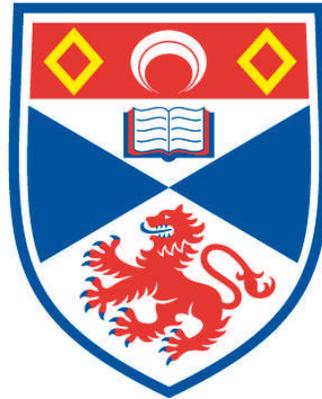


**THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE BODY
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH THEOLOGY**

William Hughes Hamilton, Jr.

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE BODY
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH THEOLOGY

Being a thesis presented by
William Hughes Hamilton, Jr.

Submitted to the University of St. Andrews

in application for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
February, 1952

I hereby declare that the following thesis has been composed by me on the basis of research carried on by me, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.

The following is a statement of the nature of research, with relevant dates.

Commenced full-time research	September, 1949
Departed from the University, going off full-time status	May 1951
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I hereby declare this information to be truly presented
to the best of my ability

January, 1952

PREFACE

Theological research ought not to be done in a vacuum. In a word, theology is most true to its function when it sets out to speak a relevant Christian word to misunderstandings and problems that emerge at particular times, within and without the church. The subject of this thesis, therefore, was not simply drawn out of a hat. It was chosen as the beginning of an answer to a serious theological misconception that seems to be afflicting contemporary Christendom. This misconception has two closely-related dimensions:

(1) Christian thought has often in the past been tempted to define the problem of the individual in terms of a war between the body (or matter or flesh) and spirit (or mind or soul). It is still so tempted today. One of the damaging results of this misunderstanding is that the church has seemed to be unconcerned with what may be called the material and physical sides of the life of the individual. "Spiritual" has become a word that is interchangeable with "Christian," and "physical" or "materialistic" are somehow irreligious. Just because the New Testament can be misread so as to countenance a spirit-flesh dualism, it seemed important to lay bare the roots of this misunderstanding. No better way presented itself than to point to the distinctive attitude to the body that Christianity contains: to the body itself and to the total dimension of the life of the individual for which "body" serves as an appropriate symbol. It was Browning as a student of the Bible rather than as a Victorian who was able to declare in Rabbi Ben Ezra:

Let us not always say
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

(2) But this mistaken dualism operates in the social as well as the individual field. Pulpits attack materialism, and in so doing apparently deny that there is any Christian concern for the material existence of modern man, for his work, his leisure, his needs. Against what we call Communist materialism we set, as its opposite, a "spiritual" Christianity. In so doing we make a double mistake. We ignore the fact that much of the persuasiveness of the Communist faith lies precisely in its recognition of the material dimension of man's life, and we obscure the large part of the Christian message that cannot be subsumed under the heading "spiritual." Again it seemed that this double mistake in strategy and in analysis could only be set right by pointing to the genuine sources of a materialistic concern in the Christian gospel itself. And this could be done only by setting forth the recurrent note that appears through all Christian theology of interest in and respect for the body and the "bodily" life of man.

Something like this process then, lies behind the selection of the subject for this thesis. The phrase in the title "twentieth century British theology" sets the historical, geographical, and subject-matter limitations. The requirements of research meant that a relatively small area had to be scrutinized with some care. British theology was chosen both because it is a field with its own intrinsic interest, and because the research was carried out in that country. "Theology" in the title means that I have not held myself responsible

for relevant developments in the fields of philosophy and psychology, although here and there notice is taken of them. These limits have been transgressed only to refer, at several points, to the work of certain American theologians. I have done this reluctantly, and only when a criticism had to be made or a gap in the argument filled, and when this could not be done by a reference to the British scene. Incidentally, I have cited only those American theologians with whom I have had some sort of personal relationship, and thus their presence will help to define my own bias and presuppositions.

The first chapter may need a word of defence. In the course of the research it soon became clear that two things were required: first, it had to be shown that there was such a thing as a uniform biblical witness concerning the body that could serve as a point of reference; and second, some account had to be taken of the fate of that biblical witness throughout the early centuries of Christian thought. In a sense, the whole drama of early Christian thought can be seen as a battle between biblical and Hellenistic attitudes to the body; and while most of the issues were raised in the first four centuries, almost none of them were solved. It is the very inconclusiveness of the historical answers to this problem that makes this a relevant subject for contemporary investigation. I make no claim to original research in the biblical and historical parts of the first chapter; there may be a fresh arrangement of familiar material, and here I have tried to stay as close to primary sources as possible.

The Christian attitude to the body is grounded on several important affirmations. Ours is a faith which believes that creation is itself good and that the worst sins are not those that spring from the body. Ours is a faith that affirms a unique significance for

events that took place in the human, historical, physical realm; which affirms that its Lord busied himself with material, secular, and physical concerns; which affirms that its Lord himself was subject to the completely human experience of being in a body and all that that involved. Ours is a faith that has found itself calling the church the "body" of Christ and that celebrates regularly its concern for material things in the Lord's Supper. And finally, ours is a faith that renders its eschatological convictions in terms of the resurrection of the body. All this cumulative evidence certainly suggests that the church cannot despise the body; materialistic, finite, physical existence. The chapters of this thesis will take up each of these affirmations in turn, and will seek to present the Christian doctrine of the body, as it emerges in the British theology of this century, in the areas of Christian thought about God, man and sin; about the Incarnation and Atonement; about the church and sacraments; and about eschatology.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BODY: A BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

I.

The Meaning of the Body in the Old Testament

The Hebrew considered the body an integral part of the whole personality and so had no single word that meant precisely what we mean by "body." There is a rare word (gewiyah) that is usually translated body, but it is not used significantly when it refers to the living body (Gen. 47:18, Neh. 9:37, Dan. 10:6), and more often than not it means a human or an animal corpse (Ps. 110:6, Is. 66:24). The Hebrew word basar (בָּשָׂר) is about as close as we can get in the language to the English word "body,"¹ and so we shall begin by investigating some of the uses to which this word is put. Beyond this philological evidence there are what might be called theological, psychological, and eschatological sources which will complete our look at the Hebraic understanding of the body. The doctrine of creation (esp. Gen. 1:27a, 1:31a, 2:7) presents clear testimony to the goodness and unity of the physical personality; Hebrew psychology has important information to yield; and the suggestions in the Old Testament pointing to a bodily resurrection are of some importance. These four approaches, therefore, will constitute our short survey

1. Basar is usually rendered "body" in the Authorized Version and "flesh" in the English Revised Version.

of the Old Testament evidence.

Basar is used 266 times in the Old Testament, but in only about 45 cases does it seem to bear a meaning that is useful for our purpose.²

1. It can refer to the soft muscular parts of the human body, and, in the case of animals, to those parts used for sacrifice. It can in this way actually mean food.³ By far the greatest number of references are in this category; the "heart of flesh" in Ezek. 36:26 is perhaps the one that comes first to mind.⁴

2. By the laws of synecdoche, we come to a second meaning. Basar can refer to all of the flesh, to the body as a whole. There are perhaps 40 references in this category, with nearly half of them found in Leviticus.

3. By metonymy, basar can imply relationship or kinship; generally in connection with "bone": "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh" (Gen. 29:14).

4. In the fourth and most important group of cases, basar refers to a corporeal living creature, sometimes man and sometimes man and beast together. At times it is used to suggest man's essential nature "in contrast with God or with 'Spirit,'" to emphasize man's

2. I have relied, in part, on Prof. H. Wheeler Robinson's analysis in The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 24.

3. If it is basar that is offered to God in sacrifice, it cannot be supposed that any moral and physical uncleanness attaches to it. Cf. A.B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament, pp. 188-92.

4. Cf. E. deW. Burton, Spirit, Soul and Flesh, pp. 68-70.

frailty, dependence, or incapacity."⁵ When basar is thus alive, it is the soul (Gen. 2:7) or the whole human person (Ps. 63:1, 84:2), as when Satan is said to tempt Job "in the flesh" (2:5). When basar refers to the weakness of man before God, there may be a point of contact with the subsequent Pauline doctrine of sarx and its bondage to sin; but there is clearly no idea of basar as itself sinful or as the seat of sin. It is weak, as the whole man is weak before the mighty power of God, but it is not impure (Job 10:4). There is no consistent ethical dualism in Hebraic thought.

In summary of the philological evidence, it can be said that basar is primarily a physical term, though it can refer to one's kindred or to a living human person. When it means this latter it takes on, of course, a psychological colour and comes very close in meaning to nephesh. But whether as flesh or as body, basar cannot be construed as morally bad in the Greek sense: as a drag on the imprisoned soul which is fully developed only when free from the body. Basar may suggest weakness, as we have seen; but never a power for evil.⁶

The Bible, it has been said,

never overlooks the ministry of the body. From that great first text which describes man's original constitution, through those passages which speak of his dominion over the earth and the creatures, in all those which represent

5. H. Wheeler Robinson, op. cit., p. 25. Compare John F. Darragh's classification of the meanings of basar: as (1) food, (2) human flesh, (3) living creatures, (4) relationships, (5) the whole man or human nature. The Resurrection of the Flesh, pp. 275-8. This author, again and again, emphasized the absence in the Old Testament of any idea of corrupting power or inherent evil in the flesh.

6. Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, op. cit., pp. 153-4, and an interesting monograph on this subject by Aubrey R. Johnson, entitled The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel, esp. pp. 39ff.

work done through the agency of the body as divine service and human victory, onward to those which represent the redemption of the body as the climax of revelation, it is evident that the Bible is based on the unity of man's nature.⁷

This sense of the unity of human personality is far more than a consequence of a primitive people's failure to make a distinction between the parts of man. It is derived from the doctrine of creation itself. This sense of unity is more than a conclusion from a study of words; it is a theological presupposition. The importance of the biblical doctrine of creation in safeguarding both the unity and the goodness of human personality can hardly be overlooked. Detailed notice will be taken of the bearing of this doctrine on the understanding of the body in the following chapter.⁸ We must now turn to the bearing of Hebrew psychology on the understanding of the body in the Old Testament. Three relevant affirmations can be set down.⁹

1. The idea of the "corporate personality" is a central one for Hebraic thought. Prof. Wheeler Robinson coined this phrase, and it points, he said, to the "close relation, and for some purposes...

7. John Laidlaw, The Bible Doctrine of Man, p. 303. Cf. John F. Darragh, op. cit., pp. 49-50, for his conclusions about the unity of personality derived from his analysis of the Old Testament use of basar.

8. Cf. Chapter 2, section II. Contemporary exegesis of the early chapters of Genesis is by no means agreed that a clear doctrine of creation ex nihilo can be found there. But if it is not in Genesis it is certainly implicit in 2 Kings 19:15 and Ex. 20:11 and explicit in Is. 40:17 and 45:18. But if Genesis does not contain a creation out of nothing, neither does it speak of a creation out of an uncreated stuff, apart from God. What it doubtless describes is creation by God out of a tehom or stuff already created by Him.

9. Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, pp. 69 ff.

identity, of the individual and the group to which he belongs."¹⁰

We have already seen that basar may refer to a family as well as to an individual. We recall Adam's loneliness and his inability to complete himself save in another like him. We recall also the principle of corporate responsibility in Hebrew law, as when a whole family is destroyed because of the sin of one member (Joshua 7).

Yet Yahweh can go beyond the law and can be described as

"visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," though Hebrew law by the seventh century had reached the point of decreeing that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sins." 11

Even in the so-called individualism of Jeremiah, the new covenant is to be written with the children of Israel. It may well be doubted whether the Old Testament, apart perhaps from the Wisdom literature, knows such a thing as an individual apart from the community.¹²

2. The body is the centre of the personality. Modern man considers the body as a unified organism under the control of a brain and a nervous system, but to the Hebrew it was a collection of separate functions. When Elisha restored the life of the Shunamite woman's son, we recall that he placed his mouth to the mouth of the child, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. This was an actual necessity if each of the organs of the lifeless child was to be restored. They

10. Ibid., p. 70. Cf. also his essay on "The Hebrew Conception of the Corporate Personality" in Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments.

11. Ibid., p. 71. Cf. Ex. 20:5, Deut. 24:16.

12. This conception of the corporate nature of the self or body has an important Christian significance. It seems likely that the Pauline doctrine of the body of Christ springs from the Hebraic idea of a corporate individual. At any rate, the idea of a "person" in whom all might participate could hardly have arisen apart from this Hebraic insight that "Body" describes not only the individual but also his relationships. The doctrine of the body of Christ will be analysed in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5 the resurrection of the body is defended as the most social of all the doctrines of fulfilment.

each had to be touched by the corresponding healthy organ of the prophet (2 Kings 4:34). Each bodily organ is independent, and each has a psychic as well as physical function. This is explained by a third affirmation:

3. Hebrew psychology is based on the unity of body and soul, basar and nephesh. There is no hint of dualism in those key passages on which the Old Testament doctrine of the body is grounded: Gen. 2:7, Ps. 63, Ez. 44:7,9, Mic. 6:7. Hebraic psychology is based on observation not analysis, and therefore it is natural that the unified reality of the personality should be emphasized. Now it is quite true that man's unity can be divided into parts. Thus part of the unity can be called "flesh," the name for the earthly part, the physical body that was originally fashioned from the dust of the earth. The other part is the spirit (ruach), and this is the part of man that is given him by God. And though nephesh is usually translated "soul," we ought not to think of it as a single element in man, but as created man in his totality. It is not something that man has, but something he is.

So in spite of this unity, the Hebrew mind can distinguish between the parts as in Is. 10:18: "he shall consume both soul and flesh." But these are not different forms of existence: flesh may be weaker than soul, and soul may be more than flesh; but flesh or body is still a manifestation of, or a different way of looking at, the soul. In Gen. 2 the dust is not the same as the body, nor is soul the same as Spirit. Soul and body are united in creation; body is soul in an outward form, and soul is animated body. Even later when the distinction between the good and evil impulses arose in Jewish thought, the good was never identified with soul, nor the evil with body.

Since soul and body are united in fact, we are not surprised to find them united in function. Here is the decisive denial of dualism: the lower functions are not the body's, nor the higher the soul's. Parts of the body are often used, therefore, to describe functions of soul or mind,¹³ and conversely, the soul may express itself through parts of the body.¹⁴

Because of this unity, the human conflict is not found within man, between the parts of his personality, but between man with all his parts and God. Not between body and spirit, but between man's spirit and God's Spirit. The key passages are revealing. Is. 31:3: "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, not spirit." The parallelism implies that the distinction between man and God is the same as that between flesh and spirit. Or in Ps. 56:4: "in God have I put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." It is God over against the whole man of flesh.

It must be admitted that we cannot expect precision of terms here. "Flesh" or "body" can be the same as life or soul; or they can be set against them. They can refer to all of man or to part of him.

13. For example, various inner organs are used as equivalent to the soul and its functions. "Heart" is used, by Prof. Wheeler Robinson's count, 851 times to express an infinite variety of emotional, volitional, and intellectual activities. "Heart" is identified with life, and is thus almost the same as nepheesh (Ex. 36:26). "Liver" is also part of the soul, and is spoken of as the centre of life (Lam. 2:11). "Kidneys" and "bowels" are used as the centre of the emotions (Ps. 73:21, 16:7, Is. 16:11, 63:15), and bones, blood, breath, belly, liver—all of these are used to describe the condition of life and of the soul. If an organ is physically affected, the soul will also be: he who does not eat injures his nepheesh (Is. 58:3, 5, 10).

14. The head bears honour and responsibility (Ex. 9:10) and is identified with life (1 Sam. 28:2). The soul shows itself through the face: in the eyes (Ps. 38:10), in the anger of the nose (Job 4:9).

We shall say that for the Hebrew, man is a unity, and that that unity is the body as a complex of parts, drawing their life and activity from a breath-soul, which has no existence apart from the body. Hebrew has no proper word for that body; it never needed one so long as the body was the man; definition and nomenclature come in only when there is some conscious antithesis.¹⁵

We must conclude this section on the meaning of the body in the Old Testament with a look at the hints of a bodily resurrection in Hebraic thought. On the whole, the Old Testament is unconcerned with the life after death. This may be because of the elaborate Egyptian death-cult against which Israel reacted, or simply because it took a considerable time to discover that deserts in this life are not meted out equally. Up to the Exile, the traditional belief was that at death man, no matter how devout, disappeared into the pit of Sheol, beyond Yahweh's jurisdiction (Cf. Is. 38:18, Deut. 32:22 and Job 19). In Sheol existence was semi-corporeal; the shades there were thought to carry about a kind of a body.¹⁶ Against this background the early idea of the "Day of Yahweh" developed into a full-grown hope for a Messianic Age with a restored nature (Amos 9:13, Zech. 14:9), a new heaven and a new earth, and a new Jerusalem into which the righteous remnant would be ushered.

But during the Exile, the present came to seem so hopeless that it was clear for the first time that some provision would have to be made for the righteous dead who would not live to see this new age,

15. H. Wheeler Robinson, "Hebrew Psychology," in The People and the Book, edited by A. S. Peake, p. 366. Cf. The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 69.

16. The bodily nature of existence in Sheol is verified by the horror with which the Hebrew regarded cremation. Cf. Lev. 20:14, 21:9 and Amos' horror at the burning of the bones of the king of Edom (2:1). Cf. F. T. Lord, The Unity of Body and Soul, p. 35; The Conquest of Death, p. 99.

as well as for the patriarchs who were so instrumental in mediating Yahweh's covenant to the people. So the idea of resurrection--- heretofore only used to describe the restoration of Israel (Hos. 6:2, Ez. 37)---became a doctrine with individual and moral meaning.

Yahweh would raise the righteous dead out of Sheol so that they might share in the earthly joy of the transformed world.

And this was quite clearly resurrection of the body, for as we have seen, life without the body and blood is inconceivable to the Hebrew. Is. 26:19 points to a resurrection merely of the just, while the only other clear reference to the resurrection, Dan. 12:2, suggests that both the unjust and the just will be raised. When both the just and unjust are raised, judgment follows the resurrection; in Isaiah where only the righteous are raised, the Messianic Age begins with a judgment on the earth, and the righteous remnant there is joined by the raised dead to enjoy the new life.

The important point to note is the insistence that the Messianic life is a full life enjoyed in the body. So from the doctrine of the creation to resurrection, from a study of philology to psychology, we can trace in the Old Testament a lofty estimate of the body and the physical existence of man.

There is an ennoblement of the body which has never been excelled in any religious literature. From his reverent thoughts about the beginning of life, to his hopes and yearnings for the life that is to come, the Hebrew was always conscious that his physical frame was a very real part of himself. Without it, he could not think of life at all. Others might spurn the body, and blame it for the evils which attend human life; he conceived it to be his solemn duty to preserve it from defilement. How meticulously and carefully this was done is seen from the detailed injunctions in the Old Testament. Later Jewish thought and practice continued this respectful attention to the body. The marvellous construction of the human frame

was regarded as evidence of the Creator's wisdom.¹⁷

We are now in a position to turn to the New Testament to complete our survey of the biblical attitude to the body.¹⁸

17. F. Townley Lord, The Unity of Body and Soul, p. 39.

18. We must make a brief mention of the fate of the Hebraic understanding of the body, as sketched out above, in the Intertestamental period. We can best see this by noting the attitudes to the doctrine of the body's resurrection during the two centuries before and the first century after the coming of Christ. This will provide a background for the teaching on the resurrection at the time of Jesus, to which we shall be referring in the next section.

In the Jewish eschatology between 200 BC and 100 AD there are two important influences at work. One is that mass of popular religious beliefs that came to be known as Hellenistic theology, and the other is the experience of martyrdom under the Seleucid emperor before the Maccabean revolt. The exact effect of Greek and Persian thought at this time is difficult to determine, but it is certain that Greek influence brought out, if it did not actually introduce, the idea of immortality of the soul into Jewish thinking.

The main difference between the apocryphal literature and the eschatology of the Old Testament is that in the former we find the outlook extended, almost exclusively, into the next world. This change of emphasis will condition the understanding of the body. In the Book of Enoch 91:10 and 92:3 there is a resurrection of the righteous in their own bodies, and a similar idea in the Psalms of Solomon. In the Apocalypse of Baruch 49-51, it is taught that the dead are raised in their actual earthly bodies, but these are transformed into more fitting bodies for use in the new life. 2 Maccabees teaches that the body will be raised to enjoy the life of the new age on this earth (7:10ff.). But when the idea arises that this earth will be transformed in the coming days, a raising of the self-same earthly bodies becomes more difficult to hold. There are attempts to deal with this problem in the so-called "Similitudes" of Enoch.

When the idea of a transfigured earth emerges, leeway is given to the Greek influence and to conceptions that treat the resurrection in more spiritual and attenuated ways. The Book of Wisdom says (2:23) that "God created man for immortality" and the same strain appears in the famous passage, Wisdom 3:14: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God." The Fourth Book of Maccabees and the Book of Jubilees teach an almost purely spiritual immortality. The influence of Philo at this time was the occasion for a powerful Greek strain to appear in this eschatological thought.

The real importance of this difference of opinion over immortality emerges when we look at the views held by the Pharisees and Sadducees at the time of Jesus' ministry. The Sadducees, representing the conservative element in Judaism, reacted strongly against any unrestrained elaboration of apocalyptic fancy and against the practice of the pseudonymous authorship of these apocalyptic works. They

II

The Meaning of the Body in the New Testament

As was the case in our study of the Old Testament material, the doctrine of the body cannot be completely understood here merely by an analysis of individual words; in this case such words as soma and sarx. Some of the instances of these words are significant, some are not.¹⁹ Some material can be drawn from Jesus' teaching; but for some we will need to look beyond the words of Jesus to the central events of the New Testament gospel as indicating what is God's attitude to the body. For the purposes of analysis we can distinguish two broad areas for investigation; Christ and the gospels, and the doctrine of the body in Paul.

1. Christ and the Gospels: Evidence for a Doctrine of the Body

Both in the fact of God's revelation in Christ and in the records of Christ's teaching we find an exaltation of the body and all that it represents.

attach little credence to the resurrection if they did not deny it altogether. The Pharisees, on the other hand, held to the resurrection of the body in a rather artificial way as a necessary part of the final judgment. Some of them regarded the resurrection as only the lot of the righteous Jew, others as universal; but in either case it was a materialistic conception in which the old body was exactly identified with the body to be used in the risen life.

Thus, in this period, all possible attitudes to the body and to its resurrection were represented, from the out and out denial of the bodily nature of eternal life (Wisdom, 4 Maccabees, Philo) to a materialistic identification of the earthly and the risen bodies (Apoc. Baruch, 2 Maccabees), with many varieties of compromise positions in between. Cf. F. C. Grant, Can We Still Believe in Immortality?, pp. 11-20; H. Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, pp. 71-2; R. H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life: In Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity, pp. 198, 238, 302.

19. In A. M. Ramsey's The Gospel and the Catholic Church there is an interesting note on σῶμα in the New Testament, p. 36.

a. The Incarnation. Just as the fact of the divine creation is crown and guarantor of the Old Testament conviction of the goodness of the body, so the fact of Incarnation is the fundamental New Testament witness to the same conviction. When faith affirms that God entered fully into the contingent, finite realm of history; when it asserts, above all, that the divine logos was made "flesh" (John 1:14), this means at the very least that God deemed the historical, bodily life of man worthy enough to be the locus of his unique revelation. The Incarnation preserves the conviction that here was not merely a divine influence or a partly divine indwelling; but the full life of God himself active in the series of events to which we refer as "Christ." At the same time Incarnation preserves the conviction that God acted in a fully human, earthbound man; not a demi-god, not a divine-human mixture, but a thoroughly human individual, in every respect as we are.

In the Old Testament the flesh is dignified as being brought into a living unity with the spirit, the dust of the earth with the breath of life that comes from God (Gen. 2:7). In the New Testament the flesh is raised to a dignity unspeakably higher, by the habitation in it and incorporation with it of the very Word of life (1 John 1:1,2).²⁰

It is interesting to note in this connection how the Jews in John 6:41 ff. objected to Jesus' contention that a man of flesh and blood could descend from heaven. They could not believe that flesh could be an adequate locus for the life of God. And at first it might seem as if Jesus' reply (in verse 63 of this chapter) that flesh is of no avail simply confirms their skepticism. But he did not mean

20. J. C. Lambert, in the article "Body (Christian)" in the Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Volume II, pp. 760-3.

that the natural historical life is unimportant when compared to the realm of the Spirit. He meant that flesh (which is virtually equivalent to "history" in the Fourth Gospel) is meaningless unless God acts in it, that historical existence is not the end of things, that Incarnation is not the whole of God's plan. The Johannine terms "flesh" and "spirit," therefore, do not suggest a conflict between (what we would call) the material and spiritual, and their usage does not qualify the high value placed on the body's life in the New Testament. The terms when set against one another express not a moral but a religious contrast -- a contrast between "the limitations of mortal men and the creative power of God."²¹ Thus the Christian's and the church's claims to perfection must always be qualified by such passages as John 3:6, 6:63, and by such reminders of human weakness as Mark 14:38. He became flesh, which means in the Bible "the life of man, or of creatures, in its frailty and limitations as lived on earth in the mortal body."²² Flesh, earth, body, history; this is the proper and sufficient area for God's full revelation and activity to be made known. Like the doctrine of creation, Incarnation presupposes both the weakness of man and the goodness of his natural life; weakness because God needed to enter into human history to give it meaning; goodness because God did not shrink from fully entering into that history.²³

21. L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, pp. 433-4. Compare E. C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, p. 304.

22. L. S. Thornton, op. cit., p. 443.

23. For a further elaboration of this point, see Chapter 3, section I, on The Fact of Incarnation.

b. The full humanity and sinlessness of Christ. These facts about our Lord point to another source for a biblical doctrine of the body. As Prof. D. M. Baillie has pointed out, theologians in the past

shrank from admitting human growth, human ignorance, human mutability, human struggle and temptation, into their conception of the Incarnate Life, and treated it simply as a divine life lived in a human body (and sometimes even this was conceived as essentially different from our bodies) rather than a truly human life lived under the psychical conditions of humanity.²⁴

Yet Christian theology at its best has always insisted that the human life Jesus lived was in all respects human. He knew hunger (Matt. 4:2), weariness (John 4:6), conflict and agony (Luke 22:44). Outside of the gospels, the full humanity of Jesus is perhaps best attested to by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (2:14, 5:7). Paul, while he occasionally shrank from completely satisfactory assertions of the full humanity (Rom. 8:3), generally gave an unqualified assent to this conviction as his doctrine of sinful flesh would permit him (Phil. 2:7, Rom. 1:3, 9:5, Col. 1:22). He probably would never have asserted, with the author of the Fourth Gospel, that the word was made flesh. Yet the Johannine treatment of Jesus' humanity is by no means unambiguous. It comes very close to docetism in its conception of Jesus as a timeless, semi-divine being, even though John 1:14 is clearly a deliberate refutation of what later developed into the docetic heresy.

In addition to its unqualified conviction of Jesus' full humanity,

²⁴. God Was in Christ, p. 11.

Christian orthodoxy has asserted in the same breath its conviction of his sinlessness. This at first seems a denial of his complete humanity, but it is better understood as a judgment on our partial humanity. The fact that we can hold both to Christ's full humanity and to his sinlessness makes possible three important conclusions: (1) that since he has been at every point sharing our weakness, God through Christ is equipped to overcome it (Heb. 4:15); (2) because of Christ's sinlessness, God can work fully and completely through him without obstruction; and (3) since Jesus is both fully human and without sin, God has given the decisive blow to any idea that inherent evil is attached to finite existence as such.²⁵

c. Jesus' freedom from asceticism. One of the most precious notes in the entire gospel story is the accusation of sensuality that Jesus evoked from his enemies in Matt. 11:19. To this we may add his denial that anything a man eats is in itself unclean (Matt. 15:11/Mark 7:15-23).²⁶ One cannot overlook Jesus' warm appreciation of nature and his use of examples from nature to describe

25. For a further working out of this principle in contemporary British theology, see below, Chapter 3, section II.

26. Cf. Baron Friedrich von Hügel, Essays and Addresses, First Series, pp. 126, 164. Paul has some trouble in achieving such an unequivocal denial of asceticism, partly because of the nature of the special problems he had to meet in the Corinthian church, partly because of his doctrine of the uncleanness of sarx. But note Rom. 14:14, Col. 2:20-3 and the later elements of anti-Marcionite polemic in 1 Tim. 2:15, 4:3,8. This anti-ascetic note in the pastorals, often implicitly pointing to Marcion's influence and at least once explicitly (1 Tim. 6:20), is a strong argument against Pauline authorship. C. H. Dodd has recently raised the question whether the Johannine idea of the "world" is an ascetic one. The gnostics, he points out, did consider the world, matter, and the body evil, but this is not the Johannine attitude to the world. It defines the world as "human society in so far as it is organized on wrong principles, and characterized by base desires, false values, egoism. The material world as such is God's creation." The Johannine Epistles, p. 44.

the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:26 ff, and ch. 13). The prohibition of anxiety over the material conditions of life ("body" is to be taken in its broadest sense in Matt. 6:25) is not an ascetic injunction, but the opposite. It is the Son's assurance that the Father is genuinely concerned with food, clothing, and shelter, and will provide for them.

Passages such as Matt. 10:28/Luke 12:4 enjoining the disciples not to fear those who can kill the body, and Mark 14:38 and Matt. 26:41 about the weakness of the flesh and the willingness of the spirit have often been used to establish a purely spiritual New Testament ethic. They must not be overlooked, and at first glance they do seem to modify Jesus' warm approval of the life in the body. But it is quite possible that these sayings can be simply explained on the basis of the situations they were designed to meet. The prohibition of fear of those who can destroy the body then becomes a call to courage in the face of a possible martyrdom in the future; and the admission of the flesh's weakness becomes an excuse for the sluggish disciples who are unaware of the great events about to transpire. Such is the weakness of all natural men when they turn their eyes away from the activity of God in history.

Mark 9:43-8 does involve a solemn warning against the use of the body for immoral purposes. Yet Jesus certainly did not condemn fleshly sins as rigorously as he did the spiritual pride of the Pharisee. His free forgiveness of the woman discovered in the act of adultery (John 7:53-8:11), his acceptance of the harlot's gift (Luke 7:36-50), and his declaration that the harlots and tax-collectors would enter the kingdom before the religious leaders (Matt.

21:31)---these incidents combine an awareness of the seriousness of all sin with a recognition of sin of self-righteousness as the most heinous.²⁷

d. Jesus' concern for the bodily life of others. This is a wide field to analyse, and the countless instances of Jesus' concern for the physical, material life of those around him can only be touched upon. One thinks of his vindication of marriage (Matt. 19:4) and his recognition of the central role of the child in the kingdom of God. There is his prayer for daily bread (or bread enough for tomorrow) and his petition that God's will be done on this earth (Matt. 6:10b, 11).²⁸ Both the Beatitudes and the feeding of the multitude have a "materialistic" and a "spiritual" version in the gospels, and it seems likely, in the case of the Beatitudes, that the "materialistic" version in Luke--- with its clear concern for the bodily life of man---is the original (Luke 6:20-2/Matt. 5:1-12, and Matt. 14:13-21, 15:32-8; Mark 6:32-44, 8:1-9; Luke 9:10-7/John 6:1-13).

The two most important facts under this classification may well be the concern of Jesus for the poor and dispossessed, and the physical needs that he freely met in the healing miracles. When one reads the gospels through it is astonishing to see the central role

27. Cf. the interesting discussion of this problem in Jesus and in Paul in L. H. Marshall, The Challenge of New Testament Ethics, pp. 36-41.

28. An interesting point is made by Walter Lüthi, when he suggests that the room into which Jesus advises his hearers to retire for prayer (Matt. 6:6) is, strictly speaking, the pantry (τραπεζιον). "Into this," he says, "where the air is filled with natural smells and vapours, into this where the empty shelves remind the poor man of his poverty, and where the full shelves remind the rich man of his poor neighbor, into this Jesus sends the one who would pray." From Lüthi's pamphlet, Die Soziale Frage im Lichte der Bibel, quoted by David H.C. Read, in his article "Holy Materialism" in The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 1, no.3, December 1948, p. 273.

these two emphases have. The cup of cold water as an example of service to the needy (Matt. 10:42/Mark 9:41) and the account of the last judgment as depending on the material services man had performed on earth (Matt. 25:34ff) are just two out of many instances of this "non-spiritual" concern for the poor.²⁹ The healing miracles come with an even more impressive impact. Whatever the eschatological significance of the miracles may be, the persistent and obvious note of physical suffering met and overcome cannot be denied.³⁰

Three other examples of Christian "materialism" or concern for the material life of man come to mind, though they do not fit precisely into the categories we have arranged. The first is the hope, found in the Old Testament as well as the New, for the transformation of nature: nature which now groans and labours will in the last days be transformed into a new earth. God's salvation extends to his entire creation, and the order of redemption is equivalent to the order of creation.³¹ Second, we may point to the very materialistic response to the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Pentecost is often interpreted in purely spiritual terms, and it is sometimes forgotten that this final sealing by God of his purposes in Christ had as one of its immediate results a communal sharing of goods. This so-called primitive communism has often embarrassed commentators, and many of them have breathed a sigh of relief when they were able

29. C. H. Dodd has drawn together the passages reflecting this concern from all the different literary sources in order to insist that we can claim to some knowledge of Jesus' historical character when all the sources bear witness to a similar set of facts. History and the Gospel, pp. 90-101.

30. For a full discussion of the significance of the miracles for a Christian doctrine of the body, see Chapter 3, section III.

31. Cf. Rom. 8:19-22, Acts 3:21, John 11:24, Rev. 21:1-4, 22:1-2, and the discussion of this point on p. 37, below.

to point out that the experiment was a failure. But there it stands; another testimony to the intimate relationship in the Christian life between the Spirit and bodily needs. A third comment must be made on the related terms, "flesh" and "life" in the Fourth Gospel. We have already pointed out that the author of this gospel virtually identifies "flesh" with history or particularized existence. Thus E. C. Hoskyns can say that

the purpose of the Fourth Gospel is not to record the opinions of one man or to write a biography of one of the apostles, but to make known the faith of the Church and the meaning of the history or "flesh" of Jesus.³²

The Johannine idea of life or eternal life is a closely related one, and whatever else it may mean, it surely means that the redemptive purpose of God as revealed in Christ includes a heightening of all that we ordinarily mean by natural life. This is certainly part of the meaning of such passages as John 10:10.

e. The resurrection: Jesus' sayings on the resurrection, and his own resurrection. There are two sources of evidence here: what Jesus himself said about the resurrection of the body, and what is said in the gospels about his own resurrection from the dead.³³

32. The Fourth Gospel, p. 171 (italics mine). Cf. pp. 52-3.

33. The resurrection of the body and the resurrection of Christ have, of course, a close connection; so close, as a matter of fact, that the church has often referred to resurrection as a single event, with the resurrection of Christ establishing the present reality of the resurrection-life, and the resurrection of the body as the fulfilment in hope of the event which Christ's resurrection began. Cf. pp. 32-3 below.

Another point may be mentioned here in passing. Modern authors are often embarrassed about Jesus' silence on the question of the immortality of the soul; so that it is common to read that Jesus did not so much teach this doctrine as presuppose it. But this is just carelessness. Of course, the New Testament speaks of a life beyond death, but it knows nothing of the natural immortality of the soul. Cf. Chapter 5 below.

The background of beliefs about the resurrection against which Jesus' ministry was carried on has already been noted. The Sadducees denied it altogether; the Essenes and the Jewish parties influenced by Alexandrian teaching held to a rather attenuated form of immortality of the soul; while the Pharisees taught a quite literal restoration of the earthly body. Into this situation Jesus came, and against the Sadducaic view of a half-sentient existence in Sheol he insisted that the dead are raised, that the life to come is better, not worse, than the life in the present age. He was opposed to the literalism of the Pharisees (who were apparently speculating upon the possibilities of marriage in the future state: Mark 12:24-7/Matt. 22:23-33 and Luke 20:35), though his position could be fairly described as Pharasaic, minus the cruder elements of current apocalyptic. There is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, he stated, but as God is a God of the living there must be a resurrection of the body. Jesus shared his race's inability to conceive of life without a body. His argument from the law was especially telling against the Sadducees, who based their denial of the resurrection on the silence of the law. But, Jesus asked them, if God is the God of the living, and if you teachers refer to him as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then surely these patriarchs must be even now sharing in some kind of life with God.³⁴ That the dead are raised and that they participate in some kind of bodily life is really all that Jesus says about this difficult problem. He was not interested in the details

³⁴. Luke's addition in 20:38, "for all live to him" probably betrays his misunderstanding of Jesus' meaning, and modifies the doctrine in the direction of a more spiritual form of immortality.

which occupied the apocalyptic writers and that later were to occupy Paul: the time of the resurrection, the relation of the present body to the body of the consummation, the condition of those in Sheol. His argument—that God is a God of the living—is perhaps the only argument one can use.³⁵

But it seems clear that Jesus' followers did not understand the meaning of the resurrection of the body until for "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" they could substitute "the God who is Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, nothing that Jesus said about the resurrection of the body is so significant as the resurrection of his own body. In this act, God gives his final verdict on the goodness of the physical and historical existence into which he had completely entered.

Now the phrase "resurrection of Jesus Christ" is used in two quite different senses that are not always distinguished. In the first place, it can mean "the continued activity of Christ after His death, in the full reality and power of His personal life."³⁶ Or, it can mean the coming to life of his dead body, the reanimation of the actual body that was crucified. The empty tomb narratives, with their clear polemic interests, do not give us warrant either to affirm or to deny this latter sense. Resurrection in the former sense, however,

35. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is, after all, a parable; and one with much symbolic phraseology such as the difficult "in Abraham's bosom" (whatever that may mean, as Augustine remarked). The point of the parable is not to depict details of the future life, but to urge the necessity of watchfulness and brotherly love in the present.

36. Edwyn Bevan, Hellenism and Christianity, p. 248.

is essential to the Christian faith.³⁷ In other words, though the church said that its faith was based on the resurrection of Christ, actually the resurrection was based on its faith. Resurrection for the early church (for the most part) was an assurance that the power of death had been broken, not a look into the details of what the life beyond death would be like.

To say that the Lord is risen is to say that he is still present to the community of believers as a living memory in quite a unique way—not merely as an influence. Resurrection speaks of the presence of one who has died, a presence by means of a shared remembrance,

37. Prof. Dodd, in trying to account for the lack of reference to the resurrection in the Johannine epistles, has made a similar distinction. It is possible, he writes, to "distinguish two slightly different ways of regarding it. [i.e., the resurrection]. Some, it would seem, thought chiefly of the appearances of the risen Christ to His followers, and especially of their evidential value for faith. Others (or the same persons in a different context) thought chiefly of the risen Christ as exalted 'at the right hand of God,' ready to come again in glory....If the foreground of one's mind were occupied with the thought of Christ's eternal power and glory in the heavenly places, the fact of His resurrection might be taken to be implied in this larger and more inclusive truth. To put it in terms of the kerygma, the affirmation of Christ's resurrection might be taken as implicit in the clause affirming His victory over 'principalities and powers' and His eternal session 'at the right hand of God'." The Johannine Epistles, p. xxxiii.

Or, in other words, some New Testament writers found it necessary to defend the reality of the resurrection against the gnostics and other doubters. These emphasized the empty tomb and the fact of resuscitation. When this was done, a period had to intervene between the resurrection and the glorification during which the evidential appearances could be said to have taken place. Hence the resurrection and the ascension became separated, that the 40 days might be used in this way. But in the Johannine epistles, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is no distinction between resurrection and glorification, for the belief in the resurrection is there equivalent to a belief in God's power over death and his destruction of the demonic powers, and has little to do with an empty tomb and a reanimated body.

alive and growing. This is an utterly unique situation because it is a memory of one who still is, and who is now confessed as present Lord. To know Jesus as risen, therefore, is to enter into the presence of Jesus as he was when alive. Thus, the basis of our faith in the resurrection of Christ is the realized continuity between the past and the present. He is the same, now and then, but he is not known in the same way. The continuity between the past and the present is not a conclusion from the resurrection. The resurrection is an inference from known, self-authenticating experience. The incidents of it are simply not accounted for in the New Testament. The narratives of the empty tomb dispel none of the mystery; what the first Christians knew is all that we know: he who had lived among them, he who had been crucified, is alive again. Therefore, to say that Christ's body is risen is to say that the communion between the risen Lord and his disciples (then or now) could and can only be the kind of communion that a personal, bodily confrontation makes possible. This is the significance of the resurrection of Christ for a Christian understanding of the body.

2. The Doctrine of the Body in Paul

a. The body and sin: the case for dualism. Prof. H. Wheeler Robinson made a detailed study of Paul's use of the term sarx (σὰρξ), on which the question of his dualism hinges. In twelve cases, Prof. Wheeler Robinson declared,³⁸ sarx is purely a physical term. In eleven cases it means kinship; in fourteen it is the condition of our

38. Cf. the detailed analysis in The Christian Doctrine of Man, pp. 113 ff., and also John Darragh's study in The Resurrection of the Flesh, pp. 279-83.

present existence; in nineteen it implies weakness without moral factors entering in; and in thirty-five cases he thought that the term pointed to moral weakness or failure.

The clearest way of displaying Paul's use of sarx is to look at his treatment of Jesus' humanity. There were times when Paul stopped on the edge of a full affirmation of humanity and faced in the direction of gnosticism: cf. the "likeness of sinful flesh" in Rom. 8:3 and the "likeness of men" in Phil. 2:7. In the former passage Paul is making, from his point of view, a striking assertion of the full humanity, for he associates Christ not only with mortality but with sinful flesh. C. H. Dodd has pointed out how Paul was caught here in a double use of the term "flesh": when he wanted to associate Jesus Christ with human nature he was forced to use a term which he had already used to define the wrongly directed instincts in man. Flesh, therefore, is not neutral for Paul, as it is for the authors of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is the place where God in Christ has met and defeated the evil powers. A solution to his problem would perhaps have been to distinguish between real and sinful flesh in regard to Christ. Then Paul could have said that Christ was utterly in the flesh, though not in sinful flesh. He was in the likeness of sinful flesh, he appeared to be in it, but wasn't. We are entitled to ask Paul a question: If Christ conquers sin in the flesh by his obedience, how else can he do it save by being in that flesh himself? Thus, on this question of the humanity of Christ, Paul is not fully satisfactory because of his interpretation of what sarx really is. He seems to feel that there is something in it that makes its redemption impossible (1 Cor. 15:50).

That there is a close and almost inevitable connection between flesh and sin for Paul seems difficult to deny (Rom. 6:6,7:18,23,24). Yet this fact, which may be deplored, does not warrant our sending him directly into the Hellenistic or dualistic camp. While Paul and Philo may be agreed that the flesh is in enmity with the soul, Paul would never ultimately say that the body³⁹ and the spirit are in antagonism; the body is indispensable to the soul, and the soul without the body is naked. Paul's dualism, if such there be, is eschatological rather than moral. The tension under which the early Christians lived made this problem of the flesh quite acute for Paul. The church found itself after Pentecost living in a new age, yet aware that the old had not yet passed away. The Christian still lived in the body, yet he must often have felt limited by the shackles of nature and history as he expectantly awaited the fulfillment (Phil. 1:23,4; Rom. 8:23; Gal. 5:25). One can understand Paul's impatience and uneasiness about anything that seemed to hold back the complete disclosure of the new age.

Yet Paul could make appreciative statements about the natural world (Rom. 11:11, 1 Cor. 10:26) and could speak of the body as if it would know full redemption (Rom. 8:23, Gal. 2:20, Phil. 3:4). So we must be careful before we attach the label of dualism too easily to Paul. His view of the corruption of the sarx was perhaps extreme, yet among the "works of the flesh" in Gal. 5:19 can be found spiritual sins, and "carnal" in 1 Cor. 3:3 means jealousy. The only consistent dualism that Paul knew was the "dualism" defined by man's

39. Which is not identical with "flesh": cf. p. 29 below.)

longing for the next world, and the "dualism" in which the Christian knows that he, as sinner, is over against God.⁴⁰

b. The body and ethics: the body as temple of the Lord. It is precisely because he believed that sarx implies a special kind of weakness that Paul was particularly determined that his readers control the body and keep it in subjection (1 Cor. 9:27, Rom. 8:13, 6:12, Col. 3:5). This led him, in 1 Cor. 6:13-20 (developing a suggestion from 3:16-7), to his doctrine of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Now this seems to conflict with Paul's belief in the imperfection of sarx, but actually the two beliefs are related; for only what is high can be profaned. Since the temptation to sin is great because of the flesh, the body must be especially watched.

Prof. A. M. Ramsey has written:

Nothing is more impressive in the Apostolic writers than their refusal to exclude the body from its relevance to the moral issues of their faith and from the final destiny of the Christians. The Hellenistic environment of the church almost cried out to it to assert a "spiritual" salvation, whereby man might escape from the prison of the body into a destiny from which all the transitory things of physical nature were excluded. But the Christians cling to the belief that the body had been divinely created and divinely redeemed.⁴¹

The idea had apparently grown up in Corinth that the body was not truly part of man, and that the sins committed in it were not

40. Cf. the denials of a dualism in Paul made by L. S. Thornton, op. cit., pp. 264, 284-6, and R. N. Flew, The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology, pp. 49-50. Prof. H. Richard Niebuhr points to the limited use made by Paul of the idea of creation. "In Paul," he writes, "the idea of creation is used significantly only for the sake of reinforcing his first principle of the condemnation of all men because of sin; while his ambiguous use of the term 'flesh' indicates a fundamental uncertainty about the goodness of the created body." In Christ and Culture, pp. 188-9.

41. The Resurrection of Christ, p. 104.

significant. Paul's answer to this is one of his most important contributions to Christian ethics. The body, he said, does not relate to earthly existence alone; it is destined for God. He was not merely stating the obvious here, that a misuse of our bodily functions degrades man. Such a misuse, he declared, also degrades the Lord of whose risen body our bodies are members. We are doubly related to the Lord: our bodies are part of his, and his resurrection has guaranteed ours. Thus, instead of giving the Corinthians a bit of practical advice, Paul made on them the most radical demand possible: we cannot do with ourselves what we want, for our bodies are not our own but the Lord's. Starting from a simple ethical problem, he presented in his answer a capsule exposition of three central Christian tenets: creation—our bodies are not our own; the church—we are members of Christ's body; and resurrection—what we do in this body now affects our life to come. L. S. Thornton concludes his detailed study of this passage from 1 Corinthians 6 with these words:

The spiritual significance of the body is most completely revealed in a true marriage. Because the body has such high significance in the order of creation, it is appropriately treated as a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit in the order of redemption. For here a whole world of new considerations arises from the facts of the Incarnation and of our Lord's Resurrection. Through the redemption of the body the relationship between the soul and the body has been transformed. Consequently the redeemed body has, even in this life, a share in the privileges and graces conferred by redemption upon the regenerate soul.... Through union of the soul with Christ (v.17) the body of a Christian is part of the organism of redeemed humanity... [and] the same new organism is fittingly regarded as a sanctuary where God dwells, and where man's whole redeemed nature is consecrated and offered to God in worship.⁴²

42. Op. cit., pp. 18-19.

It is true that practical considerations often prevented Paul from working out this high estimate of the body in detail, as, for example, in his apparent preference for asceticism in 1 Cor. 7. Yet in principle he held that the body was free from taint; it can become the Lord's, the temple of the Spirit, valuable because created and redeemed by God. This is the note in Paul's ethic that we must consider dominant.

c. The body and the future life. We must first call attention to Paul's attitude to death. It was certainly not, in his mind, the escape of the soul from temporal conditions.⁴³ Nor was it simply the end of physical life. Paul saw death as utter separation from God, complete hopelessness. Therefore, he

could not picture a more appalling penalty for sin than death, and all that death, in its complete paralysis of the personal being, must involve.

Life, not disembodied existence, is the opposite of death for Paul.

What moderns are apt to forget is, that for the Old Testament writers and for St. Paul, the question of the existence of the person had no interest whatsoever. They were not concerned at all with considerations of immortality in the abstract. It was life which occupied their thoughts; the life of the community or the individual; that is, existence in touch with God. When that contact was lost, the outlook for the person was the most hopeless they could imagine.⁴⁴

This is the reason, therefore, that Paul could identify sin and death. Both are defined as being apart from God. In death as in sin the flesh (the actual structure of man) is corrupted or destroyed.

⁴³. To be sure, we groan in our present bodies, according to 2 Cor. 5:4, but only so that we may be more fully clothed, not unclothed.

⁴⁴. H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things, pp. 117, 125.

Paul could hold his high estimate of the body along with his low estimate of the flesh because he knew that

the flesh and blood structure may pass away, leaving not a vestige, and yet the body remain self-identical. As it now partakes of the perishable substance of "flesh," it may in future partake of the imperishable substance of "glory" or splendour, and yet remain in the same "body."⁴⁵

Against this background Paul insisted of the redemption of—not deliverance from—the body.

It is difficult to know just what form the Corinthians' rejection of the resurrection took (1 Cor. 15). Perhaps it was a refusal to believe that man really perishes at death (15:19). At any rate, Paul approached them not with hypothesis or inference nor even with historical proofs of Christ's resurrection, but with a reminder of the kerygma he had delivered to them and which they had once accepted. If Christ was preached, he said, as raised from the dead, how can you deny it? For if the preaching is false at this point, then the rest of it—even that in it which appeals to you—is also false. The denial of the resurrection of the dead means a denial of Christ's resurrection. And if this is denied, the kerygma is vain, the Corinthians' faith is futile, and no redemption from the power of sin has taken place (vv. 12-4,17). But Paul assumed that the Corinthians knew that they were not still in their sins, or at least that their faith was not wholly vain. Thus he may be said to have re-established the resurrection in their thought.

45. C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 90. Prof. Dodd goes on to define the body in this passage as "the individual self as an organism (neither flesh nor spirit being individual, and 'soul' being merely the animating principle of the flesh, or physical structure)."

He rightly saw the resurrection as an event containing three indispensable elements, none of which could be denied without implying a denial of the total kerygma: the resurrection of Christ, the overcoming of the enemy death (v.26), and the resurrection of those who are Christ's (v.23).

Paul turned next to examine the question: "With what kind of body do they come?" And he made use of the analogy of the seed: if God can raise a seed into life out of apparent death, why can he not do the same with man? He was sure of a hearing at this point, for the idea of the seed was both a familiar term in the mystery religions and used by the Stoicism of the day to describe the spark of divine life in man. It is a bold analogy, and a dangerous one that cannot be extended into an allegory. To use this analogy does not mean that there is a vital principle in man—as in the seed—that death does not touch. Paul intended this merely as a vivid picture from which he could quickly pass on. The next question immediately suggested itself: What is the relation between the bare seed and the plant; the present body and the body that is raised? Here Paul gave but one answer: the sovereignty of God—he giveth it a body (v.38). But he took a further step in explanation: now we know a weak body—a body adaptable to the needs of the psyche; then we shall know a body of power, a spiritual body—not made of spirit, but suitable to the Spirit's needs (vv.42-4).

This doctrine of the spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν) is a critical point in Paul's whole understanding of the body. It shows up both his courage and his weakness; or rather, it shows up-- in its strength and weakness as a doctrine - the difficulty of making clear and consistent the problem of continuity between this body and

the body to come. Here is his problem. The body represents man in his totality, with his capacity for personal communication and self-expression. As such, it can be the symbol of continuity between this life and the next. But it is also the organism that knows death, in which the struggle against sin is fought. Thus there must be a sharp discontinuity between life as we know it in this body and the life to come.⁴⁶ It is likely that the idea of "spiritual body" was suggested to Paul by his experience of the risen Christ. He knew that this was not an historical confrontation; at the same time it was historical and bodily enough to be considered as credentials for an apostleship equal to that of those who had known Christ in the flesh. Similarly, in Rom. 8:11-23, the spiritual body is a body to be sure, but one quickened by the Spirit of God and one in which sin has been destroyed. If the gift of the Spirit has been truly received---this seems to be the meaning of Romans 8:9-11---the body as identified with the flesh has been destroyed; but the body as new creation suitable to the gift of the Spirit, that body fully shares in redemption. For

46. H. A. A. Kennedy made a helpful comment on the precise meaning of the "spiritual body." "The ψυχή, the natural principle of being, the life-force in the individual, has by God's appointment an organism corresponding to itself, the σῶμα ψυχικόν, the body whose substance is σὰρξ, with all which that, in the actual condition of human nature implies....The πνεῦμα, on the other hand, the Divine gift, the power which enters human nature in response to faith, and changes it so that henceforward it is governed by a Divine principle, will be equipped with an organism corresponding to itself, the σῶμα πνευματικόν; the 'body' which has no fleshly element inherent in it." *Op. cit.*, p. 252. The important point in this analysis is that Spirit for Paul is always a divine incursion into human experience, not a part of the human psychological structure. So a "spiritual body" is a body in which identity is preserved, in which sin is overcome in fact, and which, supremely, is a body that God has given - not one that man has deserved or that has developed out of imperishable elements in man that survive his physical death.

Paul,

it is not only the spiritual aspect of man that is affected by the Resurrection. In face of the contemporary Hellenistic teaching that the body is irrelevant and is to be left behind in the interests of a purely spiritual salvation, the first Christians insisted that the body, created by God, is also redeemed by God. The body is for the Lord.⁴⁷

Furthermore, if the body is a symbol of man's relationship to nature, then Paul was consistent when he extended redemption to the natural world itself. This is an inference, as it were, from the idea of the redemption of the body. The idea occurs in the Old Testament, as we have already seen (Is. 65:17, 66:22), and even more frequently in the apocalyptic literature (Enoch 45:4,5; Jub. 1:29; Apoc. Baruch 32:6). Nature as well as man has been pronounced good by God; yet nature as well as man participated in the Fall and needs redemption. Thus we can see how Paul stretched out the idea of the redemption of the body to its most inclusive possible meaning, that it may include not only the human body, but all of nature, history, and the contingent and finite existence that we experience through our bodies.

A concluding word must be added about the resurrection of the body in Israel and in Christianity. Christianity took over its belief in the resurrection of the body from Israel; it did not originate it but it did revise it somewhat. For Israel, the resurrection was completely in the future—in that day, in that miraculous day, this event will occur; the lion and the lamb will lie down together and the earth will be fruitful again; men will be at peace with one another and all nations will come to the mountain of the Lord to worship and acknowledge his name. But in the Christian transformation,

47. A. M. Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ, pp. 31-2.

the future resurrection is replaced by a combination of anticipated and present resurrection—a combination of fulfilment and hope. As for fulfilment, we must remember that when Matthias was elected by the apostles to take the place of Judas, he was not asked to witness to the principles of Jesus, but to the resurrection. The deepest affirmation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Christ. Our faith is the resurrection, and we are an Easter people. This is the fulfilment side, the present resurrection. Christ's resurrection is complete: "now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

Nevertheless, the resurrection of the body is something that we do not yet have, but will receive in the last days. What we do not have that Christ in his resurrection had is the body. We have the Spirit of the new life, but the incorruptible body of glory that Paul tried so hard to relate to our present body—this we lack. Nevertheless Paul always taught that the Spirit which we do have—the present part of the resurrection—is a promise of what we lack. The Spirit, he said, is an earnest of the body that is to be.

Just as Jesus had to strike a middle course between the spiritualistic immortality of the Sadducees and the coarse and speculative literalism of the Pharisees, so Paul was at pains to deny both the apocalyptic materialism which affirmed a resurrection of the earthly body and the Greek and gnostic aversion to the inclusion of the body in salvation. The contemporary challenge of gnostic dualism and an extreme view of the corruption of sarx may have played into his final position. But he was attempting to preserve the Hebraic insight that life without embodiment is no life at all, while holding to his

conviction that the resurrection life was to be without sin. Because sin was for him somehow in the flesh, Paul could occasionally speak as if the sinless resurrection-life could not be flesh-and-blood. Passages such as 1 Cor. 15:50 may perhaps obscure the "sharp line of demarcation between the classical and the Christian view of the world."⁴⁸ Yet it is essential to hold together, as Paul tried to do, the goodness of the body and the full reality of the divine judgment on sin. The first without the second tempts us to make unwarranted claims about sanctity already achieved and obscures the fact of the resurrection as fulfilment. The second without the first leads to such a discontinuity between this life and the next that the resurrection becomes incredible and the reality of Christ's resurrection as "first-fruits" is denied. Perhaps 1 John 3:2 holds together the elements of confidence and reticence in regard to our knowledge of the last things in a satisfactory way. "We know that when he appears we shall be like him"—the resurrection has made this part of our faith; but "it does not yet appear what we shall be."⁴⁹

48. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, Human Nature (hereafter referred to as Human Nature), p. 177.

49. No mention has been made in this section of the Pauline phrase "body of Christ," because this will be treated at length in Chap. 4. It is not difficult to understand how "body of Christ" could be turned into a communal term, since we have seen that "body" for Paul is not merely material, but the whole existing individual. Or, as L. S. Thornton has written (op. cit., p. 254): "in Hebrew thought the body stands for the whole man and represents him. This is the basis of the Christian attitude to the body. But it received its full justification only in our Lord's resurrection. In that event all false spiritualism and dualism, so congenial to the Greek mind, and so devastating in its consequences, had already been put out of court."

Paul's sacramental use of "body of Christ" as referring to Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper will also be dealt with in Chap. 4. Here we need only point out the significance of this usage for a biblical doctrine of the body: Christ's real presence in the sacrament is defined in terms of the presence of his "body."

III

The Meaning of the Body in Christian Theology to Augustine

This introductory chapter will be of greater use if we are allowed to conclude it with a brief sketch of the doctrine of the body in the first four centuries of Christian thought. For our subject, this can be said to be a normative period. A great part of the challenge of classical dualism was met and overcome. Yet, as we shall see, Augustine, standing at the close of this period, with all his success in overcoming the classical view of a cyclic history, was not quite so successful in countering a dualistic attitude to the body. Just because there was no decisive solution to the problem of the body at this time (to compare with the decisive Christological and Trinitarian solutions), lack of clarity on the problem has abounded throughout Christian history.

From the point of view of the Reformation, the thought of the so-called apostolic period has always appeared meagre. Martin Luther roundly declared: "When the word of God comes to the Fathers, methinks it is as if milk were filtered through a coal sack, where the milk must become black and spoiled."⁵⁰ Yet there were moments in this period, particularly when the primitive Christian tradition was consciously preserved, which are of genuine interest in our search for material contributing to a Christian doctrine of the body.

50. Werke LXII, p. 49, quoted by A. Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. II, p. 7. Reinhold Niebuhr has defined the weakness of the early centuries of Christian thought by stating that they set the religious problem in terms of time and eternity rather than in terms of sin and grace. Cf. The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, Human Destiny (hereafter referred to as Human Destiny), pp. 129-30.

1. The Sub-Apostolic Age

There were three important affirmations in the early rules of faith which acted as barriers against Hellenistic influence. These were the beliefs in God as creator of heaven and earth, in the Incarnation of the son of God, and in the resurrection of the flesh. Ignatius repeatedly referred, in the face of a rising gnosticism, to the real flesh of Jesus. He was one who

was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth; who moreover was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him, who in the like fashion will so raise us also who believe on Him.⁵¹

And the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians was pointedly concerned with the resurrection of the flesh.⁵² To be sure, there are Greek elements in the apostolic fathers,⁵³ but their central emphasis on creation, Incarnation, and resurrection saved them from much of the confusion into which later thought was tempted.

The apologists admitted some few Greek elements into their thinking, though these are less pronounced even than those in the

51. Epistle to the Trallians, 9 (c.110 A.D.). Cf. the Epistle to Smyrnians, 3,6,12.

52. Cf. Chapters 24-26,49. The so-called "2^d Clement" was also concerned to defend the dignity of the flesh: "Let none of you say that this flesh is not judged and does not rise again. Observe. In what were you saved, and in what did you receive sight if not in this flesh? We must therefore guard the flesh as a temple of God; for as you were called in the flesh you will also come in the flesh. If Christ the Lord who saved us, being at first spirit, became flesh and so called us, thus also we shall receive the reward in this flesh." Chap. 9. Cf. 6 and 7.

53. Note Ignatius' curious outburst in Romans 3: "nothing visible is good"; and the Greek aversion for this life in "2^d Clement," 5.

apostolic fathers. The Epistle to Diognetus (6) betrayed a disparagement of matter and defined life as temporary residence in the tomb of the body, a sojourn amidst the perishable things of the world until the imperishable heaven be granted. But the apologists, on the whole, had no interest in the immortality of the soul, and indeed they consciously set the resurrection of the flesh over against it.⁵⁴ Justin and the anonymous author of the fragment On the Resurrection both emphatically maintained a materialistic view of the resurrection of this flesh-and-blood body, and Justin described in his Dialogue with Trypho (4,5) how the old man by the sea was able to convince him that his early, self-confident Platonism was mistaken in its view of the body as a drag on the soul.⁵⁵ Some time later (c. 177) Athenagoras, a converted Athenian philosopher, wrote On the Resurrection of the Dead, which seems to have been influenced by the earlier fragment On the Resurrection. He was not explicitly trying to establish the goodness of the body (as was the author of On the Resurrection), but in his defence of the resurrection of the flesh he cited for support the doctrine of creation, the

54. "Not immortal, O Greeks, is the soul in itself, but mortal." Tatian, Oration to the Greeks, 13:1.

55. The anonymous fragment, traditionally ascribed to Justin, entitled On the Resurrection, presented the most interesting observations on the body in this entire period. The author of this work was perhaps the first Christian to use the doctrine of the goodness of creation as a conscious weapon against Hellenism. In three different ways he affirmed the goodness of the body: because of the creation of God who made man's flesh in his own image; because of the fact that God became a fleshly man; and because of the promised resurrection of our flesh which is an inference from God's concern for the whole of man. Cf. Chapters 7-10.

fleshly nature of man, the need for a body at the last judgment, and the concern for physical needs showed by Jesus.⁵⁶

2. The Ante-Nicene Fathers

In connection with our treatment of Tertullian, the Alexandrians, and Irenaeus, it would be desirable to present a more detailed treatment of the gnostic and neo-platonic attitudes to the body than is actually possible, for in these two forms the Greek and the Christian worlds met during the second and third centuries. Suffice it to say

56. The conception of resurrection that Athenagoras emerged with is what modern man would call crude and materialistic. But we cannot so lightly dismiss the idea of the resurrection of the flesh as used in this period. It was not merely a survival of the primitive eschatological tradition, for the apologists made a great deal more use of the doctrine than did the early church. Resurrection alone, or merely resurrection of the dead would not have been such potent weapons against the Hellenistic doctrine of salvation as was the belief in a resurrection of the flesh. The doctrine as formulated in this way could show to the inquirer trained in Hellenistic contempt for the body that God was concerned with the physical life of man and that this life was part of his order of redemption. So this "crude" way of stating the doctrine was absolutely essential at this time. We must be careful even today that in our attempts to avoid materialism we do not move too far in the other direction. Anders Nygren has an interesting comment on this point.

If the Resurrection faith in itself is already a powerful weapon in their hands, it is a far more powerful weapon when it appears as the "Resurrection of the flesh." The "flesh," corporeal nature, is just that from which, in the Hellenistic view, man longs to be delivered. The body is the prison and tomb of the immortal, divine spirit. Yet, according to the Apologists, the body is to have a part in the Resurrection life, the source of this world's tragedy is to be immortalised; a thing which must have seemed the height of folly to the Platonist and Hellenist. The Apologists, however, see it in a different light. The tragedy of existence is not due to matter, to the corporeal, for this, as much as spirit, is the good creation of God. To them the Hellenistic tendency to spiritualisation and to contempt for the material and corporeal was an attack on God Himself as Creator of the material world. (Agape and Eros, Part II, Vol. I, pp.67-8).

The whole discussion here, pp. 60-72, is a masterly analysis of the contribution of the apostolic church to an authentic doctrine of the body.

that gnosticism pointedly rejected the three basic Christian convictions that the sub-apostolic period was so concerned to defend: creation, Incarnation, and resurrection of the flesh. For the gnostics and for Marcion (who in other ways differed from them), God was not the creator of the world of sense; the created world is impure and evil. And for the same reason the Incarnation was rejected, for a redeemer could never fully enter into the corrupt world of matter. Salvation was primarily deliverance from the body and from the fetters of the material, created world.

a. Tertullian. Tertullian's whole work (192-212) can be seen as an attempt to defend the three cardinal anti-gnostic doctrines against the attacks made on them by the heretics of his day. He set himself emphatically against the Hellenistic world, rejecting altogether the contribution of philosophy to faith.⁵⁷ In his tract Against Hermogenes he defended in detail the doctrine of creation out of nothing in order to refute his opponent's belief in the eternity and inherent evil of matter. In On the Soul, he supported the creationist view of the soul's origin, setting himself consciously against Plato, and as part of his protest he affirmed the corporeal nature of the soul. The heretics attempted to define the soul as a spark of divinity located in man, and so Tertullian replied (Chapters 6-11) that not only is the soul not divine, but it is bodily. The soul, therefore, is in no sense higher than the body. "Things bodily

57. "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians?...Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition!" On Prescription Against Heretics, 7.

are in every respect worthy of honor; and because the heretics speak of them with contempt, Tertullian feels it his special duty to praise and glorify them."⁵⁸ He had a strong sense of the body-soul unity of man, and in his thought creation, Incarnation, and resurrection all pertained to the whole of man's being.⁵⁹

That salvation was by a fully human man for the whole man was the basis of Tertullian's defense of the Incarnation and resurrection of the flesh. He considered these two doctrines so closely related that he called his treatise On the Flesh of Christ a necessary preliminary to his work On the Resurrection of the Flesh. In the former work he argued against the heretics who denied the reality of Christ's flesh so they could go on to deny his, and thus their own, resurrection. But, Tertullian insisted, Christ came to abolish not flesh but sin in the flesh; he did not condemn flesh, he sanctified it. The heretics could not affirm the true humanity of Christ because of their prior belief in the evil of matter, and so they said that Christ merely appeared to be in the flesh, that his body was fashioned out of soul or some special celestial stuff. But to all these qualifications Tertullian gave an absolute denial. No, he said, this man

58. A. Nygren, op. cit., p. 123.

59. On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 34. Cf. On Repentance 11:3: "because the body and the spirit are two things, [the sins committed by each part]...do not therefore differ: on the contrary, they are rather of the same nature, because these two things make up one; lest any should distinguish between their sins according to the difference of the two substances, so as to esteem one lighter or heavier than another. For both the flesh and the spirit are things of God...they equally pertain to the Lord." Elsewhere, he suggested in the wry way he delighted in that the body is associated with evil in our minds only because of the pernicious effect the soul exercises over it. (On the Soul, 40) This must have charmed his Greek readers!

hungered, thirsted, wept, trembled at the approach of death and finally poured out his blood for us.⁶⁰ If he came to redeem us, he would have—at the very least—to be as fully human as we are.⁶¹

Tertullian used whatever argument fell into his hands to defend the resurrection of the flesh against the heretics who inveighed against it.⁶² He cited examples of death and resurrection from nature, the story of the phoenix, the need for a body at the last judgment, the fact that many of our good acts in this life are done on behalf of the "flesh" of others, and all possible Old and New Testament passages that could be pressed to defend the resurrection. The most important divine estimate of the goodness of the flesh was, for him, the fleshly resurrection of Christ. The body of the resurrection was

nothing else than that fabric of the flesh which, whatever be the kind of material of which it is constructed and modified, is seen and handled, and sometimes indeed killed, by men.⁶³

60. On the Flesh of Christ, 9.

61. Tertullian believed that to say that assumption of flesh was unworthy of God denied the redemption that God granted us in Christ. "For One who was to be truly a man, even unto death, it was necessary that He should be clothed with that flesh to which death belongs." On the Flesh of Christ, 6.

62. The heretics can become quite poetic in describing the evils of the flesh, he pointed out in On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 4. They rail "against its origin, against its substance, against the casualties and the invariable end which await it; unclean from its first formation of the dregs of the ground, uncleaner afterwards from the mire of its own seminal transmission; worthless, weak, covered with guilt, laden with misery, full of trouble; and after all this record of its degradation, dropping into its original earth and the appellation of a corpse, and destined to dwindle away even from this loathsome name into none henceforth at all—into the very death of all designation."

63. On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 35.

Tertullian, like the apologists before him, found the resurrection of this flesh and blood organism to be the most powerful possible weapon of protest against the current views of immortality as release from the flesh. He insisted that the resurrection of the flesh, in these literal terms, was the least incredible of any of the alternative views.⁶⁴ On the Resurrection of the Flesh (55), however, contains a formulation of the doctrine which probably exonerates him from the charges of crudeness that modern Christian thought has found it so easy to level against him. Here he argued that our flesh can change its condition without becoming other than our own flesh. He was not unaware, therefore, that death involves a change in our present bodies; that there will be, in some sense, a new body, though it will not be such that our personal identity is lost. Today, of course, we should state our position differently from the way Tertullian stated his. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to appreciate the task he performed, particularly in view of the increasing tendency to compromise with pagan thought that came after him. He saw the real sense in which there is a radical discontinuity between the pagan and Christian doctrines of the body, and he did not attempt to effect an easy synthesis.

b. The Alexandrian school. We must first call to mind the intellectual atmosphere of the Alexandrian world in which Clement and his pupil Origen (185-6 to 251-4) worked. It was a world of religious syncretism, dominated by the philosophical position that has been called the Alexandrian world-scheme. Against this background, Clement

64. Apology 1:48.

can be said to have taken a decisive step in Christian theology: up to his time Greek philosophy or gnosis had been used chiefly as a means for combatting heresy. In his hands it became a positive means of setting forth what is true in Christianity.

We need not be surprised to find genuine primitive Christian elements in the thought of Clement. He was not, after all, a Greek philosopher, but a man of faith. He emphatically affirmed, for example, the Christian doctrine of creation over against the gnostic denials of it. And though we may find in him an ascetic interest in the control and regulation of the body, it is more Stoic than Platonic. He could say the body is not bad in itself but has a proper care and must be treated with respect. To be sure, he counselled the true gnostic to avoid seeking after the material things of life, not, however, because they are evil but because God will provide. He quite openly rejected celibacy on the grounds that the human body is not to be despised.⁶⁵

Clement's definition of his problems in Greek terms, however, did permit him to go a long way towards the Greek thought in the midst of which he worked.⁶⁶ In the Stromata (ch. 4) he professed a typically Greek view of man, dividing him into a rational soul that seeks

65. There are many references here: Stromata 4.4.14; 4.26.163-5; On the Teacher 2.2. Cf. also A. Nygren, op. cit., pp. 137-52; K. Kirk, The Vision of God, p. 131 (abridged version); A.C. McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I, p. 187; C.E. Raven, The Gospel and the Church, pp. 72 ff.

66. In general, it is true to say that Clement defined the Christian problem in terms of finiteness rather than sin, so that the meta-physical structure in which he worked forced him to depreciate the body itself (as a Greek) rather than to depreciate sin which is not in the body alone (as a Hebrew). Cf. R. Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 144.

after God and an irrational body that tends towards the earth, away from God. Worship he defined as a glad separation of the soul from the body and its passions, for the soul must be freed from all bodily taint before it can attain to the knowledge of God.

Clement maintained a theoretical belief both in the true humanity of Christ and in the resurrection of the flesh. But in the former case, he qualified the traditional belief by asserting that the "humanity" was not of the ordinary kind, for Jesus did not know passion, pain, or hunger, and ate only to prove to his disciples that he was really human. In the same way he combined a theoretical conviction in the resurrection of the flesh with a reinterpretation of the belief in a highly spiritualized form. He was ultimately as unable to affirm the true humanity of Jesus as he was to believe that the body of man could be the object of God's redemptive act.⁶⁷

We find in Origen an almost perfect synthesis of the Christian and Hellenistic traditions. No criticisms of him that fail to do justice to his status as a biblical theologian will suffice; at the same time, the streams of Platonism and Christianity flowed side by side in his thinking, differing in his mind only in that the former was for the select few, the latter for all.⁶⁸ Consequently, we will find both Greek and biblical elements in his view of the body. At the beginning of his great systematic treatise On First Principles, he

67. On the Teacher, 2.10.

68. According to Hartack, the fundamental religious themes of Platonism and Christianity were, for Origen, identical, and the only real fault he ever found with Plato was his polytheism. Cf. History of Dogma, Vol. II, p. 340.

quoted with approval the "apostolic doctrine" he intended to expound:

First, that God is one, who created and set in order all things, and who, when nothing existed, caused the universe to be...Then again: Christ Jesus, he who came to earth, was begotten of the Father before every created thing... was made man, was made flesh, although he was God; and, being made man, he still remained what he was, namely, God. He took to himself a body like our body, differing in this alone, that it was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit. And this Jesus Christ was born and suffered in truth and not merely in appearance, and truly died our common death. Moreover he truly rose from the dead, and after the resurrection companied with his disciples and was then taken up into heaven.

As it stands, this confession of faith is an adequate description of the cardinal doctrines of creation, Incarnation, and resurrection. Yet Origen found himself saying quite different things when he was pitted against the very able Platonist, Celsus. At one point, for example,⁶⁹ Celsus made the interesting accusation that Christians make so much of the body that they seem to regard it as the most precious part of man. Origen met this, however, by assuring Celsus that he was mistaken, that Christians set far greater store by the rational soul of man than they do the body.⁷⁰

The doctrine of creation is the particular point in Origen's system most vulnerable to the charge of ambiguity. Against gnosticism and Marcion he had asserted that the creation of both the spirit-world and the world of matter was God's work. Yet, strictly speaking, only the former creation was God's free and direct act of will. The creation of the material world was a necessity because certain

69. Against Celsus 8.49.

70. Cf. "Let any, however, who are disposed to hear us observe, that if we have need of a body for other purposes, as for occupying a material locality to which this body must be adapted...we have no need for a body in order to know God." Ibid., 7.33.

of the lower members of the spirit-world fell after their creation as spirits, became souls on earth, and had—because of their disobedience—to be given bodies and matter. These fallen spirits composed humanity, and because their creation on earth followed their sin, the second creation was in the strictest sense evil. This world, then, is an arena of discipline in which the soul seeks to rise higher and higher in the scale of being, hoping ultimately for a less substantial body, so that at the end all bodies will be discarded or completely etherealized. When human life is seen as judgment and punishment, it is not surprising to find the body called a defilement to the soul.⁷¹

Yet Origen was unwilling, even with this curious interpretation of creation, to give a consistently Greek analysis of sin. In On First Principles (3.4.1-5) he proposed two alternative interpretations of the source of evil in man: one, that the soul has a higher and a lower part that war against each other; the other, that our bodies by nature dead and lifeless, are in opposition to the higher spiritual life of the soul. He left the decision between the two open to the judgment of the Christian, while making no secret of his preference for the latter view.⁷²

It is unnecessary to elaborate the somewhat equivocal position of Origen on the Incarnation and resurrection. He rejected the docetism of the gnostic heretics, while at the same time insisting that the

71. In On First Principles, 1.8.1, Origen stated that God "made the present world and bound the soul to the body as a punishment...That is why the body is called a frame, because the soul is enclosed within it."

72. Cf. On First Principles, 3.4.4, where Origen quoted with approval the prevailing Alexandrian belief that the body is a source of evil because of the random movement within it of the seminal fluid.

Logos could not assume a human body directly, the gap between the divine and material world being too great. What happened was that the Logos joined with an intermediate created spirit which had proved itself especially worthy, and then this spirit together with the Logos was able to enter into the human body of Jesus. Similarly, while Origen accepted the church tradition concerning the resurrection of the flesh, he believed no less firmly in the Hellenistic doctrine of the immortality of the soul. He did affirm, half against his will, that the body will be raised, since God is the only spirit who can exist without a body.⁷³ But the body that is to be raised will be a spiritual one without any material attributes and without those bodily parts that have sensual functions. The real reason for his uneasiness about the resurrection of the body was his fundamental belief that in the end we shall be like God, that God is incorporeal, and that therefore our future state must be incorporeal. For "wherever bodies are," he said, "corruption follows immediately."⁷⁴

c. Irenaeus. We move from the thoroughgoing Hebraism of Tertullian, from the Hebraic-Hellenistic synthesis of the Alexandrians,

73. On First Principles, 1.6.4. Cf. 2.10.2,3.

74. On First Principles, 1.7.5. Cf. 2.3.3 and 3.6.1. Cf. A. Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. II, p. 377; A.C. McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I, p. 228; and especially the attempt of A.M. Ramsey to reinstate Origen's eschatology into contemporary usage in The Resurrection of Christ, p. 112. It is not wholly fair, of course, to label as Greek every doctrine of the resurrection that modifies a flesh-and-blood literalism. It is not clear, for example, whether Origen qualified his doctrine along the lines suggested by the Pauline phrase "spiritual body" because of Greek presuppositions about the corruptibility of the body, or because he concluded that earthly life under heavenly conditions will not require bodies adapted to earthly use. Edwyn Bevan, in The Hope of a World to Come, pp. 55-6, took the latter position, and defended Origen at this point.

to Irenaeus, whose doctrine of the body might be described as moderately Hellenized Hebraism. Like Tertullian and Origen, Irenaeus (177-202,3) set before himself, as a broad base from which heresy was to be refuted, a rule of faith or credal formula. Its major tenets were, as we might suspect, the three cardinal anti-gnostic doctrines that we have already seen used; that God is creator of heaven and earth, that the Son of God became incarnate for our salvation, and that Christ was raised in the flesh that we might also be raised in the flesh in the last days.⁷⁵ One of the great emphases in Irenaeus' anti-gnostic polemic was his conviction of the value of the flesh or the body.⁷⁶ His major argument against heresy was, at the same time, his great contribution to the doctrine of the body: the world was created by God, not emanated from him; Christ actually came (and did not just seem to come) in the likeness of sinful flesh to redeem man's own flesh; we shall attain immortality and incorruption by resurrection.⁷⁷

Irenaeus' great single idea was that the one God and the creator of the world are identical. He opposed not only the Marcionite belief in two gods, but also Origen's belief that the creation of the

75. Against the Heretics, 1.10.1. Cf. the statement in 5.20.1: "those who are of the Church have a regular path...since all teach one and the same God and Father, believe the same Economy of the Son of God's Incarnation...and maintain the same salvation of the whole man, i.e., of the soul and body."

76. He makes liberal and circumspect use of the Scriptural evidence for the importance of the body, citing, for example, the bodily translations of Elijah and Enoch, and the Pauline doctrines of the body as temple and resurrection of the body.

77. Against the Heretics, 3.20.2 and 3.19.1.

world was the result of pre-existent sin. With the possible exception of his doctrine of sin as finiteness, he was able to affirm unequivocally the creatorship of God over heaven and earth. This was one reason for his conviction of the goodness of the body. A second was his equally emphatic assertion that the Son of God truly became flesh and not merely in appearance. He would not, as Clement and Origen had done, qualify this in any way, for he knew that if Christ had only appeared to be in the flesh, our salvation would be only apparent.

But where Irenaeus was most insistent in his arguments against the gnostic devaluation of the flesh was in his treatment of the doctrine of the resurrection. He argued primarily from the fact of God's power—that a failure to include our bodies in the resurrection would indicate a lack of power in God.⁷⁸ The entire fifth chapter of his great work Against the Heretics he devoted to a defence of the resurrection of the flesh.⁷⁹ He no doubt held, in opposition to the spiritualizing tendencies of the gnostics, to a belief that the identical particles of the earthly body would be miraculously restored by God.⁸⁰

78. Ibid., 5.4.1.

79. "Wholly vain," he declared, "are those who despise the entire dispensation of God and deny the salvation of the flesh and spurn its resurrection, saying that it is not capable of incorruptibility. But if the flesh is not to be saved the Lord did not redeem us with his blood, neither is the cup of the Eucharist a communion in his blood, nor the bread which we break a communion in his body." Ibid., 5.2.2. Irenaeus had developed this idea of the Eucharist as a testimony to the goodness of the flesh earlier in this work, 4.18.5. The implications of this idea for a doctrine of the body will be worked out in Chapter 4, section II, below.

80. Fragment 12, London edition.

He would not tolerate the gnostics' use of 1 Cor. 15:50 ("flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God") to establish the immortality of the soul against the resurrection. This Pauline passage means, he declared, not that there is no bodily resurrection, but that man cannot earn resurrection himself because it is God's sovereign act.⁸¹

It would not be quite fair, however, in an exposition of Irenaeus' total view, to refrain from mentioning that alongside of this emphatic affirmation of the resurrection of the flesh he held--perhaps as part of the religious atmosphere of his day that he could not avoid--to a belief in the natural immortality of the soul. The body, he declared, is in a peculiar sense the bearer of mortality, and spirit or soul cannot really perish.⁸² This may explain in part why he could echo the Hellenistic belief, quite at variance with his central conviction about the goodness of creation, that finiteness is itself evil.⁸³

3. From Nicaea up to Augustine

The important contributions to the Christian doctrine of the body in the third century centred upon the great Trinitarian and Christological controversies. It was the virtue of Athanasius (293-373) to have seen that the Arian position challenged the whole integrity of the Christian world over against the classical. When Arius, the presbyter of Alexandria, came forward to refute the Sabellian contention that the Son was a mere power or function of the Father, he

81. Against the Heretics, 5.9.13.

82. Against the Heretics, 5.7.1 and 2.34.1. Cf. A. Nygren, op. cit., pp. 190-2.

83. Ibid., 4.38.4. Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 173.

solved his problem in neo-platonic terms. He treated the Son as "of another substance" from the Father, very like one of Plotinus' intermediate beings.

Accordingly, the question raised by Arianism was whether the substance of paganism was to survive under Christian forms....[Arius tried to show] how God, the eternal and immutable, could enter into combination with nature, the world of "flux," without suffering degradation in respect of His essential attributes.⁸⁴

What the Nicene solution did was to define not a compound of the divine logos with flesh, but a genuine "assumption" of the flesh.

Stripped of the somewhat formidable phraseology of contemporary thinking, this amounts to a denial that there existed any such hiatus as the pagans had supposed between being and becoming, God and nature. On the contrary, the two were immediately related, and the relationship between them had actually been demonstrated (however illogical this might appear) in the life of the Saviour.⁸⁵

Athanasius was able to see that in the mere iota difference between homoiousios and homocousios (of like substance and of the same substance)

lay all the difference between the claim of the Evangel to finality and a Platonic theory of "participation" which, by leaving open the question of "how much" the Son resembled the Father, was exposed to the possibility of numberless other "revelations," past, present, and to come.⁸⁶

Throughout the pages of Athanasius' great work On the Incarnation of the Word of God, the interplay of the three main themes of creation, Incarnation, and resurrection, can be traced. We would

84. C. N. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, p. 234.

85. Ibid., p. 236.

86. Ibid., p. 258.

expect from his stand at Nicaea that he would be concerned, above all else, to affirm the Christian attitude to the body over against the classical. The fact that God created us embodied spirits (para. 4) was the reason that he came down to us in a human body, and the supreme object of his coming was to bring us true resurrection of the body (para. 22). Between the doctrines of creation and resurrection stands, so to speak, the great fact of the Incarnation itself to which Athanasius bore such effective witness. God saw our race and was moved to compassion for it, Athanasius said. He went on, in a summary statement of his central position:

He took to Himself a body, a human body even as our own. Nor did He will merely to become embodied or merely to appear; had that been so, He could have revealed His divine majesty in some other and better way. No, He took our body, and not only so, but He took it directly from a spotless, stainless virgin, without the agency of human father—a pure body, untainted by intercourse with man. He, the Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for His very own, as the instrument through which He was known and through which He dwelt. Thus, taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered His body to death instead of all, and offered it to the Father.⁸⁷

This interesting passage, both because it affirms a true Incarnation and because, at the same time, it betrays a Greek aversion for the life of the body, demands fuller attention than is possible to give

87. On the Incarnation of the Word of God, para. 8.

it here.⁸⁸ We must turn for a moment to the implications of the Christological struggles for a doctrine of the body.

After Nicaea, where the problem of the divinity of Christ might be said to have reached a solution, the problem of Christ's humanity remained. Athanasius took for granted that the union between the human and divine in Christ was full and complete, but he did not pause to consider the problems this fact posed. Perhaps Apollinarius was the first to attempt a solution. He accepted the full Nicene doctrine of the divinity of Christ, acknowledging that the fusion of the two natures should be complete. But, he added, there cannot be a union of two persons in Christ, but only a fellowship or association. Man, Apollinarius said, is body, soul and spirit. Spirit is the active principle, while the flesh (which is, for him, body plus soul) is passive. The spirit contains the human personality, while body and

88. The strong emphasis here on the virgin birth and the corruptibility of the body reminds us of another side to the work of Athanasius, differing somewhat from his defence of orthodoxy at Nicaea. (As an example of his double-sidedness, note the defence of the natural immortality of the soul in Against the Gentiles, and his repudiation of it in the work quoted above.) Athanasius is the great theorist of the monastic movement, and were this thesis solely an historical one, that movement would have to be treated in some detail. It arose partly in reaction to the political involvement of the church in the third and fourth centuries, and partly as a desire to preserve some of the moral rigour of the Christian ethic that was lost when the expectation of the immediate parousia waned. At its best, there was perhaps little Hellenistic influence in monasticism; the prayer "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" made it impossible to regard the earthly life of the body with a consistent classical abhorrence. As Edwyn Bevan pointed out (in Hellenism and Christianity, p. 88), when the church moved towards asceticism its grounds were quite different from Greek grounds, and discipline rather than disparagement of the body was, at best, the dominant note. The Christian could always avoid Greek extremes in this matter because he believed that something beyond mere ascetic discipline had overcome the world and defeated the powers of evil in it. Yet there are grounds for accusing monasticism, as it worked out in practice, of being a more or less acutely Hellenized form of the primitive Christian faith.

soul merely contain what is common to all human nature. For this psychology, a full human person is produced by the union of the human spirit with the body and soul. In the Incarnation, therefore, the logos or divine Spirit was united with the body-soul of the man Jesus to form the divine-human person, Jesus Christ. The human was thereby transformed by the divine so that the whole "person" could be said to be divine as well as human. In spite of the ambitiousness of this solution of Apollinarius, it came to be felt that the man Jesus had somehow been lost. It was against this view, and others that seemed to qualify the reality of Christ's humanity, that the formula of Chalcedon was directed.

The formulations of these councils play an important, but perhaps only secondary, role in casting light on the development of the Christian attitude to the body. Now, as a conclusion to our introductory chapter, it will be instructive to turn to Augustine who may be said to sum up all the currents of thought in these early centuries that pertain to an understanding of the body.⁸⁹

4. Augustine: An Inconclusive Solution

It is almost impossible to do justice to Augustine's thought. A student can find in him whatever he is looking for, whether he be Protestant or Catholic, Jew or Greek, materialist or idealist. And his doctrine of the body is certainly as ambivalent as anything else in his theology. It is possible, if we accept the Confessions as historically accurate, to interpret his career in a purely chronolog-

89. For a detailed study of the relation of the problem of Christ's full humanity to a doctrine of the body, see Chapter 3, section II, below.

ical sense; to trace his passage in and out of the skeptical, Manichaeian, neo-platonic, astrological periods, and so forth. But recently, there has grown up a certain amount of critical distrust of the autobiographical portions of the Confessions; perhaps, it is suggested, Augustine retrospectively exaggerated his break with neo-platonism and the decisiveness of his conversion experience. If we follow the guidance of such scholars as Anders Nygren, Karl Holl, and Edwyn Bevan⁹⁰ we will not read Augustine's Platonism merely as "early influence," but rather interpret him as a man who achieved, and never transcended, a complete synthesis between the classical and Christian worlds.⁹¹

If we can look at Augustine, then, as supremely the "synthetic" thinker, we shall have an adequate starting-point to sort out what must seem at first to be the bewildering confusion of his ideas about the body.⁹² It will be possible here, as before, to single out his treatment of creation, Incarnation, and resurrection for special mention.

90. Cf. their works, respectively: Agape and Eros, Part II, Vol. II, pp. 243-5; Gesammelte Aufsätze, Vol. III, pp. 54 ff.; Hellenism and Christianity, pp. 133-4.

91. At one point, of great interest in contemporary theology, Augustine may be said to have achieved a genuine break with classicism. This is in his philosophy of history where he overcame the Greek theory of time as a cyclic and recurrent process. And it may be also true that his consistent Trinitarianism represented a clean break with classical cosmology. But at most of the other points in his thought the relationship between Greece and Palestine is far more complex.

92. Cf. J.H.S. Burleigh, The City of God, pp. 82-3, for some interesting remarks on the presence of Hellenism and Christianity in Augustine's theology.

Augustine's doctrine of creation was not half Christian and half neo-platonic. It was to a large extent fully and completely both. Perhaps in reaction from his Manichaeian past, he strongly affirmed the creation out of nothing, but he gave this a curious interpretation. Between God who is Absolute Being and this "nothing," he said, there are degrees of good; created life does not possess its own good in itself, but must seek it out.⁹³ "All things that exist" he wrote in Enchiridion (12), "seeing that the Creator of them all is supremely good, are themselves good." However, he had just before pointed out (11) that evil is the absence of true good and that therefore the good of created things can be more or less. In his exegesis of the Genesis accounts of creation⁹⁴ he did not deny that God created all things out of nothing. But he did try to establish the fact that, while God called the light he had made good, he gave to the darkness which he also made no such approval. Thus, he concluded, we can conceive of a part of God's creation which he truly made, yet which exists, as it were, apart from his approval.

Perhaps the clearest approach to Augustine's doctrine of creation is by way of an examination of his attitude to the stuff of creation: matter, bodies and souls. On the one hand, he could affirm that nature, matter, and all created things are genuinely good in God's sight.⁹⁵ He agrees, he said, with Paul in finding no fault

93. A. Nygren, op. cit., Part II, Vol. II, pp. 261, 270.

94. City of God, XI.20.

95. Concerning the Nature of Good, 2,17,18,30.

"with the substance of the flesh...since the nature of the body as well as of the soul, must be attributed to the good God as the author thereof."⁹⁶ He could praise the Creator for having made the human body with such symmetry, beauty, and agility,⁹⁷ and he could admit that the soul is no better than the flesh.⁹⁸ Against the philosophers he saw that he was "forced laboriously to demonstrate that it is not the body, but the corruptibility of the body, which is a burden to the soul."⁹⁹ But here we can begin to detect a weakening of the full Christian affirmation of the goodness of the whole man. In this passage, it is clear that for Augustine the body was more susceptible to corruption than the soul.

Elsewhere Augustine made quite consistently Hellenistic statements about the soul and the body. Only the soul or mind was made in the image of God, and not the body.¹⁰⁰ And in fact "the soul is not the whole man, but the better part of man; the body not the whole, but the inferior part of man."¹⁰¹ He seemed to have an ineradicable

96. On Nature and Grace, 65.

97. City of God, XXII.24.

98. In a witty aside, directed to Platonic philosophy, he remarked: "He who extols the nature of the soul as the chief good, and condemns the nature of the flesh as if it were evil, assuredly is fleshly both in his love of the soul and hatred of the flesh." City of God, XIV.5.

99. City of God, XIII.16.

100. City of God, XII.23 and Commentary on the Gospel of John, XIII.10.

101. City of God, XIII,24. Cf. On the Morals of the Catholic Church, 4, for the ethical consequences of this position.

tendency to interpret man's creation out of the dust to mean that the body must naturally tend to the earth and earthly concerns. Thus we find him using the phrase "corruptible body" over and over again in contexts that not only diverge from the biblical view of the body but also from his own more profound conception of creation.¹⁰²

We can pass by Augustine's view of the Incarnation rather briefly, partly because he had comparatively (and perhaps surprisingly) little to say about Christ, and partly because he took his stand within the orthodox Chalcedonian tradition which we have already touched upon. We can find him saying, with Paul, that Christ was in the likeness of sinful flesh and not in sinful flesh itself.¹⁰³ But on the whole he was able quite legitimately to scoff at the Platonists for taking offence at Christian affirmations about the Incarnation and resurrection: "Oh, that thou couldst have discerned His assuming of body and soul to be the greatest example of grace that ever was!"¹⁰⁴

102. Cf. City of God, XIV.3; XIX.17,18,27; and the other places in this work where he quotes Wisdom 9:15. Cf. also on this point F. Loofs, Dogmengeschichte, p. 410 and John Oman, The Church and the Divine Order, p. 177. Because of his strong sense of the corruptible body, Augustine could often put fleshly desire at the root of sin: "radix omnium malorum cupiditas" (Comm. on Psalm 90, I.8). And it is doubtful whether he really ever accepted lawful sexual relations as consonant with the highest Christian virtue. This may have been because of his sympathy with monastic piety or because of a reaction from his youth rather than a conscious Hellenistic influence. Cf. City of God, XIV.18 and especially his doubts about legitimate sexuality in On Original Sin, 43.

103. Cf. On Nature and Grace, 71.

104. City of God, X.29.

Charles Norris Cochrane pointed out the use Augustine made of the Trinitarian principle to overcome the metaphysical structure of the Graeco-Roman world. This principle implies, he declared,

that the life of sense must be brought into intelligible relationship with the life of reason. It thus points to an effective technique of redemption for the flesh as an alternative to the conclusion of Platonism, omne corpus fugiendum est... [and provides] a point of view from which evil could no longer be ascribed to the "substance or nature of the flesh."¹⁰⁵

Just as Augustine believed both that the created world was good and that some parts of it were less than wholly good, so also it is clear that he held firmly both to the natural immortality of the soul and to the resurrection of the body or flesh. And at times he even tried to minimize the difference between Platonism and Christianity on this matter. In his treatise On the Immortality of the Soul he repeated many Platonic arguments for immortality¹⁰⁶ and at one point he even tried, by the most tortured kind of exegesis, to place the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in Plato's mouth.¹⁰⁷ He

105. Christianity and Classical Culture, pp. 413, 417. Cf. City of God, X.24. Cochrane claimed that Augustine's view of the body made it possible for him to mediate between the epiphenomenalism of Tertullian and the idealism of Plato, when he declared that the body is "neither absolute reality nor absolute appearance; it is the organ by which mankind establishes contact with the objective world," p.437. Whether Augustine was really able to achieve this mediation is doubtful. It is interesting to note that contemporary existentialism is claiming, on the same grounds, to have overcome the antithesis between materialism and idealism, reality and appearance.

106. Cf. para. 2: "our reason, moreover, is better than our body." Augustine's doctrine of natural immortality is interesting. It is equivalent, in his mind, to the doctrine of original righteousness, and it is found necessary in order to render the guilt of original sin as undeniable as possible. He may be said to have fixed the church's thinking on the doctrine of natural immortality, though it was not until 1513 that the pope (Leo X) officially condemned its denial.

107. City of God, XXII.26.

seemed to believe that there was no basic difference here between Christianity and Platonism that could not be repaired by a slight alteration in terminology.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, some of the most impressive passages on the resurrection of the body known to Christian theology have come from Augustine's pen.

Man will then be not earthly but heavenly---not because the body will not be that very body which was made of earth, but because by its heavenly endowment it will be a fit inhabitant of heaven, and this not by losing its nature but by changing its quality.¹⁰⁹

In his treatise On Grace and Free Will he devoted a paragraph (19) to prove that eternal life cannot be a reward for service or virtue, but must be solely a divine gift from God. Beyond this, however, Augustine paid little attention to the details of the resurrection-life and structure of the future body. He did point out, however,

108. City of God, XXII.27. There was certainly in Augustine none of Tertullian's acute awareness of the irreconcilability of resurrection and immortality of the soul. Cf. the famous passage in the Confessions VII.9 where the difference between Platonism and Christianity is minimized. Also City of God XI.10 and the great concluding chapter to that work (Book XXII) where the Christian consummation is portrayed in predominantly mystical terms: drawing near to God in the beatific vision. Here he argued that---since it is by faith that we draw near to God and since faith is an act of spirit not body---the function played by the body in the final consummation is a minor one.

109. City of God, XIII.23. This idea of the permanence of nature but change of quality in the resurrection body closely resembles the suggestion of Tertullian that we have already referred to on p. 42 above. It is difficult to tell in Augustine's case, as it was with Origen, whether the modifications of crude literalism in regard to the resurrection are due to neo-platonism or to the profounder conviction that since heaven is not earth it will not require the same kind of body that earth makes necessary. Cf. the interesting analysis of Augustine's view of the resurrection of the body by J.H.S. Burleigh in The City of God, pp. 121-5. The author here, it seems to me, undervalues the Hellenistic influences that played into Augustine's final position.

that because the resurrection of Christ is called the first-fruits of our own, the stature and size of his body will be the measure of ours.¹¹⁰ After summarizing some traditional objections to the idea of the resurrection of the flesh, he set down what may be considered his central view.

The bodies of the saints then, shall rise again free from every defect, from every blemish, as from all corruption, weight, impediment....Whence their bodies have been called spiritual, though undoubtedly they shall be bodies and not spirits.¹¹¹

As we leave Augustine and move into the main part of this thesis, we do so feeling that the problem of the body in Christian thought has been made a relevant one precisely because in the ancient world, even with Augustine, it did not achieve a stable or normative solution. If Augustine had worked out a clearer position, the task of formulating a doctrine of the body today might have been made easier; it would also have been made less urgent. Augustine is a convenient point at which to close the historical introduction because in him are gathered most of the strands that have, from his day to ours, determined the Christian attitude to the body. We will now move into a more detailed examination of the modern period with at least some of the necessary biblical and historical background in hand.¹¹²

110. City of God, XXII.5,12.

111. Enchiridion 91, and a similar passage in City of God, XXII.20,24.

112. It should be pointed out here that the understanding of the body in medieval theology was more consistent, if less dialectical, than that of Augustine. Perhaps this is explained by the influence of Aristotle and Stoicism as against the Platonic influence of the earlier period. One can call to mind Bonaventura's genuine sacramental feeling for the goodness of creation, and it may be possible to agree with Kenneth Kirk that Aquinas is "perhaps the first Christian philosopher to take the corporeal nature of human existence

calmly." (The Vision of God, p. 157, abridged version; Etienne Gilson confirms this in his The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, pp. 171-82; cf. also the remarks on Aristotle in the appendix to this chapter.) It is true that Aquinas gave concupiscence a large role in his doctrine of sin, and he often called the venial sins the lower sensual desires. Cf. his Treatise on Grace, question 109, art. 2 and Reinhold Niebuhr's comments in Human Nature, p. 232. Nevertheless, it may be said that when the doctrine of the body came to be formulated in medieval theology, the best and not the worst of the patristic period was relied upon. Though of course the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul was also held, and there no doubt was a popular contempt for the body in large sections of medieval life. (Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization, pp. 35-6, presents an interesting analysis of the relation between contempt for the body and the rise of the machine in the Middle Ages.)

In general, the Reformation effected no real changes in the cardinal doctrines of creation, Incarnation and resurrection. The Renaissance, on the other hand, in such representative spokesmen as Ficino, revived the Hellenistic view of the man as a sojourner on earth, unfortunately imprisoned in the body. Immortality of the soul was interpreted in the Renaissance as "god-likeness." (Cf. on this subject, A. Nygren, op. cit., Part II, Vol. II, pp. 453,5; R. Niebuhr, Human Destiny, pp. 153-4; L.S. Thornton, The Incarnate Lord, pp. 16ff.) Calvin, more than Luther, was inclined to make disparaging remarks about the body, whether because of the powerful influence of Augustine on him or because of the atmosphere of Renaissance humanism in which he was educated. He spoke of the body as a prison, a burden, corruptible (Institutes, II.7.12, II.9.3, III.6.5, III.9.4, IV.1.1, IV.25.11), and of the flesh as naturally opposed to God (III.3.8). And he often came close to identifying sin with carnal desire (I.5.5, II.1.8-9). At the same time, Calvin could give the body all praise, speaking of it as a temple (III.20.29), worthy of admiration (I.5.2, III.20.44); declaring that sin is not only in the body (II.1.7) and that the image of God refers to the body as well as the soul (I.15.3).

In one way, however, the Reformation took a clear step forward on the problem of the body. In the second century, what A. Harnack called the "naturalization" of Christianity began to settle in: the hope for the parousia had waned, and the world had to be taken in. Both as an implementation and as a result of this process, the primitive eschatological and moral rigour of the church inevitably diminished. Inevitably a double ethic and a sharp priest-lay, sacred-secular distinction arose. This worked out into a distinction within the life of man himself between a religious-spiritual sphere and a bodily-temporal one. The church claimed dominion only over the former, and as medieval political theory developed, became willing to grant to the state a complete authority over the latter. This came to mean that there grew to be a whole area in the life of man—the area that can be described literally and metaphorically as "body"—for which the medieval church professed no religious concern. The rise of monasticism was partly a reaction to this double standard. (Cf.

Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, p. 74.)
Not until Luther was this situation decisively broken through. On the ethical level, Luther refused to make the Greek distinction between carnal and spiritual, insisting that man's whole nature was "carnal," even his religious life. But his great victory, as far as concerns the doctrine of the body, was his conception of Christian vocation with its overthrow of the sacred-secular distinction. The classical-feudal system of hierarchies in society and in life was broken, and not since has the church been able to justify carelessness about the physical life of man. Protestantism, when at its best, ever since has insisted on the possible sanctification of the whole of life, lay and sacred. Nothing is ultimately "lay" for it, because nothing is especially sacred. Whenever the church has forgotten its radical concern for the whole of personal and social existence, heretical prophets like Freud (to remind them of their myopia in the personal sphere) and Marx (to remind them of their myopia in the social sphere) are raised up, and sometimes, as we can see today, at great cost.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER ONE

The Greek Understanding of the Body

It is not extreme to say that Greek presuppositions about the nature of the body have dominated much Christian thought on this subject, and have influenced much of what they have not dominated. From the traces of Hellenistic religion that can be detected in the Bible down to the influence on contemporary British theologians of their classical studies in the university, the Greek way of thinking on the subject we have placed under consideration has been so pervasive, that some notice of it must be taken.

1. Greek Religion up to Plato

Religious speculation among the Greeks was not always dualistic. Homeric religion can be described as an unreflective monism: man, for Homer, was predominantly a body who carried about with him a ghost-like soul which escaped after death to a feeble and shady life in Erebus. It is not misleading to say, therefore, that Homer had no conception of a life after death.¹ But in spite of the absence of this conception, we do not find in Homer the pessimism we might expect as a result. On the contrary, the pessimism we ordinarily associate with Greek thought does not arise until the doctrine of the immortality of the soul becomes established. Homer's monism and disbelief in a future life implied for him a tremendous sense of joy

1. At least, it wasn't a consoling or a compelling one. When Odysseus tried to comfort the dead Achilles by reminding him of his earthly glories, Achilles replied: "Don't speak to me of death. I would sooner be a hireling servant of the poorest man alive than the ruler over all the kingdoms of the dead." Odyssey, lines 484 ff. Cf. John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, p. 82.

in this life; the earthly, substantial life in the body. To be sure, this life was dependant on the whims of unpredictable gods, and it was shadowed by moira and ate.² But full-fledged pessimism—the suggestion that life is not good in itself and that it is better to have done with it as soon as is convenient—this does not emerge until the belief in the immortality of the soul arises, with its rigid dualism between soul and body. Homer did not believe in the divine origin of the soul, therefore he could not entertain the kind of dualism which, through the influence of the mystery-religions, was to characterize the later Greek mind.

How and why this strange phenomenon we call the mystery-religion² arose is difficult to determine precisely. First, in the 6th century B.C., the cults of Demeter-worship, the so-called Eleusinian rites, appeared. Next we discover Dionysian worship; and around 550 B.C. the Orphic cults, the most influential of all, are reported in existence. In these cults, Western man for the first time becomes—through the experience of religious ecstasy—convinced of the soul's independence of the body. The soul is now the real element in man, not the body as Homeric religion had taught. Orphism's central myth will clarify its teaching. Zeus had intended to bestow upon his son Zagreus (or Dionysius) dominion over the whole

2. S.D.F. Salmond summarized this buoyant this-worldliness of early Greek religion. In spite of their sense of fate and nemesis, "it is to earth...that the Greek [of this time] looks for his true home. The throbbing, tangible existence that now is, with its familiar activities, its domestic charities, its substantial joys, the glory of arms, the affairs of soldiery, the engagements of hospitality, makes life in all its strength and fulness; and this bright world of sense is the theatre of man's real being. "The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 120.

world. But while the boy was still young, the evil Titans kidnapped, killed, and devoured him. In retaliation, Zeus destroyed the Titans with a thunderbolt and out of their ashes formed the human race. This explains the Orphic belief in the dual nature of man: he is mainly evil for he is made from the ashes of evil men, but in the ashes of the Titans were the remains of the divine child whom they had devoured. Thus man has in himself some part of the divine nature. The evil in man is the earthly, the physical, the sensual; and the function of the whole cultic organization was to free the divine fragment or soul from the evil body.

Orphic theology must be seen as a serious attempt, by means of a consistent view of salvation, to account for the evil in the world in a way that the earlier orthodoxy had failed to do. Life is evil, Orphism admitted, and the gods are indifferent; but man can turn to the divine in himself and by hating all that is material and bodily he can free his divine soul. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the Orphic myth and its teaching for later Greek and Christian theology.

For better or for worse it stamps once and for all man's nature as dual, spiritual and physical, good and evil...Here is the beginning of the idea that this life is evil compared with the life to come; that death may be a blessed release, and that asceticism is the best preparation for such a release.³

Here is the first Western appearance of the idea that a blessed immortality may, indeed must, be disembodied. This conviction was to

3. W.C. Greene, Moirai: Fate, Good, and Evil in Greek Thought, p. 59.

grow through Plato's influence, and was handed on to early Christianity: the conviction that

in the partnership between soul and body all the good comes from the soul, which is divine and immortal, and all the evil comes from the body and the senses, which are mortal; or, as the Orphics phrased it, the body ($\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$) is the tomb ($\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$) of the soul which is its temporary tenant...⁴.

2. Plato: The Convergence of the Religious and Philosophical Traditions

It is Plato's refinement of the Orphic view of the body that has exercised the most significant influence on later thought. Indeed, he may be said to have summed up the entire speculative tradition that had gone before him. As a religious thinker he took and developed the Orphic theology; as a cosmologist he corrected the manifest errors of the earlier Ionic rationalists. His fundamental dualism was determinative for a considerable body of thought that came after him.

We may briefly touch upon the philosophical basis for Plato's dualism. Up to his time the problems occupying the minds of the philosophers had been those of the one and the many, of change and movement. Early Greek thought attempted to discover an abiding principle within the world of multiplicity and flux. The Ionian

⁴. Ibid., p. 60. Cf. John Baillie, op. cit., p. 132. Dr. Edwyn Bevan, while not justifying this dualism, pointed to the real need that it met. "The basis," he wrote, "of the conviction was no doubt a real experience; there did actually sometimes come over men with compelling power a feeling of the essential inadequacy of the sense-life, dissatisfaction with all that the senses could supply to the understanding, still more poignant dissatisfaction with all that the senses could supply in passionate pleasure to the emotions. And such a feeling was met by the assertion that there dwelt in this body a Being of immortal nature that yearned for the radiant sphere whence it had come. No wonder it found the body narrow and fetid and dark!" Stoics and Sceptics, p. 100.

school had gone off on the abortive attempt to find this principle in matter itself. Plato, on the other hand, located the fixed principle in thought or reason.⁵ Only nous can give meaning to experience; and the classical rendering of this principle is, of course, found in the Platonic doctrine of ideas. There are two orders of being: the world of thought and the world of sense. The latter, in which the body is included, cannot be said to exist; it is rather becoming and passing away—mere appearance, deriving whatever reality it can claim from the world of self-subsistent forms beyond itself. Thus the body, matter, the sensible world, are not only unreal but are positive hindrances to our perception of the real world of ideas; thus they are actually evil.⁶

This philosophical foundation for Platonic dualism must be kept in mind as we pass on to Plato's religious treatment of the problem of the body, as seen most clearly in his analysis of the relation between body and soul.⁷

Though it is common to consider Plato the supreme apologist for the immortality of the soul, it must not be forgotten that in the Apology and in his first draft of the ideal state (Statesman) this

5. For a critical remark on this approach, note the quotation at the close of this appendix.

6. The "prison" in the myth of the cave in Republic VII is the material world; and in Statesman (273B) and Timaeus (41-2) the un-created matter (hyle) or necessity (ananke) is explicitly evil. In Theaetetus (176A) finiteness itself, earth and mortality, are all equated with evil.

7. Charles Norris Cochrane insisted that behind all of Plato's religious dualism lies his fundamental cosmological position. There is a brilliant analysis of the relation between the Platonic cosmology and theory of human nature on pp. 78-80 of his Christianity and Classical Culture.

doctrine is not mentioned. It may have been the sudden impact of Orphic teaching⁸ or it may have been the effect on Plato of Socrates' death that led him to meditate on the soul's immortality. At any rate, the rather playful skepticism about the after life at the close of the Apology did not stand for long, and a clear doctrine of the soul soon took shape in Plato's thought.

The soul is that which enables man to overcome the limits of the world of sense, to soar into the world of ideas. It is non-material, uncreated, pre-existent, divine: between the two realms and related to both.⁹ But it has forgotten the pre-existent divine life that it left, and the body exercises such a perverse influence that the soul has lost all its capacity for discerning truth and goodness. The soul is in the body, but the two are never fused. But since the soul has been so corrupted by the body, Plato could often say, without really compromising his dualistic principle, that the soul as well as the body may be the cause of evil.¹⁰

8. Perhaps through Socrates; see Republic 608.

9. It is related by origin to the world of ideas, but it has been drawn, or rather has fallen, into the world of necessity and change as that world's principle of movement and life, without which the lower world would be quite literally inanimate. Thus the soul and the body are related in the world of sense, though they differ in character and origin.

10. W.C. Greene, in his excellent study on the problem of evil in Greek thought that has already been cited, is confused at this point. He claims to discover two distinct answers to the problem of evil in Plato: the one that assigns all evil to the body or to matter or necessity (Phaedo, Symposium, Phaedrus); the other which points to the soul as itself the cause of evil. He cites in support of this latter point the Phaedrus myth of the unequal steeds and Laws 906A, neither of which support the idea that the soul is the cause of evil. When Plato does speak as if the soul were the cause of evil, he is really heightening, not modifying, his dualism. The body's evil effect on the soul is so great—the dualism is so irrevocable—that at times, he says, it is possible to say that this corrupted

Plato's general position in regard to the body has been admirably summarized by Prof. W. Capelle:

Irrationality, fierce passions, grave disorders of the soul, may in fact proceed from the body...In sober truth, the body is the source of all that harms the soul. For although evil may be the soul's own act, she would have no promptings to evil-doing were she not imprisoned in the body. Every misfortune, every guilty deed in human life, emanates in the last resort from the latter.¹¹

In general, it is undeniable that Plato defined man's dilemma as corporeality and man's chief end as the purgation by the soul of sense-impulses, appetite, and affections. Only by such discipline in this world can the soul both avoid the punishment of reincarnation in another body and achieve the reintegration with the divine life in the realm of ideas that was its home in the beginning.

It remains in this appendix to examine in some detail the dialogues themselves, to see if the above analysis can be corroborated. The locus classicus for the Platonic, and indeed for the whole classical world's view of the body, is found in the Phaedo. Plato has been saying that true knowledge requires the putting away of all bodily hindrances; even sense-experience, pleasure, and love.

For the body is the source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere requirement of good; and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search after true being: it fills us full of

soul causes evil. Plato's dualistic depreciation of the body may be slightly qualified, as we shall point out below, note 13, but not in the way Prof. Greene suggests. The conception of evil as a war within the soul itself, profounder than Plato's view to be sure, does not really come into Greek philosophical thought in a clear way at all. We must turn to the tragedians for it.

11. W. Capelle, article on "Body (Greek)" in the Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, pp. 768 ff.

loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery, and in fact, as men say, takes away from us the power of thinking at all. Whence come wars, and fightings, and factions? whence but from the body and the lusts of the body? (66)

Because death is the only true separation of soul from body, Plato could define philosophy as meditation on death; philosophy sees in part what death perfectly achieves. "In the present life," Plato declared, "we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body, and are not surfeited with the bodily nature, but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. And thus having got rid of the foolishness of the body, we shall be pure and hold converse with the pure, and know of ourselves the clear light everywhere, which is no other than the light of truth."¹²

Let us record some of the other expressions used by Plato in reference to the body of man. The body's pleasure is slavish (Phaedrus 258E), the body is the grave or tomb of the soul (Phaedrus 250C, Gorgias 493A, Cratylus 400 in which Orphic theology is identified as the source of the popular pun, $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha-\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$), because of the body we are nearly dead (Gorgias 493A, where Socrates quotes Euripides with approval: "Who knows if life be not death and death

12. Phaedo, 67. That there is a kind of lonely nobility to this utterance would be hard to deny. But in this passage particularly the pure individualism that results from Plato's dualistic analysis of man's plight is in evidence. Whenever Christianity has been interested only in the problem of man's individual relationship to God, passages such as this from the Platonic literature have made an appeal, and many commentators have tried to find biblical wisdom in them. Cf. James Adam, The Vitality of Platonism, p. 127, where the author identified this Platonic view of the body-soul relationship with the Pauline distinction between spirit and flesh.

life?"), the body is a prison (Phaedrus 250C, Cratylus 400, Phaedo 79-83C), the dissolution of the body and the soul is more desirable than their connection (Laws 8.828E).¹³

As we saw in the case of Paul, a thinker's attitude to death often throws light on his attitude to the body. Plato not only did not teach the fear of death, but death, as we have seen, was the aim and goal of all his speculative thought. It is preferable to life because it is the perfect example of the body-soul dissolution that is philosophy's aim. Homer is banned from the ideal state, we may

13. It would not be wholly fair to Plato if we did not point out that for practical purposes he often went a long way towards mitigating the dualism he was compelled on purely religious and philosophical grounds to maintain. He is the supreme case of a man wiser than his system. The following examples may not be in the central and normative stream of his thought, but they cannot be overlooked, and such examples should keep us from being too glib in our characterizations of this great thinker. (1) In Laws 7.788 he emphasized the need for a sound body in education. (2) There is a clear anti-ascetic note in Timaeus 88, a warning that the body should not be ignored, and the advice to mathematicians to practise gymnastics so their bodies will not be enemies of their souls! (3) The lower part of the soul is called the seat of desire, and is compared to a wild animal in Timaeus 70. In Laws 10.896, Plato could say that "the soul is the cause of good and evil, base and honourable, just and unjust, and of all other opposites, if we suppose her to be the cause of all things." He also spoke of the evil of the soul in Laws 9.870 and Philebus 35. It is difficult to determine whether he spoke of the evil soul because of its connection with the even more evil body, or whether he actually did approach a doctrine of evil as a war within the soul here. Cf. note 10 above. (4) In Laws 5.728 he mentioned the proper honour due to the body. (5) There is in Republic 3.407a a most interesting passage prohibiting concern for the body beyond what the rules of gymnastics require. Cf. Republic 9.591. (6) Socrates' discourse on love in the Symposium (208ff.) contains a praise of the beauty of the body. Cf. the excellent analysis of Plato's attitude to the body in W.H.V. Reade, The Christian Challenge to Philosophy, pp. 83-4.

It is interesting to speculate at this point how the Greek culture which so honoured the body in its gymnastics and sculpture could so disparage it in its religion. Apparently Orphism did not put a stop to Greek sculpture with its affection for and interest in the body as such. Could it be that then, as now, the artists felt that the guidance of the theologians and philosophers was not worthy of attention? Cf. John Darragh, The Resurrection of the Flesh, p. 55.

remember, partly because of his fear of death.¹⁴

Principal Salmond made a just appraisal of Plato's strength and weakness on the matters we have been discussing. Granted that Plato was deeply devoted to defence of the soul's immortality, granted all his beauty and subtlety, his concern was only for a part of man. Plato, and Greek thought as a whole

depreciates and degrades the body....It is the duty of the sage to dishonour the body. Death is welcomed as the release of the soul from the oppression of the body. Purity is attainable only by the separation of the soul from the body. To behold the full light of truth, man must be rid of the body. The heaven of man's highest aspiration is a bodiless condition.¹⁵

3. Greek Thought after Plato

Though Aristotle seemed to overcome the dualism of his master through his discovery of the organic relationship between soul and body on the analogy of form and matter, it has recently been claimed that Aristotle's freedom from dualism is not really so clear.

Prof. Werner Jaeger has pointed out that Aristotle's early formu-

14. Republic 3.386,7. From a Christian point of view, there is an interesting remark in Gorgias 524 where Plato argues that the body must be separated from the soul so there can be a just and a fair judgment after death "without the natural and acquired affections" of the bodily nature by which we conceal in this life our true natures. Thus it can be seen that Plato insisted on a separation of body and soul at death for the same reason that Jewish thought was insisting on their inter-connection. In both cases, according to their respective presuppositions, they believed they were making the final judgment intelligible. At death, for Plato, it was the soul that became the substantial part of man and the body followed the soul around as its shade or faint image. Cf. Laws 12.959; also Chapter 5, section III, below.

15. The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 120-1. For the effect of this doctrine of the body on the Greek conception of personality, see Emil Brunner, Christianity and Civilization, Vol. I, pp. 95-6.

lation of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in Phaedrus is very similar to that in the Phaedo; and that in De Anima Aristotle has moved only very slightly away from the dualistic position. Aristotle believed, Prof. Jaeger claims, that "life without the body is the soul's normal state (κατὰ φύσιν); its sojourn in the body is a severe illness."¹⁶

Up to the middle of the first century B. C. Stoicism did not share the dualism of Plato. Denying the existence of a transcendent rational order, it postulated that order in the world of sense. Its basic conflict was not between body and soul but between pathos and apatheia: a cleavage within the soul or reason itself. But by the time of Middle Stoicism Platonic influence was proving irresistible, and we find Posidonius declaring in familiar terms that the body is a fetter to the soul. Cicero, Seneca, and even Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus all shared to some degree this distaste for the body. The latter, for example, entertained a passionate hatred for his own body, and once described man as a "soul carrying a corpse."¹⁷

16. Werner Jaeger, Aristotle, p. 51. Catholic theology, on the other hand, has always attempted to exonerate Aristotle from the dualistic position in order to bring the Aristotelianism of Aquinas more in line with the Hebraic tradition. See the excellent example of this in Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, pp. 171-82. And in his book, The Form of the Church, A.G. Hebert similarly attempts to distinguish Aristotle from Plato here: "Aristotle on the other hand thought of man as composed of body and soul, the soul or life being the form of the body, and directing the man towards the aim of securing his health and happiness. This does far better justice than the other [i.e. Platonic] view to the fact that the body is an integral part of life..." p. 54.

17. Fragment 23. For other references to this period, see Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol. II, pp. 770-2.

On the problem under discussion, Greek tragedy betrayed an insight into life not shared by the professional philosophers of the period. While one can find little explicit speculation about the body in the plays, it must be noted that the melancholy of the tragedian differs from that of the philosopher. Aeschylus and Sophocles see human vitality as more than bodily impulse; vitality is both creative and destructive; it is spirit or soul as well as body. The real difference can be described by saying that the basic conflict in the tragedies is one between gods—Zeus and Dionysius—and not between a god and a devil or between soul or spirit and a stubborn matter. Dualism can be overcome only when evil is admitted into the higher levels of soul and spirit. This the tragedians consistently did; but there are only scattered instances of this insight in Plato.

The characteristic Greek attitude to the body is preserved in two later forms of thought which owe their historical importance to the fact that they were the earliest forms in which Greek thought confronted the Christian world. These two forms, as we have already noted, are gnosticism (or "Hellenistic theology") and neo-platonism. Just as the early mystery-religions filled in a gap left by the breakdown of the official city-state religion, so gnosticism made its appeal to the Hellenistic mind when the Macedonian and Roman power threatened its security and drove men away from their naive anthropomorphism. As a result of a great number of separate influences, "Greek philosophical dogmas, Orphic and Pythagorean beliefs, ideas from Egypt, ideas from Babylonia, ideas from Persia, ideas from Judaea, with a

plentiful dose of crude old magic,"¹⁸ there emerged that general corpus of belief we now call Hellenistic theology. Those of this tradition described evil as the transitoriness of material things; and their desire amidst this flux for something abiding and without change was undoubtedly a mark of Platonic influence upon them. But specifically, the evil of the world seems connected with sensual passion.¹⁹ Philo is a good example of this gnostic approach; for him, matter was essentially evil and existence on earth he considered a living death. "When we are alive," he said,

we are so though our soul is dead and buried in our body, as if in a tomb. But if it were to die, then our soul would live according to its proper life, being released from the evil and dead body to which it is bound.²⁰

Plotinus, as his biographer Porphyry tells us, was ashamed of being in the body. Matter for him was the lowest and least real emanation from the Godhead; being the farthest removed from God, therefore, it was the most closely related to evil. But we have recently been cautioned not to say that Plotinus thought matter inherently evil. Prof. W.C. Greene has written: "As virtue is the result of an activity of the soul which rises above the body, so moral evil [for Plotinus] is the result of laziness or arrogance on the part of the soul which is involved in body."²¹ Man, for Plot-

18. Edwyn Bevan, Hellenism and Christianity, p. 75.

19. Ibid., p. 93.

20. Quoted by E.C. Dewick, Primitive Christian Eschatology, p. 107. Cf. R.H. Charles' remarks on Philo, op. cit., p. 260, and Edwyn Bevan, op. cit., pp. 96-9.

21. W.C. Greene, op. cit., p. 377. Yet cf. Creuzer's Oxford edition of Plotinus, Vol. I, p. 12, and W.H.V. Reade, op. cit., p. 84.

inus, is a union of the sensual and supersensual or divine parts; this latter part has become hopelessly corrupt by its union with the body. Plotinus believed that from

the union of the soul and body springs all the irrationality and depravity of the soul. Our great task, therefore, is the "extinction of everything that binds us to sensuous existence," the complete withdrawal of the soul from the outer world to its own inner life.²²

Here, as well as in his doctrine of the immortality of the soul,²³ Plotinus carried the individualistic tendencies of Greek thought to their logical conclusion. It is not strange that when Christianity overcame the classical fear of the body, it overcame, at the same time, classicism's individualism and self-centredness with its gospel for the whole man and for all men.²⁴

In conclusion, attention must be called to a brilliant analysis of the fundamental Platonic position on the question of the body, a devastating criticism of how and where, from the Christian perspective, classicism took a fatal wrong turning.

Assuming that the deficiencies of opinion were those of sense-perception, he [Plato] identified reality with the pattern or "idea," illusion and error with the deliverance of sense. From this it was concluded that "ideas" were "independent," possessing an existence in their own right and without relation to their applicability to sensible data. Their validity was thus to be tested

22. W. Capelle, article on "Asceticism (Greek)" in Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II, pp. 80 ff.

23. In the Enneads 3.6.6, resurrection is from, not in, the body.

24. There is an interesting analysis of the neo-platonic attitude to the body in E. Lampert, The Divine Realm, pp. 80-3. The whole section on the body, pp. 80-91, is an excellent statement of the Christian doctrine of the body from a Russian orthodox point of view.

only in terms of an ideal principle which might be accepted as absolute. Accordingly, with respect to the problems of contemporary philosophy, Plato inferred that what was needed was a principle of unification and verification, an idea of ideas, the Form of the Good, the One. To the vain effort of discovering such a principle he devoted much of his working life, sublimely unconscious of the fact that, in so doing, he was making himself the prisoner in his own cave....

The real difficulty was that, as materialism had failed to do justice to the problem of mind, so idealism failed to do justice to the problem of matter, which it sought to define as the "all-but-nothing." This was to immobilize reality, reducing it purely to terms of structure, so that time was represented as a "moving image of eternity" and process, as such, was identified with "irrationality" and "evil." The counterpart to this in human nature was the picture of the multiple soul, a composite (σύνθετον) of discrete elements confronting one another in a struggle to be concluded only by the final release of mind from its prison-house in matter and by its return to the source of its being, the "life" of pure form. The fallacies involved in such a theory of human nature were endless, but they were epitomized in the fact that it represented individuality, the existence of man in the flesh, not as a vehicle for the expression of personality but as an obstacle to its realization, an obstacle to be surmounted only by an utter repudiation of the life of sense. To embrace this ideal was, however, suicidal; it was not merely to misunderstand the significance of sense-experience but to rob the soul of its dynamic.²⁵

25. Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, pp. 425-6.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BODY AND THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES OF GOD AND MAN

In the face of a genuine past and present confusion about what to make of the body, the Christian doctrine concerning it must be recovered. In order to present this doctrine, a study has been made of a particular historical segment of theology to discover in it the uses to which the idea of the body has been put. The four remaining chapters in this thesis are therefore studies, within four different systematic areas, of the meaning and value of the body in British theology since the beginning of the century.

By way of introduction to this total enterprise, and because of a great divergence in the available definitions of the body, the initial section of this chapter will be an attempt to set forth some general definitions of "body" which have been offered within the period under scrutiny.

I

What Is the Body?

A full answer to this question should consider both fact and value. In the past, it is true, theology has most often been concerned only with the body's value. The facts have seemed plain enough: we are born in the body, and the body dies at death. And so theology has been content to ask if this thing is good or bad, a help or a hindrance, a temple or a tomb. Can it be saved? But modern philosophy and psychology have not accepted so uncritically the fact of the body's existence. Here are two revealing passages:

The realization of all values, whether objective or subjective, depends upon the fact that the human spirit does not make its approach to the physical world directly, but through the medium of a specialized structure, the body, which in its most obvious properties, belongs to nature rather than to spirit. It is as an embodied soul that man confronts the universe, and all the characteristic modes of his perceptual experience, with all the values that develop out of such experience, are due to this fact. Man's moral experience too is in no small measure dependent for its modes upon the same organic connexion. The consequences that accrue to man from the possession of an animal body are incalculable; and it is of vital importance that we should make no mistake about the mutual relation of the two constituents of his composite nature.¹

Sport represents an exceptional valuation of the human body, as does also modern dancing. The cinema, on the other hand, like the detective story, makes it possible to experience without danger all the excitement, passion and desirousness which must be repressed in a humanitarian ordering of life. It is not difficult to see how these symptoms are connected with the psychic situation. The attractive power of the psyche brings about a new self-estimation—a re-estimation of the basic facts of human nature. We can hardly be surprised if this leads to the rediscovery of the body after its long depreciation in the name of the spirit. We are even tempted to speak of the body's revenge upon the spirit...The body lays claim to equal recognition; like the psyche, it also exerts a fascination. If we are still caught by the old idea of an antithesis between mind and matter, the present state of affairs means an unbearable contradiction; it may even divide us against ourselves. But if we can reconcile ourselves with the mysterious truth that spirit is the living body seen from within, and the body the outer manifestation of the living spirit—the two being really one—then we can understand why it is that the attempt to transcend the present level of consciousness must give its due to the body. We shall also see that belief in the body cannot tolerate an outlook that denies the body in the name of the spirit.²

But partly in response to pressure from the secular world, theology

1. A.A. Bowman, A Sacramental Universe, p. 351. Cf. note 6, p. 220.

2. C.G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, p. 253-4.

has occasionally asked about the meaning of the body, and we shall first record some examples of this concern.

One of the first things the body does is to remind us that we are animals. Literary cynics, past and present, have always enjoyed degrading man by pointing to his weak body and animal functions. Jonathan Swift had an almost pathological interest in bodily weakness, and Aldous Huxley, before his conversion to Hindu piety, painted man with ruthless skill as a puppet composed of living organs and conditioned reflexes.³ Now modern Christians may need from time to time to be reminded that they are animals. Without our bones or muscles we could neither stand nor move; the sub-human mechanisms of our behaviour are real parts of us; hunger and sex do initiate a vast amount of our activity. No understanding of man should be too delicate to forget this. The body, then, is that with which we must begin; in any venture, personal, intellectual, spiritual. It is the unavoidable prius of all the forms of our be-

3. In Point Counter-Point for example. Yet notice how, in Eyeless in Gaza, the book that marks Huxley's first uneasiness with pure cynicism, he can define the body as the most personal and inviolable thing about man. "For what," he asks, "is the most personal thing about a human being? Not his mind—his body. A Hearst, a Rothermere, can mould my feelings, coerce my thinking. But no amount of propaganda can make my digestion or metabolism become identical to theirs. Cognito, ergo Rothermere est. But caco, ergo sum. And here, I suspect, lies the reason for that insistence, during recent years, on the rights of the body. From the Boy Scouts to the fashionable sodomites, and from Elizabeth Arden to D. H. Lawrence....Always and everywhere the body. Now the body possesses one enormous merit; it is indubitably there." Pp. 148-9.

haviour.⁴

This fundamental "givenness," this necessity and soundness of the body and its life has by no means been a uniform note in the segment of Christian thought that we have placed under scrutiny, but it surely is the wisest note.⁵ Let us take up some further examples of this open attitude to the body.

W. Macneile Dixon has reminded us in a sprightly passage that the plain life of eating, drinking, and talking is the life with which we all have to come to terms. We have a body and we are bound to accept it. Any system of thought, he has written,

which sets forth by flouting facts, which leaves this flesh and blood, this earthly lot of ours—whether you disapprove or approve of it—unaccounted for, or condemns it out of hand, leads to a swamp of contradictions, and can have no future.... Things must be taken as they are and explained as they are, or not at all.... [This world] has a structure, to which, as to the structure of our bodies, we must willy-nilly submit.... we cannot have it all our own way either with the world or with ourselves.⁶

4. Cf. on this point W. Macneile Dixon, The Human Situation, p.79; also R.L. Calhoun, God and the Common Life, p.98: "An idealism too fastidious to bear the rough touch of fact may need to deny or forget that these things are so; but a more robust idealism can recognize them neither with shame nor with gloating but with candor, and seek to learn how in fact they grow to be included in the widening and deepening reaches of life. To affirm that we are animals is not to deny that we are men; and our business here is to learn how to be better men, not blithe spirits. Doubtless our animality often proves a sluggish, treacherous mass, and not an aid to spiritual health. But even so, a realist's prayer will be not 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' but 'How shall this body, groaning and travailing until now, be quickened toward new life?'"

5. John Galsworthy spoke for more than the literary world when he wrote, in 1911, a propos of the publication of Sons and Lovers: "The body's never worth while, and the sooner Lawrence recognizes that the better." From a letter to Edward Garnett, quoted by J. Isaacs, An Assessment of Twentieth Century Literature, pp. 25-6.

6. Op. cit., pp. 219-20.

But not only may the body be considered the prior object in the order of knowing, it has also been defined as that by which we know, make ourselves known, and receive knowledge of others.

Prof. H.H. Farmer, in establishing the unity of the body and mind, effectively puts this point.

If our fellow-beings in this world are inseparable organic unities of body and self, then it is to be expected that we should become aware of them as such— as self active in and through its unity with a body, as body acting in and through its unity with a self, with neither being prior to the other, but both being given together. When a man who is angry with me glares at me with clenched fist, his personal attitude, as a conscious being, to myself is not inferred from the physical manifestations, but is apprehended as being dynamically contained in, and continuous with, them; he presents himself as a single personal totality containing, as it were, the two mutually involved and quite inseparable dimensions of mind and body.⁷

This view of the body as something by which we are known and through which we know others is interestingly echoed by George MacDonald in a passage from his book, The God of the Living.

It is by the body that we come into contact with Nature, with our fellow-men, with all their revelations to us. It is through the body that we receive all the lessons of passion, of suffering, of love, of beauty, of science. It is through the body that we are both trained outwards from ourselves, and driven inwards into our deepest selves to find God: There is glory and might in this vital evanescence, this slow glacier-like flow of clothing and revealing matter, this ever uptossed rainbow of tangible humanity. It is no less of God's making than the spirit that is clothed therein.⁸

One of the most original variations on this theme is found in

7. The World and God, p. 17.

8. Cf. R.G. Collingwood, Speculum Mentis, pp. 36-7.

an essay by Edwyn Bevan called "Dirt," included in his book, Hellenism and Christianity. He wrote: "Deep at the bottom of all our sense of uncleanness, of dirt, is the feeling, primitive, irresolvable, universal, of the sanctity of the body." Nothing but the body can be dirty, nothing but the body can be defiled by physical sins.⁹ We speak, he continued, of a dirty road, but it wouldn't be dirty in an uninhabited world. "It is the possibility of clay adhering to the foot that makes it mire." To acknowledge this fact, he said, is to enter into the area of a sane mysticism; not one that revels in the extravagant and odd, but one that finds mystery in the normal and common. Dr. Bevan summed up his point in a striking way. Even those who profess to care about nothing but what is clear and demonstrable

will experience a peculiar mental discomfort, it may be, if, glancing down at their own hand, they see that the nails are black—not because they fear any contagion, not even because they see a combination of colours which is ugly in itself, but because they feel somehow desecrated in body by the alien particles adhering to the holy thing.¹⁰

Closely akin to the experience described by Dr. Bevan, and offering the same testimony about the meaning of the body, is the presence of death, particularly the sight of a dead body. Of course,

9. Here, incidentally, is the reason why we feel that the sins of the flesh are at least more degrading if not more serious than sins of the spirit. It is because of this feeling, referred to by Dr. Bevan, that the body is holy. So a feeling of revulsion against physical sins is not, as is commonly supposed, a feeling of revulsion against the body; rather it is an instinctive affirmation of that holiness which has been denied in the sin. Cf. below, pp. 118-9.

10. Edwyn Bevan, the essay entitled "Dirt" in Hellenism and Christianity, pp. 154-5.

death is partly the proof of our relation to nature and therefore, from one point of view, a perfectly natural thing. But the fact remains that we simply do not accept this as the whole story.

There is something "wrong" about death; even when the deceased is very old, death is a thoroughly unnatural business. Isn't this instinctive feeling at least in part a kind of unconscious valuation of the body? Some observers have believed so. Throughout the entire history of religion, it is possible to show that there is something significant in the attitude of man towards his dead.¹¹

But there are other interpretations of the meaning of the body than this first one which has viewed it as the object and mediator of knowledge. A second approach is interested in the body as self, as the natural basis of individuality. There is a running debate between psychologists at this point as to whether the body belongs to self or to environment. F. R. Tennant reflected one side of this debate when he defined the body as the most immediate object of perception and thus a proper part of the "self."¹² Only because we perceive our bodies, he said, are we able to perceive anything else. "It is the bodily self that first gives us the right to pass from our

11. In Greek culture, which so despised the body on religious grounds, we yet have the sight of Socrates' dying body striking his friends with a peculiar sort of awe, and the tragic concern of Antigone for her dead and unburied brother. The implications of the meaning of death for the doctrine of the body will be worked out fully in Chapter 5. The problem of death has been attracting attention in recent theology; cf. especially John S. Whale, "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting," Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1948, published in Religion in Life, Summer, 1949, Vol. xviii, no. 3, pp. 434-44.

12. Cf. Philosophical Theology, Vol. I, pp. 48-9.

fleeting and sporadic sense to belief in permanent things and in other bodily selves."¹³ It was Prof. Tennant's conclusion that only

the body makes it possible for the "it" of our self-perception to become "me" or "mine." In other words, if the body were not self our attitude to it would be that of the unwary kitten who chases and bites its own tail.¹⁴ Leonard Hodgson, however, has identified

himself with the other side of this debate. Body for him is part of the environment. It cannot constitute the self because it is primarily material.¹⁵ Apart from the fact that this may be an unworthy

objection to an identification of body and self, it is important to point out that the very distinction between body-as-self and body-as-environment is an unreal one. Is it possible to determine precisely where self stops and environment begins? Isn't there truth on both sides of the debate? Prof. Farmer suggests that there may be, when he writes that "man's body is part of himself and his inner life is dynamically present within its actions. It is not correct to say that the man uses his body to express himself;" this would separate the body and self too greatly, identifying it too simply with environment. Rather, he goes on, "the body's acts are the man

13. Ibid., p.49. This insight that the body is the means by which we relate ourselves to other selves is important both for the doctrine of the body of Christ and for the resurrection of the body. Cf. the working-out of these doctrines in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

14. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 70-1.

15. This problem of the body as self or environment can be studied carefully in the following references; F.R. Tennant, Philosophical Theology, Vol. I, pp.48-9, 70-1; and Leonard Hodgson: Essays in Christian Philosophy, p.12; The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy, pp. 136-7; the essay "The Incarnation" in Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson, pp.369-74.

in action."¹⁶ Or, in other words, the body is the point at which self and environment intersect, the place where nature meets history.¹⁷ Perhaps poetry is able to render this subtle relation-

16. H.H. Farmer, The World and God, p.75. The idea of the body as man in action succeeds in relating self and environment in an acceptable way. It is interesting to point out that in a later chapter on eschatology in this book, Prof. Farmer does not make use of this idea of the body to work out a doctrine of its resurrection.

17. This idea of the body as meeting-point of nature and history is associated with the names of Paul Tillich and his colleague, Reinhold Niebuhr. For Prof. Niebuhr, "body" sometimes means the dynamic element in human individuality, sometimes nature, sometimes selfhood, sometimes historical, particular events. Four parallel statements, all similar in meaning, all ultimately referring to the body, can be cited to clarify Niebuhr's complex position. 1) The body is not the source of sin in man; 2) the world is not evil because it is temporal; 3) individuality or particularized existence is not evil because it is distinguished from undifferentiated totality; 4) death is not an evil, though it may be the occasion for evil. (Human Nature, p.167; cf. Human Destiny, p.258.)

Paul Tillich has given the clearest description of what the body as nature plus history means. Man in the body is nature because he contains complex biological, chemical, and physical structures; he is dependent on his physical surroundings; his stimulus-response organization presupposes a contact between himself and the space-time world; he shares, with nature, an ambivalent quality, a goodness and evil that is true of every natural fact. But he is also a maker of history, with an historical existence that has meaning; he is social as well as solitary. In a superb passage, Prof. Tillich sums up this fact of body as (in our terms) both self and environment:

The sense of the meaning and power of the human body has never been lost, despite the influences of mechanistic biology and medicine. In the human body all the potencies of nature are concentrated, but in such a way that they transcend their lower forms and rise to a level of freedom. In the human body nature enters history. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven is accompanied by the healing of the human body. The Christ is, as Jesus replies to the Baptist, to be recognized by his power of healing. The disciples receive the gift of healing because it belongs to the new being. In the body of the Christ nature is united with history. In the "center of history" nature reaches its fulfilment in the body which is the perfect organ and experience of the Spirit. This, of course, is the basis of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament.

This is from The Protestant Era, p.106.

ship between the body and the self more effectively than cold theological prose. Thus T.S. Eliot can say:

When you've dressed for a party
 And are going downstairs, with everything about you
 Arranged to support you in the role you have chosen,
 Then sometimes, when you come to the bottom step
 There is one step more than your feet expected
 And you come down with a jolt. Just for a moment
 You have the experience of being an object
 At the mercy of a malevolent staircase.
 Or, take a surgical operation.
 In consultation with the doctor and the surgeon,
 In going to bed in the nursing home,
 In talking to the matron, you are still the subject;
 The centre of reality. But, stretched on the table,
 You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
 For those who surround you, the masked actors;
 All there is of you is your body
 And the "you" is withdrawn.¹⁸

Another approach to the meaning of the body reveals itself where Christian thinkers have been concerned with problems of education. Many theologians have pointed to the need in education of a discipline or culture of the body. Paul Tillich has commented upon the unsuccessful attempts to correct the imbalance between mind and body in higher education, and Prof. John Macmurray approaches the problem

18. The Cocktail Party. Gabriel Marcel remarks, in Being and Having, pp.10-5, on the felt community between himself and his body that makes it impossible for him either to separate or to identify them. In Adventures in Ideas, pp. 242-4, Prof. Whitehead made a similar point. Cf. the interesting passage from J.V. Langmead Casserley, The Christian in Philosophy, p.97: "The late Dr. Temple pointed out, in his Gifford Lectures, that Descartes was gravely mistaken in supposing that the consciousness of the self precedes in time the consciousness of the not-self. On the contrary, as we are all aware, these two modes of consciousness go hand in hand together. Indeed the self remains unknown even to itself except by contrast with the not-self. The self is always known in our experience as finite, limited, dependent, constricted by frontiers, not alone in the world. A contemporary German philosopher, who may at least be described as within the existentialist tradition, Martin Heidegger, insists that what is initially given to us in self-consciousness is not a detached, pure self but being-in-the-world. I believe that this is true of all levels of self-consciousness. We never find the self entirely alone."

by means of a criticism of conventional attitudes to emotional discipline.

The very idea of a training in the freedom of feeling and the expression of feeling has hardly begun to find a place in our minds. Consequently the relation between the mind and body is broken and we have to have a separate discipline of the body to supplement the discipline of the mind.¹⁹

Both of these observers agree that the modern educational disregard for the body and its distinctive life (a disregard reflected in no other cultural form except the church) has had serious effects, and that the answer to the problem requires a thorough religious revaluation of what the body is and stands for.

So much for this preliminary and cursory introduction in which we have distinguished several approaches to the general problem of the body. We can already see that the subject of the body covers nearly the whole range of Christian thought, and spills over as well into ethics, politics, education and art. Now for the remainder of this chapter on the body and the doctrines of God and man, we must speak to three definite problems: (1) the problem of spirit and matter and the doctrine of creation; (2) the problem of sin, particularly the definition of sin as impulse and as finitude; (3) the problem of bodily evil or disease. We shall conclude with a brief examination of the important contribution made to this whole subject by Baron Friedrich von Hügel.

19. John Macmurray, Reason and Emotion, pp. 32-3. Cf. Paul Tillich, The Religious Situation, pp. 108-9.

II

Matter, Spirit, and the Doctrine of Creation

The problem that first confronts us is a simple one to state: What are we going to do in Christian theology with the distinction between spirit and matter? Is it a critical one for Christian thought? It is partly related to the distinctions between idealism and materialism, supernatural and natural, eternity and time. But how important, we must ask, and just how Christian is this particular distinction between spirit and matter? W. Macneille Dixon has a pertinent word to say at this point.

So, too, if you speak of the body as an irrelevance, a tiresome burden, you are precipitated into a swamp of confusion. An odour of sanctity attaches in our vocabulary to the word "spirit." When, however, we speak of "things of the spirit," of men as "spiritually minded," or the reverse, it were well to ask ourselves what exactly do we mean. The word "spirit" is in our language and thought set over against matter, and heavenly things opposed to terrestrial things. Yet this dichotomy is full of perils. On what grounds are terrestrial things so maligned? And how do we know them, or distinguish them from the superior things? If I have, let us say, a liking for poetry and painting, am I spiritually minded? Am I then on a higher moral plane than if my taste lies elsewhere, in travel, or mountaineering, or military history, or medicine, or machinery, or law? Is mathematics a more spiritual exercise than flute-playing, or does social study give me a better chance of heaven than athletics? Am I less spiritually minded if I prefer an out-of-doors life, and am interested in plants and animals, than if I have a fancy for church music or high ritual?²⁰

20. The Human Situation, p.221. The advantage of this kind of statement is that it takes the problem out of the arena of pure philosophy and brings it into the arena of popular language and usage. And this is proper, for theology is at least as concerned with the way ordinary people talk about spirit and matter as with the possibility or nature of philosophical accuracy on the question. R.G. Collingwood managed to escape from the problem by admitting the reality of what is popularly called matter while at the same time denying its philosophical existence; Religion and Philosophy, p.89. Cf. L.S. Thornton's The Incarnate Lord, pp.43-4.

This is the kind of reminder that needs to be made from time to time to keep theology away from a false spirituality. But an easy distinction between matter and spirit can be more than misleading; it can be dangerous. Is it not true to say that a disastrous Christian misuse of this distinction has virtually stopped the ears of the dispossessed in our society, as far as their gladly hearing the Christian message is concerned? For instance, what is theology to say today now that it finds itself challenged by a passionate materialistic faith? The one thing it must not do is to set "our spiritual faith" over against "their materialism." Will we not rather challenge the spiritual pretensions of their faith, and at the same time recover the "materialism" in our own? Dr. Edwyn Bevan put the problem in a brilliant and relevant way:

Temporal goods may be less important than eternal goods, but unless the Church shows the world that God loves it by interesting itself in man's temporal goods, it will hardly persuade the world to believe in the greater goods which God's love offers. Thus, so far from there always being a conflict between interest in men's temporal, and interest in men's eternal, good, it may often be that to show interest in men's temporal good is the best means of leading them to seek their eternal good.²¹

Prof. Paul Tillich has devoted a great deal of his life and thought to the solution of this problem. In a penetrating analysis,²² he attempts to describe the relevance of Protestantism to the whole man, body and soul. The Protestant religion does not, he declares, define the human contradiction as a war between body and soul. It

21. In The Kingdom of God and History, (Vol. III in the Church, Community, and State series), p.68.

22. In The Protestant Era, pp.166-8.

*Number of pages
Porter edition
different*

declares that "the whole man is the subject of the religious demand and promise" and also that "the help of man to man must involve the whole man, body and spirit together." Just as Protestantism exempts no part of existence (even religious existence) from judgment, so it passes over no part of existence (even bodily existence) in redemption. Insofar as Protestantism has forgotten the secret of its own materialism, it is both blind and dishonest to condemn the materialism of the poor.

Much so-called "idealism" has its roots in the social and economic security of the upper classes; and Protestantism has just as little reason to praise this bourgeois idealism as it has to condemn proletarian materialism.²³

Alongside of this analysis we must set the remark of a churchman who has contributed much to the contemporary understanding of the practical problem of spirit and matter.

Painstaking service in man's most material needs is the essence of Christian spirituality. Yet it is only the spirit in which we do things that profits anything. But further and finally, if we truly get the spiritual view of material actions, a transubstantiation begins in the matter at hand. Our spiritual response to our material surroundings begins to transform the matter itself. As our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, not in the sense of prisons that keep the Spirit captive, but in the sense of designs that can actually be transmuted by the action of the Spirit; so our environment. Ultimately, in the mystery, this whole earthly creation itself can spiritually be permeated and transformed.²⁴

Canon V.A. Demant has written a great deal on this problem in his characteristic vein. He is trying to reaffirm the Christian concern for the temporal world and to establish what he calls a theology

23. The Protestant Era, p.167.

24. George MacLeod, We Shall Rebuild, pp.116-7.

of the natural life. He is a ruthless critic of all who say of our contemporary civilization that its troubles derive from man's preference for material ends over spiritual. He sees that it is too easy to explain the divorce of religion from social behaviour by pointing to the materialistic philosophy that underlies the latter.

When we are confronted with evils, even social evils, we should remember that the antithesis of God is not matter but the Devil; and the Devil is spiritual. A thing may be spiritual and diabolical, as the New Testament makes abundantly clear. So might the universe be.... Good is not synonymous with spiritual, and a thing may be evil without being materialistic.²⁵

Canon Demant takes this theological principle and applies it with great acumen to a specific ethical problem.

It seems, then, that when religious teachers correctly find the social structure of industrial society bereft of any Christian guiding principles and explain that these have been pushed out by a spirit of materialism, the explanation is slightly misdirected and in fact may easily play into the hands of those who run the world for business. The simple Christian values of brotherhood, service, dignity, are largely kept out

25. V.A. Demant, God, Man, and Society, pp. 212-3. Cf. also his essays in Our Culture: Its Christian Roots and Present Crisis, of which he is the editor, esp. pp. 13, 113. Demant has given a more explicit definition of what he means by "spiritual" in The Religious Prospect, pp. 61-2. Here, speaking of the word "spiritual," he writes:

It has been used as a synonym for good, for the divine, for Christian, for religious, all with an ethical meaning; whereas it connotes a certain kind of existence in man which he cannot get away from, whether he recognizes it or not. It describes just the element of being in man by which he is related to the unconditioned source of existence and in which he finds the essence of his specific human quality in distinction from the cosmic order in which he exists. It is the source of his dignity and of his tragedy, of his recognition of truth and his denial of it, for it is by virtue of his link with the absolute and unconditioned reality that he can falsely give absolute validity to some aspect of the temporal order and so involve himself in evil.

Alongside of this profound attempt to bridge the practical cleavage between the spiritual and material in contemporary Anglican theology, there are still many thinkers who cling to that cleavage. Cf. the opening chapter by Canon Cyril Hudson in Christian Morals by Hudson and Lindsay Dewar.

of modern life, not because its big men are devoted to material riches but because they are devoted with a perverted religious passion to the creation of their own brains—predominantly the theories of business and finance. The enemy of Christianity today is not materialism but a false religion.²⁶

There is a sense in which this problem of spirit and matter was the one to which William Temple gave his entire life. There is a passage in an early work of his which nicely set forth his formulation:

And Christianity, whatever else it does, certainly does full justice—and, I think, alone among religions does full justice—to the physical and material. It is, indeed, its materialism which is the stumbling-block to many who aim at holding purely spiritual views of life. The insistence that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," which St. John regards as absolutely vital, strikes many people as materialistic. But Our Lord Himself opened His career by going about healing men's diseases... [believing] that material evil must be removed when there is an opportunity of removing it, even though this is hindering the great purpose of His Life. As He stands there with the power of healing, confronting the people, He must give what they need. There can be no doubt that Christianity is concerned not merely with people's souls or with their well-being hereafter, but with their whole nature, and with the whole physical side of life.²⁷

26. God, Man, and Society, pp. 219-20. This analysis could easily be applied to communism by the alteration of a few words.

27. The Kingdom of God, p. 120-1. This passage could almost have served as Archbishop Temple's credo. Cf. the famous passage in Nature, Man and God, p. 478. There is an interesting passage in John Oman's Grace and Personality in which very nearly the identical point is made: "The test of a true faith is the extent to which its religion is secular, the extent to which its special religious experiences are tested by the experiences of every day. In the life of Jesus nothing is more conspicuous than His meagre interest in specially sacred doings, and His profound interest in the most ordinary doings of the secular life." P. 75. Christianity, then, is of all religions not only the most materialistic but the most secular!

Archbishop Temple's notable Gifford lectures can be seen as a philosophical interpretation of the great practical conviction that matter must not be ignored but used. His famous remark on revelation defined precisely his fully matured position: "unless all existence is a medium of Revelation, no particular Revelation is possible."²⁸ In the fourth chapter of this thesis we will have occasion to deal at greater length with the contribution of sacramental theology to the doctrine of the body. Here we need only point to it as an attempt, and a very effective one in many ways, to introduce into theology a proper estimate of the values of nature, matter, and the body. It is true that sacramentalism has often fallen into as dangerous an error as the one it is in reaction against. That error is partly mirrored in the words of William Temple on revelation quoted above. It is the error of finding God too simply, too obviously expressed in all of life. Such an error can come about in one of two ways. If theology becomes unduly centred in the doctrine of creation there comes a temptation to exalt the fallen world as sacred without subjecting it to judgment. Creation without redemption, then, is one source of illusion. This same illusion can come about when the Incarnation is over-emphasized. It may seem strange to suggest that this can be the case, but without the other side of the truth as expressed by the Atonement, the affirmation that the gulf between man and God has been bridged becomes a fruitful source of complacency or of illusions about the

28. Nature, Man and God, pp.306-7. Cf. pp.36-7. In both of these passages their effectiveness may be slightly qualified by the remnants of absolute idealism which the author retained, even down to the end of his life. Cf. especially p.36.

extent to which God is available to us through the mediation of the natural world.²⁹ If the Incarnation prompts us to affirm that the God-man gulf has been bridged, the Atonement reminds us that it has not been wholly bridged; if the fact of creation suggests that God's world is good because he is good, the fact of redemption reminds us that the world as often denies as affirms God---reminds us, in other words, that creation is both good and fallen.³⁰

So there are two dangers that we face when we try to articulate this problem of spirit and matter. We may fall into some kind of

29. Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 29 for a telling critique of uncritical sacramentalism. "The sacramentalism of Christian orthodoxy," he points out, "in which all natural things are symbols and images of the divine transcendence, but in which the tension between the present and the future of prophetic religion is destroyed, is a priestly deflation of prophetic religion. In genuinely prophetic religion the God who transcends the created world also convicts a sinful world of its iniquities and promises an ultimate redemption from them." In L.S. Thornton's The Incarnate Lord, Chapter 1 and especially p. 6, there is an good example of this uncritical sacramentalism. And in Leonard Hodgson, The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy, pp. 108-9, there is an excellent criticism of it.

Just before the turn of the century Arthur Lyttelton (in his essay in Lux Mundi) warned against the separation of Incarnation and Atonement. His advice was not always heeded in the years that followed.

30. P.T. Forsyth said a wise word on this subject. Does not sacramentalism mistake the whole relation of religion and society, he asked?

Is it not likely to postpone the moral genius of Christianity; to articulate the Cross into the moral order of nature instead of finding it to be the crisis and judgment of nature and the natural conscience; to consecrate the lex naturae rather than convert it; to canonise the decent and conventional elder brother rather than the prodigal forgiven much; and to make any ethical demand which seems to revolutionise the natural ethic, or invert its values, seem extravagance?....In Anglican writings (of the most valuable kind otherwise) it is startling to find how the element of ethic and of atonement in the nature of Christ has been submerged by the sacramental and moral insight reduced to moral interest.

The Justification of God, pp. 90-1.

one-sided spirituality, forgetting man's spiritual-bodily unity, Jesus' concern with physical needs, and the testimony of the Lord's Supper. We may, on the other hand, become so concerned to assert the goodness of the natural world that we lose the prophetic note of judgment against the whole man, against matter and spirit, against the world. The Christian faith must stand between pure spirituality and pure sacramentalism.

Three theologians who have attempted to strike mediating positions may here be mentioned. The first is that most interesting thinker John R. Illingworth, who wrote around the turn of the century. He was a member of the Lux Mundi group, a rather orthodox Trinitarian, and a man who seems to have laid the philosophical ground-work for a great deal of William Temple's thought. In a book of his called Divine Immanence (suggestively sub-titled The Spiritual Significance of Matter) he made a plea for the unity of matter and spirit. In experience, he said, we never find them separated; reality is a complex whole containing both. This book's appearance in the midst of a strongly idealistic climate in philosophy (1898), a climate which tended to read matter out of the picture, makes it one of exceptional interest in this controversy. James Denney, in his posthumously published Cunningham lectures, made an enlightening contribution to this debate. He set himself against the traditional idea of spirit and matter that simply contrasts them or treats them as separate realities, neutral to each other.

Nature is not merely the stage of the moral life, but in some sense its soil....The nature which is absolutely separated from the spiritual life—which does nothing but confront it in its serene and scornful impartiality—

is not the real nature in which we live...31

Thirdly, John Oman gave a persuasive account of the role of "the natural" in the Christian scheme. The natural side of life, the material world, is what he called man's first environment; the most necessary, the most inescapable one that surrounds him.³²

Further light on Oman's attitude to the natural is gained from his classification of religions on the basis of their attitudes to the natural world.³³

Primitive religion, for example, is defined as trust in the natural by giving it an animistic force; pantheism is said to equate the natural and supernatural, or to call the former illusory; dualism distinguishes in the natural the secular and the sacred, and in the supernatural the powers of good and of evil.

Oman proceeded to divide all religion into two types: the mystical, for which redemption is by absorption into the supernatural and escape from the natural; and the apocalyptic, for which redemption is by reconciliation to the purposes of the supernatural, and in which the natural is transformed so that it may become both revelation and opportunity. This whole approach Oman worked out in the final chapter of The Natural and the Supernatural, and it enabled him to preserve a sound attitude to nature, to this life, and

31. The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation, pp. 201-2. Cf. his Studies in Theology, p. 76. Prin. Denney's final proof of the interpenetration of nature (matter) and spirit is the scriptural warning that the wages of sin is death.

32. Cf. Vision and Authority, pp. 312-5.

33. The Natural and the Supernatural, p. 370.

to the body, without obscuring either the fallenness of this world or its basic reality and goodness.³⁴

* * * * *

LORD, shall we not bring these gifts to your service?
 Shall we not bring to Your service all our powers
 For life, for dignity, grace and order,
 And intellectual pleasures of the senses?
 The LORD who created must wish us to create
 And employ our creation again in His service
 Which is already His service in creating.
 For Man is joined spirit and body,
 And therefore must serve as spirit and body.
 Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;
 Visible and invisible must meet in His Temple;
 You must not deny the body.³⁵

The doctrine of creation emerged rather battle-scarred from its struggle with evolution, and has not played a very decisive part in theology since then. But recently, theology has found itself turning to this doctrine for help in a solution to the problem of matter

34. Reference may be made here to two recent sets of Gifford lectures which have each said some pertinent things on this subject. Cf. Emil Brunner, Christianity and Civilization, Vol. I, pp. 101-3. Cf. also this brilliant passage from the first series of Gabriel Marcel's lectures:

It is, in fact, very possible that in our actual world a dissociation between the spiritual and the biological is becoming quite generally operative; but this is only one more proof that our world is a broken world; it is only a broken world that could give rise to such practices, for instance, as artificial insemination.

He defends this statement in more detail, and speaks of the illusion which consists in the last analysis of adhering to that conception of the spirit as something at the opposite extreme from the flesh, or as something completely transcending the flesh, against which I have never ceased to protest. In a very general fashion indeed, one might say that the difficulty lies in the very fact that the spiritual seems to wish to claim for itself the dignity of a separate existence, whereas in a deeper sense it only constitutes itself effectively as spirit on condition of becoming flesh.

The Mystery of Being: I, Reflection and Mystery, p. 202.

35. T.S. Eliot, The Rock (from the ninth chorus).

and spirit. There are several aspects of this classical doctrine that have been emphasized in fresh ways recently. In the first place, the idea of creatio ex nihilo is once more being taken seriously. In the last generation, biblical critics had managed to demonstrate that the doctrine is not easy to find in the Genesis accounts of creation, and consequently biblical theologians learned to be chary about its use. But it is beginning to be said today that this idea of creation out of nothing has a "safeguarding" function for our thought. It reminds us that matter is not godless or inherently evil, over against or in some way limiting God. There is nothing in the created world, it tells us, that is outside of God's control; no dualism, no evil matter or body or impulses. Dualism, John S. Whale has written,

conceives of the universe as being formed out of a primal material, independent of God and in some sense hostile to him. According to Dualism God is the principle of Form battling against formless chaos; or he is Spirit warring against Matter in all its gross intractability. Christian doctrine repudiates all such forms of metaphysical dualism, by affirming that the universe is created by God alone "out of nothing"; and that all things, though definitely distinct from him, are utterly dependent on him.³⁶

Another form of the doctrine of creation, closely related to the idea of creation ex nihilo and an inference from it, is the idea of the goodness of creation—the affirmation that creation is good in spite of its fallenness. Charles Gore wrote a fine statement of this conviction:

36. Christian Doctrine, p. 33. Cf. A.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, p. 111, and W.R. Matthews, Studies in Christian Philosophy, pp. 196-7.

To believe that matter is evil and the source of sin—whether as the creation of an evil or inferior God, or as something eternally existing and intractable—is to despair of the world and of our present life in the body. And the Christian's determination to plant and promote the kingdom of God in the world and to consecrate to God every element in nature, including his own body, depends on the belief that there is nothing bad in the world but a bad will, and that man's body as well as his soul, and the whole material creation, are the objects of divine redemption.³⁷

If the first two aspects of the rediscovered doctrine of creation have served as warnings against dualism, there is another element in the doctrine that has been used recently to warn us against pantheism. Canon Demant has described this vividly.

The doctrine of the creation of the world by God implies that the world has the source of its meaning outside itself. Creation is the denial that the world is God. Because the source of the world's meaning is not in the world itself, each part has its meaning from the source and not ultimately from its relation to the whole. Where the cosmos is held to carry its own meaning, or when God is conceived as the whole world process, then no single thing or event exists in its own right, but only as an element in the process.³⁸

37. The Reconstruction of Belief, p.565. Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr has also used the doctrine of created goodness to establish the meaningfulness of history, the goodness of the body, and the value to God of our finite, brief, dependent and fragmentary earthly lot. Cf. Human Nature, pp. 132-6, 167 ff. and An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, pp. 26-8.

38. V.A. Demant, The Religious Prospect, p.47. Cf. p.177. Canon Demant has also treated the doctrine of creation, as it is related to the problem of civilization, in Theology of Society, pp. 33-42. His most detailed treatment of the doctrine, however, is contained in an article entitled "Ancient Heresy and Modern Unbelief" in The Journal of Religion, xvii, no. 2, April, 1947. In this he declares that the doctrine of creation is perhaps the major need for a theology which would recover the tension between time and eternity and rescue man from his habit of identifying what belongs to the cosmic order with the divine. When we use Christian terms, he says, to perpetuate the idealistic distinction between body and mind, we are guilty of "concocting the most seductive and deceptive dissolvent of Christianity" possible. This article is an important document in this field. Cf. also George S. Hendry, God the Creator, p.176, for an interpretation of creation which underlines this discontinuity between man and God.

This third aspect of the doctrine of creation can be stated in another way: the doctrine of creation can remind man of his creatureliness. It can tell man what he really is.³⁹

Creation out of nothing, the goodness of creation in spite of its evil, and the creatureliness and dependence of the created world—these three facets of the doctrine of creation can go a long way towards explaining the proper relationship between spirit and matter. They must constantly serve the thought of the church as warnings away from both spiritualistic and sacramental extremes.

III

The Problem of Sin

Since the beginning of the century, whenever an English theologian wrote on the doctrine of sin, it is almost certain that he would try to refute what he called the ecclesiastical or dogmatic view in order to bring sin into line with the latest psychology and evolutionary doctrine. Of course, it is not wholly fair to notice only the futility of this exercise; there was a perfectly necessary task to be done—that of comparing religious beliefs to what science was learning. But it is almost fair to say that these religious comparisons were usually so radical that "transformation" would be a more appropriate term to describe the results. The two most distinguished reinterpretations of sin along these lines were those of F. R. Tennant and N. P. Williams. But there are other less import-

39. This meaning of the doctrine of creation has been analysed by Paul Tillich in The Interpretation of History, pp. 271-2 and The Protestant Era, p.217. Cf. also the important passage in Emil Brunner, Christianity and Civilization, Vol. II, pp. 129-30.

ant examples; and to show how wide-spread this reinterpreted habit proved to be, some of them should be observed. H. Wheeler Robinson, in his historically valuable book, The Christian Doctrine of Man, presented an analysis of personality in predominantly evolutionary terms.

The individuality and activity of selfhood emerge in human personality just because it belongs to a higher plane than that of organic evolution. Whatever spirit is in ultimate essence, it must have this power of assimilating the products of a lower plane into its own unique selfhood...40

Behind the rather obscure (and now dated) scientific vocabulary of this statement there seems to lurk an identification of the centre of the personality with "spirit" which is in turn set over against the "lower levels" through which it has evolved. Consider Prof. Wheeler Robinson's explanation of the origin of evil. It springs, he said,

from the circumstances, more or less inevitable, of our natural development and the precedence of the "natural" over the "spiritual." All men are sinners because all men must pass through such a stage. Moreover, we can understand from this point of view the practical dualism of the ascetic or of common speech; the life of the body is always tending to assert itself against the higher nature of the spirit, and in this conflict the whole course of evolution is recapitulated.41

This is but one of the many evolutionary interpretations of human nature common to the early years of this century. Of this particular one, as of all those like it, one standard criticism must always be made. The interpretation is too pessimistic for it makes sin an

40. The Christian Doctrine of Man, p.277.

41. Ibid., p.297.

inevitable and inherent part of man's animal structure; it is too optimistic for it cannot take into account the sins to which the higher "spiritual" levels of the personality succumb. Perhaps the whole evolutionary doctrine of sin can be explained as one large genetic fallacy: the illusion that the nature of man can be explained if only his origin be clearly enough analysed. The writer of the Genesis stories was wiser; he knew that man's origin couldn't be precisely described, so instead he told a story to account for man's nature.

But we must cite other examples of this evolutionary approach to sin before our criticisms go further. For R. S. Moxon, sin is located in the sub-conscious mind, that part of mind that man shares with animals. Sin comes about when the perfectly natural instincts within this sub-conscious mind overwhelm us. And therefore the Christian faith should encourage the sublimation of these latent instincts. How much and how little Christian content there is in this analysis can be seen from the author's definition of original sin as "the universal tendency in man, inherited from his animal ancestry, to gratify the natural instincts and passions and to use them for selfish ends."⁴²

For S. A. McDowall sin is subjection to the laws and downward forces that rule matter---refusal to set oneself on the upward road, away from matter, along which mankind is evolving.⁴³ The chapter on "Sin and Repentance" in W. B. Selbie's The Psychology of Religion

42. R.S. Moxon, The Doctrine of Sin, pp. 246-7.

43. Evolution and the Need of Atonement, pp. 65, 75.

is another case in point. The religious view of sin, he said, "finds its raw material in certain conative impulses and appetites of our nature." Man has "an animal nature whose elemental needs prompt his will to action in certain directions." Morality is possible because the will also receives promptings from the reason and conscience, and sin is said to arise "when in the presence of an inhibition, or of an impulse to some higher end, we yield to the call of the lower nature."⁴⁴ Bishop Gore, though he denied that the body was the source of sin,⁴⁵ yet could come close to certain typical statements of the evolutionary view. "Man," he said, "is balanced between two worlds. If he yields himself to the lower world—he changes his freedom into slavery, and a slavery which ends in destruction."⁴⁶ It seems to have been almost inevitable at this time when the issues between religion and science were being adjusted, that the former should capitulate to the latter on this doctrine of sin. A particularly inept version of this whole approach may be found in H. T. Powell's book, The Fall of Man. For this author sin is simply animal instinct, or, when he is slightly more cautious, the failure to control instinct. He makes the Rabbinic "evil imagination" equivalent to the evil instincts, the Holy Spirit becomes identical with moral conscience, and the moral life is then

44. W.B. Selbie, The Psychology of Religion, p.228. This analysis represents a simplified version of F.R. Tennant, whom we shall deal with presently.

45. Charles Gore, The Philosophy of the Good Life, pp. 274-5.

46. Ibid., p.269.

defined as a struggle between the two.⁴⁷

One of the most impressive attempts to formulate a complete and consistent view of individual sin was that of F. R. Tennant, worked out in his series of three books, The Fall and Original Sin, The Origin and Propagation of Sin, and The Concept of Sin. Tennant and N. P. Williams, whom we will discuss presently, occupy a distinctive place in English theology; they have given the most convincing and complete analyses of sin in evolutionary terms.

Tennant began his analysis with an important distinction between the material of sin and sin itself. The material of sin is made up of the emotional part of life—pleasure, desire, fear, anger, but especially instinct, appetite, and impulse. This material, Tennant said, is quite neutral and becomes sin only when will rather than reason becomes aligned with it. However, in spite of his assurance that this material of sin is not sin, there are many passages in which the identification is all but explicit.

Reflection on the nature, the intensity, the inevitableness, of inborn appetite and other conative tendencies inherent in human nature as such, should so far "explain" human sinfulness as to bring home the truth that, after morality has been acquired, the will, if it would fain obey the guidance of the moral reason, becomes committed to an incessant struggle in which victory is not guaranteed beforehand.⁴⁸

The picture of sin that Tennant painted begins to become clear. Using the terms of faculty psychology, he said that will and moral reason ought to be in harmony but in fact are not. Sense and im-

47. The Fall of Man, p.29. Cf. p.93 where it is affirmed that if original sin means anything at all it means only "instinctive tendencies waiting to be moralised."

48. F.R. Tennant, The Concept of Sin, p.139.

pulse conflict with reason, and will more often obeys the noisy sense than austere reason. And therefore sin was for Tennant (when he was most careful) the result of will's alignment with sense, not sense itself. It would be partly unfair, therefore, to criticize him for calling the lower appetites essentially evil. He is mainly to be understood as in reaction from what he took to be the Augustinian view of original sin, with its ideas of what he called "inherited corruption." Nevertheless, at those points in his writing where he insisted most strongly on a distinction between impulse and sin, he always added such a strong qualification that the distinction for practical purposes was made all but meaningless.

It remains to be emphasised that this material of sin, consisting chiefly, or at least fundamentally, of involuntary conative tendency, is as essential as the will itself for the production of sin, and that the conflict between "flesh" and "spirit," between sense, feeling, and desire on the one hand and reason and conscience on the other, is a condition requisite for the very possibility of human morality.

And, in a kind of summary passage of his main position:

An action can be called a sin when, in the presence of an impulse towards a morally higher kind of action, the will yields to an impulse towards a lower...Not the mere survival in man of emotional and conative tendencies inherited from his animal ancestors, but the voluntary surrender of the self to them, or to impulses derived from them, when higher and better courses of action lie open and are prescribed by a moral code, is the characteristic mark of sinfulness.⁴⁹

But there is a decisive proof in Tennant that, for all his care in preserving himself from a dualism between reason and impulse, he nevertheless maintained a dread of the bodily and instinctive life. This is what he said about Jesus' acceptance of the sins of instinct

⁴⁹. Both passages are from The Concept of Sin: pp. 145-6 and p.159.

as compared with his harshness towards sins of the spirit. It is a fallacy, he declared, shared by all absolutist theories of sin, to assume that the

widest apparent aberration from the standard of perfection is also the most culpable and wicked kind of conduct. On the contrary, the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before the outwardly respectable self-righteous.⁵⁰

What his theory forced him to say here must not be missed; he is claiming that even though the harlot was less wicked, she was yet a more flagrant violator of the standard of perfection than the Pharisee. Tennant's definition of impulse made this interpretation inevitable. His distinction between wickedness (the harlot is less wicked than the Pharisee; this the Bible compelled him to admit) and falling short of the standard (the harlot, he insisted, fell further from the standard than the Pharisee) could not serve biblical truth as effectively as it served his argument. Here is a concluding remark by Tennant on the rise of sin.

That man's performance lags behind his aspiration is attributed, not to a defection from a sinless yet moral state, but to the fact that he is rising in moral culture, which makes great demands on his organic nature, whilst his inherited psychical and physical constitution is making no corresponding or adaptive change, no evolutionary progress.⁵¹

This is Tennant's real position then, after all the qualifications are removed; the body inevitably lags behind the rest of the evolutionary advance—will, reason, and all; and will always and in-

50. The Concept of Sin, pp. 189-90.

51. The Origin and Propagation of Sin, p.112. Cf. the note on p.106 for a revealing insight into the author's understanding of Christ. Much can be discovered about a theologian's real attitude to sin by looking at his understanding of Christ.

variably do so. If therefore, the body was not inevitably sinful in Tennant's thought, it was at least the inevitable cause of sin.⁵²

Prof. N. P. Williams was led to work out his massive theory of sin in The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin most probably because of a dissatisfaction with Tennant's conclusion. In an appendix to his book Prof. Williams criticized Tennant, pointing out that he could have no room for the Fall and therefore ran into the danger of equating creation and the Fall (i.e. of identifying sin with finiteness or the natural order of things). Yet when Williams worked out his own view of the Fall he ran ultimately into the same danger. He rejected the Fall both as part of our present historical scheme and as timeless and transcendent truth. Therefore, he could see no other alternative than to posit a pre-existent Fall, a

pre-mundane rebellion against God of that which men have called the Logos Spermatikos, the World-Soul, natura naturans, the elan vital, the Will to live.⁵³

The Fall occurs in history, but before creation, and is thus not in the present historical order. But if this is true, then the creation, following the Fall, is evil and is even in some sense caused by the Fall.⁵⁴ Williams did try to avoid identifying creation with fallen existence by affirming that the World-Soul or will-to-live was created good but fell away voluntarily from God. But this still leaves us

52. Canon T.A. Lacey accused Tennant of making sin inevitable in Essays in Positive Theology, p.166.

53. N.P. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, p.533.

54. The creation as a punishment for the sin of previously fallen spirits was an element in the thought of Origen that Prof. Williams approved; cf. op. cit., pp. 210-9.

with the created world fallen from its "beginning."

He was no more satisfactory in his interpretation of individual sin. A large part of Williams' historical treatment of the doctrines of sin and the Fall is excellent, and all of it is valuable. The one really serious historical misinterpretation was, unfortunately, the one piece of historical material that he adopted as the key to his own view of sin. This was the Pauline doctrine of flesh and spirit. Here is a passage describing his understanding both of Paul and of the general situation of sin:

the "inherent infirmity" of human nature consists in the discord between "flesh" and "spirit" which may be described in modern terms as "weakness of will-power," defective control of the emotional impulses, or imperfect power of inhibiting the spontaneous flow of psychic energy along the channels of primary instincts.⁵⁵

Just what does this mean? Williams accepted the findings of the psychologists of his day that the root of morality was to be found in the herd-instinct. So, when one has accepted this, it is not hard to go on to say that

all interior moral conflicts are due to incompatible conations arising from this [herd-instinct] on the one hand, and either from the ego-complex or the sex-complex on the other.

But in this struggle, the herd-instinct is no match for ego or sex;

Prof. William McDougall is quoted with approval:

We have to recognise that the desire that springs from the completed moral sentiment is usually of a thin and feeble sort in comparison with the fiercer, coarser desires that spring directly from our instincts and from our concrete sentiments.⁵⁶

55. Op. cit., p.461.

56. An Introduction to Social Psychology, 18th edition, p.229. Both this quotation and the previous passage are found on p.479, op. cit.

This weakness of the herd-instinct, this disproportion between self, sex, and society, is part of the endowment with which we are born. It would seem, Prof. Williams concluded,

that we need search no further, and that at this deep level in the structure of the soul, beneath the area of the preconscious and lying in the obscure recesses of the Unconscious, we have unearthed that precise weakness or interior dislocation of man's being which historical Christianity has steadfastly affirmed to exist...⁵⁷

We have already suggested most of the important criticisms of this effort to put sin into an evolutionary and psychological context. Both Tennant and Williams held to the basic conviction that there was "a something" in the physical or psychic structure of man that could explain what sin really was.⁵⁸ Perhaps one further remark needs to be made. The mistakes of this whole movement of thought were inherent in its presupposition and in its task. The mistake that their presupposition made inevitable was this. Almost all of these evolutionary and psychological reinterpretations of sin came out of philosophical and theological idealism. Man is, for idealism, partly divine insofar as he possesses reason. Therefore, idealism is unable from the start to understand the conviction that

57. Ibid., p.480.

58. Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr on Prof. Williams' position: "So pervasive is the optimism and unilateral simplicity of modern morality that even an Anglo-Catholic theologian, under its influence, can arrive at the foolish conclusion that the Christian conception of love is practically identical with the 'herd-complex.'" Niebuhr's criticism of Williams can apply to all analyses which attempt to locate sin solely in "body" and which find in "spirit" only the forces for good. It is rather the case, he writes, that "the most stubborn evil in human life appears precisely at the point where the forces which make for community have been extended far enough to create large social aggregates which are not yet large enough to include the total human community and are yet powerful enough to dominate and destroy life beyond themselves." An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p.95.

evil can emerge from the divine, the "spirit" in man, that it can be an act of reason and will and not necessarily sensuality and impulse. The second mistake of this movement was inherent in the task it set for itself---the task of accommodating the Christian doctrine of sin to the findings and language of modern culture. To be sure, modernity was at that time criticizing the Christian religion because its myths made bad science; but it proved to be just as true that the philosophical implications of the science of that day made a poor sort of religion. All of these evolutionist theologians confused myth and science, or at least accused the former of not being the latter. None of them saw the peril implied in their task. None of them understood that the true function of the myths they threw out so easily was

to suggest the dimension of depth in reality and to point to a realm of essence which transcends the surface of history on which the cause-effect sequences, discovered and analysed by science, occur.⁵⁹

Before we are ready to work out a formulation of the doctrine of sin's relation to the body that will avoid the pitfalls we have been noticing, we must carry our critical task a step further and call to attention some of the interpretations of sin that have managed to avoid the worst of the evolutionary errors. Even in England, there were those who set themselves against the current. In a most interesting book, Arthur S. Peake had some pertinent remarks to make. It is obvious, he said, and it is a fact that should bother no one, that creaturely existence involves imperfections. "This, however,

59. R. Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p.12. It is true that myth cannot speak of what is beyond and deeper than history without using historical terms and symbols, and thus it must invariably falsify the facts of history as science sees them.

simply means that the creature must be finite, but there is no necessary connexion between limitation of being and sinfulness of character."⁶⁰ He went on to point out that this means our physical conditions cannot be said to necessitate our sinfulness. Perhaps it is natural that we interpret the evil that besets us as a conflict between spirit and flesh, as a being bound by the tyranny of matter. Yet such an explanation hardly fits the facts as we know them.

There are many forms of sin that could be practised just as well by a disembodied spirit. To feel the emotions of anger and hatred, of envy and jealousy, of vanity and pride, a bodily organism is not necessary. Moreover, precisely the same physical act may be sinful or legitimate according to circumstances.⁶¹

In pointing to this truth, he nicely showed how the existence of motive makes it impossible to ascribe inherent evil to physical acts.

William Temple was similarly concerned to rescue sin from its alliance with animalism.

The centre of trouble is not the turbulent appetites... but...the personality as a whole, which is self-centred... Our primary need is not to control our passions by our purpose, but to direct our purpose itself to the right end...The suggestion which we have repudiated [that sin can be identified with animal instinct] belongs to the phase of "faculty-psychology." This presents the soul as a complex entity in which reason and passion exist side by side. Passion, according to this view, comes from our animal ancestors and is already strongly developed when reason appears; reason at first is feeble, and very slowly develops capacity to control passion...⁶²

60. A.S. Peake, Christianity: Its Nature and Truth, p. 112.

61. Ibid., p. 58. Sexual relations, even those between married persons, might under one set of conditions be deeply expressive and meaningful; at another time, under other conditions and with other motives, might well be adulterous.

62. Nature, Man and God, pp. 367-8.

This is a careful and fair presentation of the opposition's case, and Temple neatly demonstrated that it won't do. In an italicized passage he concluded his argument:

We totally misconceive alike the philosophic and the practical problem of evil if we picture it as the winning of control over lawless and therefore evil passions by a righteous but insufficiently powerful reason or spirit. It is the spirit which is evil; it is reason which is perverted; it is aspiration on itself which is corrupt.⁶³

There have been others who have clearly seen the danger of explaining sin in terms of the theory of evolution. James Denney remarked that when the evolutionary theory is too heavily relied on, it is almost always the case that sin is regarded as inevitable. But at the same time, evolution is associated with progress and with progress upwards, so that even if inevitable, sin is not regarded as fatal.⁶⁴ To set sin into the evolutionary process is to set it into nature and to make it a natural fact. It is just this that Prin. Denney will not allow.

Every one who knows anything about sin will admit that we should die rather than do wrong, and this is a conclusive proof that, however deeply our nature may be

63. Ibid., p.368. Cf. R.G. Collingwood's remark: "That which acts is never one part of the self; it is the whole self. It is impossible to split up a man into two parts and ascribe his good actions to one part—his soul, his reason, his spirit, his altruistic impulses—and his bad actions to another. Each action is done by him, by his one indivisible will." From his essay "The Devil" in Concerning Prayer, by B.H. Streeter, etc., pp. 464-5.

64. When sin is taken seriously, as in Augustinianism, it is intolerable to regard such an evil as inevitable. But when, as in evolutionary interpretations, it is lightly regarded, the offensiveness of inevitable sin is not discerned.

identified with sin, it is not finally one with it.⁶⁵

J. R. Illingworth was far wiser on this matter than many who followed him in this century. The theory of evolution, he pointed out, is a theory of process and not origin; it can be combined with any theory of origin. Evolution has this to say about man: his bodily organism has developed from an animal ancestry. Further, it says that when man's mental and moral faculties became human and while the traits of animality still persisted, man fell into moral evil. But, Dr. Illingworth pointed out, we are not required to conclude from this analysis that the persisting animal instincts caused the fall. Quite the reverse is true; the enlarged mental and moral faculties, the free will, these lie at the root of the evil. God endowed man with faculties which

might be misused, and must have known, in so doing, that he [man] would in fact misuse them; and that, in this sense, his fall was the practically inevitable consequence of his spiritual elevation above the animal world.⁶⁶

V. A. Demant has applied to social ethics this principle that sin emerges far more readily from the spirit of man than from his

65. The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation, p.198; cf. the whole passage on this subject (pp. 196-8) which ends with the succinct piece of advice: "we must be Augustinians without being Manichaeans." In other words, when sin is one with our nature, we are the victims of an inescapable dualism, and sin is outside the realm of freedom. John S. Whale similarly objects to the wedding of evolutionary thought and the Christian view of sin. Speaking of man: "the facts," he says, "which are summed up in heredity do not exhaust the being of one who, though rooted in nature, is also its sovereign." Cf. Dr. Whale's essay "Sin and the Need of Redemption" in the volume The Christian Faith, edited by W.R. Matthews, p.205.

66. J.R. Illingworth, Reason and Revelation, p. 226; the whole argument is on pp. 224-6. In another connection the author argued that just as the body is not the sole cause of sin, so the body cannot be said to constitute the self or character, Divine Immanence, p.182; cf. ibid., pp. 92-100, on sin.

"lower" or instinctive side.

Owing to the fact of sin, then, sub-human nature, though lower in the order of Creation than humanity, is in actuality nearer the Divine pattern than human society perverted by the power given men in their spiritual faculties. As St. Gregory said that the Devil has only power for evil by virtue of the power given him as an angel of light, so we are warned to seek the roots of evil in human society in the misuse of the power given man as made in the image of God. This explains what a psychological study of our present discontents also reveals, that the worst perversions of human society occur in our day when men have reached their greatest power over the material creation.⁶⁷

There is a provisional sense in which we can call some forms of social evil "animal." But the "animal" conditions of the Negro slum sections of New York City are not so because of the natural animality of their inhabitants; they are evil because a kind of animality has been imposed on the inhabitants by the spiritual corruptions of a system and of men within a system. In social evil, then, "animality" is evil only because it is caused by the complacent and perverse spirituality of others.⁶⁸

67. Christian Polity, p.24.

68. In Christian Polity, pp. 24-5, Canon Demant elaborates an impressive argument for the goodness of the body and the natural life. The creation of the natural as well as the spiritual world by God is of course also the ground upon which Catholic sacramentalism, with its centre in the Incarnation and the Blessed Sacrament, rests. This hardly needs emphasis among those for whom the material has its place in the religious order, and whose social mission includes concern that the spiritual destiny of men shall be figured in their material habitation and activity. These are they for whom a purely spiritual religion is un-Catholic, and for whom, in Father Peck's words, a slum tenement is as derogatory to the Holy Ghost whose human temple inhabits it, as would be a mass celebrated with mouldy bread and a dirty chalice.

For a Protestant, the truth of this analysis is partly qualified by the curious comparison of the last clause. A Protestant would have no trouble believing that a Lord's Supper with mouldy bread and a dirty cup, when nothing else is available, is as acceptable to God

In our study of the relation of the body to sin, we still have a further step to take. In a doctrine of sin which takes the biblical understanding of the body seriously, what are the principles that ought to be kept in mind? There seem to be three.

1. We must have a doctrine of the Fall that does justice to the paradoxical relation between spirit and matter. In other words, we must acknowledge that the Fall points to the fact that reason and will are not necessarily instruments of the good, and that the body is not necessarily an instrument of evil. A true doctrine of the Fall will avoid both monism and dualism by insisting that sin comes into the world by human responsibility; and not because of either the counsels of God or the corruption of the temporal process. Thus the Fall is not an account of the origin of evil but rather a description of its nature. Original sin is not an inherited taint but an inevitable and universal fact about human existence.⁶⁹

as the freshest bread and the most gleaming silver. A slum, a Protestant would say—and this shows the deeper wisdom of the prophetic as against the sacramental approach to matter—is far more grievous a denial of God than a soiled chalice could ever be. Nevertheless, in spite of this criticism, the work of Canon Demant (and the "Christendom" group he is a part of) in attempting to free the latent materialism in Christianity for action is a highly important one. And if it is sometimes difficult for an outsider to understand what they are saying, this group is one of the growing points in Christian social thought today.

69. John S. Whale has a remark which nicely defines the meaning of original sin as it has been rediscovered in recent years. "The word 'sin' has an individual reference, plainly enough: it is always a conscious and responsible act of will on the part of an individual. Yet this cannot be an exhaustive definition of it. Sin is also a state or condition of sinfulness mysteriously constitutive of our empirical make-up. It is never a man's private affair. Your failure matches mine and our lives interlock to form an organic system of evil." Christian Doctrine, p. 46. J.B. Priestley's play, An Inspector Calls, is a vivid parable about original sin in this sense.

The Fall means that evil can never be made good by attributing it to God, nor can the natural life be made evil by deriving sin from finiteness.⁷⁰ In other words, sin can be said to lie at the juncture of nature and spirit.⁷¹ This means that sin is neither wholly spirit (it is not attributed to God) nor wholly nature (matter is not evil), but rather emerges when the spirit of man rebels against the fact that it is involved in nature. A doctrine of the Fall can preserve this truth.

2. Sin cannot be identified with sensuality. This is the modern way of denying the evolutionary interpretation of evil as reason's lag behind instinct. Two replies must be made to an identification of sin with sensuality. First, it can be shown that the most damaging sins have nothing to do with what we call the animal or sensual side of man. Indeed, those sins which are "nearest to the behaviour of mere animals are not the most deadly but the least."⁷² To make sin nothing but sensuality is, furthermore, to minimize its

70. Cf. R. Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, pp. 74, 90. L.S. Thornton has made a remark on this same point in his own characteristic philosophical language. "The tragedy of creation," he writes, "is not the fact of creation, nor the existence of creaturely limitations. For the unfinished character of the cosmic series is evil only if it cannot attain finality in God.... Evil then manifests itself in our experience, not as an essential factor in the universe or in the limiting conditions of human life, but as failure of response to the eternal order within the limits of creaturehood on the level of spirit." The Incarnate Lord, pp. 121-2.

71. This is Prof. Niebuhr's formulation; cf. An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 76.

72. W.H.V. Reade, The Christian Challenge to Philosophy, p. 86. Cf. pp. 187-8.

evil by making it natural, that is, according to nature.⁷³ Second, not only is spiritual sin more serious than fleshly, but most of the so-called sins of the flesh are ultimately spiritual. Sensuality is part of the spiritual side of sin, and not primarily a physical fact. After quoting Luther's definition of sin as being incurvatus in se, Prof. D. M. Baillie adds:

That is what sin is, and all our sins can be reduced to that, even what we call the sins of the flesh. The evil comes not with the instincts and appetites connected with the body in themselves: these are part of the human nature that God has given us. The sins of the flesh come from this: that we care more for the body (our own body) than for "the Body," the community for which God has created us; so that we are ready to use our own and other people's bodies for our passing pleasure, instead of giving ourselves, soul and body, to the love of God and man, which can use and consecrate both soul and body.⁷⁴

This is deeply true and must constitute a decisive challenge to all interpretations of sin that attempt to associate it in some special way with the body and its impulses.⁷⁵

3. Sin cannot be identified with finiteness. As we have already seen, this was a temptation to which the evolutionary inter-

73. Cf. H.R. Mackintosh's article, "Sin (Christian)" in the Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XI, esp. pp. 541-2, where it is pointed out that for the evolutionist, sin is both inevitable and not particularly serious. Cf. p.114 above.

74. God Was in Christ, pp. 204-5. Cf. John Dickie, The Organism of Christian Truth, p. 135; H.H. Farmer, God and Men, pp. 63-4, 76-7 and The World and God, pp. 193-4.²⁰ Niebuhr, in Human Nature, pp. 228-40, defines sensuality as spiritual because of the anxiety and will-to-power that underlie most sensual indulgence.

75. John Baillie has a significant analysis of the fallacy of equating the body and sin in his Invitation to Pilgrimage (Scribner's). See the passage on pp. 55-6 beginning: "My body is associated with sin only because it is so closely associated with me; but it is in me, that is, in my inmost self-conscious being, that sin has its real seat."

pretation of sin succumbed. If the impulses are the source of sin, and if the impulses are natural to human nature, then you cannot avoid calling historical existence evil in itself. A doctrine of creation ("behold, it was very good") and Fall (which remembers that the Fall implies a status from as well as a condition into which) should guard us doctrinally against uniting finiteness and sin. William Temple at one point came very close to this identification. He said that "the pre-condition of a fellowship of finite spirits united in mutual love is the existence of finite spirits." And while it is true that the creation of finite spirits did not make inevitable their self-centredness, it "rendered it so overwhelmingly probable that its occurrence must have been expected as part of the whole plan."⁷⁶ Sin, therefore, is not so much finiteness as man's refusal to admit the limitations that finiteness imposes. The temptation in the garden was an invitation to overcome the limits of the finite existence that prevailed even in paradise. "You shall be as gods," was the promise; and the first man's refusal to admit his finiteness must always be normative for an understanding of sin.

Every human action betrays not only finiteness and the limitations of a natural organism but the pretentious effort to deny the limitation and the hypocritical claim of having transcended what has not been transcended... Sin is not a quality of nature but of spirit. It is the pretension of finite nature, unwilling to accept its finiteness.⁷⁷

76. Nature, Man and God, p. 510 (italics mine). Temple here was attempting to do justice both to the persistence of sin and to the goodness of God, just as Prof. Niebuhr tries in his formula describing sin as inevitable but not necessary. Cf. Human Nature, pp. 253, 263.

77. Reinhold Niebuhr, in his essay in Christian Faith and the Common Life, p. 76, Vol. IV of the Church, Community, and State series. Cf. An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 67, and Human Nature, p. 16.

Sin cannot be simply finiteness because there has to be freedom before the finite spirit can act, much less sin, responsibly. This freedom is precisely what enables man to see himself as finite, and to rebel. "Man transcends his finiteness," Dr. Whale has written, "in the very act of being aware of his finiteness."⁷⁸ Canon Quick made an interesting remark on this dimension of freedom in human sin.

Finite freedom in itself is good, but it involves the possibility of evil. This possibility simply as such is also good. What actualizes evil and therefore may be said to be the cause of all real evil is the act of a finite will in exercising its freedom wrongly, i.e., so as to destroy God.⁷⁹

Baron von Hügel has also seen that man's freedom makes it impossible to locate his sin solely in his finiteness, that is, in his "body."

God, then, in creating man with the full dignity of a free creature, could not but create him capable of evil, and, indeed, the degree of his goodness, where and when he chooses to be good, is measurable by the degree of badness he can attain if he so chooses; and thus we get a world springing out of God's hand not actually evil, but capable of evil, and this because in the very nature of things God Himself does not and cannot contravene, since this nature is but a reflection of His own. Possible evil dogs all actual good, and actual evil is the price God's creatures have to pay for being free.⁸⁰

It is this mysterious freedom, then, so difficult to define, that keeps many contemporary theologians from assigning human sin to

78. Christian Doctrine, p. 27.

79. The Gospel of the New World, p. 26.

80. The Reality of God, p. 120. Cf. Essays and Addresses, First Series, pp. 9-10, where he defined the root of evil as man's imperfectly poised liberty. For further analyses of the relation of finiteness and freedom pertaining to sin cf. William Temple, Nature, Man and God, p. 514, and Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era, pp. 165-6.

the instincts or to finiteness. Along the lines of the three principles suggested in this section, a doctrine of sin might be formulated to do justice to what we have called the distinctive biblical and Christian understanding of the body.

IV

The Problem of Bodily Suffering

This is a vast subject, and a full treatment of it would require a detailed study of the entire problem of evil as well as an analysis of the many past and present approaches to the problem of healing. Justice cannot be done to these larger questions, but it is important to notice that our answers to questions about bodily suffering will have to square with and should contribute to our doctrine of the body.

Probably the group of thinkers that has, in the recent past, offered the most original thinking on this specific problem is that known as the Cummor Group. This group, which met at the home of Miss Lily Dougall in Cummor near Oxford during and after the first World War, contained such notable members as B. H. Streeter, Arthur Clutton-Brock, and Cyril Emmett. This group was responsible for fresh investigation in many fields of thought: the doctrine of the Spirit, life after death, prayer, the meaning of sex; but perhaps their most original contribution may be found in their radical criticism of the orthodox Christian attitude to suffering, especially to disease.⁸¹ Lily Dougall's little book, The Christian Doctrine

81. On the matter of sex, it is interesting to compare B. H. Streeter's unconditional repudiation of the unbiblical view of sex

of Health, is a fascinating study of their position, and it contains the nearest thing to an explicit doctrine of the body that the Cumner Group produced.

The book begins with a criticism of orthodoxy's attitude to bodily pain. It has no trouble pointing out that the orthodox assurances of victory over pain and suffering were often based not only on well-meant piety but also on an attitude to the things of the body that unduly subordinated them to the "higher" things of the spirit. So Miss Dougall went on to criticize the orthodox position on Providence which affirms that anything that happens is according to God's will. We cannot, she said, believe that disease is according to his will.

While it may be true that certain forms of disease are not the result of any sin in the immediate family in which they occur, scientific research shows more and more clearly that they are all the result of wrong living and wrong thinking in the human family.⁸²

This is a valuable reminder, even though it suggests that some things happen without God being able to affect them, and thus suggests further a God not fully in control of his world. But it is surely the case that a large part of what we call disease can be traced to the error of man, individual and (even more so) collective. Therefore, the attitude to disease implied in this position—that God is

and the body as evil with Leonard Hodgson's "Catholic" interpretation of the sexual life as "low." Canon Hodgson's essay, "Birth Control and Christian Ethics" in his Essays in Christian Philosophy, should be set alongside Canon Streeter's remarks in Adventure, pp. 107 ff.: "The time has come for a repudiation [of dualism] more complete and more emphatic [than even the Reformation provided]. The body and its instincts are in themselves good....," p. 108.

82. Lily Dougall, The Christian Doctrine of Health, p. 6.

as opposed to it as we are, for there is a sense in which he has not been able to prevent it—is valuable as a correction of orthodox complacency. But the view of the Cumnor Group on the precise relation of God to disease is—too precise; and when too much precision is attempted, error almost certainly results. The man of faith feels, in relation to his disease, both that somehow God brought it to pass, and yet that God is as against it as he is.

But let us not be stopped by the incomplete and perhaps unsatisfactory analysis of Providence in this book. It has a great practical lesson to teach, and it is this. It reminds us of the true significance of the gospel accounts of the healing miracles of Jesus. It reminds us that the problem of disease presents us with a real demand to take the body seriously and to fight against its pain and suffering. Miss Dougall clearly showed that disease was a serious thing to Jesus, that he often interrupted other work to heal, and that healing itself was an extensive part of his own earthly life.⁸³ And she rightly objected to what she called the

83. Op. cit., pp. 35-7. Prof. Tillich has an interesting remark on healing in The Religious Situation, pp. 104, 107: "A peculiar and, for the religious situation, important significance is attached in the present to the art of healing. It must be recalled that with the elimination of the priestly confessional and the loss of its real values the physician stepped upon the scene as a substitute. Yet he was a substitute who could not supply what should have been supplied, a healing process proceeding out of man's central function, that is, out of his religious relations. First of all the separation of body and soul, then the mechanization of the body, then the conception of the psychic as a product of the physical machine—these logical consequences of a rationalistic, atomistic conception of nature which had been deprived of life and of inwardness made the healing art more and more a mechanical and technical activity...Insight into the dependence of all separate functions and separate organs on the total constitution and the further insight that this constitution is just as much a psychic as a physical fact make the healing of the body also a matter of community and love."

agelong superstition that the disease of the body is good for the soul.⁸⁴ We have, she wrote in the last pages of her book, our Hebraic ancestry clearly behind us when we praise and exalt the body and its life. We, like the Jews, must be incorrigibly this-worldly. This obligation to take upon our consciences the problems of disease and health must often be reaffirmed. It is, as Miss Dougall showed, a logical consequence of the Bible's concern for the body. And while we may want to reject her tendency to posit a limited God to "explain" suffering, we are gratefully reminded of the religious significance of disease and of the central evangelical role that healing has played, and possibly must once again play. Baron von Hügel's delicately balanced statement about the relation of Providence to disease is perhaps the finest word that has been written on the subject, and nothing further needs to be added to it:

Jesus [he said] cures pain and disease as though they could not be utilised, whilst Jesus also trains and empowers souls to utilise their sufferings, as though they were incurable.⁸⁵

V

The Contribution of Baron von Hügel

There is no doubt that the most important single personality in the field of British theology on the doctrine of the body is the great Roman Catholic lay theologian, Baron Friedrich von Hügel.

84. Op. cit., pp. 191 ff.

85. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 200. Cf. Chapter 3, section III below, for a discussion of Christ's healing miracles, and their significance for a Christian understanding of the body.

There are many important motifs in his rather unsystematic religious writings, but one of the most persistent, and one that can be used as a principle of unity in understanding his over-all position, is the description of what he called the "bodily" element in the life of faith. Just what did he mean by "body"? It is certain that his use of the term is a complex one with many connotative layers. Yet he did use and defend the value of the body in its plain denotative sense, as meaning our physical organism.

Now the natural virtues and the natural outlook and hopes, all more or less dominated by the Body and its requirements (its most legitimate requirements), remain, in various degrees, as regards their materials and even their immediate occasions and proximate motives, a strict necessity and full duty for us all. Even the loftiest sanctity finds here the substratum, the subject-matters, the occasions for its own supernatural life.⁸⁶

Or, he could write in a letter:

The body, the imagination, reasoning, intuition, taste, heart, will, the religious instinct,—how many things— all right, all necessary, to be developed strongly with, and in rivalry with each other, within the evergrowing, deepened personality.⁸⁷

Another example of his defence of the body can be seen from his criticism of F. R. Tennant's "attack" on the body as the source of the materials of sin. He would not take issue with Tennant, he said, over the animal origin of such physical sins as sloth and sensuality, but he strongly dissented when Tennant made pride and self-sufficiency dependent on our animal ancestry.

86. Essays and Addresses, First Series, pp. 282-3.

87. Letter to JM, dated Sept. 28, 1910, In Selected Letters, edited by Bernard Holland, p. 181.

Impurity may indeed be the viler sin, but even Impurity is instinctively felt here to be less deadly than Pride...[and] whilst Impurity is occasioned by the body, Pride is not; the doctrine of the Fall of the Angels grandly illustrates this deep instinct.⁸⁸

It is not the body, but the fact that men are both finite and independent that is the real root of the deadliest sins. Von Hügel held fast to two important notes in the doctrine of creation: the fall of the angels as defining ultimate evil as spiritual, and the goodness of the material creation. Creation is, he said, in "its single parts good, its totality very good."⁸⁹ He saw many of the implications of this high estimate of the body, and he faced them.

A further peculiarity which, I believe, we ought to cultivate, is a true and ever present reverence for the body. Materialism readily appears as the arch-enemy of the spirit; yet, erroneous as materialism is, it very certainly is not the most dangerous of the spirit's enemies. Never to lose the sense that we human beings are body as well as soul, not only here but, in some way and degree difficult or impossible to picture, also in the hereafter, is to keep ourselves sane and balanced.⁹⁰

Just as important as his literal use of "body" is his wider, metaphorical use. Time after time, "body" comes up in his writings to refer to what he liked to call the "thing-element" in life; the brute, irreducible "givenness" of things as they are. This is a major note in his religious thought, by his own confession. In speaking of one of his own books he said;

88. Essays and Addresses, First Series, pp. 9-10.

89. Ibid., pp. 77-8.

90. The Reality of God, p. 32.

There runs here throughout everything the sense that Religion, even more than all other convictions that claim correspondence with the real, begins and proceeds and ends with the Given—with existences, realities, which environ and penetrate us.⁹¹

So often when he spoke of the value of the body, he meant the value of this "given" quality in the environment.

Man is a Body as well as a Soul, [he wrote] and the two are closely interrelated. The sensible perception of objects, however humble, is always necessary for the beginning, and (in the long run) for the persistence and growth, of the more spiritual apprehensions of man. Hence Historical Persons and Happenings, Institutions, affording Sensible Acts and Contacts, and Social Corporations, each different according to the different ranges and levels of life, can hardly fail to be of importance for man's full awakening—even ethical and spiritual.⁹²

Out of the richness and variety of von Hügel's speculation on the body and the bodily element in faith, it is possible to distil, as he would put it, four "perceptions" or conclusions that serve to define and clarify his position.

1. "Body" is never found isolated; thus there is no dualism possible for Christian thought. We do not find pure spirit or pure body, a pure material or a pure spiritual act, in life. What we do find, he said, is spirit awakening body; and body awaking, checking, or obstructing spirit. Von Hügel was fond of speaking of the "cease-

91. Essays and Addresses, First Series, p. xiii.

92. Ibid., p. 70. This is a note that von Hügel sounded over and over again; cf. pp. 131, 238, 282-3, and especially p. 140: "Religious men, provided they care still more for direct spiritual conditions, cannot care too much for the social, earthly, betterment of their fellows." What an admirable phrase this is on a difficult and perhaps too much debated question!

less interdependence of Soul and Body";⁹³ he cited Janet's researches as proof of the dependence of the spirit on the body, and added that this dependence is further verified by the fact that awareness of others and even of God depends on our bodily senses. Dualism is, he summed up, impossible alike in cosmology, psychology, and ethics.

It is directly contradictory of the central truth and temper of Christianity, since these require a full acceptance of the substantial goodness and the thorough sanctifiableness of man's body; of God's condescension to man's whole physico-spiritual organism; and of the persistence or reanimation of all that is essential to man's true personality across and after death. And it is, at bottom, profoundly un-Catholic; the whole Sacramental system, the entire deep and noble conception of the normal relations between the Invisible and the Visible being throughout of the Incarnational type,—an action of the one in the other, which develops the agent and subject at the same time that it spiritualizes the patient, the object, is in direct conflict with it... Christianity has ever to come back to its central presupposition—the substantial goodness and spiritual utility and transfigurableness of body and matter; and to its final end,—the actual transformation of them by the spirit into ever more adequate instruments, materials, and expressions of abiding ethical and religious values and realities.⁹⁴

This is surely one of the finest defences ever written of the bodily life of man. He made good his case against dualism.

2. "Body" means that both our existence and our knowledge are immersed in history. Here von Hügel used the idea of the body, as

93. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 228.

94. The Mystical Element in Religion, Part II, pp. 126-7. This first "perception" and the two following I have drawn from an invaluable essay in the second series of Essays and Addresses entitled "On the Place and Function, Within Religion, Of the Body, Of History, and Of Institutions." This single essay is the richest single source for von Hügel's thought on the subject of the body.

Prof. Niebuhr often does, as a symbol for particularized or finite existence in history. He employed, for example, the idea of the interconnectedness of body and soul to depict the essential tension between present and past which is for him the essence of history. Just as "we have in the Past something that was the Present," so "in the Body we have (pace the Idealist Philosophers) something that never was spirit."⁹⁵ He meant by this two things: first, that just as the life of the body is thoroughly implicated in the whole life of a man, so the historical past is implicated in our present life; and second, the fact of our being in the body is an inevitable pointer to our immersion in history, and partly defines it.

3. "Body" points to the inevitably social or institutional element in life and faith. "Body" points to the institutional or church factor in religion in this way. We are in the body; which is to say that ours are finite, conditioned lives—weak, ignorant, fragmentary. Therefore our faith can never be, von Hügel stated, a purely mental cultus. His criticism of Lutheranism was always that it was too rarefied, too "brainy." No, he insisted, we need action and group as well as teaching and speaking and the individual. Thus our being in the body, he virtually said, points to our need for being in the Body, the community. Here it is instructive to notice von Hügel's attitude to Paul's interpretation of the body. Ordinarily the Baron preferred the gospels to Paul, just as he seemed to be more at home with the psalter than with the prophets. But he thoroughly supported Paul's attitude to the body, at least as it is

95. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 64.

affirmed in the idea of the body of Christ.

[Paul's] conception of the Christian society, in which each person, by a different specific gift and duty, co-operates towards the production of an organic whole, a whole which in return develops and dignifies those its constituents, is worked out by means of the image of the human earthly body, in which each member is a necessary part and constituent of the complete organism, which is greater than, and which gives full dignity to, each and all these its factors.⁹⁶

We have already noted von Hügel's admirable remark about how impossible it is for a man of faith to care too much for his neighbor's material well-being. Here then we can say that for him an affirmation of the body pointed not only to the institutional element in religion, but also to what might be called the institutional or social element in life. The body, therefore, described both the Christian's relation to the church, and his involvement in society.⁹⁷

4. The final "perception" which can be drawn from von Hügel's thought is more inclusive than the others, and partly includes them. It can be phrased thus: "Body" must always remind us of the necessary alternation between the claims of discipline and rightful physical needs, between the supernatural and the just claims of the natural. This insistence on relaxation as well as concentration,

96. The Mystical Element in Religion, Part II, pp. 65-6. It should be pointed out that von Hügel was not afraid to criticize Catherine of Siena in this book for her too Greek and too mystical view of the bodily life.

97. This intimate relation between the church and ethics suggests that we may have allowed our Christian ethics to forget the role of the church, not only as a microcosm within which the gospel can be lived, but as a locus of forgiveness for us when, in our moral and political life, we fail to do what we ought.

*see also ...
of ...*

play as well as work, is nowhere better illustrated than in von Hügel's letters, especially in his letters of spiritual guidance.

It was because of this lack of alternation that he found Protestantism restrictive and cold. He seemed to long for the old high Middle Ages when nature could be fully affirmed alongside supernature.⁹⁸ Protestantism too abruptly removed this sense of delight in the natural, he thought, and not altogether unjustly. In it, he felt, there could be discovered "principles and prejudices of anti-body, anti-senses kind," prejudices not only against the body as such, but even against the body "as occasions and vehicles of the awakening of spirit."⁹⁹

Just what did von Hügel mean by the necessary alternation between the claims of the body and those of a sound discipline? We have already noted his opposition to the anti-physical interpretation of sin in F. R. Tennant, and how he believed that Christianity always goes wrong when it introduces a suspicion of sex into its ethic.¹⁰⁰ He certainly meant in part the need for a complete and full emotional life. He once expressed his gratitude, for example, for the Song of Songs in the Bible, and he saw no reason why it needed to be interpreted figuratively.¹⁰¹ And in spite of his sympathy with the mystical element in religion---it was always a

98. Essays and Addresses, First Series, pp. 218-9.

99. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 98.

100. Ibid., pp. 235-7.

101. The Reality of God, p. 130. The whole chapter here, pp. 127-37, is significantly entitled "The Need of Body and Soul in Emotion."

necessary part of a sound religious attitude for him---von Hügel was in no sense merely a mystic. He criticized mysticism most strongly for precisely this refusal to admit the need for a motif of withdrawal-and-return between the natural and supernatural, pleasure and sane asceticism, Gilbert and Sullivan (which he loved) and the Blessed Sacrament. In a letter to his friend George Tyrrell he remarked:

As the body can live only by inhalation and exhalation, nutrition and evacuation, etc.; and as the mind can only flourish by looking out for sensible material and then elaborating and spiritualising it: so the soul can live, to be fully normal in normal circumstances, only by a double process: occupation with the concrete and then abstraction from it, and this alternately, on and on. If it has not the latter it will grow empty and hazy; if it has not the former, it will grow earthly and heavy.¹⁰²

Again he wrote that an exclusively mystical attitude goes wrong

in attempting to eliminate or evaporate the phenomenal world altogether, and in not allotting to the most careful, disinterested, objective study of and occupation with its matter, mechanism, determinism, a permanent, irreplaceable part in the spiritual life in all its stages.... We are no Manichees, hence the visible world cannot be evil.

We must, he continued,

find a place, in and for the spiritual life, for the phenomenal, taken with all its stimulating, purifying edges and othernesses.¹⁰³

He could never stress this need enough. The final words of his essay on the role of the body in religion mark an appropriate closing for this section and this chapter.

In our relations between one generation and the other,

102. Letter dated Sept. 25, 1898; from Selected Letters, p. 72.

103. Letter to Miss Maud Petre, dated Sept. 26, 1900. In Selected Letters, p. 93.

one sex and the other, one individual and the other, we will ever remember the need, the cost, the glory of this element of incarnation and of death in life, of life through death. Especially will we gain and keep an endless love and restraint, patience and joyous trust in our relations with the young, still necessarily so full of the "confusions," the largely dim, distracting tumult of the senses and of the visible life—and this is, surely, the supreme test of the worth of our religious outlook—by such a constant sense and practice of the Place and Function in Religion of the Body, of History and of Institutions. ¹⁰⁴

*Francis Thompson: Essay -
Health and Illness*

CHAPTER THREE

THE BODY AND THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES OF INCARNATION AND ATONEMENT

In attempting to bring to light the motif of the body in recent British theology, it has been helpful to proceed systematically rather than historically. In this chapter, therefore, a study of British Christology of the last fifty years will be made in order to obtain further evidence leading to a distinctively Christian doctrine of the body. First, we will look at what may be called the "fact" of the Incarnation. Recently, Christian thought has come to feel that the very fact that God became incarnate in human flesh has a special meaning for faith over and above the details and content of the incarnate life. Next, we shall examine some of the problems of Christology and the Atonement as they have been treated in our period. Finally, we shall present an inquiry into the healing miracles of Jesus, drawing out some of the suggestions for a doctrine of the body that were touched upon in section IV of the previous chapter on "The Problem of Bodily Evil."

I

The Fact of Incarnation

We had occasion to see in the last chapter how Christian theology has recently been turning to the doctrine of creation for a solution to the perennial problem of spirit and matter. We saw how this doctrine can remind us of the Christian estimate of the goodness of the material creation. But it is also true that the fact of the Incarnation can remind us of this same goodness, perhaps in an

even more effective way. Here the dualism between the world and God is decisively overcome; God's love for the world is shown by the gift of his Son. The fact that the Word was made flesh, Bishop Charles Gore pointed out,

involves, as against all the tendencies of Hellenism, the dignity of matter and of the material world, which indeed is implied alike in the Christian idea of creation, of sin, of the Incarnation, of the Church and the sacraments, of the resurrection of the body and the redemption of the whole creation.¹

Prof. George Knight of Knox College, Dunedin, New Zealand, suggests that theology would have been saved from a great deal of trouble had it remembered that

basar is something which is not unclean and alien from the nepshesh of God, but is itself bound up within the complex of God's nepshesh because God tabernacled within it. Many....[of the church fathers] forgot that according to Old Testament thought it was natural and inevitable for God to reveal Himself in basar because He was ever immanent in it.²

In our own day, no one has argued more persuasively for the value of "matter" in a religion of the Incarnation than Dr. George MacLeod of the Iona Community. In a characteristic sentence he writes:

It is a perennial challenge to anyone who truly grasps the meaning of the Incarnation---that God became man, that He clothed Himself in the physical, and thereby declared holiness to be inseparable from "material" considerations.³

1. The Reconstruction of Belief, p. 602. Bishop Gore is one of the few theologians of any day to have seen that the total witness of Christian theology points to the significance of the body. The relevant doctrines which he lists here are, incidentally, precisely the ones with which this thesis deals.

2. George A.F. Knight, From Moses to Paul (Lutterworth Press, 1949) p. 126. Cf. pp. 29-32 for further remarks on the relation of the Incarnation to the body-soul unity of man and the goodness of the body.

3. We Shall Rebuild, p. 18.

It is this kind of thing we are able to say because Christ took on, quite literally, a human body.

What Christ assumed, we are prepared to maintain, was, simply and literally, the single human body....Starting from the fact that the body is the medium of social relations (which are of the essence of man), it ought not to be hard to realize that, for Christ, the appropriation of the one individual Body was the salvation of universal manhood.⁴

Thus, Incarnation points to the same estimate of the body as creation. But it is able to go further. The doctrine of creation can speak of the goodness of non-human nature, and it can even speak of the goodness of man as part of nature; but it cannot take the decisive step made possible by the doctrine of the Incarnation—— it cannot speak of the positive value of history. Canon V.A. Demant has pointed out that the Incarnation gives a key to the meaning of history which saves man

from either the sense of its purposelessness or an assumed position right outside it which encourages him to interpret it by some naturally conceived human Utopia. For the Incarnation pre-supposes the doctrine of Creation, which, on the one hand, forbids the eternal element in the Godhead being explained away in the process of mere becoming, and, on the other, insists that the concrete world process, and each event in it are of divine significance and value....The Incarnation gives the possibility of a meaning to history because it is the penetration into history of God, who is beyond history as well as in it.⁵

This is an important contribution to the doctrine of the body. It means that the body is not only good in respect of its nature and

4. A.R. Whately, The Focus of Relief, p. 149.

5. The Religious Prospect, pp. 217-8. Canon Demant here points to the dependence of Incarnation on the doctrine of creation, and rightly discerns that the former doctrine permits more positive statements about the meaningfulness of history.

origin, but also in respect of its activity. One of the most interesting facts in the contemporary theological picture is the rediscovery of the really unique thing that the Christian faith is able to say about the importance of history. Here it should be noted that when we say this about history, we are also saying something about "body." The late Sir Edwyn Hoskyns saw the connection between body and history with special clarity. Speaking of the author of the Fourth Gospel, he wrote:

Confronted by the flesh of Jesus, the son of man, he demands that men should remember what he said (14:26), nay more, that they should eat His flesh and drink His blood (6:52-6). Jesus—son of man—words—flesh—blood! It is difficult to imagine language that fixes attention more steadily upon the importance of history.⁶

And at this point, as so often, Baron von Hügel has a relevant word for this generation. In an essay on the theological needs of the spiritual life, he dwelt on the importance of what he liked to call the incarnational side of religion.

The approach to God and the condescension of God, the Invisible, Pure Spirit, on occasion of, in, and with the Sensible and Visible—the Historical, Traditional, Social, Sacramental—must remain and be cultivated within our souls.....The supreme revelation of the omnipresent, non-successive God, took place, in unique fashion and degree, in such and such years, and months and days and hours, and in such and such places, of human history.⁷

This establishes what needs to be said about the witness of the Incarnation to the significance of the body as it is related both to nature and to history. But a qualifying remark should be added.

6. The Fourth Gospel, p. 58.

7. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 233.

It will be observed that nearly all of the theologians that we have drawn on in this argument are from the Catholic tradition, or are at least what might be called "incarnational" in their approach to theology. Now it can be gladly granted that the emphases of this tradition are often necessary ones, particularly when they serve to correct individualistic and spiritualistic distortions. But it is the case that a too consistently "incarnational" approach can become a Greek rendering of the biblical revelation, particularly when it regards the fact that the eternal has made itself known in time as the answer to the ultimate problem of life. What this approach may forget is that the content of the revelation is the relationship between the love and the justice of God; in other words, the content of the Incarnation is Atonement.⁸ Thus, when "incarnational" theology takes for its central concern the relation of time and eternity, it is indeed able to give positive value to the body, nature, and history, but it does so at the expense of a more basic issue of biblical faith.

8. To clarify this distinction, compare the following statements. Canon Quick defined the Incarnation as "the uniquely perfect expression and instrument of those values which constitute the very nature of God and for the fulfilment of which God made the world." (The Christian Sacraments, p. 58.) Yet in The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 50 (note 1), P.T. Forsyth wrote: "We may even select from the system of Catholic truth the doctrine of the Incarnation. That truth, central as many find it, has no such centrality as the principle of atoning forgiveness. The doctrine of the Incarnation did not create the Church; it grew up (very quickly) in the Church out of the doctrine of the Cross which did create it....The doctrine of the Incarnation grew upon the Church out of its experience of Atonement. The Church was forced on the deity of Christ to account for its redeemed existence in Christ. We can experience the redemption as we cannot the incarnation."

This issue is not the finiteness of man but his sin, not his involvement in the flux of nature but his abortive attempts to escape that flux. The issue of Biblical religion is not primarily the problem of how finite man can know God but how sinful man is to be reconciled to God and how history is to overcome...its proud and premature efforts to escape finiteness. It is in answer to this central problem of history, as Biblical faith conceives it, that God speaks to man in the Incarnation.⁹

This emphasis may be a partial correction to the excesses of the "incarnational" approach; it is at any rate a reminder that whatever we say of the value of the body or of history or of matter—and it is undoubtedly real value—it is not inherent or absolute, but derivative, fragmentary, and problematic.

The fact of the Incarnation tells us something about the body and, consequently, something about our Lord. He did enter into our history and immerse himself—far more deeply than any of us do—in its perils and possibilities. What is left if we lose this fact was graphically portrayed by P.T. Forsyth. Without the Incarnation, without a "flesh-and-blood" Lord,

Christ becomes a pathetic, tender, helpful and gracious figure rather than a mighty. We prefer the flavour of the evening service to that of the morning. The religion that is driven out of business and our energetic hours takes refuge in our tired hours and our evening time...We tend to overprize the subdued, composed, and vespertinal type of religion, whose patron saints are outside the evangelical succession with Francis and Fra Angelico; or we are engrossed with the genial, brotherly, and bustling type. And all the time the Church is dropping into a vague Arianism; it is losing faith in the Incarnation, faith in the real presence of the redeeming God and therefore faith in a strenuous and historic ethic.¹⁰

9. Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 147. Cf. Human Destiny, p. 59.

10. The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 31.

II

The Human Nature of Christ

In this major section of the chapter we will attempt to show that all attempts to give a full and complete value to the humanity of Christ are, at the same time, attempts to vindicate the doctrine of the body in the field of Christology. It is not of course true that an adequate estimate of full humanity is achieved merely by an affirmation of the reality of Jesus' "physical" body.¹¹ Yet many modifications of the full humanity have taken the form of a denial of Jesus' real body and his bodily, physical life. Nevertheless, when we affirm that the problem of the human nature of Christ and the doctrine of the body are closely related, we are using "body" in more than its literal sense. This broader use has sound biblical warrant.

In Hebrew thought the body stands for the whole man and represents him. This is the basis of the Christian attitude to the body.¹²

11. It may be true, for example, that Apollinarius, for all his docetic leanings, was able to affirm the reality of Jesus' body in the literal meaning of that word. Though even this is denied by Canon Raven, cf. Apollinarianism, pp. 209 ff.

12. L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 254. The author continues in an interesting way. "But it received its full justification only in our Lord's resurrection. In that event all false spiritualism and dualism, so congenial to the Greek mind, and so devastating in its consequences, had already been put out of court. Morality is safeguarded by the biblical and Christian attitude to the body, and that in turn by the resurrection of our Lord. Not only is the body for the Lord, but the Lord for the body. Our bodies have a share in the consecrated life through membership in the risen Lord. The Lord is for the whole man; for he himself is whole man. God raised him up; for without the body he would not be whole man. God will raise us up through his power, that we may be whole men. For we are already wholly (in body and soul) members of the Christ, who in virtue of his risen life is the only completely whole man." For further passages equating "body" with the whole man or with total human nature, cf. also pp. 260-1, 298, 311, 331.

In his introduction to The Fourth Gospel, Hoskyns time and again emphasized that "body" and "flesh" mean the whole of concrete, historical existence.¹³ And, as Leonard Hodgson has written,

To be human is to be the self-conscious subject of the experiences of a body in this world of space and time.¹⁴

To be human involves the body so intimately that the body can justly be taken as a symbol of humanity, of historical existence as such.

The body and the physical life which constitutes its history have in man become the means through which this life which we call personal is expressed. It is indeed only in the experience of man as personal that man as physical organism has significance at all.¹⁵

Thus a concern for a complete Christian estimate of the body leads us, in the central section of this second chapter, to a study of the full humanity of Christ as it has been treated in the British theology of this century. Here our field of study is that one bounded by Charles Gore's Dissertations at one end and D. M. Baillie's God Was in Christ at the other. It may well be true that the question of Jesus' full humanity was not really settled in this period until the latter laid down his admonition, "no more docetism". To be sure, there were those earlier in the century who claimed that the full humanity of Jesus was no longer a problem;¹⁶ but such

13. Cf. The Fourth Gospel, pp. 143, 144, 175, etc.

14. "The Incarnation," in Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson, p. 370.

15. L.W. Grensted, The Person of Christ, p. 193.

16. For example, Bishop Gore in The Reconstruction of Belief, p. 507, and B.H. Streeter in his essay in Foundations, A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought; by seven Oxford men, p. 75.

assurances proved to be premature. The problem of the human nature of Christ in the twentieth century can be described in this way. The century began with a number of attempts to restate the traditional orthodox dogma on the humanity of Christ. Following this there emerged two distinct reactions. Both this restatement and the "liberal" and "kenotic" reactions had to take place, and had to break down, before the warning "no more docetism" could occur and before it could be made intelligible.¹⁷ A distinguished English historian has recently described what theology is now able to say about this problem of Jesus' human nature.

If there were to be a revelation of God to man, only a human being more human than we are would give us a vision that we should be capable of comprehending—one whose humanity was genuine and authentic, whose flesh was real flesh, so that if you pricked it it would hurt and bleed—one who actually got tired at the end of the day. I personally would feel strongly that it must be a human being under our conditions—limited in his knowledge, so limited that even his consciousness of his mission only came gradually, in a groping way at first;

17. It is true that biblical criticism is one force that has made it possible to overcome docetism. The Jesus-of-history movement helped unquestionably to make clear the human nature of Christ. But it must be admitted that our ability to affirm the full humanity of Christ does not depend on our possessing anything like a clear photograph of the historical Jesus, or even on our being absolutely sure of this or that detail. Cf. L.W. Grensted, The Person of Christ, pp. 195-7, 236 ff. For example, it is coming to be acknowledged now that our estimate of the full humanity of Jesus does not depend on our being able to discover what has been called the Messianic self-consciousness; whether or not, in other words, he applied any of the available Messianic categories consciously to himself. Indeed, part of our belief in the likeness of his humanity to our own may come to include the conviction that he could not have made an unambiguous statement about his exact relation to the Messiah or the kingdom of God. In And Was Made Man, p. 147, Canon Hodgson says: "The more I read the Gospels the more the conviction is borne in upon me that never in the course of history was there a man who thought less of Himself, or cared less that men should follow him for Himself, than Jesus Christ."

so limited that even the temptations which he suffered must be regarded as having been real to him and not a mere shadow-show.¹⁸

1. Where Do We Stand Today?

Perhaps the most vivid contemporary description of the humanity of Christ has been written by Dr. John S. Whale. It might be considered as a spelling-out of what lies behind Prof. Baillie's notable "no more docetism" warning to the theological world.

Jesus Christ was a Man, in the full psychological sense, sharing truly and fully in the conditions of our empirical humanity. The fact which confronts us in the New Testament in all the wonder of its perfection is an actual human life, which was at the same time true human life. He was no phantom, archangel or demi-god, playing a human role on the world's stage.

Dr. Whale continues with a delineation of what this true and full humanity involves.

It is vitally important that we do not in any way jeopardize the truth that Jesus was a Man living upon victuals. The spiteful and ridiculous calumny that he was gluttonous and a wine-bibber (Matt. 11:19) is precious testimony to the fact that in all things he was like unto his brethren. He not only ate and drank; he knew hunger and thirst and weariness. Consider his bravery, his sense of humour, his severity, his tenderness. To use Pilate's words, "Behold the Man"—poor, born in an outhouse, working, journeying, praying; tempted as we are tempted. We cannot conceive that Christ in the wilderness was truly pure unless we also conceive that he was able to sin, and that he even desired to sin, but did not. Behold him, healing and teaching the pathetic multitudes, touched with the feeling of men's infirmities, himself a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was human enough to weep over the woes of those whom he was not ashamed to call his brethren. Bearing on his heart the burden and shame of their sin, he nevertheless stood in with them and loved them to the end. Utterly clear-sighted, he was

18. Herbert Butterfield, Christianity and History, p. 119. We shall be dealing below with both the problem of knowledge and the problem of temptation to which Prof. Butterfield here refers. Cf. pp.148 ff., pp.186 ff.

the vigorous debater, ruthlessly exposing and fearlessly denouncing the shams of much conventional religion. Without a trace of self-pity he went deliberately to Jerusalem to die. His was the highest, holiest Manhood which this world has seen or can see, and at the last—we men and women being what we are—he was nailed to a gallows to die with criminals, the innocent victim of fear, bigotry, jealous hatred, political opportunism and legalized murder. He was crucified, dead and buried.¹⁹

We are now in a position to present a summary of the definite points at which the full humanity of Jesus Christ must be affirmed. This summary represents the ground that has been gained, once and for all, when theology speaks, today or tomorrow, of the human nature of its Lord.

First, we are today in a position to insist on the human limits of Jesus' bodily and mental life. Both in body and in mind Jesus matured according to the laws of normal growth. The "increase in wisdom and stature" covers his whole life. "It is impossible," Prof. H. R. Mackintosh declared, "to conceive a point at which the evangelists would have held that He had nothing more to learn of His Father's will."²⁰ This problem of Christ's knowledge, a vexing one in many ways, will be treated below.

Second, there is the human character of Jesus' moral and

19. Christian Doctrine, pp. 99-100. This has been quoted in full not only because of its intrinsic power, but because the author here touches upon all of the major problems of Christ's humanity that we shall be dealing with in this chapter: sin, suffering, temptation, death, miracles.

20. The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 10. Cf. Prof. D.M. Baillie's remarks on the controversy about Christ's knowledge, op. cit., pp. 12-3. On pp. 12-20 of Prof. Baillie's book, and on pp. 10-14 of that of Prof. Mackintosh, there are two excellent statements of the humanity of Christ. To both of them I am indebted for this and the two following paragraphs.

and religious life. This principle must mean that Jesus' temptations "were real temptations, which it was difficult and painful for Him to resist. His fight against them was not a sham fight, but a real struggle."²¹ It means further that whatever we say about the relation of Jesus to sin, the struggle with the effects of sin was a real struggle for him. We have already noticed that Dr. Whale has said of Jesus that he was able to sin, even perhaps desired to sin, but did not do so (potuit non peccare, and not non potuit peccare). Prof. Baillie has suggested that even if we prefer the more orthodox non potuit peccare,

we do not mean that He was completely raised above the struggle against sin....[but] that He was the supreme case of what we can say with limited and relative truth about many a good man. "He is incapable of doing a mean or underhanded thing," we say about a man whom we know to be honourable; and so we say in a more universal and absolute way about Jesus: Non potuit peccare, without in any way reducing the reality of His conflict with His temptations.²²

Under this heading must also be mentioned the reality (and necessity) of the religious life of Jesus. Perhaps this has been over-emphasized by liberal Protestantism, but it is ground gained for good, and it is real testimony to a full humanity. Prof. Mackintosh mentioned the characteristic traits of faith, peace, and love, that we find in Jesus' religious life.²³ And Prof. Baillie adds two further reminders. First: Jesus' prayer was real prayer, born out of

21. D.M. Baillie, op. cit., p. 14. Cf. H.R. Mackintosh, op.cit., p. 10.

22. God Was in Christ, pp. 14-5. Cf. pp.187ff below for a further discussion of this point.

23. Op. cit., pp. 11-2.

real need and real, unfeigned dependence upon the Father. It cannot be considered, even though the Fourth Gospel sometimes gives this impression, merely as demonstration before an audience.²⁴

Second: it was by human faith that Jesus accepted the cross, and not by any sort of supernatural knowledge or power. It would be highly artificial

to think of Him as setting forth from the beginning with the clear consciousness that He had come into the world to die a violent death for human salvation.....[or] to think of Him as forming the intention, at any point in His career, of being condemned to death.²⁵

Finally, we must insist on the human character of Jesus' miracles. Prof. Mackintosh pointed out that Jesus was able to perform the mighty works not by some special kind of power, but because of his obedience and faith towards God.²⁶ The miracles cannot, as orthodoxy has often assumed, be used simply as proofs of Jesus' divinity. They were, at least on one important level, human works of concern and compassion. They were, to be sure, mighty Messianic signs, marking the intrusion of the kingdom of God into history. But in addition, Prof. Baillie has pointed out,

they were also the works of the Kingdom, of the Messianic Age, in which the "powers of the world to come" were at the disposal of all who would believe. God had given such power to men. In that sense they were human works.²⁷

24. God Was in Christ, p. 15.

25. Ibid., p. 181.

26. Op. cit., pp. 13-4.

27. Op. cit., p. 14. Cf. the discussion of this below, pp.191 ff.

We must now turn from the present status of the problem of Christ's humanity and investigate the problems we have mentioned in the context of their development through the first half of this century. One of the most difficult and controversial is that which can be called the problem of Christ's knowledge.

2. Christ's Knowledge

Prof. H. R. Mackintosh, in his book on the person of Christ, wrote that Jesus unquestionably shared the secular beliefs of his day and can on no account have omniscience ascribed to him.²⁸ Elsewhere in this book he implied that this question had been settled and agreed upon by 1912, but such in fact was not the case. It can perhaps be said that Charles Gore was the first to see the implications of the problem of Christ's knowledge; but he left it unsolved, or rather, reached a contradictory position and thus left the question open. In an early book he had insisted on the reality of Jesus' human limitations. It is not enough, he wrote, that we admit that as a man Jesus was ignorant of the divine secret of the time of the end. We must also say

that He was so truly living under human conditions as Himself to be ignorant. The Son Himself, as He reveals Himself to men in manhood, did not know.²⁹

But while Gore could affirm that the limitation included both the human and the divine natures (holding to a form of the kenotic theory, he could naturally admit to a limitation of the divine), he did not admit that this human limitation really included the whole

28. The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, p. 10.

29. Charles Gore, Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation, p. 97. Cf. the entire section here, pp. 94-7.

earthly life of Jesus. He granted absence of knowledge or ignorance, but not error in judgment or mistaken information. Thus he could not say, as came to be said later, that Jesus fully shared in the limited perspectives of his age. And he went to considerable length to show that Jesus' belief in demon-possession and his views on Old Testament authorship could not really be interpreted as errors of judgment.³⁰

Denials of the limited knowledge of Jesus since this time have taken stronger form even than Bishop Gore's, especially among the representatives of the Catholic wing of the Church of England. E. L. Mascall, for example, holding to a strict interpretation of the doctrine of "impersonal humanity," can say that the human centre of consciousness in Jesus is replaced by the divine logos. And therefore, while the human mind of Jesus may be conditioned, the divine mind is omniscient. In addition, the human mind is able to draw on the special resources of knowledge contained in the divine. Limitation of knowledge in Christ is therefore only apparent.³¹

30. Charles Gore, The Reconstruction of Belief, pp. 484 ff.

31. Cf. Christ, the Christian, and the Church, pp. 53-60. An even more speculative and fantastic position is taken by J.S. Lawton in Conflict in Christology, pp. 44-73. Cf. pp. 72-3 where he writes that the New Testament "provides a goodly array of proof-texts in support of the view that Christ was in possession of a knowledge of a higher order than that enjoyed by other men. It does not demonstrate his omniscience, but the fact that he had at his command when circumstances and the good of others demanded it, an access of springs of knowledge belonging only to God himself, and if this material be taken at its face value, it would be hazardous to declare in the face of it that Jesus was truly ignorant in any given circumstances. Such would be the verdict in the court of law." Such polemical and somewhat anxious attempts to prove the existence of a "special source" of divine wisdom in Christ arise in part from an uncritical acceptance of the Fourth Gospel as historically accurate reporting of Jesus of Nazareth.

Canon O. C. Quick could not quite grant a fully human quality to Jesus' knowledge, but he was cautious in his presentation of his views.

To say that the knowledge proper to Godhead was altogether excluded from our Lord's consciousness in the days of his flesh would be a serious mistake. It is indeed precisely the divinest kind of knowledge which he seems most fully to have possessed....He probably did not know any particular facts, past, future or contemporary, which were outside the range of a human mind living at that particular time and in those particular circumstances of education and environment. But this assertion may be qualified by adding the words: except in so far as his divine insight into universal order and values affected even the knowledge of particular facts present to his human consciousness.

Canon Quick seemed to be trying to say two things at once, but he emerged not with paradox but with confusion. At the same time he showed himself to be aware of the problem; and if he was not clear and unequivocal, he did not minimize the difficulties.

Thus [he wrote on the same page] while remaining faithful to the historical evidence of the Gospels, we may begin to picture to ourselves, however inadequately, the historical reality of what is at once divine knowledge in a human mind, and a human learning and nescience in the mind of the incarnate God.³²

By far the most convincing and useful study of the problem of Christ's knowledge is that of Canon Leonard Hodgson, as set out in

32. This passage and the previous one are from Canon Quick's Doctrines of the Creed, p. 169. Lurking in the background of such pictures of two minds in Jesus and two sources of knowledge may be a distinction between knowledge and opinion or fact and value which is not particularly useful for the purposes of biblical interpretation. Canon Quick favoured a modified form of the kenotic Christology which has often been approved as at least guaranteeing the real humanity of Christ. Yet he showed here that when Jesus of Nazareth is conceived as a kind of self-restrained incarnate logos, the humanity that emerges from the picture is artificial and limited. Cf. below, pp.176 ff.

his moving book, And Was Made Man. We must not, he says,

fear to accept with the most utter honesty the evidence of the Gospels, even when they tell us of His ignorance, always remembering that the ignorance is the ignorance of God incarnate.³³

He explains what he means in a later part of the same book. There is a kind of ignorance which, far from being out of place in Jesus, is just what we might expect. It is the "ignorance of what it is to be blind to the things of the Spirit as His hearers were blind."³⁴ This "ignorance," he continues, we can see in Jesus' surprise when he came across unbelief, in his amazement whenever his disciples were slow to understand. This expected ignorance in Jesus includes the details of his relation to God and to the Messianic hope.

We must honestly acknowledge that even such an idea as that of His own pre-existence might have come to Him from current teaching about the expected Messiah. Here, as in the case of His moral teaching, we must look for evidence of His divine insight not, as it were, in an account of celestial history and geography revealed by a visitor from above, but in the reaction of His mind to the teaching He happened to meet through His being born and growing up in Palestine at the beginning of our era.³⁵

The most important point that Hodgson makes in his defence of the fully human quality of Jesus' knowledge is this: Christ's

33. And Was Made Man, p. 12.

34. Ibid., p. 46.

35. Ibid., p. 54. Canon Hodgson goes on to say in this place that "this is not to deny the divine nature of Christ; it is but to draw out the implications of belief that He was human in mind as well as in body." Canon Quick, on the other hand, would have called such thinking a denial of divinity, on the principle that any full assertion of humanity must detract from the quality of divinity. But Hodgson clearly sees that one need not, indeed cannot, establish Christ's divinity by qualifying his human nature.

authority does not demand a formal inerrancy or omniscience. He feels that this misunderstanding may lie behind some of the too feverish attempts to discover some special source of wisdom in Jesus. Jesus' authority cannot really be explained by analysing his knowledge or his psychological processes. We do not define his authority in terms of something static which he possessed, but in terms of God who acted in and through him.

We think of Him as truly human in mind as well as in body, as growing from childhood in wisdom as in stature. The world in which He lives is the world of His own day, the problems He has to face are the problems of His own life, the knowledge He has at His disposal is the knowledge open to one in those circumstances. It is noteworthy that He does not attempt to go outside the limits of that knowledge. When He is asked to decide the question of a disputed inheritance He declines, saying: "Who made me a judge or a divider?" His prayer in Gethsemane ends with the words: "Howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt."³⁶

This then is the way the problem of the knowledge of Jesus has been faced. It would be a great gain if we could say to this controversy: "no more docetism," that the abortive attempt to define the divinity of Christ by modifying the humanity might come to an end. For

both in its genesis and in its basis, the Christian estimate of our Lord's Person is independent of any theory of our Lord's knowledge, or of our ability to formulate a satisfactory theory.³⁷

3. The Defence of Orthodoxy

In recent British Christology the defence of orthodoxy can roughly be described as the attempt to combine or conflate the human and the divine natures in Christ. Before we investigate these at-

36. Ibid., pp. 25-6. Cf. p. 30.

37. John Dickie, The Organism of Christian Truth, p. 314.

tempts, however, a word must be said about the conciliar decision which defined the problem. On the whole, British Christology has taken the Chalcedonian formula seriously. Even when it has been criticized, it has rarely been found necessary to depart a great length from its statement of the problem. However, it has also been acknowledged that, practically speaking, the formula has made it easier to modify the humanity than the divinity, in spite of the fact that "very God, very man" gives both equal weight. There would be general agreement with Baron von Hügel's statement that

the Chalcedonian formula has, upon the whole, been more satisfactorily attended to as regards the Divine Nature than as regards the Human Nature; and limitations, obscurities, weaknesses, growths, temptations, which are interwoven with human nature as such, have been, for the most part, too much ignored or explained away, even though they still stand on clear record in the Synoptic Gospels.³⁸

A remark of William Temple in an early essay has been much quoted.

The formula of Chalcedon is, in fact, a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek Patristic Theology. The Fathers had done the best that could be done with the intellectual apparatus at their disposal. Their formula had the right devotional value; it excluded what was known to be fatal to the faith; but it explained nothing....The formula merely stated the fact which constituted the problem; it did not attempt solution.³⁹

38. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 196.

39. In Foundations, pp. 230-1, the essay, "The Divinity of Christ." It is not clear from this criticism whether Temple expected conciliar definitions to achieve any more than he attributed to that of Chalcedon. It may be here that he was criticizing the definition for failing to do what it never was intended to do at all. It has often, and rightly, been pointed out that this negative (or, as Temple called it, devotional) function is all that can be asked of conciliar definitions. They can only exclude heresies; they cannot, as Temple seemed to imply, "attempt solution." In Christus Veritas, p. 234, he slightly modified his criticism of Chalcedon, but this early remark essentially stood throughout his theological work.

Prof. H. R. Mackintosh defined the weakness of Chalcedon in even more explicit terms. If we accept the Chalcedonian position as positive guidance, he said, we shall be led directly into a dilemma, and this dilemma---

the Scylla of a duplex personality and the Charybdis of an impersonal manhood---has invariably proved fatal to the doctrine of the two natures. If it takes Jesus' manhood seriously, as the New Testament of course does by instinct, it makes shipwreck on the notion of a double Self. If, on the other hand, it insists on the unity of the person, the unavoidable result is to abridge the integrity of the manhood and present a Figure whom it is difficult to identify with the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels.⁴⁰

But in spite of this kind of uneasiness about the orthodox Christological formula, most of the British Christology of the first fifty years of this century has worked very definitely within the orthodox circle. Let us look at some of the attempts to work out the problem of the humanity of Christ that can be called strictly orthodox.

R. C. Moberly, in his great work Atonement and Personality, refused to separate out the two natures and to place one alongside the other. "In His human life on earth," he said, Jesus "is not sometimes, but consistently, always, in every act and every detail, Human."⁴¹ There is no non-human sphere within the man Jesus. And yet Moberly could seem to qualify this truth in his remark that in the case of Jesus "the centre of His being as man was not in Himself

⁴⁰. Op. cit., pp. 296-7. We shall see below, pp.177ff, how Prof. Mackintosh attempted to escape from this dilemma.

⁴¹. Atonement and Personality, p. 97.

but in God."⁴² H. M. Relton follows a line of argument very similar to that of Moberly, and he begins as well and ends as unhappily. Relton insists, at the outset, that the unity of Christ's personality is the factor we cannot lose. This is our starting-point, he says, because the Bible unequivocally rejects all dualism, whether of body and soul or spirit and matter.⁴³ Just as the Bible cannot think of the body apart from the soul, so, he argues, we cannot think of the human nature apart from the divine. Thus the two natures are said to have an affinity without identity, and "the difference between the two is not obliterated by their union."⁴⁴ But Dr. Relton has not escaped from the dilemma to which Prof. Mackintosh called our attention. In setting himself against Nestorian dualism, he inevitably moves too far towards a doctrine of "impersonal humanity," though his precise formulation is closer to the enhypostasia of Leontius of Byzantium than to the anhypostasia of Cyril. Christology demands, he says, that the divine logos be substituted for the human soul in Jesus; though, as he is aware, this substitution is tolerable only if it can be shown not to detract from

42. Ibid., p. 105.

43. In A Study in Christology, pp. 144-5, Dr. Relton has an interesting passage on this point, particularly so for the argument of this thesis. "We look," he writes, "for the redemption of the whole man, and not simply one part of him, even though that part be the highest. So close and intimate is the union of 'body' and 'soul,' so indissolubly are they united, so indispensable to man's normal life is the 'body' as an integral factor in the growth and development of his personality, that it is difficult to think of the severance between 'body' and 'soul' as anything but abnormal, and as leaving the man anything but incomplete."

44. Op. cit., p. 146.

the "reality and completeness of the human nature."⁴⁵

Sometimes the dilemmas of orthodox Christology are not so keenly felt. J. S. Lawton, in a work already referred to, is content to declare that all modern attempts to begin with the humanity of Jesus are inept and in error---typical of the liberal, or of what he calls the neo-Antiochene, heresy. Modern thought, he says, has deliberately failed to understand the doctrine of "impersonal humanity," which is the only path to truth in these matters. This is the picture of Christ that he draws from the New Testament to support his position. We do not, he writes, find in the Bible

simply a man, Christ, who lives a completely human life in a completely human manner---a primarily moral man living a life in harmony with the will of God....We are presented with a figure who, in the first place, possesses and exercises divine powers---he performs miracles of healing, control over nature, and super-human vision: above all, he enters and leaves the world in a manner in which other men cannot. This figure, moreover, makes far-reaching claims for himself: he can remit the eternal guilt of sin, he proclaims himself equal with God, and fortells that he himself will sit as judge over all men at the grand assize. All these things, and more, do not and cannot pertain to one who was merely a man, perfectly fulfilling God's will, or even suffused with God's life---they pertain only to God himself.⁴⁶

All that this proves is that if one wishes to distort the New Testament wholly out of focus, it is possible to make some such unqualified rejection of the humanity of Jesus. E. L. Mascall has performed the same operation more delicately; and it is interesting to see that he seems to do it merely by accepting the mantle of

45. Ibid., p. 147.

46. J.S. Lawton, Conflict in Christology, pp. 323-4. Cf. pp. 8, 36.

Cyrrilliam orthodoxy. "The Person of this human nature was not created, as in the case of all other human beings; it was the pre-existent Word or Logos."⁴⁷

We come into an altogether different world when we look at William Temple's solution to the problem of Jesus' humanity. However, in spite of his understanding of the issues and his real struggle with them, he—with the others—failed in trying to combine the human and the divine natures. He stated the problem with characteristic clarity.

47. Christ, the Christian, and the Church, p. 2. Dr. Mascall defines the Incarnation not as the conversion of the Godhead into flesh but as the "taking up" of manhood into God. Canon Quick used this same terminology in a passage combining affirmation of humanity with denial. Jesus made use of normal human faculties, he wrote; he "trod man's path to God, knew God, and knew himself as God's own appointed representative on earth, all with an undeviating sureness and insight such as no mere man could have displayed. In all he did he was through human faculties taking up manhood to a new level of life whither no mere man, but God only, could have raised it." (Doctrines of the Creed, pp. 182-3, italics mine.) But there is danger of confusion in such statements as these of Mascall and Quick. Prof. D.M. Baillie has pointed out that we use the phrase "assumption of human nature" in two entirely different senses without always making the distinction. In some formulations the phrase probably means no more than the taking or the putting on of human nature. But often the idea is linked with a view of salvation as deification, in which case "assumption" comes to mean the gathering up into eternity of the human stuff—God's transforming it into something no longer fully human. There are hints that this latter usage is not far from the meaning intended by Mascall and Quick here. L.S. Thornton has pointed to the danger of this phrase, the "taking up" of manhood into God. If we do not balance it, he says, with such words as "Incarnation" and "the Word made flesh," we may run the risk of sacrificing the Western emphasis on redemption in favour of the more Eastern idea of deification; cf. The Incarnate Lord, pp. 225-6. It is interesting that Thornton can make this point, as he is a representative of the Catholic wing of the Church of England with strong Alexandrian tendencies in his thought.

God has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ: that is the central truth. But if so, we are driven to ask who or what is Jesus Christ. Is He a man like any other man? or is He a Divine Being breaking in upon our world, a God in a human body?⁴⁸

In reply to his own question Temple declared that Christ is neither of these two when one would have wanted him to say both. Nevertheless he could do real justice to Jesus' humanity. He could say that his life on earth was real, subject to all the limitations of a human life, growing, inadequately informed on many things, tempted. "He grew in knowledge as He grew in stature, and learnt by the same processes by which other men learn."⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that Temple would not allow theology to apply the category of humanity to Christ because all we know of what true humanity is comes from Christ---the man made truly human by the complete indwelling of God. In Jesus Christ, he pointed out, we shall discover

the one adequate presentation of Man---not man as he is apart from the indwelling of God, but Man as he is in his truest nature, which is only made actual when man becomes the means to the self-expression of God.⁵⁰

Now there is something true and even quite attractive in this idea. Christ, after all, is the norm for human nature, and there is a sense in which we cannot act as if the category of "humanity" were

48. In Foundations, p. 223.

49. Christus Veritas, p. 121. Cf. pp. 115 ff.

50. Ibid., p. 125. Cf. Foundations, p. 259. This approach to the problem of humanity has had considerable influence in British Christology. In an interesting essay in the symposium The Lord of Life, D. Miall Edwards bases his whole position on this point of Temple's, especially on the distinction in Temple between the human form and the divine content of Jesus' consciousness.

wider than he is. Nevertheless, it is hard to avoid the feeling that Temple was ultimately unable to conceive of a real, autonomous human nature---a human nature that eats, drinks, and needs faith at every moment of its life. There was a confusion of the human and divine in his formulation in that he defined the divine in terms of the highest human. Thus he could never really avoid the pitfalls of something close to "impersonal humanity."

It seems, then, to be all but inevitable that a thinker beginning within the orthodox circle of Christology will make modifications of the full humanity of Christ that ought not to be part of the picture. Before we come to consider two of the reactions to orthodoxy, let us look at the answers that have been given to two important questions which orthodox British Christology in this century found itself asking.

First: Can we hold to the doctrine of the "impersonal humanity" of Christ without losing his human reality? British Christology has often, though not always, accepted as normative the distinction between the "person" and "nature" of Christ which Cyril worked out as a weapon against Nestorianism. As a barrier against a divided Christ (which Nestorianism seemed to imply) the idea of "impersonal humanity" was found to be useful. This meant roughly that Christ possessed a fully human nature but not a human (only a single divine) hypostasis, persona, or person. But as a positive contribution to an understanding of Jesus' humanity this formulation proved to be less happy.⁵¹ For example, Charles Gore, who in many ways broke fresh

51. Many have held to this doctrine while formally insisting on a full estimate of Jesus' humanity. Cf. R.L. Ottley, The Doctrine of the Incarnation, pp. 600 ff., and D.W. Forrest, The Authority of Christ, pp. 49 ff.

ground in his evaluation of the human nature of Christ, accepted the idea of "impersonal humanity" as the only possible way to avoid Nestorianism, even while he deplored the phrase. The doctrine means, he wrote,

that there was no independent seat of personality in the manhood of Jesus, but that it found its personality in being taken by the Son.⁵²

William Temple was, as we have seen, more successful than most theologians in doing justice to the reality of Jesus' ignorance, growth, and temptation. He admitted that (save for the risk of being misunderstood) he would have liked to call the unity of God and man in Christ a unity of will. But he concluded that it would be better to say that "in Christ God and Man are personally one; the Person of the Man Christ Jesus is God the Son." But this formulation makes it too easy to lose the real human personality of Jesus. "By person," he said, "we do not understand an ultimate point of reference, but the entirety of the spiritual being." Or further: "As Person Jesus is both Man and God."⁵³ Here he seemed to be equating the spiritual and the divine in such a way as to deprive Jesus of a human spiritual life. He was not quite able to break through the traditional forms of this doctrine of "impersonal humanity"; yet when he was not specifically engaged in defending it, he did excellent justice to the full humanity.

L. S. Thornton does not really succeed in removing the objectionable elements in the doctrine by redefining hypostasis as law of

52. The Reconstruction of Belief, p. 858.

53. This, and the two previous passages are from Christus Veritas, p. 149.

being, though he is able to disengage himself from some of the more unreal pitfalls of the doctrine.

The humanity of the Incarnate Lord is not a static metaphysical entity, but a spiritual organism. We have not to search, as some have supposed, for a central core which must be abstracted to make room for the eternal Logos.

This is well said, and it defines precisely the dissatisfaction we always feel with the usual way in which "impersonal humanity" is defended. For in separating off some such "core," the human nature is, as it were, decreased and made less real by just the amount that is subtracted to make room for the Logos. However, Thornton does not make things any better when, in a continuation of the above passage, he proposes his own modification.

All the principles of unity which exist in any other human organism exist also in Him. But whereas in created human beings the highest law of being is that transcending principle of unity which is proper to a human organism on the level of spirit.....this is not the highest law of being in the Incarnate Lord. The highest law of being in His case is the law of being appropriate to deity. There is no abrogation of other laws of being. In His organism are all the laws of being which exist in each of us. But even the highest of these, that which constitutes Him "the man Christ Jesus," is not the highest law of His Being....His human organism has the creaturely status which is proper to humanity....The body is not less physical because it is taken up into a spiritual organism and has become an organ of spirit. Neither is the human organism less human because it is taken up into union with the eternal Logos and has become the organ of His deity.⁵⁴

54. L.S. Thornton, The Incarnate Lord, pp. 237-8. I do not understand the whole of the difficult argument here. It will take more study than I have been able to give to the problem to determine whether this redefinition of "impersonal humanity" in terms of organic philosophy (though just here, the affinity is with Alexander rather than Whitehead) has conserved the reality of Christ's humanity. It does appear, however, that to say that Christ was ruled by a law of being utterly different from that which rules ordinary humanity is to say too much about his difference from ordinary humanity.

E. L. Mascall, in his restatement of the Cyrillian position, makes little attempt to safeguard the normal human nature of Jesus. The logos has taken the place of the human "person" in Christ; thus his human nature is "impersonal,"

not in the sense that Christ is not a person, but in the sense that the function in relation to his nature which would ordinarily be performed by a created human person is performed by the uncreated and pre-existent Person of the Divine Word.⁵⁵

Even if we grant with Dr. Mascall that hypostasis or persona does not mean for the Fathers what "being a person" or "personality" means to us, it is none the less true that even when you deny to Christ a full, human persona in the patristic sense, you have in fact modified his "person" or "human personality" in the modern sense. This is demonstrably true in Mascall's case. For him, the Incarnation took place in time only as concerns Christ's human nature; in relation to his divine nature, it was not in time and thus, we may surmise, not in history. But surely a partly historical Incarnation is strange to the gospels.

One interesting way in which theologians have tried to express the truth of the doctrine of "impersonal humanity" is by making Christ Man---inclusive, generic, representative. Some have said that Christ is not only a man, but Man. Others have gone further and have said that we was not a man at all, but only Man. H. M. Relton is an example of the first type. No theologian has been more sensi-

55. E.L. Mascall, op. cit., p. 3.

tive to the reality of the ordinary humanity of Christ than he.⁵⁶

Yet when he comes to say that Christ must be something more than merely human, he says this: Christ is not only a man, but Man the universal.

His whole earthly life was so truly human as to be capable of transcending its historical setting, if we may so put it, and of revealing itself as absolute, archetypal, universal; incapable therefore of being identified with, or confined to, any particular age, but recognised to be for all time.⁵⁷

Now it is forever true that the effect of Christ has been and is universal, transcending all barriers of time and distance and culture. But is it not misleading to argue from the universal effect of the gospel of Christ to the universal or archetypal nature of his person? The true paradox of the Incarnation has two necessary and interacting centres, but they are not man and Man, but man and God.

William Temple also spoke of Christ as not only a man but Man. He accepted R. C. Moberly's statement that "Christ is Man—not generically but inclusively,"⁵⁸ and defended it in an interesting

56. Cf. A Study in Christology, pp. 246-7: "Every limitation which the Son of Man can be shown to have lived under, every detail of a circumscribed existence to which Kenotic Christology has drawn our attention, including, of course, the fact of Christ's human knowledge being limited...we can accept without hesitation. All that is involved in Christ's possession, not simply of intelligence, but of intelligence moulded by a certain training and education as a Jew, and which was circumscribed within the limits of the scientific knowledge and mental equipment of the age in which He lived, we can accept as the necessary conditions essential to His human life, if that is to be described in any sense as an historical reality, and if we are to regard Him as a Man Who lived at a particular time and in a particular environment."

57. Op. cit., p. 247.

58. From Atonement and Personality, p. xx; cf. Temple, "The Divinity of Christ," in Foundations, pp. 253-4.

way. When we draw near to God, he said, and take his purpose as our own,

we vindicate the claim made for Christ that His Personality is representative and inclusive...[and] when we call His Personality representative we mean that in it we see what all men shall become.⁵⁹

This is a sound reminder that personality is not merely an individualistic essence, but a complex unity formed by the interaction of self and society. But where Temple went wrong was when he denied this "social" or "communal" or "representative" nature of personality to all men, in his attempts to establish the uniqueness of Christ. Again we run into the error of mistaking an effect of Christ's work (i.e., universality) for the nature of his "person." Because we can say that Christ has universal significance and a representative function, we cannot necessarily say that his human nature partakes of some abstract essence of universal manhood.⁶⁰

Some thinkers have gone beyond this "both a man and Man" position. Leonard Hodgson admits that to call Jesus "not a man but Man" is ungainly and misleading, yet he adds that "we must try to elicit the truth which [this statement is]....intended to enshrine."⁶¹ And more recently, among some of the English Congrega-

59. William Temple, in Foundations, p. 254.

60. One suspects that whenever this idea of Christ as universal Man has been defended, there is in the background a strong affinity for Platonic realism which could speak of the subsistence of universal archetypes apart from the individual objects that define that universal. This is certainly true of William Temple.

61. "The Incarnation," in Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson, p. 383.

tionalists, the idea of the representative humanity of Christ has come to play a significant part. Nathaniel Micklem, for example, denies that Jesus should be thought of as one among many men. We ought, he writes, rather to say

that he is the archetypal Man, the heavenly Man, the representative of the redeemed humanity as is Adam of fallen man.⁶²

Perhaps enough has been said about the attempts made by the supporters of an "impersonal humanity" to give full weight to the humanity of Jesus Christ. We ought, in justice, to recall that the doctrine must not be interpreted crudely; it does not, at its best, mean what the phrase "impersonal humanity" sounds like. It rests on a distinction between human nature and persona, and it is trying to affirm that while the former is complete and a unity, the latter—whatever it may mean: centre of consciousness, experiencing subject—is not apart from God, but is in fact God himself. Nevertheless it remains true that Christian orthodoxy, as reflected in this doctrine, has made a point of denying a human "personality" to Jesus. L. W. Grensted has succeeded in stating the truth which the doctrine preserves—the universal significance of Christ—without succumbing to its errors.

To say that Jesus was Man without being individual man

62. The Doctrine of Our Redemption, pp. 30-1. Cf. the similar view in Daniel T. Jenkins, The Nature of Catholicity, pp. 62-3. This use in recent Christology of the idea of the "heavenly man" is due no doubt to the rediscovery of this theme by contemporary continental biblical criticism. Similarly, the idea of the Second Adam is coming to find its way more and more in New Testament theology in Britain. Without minimizing the fruitfulness of these conceptions (and they are certainly valuable in stressing the solidarity of man with his society), the dangers of bringing them directly into Christology ought not to be forgotten.

would be a contradiction in terms, for the very idea of manhood includes the idea of its expression in individual men. He knew and knows all that can be meant by restriction to a particular time and place....It is utterly inconceivable that Jesus could have had any meaning for mankind at all if He had not come by this way, "being found in fashion as a man." He is not a principle of salvation but an individual and personal Saviour.

He goes on to define this universal effect of Christ without making Jesus' human nature partake of that universality.

What is amazing, and to one who has not entered into the Christian experience incredible and unintelligible, is that this life, lived under entirely individual conditions of time and place and of human relationship and environment, should have proved itself capable of reaching out through ever-widening circles of personal influence and at the same time of retaining its own peculiar and creative identity....⁶³

How can we define the perfection of Christ without losing his human reality? This is the second question that will illumine our study of the orthodox Christological thought of the period under study. It is a far less complex one than that dealing with "impersonal humanity." Here it will be important to point out that all attempts to define the perfection of Christ in terms of his essential nature or inner structure and ultimately by making him an unreal

63. The Person of Christ, pp. 235-6. The author's insistence here that Christ is a personal saviour and not a principle of salvation is an important criticism of much of the thought we have had under scrutiny. J.M. Creed has pointed out that there has been a widespread tendency in English Christology to see the Incarnation as the "climax and clue to a philosophy of the universe," and to see Christ as "a new divine principle [that] has been implanted in the human race." This tendency has made the idea of an archetypal or "impersonal" Christ an easy one to use. Cf. Dr. Creed's essay, "Recent Tendencies in English Christology" in Mysterium Christi, edited by G.K.A. Bell and Adolf Deissmann, esp. pp. 126, 7.

and unapproachable man. For example; it is quite true to say, with Dr. Relton, that to find perfection in manhood we must look to Christ and not to some abstract picture of perfection; though it may be wondered whether it is necessary to apply the standard of perfection to manhood at all. Yet even so, when Dr. Relton states that Christ "was perfect man because He was perfect God,"⁶⁴ hasn't something been lost from the humanity? Doesn't this tempt one to leave out the moral and religious struggles in Jesus, his moving always by faith and not by sight, his real doubts and anxieties concerning his vocation? Perhaps L. S. Thornton's analysis of Christ's perfection as "perfection in development," that he was perfect at every developing stage of his human life, is somewhat more plausible.⁶⁵ If human perfection is a meaningful category at all, then Thornton is right in seeing it as pointing to Christ's perfect meekness, submission, obedience.

This attitude of creaturely surrender which He embodies in His human life is to be the law of all true human life. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." He makes Himself one with all men in this.

True enough. Yet he takes a second step, implying a view of Jesus' attitude to himself that is unreal and strange.

Yet even so, [he continues from the above passage] in that very self-identification with man's true response to God, He is aware of Himself as possessing that attitude in a most final way.⁶⁶

64. H.M. Relton, A Study in Christology, p. 228. The whole passage here is an excellent example of how difficult it is to get a satisfactory picture of the humanity of Christ when one is bound by the categories for which Cyril of Alexandria only just obtained conciliar sanction.

65. The Incarnate Lord, p. 241.

66. Ibid., p. 248.

This we cannot believe. Is there not at the very centre of Christian ethics the conviction that true religious perfection is unselfconscious?

Perhaps the most traditional, or at least the most prevalent Catholic way of defining Jesus' perfection is by means of the virgin birth. It is unnecessary to present here a detailed critique of this dogma; it is, on the whole, passing to the periphery of Christological problems. But it has had its important moments in British thought, and it has often been defended in such a way as to suggest both an unbiblical attitude to sex and a concern to make the incarnate life totally different from the life of other men. Leonard Hodgson, for example, disposes of the objections to the doctrine on the grounds that most of them are based on the false pre-supposition "that the history of Christ's manhood must in all respects be similar to that of each of us."⁶⁷ This is false, he says, because in our case birth is the coming into being of a new self; while Christ's birth was not this, but rather the entry into historical conditions of the pre-existent self of the second person of the Trinity. This leads him to a position in which he seems to say that the only truly human factor in the incarnate life was Christ's body.

We should rather [Hodgson writes] 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

67. "The Incarnation," in Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson, p. 373.

time; for to be the subject of such experiences is to be human.⁶⁸

It is not difficult to fit the virgin birth into such a structure.

William Temple used the doctrine of the virgin birth more circumspectly, or at least more pragmatically. It is a doctrine, he said, which guarantees the fact that salvation is not man's achievement but God's gift. It points to the fact that, in Christ's birth, there is no active causation—no human father, that is; only the passive will of the mother. The Nativity, he wrote,

was in no way due to the active causation of man's will, though it was conditioned by the self-surrender of the Blessed Virgin to receive for mankind God's gift of Himself.⁶⁹

This interesting defence is vitiated by Temple's unreal distinction between active causation and passive will in sexual activity. The sexual act cannot be thus divided as between male and female; self-surrender at any rate is hardly a "passive" virtue. Thus his symbolic use of the doctrine of the virgin birth breaks down because it is based on an unworthy understanding of the true creativity and unity of sexual experience.

Whatever one's final decision about the doctrine of the virgin birth may be, it is at least the case that, as used in recent years, it has tended to minimize the reality of the humanity of Christ. Christian thought can more safely agree with Nathaniel Micklem:

68. *Ibid.*, p. 379. Canon Hodgson comes close here to a kind of hyper-Apollinarianism; Apollinarius at least granted that the body and the psyche of Christ were human, only the spirit being divine. Hodgson seems to imply that the body is the only human factor in the Incarnation.

69. William Temple, Christus Veritas, p. 162.

Jesus was a man, not Man; but, after all, this does not carry us far, for man is but another name for mystery. When we call Him a man, we mean only that, to the best of our knowledge, He had physical and mental powers similar to those of other men, and that He lived His life under the normal conditions and limitations of humankind....We can no longer assert with confidence that Jesus differed from other men in the manner of His coming into the world or of departing from it, in His physical constitution or His mental powers.⁷⁰

4. Two Reactions from Orthodoxy

Canon O. C. Quick presented an excellent statement of how the reactions of liberal and kenotic Christology arose in this century. The chief cause, he said, was in the inability of the formula of Chalcedon to offer positive guidance. This inability we have already noted and documented. Even though the formula affirmed that both the human and divine natures of Christ existed in him complete and unconfused, it remained true, nevertheless, that the nature of God was to be unchangeable and eternal.

Jesus Christ therefore, in so far as He was always God, can never have ceased to possess any of these attributes. He therefore suffered, was crucified, was limited in

70. "A Modern Approach to Christology," in Mysterium Christi, edited by G.K.A. Bell and Adolf Deissmann, pp. 157-8. It is interesting to compare this statement by Micklem that "Jesus was a man, not Man" with the later view he came to in The Doctrine of Our Redemption, pp. 30-1, quoted on p.165 above.

It may be noted here, before we pass on to the next section, that a great deal of the inability of orthodox Christology to achieve a satisfactory view of Christ's humanity, springs from its attempt to understand him in terms of "nature," divine and human. The crude picture of these two "natures" as somehow spatially existing in Christ is often behind much of the thought we have here discussed. Perhaps the reductio ad absurdum of this whole tradition is the guess of William Sanday (in Christologies Ancient and Modern, pp. 174,9) that the locus of "divinity of Christ is in the sub-conscious level of his mind! Cf. J.K. Mozley's critique of Sanday in his post-humously published work, Some Tendencies in British Theology, pp. 33-4. There is an excellent criticism of all attempts to solve the Christological problem in terms of "nature" in R.G.Collingwood's Religion and Philosophy, p. 159.

knowledge, only as man, and His person in its divinity remains strictly unaffected by any of these things. So it becomes almost impossible to conceive the human life of Jesus in its natural humanity as being really the act of God at all, although this was what orthodoxy clearly desired and intended to affirm.⁷¹

That this is a just estimate we have already observed from our study of orthodox Christology in this century. But, Canon Quick went on to say, it is difficult to get out of this impasse without moving into an even deeper one. Suppose, recognizing the inadequacy of the orthodox formulae, we decide to begin our thinking with the idea that whatever else he was, Jesus Christ was fully and completely a man. This, Quick pointed out, is where both the liberal and the kenotic Christologies began. But if this principle is firmly adhered to, it becomes extremely difficult to describe in a satisfactory way the activity of God in Christ.⁷² Let us turn our attention to the treatment of Christ's humanity in the liberal and the kenotic Christological reactions, to test the truth of this judgment that they are both involved in an impasse as serious as the orthodox one.

a. The Liberal Christology. The most important thing about the movement of theological liberalism was its method. In Christology, this meant a free and open beginning with what information about Christ the New Testament affords. Because of this fact, we shall rightly expect greater justice to be done to Christ's full humanity than could be done by an orthodoxy beginning with a con-

71. O.C. Quick, The Gospel of Divine Action, p. 80.

72. Cf. ibid., p. 98.

ciliar definition. Whatever may be said about the accuracy and ultimate value of the many studies of the life of Jesus, they do at least represent a piece of theological ground gained. Because of the movement of criticism of which such volumes were the fruit, we now have a clearer idea of what we mean when we talk about the human nature of Jesus Christ.⁷³ In 1922 Bishop Gore wrote:

Today it is not necessary to argue the case against Apollinarius. All our modern Lives of Christ, and books about Christ, give the fullest interpretation to His manhood and call attention to the overwhelming evidence which the Gospels give us of the human spirit—reason and will and feeling—in Jesus.⁷⁴

Whether or not Gore was correct in assuming that his day had witnessed a clear ^{victory} over docetism, his judgment of the effect of the liberal "lives" of Jesus was certainly a sound one.⁷⁵

But what precisely was the shape of the liberal Christology?

L. S. Thornton presents a critical but not inaccurate picture.

It is not, in fact, impossible for Christian theology to become infected with the spirit of the world, and so to minimize the fact of sin and the need of redeeming grace. The fact of Christ may then come to appear as the crowning point of human effort rather than as God's saving work of mercy for sinful man. Our Lord will then be regarded as the prophet of human progress and enlightenment. He will stand for the high-water mark thus far attained by our race. In this role He

73. For example, the vivid picture of Christ drawn by P.T. Forsyth in The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 65-6, could never have been done without the results of the nineteenth century German criticism which he knew so well.

74. The Reconstruction of Belief, p. 507.

75. In his essay "The Historic Christ" in Foundations, p. 75, Canon Streeter similarly spoke of the plainness of the gospel witness to Christ's full humanity as discovered by the liberal movement.

will seem to glorify man rather than God. By doing what all may do He will reveal the possibilities in us all. There would then be, in principle, no difference between Him and us. His life and death are a picture of how love acts, and so may ours be. We need not so much redemption from a fallen state as inspiration to lead a new life. Salvation would then come to mean hardly more than this; Christ has shown us the goodness of God; we should believe in it and live by that faith.⁷⁶

This passage justly describes the weakness of liberal Christology.

James Denney's remark is similar. Christ was not, he said,

merely one man more in the world, though one who (as it happened) knew God better than others; He was not simply a prophet like those who had gone before.⁷⁷

Liberalism, rightly desiring to begin with a fully human Jesus, usually exhausted itself in maintaining this and could say nothing further. For B. H. Streeter, for example, Christ was the perfect symbol of God, the fullest manifestation the world had ever seen of the eternal. The movement of "New Theology" at the beginning of the century displayed both grave theological weaknesses and a real awareness of the human figure, Jesus Christ. R. J. Campbell, one of the most articulate spokesmen for this group, insisted that the Jesus of history

did not possess the consciousness of Deity during His life on earth. His consciousness was as purely human as our own.⁷⁸

So if orthodoxy erred always by taking one step too far in the

76. The Doctrine of the Atonement, p. 34.

77. Jesus and the Gospel, p. 266.

78. The New Theology, p. 79. For a critique of the New Theology, cf. J.K. Mozley, Some Tendencies in British Theology, pp. 34 ff.

direction of docetism, liberalism generally erred by not stepping beyond its salutary reminders of the full humanity. And since it did not go further, even what it did say became wrong. As part of a frankly paradoxical statement about Christ, an assertion of full humanity is correct and indispensable. But, standing alone, it is made to serve as a description not only of the human nature, but also of the divine. This confusion of the human and the divine; or rather, this reading of the divine as identical with the highest (or most fully) human, is a strong trait in liberal thought about Christ. An example will make this clear. Malcolm Spencer, writing in the symposium, The Lord of Life, said:

The Divinity which was native in Christ is present in germ also in us, who are made in God's image. Indeed it is only in so far as there is a spark of Divinity in our humanity that we can recognize and worship the perfect Divinity of Christ. The unity of the human and the Divine in Christ is thus no metaphysical juggle or psychological puzzle: it is the unity of complete identity, the human reaching its true perfection, the Divine finding its perfect personal embodiment.⁷⁹

Christ is here said to be divine as all men are divine; he is divine when most completely human. This is a note that runs through a great deal of liberal Christology. One is tempted to agree with Canon Quick when he said that perhaps even the logical absurdities of Chalcedon are preferable to this.

Yet there is much to admire in a book like John Baillie's The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity, surely the most impressive working out of the liberal Christological position. The strength of liberalism can be seen in such a passage as this.

79. The Lord of Life, p. 315.

He is altogether one of ourselves, a man among men, a human brother to the lowliest among us, with the same handicaps and the same opportunities. He had His human chance just as you and I have ours; He had His life to make or mar, and His human free-will to make or mar it with.

But then the author goes on to define the difference between us and Christ.

He differs from us only in that He made more of His human opportunity than any of the rest of us has ever made of ours, and used His free-will to better ends.⁸⁰

Somehow, we feel that this does not say enough. Here, as was the case in orthodoxy, the difference between us and Christ is located on the human level: the difference in orthodoxy was in the structure of the personality; the difference here is one of insight and moral acumen. But this confusion or commingling of the human and the divine is necessary to Prin. Baillie's argument at this point. It enables him to achieve what he set out to do: to steer a course between the orthodoxy of Chalcedon and Leo which requires a dual nature and an alternation in Jesus between moments of one and the other, and an adoptionism which teaches that Jesus of Nazareth at some point in his career became or was appointed divine. Equating the human and the divine saves him from the dualism of orthodoxy; and it also saves him from adoptionism, because Jesus could not become divine at any particular time when divinity is defined as a part of, or at least as the perfection of, humanity.⁸¹

80. Both of these passages are from Prin. Baillie's early book, The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity, p. 108. It is important to note that the author would certainly not express himself in the same terms today. In fact, on p. 84 of his Invitation to Pilgrimage (American edition) he quotes almost verbatim from the above passage as an example of an inadequate and one-sided approach to Christ.

81. Cf. ibid., pp. 135-6.

Thus there are both real advantages and real perils in the liberal position. The perils are that if one begins with a full affirmation of our Lord's human nature, it is all but impossible to get beyond it. Is it possible to affirm to the full the humanity of Christ without saying that it is the only truth? On the other hand, Canon Raven has stated the lasting lesson that liberalism has taught in persuasive terms. We cannot begin, he says, as did the Alexandrian theology, with the incarnate logos. We must learn from Antioch at least in this. They began with

the facts of the Gospels, from the manhood not the God-head of the Master. Like the Apostles we must begin our apostleship at the feet of the Man of Nazareth, learning by patient study of the records to know Him in the days of His flesh, absorbing His teaching and letting His personality make its impact upon us.⁸²

So we can well learn the methodological lesson of the liberal Christology. The haunting question remains: can we begin with the man, can we insist on the full humanity, can we say at the start "no more docetism"-----and still go beyond it? Here we must turn away to look at the other great reaction from orthodoxy in this century, the kenotic Christology. Perhaps it can take us further along the way.

b. The kenotic Christology. The kenotic approach to the Christological problem, as it emerged in twentieth century British theology, can best be understood as an attempt to steer between the liberal confusion of divinity and humanity and the apparently inevitable devaluation of the humanity in orthodoxy. It can be granted that a kind of middle road was achieved. Certainly, the kenosis theory distinguishes itself from liberalism when it defines Christ's

82. C.E. Raven, Apollinarianism, p. 298. Cf. p. 308.

uniqueness in terms of his active relation to God. And it overcomes some of orthodoxy's difficulties when it insists that the Incarnation involved a double movement, kenosis and plerosis: God coming to man, and man being taken up to God. This at least improves on the strict orthodoxy of Dr. Mascall, who refuses to admit that Incarnation can mean "compression of the divine Word within the limits of human nature," insisting that it is only the "exaltation of human nature to the level of Godhead."⁸³

According to the central idea of the Kenotic Theory, what happened in the Incarnation was that the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Divine Logos, laid aside His distinctively divine attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence) and lived for a period on earth within the limitations of humanity.⁸⁴

Since our concern here is for the problem of Christ's humanity, let us look for the distinctive thing that the kenotic theory is able to say about this. It cannot be denied that some of the finest tributes to the human nature of Christ have come from representatives of this school. Prof. H. R. Mackintosh wrote a fine defence of the full humanity, directed against the orthodox theologians who account for Christ's universality by his "divinity."

We cannot indeed overestimate the importance of the fact that Jesus' redeeming influence on the world—all that has induced men to call Him Lord and Saviour—owes to His humanity at once its individual and its social power, and is complete only with the completeness of His manhood. It is as Man that He takes His place in the historic context. Of course, the influence of Jesus is more than historical; it is also what may be called super-historical, or, in one aspect, timeless and eternal. But yet this very quality of timelessness, whereby He becomes

83. E.L. Mascall, Christ, the Christian, and the Church, p. 48.

84. D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, pp. 94-5.

the contemporary of all ages, and touches sinful hearts in every land, conveying to faith the life of God, is something which only secured its foothold in the world through its actualisation as a real element in the time-series, a perfect earthly medium of grace. Had Jesus' manhood been fictitious or abridged, no fully saving power could pass forth from Him to win mankind, and God were still far away.⁸⁵

This passage embodies the real strength of the kenotic theory (or at least of its practice)---its unswerving faith in the full reality of our Lord's humanity. And Prof. Mackintosh was probably correct when he declared that orthodox Christology has never really been able to admit this. He perceived the inadequacy of all attempts to reinstate the doctrine of "impersonal humanity," and he questioned whether the statement that "Jesus was not a man but Man" could really be helpful. A nominalistic age such as the modern one, he declared, will never be persuaded of the real humanity if Jesus is only an abstract universal. His affirmation of the necessity of the full humanity is a striking one.

Were it conceivable indeed that we were forced to choose---as we are not---between the conviction that Jesus possessed true manhood in all its parts, and the assurance that He was the Son of God come in flesh for our salvation, our plain duty would be to affirm His humanity and renounce His deity.⁸⁶

At no level, he said---bodily, social, emotional, moral, intellectual, or religious---can we qualify this humanity.

P. T. Forsyth defended the full humanity in similar terms.

85. The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 385. In this passage Prof. Mackintosh made the distinction that orthodoxy failed to make between the universal significance of Christ and the alleged universal or archetypal elements in his inner constitution. He granted the first while denying the second.

86. Ibid., p. 395.

And when we are asked what we mean by the manhood of such a Christ, we do not mean some stalwart dignity with which he faced and owned God in self-respecting godliness...We mean much more than his intimate and sympathetic humanness...Christ's manhood, therefore, consists in the moral reality of his experience, his conflict, and his growth. It means his true ethical personality growing in an actual historic situation. It means that he counted in the public of his age, and really inhabited its spiritual milieu...

He went on to distinguish his own position from the liberal view that confuses the human and the divine.

His human person was not the most illustrious of the many spiritual and providential personalities that had appeared on earth from God...And his identity with Humanity lies not in prolonging, as it were, to the sky the rarest matter of the race, but in his own act of voluntary self-identification with it. His identity with man lay in no mere continuity of substance, nor even in participating in personality, but in his assumption of man's conditions of personality, and his renunciation of God's. It lay in his active acceptance of the human and sin-laden conditions of communion with God in such victorious and sinless way as to make that communion possible and real for every other personal soul. And amid all that we recognise in him of human conditions and human growth, even his growth in the consciousness of what he was, we shall be most careful to note that any growth in his sense of his Godhead was not the growth or acquisition of that Godhead itself.⁸⁷

This was a remarkably skilful attempt to affirm the reality of the humanity of Christ without falling into the errors of liberalism. In another passage, Forsyth set his position over against that of orthodoxy.

On the one side we have a personality taking the form and conditions of a corporeal life, in order to be the arena and the organ of God's revelation and man's redemption....And, on the other side, we have him growing in this corporeal personality, this increate but creaturely life. We have his eternal person living

87. P.T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 351-3.

under the conditions of corporeal personality.⁸⁸

This doctrine of kenosis has been subjected to criticism, and that primarily because of its rather crude way of treating the attributes of God in its definition of Christ's divinity. The critics are right to point out that we cannot define Christ by looking at God and his attributes, and then by subtracting some of those attributes until we come to a proper man. We can only know God through Christ; the process cannot be reversed. The theory is thus guilty of an imperfect understanding of the nature of revelation.⁸⁹ But what we must ask in this chapter is whether this theory's claims to give a satisfactory account of Christ's humanity can stand investigation. Certainly we could ask for no fuller statements of this than those we have already cited from H. R. Mackintosh and P. T. Forsyth. But are these statements really consistent with the kenotic theory itself? As we have already seen, Prof. Mackintosh claimed that the chief merit of the theory is that it alone can permit an unrestrained appreciation of the humanity of Christ.⁹⁰

88. Ibid., pp. 338-9. It might be pertinent to ask of the above phrase "increate but creaturely" whether it is paradoxical enough. Cf. p. 318: "He did become creaturely. He did not simply enter a creature prepared for him."

89. William Temple pointed to the most damaging weaknesses in the kenotic theory as a whole; its over-speculative treatment of the attributes, its suggestion that during the Incarnation the Son of God was denuded of his power, its radical distinction between the heavenly glory and Christ's earthly life. See his essay "The Divinity of Christ" in Foundations, p. 219 and Christus Veritas, pp. 142-3. Cf. also D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, pp. 94-8, for a concise summary of the criticism of the theory of kenosis.

90. Op. cit., p. 469.

We must look at this claim⁹⁰ more carefully.

In trying to derive a full humanity from the self-limitation of the divine logos, is not kenoticism really involved (at least in theory) in the same situation as the orthodox logos Christology: making the logos the centre of the human consciousness? It is the logos stripped of attributes that "becomes" the human person; but it is still involved in the attempt of orthodoxy somehow to transform the logos into a fully human "person."⁹¹ Thus the kenotic theory is in the position of insisting on the need for a full humanity, while providing a theory that makes that impossible to achieve. You cannot reach humanity by subtracting attributes from the logos; just as we have seen that you cannot reach divinity by drawing out humanity to the highest degree. Forsyth, we noticed above, could speak of Jesus Christ as "increate but creaturely." If, as he suggested, Christ's growing life is really a gradual recovery of the modes of being which he voluntarily put off; if, as he said, 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 manner of a man, and the mode of moral action that marks human nature";⁹² if in the man Jesus the attributes of the Son of God were potential and were being actualized all along; if all this---then we have, after all, a feigned human nature, a sham, a piece of play-acting.

91. For more detailed criticism along these lines, cf. J. Vernon Bartlett, in The Lord of Life, p. 175, and J.M. Creed, The Divinity of Christ, pp. 76-82.

92. The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 307.

Isn't there something unreal about the Son concealing his true nature from man? Can we really, on these terms, in spite of the protestations of the kenotic theorists themselves, grant that a full appreciation of Christ's humanity is possible along these lines?

We cannot do better, as a summary for this section, than to point to the reasons given by Prof. Mackintosh for modern theology's concern with this doctrine of the full humanity of Christ. What, he asked, does this doctrine contribute to Christian thought?⁹³

1. It guarantees a true incarnation. Christ cannot fully redeem what he does not fully share. We cannot come to him until he comes all the way to us.

2. It provides the essential basis for the atonement. A full humanity, in other words, protects Jesus' true identification with sinful humanity. His temptation, suffering, and death were real events. It was a man who died for our sins.

3. It secures the reality of Jesus' example. This is a major contribution of the liberal emphasis on the humanity of Jesus, Christian ethics, as well as Christian theology, has an interest in a real manhood for Christ.

4. It points to our ultimate destiny. If, as Paul claimed, our hope for the resurrection of the body depends on the resurrection of Christ, then it is surely true that a resurrection of a demi-god or half-man could not provide that guarantee. As Prof. Mackintosh said:

93. The remainder of this section owes a good deal to Prof. Mackintosh's remarks on pp. 404-6 of The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ.

it is because Jesus the Man has risen from the grave and passed to a transcendent life with God that we too may triumph in prospect over death.⁹⁴

5. The Atonement and the Human Nature of Christ

If we are to present an adequate account of the treatment of the full humanity of Christ in twentieth century British theology, then we must turn briefly to some aspects of the doctrine of the Atonement. The full humanity can be denied in this doctrine, just as it can be denied in doctrines about the person of Christ. We must seek some brief answers to these questions: Were Christ's sufferings real? Were his temptations real ones; did he overcome them in the same way that we overcome ours? What is the relation of Christ to sin? What about the dogma of sinlessness? If a Christian doctrine of the body points to a full defence of the humanity of Christ, then such answers to these questions as have been given in the period under investigation will be relevant to our task. For, as R. C. Moberly pointed out, "the body was the avenue of access of suffering, and through suffering, of temptation."⁹⁵ Unless, therefore, we can establish the reality of Christ's suffer-

94. Op. cit., p. 406. It is a proof of the close relation between a Christian doctrine of the body and the doctrine of the full humanity of Christ, that each of the four points above are also points which an adequate understanding of the body guarantees. We have already noted, in the first section of this chapter, the relationship between the Incarnation and the Christian estimate of the body. Our final chapter will deal with point four here; the relation between the doctrine of the body and the resurrection. We must now turn briefly to the relation of the doctrine of the body to the problems of the suffering, temptation, and sin in connection with Christ.

95. Atonement and Personality, p. 113.

ing and temptation, and further, the reality of his relation to sin, we cannot truly affirm that he who came for our salvation was a true man. And if we cannot affirm this, then the whole dimension of life to which the human body refers is irrelevant to salvation. But if these questions can point to a full humanity, then that dimension is assured its proper value.

In orthodox Christology, we have discovered, the full humanity of Christ was less satisfactorily attended to than in liberalism. The reverse is the case, however, when we come to the doctrine of the Atonement. Suppose we ask this question. Were the sufferings endured by our Lord during his life and passion real human sufferings? This question, it can be seen, is not of major interest to liberal theories of the Atonement, with their ideas of the cross as moral example. But orthodox thinking on the Atonement has seriously tried to grapple with this problem.⁹⁶

The most important question about the sufferings of Christ is "why." We must not think only of physical suffering, though this must not be completely set aside. We are to think rather of the suffering involved in Christ's struggle against sin and disease and unbelief.⁹⁷ If his sufferings were merely physical, we can say,

96. This is not to say that the orthodox answers were always satisfactory. Cf. the statement of F.H. Brabant in Time and Eternity in Christian Thought, p. 276: "In the human nature of our Lord we have human suffering coloured, as ours is, by the limitations and perhaps by the uncertainty of human nature; but of the Divine Nature we cannot admit any suffering like that; all we can say is that the Love of God has in it a readiness to suffer which is expressed in the actual sufferings of the Cross; the Divine 'sympathy' is not so much an entering into our sufferings as an infusion of His joy."

97. Cf. A.B. Macaulay, The Death of Jesus, pp. 135 ff., and J.K. Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement, p. 214.

he did not suffer fully. Mental, moral, even religious agony—these all were a part of the historical life of Christ, and they represent a more tragic kind of suffering than mere bodily pain could cause. William Temple analysed in an impressive way this question of the necessity of suffering in Christ. Christianity, he said, offers the free forgiveness of God on the condition of repentance. But how, Temple asked, can forgiveness be freely given without God compromising his righteousness? Wouldn't such a forgiveness be immoral? Temple's answer was that forgiveness costs God a great deal; and the necessary suffering of Christ is the measure of this cost.

The promise of free forgiveness on condition of repentance to men so blind and callous as we are would be demoralising. It could only be safely given by One who was also to lay bare the heart of God and show what sin means to Him, and therefore how righteous as well as deep is the love from which forgiveness flows.⁹⁸

Baron von Hügel wrote a fine defence of the reality of Christ's suffering, relating it to his full humanity.

The Humanity of Jesus Christ, as we have already found, brings temptation as near to God as is compatible with Godhead. And now we find this same Humanity of Jesus brings suffering as near to God as is compatible with the same Godhead. Indeed, the sufferings are so great as to require, for their sustainment by His human nature, the presence and action of the Divine nature, of the Divine Person which has conjoined itself to, and which

98. William Temple, Christus Veritas, p. 260. Cf. the full discussion of the problem on pp. 259-63, 269, 270.

informs, this human nature.⁹⁹

Theology has usually been inclined to argue that since Christ is fully human, therefore his sufferings are real. Perhaps, however, it would be nearer the truth to say: He must have truly suffered and died, therefore he was truly human. This "soteriological" approach to the humanity of Christ makes it unmistakably clear that every qualification of the full human nature is a denial of the reality of our redemption.

In addition to the full affirmation of Christ's suffering, the principle of "no more docetism" requires a statement about his temptations. These, Prof. D. M. Baillie has written,

were real temptations, which it was difficult and painful for Him to resist. His fight against them was not a sham fight, but a real struggle.¹⁰⁰

This much certainly a full appreciation of the humanity of Christ requires us to say. Yet this raises some thorny questions. We immediately are forced to take account of the key passage in Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning." Is there in human existence, it must be asked, such a thing as temptation without sin? Is it right to say that Jesus could not yield to temptation? William Temple

99. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 223. This passage shows the close relation between the problem of the Atonement and the Christological problem of the humanity of Christ. It might be pointed out that it is here part of an argument in which von Hügel was defending the orthodox doctrine of the impassibility of God. This doctrine, far from qualifying von Hügel's appreciation of the reality of Christ's suffering, actually seemed to intensify it.

100. God Was in Christ, p. 14.

declared that while Christ was fully human and subject to temptation, he was unable to yield to it.¹⁰¹

The relation of temptation to sin is, moreover, a difficult and delicate one to establish. We cannot say, as H. R. Mackintosh claimed,¹⁰² that temptation is merely the inner intention and sin the outer act. If this were the case, then Jesus' reinterpretation of the law in Matt. 5:28, overcoming the distinction between intention and act, would involve the denial of the distinction between temptation and sin. Orthodoxy's instinct has been correct, nevertheless, in ascribing real temptation to Christ while denying that he, as an individual, could be called a sinner. The relation of Christ to sin, however, is far more subtle than a negative ascription of sinlessness would suggest.¹⁰³ The presence of Christ at John's baptism of repentance, his corporate involvement in the sins of his people and the special responsibility for their sins that he came to

101. Christus Veritas, p. 217: "The human life [of Christ, he wrote] is truly human, and subject to real temptation; yet it is also true that He could not yield to the temptation. This is not even a paradox to anyone who has seriously considered what is involved in the temptation felt by a man of high character to an act contrary to his character; he is attracted by the wrong course; he has to keep a hold on himself; he knows he is making a real choice; yet (being himself) he could not yield. The effort needed to overcome the temptation is a real effort, but it is also a necessary effort because his character, being such as it is, must so react to the situation. Raise this to the ideal limit, and you have a character which still needs effort to resist evil, but (being such as it is) is bound to make the effort and to succeed in it." For a similar analysis cf. D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, pp. 14-5.

102. Op. cit., p. 402.

103. Cf. the doubts cast on the biblical basis of the dogma of sinlessness by L.W. Grensted in the appendix "The Sinlessness of Christ" in The Person of Christ, pp. 271-86.

take on himself, the word of Mark 10:18: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone"---all these facts make this a delicate problem. Perhaps the most terrible, and yet the clearest answer to this problem is found in the cry from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here is real desolation, defeat, and despair on the part of our Lord. Here his intimate relation with sin and with sinners is exposed and described.

God was in Christ doing whatever was done here. Yet the innocent One himself came so close to sinners here that his sense of perdition was real and terrible. It is at this point alone in all human history that sinful men approach nearest to understanding what Sin means to Holy Love. The Man called Christ is the only Man in all history who has seen Sin for what it really is.¹⁰⁴

So much is all that needs to be said here on this problem. But many related questions press for mention: Did Christ take on fallen or unfallen human nature? What is vicarious penitence? What is the value of the idea of Christ's sin-bearing? Here we can only say that the full humanity of Christ must force us to take very seriously the relation of Christ to sin. At the same time it remains true that being in the body does not make sin inevitable.

In summary, let us recall the several different questions concerning the Atonement and the full humanity of Christ to which we found answers more or less possible. First, we asked about the reality of the sufferings and the temptations, and we saw that

104. John S. Whale, Christian Doctrine, p. 88. Cf. Vincent Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Thought, pp. 127-9 and Jesus and His Sacrifice, pp. 125, 161. P.T. Forsyth made careful analyses of the relation of Christ and sin in The Cruciality of the Cross, pp. 101-2 and in The Work of Christ, pp. 212-3.

theology at its best has admitted these fully into the experience of Christ. Second, we found ourselves wondering about the relation of Christ to sin, and how far the interests of a full humanity require us to bring sin close to his experience. The question as to whether Christ committed sin is an historical one, and impossible to get an answer on, especially as it would mean seeking for historical evidence to prove a negative. The question as to whether Jesus knew he could not sin has been important for some theologians,¹⁰⁵ but we rebel rightly against a picture of Christ as believing in his own moral perfection. This is too Pharisaic; it seems more likely that Jesus' perfection would include a refusal to claim, a refusal even to be interested in, any kind of perfection for himself. The question as to the possibility of sin in Christ recalls the patristic distinction between posse non peccare and non posse peccare. Orthodoxy has generally preferred the latter designation, but recently John S. Whale has made an impressive plea for the use of posse non peccare, claiming that it safeguards both Christ's perfection and humanity more effectively than the other.

We cannot conceive that Christ in the wilderness was truly pure unless we also conceive that he was able to sin, and that he even desired to sin, but did not.¹⁰⁶

Finally, we looked at the dogma of sinlessness and asked whether it was adequate either to the humanity of Christ or to the task of describing his relation to sin. Many theologians recently have spoken out against it. Nathaniel Micklem has written that "sinlessness"

105. Cf. H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 35-6.

106. Christian Doctrine, p. 99. Cf. the discussion on p. 146 above.

does

far less than justice to the active, unstinted, triumphant love and loyalty towards God and man which Jesus showed in His life and, supremely, in His death.¹⁰⁷

In our previous discussion of the relation of the body and sin we pointed out that finite existence cannot be called inevitably evil. And here as well, in our study of Christ's humanity, it is essential to preserve the truth that sin is not inevitable in historical existence, that being human, being in the body, does not necessarily involve sin. Sin, P. T. Forsyth wrote,

is no factor of the true humanity, but only a feature of empirical humanity which is absolutely fatal to the true. What is truly human is not sin, but the power to be tempted to sin...Because Christ was true man he could be truly tempted; because he was true God he could not truly sin; but he was not less true man for that.¹⁰⁸

The problem of the relation of Christ and sin is, as we can see, a difficult and important one. The preservation of the full humanity

107. "A Modern Approach to Christology," in Mysterium Christi, p. 55. Cf. Paul Tillich, in "A Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Incarnation," in Church Quarterly Review, January-March, 1949, p. 145: "It is not wise to attempt to express the character of the New Being in Christ in negative and static terms such as 'lack of sin' or 'lack of error.'" Also against the dogma of sinlessness have been B.H. Streeter, Reality, pp. 189 ff. and P.T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 7. On the other hand, Bishop Gore, The Reconstruction of Belief, pp. 469-72 and H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 401, have both defended the idea of sinlessness.

108. The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 302. To make this point stronger, the last sentence here should read: "Because Christ was true man he could be truly tempted; because he was true man he could not truly sin...." L.S. Thornton has stated this same truth in his characteristic philosophical terms. "Ethical non-attainment and sinful estrangement from God do not belong to that divine pattern of creation...If our interpretation of man's experience in respect of the eternal order holds good, then there is no ground for doubting that a perfect humanity would share to the full in the pattern of creation manifested in other human organisms. Spiritual deterioration is not included in that pattern." The Incarnate Lord, p. 266.

of Christ does not require us to pin the label of sin onto Christ, but it may well make us suspicious of the dogma of sinlessness. His redemptive work could never pertain to us unless he had been fully like us. This, in a word, is why the problem of the full humanity is so important. It involves our very existence — the reality of our redemption.¹⁰⁹

III

The Miracles of Jesus Christ

Since this chapter is a recording of the evidence for a Christian doctrine of the body to be discovered in the life and teaching, person and work of Christ, it is fitting that it should be concluded with an examination of his miracles and his healing ministry.¹¹⁰ The very fact that the healing miracles in the gospels can be cited to establish the importance of the physical side of life has not always been acknowledged in Christendom. Not too long ago (and even today where the so-called orthodox view of the

109. It is probably true that the Atonement rather than the Incarnation is the key to a satisfactory solution to the problem of the full humanity. An excellent example of this kind of solution can be seen in a passage from the remarkable book by Prof. John Knox, On the Meaning of Christ, p. 105. "The burden of the Christian message was not that Christ was sinless in some Godlike sense, but that he had conquered sin; not that he could not die, but that he had conquered death; not that our enemies had not touched him—they had and had done their worst to him—but that they could not master him."

110. It should be noted, however, that the problem of the miracles cuts across the chapter divisions of this thesis. We have already briefly referred to the miracles in the first chapter; in the second chapter we presented an analysis of the problem of healing as it bears on the doctrines of God and Providence. And in the fifth and final chapter, notice will be taken of the resurrection of Christ—the healing miracle par excellence—and its relation to the Christian attitude to the body.

miracles still prevails) it was unthinkable that the miracles of the New Testament should be used to validate anything but the supernatural power of Christ.¹¹¹ But a number of thinkers have, in recent years, been pointing out that this old view of the miracle as a sign or portent or mark of supernatural power is clearly contradicted by Jesus himself. Nor is such a view supported by a careful study of the miracle stories. If, then, we can no longer accept the miracles merely as unique marks of the divinity of Christ, what is to be a basis for interpretation? There have been two recent answers to this question. They may be distinguished as the eschatological and the human interpretations.

Canon Alan Richardson and Sir Edwyn Hoskyns may be cited as the leading exponents of the eschatological approach. The former's book, The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels, is the clearest statement of this general position. Canon Richardson begins by distinguishing his view from that of orthodoxy. He writes that

the significance of the miracles lies in their character, or quality, or spiritual meaning, rather than in their impressiveness as mere "wonders."¹¹²

Nearly all of the modern writers on this problem have emphasized this fact: the miracles are Messianic works, marking the entry of the new

111. The famous controversy that arose over J.M. Thompson's Miracles in the New Testament in 1911 was largely over the problem of historicity. But many of the orthodox attempts to refute the natural explanations given by Dr. Thompson denied at the same time that there was a "natural" as well as "supernatural" dimension to the miracle stories. Cf. J.K. Mozley, Some Tendencies in British Theology, pp. 39-42.

112. Alan Richardson, The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels, p. 22.

age, the kingdom of God, into human history. Canon Richardson is unique, however, in his repeated insistence that this is the only meaning which the miracles bear. He is hard on those critics who trace in the gospel tradition a growing tendency to elaborate the miraculous, and on the matter of the miracles' historicity he comes forward with an all-or-nothing demand.¹¹³ He is equally hard on those observers who discern, alongside of the eschatological meaning, a quite human and physical side to the miracle stories. Prof. D.M. Baillie, for example, grants that the miracles must be viewed as mighty works of the Messiah, marking the entrance of the kingdom of God into history. But, he adds significantly,

they were also the works of the Kingdom, of the Messianic Age, in which the "powers of the world to come" were at the disposal of all who would believe. God had given such power to men. In that sense they were human works.¹¹⁴

But this would be denied by the "thoroughgoing eschatological" view as expounded by Canon Richardson. He views the miracles as physical acts but with meaning only on the spiritual level.

113. Either we believe in the power of God, he says, or we do not. The miracles present no historical problem, but only a theological one. If we ask "whether Christian faith, or the biblical principle of historical interpretation, if accepted, requires belief in the historical resurrection of Christ or of His wonderful accomplishment of the Messianic signs, it will be seen that an affirmative answer must be returned. Any other answer would make nonsense of the biblical principle of interpretation." Christian Apologetics, p. 175. Surely the camel's nose of biblical obscurantism is showing in the tent here. There is no "biblical principle of interpretation" to judge the Bible and Christ other than Christ as witnessed to by the Bible.

114. God Was in Christ, p. 14. Cf. Prof. Baillie's earlier book, Faith in God and Its Christian Consummation, pp. 234-5. The further implications of this "human" interpretation will be set forth presently.

The Gospel-writers portray Jesus as the Christ who fulfills this prophetic expectation, seeing in His healings of the physically blind the outward and visible sign of the gift of spiritual sight which the Messiah confers upon all who have faith in Him.¹¹⁵

This sacramental language, however, is inconsistent and misleading.

A sacrament must deem the "matter" it makes use of good and worthy on the human level before it can give it a deeper meaning. But here Canon Richardson does not allow the miracles to bear a physical meaning at all, so that in his view there is more "transubstantiation" than sacrament.

It would not have occurred to St. Mark to suppose that Jesus' power was limited by the subjective attitude of unbelief amongst the onlookers; this is a curiously modern view, based on an unbiblical psychological theory that Jesus' healing miracles were examples of "faith-cures" (in the modern sense), which cannot be performed when "faith" (i.e. a form of "suggestion") is lacking.¹¹⁶

Here the author is reacting against the modern attempt to explain the miracles purely on psychological grounds. To this extent there is an element of truth in his extreme remarks. But he reacts much too far, and caricatures the view he opposes. For him, in the miracles, Jesus is not curing disease at all but only acting out parables about the forgiveness of sins.¹¹⁷

Now it is very important not to go wrong on this matter of the

115. Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics, p. 226.

116. The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels, p. 44.

117. Cf. ibid., pp. 63 ff. How easy it is to pass from the balanced "A is not merely B" to the dogmatic "A is not B at all." One is tempted to say that the major theological ailment of the present day is the inability to make this distinction.

miracles, and it is very easy to do so. It is quite true that Jesus regarded the healing of disease as one of the means by which the kingdom of evil was passing away. Satan was identified as the source of both suffering and disease. And insofar as these were being overcome, the old age was giving way to the new. So when it emphasizes this, the eschatological approach to the miracles is a fruitful one. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns was related to this interpretation and was usually at pains to criticize those who see the miracles merely as examples of human compassion. Yet he could, unlike Canon Richardson, admit in a negative way the possibility that some of the truth belongs with the human interpretation.

The miracles that the Evangelist selects can no longer be understood merely as episodic, charitable, human actions; they are also, and indeed, pre-eminently, signs, signs of the Truth, signs in concrete action of the Glory of the Word of God. They are opportunities for faith, not occasioned by it.¹¹⁸

Let us turn to what we have called the human interpretation of the miracle stories. Leonard Hodgson represents the extremist wing of this school, as Alan Richardson does the eschatological. He calls attention with great vividness to the human side of the mira-

118. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, p. 62. It is difficult to distinguish this position, except for the brief nod it makes to the fragmentary truth of the human interpretation, from the older views of orthodoxy. For a similar analysis, cf., by the same author, "Jesus the Messiah," in Mysterium Christi, edited by G.K.A. Bell and Adolf Deissmann, pp. 73-4; and the sermon, "Sin and the Crucifixion" in Cambridge Sermons, pp. 58-9. The eschatological position was elaborated in The Riddle of the New Testament by Hoskyns and Noel Davey, but there is in this work an interesting appreciation of the human or physical significance to the miracles not found in Hoskyns' other works. The authors here stated that the New Testament miracles represent by and large fulfilment of Old Testament Messianic prophecies. Insofar as some of these Messianic hopes involved the restoration of nature and the physical existence of Israel, the New Testament miracles may be said to have the same physical interest. Cf. pp. 117-23.

cles, but virtually denies their eschatological significance.

For Him, then, they were not "mighty works" but expressions of love. When faced by human beings in pain His first thought was: "What can I do to help?" and, being who He was, His help flowed forth to the healing of mankind....Whether it were the ills of the body or of the soul that He met with, the Son of Man had come to minister. So He ministered.¹¹⁹

Hodgson begins, as every discussion of miracles must, with the ultimate miracle of the resurrection of Christ. And just as faith is the presupposition and not the result of our belief in the resurrection, so faith is the key to our understanding of the healing miracles.¹²⁰

It is interesting to note that Hodgson accepts the historicity of all the miracles with an argument much like that of Richardson, from whom he otherwise differs so radically. If healing is God's will, he says, then it is impossible not to believe that all of the cases of healing recorded in the Bible did in fact occur.¹²¹ If we believe in the power of God, he goes on, then it is not improbable that Christ as man shared this power to an extent we cannot conceive, through the power of his perfect human faith.

Thus, for Hodgson (unlike Richardson) it is not the divinity of Christ that lies behind the miracles, but the perfect faith of the

119. Leonard Hodgson, And Was Made Man, pp. 153-4. J.R. Illingworth, in Divine Immanence, pp. 88-9, made much the same point. Healing came naturally to Jesus, he said, because of his infinite capacity for charity and mercy.

120. Cf. John Knox, On The Meaning of Christ, p. 83, where the author shows that the miracles became accepted because of a prior belief in the ultimate miracle of resurrection.

121. And Was Made Man, p. 134. This approach to the Bible seems as questionable as that of Canon Richardson. Both writers escape from the critical study of the evidence.

perfect man. Just as faith can, over a period of time, discipline the natural passions and desires, so in the miracles of Christ faith transforms nature into something else.¹²² He concludes his analysis with an impressive statement.

To me the root of the matter is this. The miracles of Christ are worked through "faith." That "faith" was born of knowledge that certain things were necessary for Him to fulfil His mission. The question to be asked in the case of each recorded miracle is how its performance helped forward His work, what was its purpose in the mind of Him who worked it.¹²³

Canon Hodgson has rightly brought to light the profound human meaning in the miracle stories, and has rightly discerned that among the lessons to be drawn from them are the power of faith and the real significance of the bodily side of life.

In Prin. D. S. Cairns' book, The Faith That Rebels, the full value of the human interpretation of the miracles is preserved. At the same time, they are recognized as

revelations of the presence of the Kingdom of God, not, as has been said, seals attached to the document, but parts of the document itself.¹²⁴

The miracles, he declared, are not portents "outside" of the kingdom pointing to its presence, but a real part of the new life of the new community that God was bringing to pass among men. Thus Prin. Cairns

122. Cf. ibid., p. 138.

123. Ibid., pp. 140-1. For a similar analysis of the role of human faith in the healing miracles, see F.S.M. Bennett, The Resurrection of the Dead, pp. 153-4, and his earlier book, M. Coué and His Gospel of Health.

124. Op. cit., p. 70.

was able to show that the human and the eschatological approaches are not, after all, mutually exclusive views between which a decision is necessary. Faith is the key to both. Faith is not only the human means by which Jesus effects his cures,¹²⁵ but it is also the clue to the Messianic kingdom to which the miracles point.

The cumulative case seems to be irresistible. The Gospel theory of the "miracles" of Jesus is that they are the answers of God to the prayers of the Ideal Son, the Man who is the supreme instance, in history, of Faith, Hope, and Love; and that they say with unambiguous plainness that that ideal Man invited His disciples to similar enterprises of faith, encouraging them to believe that in proportion to their faith would be the manifestation of God's order, the revelation of man's life as God meant it to be.¹²⁶

This interpretation is, as can be seen, extremely fruitful for the doctrine of the body. It means that "even in His miracle-working He was 'very Man.'"¹²⁷ It means that Jesus expected the Messianic powers, which were powers of faith, to be available for the use of others, for physical service in the needs of men. It means that a transformed physical life is part of the life of the new

125. Prin. Cairns, op. cit., pp. 68-70, presented an exhaustive study of the eighth and ninth chapters of Matthew to show how important faith is in the miracle stories there recorded: in the healing of the leper, the centurion's servant, the faith of the people when Jesus approached the palsied man, the ruler's daughter, the woman with the flow of blood. All these stories, he said, can be described as stories about the effect of faith.

126. D.S. Cairns, op. cit., p. 85. Cf. the confirmation of this interpretation in Acts 3:16: "And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all."

127. A.G. Hogg, Redemption From This World, p. 65. Cf. Charles Gore, Dissertations, p. 203.

age; partly present now, but fully to be revealed in the last days.¹²⁸ And it means, finally, that the Christian in his petition and intercession ought to be quite free in asking for material blessings for himself and others. There are dangers in this kind of prayer, of course. But it is nevertheless true that there is nothing either in the will of God or in ourselves that should restrict our prayers merely to the so-called spiritual realm. This interpretation of the miracles reminds us that God is in equal control of, and has an equal concern and love for, the realms of nature and spirit, body and soul.¹²⁹

It is quite fitting that this discussion of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the body should conclude with a study of the miracles of the gospel. In many ways, these stories are the most direct and obvious validation of what we are calling the Christian doctrine of the body that can be discovered. For, as Prin. Cairns said,

They show us how we are to think of the Divine Love and Pity, which cares not only for the souls of men, but for their bodies. They show us that we are to think of the Divine Love in the simplest way as delighting in the dispelling of pain, the restoring of sanity, the satisfying of hunger, the preservation of life, the dispelling of premature death, just the things which ordinary love glories in being able to do.¹³⁰

128. Cf. A.G. Hogg, op. cit., pp. 39-42.

129. Cf. D.S. Cairns, op. cit., pp. 177 ff.

130. Ibid., pp. 221-2.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BODY AND THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH AND SACRAMENTS

Our search for a Christian doctrine of the body in the British theology of this century must turn to the doctrines of the church and sacraments for a single reason: to uncover the significance of the important phrase, "the body of Christ." Now it is clear enough that the use of the phrase to define the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is relevant to our task. We have already noted that the sacramental approach to theology is able, in a very fruitful way, to do justice to the goodness and reality of matter, the body, physical life. But it may not be so obvious that the use of "body of Christ" to describe the church can contribute to what we have called a Christian doctrine of the body. In this sense, it might be claimed, "body" is merely a metaphor. But even if it is true that "body of Christ" as applied to the church is only a metaphor in the New Testament (we will attempt to show that it is both a metaphor and something more), it is a true one. That is, it is used for a purpose; the word "body" is not there, as it were, by chance, but precisely because it bears a particular meaning, related to its meaning in other areas of Christian thought. Dr. John S. Whale has emphatically affirmed that the phrase "body of Christ," both as applied to the church and to the sacrament, extends and witnesses to the fundamental biblical concern for the body.

Indeed, following the Hebraic psychology of the Old Testament the central classical tradition of Christianity has asserted this indissoluble unity of "body" and "soul" in many ways. It has seen that both the Matthaean and the

Lucan versions of the Beatitudes---the one spiritual, the other material in its emphasis---are right, because they constitute a unity. It has remembered that the first sign whereby Jesus revealed his messianic vocation was his healing of bodily as well as mental diseases. It has confessed that the human body is a mysterious meeting place of nature with history; indeed, in the Body of Christ nature is united with history; nature reaches its fulfilment in that Body which is the perfect organ of the Spirit; it is this mystery which is fundamental to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.¹

Indeed, the author of Ephesians was aware that the doctrine of the body of Christ rested on the total biblical testimony to the meaning and value of the body: "For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body," (5:29-30).

In presenting the material of this chapter, we shall first attend to "body of Christ" as it is used to describe the church. Then its sacramental use will be considered.

I

The Body of Christ and the Church

1. The New Testament Meaning

The identification of the church with the Messiah's body must, at the beginning, have had an extraordinary and unprecedented effect. The church as the body of Christ? It is surely not a natural or obvious thing to say. Bishop Rawlinson has spoken of the effort it takes

1. John S. Whale, "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting," the Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1948, reprinted in Religion in Life, Summer, 1949, vol. xviii. no. 3, p. 440.

to make real to our minds the extreme violence of the metaphor involved in the description of the Church as a "body," a σῶμα .²

It is to Paul that we apparently owe the first use of "body of Christ" to mean something other than the actual physical organism of Jesus of Nazareth.

Christ's body of flesh had been crucified and broken. Through His ever-living Spirit He still works among men, but His Spirit must now have another Body as its vehicle and instrument on earth.³

There are two theories as to the origin of the idea of the church as the body of Christ in Paul's mind, and both of them may well be correct. One view, less widely held, says that Paul drew the idea of the church as a body from the Stoic teachers whom we know to have been active in Tarsus in the first century. Prof. W. L. Knox, Baron von Hügel, and Canon T. A. Lacey have all supported this position.⁴

On the other hand, it is suggested by others that behind the idea of the church as body of Christ lies, in Paul's mind, a memory of Jesus' words at the Last Supper, "This is my body."⁵ In effect,

2. A.E.J. Rawlinson, "Corpus Christi," in Mysterium Christi, edited by G.K.A. Bell and Adolf Deissmann, p. 231.

3. From the 1943 Report of the Church of Scotland on the Nature and Mission of the Church, in the volume God's Will for Church and Nation, p. 70.

4. Cf. W.L. Knox, S. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, pp. 160 ff., von Hügel, Eternal Life, p. 71, and T.A. Lacey, The One Body and the One Spirit, p. 233. The latter suggested in this passage that since σῶμα meant to the Stoic anything that existed, in contrast to φκντασία, Paul may have meant by "body" of Christ simply his concrete and visible reality.

5. A.E.J. Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 240.

this view declares, the idea of the church as body of Christ may be seen as an interpretation of what Jesus meant when he spoke of his body about to be broken for many.⁶ Vincent Taylor agrees that the idea of the church as the body of Christ is sacramental in origin; he adds that it is also sacramental in meaning. "There can be no doubt," he says,

that St. Paul's thought is sacramental in the sense that he regards material things as means for the manifestation and appropriation of spiritual realities. This is true... of his conception of the Church as the Body of Christ...⁷

When we come to study the actual passages in the New Testament where "body of Christ" or "body" is used to describe the community of Christians, we find before us a complex picture. In brief, the situation can be summarized thus: body or body of Christ is used to describe the church or the Christians as analogy, as metaphor, and (more rarely) in a literal or univocal sense. In the first instance, the Christians are likened to a body.

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Rom. 12:4,5)

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf. (1 Cor. 10:16, 7)

6. Cf. for an elaboration of this position: C.H. Dodd, "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament," in Christian Worship, edited by Nathaniel Micklem, p. 81; J.K. Mozley, The Gospel Sacraments, p. 40; L.W. Grensted, The Person of Christ, pp. 49 ff.

7. Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 209. C.H. Dodd, in The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, pp. 194-5, has also pointed to the similarity between the sacramental and the "church" uses of "body of Christ" in Paul.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Cor. 12:12)

There is no identification here of the church with the body of Christ, and, strictly speaking, not even of the church with a body. In the passage from Romans, Paul cites his readers' experience of being "in Christ" in order to underline their unity and mutual responsibility. "Body" here is simply the means by which Paul attempts to describe the unity and diversity, without mentioning the community's status as a church. Similarly in 1 Cor. 10:17. The "participation in the body of Christ" of v. 16 cannot mean the church, but rather (as in Rom. 7:4) the broken body on the cross: the death and resurrection of Christ by means of which Christians are united to him and to one another. This use of "body" merely to clarify the problem of unity and diversity is reflected in 1 Cor. 12:12, and probably also in Eph. 3:6, 4:4, 16. In none of these passages is there an idea of the body of Christ, nor yet any attempt to call the church his body.

Secondly, Paul moves beyond his statements that the Christians are like a body to the arresting metaphor of 1 Cor. 12:27: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." Here he uses "body" much as he used it in the passages cited above, but a body becomes the body of Christ. He comes very close here to saying that the church is the body of Christ, but perhaps he does not quite affirm this fully. "Body of Christ" may mean here what "one body in Christ" meant in Rom. 12:5, and what the formula "in Christ" means throughout all of Paul's letters. You Christians, he seems to be saying, are members of the new community which God has brought to pass,

and therefore you are obliged to use your gifts in a responsible way. In Eph. 4:12, 15, 16 and 5:30 there are also passages which use the idea of the body of Christ without relating it specifically to the church.

Some observers would include 1 Cor. 11:29 among those passages in which body refers to the church. L.S. Thornton does, for example, and according to him "to discern the Body...is to recognize the true pattern of the common life and our relation to it."⁸ The tendency to make Paul speak out against individualism in this passage is a common one among Catholic commentators.⁹ Others, however, have denied that Soma can ever mean a society or a "body" of people. Bishop Rawlinson, for example, declares that Paul means by Soma in this passage not the corporate life of the Christian, but rather "corporeality; visible, concrete reality; unity (as it were) of a 'bodily' kind."¹⁰ But whether "not discerning the body" (*μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα*)

8. The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 343.

9. It is also the view of Prof. H.T. Andrews in his chapter on Paul's use of the sacraments in P.T. Forsyth's The Church and the Sacraments, esp. pp. 162-3.

10. Op. cit., p. 231. A.M. Ramsey has declared that a careful study of pre-Christian Greek fails to reveal a single instance of *σῶμα* used to mean a society, "a body of people" in the modern sense. He doubts, therefore, if this meaning ought to be read into the New Testament. Cf. The Gospel and the Catholic Church, p. 35. Yet T.W. Manson, in a note in the Journal of Theological Studies, October 1936, Vol. XXXVII, p. 385, claims to have discovered a pre-Christian Greek example of *σῶμα* used to mean a "body" of people. He declares that it is "no longer possible to say that *σῶμα* is never used in pre-Christian Greek for a 'body' of people or a society." Later notes in the Journal of Theological Studies confirmed Prof. Manson's claim; cf. January 1937, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 165; and April 1938, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 243-6.

means unconcern for the common life or forgetfulness of the cross and resurrection, it is at any rate clear that Paul here does not identify the church with the body of Christ.

But finally, there are three passages in which there is suggested a much clearer relationship between the church and the body of Christ.

He is the head of the body, the church...(Col. 1:18)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what remains of Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church...(Col. 1:24)

For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. (Eph. 5:23)

Here, while the language is metaphorical, we do seem to be in the presence of something more than merely a figure of speech. Yet there are some curious points. In the first passage from Colossians, Christ is called the head of the body; in the second, he is the whole body. And in the passage from Ephesians, he is called both at once.¹¹

This, then, is the material from which the doctrine of the church as the body of Christ can be drawn. But there are reasons for caution in the use of this doctrine. First, we have seen that Paul played many variations on one theme, and it is almost impossible to get precise definitions from him. He was writing under the influence of such a vivid experience of personal salvation that he was never as unambiguously clear as later generations would have liked. Second,

11. Col. 1:24 should warn against the use of the doctrine of the body of Christ to claim Christ's perfection for the church. Christ is suffering, Paul says, for the sake of the church. It can be called Christ's body, but it is weak and incomplete.

it is not wholly satisfactory to call the doctrine of the church as body of Christ "Pauline." Colossians as a whole is most probably Pauline, but the difficult section, 1:15-29, is troublesome and contains a bit of logos-Christology that is closer to gnosticism than Paul was wont to get. Ephesians, of course, is considered by many to be the covering letter for the edition of Paul's letters that was drawn up around the beginning of the second century. The case for the Pauline authorship is, today, neither established nor disproved. The final point to be made is that the phrase "the body of Christ," while not in these last cases a metaphor, still has a metaphorical flavour to it, and care must be exercised in basing an argument on the phrase for this reason.¹² But whatever one's critical judgment on the presence in the Bible of a clear doctrine of the church as the body of Christ, the doctrine has been used throughout the history of theology, and fruitfully so. We can now turn to the use to which the doctrine has been put in the British theology of this century.

2. The Church as the Body of Christ

Because there has been no systematic study of this doctrine in British theology, no phrase has been made to bear more diverse meanings than "body of Christ." The task of disentangling them and judging of their value will be interesting.

One meaning has generally been agreed upon. When we think of a "body," it is said, we really refer to that organism which is de-

12. This caution has been uttered by T.A. Lacey, op. cit., p. 57; also by A.M. Ramsey, The Gospel and the Catholic Church, p. 34, and The Resurrection of Christ, pp. 94-5.

signed to express the purpose of a man, to be the instrument of his will. This is a basic affirmation about "the body of Christ" that nearly all theologians have made.¹³ But beyond this agreement there are real differences of interpretation. Suppose we set alongside one another two passages, both agreeing that the church as the body of Christ is his means of expression and purpose in this world. This will show the divergence of interpretation that the idea of the church as body of Christ has elicited.

In the days of His flesh, our Lord's human body was used as ours are for the expression of His Personality. The body is the means whereby the man reveals himself, the vehicle for his self-expression, the organism which his spirit uses in contact with the world of phenomena outside. The spirit functions through the body. The bodily presence of Christ is now withdrawn from the world.... Before He left the world and took His Body back to God, He had prepared another Body. He left behind a new Body and He came again to dwell in it on the Day of Pentecost. The Church in the world is the Body of Christ. In it He becomes incarnate again. In it He desires to live over again His Glorious Life of at-one-ment with God. This is the grand conception suggested by St. Paul's teaching, the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ to which He has come, in which He lives, through which He breathes forth His Spirit.¹⁴

But if this passage defines the glory of the church in terms of the body of Christ, here is another which does just the opposite. The church as the body of Christ is

the Christian society as the instrument of Christ in the world and the outward manifestation of His Spirit, the visible habitation in which He dwells. Nor is it an idealised Church which is thus described by St. Paul. It is the actual visible society with all its sins, negli-

13. Cf. William Temple, "The Divinity of Christ" in Foundations, p. 340, and H.T. Andrews, in The Lord of Life, p. 94: "He needed a new body and He made it of men."

14. H.M. Relton, Cross and Altar, p. 81.

gences and ignorances amid the resistances of history and the frustrations of the time process, which is the organ of the divine purpose....A body is not a fixed quantity. It is no mere aggregation of substances, nor is it merely the envelope of a spirit. It is the instrument of a life-purpose. It derives its identity and continuity not from the materials which compose it— for these are in constant process of metabolism—nor from the patterns into which it is organised—for it may yet persist in a changed pattern; but from the purpose by which it is informed.....[Therefore] the Church as the Body of Christ is itself in process of becoming and is never a static institutional system...It, too, is coming to its fulfilment, as more and more elements in the world's life are redeemed from the dominion of worldliness and incorporated into the Church, thus being made organic to God's will and embodiments of Christ's Spirit. Thus the Church is always unfinished, and is yet to be realised on earth.¹⁵

Nearly every possible meaning of the idea of the church as the body of Christ is touched upon in these two very different passages. We must now look more carefully at the precise meanings in the idea that have been found in the period we are studying.¹⁶

15. F.R. Barry, The Relevance of the Church, pp. 219-21.

16. There are some very interesting remarks about the church as the body of Christ in the first volume of the reports of the recent Amsterdam Conference on Man's Disorder and God's Design, entitled The Universal Church in God's Design. Bishop Gustav Aulén states that the biblical idea of the church is most exactly expressed by the idea of the body of Christ. He interprets this to mean that Christ and the church belong together; the church should reveal Christ; it should be the place where he confronts and makes demands upon men; pp. 19-20. C.T. Craig elaborates the meaning of body of Christ somewhat more explicitly. First he finds that the idea expresses both the unity and the diversity of the church. This was Paul's major use of the phrase, he says. Next, he points out that it is the nature of every "body" to be "the agency for the visible expression of the soul or spirit" (p. 40). Just as the person is not identifiable without a body, so the church needs corporate and institutional form. Thirdly, the church as body reminds us that it is "an organism which develops by transformation from within" (p. 41). The metaphor, in other words, helps us understand the facts of growth and change in the church. Father George Florovsky brings out, as does Aulén, the fact that the basic meaning of the church as the body of Christ is that there is a unity between Christ and his church. He adds that Paul no doubt derived this idea from the language of the eucharist. He goes on to add a note that is characteristic of orthodox and Catholic thought; the church is the body of Christ because it is the complement or completion of Christ. This he takes to be the teaching of Eph. 1:23.

a. The church requires a corporeal structure. The doctrine of the church as the body of Christ has often been made to point to this fact. It is a fact, of course, that has been strongly insisted upon by Catholic thought, but it need be denied by no one. A most persuasive statement of this fact, and one relating it directly to the importance of the body, was made by Baron von Hügel. If we value the life of the body, he said, then our faith must have a definite form and structure.

Spirit is awakened on occasion of Sense....Catholicism alone, in its deliberately Sacramental outlook, stands, fully consistent and persistent, for this great fact of Spirit and Sense, Spirit in Sense, Spirit through Sense.¹⁷

And even more explicitly:

...there lies ready for the docile mind the most varied, unforced, largely indirect and unexpected, cumulative and hence very powerful, evidence for the abiding need of the Church...The facts of man's essentially mixed condition of sense and spirit, and of his essential sociality will always, in the long run, refute and supplant, for the masses of men, every purely individualist or purely spiritualist religion. But body and society combined spell (if thus admitted on principle as essential factors of religion) nothing less than the Visible Church.¹⁸

Pure spirituality is impossible because it ignores a basic fact about human nature. This is a lesson, Bishop Cockin has written, which history teaches beyond any doubt:

17. Essays and Addresses, Second Series, p. 246. The Baron's assertion that this awareness is distinctively Catholic may have been true when he was alive. But its truth is markedly less today, when Protestantism is recovering the doctrine of the church under the impetus, in part, of the ecumenical movement.

18. Essays and Addresses, First Series, pp. 259-60.

A disembodied faith, a spirituality which despises institutionalism as an unworthy restriction of its freedom, does not retain either its purity or its vigour. It goes queer, because it is just attempting to ignore a basic condition of human life. 19

Lesslie Newbigin connects the prejudice against a corporeal visible structure in religion with the false spirituality that declares spirit alone to be good and matter somehow unworthy. He finds this idea at the root of much popular feeling that the institutional structure and unity of the church is a matter of secondary importance. He points out against such a feeling that at the centre of Christianity lie historical, material facts. The material and institutional therefore cannot be peripheral concerns. All this, he says,

is a vital part of what it means to be in Christ. The Church's unity is not merely spiritual. It is the unity of one divine organism, the Body of Christ, existing in time and space, yet showing the life of eternity. Visible unity and continuity are of its essence.²⁰

In Christianity, this author warns over and over again, the material is not set over against the spiritual, but is valued for itself. Thus both the present structure and the expected unity of the church must take on a substantial (and not merely a "spiritual") form.²¹

P. T. Forsyth, in his own day, warned against spirituality without substance:

A warm spirituality [he wrote] without the apostolic and evangelical substance may seem attractive to many—what is called undogmatic, or even unconscious Christianity.

19. F.A. Cockin, Christianity in Common Speech, p. 54. Cf. E.L. Mascall, Christ, the Christian, and the Church, pp. 118 ff.

20. Lesslie Newbigin, The Reunion of the Church, p. 26. Cf. p. 49.

21. Ibid., p. 53.

It will specially appeal to the lay mind, in the pulpit and out. But it is death to a Church. With mere spirituality the Church has little to do.²²

b. There is no Christian individualism. This is another truth which the idea of the church as the body of Christ has come to represent. There is no individualism in the life of faith, no purely individual salvation, no purely personal ethics, no private suffering, no private knowledge. And even if $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ in the New Testament cannot bear this corporate and communal meaning,²³ contemporary interpretation of the body of Christ has found one of its most fruitful lines of thought precisely at this point. Prof. D. M. Baillie, for example, has described the body of Christ as part of God's eternal purpose of community for man.

The "sacred story" begins with God's eternal purpose for man, as faith perceives it. His eternal purpose was that mankind should be "one body"...a free and harmonious fellowship of persons united in the love of God. In such a perfect community each individual would have the fullest and highest freedom—without which there can be no true fellowship. But they would not be "individualistic" in spirit: if they were, their personalities would be starved and cramped, since the true life of personality is in close fellowship. Moreover, fellowship with God and fellowship with men cannot be separated in human life—can hardly even be distinguished. Thus the true life of mankind is found in the corporate enjoyment of God, a life of complete community with God and man. That is true

22. The Church and the Sacraments, p. 4. In this same book, Forsyth presented a unique definition of the church as body of Christ. "Body" means personality, he said, and it is this which distinguishes the church from other social groups. They may be bodies insofar as they are composed of groups of people; they are not so in the sense of having an indelible mark of a person on them. Cf. p. 32.

23. Cf. A.M. Ramsey, The Gospel and the Catholic Church, p. 35; also p. 205 and note 10 above.

human nature, created in the image of God. That is God's plan for mankind: that it should be "one body."²⁴

But this true community, this life in the "one body," was interrupted by the Fall, and the sacred story thereafter becomes an account of God's breaking through man's recalcitrance to return to him the community he lost. Under the old covenant, not even the prophetic word was successful in calling Israel into "one body." Man continued to assert himself against the community and against God. But a new thing happened. After the bitter disappointment of the cross, on the day of the feast of Pentecost, the new community formed by the followers of the crucified Messiah was "one body" once more. "One body"—but of a unique kind. They called themselves "the body of Christ," and today, as then, this community

shares in the sufferings, as it keeps the Festival, of the Broken Body. And it cannot be content until all men have been drawn into its fellowship, even if the perfect consummation must be beyond the bounds of terrestrial history. It can never be content until mankind is truly "one body" according to the eternal purpose of God...²⁵

This doctrine of a corporate life and a corporate salvation in the body of Christ has bulked large in recent Anglican thought about the church. Perhaps William Temple's work is the most significant in this regard. He was an unsparing critic of religious individualism; in the church, he believed, society is prior to the individual member.²⁶ This interpretation of the body of Christ as pointing to

24. God Was in Christ, p. 203.

25. Ibid., p. 209. Cf. the passage from Edwyn Bevan cited on p. 223 below.

26. Cf. Temple's essay, "The Divinity of Christ" in Foundations, pp. 248-50.

the corporateness of the church is a very practical one. It means, for example, that there is no such thing as private truth. No one man has all of it; it is a corporate possession and knowledge of it is a corporate process.

A purely individual faith is bound to be precarious, partly because of doubts suggested from without, and partly because the whole Spirit of Christ can only operate on the whole Body and not in a single member. No one person and no one group of persons could claim to have exhausted the unsearchable riches of Christ.²⁷

This principle, if taken seriously, would go a long way towards breaking down the traditional conception of the church in Protestantism as composed of the leaders and the led, the pastor and the flock. And it would recall what should not have been forgotten: the reality of corporate responsibility within the church and the significance of the laity.²⁸ This line of thought is made even more clear when the idea of the body of Christ is seen as the true fulfilment of the Hebraic principle of corporate personality. L. W. Grensted has remarked that the secret of the Christian ethic is not a set of principles, but growth within a community.

This experience is continually tested in the life of the fellowship. The Christian does not live to himself alone. The standards by which his ideal is shaped are the standards of the Body of Christ. An individualism which breaks away from those standards cripples itself and wounds the Body. If one member suffer all the members suffer with it.²⁹

27. Temple, op. cit., p. 251. Cf. Alec Vidler, Christian Belief, p. 67.

28. Cf. P.A. Micklem, The Secular and the Sacred, p. 217.

29. The Person of Christ, p. 207. Cf. W.F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p. 126.

L. S. Thornton, in his exhaustive study on the meaning of koinonia in the body of Christ, makes a similar point in commenting on 1 Cor. 12:26:

The sufferings of one member are shared by all, because the body is an organism which functions as a whole. It follows that in the Body of Christ there are, strictly speaking, no private sufferings.³⁰

Not only are the common life and practice of the church corporate. So also is salvation, the very gospel it claims to mediate. Salvation is never individual or solitary.

It is never true to say that separate persons are united to Christ, and then combine to form the Church; for to believe in Christ is to believe in one whose Body is a part of Himself and whose people are His own humanity, and to be joined to Christ is to be joined to Christ-in-His-Body...³¹

Salvation "in Christ" is the same thing as salvation "in the body of Christ."

For the individual Christian exists only because the Body exists already. The self is known in its reality as a self when it ceases to be solitary and learns its utter dependence, and the "individuality" of Christians, with all its rich variety, springs from their death and resurrection in the Body which is one. In the Body the self is found, and within the "individual experience" the Body is present.³²

V. A. Demant describes the surrender that a man makes to Christ in the same corporate terms. To be a true surrender, he says, it has to be made

not to the heavenly Christ, but to Christ in his humanly disfigured body, the Church. To receive the truth

30. The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 36.

31. A.M. Ramsey, The Gospel and the Catholic Church, p. 36.

32. Ibid., p. 38.

about myself from the sinful man who is my fellow in the Church, that alone is full surrender...Christians do not accept redemption by faith, and then join with others who do the same, and so form the Church. Membership in the Church is an essential element in the surrender to Christ. To join an ideal brotherhood would be no act of faith but an expression of one's own judgment; but to take my life into the tiresome pettiness, the formality, conventionality, the stuffiness—and all the other human grime—of a congregation of Christ's Church and surrender to him there, that is the surrender of faith, and it is also the act of becoming a social being.³³

No illusions about the perfection of the church here; no injunction to separate from the ambiguous world into an ideal church. The church is the broken body of Christ, where, at the same time, a total gospel and a total salvation is offered.

Each soul is saved in a universal and corporate salvation. To be a Christian is not to attach one's salvation to a grand individual, but it is to enter Christ; and to enter Christ is in the same act to enter the Church which is in Christ. Faith in Christ is faith in One Whose indwelling makes a Church, and Who carries a Church within His corporate Person...Our union with other Christians is not a matter of mere choice but of spiritual necessity. We are one, not in consequence of each being in Christ, but in the very fact that He is. Hence the Church was the body of Christ before it had anything that could be called organisation.³⁴

L. S. Thornton has pointed out that it is appropriate that the locus of redemption, the church, should be called the body of Christ because part of God's work can be described as a "redemption of the body."

Through the redemption of the body the relationship between the soul and body has been transformed. Consequently the redeemed body has, even in this life, a

33. Theology of Society, p. 24.

34. P.T. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments, pp. 43,4.

share in the privileges and graces conferred by redemption upon the regenerate soul. There is an organism of the new creation which is the locus of the new fellowship between God and man. From the point of view which emphasises organic unity in the new creation this organism is fittingly called the Body of Christ.³⁵

And further, this corporate salvation in the body of Christ provides a powerful moral dynamic. The bodily side of all life must become subject to this salvation.

Through the outward movement upon the world of that communion in the Christ-Spirit which is His supremely redemptive gift, there may be fashioned a transformed social order in which the changing materials of the world's life---biological, economic and political, with all the technical factors involved in them---may be made the Incarnation of that Spirit and the outward embodiment of His will for men. That is implied in the phrase, the Body of Christ.³⁶

And so it seems that both theology and ethics are moving away from individualism. In other words, the idea of the church as the body of Christ is being interpreted to mean that, in the church, individualism is taken up into the community: not annulled but fulfilled there. In reinterpreting its corporate, its "bodily" nature, the church is at last doing justice to a dimension of human existence that has long been recognized outside the church. One of the finest expressions of the meaning of corporate responsibility ever written is that of the late Antoine de St. Exupéry, writing in his Flight to Arras about the fall of France.

The spiritual communion of men the world over did not operate in our favor. But had we stood for that communion of men we should have saved the world and our-

35. The Common Life in the Body of Christ, pp. 18-19.

36. F.R. Barry, op. cit., p. 60.

selves. In that task we failed. Each is responsible for all. Each is by himself responsible. Each by himself is responsible for all. I understand now for the first time the mystery of the religion whence was born the civilization I claim as my own: "To bear the sins of man." Each man bears the sins of all men.

This is what theologians mean when they come to call the church the body of Christ.³⁷

c. The shame and glory of the church. The church has only recently learned the art of self-criticism. The idea of the church as the body of Christ has, moreover, both confused and aided her in the practice of this art. Yet, when rightly interpreted, "body of Christ" is perhaps the most accurate formula by which to describe the terrible ambiguity in the life of the church which Christians are now learning to admit with open and humble eyes.

To some it has occurred that to call the church the body of Christ is to compare it to an organism. It has been concluded, therefore, that as an organism the church is subject to normal laws of growth and development, and has within itself the capacity for change.³⁸ There is perhaps some value in this comparison; though to be consistent, proponents of the church-as-organism theory would

37. C.H. Dodd has pointed to the relation between this "corporate" meaning of the body of Christ and the attempt to find a progressive evolution towards individualism in the biblical revelation. It would, he writes, "be untrue and misleading to suggest that the New Testament represents the culmination of a development in the direction of individualism. It is of course true that the religious and moral significance of the individual is asserted by the New Testament writers at least as firmly as by Jeremiah; but on the other hand the conception of an organic solidarity of the people of God reaches its fullest expression in the New Testament idea of the Church as the "Body of Christ'." The Bible Today, p. 147.

38. Cf. E.L. Mascall, Christ, the Christian, and the Church, pp. 118 ff.

have to admit the reality of decay, senility and death as well. On the whole, the idea is probably too awkward to be of much use. It is more plausibly pointed out that the church, if it is really to be the body of Christ, cannot tolerate the presence of denominationalism and schism. Lesslie Newbigin remarks, for example, that the presence of disunity in the church qualifies the appropriateness of "body of Christ" as a description.³⁹ Consequently, the vision of the church as the body of Christ has been a powerful impetus to the plans of church unity and union now extant. But it has also been suggested that there is a weakness as well as an advantage in this way of speaking. The idea of the church as a body with several differing members must not allow an easy toleration of existing denominations on the alleged grounds that

different Churches serve a useful purpose in the providence of God because each makes its unique contribution to the many-sided richness of the manifestation of Christ to the world.⁴⁰

If the church is a body at all, it is one body; the diversity of gifts thus applies to a united, not a divided church. When the church is divided, as it is today, Christ's body—his very self—is not whole; his will and authority on earth are gravely weakened. At its best, then, the idea of the church as body of Christ should encourage intolerance of denominations; diversity can be admitted

39. *Op. cit.*, p. 100. This statement implies that "body of Christ" describes the perfection of the church; that "body" in this case is the perfected, risen body of the Lord. As we shall point out, this may not be the most fruitful way of reading the phrase when speaking of the strength and weakness of the church.

40. Daniel T. Jenkins, The Nature of Catholicity, p. 127.

only when it arises out of unity.

Some have spoken of the weakness and strength of the church as two aspects of the same entity, viewed only from different perspectives. R. C. Moberly wrote, for example, that just as man is both body and soul, with a higher and lower part, so is the church. As spirit is the determining thing in human nature, similarly the Holy Spirit is the characteristic mark of the church. "The visible Body is the spiritual Church," he said, and "is so really....it does not represent—but it is the Kingdom of God upon earth."⁴¹ As body, then, the church is weak; but as Spirit it is strong. Prof. J. H. S. Burleigh, on the other hand, uses the idea of the body of Christ to describe what the church ought to be, implying that insofar as the church still knows weakness and sin and schism, it is not that body. Yet he does not blink at the sin of the church.

Assuredly the Church on earth occupies a position full of paradox. Outwardly it is an historical institution with interests and ambitions of its own, with policies and mechanisms for making them effective. Whether it seek world-domination or merely self-preservation, there is always the temptation to "use" God for its own purposes, and so to become a veritable Civitas Terrena, unintentionally and unconsciously...But, on the other hand, the Church is also an institution with an appointed place in God's eternal purpose for man in history. It is founded by the Gospel of grace. It is entrusted with the proclamation of that Gospel to the ends of the earth and to the end of time. It remains, subject to the Word, and it watches and prays, looking for the promised consummation of redemption. It is Christ's Kingdom, but only "in a sense" and as it remains subject to its King. It

41. R.C. Moberly, Ministerial Priesthood, p. 40. The second chapter of this work, entitled "The Relation of Inward and Outward," is an interesting analysis of this idea, comparing the nature of man as body and spirit to the church, with its body and its Spirit.

is Christ's Body, but only lives as it remains subordinate to its Head.⁴²

This is an excellent statement of the paradox of the church; in the final sentence the body of Christ is used to describe the perfection of the church which it does not yet possess.

But some have found yet another use for the formula "body of Christ." "The Church's one foundation, and the trust of its ministry, is not simply Christ, but Christ crucified." Thus P. T. Forsyth wrote.⁴³ That is to say, the "body of Christ" which can be compared to the church is not the body in contrast to the Spirit, nor yet the risen, and perfected body, but the broken body—broken on the cross by the sins of self-righteous men; and in the church today still largely known as broken. This position therefore would not use "body of Christ" to describe the perfection of the church; but as the most vivid way of portraying the real, sinful, and very human church. William Temple said that the answer to the problem of the imperfection of the church is that "the Body itself is still imperfect; and therefore the Power of Christ that works in it is still imperfect."⁴⁴ The church as body of Christ today, he said, can be called a torso; the body or the church is imperfect, for

a head without a body, or with a maimed, imperfect body, is ineffective; its purpose may be excellent, but its achievement will be small. So Christ in Himself is com-

42. The City of God, pp. 183-4. Cf. C.H. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p. 153.

43. The Church and the Sacraments, p. 34.

44. In Foundations, p. 347.

plete; in His earthly life the whole character of God was manifest. But in power over the world He is incomplete until the Church, His Body, the instrument by which He accomplishes His will, is complete.⁴⁵

So there have been many attempts to grapple with the problem of the ambiguity of the church by means of the formula "body of Christ." Perhaps the best way to clarify the problem is to say that the church as Christ's body is both the broken and the glorified body. As it exists in time it is observed and known primarily as broken, sinful, contingent, finite. Its "glory" or perfection consists not so much in some possible "ideal" which it may some day attain, but in that to which it witnesses, while it is yet sinful. Its true perfection lies in what it waits for; in the realm, thus, of Christian hope. The church as broken body of Christ is thus an adequate descriptive figure for the church as it exists. John Oman described this side of the truth admirably.

As Pascal says, we touch the risen Christ only through His wounds, and when we try to sink ourselves in His glory or try to absorb ourselves in the Church as though it were His glorified body, and not His body only as we in our mortal conflict manifest the spirit which brought Him to the cross, we merely substitute for reconciliation in our whole personal life to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a vast shining abstraction of power which does not transform but remove the burden of the world and which saves us from the conflict and does not send us forth with high hearts to the battle in which we must win our souls as the children of God.⁴⁶

The church as the glorified body is, however, an eschatological conception. Edwyn Bevan described this side of the truth.

45. Ibid., p. 359.

46. Grace and Personality, pp. 245-6.

Christian doctrine asserts that the perfect Society, which is an impossibility under our present laws of space and time, will be realized in another mode of existence. The "divine event," in fact, "to which the whole creation moves," is the realization of this society "in Heaven"...Human persons who had passed through life on earth, who, if their life on earth extended beyond infancy, had sinned and been saved, would form a special body, the Body of Christ, the Church. What we ordinarily call the Church, the community of Christians alive in the world around us, is just a small fraction of the perfect Society in the making, and, like anything else in the making, its significance can be understood only in reference to what it is intended to be when made. There is no entity of which it is more true than that, in order to consider it properly, we must begin at the end than the Christian Church. This may be expressed in the jargon of theology by saying that the significance of the Church is essentially eschatological.⁴⁷

Thus the true ambiguity of the church, the true perspective from which to estimate its shame and its glory, is not to be rendered in terms of the real and the ideal. The true tension is between present and future; the church has, but does not yet fully have, the truth about God's activity. The kingdom is in its midst, but it has not yet been completed.

Only by moral effort, discipline, and experience does the believer become the Christian he is...The Kingdom is therefore at once both a possession and a problem. It is that relation to God in which we have all things, yet in which also we have to win all things. It is a present relation and a future society.⁴⁸

Thus if we do say that the church is both the broken and the glorified body of Christ, it is only in the "last days" that the glorified body will be present to the believer. It is known now, not even

47. "The Church," in The Christian Faith, edited by W.R. Matthews, pp. 238-9. Cf. C.H. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p. 159.

48. P.T. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments, pp. 89, 91.

to the eye of faith, but only to the eye of hope. The church as man sees it, even after all human perfecting has been done, will still be the broken and the crucified body of the Lord.⁴⁹

d. Christ and the church: extension of the Incarnation?

The presence of Christ in the world and His work for the world is continued through the existence within the world of a living organism which has so close a union with Christ that it can be called His body.⁵⁰

This sentence suggests one of the most important uses to which the formula "body of Christ" has been put. It calls attention not merely to a group of individuals, but to the head of that group—to Christ. Body of Christ, therefore, implies a definite relation between the Christian and Christ. To call the church the body of Christ, A. M. Ramsey has pointed out, was in primitive Christian circles "to draw attention to it not primarily as a collection of men, but primarily as Christ Himself in His own being and life."⁵¹ But what exactly is this relation described by the phrase as it is experienced in the church? A. G. Hebert answers this question by asking what it means to become a "member" of this body. It does not

49. Cf. C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 101, on the church as crucified and glorified body of Christ. Also Oscar Cullmann, Christus und Die Zeit, p. 136: "Die Kirche ist das irdische Zentrum, von dem aus die ganze Herrschaft Christi sichtbar wird. Sie ist der Leib Christi als des Gekreuzigten, aber auch des Auferstandenen."

50. J.K. Mozley, The Gospel Sacraments, p. 42.

51. The Gospel and the Catholic Church, p. 35. Ramsey supports this distinction by an analysis of the biblical use of $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$. Cf. note 10, above. In his later book, The Resurrection of Christ, p. 93, he says: "The emphasis in the phrase 'Body of Christ' is upon the word of Christ. The Christians are His Body, the sphere of the action of His risen life."

mean, he says,

merely belonging to a religious society called by His name: though the practice of churchmen who have forgotten what Christianity is may sometimes make it mean little more than that. It means an identification with Christ in His crucifixion, so that in us also the impulses and desires of self-centred human nature are no longer able to rule over us, and are removed and done to death; and an identification with Christ in His resurrection, so that the spirit of man, sin having no longer dominion over it, is set free to serve God and to do what all along it would gladly have been doing if only it had been able.⁵²

Likewise E. L. Mascall defines the body of Christ as that which guarantees an intimate relation between Christ, the Christian, and the church. He defines membership in the body of Christ as becoming

incorporated into the human nature of Christ...; it involves a real participation in Christ's human nature on the part of the believer and a real communication of it to him....For the relation of Christians to Christ is not one of external juxtaposition; it involves even more intimacy and interpenetration than exist between the head and body of a man. The Christian is re-created into Christ. Christ's life becomes his life, and Christ's sonship his sonship.⁵³

Thus Mascall interprets entrance into the body of Christ "ontologically and realistically" (p. 112), while Hebert stays within the metaphorical scheme. Such language of physical identification of the church and the Christian with Christ runs into the danger of assuming that the believer and the church "possess" Christ in some unalterable physical way. Christ then becomes a claimed possession to be used by the church, and thus both believer and church are tempted into a self-righteousness which has forgotten that the

52. A.G. Hebert, The Form of the Church, p. 61.

53. Christ, the Christian, and the Church, pp. 109, 111.

Christian and his community are judged by Christ and can "hold" him only when he is not actually claimed. Thus, if the idea of the church as the body of Christ reminds us that the community is the recipient of the redemptive activity of God, the related but different idea of Christ as head of the body reminds us that the church as the body can never claim full possession of its Lord.⁵⁴

After a discussion of those passages in the New Testament that speak of the church as the body of Christ, L. S. Thornton concludes that the phrase can mean one of two things about the relation of Christ and his church: the earlier epistles seem to identify Christ and the church, while in the later epistles the church is seen not as identical with, but as complementary to Christ, the head of the body. Thornton clearly recognizes the dangers in the latter position, but supports the implications of the former:

Whatever developments may be traced in the doctrine of the Body of Christ as between earlier and later Pauline epistles, these are subsidiary to the main conception, namely, that Christ and his people share one single life together after a manner which can be fitly symbolized by the idea of a single human organism. Whatever distinctions are to be recognized, they must be compatible with the notion of a living unity which justifies the language of identity as actually used.⁵⁵

54. This double truth has been pointed out in a recent article by Prof. Dodd. "Hence the Church is the 'body' of Christ; in two senses: (1) the Church is the body of Christ in such a sense that it can be said, 'As the body is one and has many members, so also is Christ' (I Corinthians 12:12), or, 'We being many are one body in Christ' (Romans 12:5); i.e., Christ is identified with the body; (2) Christ is distinguished from the body as its 'Head,' the seat of authority over the whole. As such he is Kyrios." "The Foundations of Christian Theology," Theology Today, Vol. VII, no. 3, October, 1950, p. 317.

55. L.S. Thornton, op. cit., p. 48.

Some observers, however, have been uneasy both with this idea of an identification of the Christian with Christ and with the related idea of the physical incorporation of the believer into Christ's human nature. C. H. Dodd, at one point, interprets the doctrine of the church as the body of Christ as Paul's accommodation to the waning hope of the parousia. As the early church began to outgrow its literal expectations of the second coming, he says, Paul developed this idea to help Christians come to terms with the disappointment. Thus, according to Prof. Dodd, Paul means by the doctrine of the church as the body of Christ that Christ had already come "again"; that no further coming need be expected.

It was not enough to say that Christ, being exalted to the right hand of God, had "poured forth" the Spirit. The presence of the Spirit in the Church is the presence of the Lord...Thus the "one body" which the one Spirit created is the Body of Christ. To be "in the Spirit" is to be "in Christ," that is to say, a member of the Body of Christ. The personality of Christ receives, so to speak, an extension in the life of His Body on earth.⁵⁶

This unique and interesting interpretation has both the strength and the weakness of the general position known as "realized" eschatology. Its strength is that it defines in a clear way the presence of Christ in the church. Yet to read out of the picture in this way the doctrine of the second coming is to lose the idea that there is an ultimate (i.e., eschatological) judgment awaiting all the works of men including the church. To be sure, Christ, the Christian, and the church must be shown to possess a close inter-relationship. But there are two ways of making this clear. We may think of the church as containing Christ in some exact way, so that there is, so

56. C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, p. 147.

to speak, nothing of Christ that the church does not know. Or, we may reverse the picture and think of Christ "containing" the church, present in it to be sure, but present often as judge and as prophet. In the first instance, Christ is found where the church is found; in the second, the church is found where Christ is. Perhaps, after all, Christ is the only true "mark" of the church. And if it is true that the doctrine of the body of Christ identifies Christ with the church, it is only so in the sense that God "identified" himself with his people when he declared: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

These two approaches to the problem of Christ and the church are further clarified by a passage from one of the preparatory volumes to the Oxford Conference on the Church, Community, and State:

If the Church is primarily conceived as being in possession of supernatural life, it will be thought of as an "extension of the Incarnation," and as a body, the life and tradition of which carry a certain authority within themselves. On the other hand, if the Church is primarily viewed as existing "between the times," and the fundamental difference between the Church and the Kingdom is strongly underlined, it will be held that the Church remains exclusively dependent on the revelation in the New Testament message as "over against" its own life.⁵⁷

When one thinks of the church as the body of Christ, it is easy to see how the idea of the church as "extension of the Incarnation" could arise. Our study of the doctrine of the body of Christ as a means by which the relation of Christ and the church is defined might well close with an attempt to investigate this phrase "extension of

⁵⁷. W.A. Visser't Hooft and J.H. Oldham, The Church and its Function in Society, p. 27.

the Incarnation." Is it, or is it not preferable to the idea of the body of Christ? One recent writer has expressed himself vigorously on the matter.

The danger of pride and of attempted escape from judgment always has beset the historic Church. This danger is clearly seen in the phrase so often used by Catholic writers, defining the Church as "the extension of the Incarnation." The phrase is unscriptural. Guardedly used, it contains a truth. But the Catholic tradition has sinned precisely in using it unguardedly. One of the issues causing the Reformation can be traced to Rome's equating of a single, historic Church with the Head of the Church—Incarnate God Himself. The scriptural figures for the Church—Bride of Christ, Body of Christ—are very much safer.⁵⁸

Let us, as a conclusion to this section, note some of the criticisms of this idea that have been made in recent times. Perhaps three basic objections to it can be discerned.

First, the idea of the church as the extension of the Incarnation is not in the New Testament. Not only this, but the idea is "quite irreconcilable with the New Testament evidence."⁵⁹ According to the New Testament, Christ's presence with the church after Pentecost was quite different from his historical presence with the disciples. The whole Bible

is the story of the People of God, of God dealing with men on the plane of history through a particular people and a particular society, yet it is a confusion of terms to subsume this under "the law of incarnation," for the Incarnation was an event, the crucial event, within this whole history. It had a beginning and an end.⁶⁰

58. Canon T.O. Wedel, The Coming Great Church, pp. 74-5.

59. Lesslie Newbigin, op. cit., p. 60.

60. Ibid.

It was something done once and for all; thus it cannot be repeated and cannot be "continued" or "extended." P. T. Forsyth put his objection on biblical grounds somewhat differently. In the Bible, he said, the Incarnation meant that Christ's soul took on a material body; but "the Church in which Christ dwells is not a material body, but an organism of spirits."⁶¹ Thus, he concluded, the church which Christ created cannot be an extension of the uncreated Christ.

Second, it has been said that the idea of the church as extension of the Incarnation is untenable on theological grounds. When the church is defined as an extension or prolongation of just the Incarnation, it becomes difficult to relate the church to the other aspects of the total event of Christ not included in the word Incarnation. The cross---the death and resurrection of Christ---tends to be passed over. But the church, P. T. Forsyth said,

has a more direct connection with Redemption than with Incarnation....[and therefore] the Church is not the continuation of Christ, but His creation and His response.⁶²

When the cross is thus excluded from the definition of the church, the presumption that comes from claiming Christ too absolutely becomes dangerous. If it is once admitted, Lesslie Newbigin has said,

that the Church must look beyond itself to Him, and especially must look to His Cross and Resurrection, must not only transmit His authority but also submit

61. The Church and the Sacraments, p. 82.

62. Op. cit., p. 83. Forsyth observed here how easy it is to go on to say, once the church is described as an extension of the Incarnation, that the sacraments are extensions of the Atonement, and therefore that the Lord's Supper is "a sacrifice offered instead of the acceptance, from a present Christ's hands, of His offering once for all."

afresh in every age to His authority; if it be admitted that its sacraments are sacraments of the Gospel, always to be administered with the Word that points men back to their source, then it cannot be agreed that the Church is an extension of the Incarnation.⁶³

A. M. Ramsey has declared that if Christians could learn to look at the church as it really is, they would never be tempted to confuse it with the Incarnation.

Looking at it now, with its inconsistencies and its perversions and its want of perfection, we must ask what is the real meaning of it just as it is. As the eye gazes upon it, it sees—the Passion of Jesus Christ.⁶⁴

The passion of Christ and the sin of man that brought it to pass must always serve to keep the church from defining its relation to Christ in terms of any precise formula.

We cannot therefore know the touch of Christ through crude historical connection, so that the hand of the Bishop upon us is the same, through some miracle of transubstantiation, as the hand of the Lord, which is what the simple statement that the Church is the extension of the Incarnation would appear to imply.⁶⁵

Third, it seems clear that when the church is conceived as an extension of the Incarnation, it is not able fully to admit its own sin. Again we find P. T. Forsyth putting the point with especial pungency. Christ took on regenerate human nature, he pointed out. The human nature in the church, however, needs to be reborn. Thus the human church cannot be an extension of the sinless incarnate

63. Op. cit., p. 61.

64. The Gospel and the Catholic Church, p. 5.

65. D.T. Jenkins, The Gift of Ministry, p. 54.

life. The work of the church is the source of regeneration, not the result of it. Thus he expressed his criticism of this idea:

Christ's Incarnation was not simply His taking flesh but His entry on human nature, and especially on moral humanity, so as to become not only flesh but sin for us. I have said that that cannot be what the Church prolongs, because a Church must be reborn. That which owes itself to a re-birth cannot be a prolongation of the ever sinless.⁶⁶

To say that Christ did more than take on flesh is to say that he did not come merely to establish a new relationship between spirit and matter. He was without sin, yet he came to save men from their sins. But the church cannot claim to be or to do this without becoming unpardonably myopic towards its own sin, its own need to be saved.

What He did was not to accomplish a rearrangement between two elements in the created world—the material and the spiritual. It was to accomplish on behalf of all men an atonement with God their Creator which was to be appropriated by faith. The Church is the body of those who believe in and live by that atonement...But because sin also works even in those who believe, the consequences of sin will be apparent not only in individual lives but, perhaps even more impressively, in the life of the institution. Its corporate acts may be marked by pride, greed and sloth. Because this is so it is an obscuring of the truth to call the Church the extension of the Incarnation. The Church, like Jesus in His flesh, is visible. She is, and ought to be, institutional. But unlike Jesus she is, and ought not to be, sinful.⁶⁷

66. P.T. Forsyth, op. cit., p. 83.

67. Lesslie Newbigin, op. cit., pp. 63-4. In the first sentence of this passage, Newbigin is criticizing certain forms of sacramental theology which have interpreted the Incarnation as the final stage of a general law of incarnation running through the whole universe. Cf. pp.251 ff. below for a study of the significance of the sacramental principle for a doctrine of the body. Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr has expressed his preference for "body of Christ" in language similar to that of Bishop Newbigin. Cf. Human Destiny, pp. 114-5:
The deification of the church is spiritually dangerous, however conceived. The Catholic doctrine that the church is an "extension of the Incarnation" represents a significant shift of emphasis from the Pauline-Biblical doctrine

It seems clear that "extension of the Incarnation" perpetuates far too many illusions about the nature of the church to be a useful description. "Body of Christ" implies, in a succinct way, both the fact that the church is a concrete, historical reality, full of both human virtue and failing; and, at the same time, the place where the incarnate life of God is known and shared. "Body" is a very significant word in this formula, and its use is seen to be in line with what we have already described as the distinctively Christian appreciation of the body and its existence.⁶⁸

that the church is the "body of Christ." For when conceived as the body it is clear that it remains subject to the laws of historical reality. Its ideal and norm is, that all its members should be perfectly coordinated to one another by being subordinated to the "head" which is Christ. But the actual realities always betray some of the contradictions which characterize historical existence. In history there is always "another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." This war is certainly as apparent in the collective, as in the individual, life of the redeemed.

Cf. also Paul Tillich's analysis of the Catholic tendency to claim the absolute presence of Christ in the church. He traces this tendency to the characteristic Catholic view of grace. The Protestant Era, pp. 211-2. T.W. Manson admits the vulnerability of the idea of the extension of the Incarnation, and prefers to call the Church's ministry "a continuation of the Messianic ministry of Jesus." The Church's Ministry, p. 107.

68. There is an interesting use of the idea of the body, as related to the church, that might be noted in passing. Catholic theology has often tended to distinguish between the soul and the body of the church in order to rationalize the problem of final destiny, and, at the same time, to do justice to the instances of morality, repentance, and even faith which exist outside of the institutional church. Thus, such a statement as this can be made: "Some who are of the soul of the Church are yet not of its body, and some who are of its body are not yet of its soul" (Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England, p. 139). The first clause refers to those who may well be "elect" or "saved" while outside of the church; the second refers to those in the church who have neither the awareness nor the fruits of a true life of faith. This distinction is partly useful in reminding us that while in one sense,

II

The Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper

Before we proceed to the main purpose of this section—which is to discover the meaning of "the body of Christ" when used sacramentally—it will be profitable to record some remarks that have been made in recent British theology about the general relevance of the sacramental life for an understanding of the body. The Christian religion has put its sacraments very near the centre of its life because they serve admirably as a warning against what Prof. D. M. Baillie has called "false spirituality."

There is a false spirituality which comes of setting spirit and matter, or soul and body, too much over against each other, as if only the spiritual belonged to God, and as if matter were something godless, as if the body were the sinful part of us. But you will not find those views in the Bible. According to Christian teaching, the body as well as the soul is God's creation, and belongs to His perfect plan. We have fallen away from God and that has affected both soul and body. God has a purpose of salvation for us, and it is not merely the salvation of the soul—it includes "the redemption of the body." Christianity does not offer to save us from our

only the church is the arena for Christ's activity, in another sense he is Lord over the entire world. But it is unreal to talk of a division between "soul" and "body" in the church, because either separated from the other cannot live. Canon T.A. Lacey has written: "Body and soul are so far one that their severance is death; soul is the formative principle of body, animating alike the whole and the several members, but the members only as parts of the whole. To be animated by the Soul of the Body of Christ is nothing else but to be a member of the Body" (The One Body and the One Spirit, pp. 160-1). Nathaniel Micklem has suggested a solution to this problem by saying that "the Church is the Body of Christ, but in another sense all humanity is his Body" (The Doctrine of Our Redemption, p. 57). A sharp distinction between soul and body in the church is both unreal and unbiblical. The solution may well be that an identification of the church with the body of Christ will have to give way before the awareness that the world may also be an instrument of Christ's purpose (and therefore his "body") for, and even sometimes, against the church.

bodies, as if that would save us from evil. As a matter of fact, all our sins, even those connected with bodily appetites, come from what is wrong with our souls, a spiritual twist which makes us use everything in wrong ways; and perhaps the worst sins of all are purely spiritual sins, like pride. All this would not be put right by our escaping from our bodies.

After pointing to the witness to this truth provided by the resurrection of the body and by the role in Christianity of concrete, historical events, he continues:

It is an every-day religion for everybody. Indeed it is a religion which makes all sorts of people, including philosophers and intellectuals, feel that they are only "babes and sucklings" in the face of the deep things of God. We are all but as little children when it comes to these great mysteries, and we need not merely words but "object lessons." And therefore Christianity gives us, in the sacraments, something that we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands.⁶⁹

This fact was also emphasized by Canon O. C. Quick:

In giving general instructions about sacraments most teachers are wont to start from the fact that throughout human experience the outward and the inward, the material and the spiritual, are found to be inseparably linked. We ourselves are souls or minds in bodies. We use material instruments to achieve our mentally conceived purposes, and outwardly spoken or written words to express our thoughts.⁷⁰

69. D.M. Baillie, in the pamphlet, The Meaning of Holy Communion, p. 3. This same idea has been well stated by a Roman Catholic thinker:

Gestures often convey a depth of meaning and conviction denied to mere words. We are not spirits but body-spirits: often we can see reality most clearly, not in the dry bones of reasoned statement, but in the living rhythm of movement or other material symbol: the handclasp of friendship, the open arms of welcome, the head bent in sorrow or shame. Constantly we use that sort of symbolism; and God, who does not do violence to the nature He has created, teaches us to do likewise in our approach to Him; for our worship is fully a self-dedication when every level, bodily and spiritual alike, of our nature is engaged and offered and sanctified.

Gerald Vann, in the symposium, The Holy Communion, p. 33.

70. The Christian Sacraments, p. 1.

The very presence of sacraments in religion, then, implies a positive judgment on the significance of the material side of life. And those material things include the human body, for it is not mere chance that one of the most widely used Communion prayers is this: "And here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice..." And further, the Lord's Supper points not only to the body itself, but also—because we use bread and wine—to the things that minister to the health of the body. The Communion table, Dr. George MacLeod declares, is concerned with and must be seen over against "the river and the market-place." This is what he means.

The Sacrament, whatever greater things it may declare, at least dictates to men how best to share their Bread. And what is the one remaining problem of this potentially plenteous earth but the problem of how to share the mercies that God would make available for all?...We are in the region of totality...While all previous religions and those of His own day declared that God was to be found by turning away from this world's problems and affairs, Christ came to declare God's presence in the Burning Bush, the common meal, and at the market-place.⁷¹

This tendency to find in the Lord's Supper a motive for a concern for the "total" life of man has been a salutary one in British Christianity. One of the earliest theologians in this century to make use of the sacrament in this way was Bishop Charles Gore who was, in-

71. We Shall Rebuild, p. 13. He goes on: "While contemporary faiths insisted that the spiritual was to be discovered in the etheric other-worldly, Christ entered the physical at Christmas to declare the nexus of the spiritual with the material; disparate but conjoined." Here Dr. MacLeod runs into the danger that we have already heard Leslie Newbigin warn against (p.232, above): the danger of defining the Incarnation too exclusively in terms of a new relationship between spirit and matter. Cf. below, pp.251 ff., for a discussion of the attitude of sacramental theology in general to this problem.

cidentally, a leader in the Christian Socialist movement. There can be no contradiction, he wrote,

between the spiritual and the material; that as they are from the same divine Creator and Lord, so they are compatible the one with the other. The spiritual does not interfere with or overthrow the natural.⁷²

Once the theological connection between the Lord's Supper and the social life of man was discerned, there also emerged an awareness of the communal or corporate nature of the sacramental act itself. Communion, after all, means fellowship; and since the redeemed are not isolated individuals, but a body,

this sacrificial life of theirs must find a corporate expression, and such expression the eucharist is.⁷³

P. T. Forsyth made the same point.

The Lord's Supper is essentially a social and communal act—the worshipful centre of a social Christianity.⁷⁴

The general significance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, thus, has been seen as involving a high religious estimate of the "bodily"—the material or economic as well as the social or corporate—life of man. The Christian faith would be the poorer if,

72. Charles Gore, The Body of Christ, pp. 111-2. Cf. J.K. Mozley, The Gospel Sacraments, p. 34. It would be misleading to suggest that only Anglican theology has seen the relation between the Lord's Supper and social concern for the total life of man. When Scottish theology has made use of this relation, it has found good warrant in Calvin. Cf. the Institutes, 4.17.24.

73. Charles Gore, op. cit., p. 171. Cf. also pp. 40 ff., 286-8.

74. The Church and the Sacraments, p. 274.

misunderstanding its sacraments, it forgot this note.⁷⁵

* * * * *

The debater's maxim, "When faced with a difficulty, make a distinction," has been widely used by Anglican theologians in writing about the body of Christ. They have, for example, usually distinguished the natural body of Christ from the mystical, the eucharistic or sacramental, and from the glorified body. E.L. Mascall has elaborated these distinctions with an almost medieval ingenuity,⁷⁶ and not only in his meaning difficult to discover, but such absolute distinctions as he advises seem to be contrary to biblical warrant. The Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England admitted that this four-fold distinction between the "kinds" of "body of Christ" may be useful, but in its report it

75. I am not certain to what extent recent thinking about the sacrament of baptism is relevant to this point. As a sacrament baptism surely involves, perhaps even more obviously than the Lord's Supper, the total existence of man, his body as well as his soul. Yet in some forms of baptismal practice this symbolic significance is negligible. Cf. P.T. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments, pp. 202-3, for a discussion of this point. Yet George MacLeod writes that baptism means that becoming

a Christian is a total affair, a mind-spirit-soul-and-body affair; a total immersion....How many, if you were to challenge them—and not just our young people—think of the soul as a captive thing in the cage of our "neutral" bodies...[But] it is the whole of man that is immersed in Baptism: whether literally or in symbol so far as the ceremony is concerned. It is the whole of man that goes down to death that the whole of may may rise.

And, he continues, just as there is a communal meaning in the Lord's Supper, so there is in baptism. Baptism relates both to the body and to the "Body" of the whole faithful congregation. "It is into a mystic Body that we are baptized, in which all the congregation are fellow-members." We Shall Rebuild, pp. 57-8.

76. Christ, the Christian, and the Church, pp. 161-200.

reminded us that all four meanings have a good deal of common ground:

each is in some sense an embodiment of our Lord---i.e., a means through which the life of the Incarnate is made accessible to man.⁷⁷

William Temple argued effectively against distinguishing the several meanings too absolutely.

What, after all, is "my body"? It is an organism which moves when I wish it to move. If I will my hand to move, it moves without my thinking how to set it in motion; if I will anything else to move, it remains unmoved unless with my body I lift it. "My body" is that part of the physical world which moves directly in response to my will, and is thus the vehicle and medium whereby I effect my purposes. In precisely this sense the Church is the Body of Christ; in precisely this sense (I suggest) the Eucharistic Bread is the Body of Christ. The identity which justifies the use of one name is an identity of relation to the Spirit of Christ and to His disciples. As through the physical organism which was His Body Christ spoke the words of eternal life, so through the Church which is His Body He speaks them still. As through the physical organism which was His Body He revealed in agony and death that utter obedience of Humanity in His Person to the Father, which is the atoning sacrifice, so through the broken Bread He shows it still and enables us to become participants therein. Thus by means of Bread and Wine, blessed and given as by Himself at the climax of His sacrifice, He offers us His human nature given in sacrifice (Body broken and Blood outpoured) to be the sustenance of our souls.⁷⁸

Between the natural, the sacramental, the mystical, and the glorified body, then, there can be said to be

an underlying identity which, in making each to be His body, makes it in that respect identical with the others. Each is the Lord's body, in so far as, in its own distinct

77. Archbishops' Commission Report, p. 224.

78. Christus Veritas, p. 251.

sphere and for its own distinct purpose, it is the very organ of His activity and self-expression.⁷⁹

Nevertheless there are real reasons why this lumping together of the several meanings of "body of Christ" must not be consistently carried through. After all, we are using language in a plain and univocal way when we call the historical, actual, physical organism of Jesus of Nazareth the body of Christ. But we are not speaking univocally in the other cases. For example, when Jesus took the bread and broke it and said "This is my body," the disciples knew that he could not be referring to his actual physical body, since that was plainly visible before them. So when we call the mystical, the sacramental, and the glorified bodies each "the body of Christ" we are speaking metaphorically and even analogically. The church, however, has never been content to affirm that the body of Christ is present only in a metaphorical way in the Lord's Supper. And it has also been unwilling to admit that the church is the body of Christ only in a metaphorical sense. Yet on the other hand if we carry the principle of the identity of meanings too far, we become involved in crudity if, in speaking of the Lord's Supper, we declare that the material, historical body of Christ is present in the elements. The "natural" body is, after all, not identical with the "sacramental." Just as we have already seen how the tendency to unite the natural and the mystical bodies of Christ led to the illusion that the church can be called "extension of the Incarnation," so this attempt to bring too closely together the natural and the

79. Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England, p. 226.

sacramental bodies has led some thinkers mistakenly to call the sacraments extensions of the Incarnation or the Atonement. Not only must we

not speak of the sacraments as the extension of the Atonement, but [even] to call them the extension of the Incarnation hinders insight into their dependence upon the Cross.⁸⁰

It is wrong, then, to identify the natural with the sacramental body. On the other hand, C. H. Dodd seems to err by identifying the sacrament (i.e., the sacramental body) with the fully realized second coming (i.e., the glorified body). He interprets the Lord's Supper as he interprets the Pauline doctrine of the body of Christ: they are both part of the church's response to the failure of an immediate parousia.

As the too crude and literal expectation of the Advent faded, the Sacrament became the repository of all that proved permanent in the eschatology of the primitive Church. Attempts to revive the hope of a speedy Advent have, ever since the second century, had something abnormal, artificial, or fanatical about them. Yet the Church cannot rest content with the belief that the Christian life in the world, as we know it, fulfils all that is meant by that great assurance, "The Kingdom of God has come upon you." There are glories yet to be revealed, and never fully to be revealed in this world. In the Sacrament, they are realized "by faith, not by sight."⁸¹

80. J.K. Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement, p. 221.

81. C.H. Dodd, "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament," in Christian Worship, edited by N. Micklem, pp. 78-9. This is, it can be seen, a step down from a fully "realized" eschatology. Yet the question remains whether Prof. Dodd has not claimed too much for the sacrament as fulfilling all that the kingdom of God is to be. The Christian surely apprehends the things of the "last days" not by sight, of course; but not even by faith. Rather by hope, for hope is the supreme eschatological virtue.

Perhaps the least dangerous identification of meaning to make is that between the mystical and the sacramental body. It may be the case that the sacramental and the church uses of "body of Christ" are closer than we have expected. One result of relating these two meanings has already been noted: it brings out the social significance of the sacrament. In the Lord's Supper the community which calls itself the body of Christ is in the presence of an event in which the meaning and power of the crucified body of the Lord is made available and plain. It might be said that the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper is both the recipient and the meaning of the divine action.⁸² Thus it can be shown that neither a separation nor an identification of the several meanings of "body of Christ" should be consistently carried through.

1. The "Location" of the Body of Christ

It will help to clear the ground if, before turning to consider the meaning of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper, we take account of the several positions that have been held about the "location" of the body in relation to the elements. There is no occasion here to report on the endless debates over the merits of transubstantiation, receptionism, or virtualism. But it may be pointed out that Protestants have generally held one of two views on the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament. Some Anglicans and some Lutherans locate Christ in, or closely related to, the elements of bread and wine. Through consecration, according to this view, the material substances are taken up into the purpose of God,

82. Cf. I.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 336.

just as in the Incarnation humanity was taken up into the Godhead. So Christ is said to be present under the forms of the bread and wine. The other view is inclined to say that Christ is not present in any particular place, and is therefore not "in" the elements. He is rather present in the act, in the total event of the whole sacrament. The difference between these positions is based on different understandings of the meaning of the primary elements, the body and the blood. The former view tends to think of an actual body, while the latter broadens its interpretation of "body." The one view speaks univocally; the second metaphorically and analogically.⁸³

There would be no "problem" about the meaning of the body of Christ in the sacrament if the elements were universally held to be the place where Christ is "located." If he is "in" the elements, then "body of Christ" means either the natural or glorified body. We will summon at this point, therefore, several observers who have in one way or another moved away from a consistent identification of

83. P.T. Forsyth believed that even in the Bible itself one could trace a tendency to "corporealize" the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. In the Fourth Gospel, he wrote,

the flesh of Christ replaces the body of Christ—a vivifying substance or food replaces a person in regenerating action on the moral soul....No doubt for John the flesh and blood meant the personality of Jesus; but it was easy to misconceive the word flesh, as if, not the personal Christ, but His material flesh and His material blood in some rarefied form, were the gifts, instead of the mere agents or elements of the gift; as if these glorified "ingredients" entered men like a medicine to permeate and immortalise them....At this point the sacrament began to stray from Christ's meaning, and the Church went on to be wasted on insoluble questions about transubstantiation, substance and accident, the ubiquity of Christ's body, and the like.

The Church and the Sacraments, pp. 266-7.

Christ with the bread and the wine. Canon O. C. Quick tried to mediate between the Christ-in-the-elements and the Christ-in-the-total-act points of view, but his affinities largely remained with the former position. He wrote from within and for the Anglican tradition, and he was acutely aware of the broad differences within his own communion that had to be satisfied. The presence of Christ is to be sought in the elements, he said, but not as physically present in objects. Rather

as they are within the process of a certain action which takes them up into itself, uses them as its instruments, and expresses itself in them.

And further, he wrote:

It may be true to say that the presence resides in what is done with the elements rather than in the elements themselves, if it be remembered that in the process of that action the elements are more than merely the instruments of a living spirit beyond them and become actually the expression of the life of that spirit itself.⁸⁴

This is an excellently balanced statement, clarifying the differences between the two approaches. It could offend no one, and probably satisfy no one.

Vincent Taylor has attempted to strike a middle course between the positions by means of a slightly different approach. We can, he says, interpret "This is my body" as an example of prophetic symbolism in the tradition of Jeremiah's yoke. Yet it must not be forgotten that these prophetic actions were more than symbolic: they were actually designed to bring about the event symbolized. Jeremiah believed, for example, that by wearing the yoke the invasion by

⁸⁴. O.C. Quick, The Christian Sacraments, p. 225.

Babylon would be made inevitable.⁸⁵ Thus the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a presence within a total event. The "this" of Christ's words referred not to the flesh of Christ, and not to the church, but to the sacrifice on the cross about to be offered. In our interpretation of the "is," we are to steer, Prin. Taylor advises, between a too literal identification of body and bread and a too casual and limited relation such as the translation "represents" might suggest. "This means my body" is perhaps the clearest rendering, he states.⁸⁶ A similar analysis was put forward by John Oman: the body in "This is my body" points to the cross, and the presence of Christ in the sacrament is in the actions performed.

As He was still present in His earthly body, one would imagine that there could be no conceivable room for speculations about partaking of His heavenly body. Nothing seems clearer than that the breaking refers to the breaking of His corporeal body and the outpouring of the cup to the shedding of His real blood, the symbolism being in the breaking and pouring, not in the material.⁸⁷

In Chapter 3 we discerned the "divinity" of Christ not so much in some inner substance or form of consciousness that he possessed, but in terms of the quality of the redemptive action that God was bringing to pass through him. So it is here. The real element of the divine, the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper has been

85. Cf. Vincent Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 118.

86. Vincent Taylor, op. cit., p. 121.

87. The Church and the Divine Order, pp. 48-9.

located by these observers not in the elements but in the actions.

P. T. Forsyth cleared^{ly} stated this position.

It was the action that was symbolical, the breaking rather than the bread, the outpouring rather than the wine. "This" is not this object but this act. Remove the comma after "body." "This is my body broken." "This thing I now do means the breaking of my body soon, which means the surrender of my person." So with the cup. It is the action, the outpouring of the cup, that is meant, more than its contents. "This is my blood shed." Else how could it be called a covenant, which is a mutual act?⁸⁸

And Forsyth clearly saw the importance of this view of the matter for the Christian doctrine of the body.

Thus He is present in the Church's act rather than in the elements. The bread and wine remain such—points of attachment, vehicles, occasions, agents, not the essence of Christ nor its envelope. The elements are made sacramental by promise, and by use; they are not transmuted in substance...They are charged with Christ but not converted into Christ....Matter is not spirit, but it is sacramental for spirit....as the body is for the personality, that leaves it, as the whole history of the Church is; which does not prolong the Incarnation, but confess and convey it, as the bread and wine do not continue it but only mediate it.⁸⁹

Therefore, if Christ, the body of Christ, is present in the sacramental act, what is it exactly that is present? When we speak of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper, what exactly do we mean?

2. The Meaning of the Body of Christ

a. The traditional position. In spite of disagreements in the Anglican communion as to the manner in which the sacramental gift is received, there is general agreement, it has been said,

88. The Church and the Sacraments, p. 234.

89. Ibid., pp. 256-7.

that the gift in the Eucharist is Christ Himself—
it is Christ, the Son of God, in all the power of His
risen manhood, who comes to dwell with the believer.⁹⁰

This we may take to be the traditional view. It is the risen man-
hood of Christ that is present in the sacrament. His manhood,
Bishop Gore declared, "is to be imparted to those that believe in
Him, and fed upon as a principle of new and eternal life."⁹¹ The
picture in this traditional view is often one of a static imparta-
tion of a principle of eternal life. The reception of the sacra-
ment is then said to effect not so much a salvation from sin as a
transference from death to life.⁹²

b. A philosophical reinterpretation. The Archbishops' Com-
mission on Doctrine in the Church of England acknowledged the
validity of this traditional interpretation of the body of Christ
in the sacrament. But it made a significant addition.

If that which is the organ of our Lord's activity and
self-expression may properly be called His body, and if
that which is the instrument and expression of His
sacrificed life in its redemptive power may properly be
called His body and blood, then there is a sense in
which the consecrated bread and wine in the Eucharist
may be directly identified with Christ's body and blood,
in so far as these elements become that through which

90. Stephen Neill, in The Holy Communion, p. 62.

91. The Body of Christ, p. 24.

92. Charles Gore, op. cit., pp. 25, 49, 182. Gore did not con-
sistently interpret salvation as triumph over death rather than as
release from bondage to sin. In spite of the fact that in the pages
cited above, it is the risen manhood of Christ that the sacrament
conveys, he did write in The Reconstruction of Belief, p. 676,
that it is the "sacrificed humanity" of Christ that is imparted to
us under the forms of the bread and the wine.

Christ in His sacred humanity both expresses Himself and actually gives Himself to faithful recipients.⁹³

What is most significant in this statement is not the attempt to make the doctrine of the "real" presence palatable, but the definition of "body" as meaning the instrument of activity and self-expression. This redefinition, particularly as it applies to the doctrine of the body of Christ, is a common one, particularly among Anglican theologians. Here, for example, is a statement by Leonard Hodgson.

When we speak of the bread and wine of the Eucharist as being "consecrated" to become the Body and Blood of Christ, we do not mean to say that they cease to be made of one kind of stuff and begin to be made of another, or that from henceforth they are made of two kinds of stuff at once. That would be to imagine them transformed into the corpse of a dead Christ....What makes a thing the body of any person is not the material of which it is made, but the fact that it is the means appropriate to the environment in which he expresses himself. When the Person is Christ and the environment the society of believers, the means chosen by the One and accepted by the others are His Body and Blood in the only sense in which the words can mean anything at all.⁹⁴

O. C. Quick made the same two points: that the body can be defined as a person's means of expression, and that therefore the bread and wine are really Christ's body and blood.

In every human organism the material body is essentially the expressive symbol and actual instrument of the inward spirit or soul or personality. And it is that relation of expressiveness and instrumentality towards the spirit which makes the material "flesh and blood" to be the very body of the person. May we not then interpret the af-

93. Report of the Archbishops' Commission, p. 229. The affinity between this analysis and that of William Temple, quoted on p.239 above, can readily be detected. Cf. also pp.27-8 above.

94. Leonard Hodgson, Essays in Christian Philosophy, p. 111.

firmation that "this is the Lord's Body" to mean that this bread broken and distributed in the Eucharist is in very truth the expressive symbol and instrument of our Lord's spiritual presence and action towards us, and is therefore related to Him as His Body? In that case the consecrated species does not symbolize the Body; but it is the Body, because it is the expressive symbol and instrument of Himself.⁹⁵

However ill-advised it may be to suggest that either the church or the Lord's Supper is a true "expressive symbol and instrument" of Christ's presence and activity (and no doubt this is claiming too much), this philosophical redefinition of the meaning of the body in "the body of Christ" is extremely interesting and suggestive.

c. An evangelical view. In the traditional interpretation of the doctrine of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper the guiding idea was seen to be the doctrine of the Incarnation, stated in what might be called "Catholic" terms. Second, we discovered that the key motif in the interpretation of this idea by such theologians as Temple, Hodgson, and Quick was the attempt to re-establish the doctrine of the real presence. There is yet a third approach to the problem; that represented by P. T. Forsyth, and in it the Atonement and the cross are the main motifs.

This is Dr. Forsyth's analysis of the Last Supper. First they took the bread, he suggested; then the regular meal, and then the cup—removing the emphasis from the "flesh" eaten in the meal to "fix it on His body or person....It was Christ's body that was taken, not His flesh."⁹⁶ "The body means the person," he stated, and there-

95. O.C. Quick, The Christian Sacraments, p. xviii. Canon Quick significantly added at this point: "the Church is the Body of Christ because it also stands in this same relation to Him." Cf. pp. xix, 208.

96. The Church and the Sacraments, p. 250.

fore the "chief thing in the sacrament is appropriating the humanity of Christ."⁹⁷ Now this language about "appropriating the humanity of Christ" may remind us of the so-called traditional view of the sacrament we have already outlined, which spoke of the communication of the risen humanity, the essential human nature of Christ. But Forsyth was really saying something quite different from this.

There are two features in the situation. First, He is united with them and they with Him; second, farther off, beyond Time, they will be united again in the glory of the consummation. What lay between? The Church's repetition of the meal in His refinement of it. But He will not be there. "Yes," He says, "I will. Be this my presence. When you break bread together (always, not at Paschal-tide with its flesh), let the bread you daily live on symbolise Me and My real personal atoning, creative presence among you and in you." The bread should stand for the missing visibility, His personal presence, once mediated by His body. It would not replace His absence, but it would signify His presence.⁹⁸

"Atoning" presence, active presence; this is the real key to Forsyth's view; and it is this which sharply distinguishes him from the traditional position.

Body meant then more than it does now. It meant the whole person in visible form, and not the mere organism. It meant neither His earthly body (which stood before them) nor some glorified mystic body. The presence of His body meant, in symbolic language, the presence of His person. The breaking of the bread was the consummation of the whole unity of that person in a sacrificial act. That presence could only be in persons, not on a table, not in a piece of matter...The body means the entire person and presence of Christ...He will, symbolised by the bread, be there in person breaking the bread of life. The institution of the

97. Ibid., pp. 292-3.

98. Ibid., p. 251.

Supper was complete in principle with the distribution and appropriation of the bread, representing the body which mediated the person....The bread means the person in presence; the wine the person in action, showing what He was present for---not in endearment but in redemption, not as theosophic food but as theological salvation.⁹⁹

If a conclusion were to be written about the material covered thus far in this chapter, relating it to the Christian doctrine of the body, something like this would have to be said. The church has always found "body of Christ" the most vivid and accurate way of expressing both the presence of Christ in the church, and the activity of God in Christ in the Lord's Supper. It has rightly preferred "body of Christ" to the other biblical alternatives, "mind" or "spirit" of Christ, because it is better able to suggest the totality of Christ's impact and the reality of his claim on the whole of man's existence. The church has not yet, and perhaps never will, agree or decide on what precisely it means by this phrase. But that it has chosen to speak in this way of the body of Christ reminds us that when we are dealing with the doctrine of the body we have a hold on a piece of theology that influences many branches of Christian thought, and often importantly.

III

The Sacramental Principle

One thing that a student of twentieth century English theology cannot avoid stumbling into again and again is the idea of sacramentalism. This has been justified, defended, and explained in many

99. Ibid., pp. 251-3.

ways in recent years and for many reasons. By way of conclusion to this chapter, then, it may be interesting briefly to record some of the available expressions of the sacramental view and then to call attention to some of the critical voices which have been raised against it.

Few would hesitate to admit that the giant of recent English theology was Baron Friedrich von Hügel. And no one presented such diverse yet cumulative witness to the value of the sacramental principle. Indeed, one could quite accurately describe his life-work as a defence in depth of this single line of battle. The sacramental principle is, he said,

the waking up of spirit under the stimulus of sense, and this comes, I take it, simply from our soul-and-body compoundedness.¹⁰⁰

He supported his view biblically and theologically.

Christ everywhere makes use of the sensible to convey the spiritual, never the spirit alone. Man is spirit and body; he has arms and legs, he is not spirit alone, He is not even an angel. The spirit is stimulated through the senses—to object to this is foolishness. Christ never left them out: the woman who touched him, the clay on the eyes. He always and everywhere makes use of the sensible. Thus the bread and the wine. Man needs the sensible so long as he is man and not spirit alone.¹⁰¹

The sacramental principle has also been defended philosophically.

100. Letter to Miss Maud Petre, dated June 8, 1922; in Selected Letters, edited by Bernard Holland, p. 357. We have already seen above, pp. 234 ff., how others have defended the sacramental idea by pointing to the fact that man is body as well as soul or spirit.

101. This is actually a piece of "recollected conversation" from the Introduction by the editor to Letters from Baron Friedrich von Hügel to a Niece, edited by Gwendolen Greene, p. xxiii.

By the sacramental principle, then, we mean the truth that spirit expresses itself in matter, and that the material universe is a burning bush, aflame with the will and purpose of God. Matter and spirit must not be regarded as mutually exclusive.¹⁰²

It has been drawn out of a critical study of the Fourth Gospel.

Christianity is the spiritual religion not because it is divorced from the physical world, but because the Flesh has been submitted to the Spirit, and thereby vivified. The Body of Christ and the bodies of those who believe in Him are Living Flesh; and water, bread, and wine have been vivified as the means by which this transformation may be effected. The author [of the Fourth Gospel] is making it clear that Christianity is neither crude materialism nor the "pure religion of the Spirit" in its anti-sacramental sense.¹⁰³

It has been defended as a logical implicate of the doctrine of the Incarnation and as a means by which the problem of spirit and matter may be solved. A sacramental, incarnational religion

associates the lower and material nature with the whole process of redemption, and teaches us that not without a material and visible embodiment is the spiritual life to be realized either now or in eternity. The spiritual, in the New Testament, means not what is separated from the material or the bodily, but that in which the spirit rules, or that which expresses a spiritual meaning.... [It is] the sound argument of Christian theologians that the idea of sacraments—the idea of spiritual gifts given through material means—is of a piece with the whole method of God in the creation and redemption of man; of a piece, to put the matter otherwise, with the two-fold nature of man...¹⁰⁴

Only sacramentalism, it is said, can deliver man from the false spirituality that is prejudiced against the bodily and the physical.

102. Paul R. Bull, The Sacramental Principle, p. 6.

103. Edwyn Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, p. 304.

104. Charles Gore, The Body of Christ, pp. 39-40.

This prejudice, it is added, is usually associated with anti-sacramentalism. Sacramentalism claims to present the clearest definition of what true spirituality is. Prof. A. E. Taylor defined it, for example, as

not behaving as though we had no bodies, and were not set in a framework of bodily happening, but utilising the transactions between our own body and others to the full as opportunities for the discernment of truth, the practice of virtue, the creation or enjoyment of beauty. We need no proof of the falsity of the kind of "spirituality" which consists in pretending that the body is not there, beyond the moral havoc which it makes of the whole life of sex, marriage, and parenthood. Our true business with it is not to ignore it, but to keep it "in its proper place."¹⁰⁵

The sacramental position of the church, it is said, alone makes it possible for the body to be included in its definition of spirituality.

~~For example:~~

The Church teaches, in her sacramental system, that the body is holy as well as the soul: that the seat of evil is in the will, not in the body: that there is no passion in the body which is evil in itself, but that passions are only evil when they are misdirected: that they are non-moral, neither good nor bad in themselves, a spring of energy which we may turn either to the fulfilment of God's will or the frustration of His purpose.¹⁰⁶

And sacramental religion claims to be able, not only to safeguard a proper moral estimate of the body, avoiding both asceticism and licence, but to give it its true theological significance. J. K.

105. The Faith of a Moralist, Series II, p. 298.

106. Paul R. Bull, op. cit., pp. 142-3. Cf. F. Townley Lord, The Unity of Body and Soul, p. 247: "Things, words, acts: here, obviously, we are in the realm of the body, and...this very fact is an indication of the importance of this body in Christian thought and practice."

Mozley declared that sacramental religion alone can give nature and the body their true place; not by declaring them evil, or even irrelevant or neutral, but by attaching "real value to the body in relation to the spirit, as the organ of the spirit."¹⁰⁷ Events of the physical order, then, are not kept from being bearers of spiritual reality. Miss Dorothy Sayers has an interesting passage in which she shows that the sacramental attitude to matter and the body can have even wider implications.

The common man labours under a delusion that for the Christian, matter is evil and the body is evil. For this misapprehension, St. Paul must bear some blame, St. Augustine of Hippo a good deal more, and Calvin a very great deal. But so long as the Church continues to teach the manhood of God and to celebrate the sacraments of the Eucharist and of marriage, no living man should dare to say that matter and the body are not sacred to her. She must insist strongly that the whole material universe is an expression and incarnation of the creative energy of God....For that reason, all good and creative handling of the material universe is holy and beautiful, and all abuse of the material universe is a crucifixion of the body of Christ. The whole question of the right use to be made of art, of the intellect, and of the material resources of the world is bound up in this. Because of this, the exploitation of man or of matter for commercial uses stands condemned, together with all debasement of the arts and perversion of the intellect.¹⁰⁸

107. The Gospel Sacraments, p. 19. Note that Canon Mozley could give only a derived or borrowed value to the body. Nature is significant, he said, only as it can bear spiritual meaning. This is also true of A.E. Taylor, op. cit., p. 282, and especially so of Oscar Hardmann, The Resurrection of the Body, pp. 62-7, who combines an extravagant appreciation of matter with the conviction that it is valuable only because it will be transformed into spirit. This position will be dealt with in our first criticism of the sacramental principle below, pp. 257 ff.

108. Dorothy Sayers, Creed or Chaos, p. 43. One need not agree with Miss Sayers' statement about Paul, Augustine, and Calvin to appreciate her interesting interpretation of the Christian significance of the body here. A similar point was made by W.H.V. Reade, The Christian Challenge to Philosophy, pp. 187-8.

And finally, Canon Mozley declared that

the sacramental principle is in line with the distinctively Christian hope of spiritual survival in an appropriate body...It is valuable testimony to the specific nature of the Christian hope, which is something much richer than the belief that the soul of man survives death.¹⁰⁹

These claims for what the sacramental principle is able to do for Christian thought are only partly justified by a survey of what, as it has been worked out, it has in fact done. It has not noticeably been the case, for example, that there has been a special affinity between sacramental theology and a radical social ethic or a doctrine of the resurrection of the body. One claim does hold good, however: sacramentalism is able to give a coherent account of what it takes to be the true relationship between spirit and matter.¹¹⁰ William Temple's important chapter "The Sacramental Universe" in his Gifford Lectures is perhaps the most careful application of the sacramental principle to the problem of spirit and matter. We may cite a much-quoted passage as the key to Temple's position.

It may safely be said that one ground for the hope of Christianity that it may make good its claims to be the true faith lies in the fact that it is the most avowedly materialist of all the great religions. It affords an expectation that it may be able to control the material, precisely because it does not ignore it or deny it, but roundly asserts alike the reality of matter and its subordination. Its own most central saying is: "The Word was made flesh," where the last term was, no doubt, chosen because of its specially materialistic associations. By the very nature of its central doctrine Christianity

109. Op. cit., pp. 23-4.

110. Cf. the remarks on this subject in Chapter 2, section II.

is committed to a belief in the ultimate significance of the historic process, and in the reality of matter and its place in the divine scheme.¹¹¹

It cannot be doubted that this analysis of the meaning of the Incarnation, however imperfectly it renders the biblical truth involved, was put to fruitful and creative use by Temple and by others in the Anglican tradition. The sacramental approach was used as a means by which modern industrial society could be challenged and controlled. Sacramentalism, Temple liked to say, keeps us from the scientific illusion that only what is "material" is worthy of investigation. But it also keeps us from the religious illusion that "spirit" is contaminated by contact with the material world. Sacramentalism preserves the unity of human existence, and in so doing guarantees the Christian's concern for the political and economic areas of life.

It is in the sacramental view of the universe [Temple wrote], both of its material and of its spiritual elements, that there is given hope of making human both politics and economics and of making effectual both faith and love.¹¹²

In conclusion, we shall record three different lines of criticism of sacramentalism that are being made in the thought of the church today. No one of these criticisms, it should be noted, objects that sacramentalism values matter and the body too highly. The objections are really that not a high enough value, and not the right kind of value, is given. The first criticism accuses sacramentalism of a false idea of nature. Prof. Tillich has contrasted sacramental-

111. William Temple, Nature, Man and God, p. 478.

112. Ibid., p. 486.

ism with what he calls the Protestant approach to nature. The first, he says, affirms that matter or nature is universally able to reflect and to bear spiritual meaning. But, he points out, for Protestantism matter is ambiguous. It was created by God along with man; but like man it participated in the Fall. Thus, he writes,

where nature is not related to the events of the history of salvation its status remains ambiguous. It is only through a relation to the history of salvation that it is liberated from its demonic elements and thus made eligible for a sacrament.¹¹³

The body, to take an example, is not eligible for sacramental use simply because it is part of nature. Only because it is a central element in the sacred story can we be said to appropriate the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Prof. Tillich explains his meaning:

In the human body nature enters history. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven is accompanied by the healing of the human body. The Christ is, as Jesus replies to the Baptist, to be recognized by his power of healing. The disciples receive the gift of healing because it belongs to the new being. In the body of the Christ, nature is united with history. In the "center of history" nature reaches its fulfilment in the body which is the perfect organ and experience of the Spirit. This is the basis of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament.¹¹⁴

He justifies the use of bread and wine in the sacrament on unique grounds. In the sacrament, he says, we cannot use the body of Jesus Christ as it existed in history, because it has become inaccessible to us. Thus we lack, he says, "the natural element without which a

113. Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era, p. 124. It is interesting to note that O.C. Quick made a similar criticism of the sacramental view of nature. Cf. The Christian Sacraments, pp. 34-5.

114. Ibid., p. 106.

real celebration of the sacrament is impossible."¹¹⁵ Because of this, we substitute the natural substances which nourish the body, and these we use in the sacrament. We do not choose these elements because they happen to be mentioned in the New Testament. This would mean that the

association of the body of Christ with bread and wine would be explained as the mere accident of a historical situation.

No, bread and wine are chosen because they represent

the natural powers that nourish the body and support in the human body the highest possibility of nature. They point to the presence of the divine saving power in the natural basis of all spiritual life as well as in the spiritual life itself.¹¹⁶

This last sentence is all-important. Prof. Tillich wishes to show that nature has an autonomous status, and is not of value merely when it bears spiritual meaning. This is especially true of the human body. This defence of the independent goodness of the body as it participates in the sacred story of salvation (creation, Incarnation, healing miracles, sacraments, resurrection) seems to be an important advance beyond the subordinationism of matter to spirit as defended by the sacramentalist.¹¹⁷

115. Ibid., p. 97.

116. Ibid., pp. 97-8. In The Faith of a Moralist, Series II, p. 295, A.E. Taylor defended the use of the bread and wine on the grounds that they are contained in a command of Jesus. This is of course the traditional view. But Prof. Tillich wishes to show that there is divine power in nature itself, and not merely in spirit.

117. It is true also that sacramentalism falls down because it cannot provide an adequate understanding of the secular world. Radical Protestantism accepts the breakdown of the secular-sacred, lay-priest distinction achieved by the Reformation, Sacramentalism cannot accept this, and consequently sacramental forms of religion still

The Incarnation was not an event in which spirit entered into matter. To treat it so is to forsake the whole Biblical doctrine that man in his totality as an "ensouled body" is the creation of God; that "matter" and "spirit" are equally His creation and are indissolubly bound together by that fact. It was not that spirit entered into matter, but that the Creator entered into humanity, that the Word became flesh, that God lived a human life and died a human death. And the reality of that Incarnation, the proof of the fulness of His humanity, is shown in the fact that in the days of His flesh He had to face just that spiritual warfare by which alone inwardly perceived truth can be embodied in visible, historical act. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.¹²⁰

Thus there is no natural law of incarnation that implies that spiritual truth is always embodied in matter. The Incarnation is not the natural climax of a philosophical principle, but the beginning of a warfare, a battle, unprecedented and unique. It has to do not with matter and spirit, but with sin and grace.

A third criticism accuses sacramentalism of ignoring the biblical understanding of the unity of man. It is not coincidence that the most ardent sacramentalists are seldom Hebraists and that the leading Old Testament scholars in Britain have rarely been within the sacramental tradition.¹²¹ W. F. Flemington points out that

the modern conception of a sacrament presupposes a clear distinction between the outward and material and the inward and spiritual. There is much to suggest that such a separation would have meant little or nothing to Hebrew thought.¹²²

120. Lesslie Newbigin, The Reunion of the Church, pp. 62-3. As can be seen in such a passage as that quoted above, pp. 256-7, William Temple never wholly freed himself from the position which Newbigin criticizes here.

121. This may explain the remarks of F.C.N. Hicks (an exception to the rule) in The Fullness of Sacrifice, pp. 57-62, that Old Testament scholars in Britain have consistently failed to do justice to the centrality of the idea of sacrifice in Old Testament theology.

122. The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p. 10.

This sense of the unity between the body and the soul may explain, this author suggests, the absence of definitely sacramental teaching in Hebraism as a whole. Sacramentalism in the modern sense, he says, could only have arisen "after a people's thought has come to be controlled by a consciously accepted distinction between soul and body."¹²³ Certainly sacramental theology does the best that it can within the dualistic framework. But it has never admitted the radical implications of the biblical sense of the unity of human existence.

Perhaps it is the special vocation of Protestantism today to remind itself that the basis of its sacramental thinking ought not to be the principle that matter can bear spiritual meaning, but rather the more dialectical fact that because of the sin in creation man needs a tangible and bodily expression for his faith; and because of the goodness of creation, nature, matter, the body are able to bear their own redemptive meaning and not simply a borrowed significance of a supposedly higher kind. The doctrine of the body of Christ in theology is important not because it points to realms of meaning beyond the body, but simply because it reminds us of the richness of the idea of the "body" itself.

123. Ibid., p. 11.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BODY AND ESCHATOLOGY

The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body

We must call to mind two important shifts of emphasis in the eschatological thought of this century that will serve to set the discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in its proper perspective. The first shift can be described as a movement away from a literalistic view of the resurrection towards some form of reinterpretation. At the turn of the century British theology was beginning to understand the impact of biblical criticism on some of its traditional doctrines.¹ F. D. Maurice's warning, almost fifty years earlier, against a too easy belief in "a resurrection of relics" was beginning to be heeded. Therefore, in the field of eschatology, the rising tide of biblical criticism was, at the beginning of the period under scrutiny here, opening the door for reinterpretations of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.² The

1. Cf. the late J.K. Mozley's remark that the early years of this century saw no particular theological tension until the critical problems of the New Testament arose. Some Tendencies in British Theology, p. 29.

2. The relation between the new approach to the Bible and the new attitude to Christian eschatology is described by H.A. Guy in his recent book, The New Testament Doctrine of the "Last Things," pp. 4-5: "The interest of New Testament scholars today in the 'last things' is, however, different from that of their predecessors of a generation or two ago. It is but one example of the change in the attitude towards the Bible in general and the New Testament in particular which has characterized this century. A former generation asked what the New Testament had to say about a doctrine, and assumed that whatever was said there had to be accepted unconditionally; there was to be found the last word; men's ideas, if not in entire agreement, must be amended to fit those of early Christianity. It was held that

theological weaknesses and the practical difficulties of the old literal view of the resurrection were coming to be clearly discerned.³

But when the church came to "reinterpret" the resurrection of the body, it was often the case that the result was indistinguishable from the idea of the natural immortality of the soul, so prevalent in the philosophical thought of the period. Let us try to state, in a general way, what this process of reinterpretation usually came to. In the traditional orthodoxy, it was asserted that after death the human soul, deprived of its earthly body, passed into some sort of interim existence—a state either of imperfect blessedness or incomplete judgment. Not till the "last day," when each disembodied soul would be reunited with its previous earthly body and when full judgment would be effected, would perfect beati-

the New Testament contained a 'system of doctrine,' forming a consistent whole, and that the references to the state after death and the 'last things' were final pronouncements and predictions made by Jesus himself or the apostolic writers, which must be accepted at their face value."

3. L.A. Reid has pointed out how a literal interpretation of the resurrection of Christ can be accused of undervaluing the Incarnation: if the flesh is taken seriously in the latter, so it must be in the former. "As the nature of flesh is to be corruptible, the body of Christ, like other bodies, must finally corrupt and decay. If we make an exception in the case of Christ's body, then we make the Incarnation unreal..." Preface to Faith, p. 91. And John Darragh, in The Resurrection of the Flesh, pp. 259-60, showed how the church's sacramental experience is a safeguard against a misunderstanding of the resurrection. No one, he said, "can entertain physical ideas about the future resurrection of the dead, nor of the Resurrection of our Lord to which men's future resurrection is to conform, who is accustomed to approach the Altar in awe and reverence and love to feed on the Risen Body of his Lord, actually and really present there for him to receive."

tude be possible. Modernism came and cut the ground from under this picture by maintaining that this scheme should not be taken as involving a series of dateable events, and further, that it would not be the same body, risen from the family vault, which would rejoin the disembodied soul. But when modernism rejected this particular sequence of "events," it also rejected the idea of embodiment after death altogether. Or, if embodiment was accepted, it was conceived in terms of a "spiritual body" which the immortal soul during the earthly life was fashioning in man, so that at death it would be at once available for use in eternity.

Doubtless modernism performed a valuable service to the thought of the church by defining these "last events" as mythical rather than historical. And it further saved the doctrine of the resurrection from the practical and scientific difficulties which the literal belief in the restoration of the old body involved. But when it threw out of court the entire idea of the general resurrection, it lost the profound truth contained in the hope of an embodied life to come. Thus, in the return to orthodoxy of the present day, the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is being recovered, while the old errors are being avoided. Modernism forgot a warning of Paul; if there is no resurrection of the body, then Christ did not rise from the dead. Or, in other words, if we lose the truth which this doctrine safeguards, something goes out of the very centre of Christian thought and life.

This first shift of emphasis—from literalism to something beyond—took place well before the turn of the century, and the habit of reinterpretation which we have described was well under way at the

beginning of the period we are studying. But the second shift of emphasis is more recent. If the first was set in motion by the impact of biblical criticism, the second may be said to have received its impetus from the rediscovery of biblical theology. It can be described in this way. The eschatology which followed the breakdown of literalism was almost wholly concerned with the fate of the individual after death, while the rediscovery of eschatology in our own time has almost completely ignored this question, in favour of the problems connected with the end of history.

The subject of eschatology has two aspects. On the one hand it relates to the fate of the individual after death... On the other hand, eschatology relates to certain cosmic events which have generally been considered to constitute the "last things" for the universe as a whole---the end of the "age," a day of judgment, future trial and stress or a period of peace and happiness, the destruction or the renewal of the present universe... There has been a change of emphasis in the past two generations in the attitude of Christian scholars to these two aspects. Attention has tended to shift from the first to the second.⁴

Why has this second shift come about? An answer to this question would have to take into account two different sets of facts.

The first reason is an historical one. During the first three decades of this century, British theology was content to accept as an adequate account of the meaning and destiny of history, the belief in progress that was born during the Renaissance, that matured in the Enlightenment, and that flowered in many Christian guises through the nineteenth century. There was no need to rethink the problem of history while this general confidence in progress reigned.

⁴ H.A. Guy, op. cit., pp. 7-8. "Last two generations" places the shift much too early as far as British thought is concerned. Even "last twenty years" would be perhaps too long ago.

But when contemporary events began to give the lie to this doctrine, and when more recently "rival religions" began offering clear alternative interpretations of historical destiny, the church was driven back to the distinctive message about history's meaning that had been lying forgotten in its gospel.⁵

The second reason for this shift of emphasis from the individual to history concerns the Bible. We have come to discover that the Bible has little to say about the former, and is moreover concerned from beginning to end with just this latter problem. In re-discovering the unity of the Bible, which an earlier criticism had broken up, we have learned that the principle of unity is precisely this new emphasis on eschatology: What is the meaning of history? John Baillie has put this point with special clarity. He is speaking of the exclusive concern with the eschatology of the individual that has marked Christian thought almost from its beginning;

As the orthodox Catholic system developed, it was dominated by the conception of "the next world" or "the life after death." The one burning question was, "What is going to happen to me when I die? Shall I go to heaven or to hell?" The other question, "What is going to

5. The belief in progress may be considered as the means by which the church was forced away from its individualistic conception of the immortality of the soul as the only concern for eschatology. The belief in progress was no doubt wrong in most of its forms, but it was doubtless nearer the truth than a doctrine of the immortality of the soul standing alone. Thus a false solution to the problem of history had to emerge, and to be disproved, so that a true solution could be established. "It may therefore justly be claimed," John Baillie has written, "that the modern belief in earthly progress, however great its weaknesses, was nearer to New Testament thought than that (roughly contemporaneous) type of Christian eschatology which was content to exhaust itself in the contemplation of the immortality of the soul to the neglect of any teaching about the end of history..." The Belief in Progress, p. 211. Cf. also on this point, S.H. Mellone, The Immortal Hope, pp. 14-5.

happen to human history and to the whole cosmic process" was always present too, but, I think, often in a somewhat otiose way as compared with the former one....In the New Testament, however, we find far less about "the other world" or "the next world," and more about "the new world." Nor is "the life after death" a typical New Testament conception. The dominant concern of New Testament eschatology is with what we should now call "the philosophy of history," with the direction and end of the cosmic process, with the fortunes of the holy community and, through the influence of that community, of mankind's long journey through time to eternity.⁶

That this recovery of a distinctive Christian understanding of history is salutary no one would deny. But there is real danger today that Christian eschatology will be so caught up with this side of the truth that it will lose its concern for what the gospel says about the life of the individual within the corporate fulfillment. Some have attempted to rule out altogether the problem of the individual from the province of biblical eschatology,⁷ but we shall be more satisfied with such a statement as that of J. H. Leckie: we can see, he wrote,

that humanity has a twofold destiny—an end towards which the race is marching in this present world, and an end towards which the individual life proceeds here and hereafter. These two are separate and distinct, and yet they are related to each other and must ultimately merge into one when the goal of earthly history is reached.⁸

We may now move on to the main concern of our final chapter:

6. John Baillie, "Beliefs About the Future Life," the Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1949, printed in the Congregational Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII, no. 3, July, 1950, p. 215.

7. Paul Tillich, for example: cf. The Interpretation of History, pp. 281-2.

8. The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 299.

a discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in the British theology of this century, and the relation of this material to our concern for a uniquely Christian doctrine of the body.

I

The Issue between Immortality and Resurrection

We have already noted that when the belief in a resurrection of the actual earthly body broke down theologians tended to restate the doctrine of resurrection in such a way that it became indistinguishable from a belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Thus, throughout most of this century (indeed, throughout most of Christian history) the "motifs" of immortality and resurrection have been intertwined and often identified. There has come to be a feeling, however,---though it has arisen only very recently in British theology---that both clarity and truth would be best served if these two strands could be separated, and if the non-biblical, or at least ambiguous, nature of the immortality motif were clearly admitted. We must briefly deal with some of the reasons for the contemporary dissatisfaction with the "mixed" situation, and ask why some thinkers are turning afresh to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in order to express what they call the biblical approach to eschatology.

We have already mentioned the fact that philosophy and psychology have often done better justice to the biblical idea of the unity of man than theology. When theology does understand this unity, it refuses to admit a cleavage between the body and the soul or mind,

and at the same time is unafraid of the lack of evidence for the survival of a disembodied soul of the sort that many immortality-theories envisage.

Under these circumstances, of the two forms of the doctrine of a future life which are best known in Europe, that which speaks of the immortality of the soul "delivered from the burden of the flesh" and that which speaks of the resurrection of the body to be the organ of the Soul's "life everlasting"—different forms of the doctrine which are sometimes held in combination—it is the latter which seems best to suit with this close intimacy of the connexion of Soul and Body and this lack of evidence for the existence of the Soul except in that connexion.⁹

There are three other points at which these two motifs can be distinguished. They differ, first of all, in their attitude to matter. Immortality generally looks at the material world as something we must be saved from; resurrection of the body, on the other hand, sees the created world as good, the place of God's redemptive concern and therefore not to be despised. They differ, secondly, in their attitude to death: for immortality, death is either unimportant or a genuine good; but for resurrection it is a tragedy, a crisis, an enemy over which we claim a victory. We will take up this problem of death in greater detail presently. Finally, the most significant difference between these two motifs is a moral and theological one; it has been accurately described by Canon Alec Vidler. It is, he writes,

the egotism or self-concern of men that has led them to be preoccupied with the question of their own survival of death or with the immortality of the soul. The immortality of the soul---if it means that there is a part of

9. C.C.J. Webb, Divine Personality and Human Life, p. 274.

every man, a kind of soul-substance, that is immortal—is not a Christian doctrine...It is...of the resurrection of the body that Christian belief, like the Bible, speaks. In God's new, immortal creation men are not ghosts; they are not disembodied spirits; they are not absorbed into an unconscious cosmic soul. They retain their personal identity, for God's purpose for them is an inheritance in which nothing will be lacking to a fully personal relationship.¹⁰

10. Christian Belief, pp. 110,111. The most profound analysis of this distinction between immortality and resurrection has been made by Bishop Anders Nygren, in his Agape and Eros, a book that has exercised a pervasive influence on recent American theology. British thought has taken rather less notice of its significance than it deserves, perhaps because Luther himself has never been wholly congenial to the British temperament, and this book is a restatement of the distinctive contribution of Luther. The contrast between the two motifs is made brilliantly clear by Nygren in this passage in which he relates the distinction between resurrection and immortality to his key distinction between agape- and eros-love.

In Plato [he writes], the thought of the soul's immortality is never far away; for immortality belongs naturally to the soul, in consequence of her Divine origin. Nothing more is required for the return of the soul to her Divine Source than that she should be thoroughly liberated from the encumbrance of sense; the Divine life of immortality is her natural state. There is a part of man which is by nature incapable of death.

But the belief in the natural immortality of the soul is wholly alien to the idea of Agape; instead, we find a faith in the resurrection of the dead. These two beliefs have come to be blended together in the traditional belief of Christendom; but properly and essentially they belong to two different worlds. Wherever the natural immortality of the soul is an accepted dogma, we can be confident that we are in a sphere of thought dominated by Eros. On the other hand, wherever the idea of Agape is dominant, it always expresses itself in a belief in resurrection; if man is to be partaker of God's gift of eternal life, it cannot be through any natural quality of the soul, but only the result of a Divine act of power. The God who can justify the sinner can equally raise the dead to life; the resurrection of the dead is the seal of the Divine Agape. This belief in the resurrection of the dead has nothing to do with a division of human nature into two parts, the one by nature unclean and corruptible, the other Divine and immortal; on the contrary, death is God's judgment on the whole man, body and soul, and resurrection is the raising of the whole man to life, by the act of God's Agape. It was a true sense of this vital distinction that drove Christian writers such as

Before we come to our analysis of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body itself, we must look a little more closely at the basic difference of starting-point between the approaches that we have labelled "immortality" and "resurrection." It might be said that immortality is mainly concerned to answer the question: What part of man survives death? Resurrection, in recent years, has put its fundamental question somewhat differently. It asks instead: What is the meaning of death? Let us take up these approaches in turn.

1. The Question for Immortality: What Part of Man Survives Death?

Principal John Baillie has a remark in a recent article which refers to the attitude of the nineteenth century poets and philosophers to the question of immortality, but it could as well refer to a good deal of the twentieth century thinking on the subject. Most of those who discoursed on immortality, he remarks,

thought it was the Christian hope they were speaking of. Many of them were indeed conscious of discarding the notion of a bodily continuance, but that seemed to them no more than a mythical integument of the essential Christian concern. They did not see that in making this change, and in reverting to the Greek mystical and philosophical conception of a disembodied spiritual life,

Irenaeus to lay stress on the "resurrection of the flesh," in opposition to the "spiritualising" tendency of the Hellenistic world and of the Gnostics. It is therefore entirely misleading when Harnack and other modern scholars treat this teaching as a piece of "naturalism." So far from being a piece of naturalism, it shows a determination to resist the naturalism of the Eros-religion which would treat everlasting life as the natural inheritance of the soul, and not as the result of the personal operation of God's power and love.

Agape and Eros, Part I, pp. 176-7.

they were stepping completely outside the framework of Christian thought. Yet the most remarkable change consisted in the fact that what was now valued was continued life as such.¹¹

This judgment is true of much of the "eschatology of the individual" written in the twentieth century. When the breakdown of the literal belief in the resurrection occurred, many of the church's thinkers began to adjust theology to the widespread popular conceptions about immortality. Thus it is the case that much of what is written about the eschatology of the individual today still speaks of the survival of some essentially indestructible part or activity of man.

Much of this kind of thinking has exerted itself to demonstrate the independence of mind over against matter or the body. In the volume, Immortality, prepared by the Cumnor Group, the burden of the whole argument is that since science cannot conclusively prove the dependence of body and mind immortality is an open possibility.¹² This is the line of approach taken by physicians and psychologists

11. John Baillie, "Beliefs About the Last Things," Congregational Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII, no.3, July, 1950, pp. 216-7.

12. Immortality, that is, construed as the persistence of the mind beyond death. This approach is particularly true of J.A. Hadfield's contribution to this volume, and partly true of Miss Lily Dougall's essay, though her main concern is to establish the permanence not of mind but of a distinct spiritual faculty of perception. Alone in the volume stands the essay of Canon B.H. Streeter which differs considerably in emphasis from the rest of the book. Cf. below, pp. 298 ff. for an examination of Streeter's position on the resurrection.

whenever they venture into this field.¹³ Countless books on the subject of immortality in the second and third decades of this century contained long sections on the "current" attitude of psychology to the problem of mind and matter. H. R. Mackintosh wrote, for example, that all denials of immortality are based on the denial that experience can show evidence for the existence of the soul apart from the body.¹⁴ But this is not the case, he said; psychology can tell us that such an existence is not an impossibility. Wherever we find authors dealing with the "latest findings" of psychology, we can be sure that their main interest is the negative and quite irrelevant one of assuring Christians that science has not yet wholly demolished the idea of the survival of the mind.¹⁵ The breakdown of the classical atomic view of matter, and the definition of matter in terms of energy was eagerly put to apologetic use by this school of thought. But these arguments were apologetic in the wrong sense. What kind of faith, what kind of assurance, emerges from such a statement as this?

We reach, then, the conclusion that mind is a reality, has a life of its own, controls matter, and uses it to

13. For a good example of a psychologist at work on this question, see the Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1935 by William Brown, entitled "The Survival of Personality," reprinted in the Congregational Quarterly, Vol. XIV, no. 1, January, 1936, pp. 47-57.

14. Immortality and the Future, pp. 168 ff.

15. Cf., for example, E. Griffith-Jones, Faith and Immortality, pp. 45-82, and F.C. Grant, Can We Still Believe in Immortality?, pp. 83-4. This is also the approach of R.H. Charles in his volume of sermons entitled The Resurrection of Man, chapters vii and viii in particular.

H.R.M. reference to 2 a material body
 The first and third of these cannot be said to be a material body

express its own purposes. It is certainly in part dependent on brain, but cannot be reduced to an effect or product of brain. If this is so, then it does not follow that when the brain perishes at death the mind perishes also...Our bodies are our medium of communication with our fellows. Death destroys that mode of intercourse. But the person, the self, may still be alive, only unable to prove to us who are yet in the body that he is so.¹⁶

The ineptness of these attempts to fill in the provisional gaps of scientific investigation with Christian assurance has often been criticized, and not just in recent years. Principal George Galloway made a shrewd comment on this kind of belief in immortality as an element in man that supposedly survives the processes of decay. Such a belief, he said, is exposed to many objections.

The idea that the soul is a simple and indestructible substance, in the body yet not of it, is a legacy from the philosophic schools; but it has fared badly at the hands of modern psychology and philosophical criticism. The psychology of our day gives no countenance whatever to the existence of a mysterious entity within the body termed the soul. The notion has no basis in experience, and it is a pure product of philosophical abstraction.¹⁷

More recently, and therefore influenced by the rediscovery of the biblical idea of the unity of personality, Prin. Lovell Cocks has made a similar point about this kind of argument.

We are constrained to recognize a distinction between mind and body, and we may go as far as to speak of the

16. V.P. Storr, Christianity and Immortality, p. 25. Cf. T.A. Lacey, Essays in Positive Theology, pp. 106 ff.

17. The Idea of Immortality, p. 21. This same criticism can be applied to the alleged independence and indestructibility of the mind; Samuel Alexander's proof of the identity of mental and neural processes makes this road to immortality a difficult one to travel; cf. Space, Time, and Deity. Vol. II, pp. 8 ff.

latter as the organ or instrument of the former. And then if we like we can go on to speculate concerning their inter-relation. Only if we do we must be on our guard. "Mind" and "Body" are names we give to distinguishable aspects of personality; to treat them as independent entities mysteriously conjoined is merely to play with abstractions. Man is not "the mechanical union of a corpse and a ghost"...The soul is not the body's prisoner. It not only uses but is the body. And on the other side, the body is not a mere tool but the personality itself in its outward aspect.¹⁸

Mind is not the only aspect or activity of man which has been defined as the imperishable thing about him. Spirit, values, personality—these all have been so described. W. R. Inge, who is indefatigable in his protest against the egotism of concern for personal survival, yet can say: "Faith in human immortality stands or falls with the belief in absolute values."¹⁹ And H. Wheeler Robinson came to very much the same conclusion. This distinguished Hebraist, who might have been expected of all men to appreciate the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, deserted the Hebraic tradition precisely at this point.

The term "immortality" (he declared) is preferable to "resurrection," because our whole line of thought points to the immortality of the soul and its values rather than to the resurrection of the body.²⁰

Dean W. R. Matthews is inclined to make the same point.

There have been different answers to the question, What is eternal in man? All the answers turn, I think, upon the perception that some elements in human nature are

18. H.F. Lovell Cocks, "Faith's Victory Over Death," Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1938, reprinted in the Congregational Quarterly, Vol. XVII, no. 1, January, 1939, p. 30.

19. Outspoken Essays, First Series, "Survival and Immortality," p. 280.

20. The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 286.

more valuable than others. Until men have formed the idea of comparative value they are not in a position to think about immortality.²¹

Yet Dean Matthews knows that the Bible has a good deal more to say about immortality than this. So while he can say that

Plato was right in thinking that mind is a higher kind of existence than matter and body, and that there is no good reason for supposing that mind depends for its existence on the organism with which it is associated,²²

he can also say this:

The Christian will accept gratefully all that philosophy or psychical research has to tell him in confirmation of his faith, he will be ready to discuss the value of various arguments, but in the end he believes because Christ has shown the way and given the assurance.

Some, he admits, will feel this to be an inadequate solution; but while the "Church has taught that the human soul is by nature immortal...it has also taught that eternal life is the gift of God and comes by grace." Dean Matthews resolves this paradox, however, by virtually denying the second half of the statement: "in every rational being there is the seed of immortality."²³ A perfect ex-

21. The Hope of Immortality, pp. 18-9. Cf. Philip Leon's defence of the immortality of the spirit in his volume in the Viewpoints series, Body, Mind, and Spirit, p. 104.

22. Op. cit., p. 30.

23. Ibid., pp. 52-4. In this passage, the writer has failed to bring out the genuinely Christian element in the church's beliefs about eternal life. Note, by way of contrast, how James Denney was able to affirm the value of the individual without falling into the perils of such terms as "inherent" value or "seed of immortality." The sense of the incomparable value of a person," he wrote, "as compared with all things—the profound and immediate conviction that a person is absolutely distinct in kind from things and that his destiny is not involved in theirs—this, however it rises into consciousness, is one of the primary factors of faith in immortality." Factors of Faith in Immortality, p. 18.

ample of how biblical and philosophical (i.e., resurrection and immortality) motifs can be blended so that the former is obscured can be seen in his further interpretation of the credal phrase, "the resurrection of the body."

I find no difficulty (he writes) in believing that during our present life we are, by our acts of will and our deeds, weaving the spiritual body which will be the garment and instrument of our spirits in the world to come.²⁴

This interpretation of "spiritual body" has been a favourite method of confusing the distinction between the resurrection and immortality motifs. V. F. Storr, for example, was not unaware of the value of the doctrine of the resurrection.²⁵ But his full position involved a mixture of the two motifs. The body, he wrote, is the material structure of life and it is constantly in flux. The soul may be defined as the life-principle that controls this flux. Thus it is the soul that ensures the continuity of the body through all life's stages: which enables the "I" of infancy to be the same "I" thirty years later.

May it not be that this principle will continue in operation hereafter, and that, whatever the resurrection body may be, it will be appropriate to our personality, and reproduce in different material sufficient of the old outline and form for recognition?²⁶

24. Ibid., p. 66. This idea of the spiritual body as fashioned during the earthly life by the good works of the Christian was worked out in great detail by F.A.M. Spencer, in "The Resurrection of the Body," in Theology, Vol. XXXIV, 203, May, 1937, pp. 284 ff.

25. Cf. his Christianity and Immortality, p. 55, where he pointed out that the doctrine of resurrection preserves the Christian conviction that matter is not in itself evil.

26. V.F. Storr, op. cit., p. 64.

Our true self, he continued, is deeper than the body; and personal immortality means that these deeper elements—self-consciousness, will, memory, emotional reactions—will persist. In this life we are even now building up the spiritual bodies which will, in the life to come, embody these permanent values. We know from reason that body must always accompany spirit, and imagination permits us to speculate on the means by which this will come about in the future life.²⁷ In many ways in this interesting book, Storr perfectly balanced the interests of the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body; yet his starting-point—the question, What is there in man that survives?—makes it clear that he used resurrection only to underline the deeper truth of immortality.

John Oman gave theology a salutary bit of advice for dealing with this problem. In the course of a discussion on the psychological and philosophical arguments for immortality he wrote:

In reply, let us say that, if there are arguments, they should be weighed; and, if there are facts, they should be investigated. Both may at least help to meet objections. Nor may that be a small service; for hopes which do not rest on intellectual grounds, may still be hampered by intellectual difficulties. But can either arguments or facts afford us an assurance that shall enable us better to depend on God or be freer in ourselves? Is there not rather a danger of making the future life and our prospects in it our direct aim and business in such a way as to corrupt both morality and religion?²⁸

27. Cf. op. cit., pp. 63-8, for the complete defence of this view of the spiritual body.

28. Grace and Personality, p p. 275-6.

2. The Question for Resurrection: What is the Meaning of Death?

Whenever the rediscovery of biblical theology has been taken seriously in British thought, a completely different approach to the eschatology of the individual has been taken up. No more speculation about the soul's survival, a hierarchy of values, or even conservation of personality. The Bible, it is said, is not concerned with such matters; and if we are to be under the discipline of the Word of God, we must learn this unconcern for ourselves.²⁹ It is partly this rediscovery of the Bible, and partly the catastrophic events of recent years that lie behind this tremendous change of outlook. From "truth, beauty, and goodness," eschatology has turned to look at death. Man has learned that he deserves to die, that he must die, and that he often must die before his time.

Death is the one certain fact...Death is the supremely tragic fact...Death is the universal fact, claiming the human race itself...Death is the one inescapable fact which compels men to choose between despair and faith.³⁰

This is the way one contemporary writer describes the significance of death. The words of Paul Tillich, a theologian just beginning to have an influence on British thought, have already reminded us of

29. Paul Tillich has spoken of the "bitter realism" of the Bible on the question of human immortality. "That is the mood of ancient mankind. Many of us are afraid of it. A shallow Christian idealism cannot stand the darkness of such a vision. Not so the Bible. The most universal of all books, it reveals the age-old wisdom about man's transitoriness and misery. The Bible does not try to hide the truth about man's life under facile statements about the immortality of the soul. Neither the Old nor the New Testament does so. They know the human situation and they take it seriously. They do not give us any easy comfort about ourselves." The Shaking of the Foundations, pp. 66-7.

30. John S. Whale, Christian Doctrine, pp. 171-7.

the frivolity of our thinking about death. Again he warns us that we too often start from the wrong end.

Do not deceive yourself about the seriousness of death---not death in general, not the death of somebody else, but your own death---by nice arguments for the immortality of the soul. The Christian message is more realistic than those arguments. It knows that we, really we, have to die; it is not just a part of us that has to die. And within Christianity there is only one "argument" against death: the forgiveness of sins, and the victory over him who has the power of death. It speaks of the coming of the Eternal to us, becoming temporal in order to restore our eternity. The whole man is mortal and immortal at the same time; the whole man is judged and saved at the same time, because the Eternal took part in flesh and blood and fear of death.³¹

No more confused thinking, we are told, about some part of us that might possibly be called deathless. Immortality, when rightly used, can mean that death is not the end. But we had used it to mean that the whole man does not die---a totally different idea. Because of this ambiguity, it may well be that the word "immortal" has lost its right to be used. Canon Vidler, indeed, would deny its plausibility altogether.

The word "immortal" means not subject to death, and applied to man it must mean that there is at any rate part of a man which need not and in fact cannot die. The word "resurrection" on the other hand presupposes the death of the whole man, every part of him.³²

Death, we are being reminded today, means in the Bible death of the whole man, and immortality is there used only to describe God, who alone has immortality.

Man does not possess in himself this quality of death-

31. Paul Tillich, op. cit., p. 172.

32. Alec Vidler, Christian Belief, p. 112.

lessness but must, if he is to overcome the destructive power of death, receive it as the gift of God...³³

This new attitude to death is an explicit rejection of the whole theological tradition that was concerned, in one way or another, to establish the immortality of the soul.

Man's life is an existence-unto-death; mortality is the very stuff of his being. Because he is a creature and not the Creator man must die. Even though he be born to know God and to enjoy Him forever, he cannot make himself proof against decay or evade his creaturely doom. From death he cannot be saved; yet God may save him through it—by the miracle of resurrection..To believe in the inherent everlastingness of a soul-substance is to evade the issue with which death confronts us. If we are naturally immortal, death is in the last analysis unreal—a mere scarecrow to frighten cowards. Our bodies shall perish but we shall not die.³⁴

What this new attitude towards death implies is a startling and radical thing. It is saying that the age-long tradition of the church, the belief accepted not only throughout most of Catholic Christendom but also in the confessional documents of the Reformation, that the soul is immortal—this belief is false to the genius of the Bible. It is not a Christian doctrine.³⁵ Such statements as the following, once so plausible to our ears, are now declared to fall far short of what the Bible requires us to say:

True, resurrection is relative to the body, for soul cannot be buried.³⁶

33. F.J. Taylor, the article "Immortal" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson, p. 111.

34. H.F. Lovell Cocks, op. cit., p. 30. Cf., for a similar statement, E.C. Rust, The Christian Understanding of History, pp. 289-90.

35. Cf. W.H.V. Reade, The Christian Challenge to Philosophy, pp. 89-90.

36. H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 164.

We hold that Man is by nature immortal, He was not made to die. Formed in the image of God—a complete moral personality at least potentially—he shares in the deathlessness of his Maker. The great change which makes an end to the body has not power to lay a withering hand on the soul.³⁷

Death then is an organic process, in which the bodily form of the human organism decays in order that its essential principle may pass into some new mode of expression.³⁸

John Baillie has written that it is non-Christian pessimism to say that "death should be the end of all and the soul perish with the body." There is no joy, he writes, in the Christian gospel "unless it be true that that to which this dreadful thing has happened is not really one's beloved himself but only his earthly tabernacle..."

And again:

...is it possible to believe that the Eternal Father, if He veritably is, should consent to the annihilation of the souls He loves?³⁹

37. E. Griffith-Jones, op. cit., p. 283.

38. L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 264. Cf. the similar view of F.E. England, "The Vesture of the Eternal," the Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1947, reprinted in the Congregational Quarterly, Vol. XXVI, no. 1, January, 1948. Cf. also W.E. Orchard, Foundations of Faith: IV. Eschatological, pp. 19, 21-2. This book was published in 1927, five years before the author entered the Roman communion.

39. These three passages are from Prin. Baillie's book And the Life Everlasting, pp. 61, 341, 194. Note, in the first passage cited, the confusion of the two meanings of immortality. That "death should be the end of all" is a denial of what immortality truly means; but this denial is not equivalent to the next phrase: that "the soul perish with the body." This new attitude we are describing would certainly deny that death is the end; but it would just as certainly affirm, as we have noted, that the soul and body perish together in death. Cf. also Prin. Baillie's analysis of the minor premise of his syllogism of the "logic of hope," and the statement that: "something of intrinsic value resides in the human individual." Op. cit., p. 196 (p. 180 in the English edition, Oxford University Press).

All these statements, then, insofar as they deny that the whole of man can die, insofar as they cannot admit that death still exercises its provisional power over the whole of man, are—according to the representatives of this new mood—false to the biblical witness.

This controversy over the problems of death and immortality is a very live one in contemporary thought. "Natural" immortality is a part of the whole Protestant church tradition and to move away from it, as some are advising, means a real break with the past. The real problem may be described in this way: how is it possible to do full justice to the victory which Christ has already won over the power and evil of death⁴⁰ and still preserve the present reality of the last enemy and the truth that death involves the whole of man's existence?⁴¹

There are three significant answers to the question about the meaning of death which must be noted before we can pass on. The first, which we have already touched upon, is that death is a mark of man's sin. This statement could not have been made until man's

40. As succinctly described, for example, by Oscar Hardman in The Resurrection of the Body, pp. 57-8.

41. While it is true that this emphasis on the meaning of death and this reaction against the traditional interpretations of immortality is new and even contemporary, some notice should be taken of a fine study by F.S.M. Bennett, The Resurrection of the Dead, now over twenty years old. In this book the author vigorously opposed the idea of natural immortality, though in the interests, it would seem, of a conservative and almost literalistic view of the resurrection of the body. This volume, however, very nearly stood alone until the biblical guns of the continent began to be heard and understood on the British shores.

sin itself had been rediscovered in British theology. It was not possible, in other words, to say that man must die, until it came to be understood that he deserved to die.

This self must die. The sin in him is that he has churlishly refused God's gift of life....the life for which he longs is an autonomous existence...God confronts him with a demand which is wholly incompatible with man's claim to be master in his own house. Now faith—which, let us remember, is not the climax of man's strenuous rational aspiration but the gift of God who gives the Word—faith is the recognition of this absolute claim of God and therefore at the same time is man's surrender to death, to the judgment of God upon his sinful egoistic existence. To faith, therefore, death is no longer a fate which overwhelms the human victim but a task to be accomplished to the glory of God and a gift to be received as the earnest of eternal life.⁴²

Yet death is not only the mark of man's sin; it is also the mark of his finitude. It not only reminds man that he deserves to die; it reminds him that he is part of nature, that he must die. And yet, finally, man's fear of death proves that he is more than finite. He cannot be wholly contained by nature. Therefore, Prof. Niebuhr has written,

however inexorable death may be as law of nature, the fear of death is just as inevitable an expression of that in man, which transcends nature. It proves that he does have "preeminence above a beast"; because the fear of death springs from the capacity not only to anticipate death but to imagine and to be anxious about some dimension of reality on the other side of death. Both forms of fear prove man's transcendence over nature.⁴³

42. H.F. Lovell Cocks, op. cit., p. 34.

43. Human Destiny, p. 8. Cf. Paul Tillich, op. cit., p. 71: "We rebel against our own end, against its definitive, inescapable character. We would not rebel if death were simply natural, as we do not rebel against the falling of the leaves." Cf. also, on the fear of death, H.F. Lovell Cocks, op. cit.

So much, then, for the general background of what we have called the immortality- and the resurrection-motifs in the British theology of this century. We must now begin our examination of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body itself.

II

Expositions of the Doctrine

There have been two distinct approaches in this century to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. And while some theologians have taken both approaches, it will be helpful to distinguish between the defence of the doctrine of the basis of its ground or foundation, and the defence which emphasizes the meaning and value which the doctrine implies. Both of these approaches have thrown light on the significance of the body in the eschatology of this century.

1. On the Basis of its Ground

- a. The nature of God. "Is it not better," asked P. T. Forsyth, to have less to say about the soul's immortality and more about God's new creation—less about a life in heaven and hell and more about life in Christ or without him? We can be more sure about the new creation than about the natural immortality of the soul.⁴⁴

This is a common note that one finds coming in again and again to discussions of immortality and resurrection. When the biblical idea of immortality is understood, it is clearly seen that eternal life and the spiritual body are gifts of God and not achievements of moral men. Forsyth liked to emphasize the "new creation" as the key to this

⁴⁴. P.T. Forsyth, This Life and the Next, p. 84.

whole problem.

Our immortality is the new work of God on us rather than the continuation of a psychical process, the uncoiling of an infinite spring, or the fruition of a spiritual tendency. Immortality is a gift, a creation. We do not simply arrive; we were invited and we are fetched.⁴⁵

Scottish theologians have always emphasized the prior faith in God from which all other doctrines and beliefs are derivative. It is reasonable to say, wrote J. H. Leckie,

that the argument from the character of God, and especially from his justice, will always remain the strongest defence of faith in immortality.⁴⁶

Immortality, wrote H. R. Mackintosh, is "subordinate, a corollary to faith in God."⁴⁷ Or, with James Denney:

Immortality is not an implication of some philosophical conception of the soul; so far as it has a vital place in religion, it is an inference from a peculiar experience of God.⁴⁸

This emphasis on the nature or activity of God as the source of the belief in immortality has served the useful purpose of making concern for human survival as such peripheral and even irrelevant. Apart from God, William Temple said, "immortality is not a religious interest at all."⁴⁹ And many other writers have pointed to the

⁴⁵. Ibid., p. 85. This same emphasis on the "new creation" is found in Alec Vidler's Christian Belief, p. 112.

⁴⁶. The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 297.

⁴⁷. Immortality and the Future, p. 164.

⁴⁸. Studies in Theology, p. 236. Cf. also Factors of Faith in Immortality, pp. 68-9.

⁴⁹. Nature, Man and God, p. 457.

dangers of self-centredness in the idea of human survival; among others, Dean Inge, A. E. Taylor, John Oman, C. H. Dodd, and Baron von Hügel. Perhaps the latter's statement of the danger is the most persuasive of all:

The simple fact, assuredly, is that the soul, qua religious, has no interest in just simple unending existence, of no matter what kind or of a merely natural kind—an existence with God at most as the dim background to a vivid experience of its own unending natural existence. The specifically religious desire of Immortality begins, not with Immortality, but with God; it rests upon God; and it ends in God. The religious soul does not seek, find or assume its own Immortality; and thereupon seek, find or assume God. But it seeks, finds, experiences, and loves God; and because of God, and this, its very real though still very imperfect, intercourse with God—because of these experiences which lie right within the noblest joys, fears, hopes, necessities, certainties which emerge within any and every field of its life here below—it finds, rather than seeks, Immortality of a certain kind.⁵⁰

b. The resurrection of Christ. Immortality, it has been said, can be called an inference from the nature of God. But it is in reality an inference from a particular act of God. A more biblical way of making this statement would be to say that the resurrection of the body is part of God's promise which he uniquely revealed in the resurrection of Christ. But the resurrection of Christ is not a piece of evidence for human survival. It is a victory over the power of death.

The complete event, that is to say, the occurrence, whatever it was, plus the meaning it bore for those who experienced

50. Essays and Addresses, First Series, p. 197. Cf. W.R. Inge, God and the Astronomers, pp. 275-6; A.E. Taylor, The Christian Hope of Immortality, pp. 12, 59; John Oman, Grace and Personality, p. 280; and C.H. Dodd, The Authority of the Bible, pp. 132-3. In the latter book, Prof. Dodd establishes the priority of God and the derivative nature of the idea of immortality by pointing out that the Hebrews achieved a lofty conception of God without a real idea of immortality.

it, is given in the Gospels: Christ triumphed over death and was raised to the right hand of God.⁵¹

Edwyn Bevan made this distinction plainly. When we speak of the resurrection of Christ, we do not, he wrote, mean the animation of his earthly body; we do not treat it as a proof of our survival.

What then was the distinctive thing about the Risen Lord? It was that His Person was continuously active in this world—not only continuously active, but active on a much vaster scale, with a reach and power that Jesus had never had in the limitations of His earthly life.⁵²

The resurrection of Christ has been used to clarify the phrase that Paul used to describe the risen state—"spiritual body." If we are ^{to} made in his likeness, it is argued, then the resurrection of Christ must be able to throw light on Paul's meaning here.

Leonard Hodgson defines this phrase by reaffirming a point we have already found him making: that we define body not in terms of its elements but in terms of its function. If the human body is the means of expression for man in this life, then

a "spiritual body" would be such a means of self-expression appropriate to a "spiritual world."

He continues:

What either a "spiritual body" or its "environment" would

51. C.H. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p. 107. He puts this another way in The Bible Today, p. 96: "Death and resurrection; they (that is, the apostles) saw that this is the pattern into which history falls, as God's purpose is realized in it..."

52. Christians in a World at War, p. 19. Cf. Chapter 1, p. 20 above and the quotation from Dr. Bevan's Hellenism and Christianity there. This distinction has been widely emphasized. Cf. C.S. Lewis, Miracles, p. 173, 175-6; James Denney, Factors of Faith in Immortality, pp. 88 ff.; C.C.J. Webb, The Historical Element in Religion, pp. 48, 104-5; S.D.F. Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 584-5. All of these writers were concerned to define the resurrection of Christ as a new act of God, a unique victory over death, and not merely a demonstration of an immortality that men already knew they possessed.

be like we have no means of imagining; still less do we know what we mean by speaking of a particular spiritual body as being continuous with a particular physical body...If we believe that after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ there was such a continuity, we shall be wise to admit that we are ignorant of the "mechanism" of the event which thus remains mysterious to us.⁵³

The resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the body have been related to each other in still different ways. For Oscar Hardman the resurrection means that—though matter and spirit are now real and separate—we may look forward to "their ultimate reconciliation by the transformation of matter into spirit."⁵⁴ And Alan Richardson has argued that we share in the resurrection of Christ because he was not man but Man, representative humanity "in whom the whole race in principle triumphed over death."⁵⁵ Dr. John S. Whale has described with great forcefulness the significance of the resurrection of Christ for an understanding of our resurrection. It means in the first place, he says, that

53. And Was Made Man, pp. 125-6. Cf. also his Essays in Christian Philosophy, pp. 108-9, and Chapter 4, pp. 143-4 above. Similar arguments about the meaning of spiritual body can be found in two works by Charles Gore: Belief in God, p. 268; and The Holy Spirit and the Church, p. 304. Cf. also Edwyn Bevan, Christians in a World at War, p. 190: "Most modern Christians do not think that the body in which the discarnate spirit is clad has a form like an earthly body, but implies means of self-expression and communication adapted to the wholly different conditions of a world not included in the three-dimensional space we know." We will deal below, pp. 300 ff., with Bevan's total view of the resurrection of the body.

54. The Resurrection of the Body, p. 63.

55. Article "Resurrection" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by him, pp. 194-5. Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 162 ff. above for a criticism of this idea of Christ as representative man. Mention should be made at this point of L.S. Thornton's difficult and rather fanciful description of the relation of Christ's resurrection to the resurrection of the body in The Common Life in the Body of Christ, pp. 260-1.

Jesus was man in the most typical of all human experiences. He not only lived our human life. He died the human death. He was crucified, dead and buried.⁵⁶

He totally died, his whole being was buried in the tomb, not just a part of it. Both to be a man and to be Christ, he had to be dead and buried. In the second place, Dr. Whale continues, he descended into hell. This means that Christ

not only died the death which mortals must all die. He also died the death which we as sinners must all die. In short, he was "made sin" for us. If St. Paul stops short of saying that he was "made guilt" for us, the Creed is more explicit: "He was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell."⁵⁷

Finally, Dr. Whale points out, the reality of the resurrection of Christ, the fact that the glorified body is still a body, should remind us that

our hope of salvation is hope not only of eternal life in God, but also of eternal life: that is, life which forms an organic continuum with real, bodily life here in this world of time and sense.⁵⁸

What we have said in this section up to this point can be sum-

56. "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting," the Drew Lecture on Immortality for 1948, printed in Religion and Life, Vol. XVIII, no. 3, Summer, 1949, p. 442. Paul Tillich has similarly called attention to the lessons of Christ's resurrection. We often hide the seriousness of the "buried" in the creed, he writes, "by imagining that not we shall be buried, but only a comparatively unimportant part of us, the physical body. That is not what the Creed implies. It is the same subject, Jesus Christ, of Whom it is said that He suffered and that He was buried and that He was resurrected. He was buried, He—His whole personality—was removed from the earth. The same is true of us. We shall die, we—our personality, from which we cannot separate our body as an accidental part—shall be buried." The Shaking of the Foundations, pp. 166-7.

57. John S. Whale, op. cit., p. 442.

58. Ibid., p. 444.

marized by a quotation from Prin. John Baillie.

The primary and all-embracing concern of the New Testament is with the hope of a new world and a new community. Unlike the Platonists and so many moderns, its rejoicing is not in the assurance that men continue to live on after death. It is even doubtful how far the New Testament writers believe that all men do live on, and it is especially doubtful whether they believe, like Plato, that men are inherently immortal. The New Testament takes no satisfaction in the thought of continuance as such, but only in resurrection to the life of the New Age, and it speaks with nothing but dread of the prospect awaiting those who, living or dead, are shut out from the life of that Age.⁵⁹

The most thorough attempt in recent years to analyse the relation between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of the body has come from the pen of A. M. Ramsey, in his important little book, The Resurrection of Christ. It will be well to look briefly at his position. He begins by distinguishing in terms now familiar to us the message of resurrection from the message of survival.

The distinction is big and important, between a Resurrection and the survival of an immortal soul. In the Platonist doctrine of immortality the body dies, but the soul continues its life. Thus, really and essentially, there is no death for that aspect of man that is deemed to be of eternal importance; the truth is that "in the sight of the unwise they seem to have died." Very different is a belief that the continuing life of the soul by itself is a maimed and incomplete life, that death is real with no semblance attaching to it, that Resurrection is the raising from out of death of a life that will be as rich and richer in the unity of soul and body than the life that existed previous to death.⁶⁰

Prof. Ramsey's conclusion at this point is similar to several positions we have already noticed above.

59. "Beliefs About the Last Things," Congregational Quarterly, July, 1950, p. 213.

60. A.M. Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ, pp. 33-4.

It is not that Jesus Christ by surviving death demonstrates that all good men survive it too. The Resurrection is far more than an illustration or an example of human immortality. It is a victory uniquely won, and won in order that mankind may be enabled to share in Christ's Resurrection. It does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.⁶¹

After paying a tribute to the nineteenth century orthodoxy of such thinkers as Bishop Westcott,⁶² he goes on to set forth three positions inherent in much modern thought on the resurrection which a biblical approach to the doctrine must reject. The first is the idea that the body has no place in man's future life. The second is that the human race can expect a spiritual survival by means of the persistence of the soul after death. The third is that the resurrection of Christ is an exemplary symbol of our human survival. This three-fold misunderstanding of the resurrection is based, Ramsey adds, on an interpretation of the New Testament which is now being called into question.

According to the one belief Jesus Christ is interpreted within the series of evolution and history in such a way that the transcendental and redemptive aspects of the Gospel receive less than their proper place: the Resurrection is a divine intervention, transcendent and creative, whereby a new creation is inaugurated in the

61. Ibid., pp. 34-5.

62. This orthodoxy, Ramsey says, in spite of its pre-critical use of the Bible, had real strength. For example: "It holds to the New Testament belief that the spiritual and the material are not at permanent variance; both are created by God who wills that both shall be redeemed and exalted. It is congruous also with those factors in modern science and philosophy which suggest that the continuity of a body lies not in the identity of the particles which compose it but in the identity of its organization or 'form' in relation to the person whose it is." Cf. pp. 46-7. This may remind us of the quotation from Leonard Hodgson on pp. 187-90 above.

life of mankind and the world.⁶³

This distinction is clearly in his mind when he comes to treat the resurrection of the body. He sharply contrasts this with theories about the immortality of the soul. He is inclined to grant that philosophy, psychology and general science may be able to present perfectly good grounds for the soul's immortality. But even at best these would only give an incomplete version of what the full Christian belief really is. And not only that, but immortality of the soul is far duller.

In contrast both with the incompleteness and dullness of the immortality of the soul Christianity teaches a future state (not as of right but as of God's gift) wherein the soul is not unclothed but clothed upon by a bodily expression, and wherein the finite human life is raised so as to share, without losing its finiteness, in the infinite life of Christ Himself.⁶⁴

As is the case with many writers, Prof. Ramsey finds Paul's idea of the spiritual body the most useful clue to the nature of the resurrection organism. This does not mean, he points out, a body made from spiritual stuff; but a body in which the Spirit has done its perfect work, a body, in other words, in which the victory of Christ is wholly won. The principle of continuity between the old body and the new, therefore, is not a continuous relation to the self; but rather a continued but perfected relation to Christ. Science today, he notes, is uncertain about the structure of matter; at least it does not encourage us to make sharp distinctions between

63. Op. cit., p. 54.

64. Ibid., pp. 101-2.

matter and non-matter.⁶⁵

Rather does it seem to encourage us to beware of setting limits to the possibility of a bodily life that is both continuous and yet utterly different.⁶⁶

He concludes his analysis by making quite explicit the connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of the body.

To cling to the words "the resurrection of the body" is to affirm that in our present bodies there is the law of a bodily life beyond our dreams, when the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus Christ has done His perfect work in us.⁶⁷

We have, up to this point, made a working distinction between the nature of God and the resurrection of Christ as different grounds for a belief in immortality or resurrection. We have seen that it is possible to say that immortality is founded upon God, or

65. And yet the cause of religion is never served by premature Christian baptism of particular findings of modern physics. W.H.V. Reade's remark on this habit is pertinently related to the doctrine of the body.

Never, it seems, will the ghost of Plato (or Plotinus) be exorcized; for there can be little doubt that most of the recurrent alarms excited among Christians by the progress of physics are revivals or survivals of the ancient belief that matter (or body) is the natural enemy of spirit, the very belief which the doctrines of Creation and Incarnation ought finally to have swept away....One rather ludicrous piece of evidence is the naive delight sometimes exhibited by friends of religion when they hear that the solidity of matter is being whittled away by modern physics, as though Materialism would at any rate less dangerous if only matter could be made decently thin.

The Christian Challenge to Philosophy, p. 130.

66. Ibid., p. 113. Ramsey's whole section, pp. 107-114 is very interesting here. Cf. below, pp. 335 ff., for a further discussion of this problem of continuity between the old life and the new.

67. Ibid., pp. 113-4.

to say that our resurrection rests solely on the resurrection of Christ.

The New Testament never argues from a general resurrection to the Resurrection of Christ. The argument is the other way about, the faith that Christ had risen being made the starting-point of the faith that His saints will rise with Him to newness of life.⁶⁸

But, in the last analysis, these two grounds are really one and the same. The fullest and truest revelation of God has come precisely through the resurrection of Christ. It is God who raised him from the dead. As William Temple wrote:

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is something very much more than the proof of His Messiahship; it is more than the pledge of our immortality; it is more than the declaration of our Lord's divinity. It is the vindication of the Divinity of God...For all through the New Testament the Resurrection is spoken of as the act of God the Father.⁶⁹

Therefore our resurrection is best understood as part, indeed the final part, of the whole sacred story. It is based primarily on an event that has already taken place; it is, as Prof. D. M. Baillie has put it, the climax of a story with a plot. We know the author of the story, we know the plot, and we can see how it is unfolding. We know something of the climax, though we have not come to it yet. So, perhaps it is unnecessary to pick this or that part of the whole story as the distinctive basis for a belief in the resurrection of the body. It is most truly seen as the final part—congruent with

68. John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, p. 165. Cf. also pp. 166-71, 185.

69. From Studies in the Spirit and Truth of Christianity, quoted by P.S.M. Bennett, in The Resurrection of the Dead, pp. 170-1.

the whole—of the total sacred story which has been made clear and real to us by the decisive events surrounding the action of God in the life, death, and resurrection of his Son. We have already seen, in the earlier chapters of this thesis, how some of the other aspects of this sacred story suggest a high Christian estimate of the body. Therefore we need not be surprised to discover that the final moment of that story, the resurrection of the body, points to the most positive divine estimate of the life of the body that could be imagined.

2. On the Basis of its Value and Meaning

The most fruitful approaches to the resurrection of the body, in spite of the value of such work as that of A. M. Ramsey, have not been those which were concerned with the ground or basis of the doctrine. More creative have been those approaches which start with the doctrine as embodying certain truths about human existence which, without the guidance of the doctrine, would be passed over. This second approach has not been particularly concerned to relate the resurrection of the body to the other parts of the sacred story. It has instead spoken of the relevance of the doctrine, of its ability to cast valuable light on certain facts about the Christian faith and life.⁷⁰ When this approach is taken, it is generally the case

70. Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr, in a much quoted passage in Beyond Tragedy, pp. 289-90, describes the perplexity with which young theologians at the time of his ordination approached the credal phrase, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Today, he writes, the situation is different. For "some of us have been persuaded to take the stone which we then rejected and make it the head of the corner. In other words, there is no part of the Apostolic creed which, in our present opinion, expresses the whole genius of the Christian faith more neatly than just this despised phrase: 'I Believe in the resur-

that some of the biblical content of the doctrine is thereby recovered. Four British theologians (and by way of comparison, one American) will be investigated here to point up the nature of this rediscovery. These five have given the most useful consideration to the doctrine in recent years. They are B. H. Streeter, Edwyn Bevan, Oliver C. Quick, John S. Whale, and finally, Reinhold Niebuhr.

a. B. H. Streeter. B. H. Streeter's essay in the volume on Immortality which he edited stands apart from the work of the other contributors. The other members of the Cumnor Group were more interested in establishing, on psychical and scientific grounds, the open possibility of human survival. Canon Streeter, however, turned to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as the true key to the meaning of the life to come. Unlike the other members of the group with which he worked, he came more and more to be impressed by the soundness of biblical guidance at this point. This is how he described his defence of the doctrine:

If the "body" stands for the medium of individuality, for the means by which in the next world persons will be recognisable or still distinct—then the body must survive... To our Lord, then, and to St. Paul, the real meaning and value of the idea of the resurrection of the body does not consist in an affirmation of a material flesh and blood existence in the future—that they both repudiate. It stands mainly for two things, that the life of the future will be richer not poorer than this life, and that individuality, personal distinctions, and the results of the moral and emotional as well as of the intellectual activities of this life will be preserved in the next. More than that, it means that the capacity for such activity

rection of the body." p. 290. There was never quite so clear a movement from outright rejection to acceptance of the doctrine in British theology; but the change can be described as a movement from a nominal loyalty to the doctrine (combined with a tendency to read it as an alternative way of defining immortality of the soul) to an attempt to find positive theological value in it. It is this second stage which we are preparing now to describe.

will still endure.⁷¹

Canon Streeter's interpretation of the resurrection of the body dealt exclusively with the life of the individual in the world to come. But this doctrine, he insisted, must not be taken merely as a symbol for the future life. It points to actual facts. Some of the chief difficulties in imagining a bodily life in the world to come arise, he believed, from the erroneous habit of denying space and time to the life to come. This denial, he remarked, is based on a four-fold misunderstanding. We have been too certain, he said, that God exists outside of space and time; that space and time have no independent existence outside of the mind; that thought is independent of space; and that space and time are—in this life—limitations on the life of man.⁷² If we keep our minds open on these questions, if we reject the pantheistic idea that after death the individual merges into some universal mind, and if we accept personal immortality; then, he declared,

the presumption is strongly in favour of the view that we shall continue to imagine and to perceive in terms of time and space... [Moreover] an ego that thinks in terms of space must necessarily have some centre of consciousness localised at any given moment in a particular spot; for otherwise it cannot think of objects as outside itself, or have any standpoint from which to survey them. Hence, a state of existence in which we perceive things other than ourselves as existing in space is only possible if our consciousness has some localised centre such as in this world is provided by our body.⁷³

71. B.H. Streeter, "The Resurrection of the Dead," in Immortality, pp. 94-5.

72. Ibid., pp. 96-103.

73. Ibid., p. 102. Cf. below, pp. 328 ff., for a discussion of the problem of time and the life to come.

For this reason, resurrection of the body is more than symbolic in Streeter's hands.

This point is his main contribution to an understanding of the doctrine; that the activities of life require something analogous to space-time, and therefore something analogous to a body. When Streeter raised the question about the future form of this body, he answered in terms already familiar to us, making use of the idea of the spiritual body. "Spiritual" and "natural" in Paul, he wrote, do not refer to the material of which the body is composed, but to the "environment to which it is adapted."⁷⁴ He neatly summarized his view, holding together the need for continuity between the old and the new body and the need for an element of the totally new.

The body is essentially the means of expression of the life of the spirit, and the organ of its activity. As such it is adapted to its environment, and it draws its substance and nourishment from that environment. Change the environment, and the spirit must find a new expression for its life, a new organ of its activity, a new "body." But the new "body" will be as perfectly (indeed, we hope more perfectly) adapted to the new environment as the old body was to the old environment; it must, therefore, be of an entirely different character.⁷⁵

b. Edwyn Bevan. Dr. Bevan began his analysis, as did Canon Streeter, with a rejection of the belief in a literal resurrection. He acknowledged the power and persuasiveness that this form of the doctrine may have for many people (just as Prof. Ramsey paid tribute to the orthodoxy of Bishop Westcott), but declared that today it simply cannot be held.

74. Ibid., p. 105.

75. Ibid., pp. 105-6.

The great difficulty is not an objection to the miraculous as such: we may quite admit the validity of the argument that if God could create the body, He can re-create it. The difficulty arises from the incompatibility of the idea of a material body with the final state of the blessed in a heaven not subject to conditions of material space and time. God can restore the body of a man long become dust to the shape it had during life; certainly, but is it a reasonable action to attribute to God that He should maintain for all eternity under non-material conditions a bodily constitution which in its every detail is made for adaptation to earthly needs, that men, for instance, should go on for all eternity having legs and feet when there had ceased to be earthly ground for them to walk on?76

Dr. Bevan then proceeded to show how modern thought had overcome this difficulty. This, he said, can be called a characteristic modern reinterpretation of the doctrine of the bodily resurrection:

The human being, they say, who enters after death into a higher state in the Divine Presence, is not to be thought of simply as a disembodied soul. The difference between that mode of existence and this is not a negative one only—the loss of a body; human spirits in that state must be endowed with means of effecting their purposes and communicating with each other far more perfect than these present bodies of ours. In that way we may speak of them as having spiritual bodies, though we can form no imagination of what a spiritual body is like. Their life and personality and energy beyond death should be thought of, not as impoverished, but as enormously enriched.77

And this, he declared, is adequate as far as it goes. Resurrection of the body, then, means that the individual will be afforded ampler means of perception, communication, and self-expression: an enriched, not an impoverished personal existence. Up to this point,

76. Edwyn Bevan, The Hope of a World to Come, pp. 54-5. Cf. a similar point made by John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, p. 302. Notice also the difference between Bevan's and Streeter's estimate of the role of space and time in the world to come.

77. Ibid., p. 56.

thus, in spite of their difference of view about the eternal status of space and time, Dr. Bevan and Canon Streeter are in close agreement.⁷⁸

But Dr. Bevan took a further and very important step beyond this speculation about the destiny of the individual. We cannot simply be satisfied, he said, with a picture of individuals passing immediately after death into the divine presence. Even if we are forced to discard the idea that at the end of the time-process the bodies of all men will be restored to material existence in the general resurrection, this scheme had hold of a truth of which we cannot today lose sight. Eternal bliss, according both to Jewish and Christian presuppositions, cannot be thought of as merely individual; it must be

a communal bliss, an existence of the Divine Community of spirits in perfection and mutual love and joy.⁷⁹

Therefore, resurrection of the body must not be restricted to the problem of the individual's destiny. Since the human body is the means of self-expression, the organ of social intercourse, human destiny may be said to require not only a body, but also a Body, a community. Dr. Bevan gave masterly expression to this fact:

If every human individual is unique, and so makes a unique contribution to the immense harmony of innumerable distinct notes...then, so long as there are

78. Cf. Edwyn Bevan, Christians in a World at War, p. 102, and Hellenism and Christianity, pp. 222-3.

79. The Hope of a World to Come, p. 58.

still individual spirits to come, their unique contributions will be lacking to the whole...But further, since we must believe that the bliss of each member of the Divine Community involves that member's rejoicing in the bliss and beauty of the Community of the whole, the completion of the Community would necessarily be an event for each member individually, a possibility for each member of joy he could not have had till then. In that way the old view which distinguished between the present relatively imperfect happiness of the disembodied spirit and the perfect happiness which would be realized at the last day, when soul and body were reunited, may correspond with a real distinction between the relatively imperfect beatitude attained individually by spirits after death, whilst the Divine Community is still incomplete, and the perfect beatitude attained by all together when, at the end of time, the Community is complete.⁸⁰

In this way Dr. Bevan took an important step beyond the purely individualistic interpretation of the resurrection of the body of Canon Streeter. In his hands it became a means of rendering not only the individual's destiny but as well the destiny of history.

c. O. C. Quick. There are two parts to Canon Quick's exposition of the doctrine. In the first place he was, as many others have been, concerned to distinguish the ultimate hope of communion with God from interest in the prolongation of human life as such. Questions about survival, he said, have no intrinsic relation to belief in God. Many Christians reject the immortality of the soul; and many who are not Christians hold to it.

The evidence for and against survival, as distinct from immortality, may be investigated from a strictly scientific standpoint, which excludes both metaphysical and religious presuppositions altogether.

Religious immortality, he continued at this point, is not founded on any kind of analysis of the nature of the soul, but rather

80. Ibid., pp. 58-9.

upon a relation which exists or may exist between the human soul and God. Nor could it be proved to be true by the most complete evidence conceivable that in fact every human soul survives the death of the body.⁸¹

Summing up his first main point, Canon Quick pointed to the lack of biblical grounds for what is generally called human immortality.

This is the great conclusion which the Bible reaches. The immortality of man is the gift of the living God who conquers death. Of that the Bible assures us; but it does not answer our questions about what happens to the soul when the body dies. And it would be difficult to cite any text outside the Apocrypha which suggests that the soul of man is by necessity of its own created nature immortal.⁸²

So far Canon Quick is on ground already familiar to us. It is when he came to deal with the resurrection itself that he made a really new contribution to the problem. He pointed to the fact that the idea of resurrection has a unique moral meaning; it is, in other words, a natural implicate of the total gospel teaching about the meaning of life.

Christ has given to the idea of resurrection the quite new meaning of life restored and glorified through and by means of death, [and] we see also that he has made it the symbol of a deeper truth than any which a doctrine of merely immortality can express.⁸³

He described this "deeper truth" in an expressive passage:

Thus the fact of the Lord's resurrection became to Christian faith the assurance that he had in His own person perfectly fulfilled and proved the law of life

81. O.C. Quick, Doctrines of the Creed, p. 263. Cf. Paul Althaus' remark that it is not the soul but the relation in which man stands to God that is immortal.

82. Ibid., p. 266.

83. Ibid., p. 267.

through death which he had preached. His death and resurrection meant something much more than the liberation of His spiritual self from an outward vesture of flesh and blood. Throughout life His whole manhood, soul and body, had been dedicated and surrendered to the service of God's kingdom. The surrender was fulfilled and completed in agony which terminated on the Cross. And as the surrender had been whole and complete, so also was the restoration and exaltation into glory. Nothing in Him had been, as it were, kept back from death...And as the death had been more than merely physical so the risen life was more than merely spiritual. The whole man had died and risen because He had been content to die.⁸⁴

This interpretation of the resurrection—that it is the clearest and the final example of the Christian principle of life through the total surrender of death—made it unnecessary for Canon Quick to posit some questionable division of the personality into a perishable and imperishable part. This, he added, has become increasingly difficult, both on biblical grounds and because we are learning more and more about the physical basis of consciousness.⁸⁵ This view also clarifies many of the knotty problems related to the resurrection of the body. It means, for example, that the change from the earthly to the heavenly life is best seen as the climax of a process of increasing conflict and tension in which, finally, the earthly man must wholly die in order to receive the gift of new life.⁸⁶ It means also that Christ's resurrection is not

84. The Christian Sacraments, p. 98.

85. Ibid., pp. 95-6.

86. Doctrines of the Creed, p. 268.

an example of human survival, but a vindication of the life of complete humility and self-giving.

All that lives in this world must really die. But this fact of mortality may be made the opportunity for entering into the service and the self-surrender of the Son of God; and, by so entering, this mortal personality of ours, and not any supposedly undying part of it, must at the last through death put on immortality.⁸⁷

Or, in other words:

The final winning of life, which issues from the final giving up, constitutes and reconstitutes in glory the eternal wholeness of the self and personality. This is the essential meaning of resurrection for the individual. It is quite different from any doctrine of the immortality of the soul which may suggest merely a continuance of the soul's life into an endless future and in any case finds no positive value in death itself. The Christian doctrine of resurrection is inseparably connected with the idea of sacrifice which does give death a positive value. And the final issue of death, which resurrection symbolizes, is a super-temporal reconstitution of the whole self finally surrendered to God—a condition in which the whole temporal history of the self is included as somehow present.⁸⁸

This interpretation of the individual significance of the resurrection of the body has the advantage of making unmistakably clear its connection with the whole New Testament gospel and of bringing out its meaning for the moral life here and now. Only what we give to God can be preserved; only insofar as we die, may we live. Only, in Paul's words, if we lose all the things of self for Christ, claiming only a righteousness not our own, can we attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:8-11). Canon Quick performed a

87. Ibid., p. 270.

88. O.C. Quick, The Gospel of the New World, p. 113. Cf. also his early book, Essays in Orthodoxy, pp. 158 ff.

great service in relating the motif of resurrection to the demand on the believer for the crucifixion of the self as a condition of his fulfilment.⁸⁹

d. J. S. Whale. The resurrection of the body, in Dr. Whale's analysis, performs two functions: it, and it alone, is able to do justice to the distinctive Christian attitude to death; and it, and it alone, is consistent with the Christian attitude to salvation. We have already seen in what sense the first statement is true. Death is a factor of man's finiteness, his relation to nature. It is also a factor of his freedom over finiteness; he fears death and therefore he is more than nature. It is finally a factor of his sin; man deserves to die. A doctrine of resurrection alone, Dr. Whale claims, is able to acknowledge all this about death, to admit it as man's universal fate.⁹⁰

Dr. Whale's distinctive contribution to the understanding of this doctrine is that he relates, and nearly identifies, "resurrection of the body" with redemption or salvation. If the distinctive Christian understanding of salvation is true, he says, then

89. "We must not distort, by ecclesiastical and theological arrogance, that great cosmic paradox that there is victory over death within the world of death itself." This from Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations, p. 129. Prof. Niebuhr has a remark closely related to Quick's view: "The self in this state of pre-occupation with itself must be 'broken' and 'shattered' or, in the Pauline phrase, 'crucified.' It cannot be saved merely by being enlightened. It is a unity and therefore cannot be drawn out of itself merely by extending its perspective upon interests beyond itself. If it remains self-centered, it merely uses its wider perspective to bring more lives and interests under the dominion of its will-to-power." Human Destiny, p. 190. Cf. a similar remark by A.S. Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of Immortality, pp. 195-6.

90. John S. Whale, "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting," Religion in Life, Summer, 1949, pp. 434-7.

"resurrection of the body" is the best possible way to express that understanding. We will never understand the resurrection of the body until we acknowledge that

redemption is not some mysterious alchemy or magic inoculation which makes us immortal, as Greek theology often tended to suggest. Redemption is moral; it must be concerned with the corrupt and enslaved will of man and not merely with his creaturely finiteness; it must be justification at the hands of God himself, even while we are yet sinners....We are justified—made right with God—not because of anything meritorious which we have done, but because of something which the Eternal God himself has done, subjecting himself to transitoriness and death and hell, in the person and work of his Son, that he might save us unto eternal life.⁹¹

This is the most far-reaching rejection of modernism's speculations about the immortality of the soul that contemporary British theology has produced. Resurrection of the body, then, stands as a refutation and correction of countless contemporary misunderstandings about the nature of salvation. It corrects the forgetfulness that God is creator which has tempted us to a pessimistic dualism between matter and spirit. It corrects our false idea of sin which placed the centre of the trouble in an intractable material body rather than in a rebellious will. It reminds us that Incarnation means that Christ took on the whole of human nature in order to save the whole of man: body, soul, spirit. Resurrection of the body reminds us that throughout the Christian life, uniquely so in the sacraments, we turn to material things—good because created by God—as bearers of God's purpose for us. Dr. Whale proceeds to sum up those elements of the Christian faith of which the resurrection of the body serves as reminder:

91. Ibid., p. 437.

The Scriptures know nothing either of man as infinite and eternal spirit or of his finite body as its essentially sinful prison house. The very distinction is meaningless to a faith which knows that all existence is of God, and therefore created and finite. Man's world of nature and spirit, of body and soul, is not evil because it is finite. God himself made this world to be the theater of his glory; and to this end he made the creature called man in his own image, marvelously compact of the physical and the spiritual in an indissoluble unity. This faith alone reveals the true dimension of man's spirit and gives to his history in time its eternal possibilities and meaning. Indeed, the Christian religion is as much "materialist" in its doctrinal emphasis as it is spiritual and transcendental. If it judges Falstaff for his sensuality, the gospel of the Incarnate Redeemer also judges St. Simeon Stylites for his asceticism. Our faith takes this world seriously, reckoning realistically with the hurly-burly of its history, and refusing to belittle—much less to ignore or repudiate in the name of a false spirituality—the physical foundation and structure of man's spiritual existence in time. Thus the Christian doctrine of redemption does not speak of the resurrection of an immaterial and immortal soul but of "the resurrection of the body"...92

The question Dr. Whale answers, then, is this. What does the doctrine of the resurrection of the body do for theology? And to this question he has given a vigorous and masterly reply: this doctrine does nothing less than describe the unique genius of the total Christian faith, throwing vivid light on the distinctive things it has to say about God, man and his sin, history, matter, and eternal life. Some might cavil that Dr. Whale says very little about just what the doctrine is. This is true; but if one were to ask him why this is so, he would undoubtedly reply that there is nothing more that we can know about it.

Therefore [he concludes], the Christian gospel of redemption here comes to its climax in all its majesty and comfort. Its final testimony is that the life which we live by grace in the body of our humiliation finds its

92. Ibid., pp. 439-40.

conservation and true destiny in God the Redeemer. He alone is sufficient for our mortal life, who made it. Moreover, our faith moves in the realm of hard fact, even when testifying to what eye hath not seen nor ear heard. For the last enemy of man is always the fact of death, and we sinners cannot escape that last inexorable frustration. But the Redeemer will bring us through that frustration, giving to us a spiritual "body," distinct from its mortal counterpart, yet inherently one with it as its organic continuum. Man's redeemed and risen life beyond death would indeed be "naked" if it had no continuous identity with what it was here in the order of time and sense; the glittering tumult of history would be but a shadow play with no final reality to give it meaning. Time itself would be no more than the moving image of eternity; its events would not be taken up into eternity, giving actuality to God's redeeming purpose toward us and so becoming part of eternity.⁹³

e. Reinhold Niebuhr. No aspect of the work of this theologian is so characteristic as his treatment of the resurrection of the body, and none has been more influential. There are really two reasons why a short study of Prof. Niebuhr's interpretation of the doctrine ought to be included at this point even though we have restricted ourselves to British theology. First, it would virtually be impossible to understand the pragmatic approach to the doctrine, which we have seen partly illustrated by Dr. Whale, without reference to Niebuhr. And further, a brief look at his position will reveal the theological climate within which the author of this thesis received his training, and will thus make clear his prejudices and presuppositions.

Prof. Niebuhr, then, is almost completely concerned with what this doctrine can do; what it points to, what facts of human experience it may cast light upon. Three statements, partly drawn

93. Ibid., pp. 441-2. Cf. the defence of an agnosticism about the "how" and the "what form" questions concerning the resurrection in John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, p. 236.

from his works, will clarify his distinctive approach.

1. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body "expresses and implies the unity of the body and the soul."⁹⁴ This first of all is an affirmation that history cannot be understood as a process of the good soul's progressive emancipation from an evil body.

The Biblical sense of the unity of man in his body, mind, and soul makes the Platonic escape from the contingent character of human existence impossible. If, therefore, the New Testament faith ends in the pinnacle of the hope of the resurrection this is also the final expression of a faith which sees no hope that man may overcome or escape the contingent character of his existence...⁹⁵

Secondly, man's body-soul unity implies that he is both part of and free from nature. This situation is the cause of man's inevitable struggle between necessity and freedom, and also of the fact that while man must submit to nature's processes he also possesses real power over them. Man's involvement in nature, his possession of a "body," is described thus:

In the symbol of the resurrection of the body, the "body" is indicative of the contribution which nature makes to human individuality...Climate and geographic limits, poverty and plenty, the survival impulse and sexual desires, and all natural conditions leave their indelible mark upon the spiritual constructions of history.⁹⁶

But man, even man as "body," is over against nature as well. And

94. Reinhold Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p. 291 (*italics mine*).

95. Faith and History, p. 150.

96. Human Destiny, p. 296. He goes on to say here that the "doctrine of the immortality of the soul implies that eternal significance can be ascribed only to that element in the historical synthesis which transcends finite conditions. If this implication is followed to its logical conclusion nothing remains in eternity but an undifferentiated unity, free of all particularity and distinctions."

while we do not have the experience of either an immortal soul or a spiritual body, we do know what it is to be both within and outside the flux of nature. We know this because we have experience of failure to make sense of our own lives merely in terms of natural survival, self realization, or will-to-power. And thus it is the case that man, knowing that he is in a body, is thereby more than "mere body." Therefore, the resurrection of the body, the

fulfilment of life beyond the possibilities of this existence is a justified hope, because of our human situation, that is, because a life which knows the flux in which it stands cannot be completely a part of that flux. On the other hand this hope is not one which fulfils itself by man's own powers. God must complete what remains incomplete in human existence. This is true both because there is no simple division in human life between what is mortal and what is immortal so that the latter could slough off the former; and because the incompleteness of human life is not only finiteness but sin.⁹⁷

2. "The hope of resurrection of the body is preferable to the idea of immortality of the soul because it expresses at once a more individual and a more social idea of human existence."⁹⁸ The body is the unique mark of individuality. Thus, those "spiritual" religions which do not account for the role of the body in experience inevitably lose the individuality of man by speaking of the loss of self in some higher union with the divine. But the resurrection of the body asserts the unique significance, not of some part of the personality apart from the self, but of the whole self.

97. Beyond Tragedy, p. 297. Cf. p. 291, and also Faith and History, pp. 149-50.

98. Beyond Tragedy, p. 297 (italics mine).

The hope of the resurrection affirms that ultimately finiteness will be emancipated from anxiety and the self will know itself as it is known.⁹⁹

The resurrection of the body also preserves the individuality of human nature because it points to a fulfilment, and not a cancellation, of time and history in eternity. The Christian idea of individuality is to be distinguished from idealism (which resolves the tension between individual and society by denying time and history), from naturalism (which denies the influence of society on the individual) and from Marxism (which denies the influence of the individual on society).

To believe that the body is resurrected is to say, therefore, that eternity is not a cancellation of time and history but that history is fulfilled in eternity. But to insist that the body must be resurrected is to understand that time and history have meaning only as they are borne by an eternity which transcends time.¹⁰⁰

But the body is also the principle and bearer of social relations; and therefore the resurrection of the body is the most adequate rendering of the social or communal character of the Christian hope. Originally, of course, the hope of resurrection in the Bible was a hope for the restoration of the whole people of God.

Any religion which thinks only in terms of individual fulfilment also thinks purely in terms of the meaning of individual life. But man's body is the symbol of his organic

99. Human Destiny, p. 312. Cf. Human Nature, pp. 63-4.

100. Beyond Tragedy, p. 302. The problem of time and eternity will be discussed below, pp. 328 ff. For an excellent analysis of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as the guarantor of an adequate view of individuality, cf. C.N. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, pp. 484-8. Cf. also the lecture by H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Christian Doctrine of Eternal Life," printed as an appendix in E.A. Payne's biography entitled Henry Wheeler Robinson, pp. 206-7.

relationship to the processes of history. Each life may have a significance which transcends the social process but not one which can be developed without reference to that process.¹⁰¹

3. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is valuable because it preserves an element of humility in the individual life of expectation in historical existence. If present history is, as Prof. Niebuhr suggests, an interim

between the disclosure of its true meaning and the fulfillment of that meaning, between the revelation of divine sovereignty and the full establishment of that sovereignty,¹⁰²

then it must be pointed out that the resurrection of the body is a reminder of what is expected, not of what is already revealed. This

101. Beyond Tragedy, p. 299. Cf. Human Destiny, p. 312: "The idea of the resurrection implies that the historical elaborations of the richness of creation in all their variety, will participate in the consummation of history." Cf. also the quotation from Edwyn Bevan, above, pp. 302-3, for a statement of the communal nature of fulfillment. This whole idea of the communal quality of the life to come has received many different formulations in British theology. Leonard Hodgson, in his essay "The Incarnation" in Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, speaks of the resurrection of the body of Christ, the community; E.L. Mascall (Christ, the Christian, and the Church, p. 146) and L.S. Thornton (The Common Life in the Body of Christ, pp. 253-84) both speak of the doctrine of the resurrection of the church. Other references may be found in V.F. Storr, Christianity and Immortality, pp. 97, 183-6; F.T. Lord, The Conquest of Death, p. 154; and E.C. Rust, The Christian Understanding of History, p. 290. Perhaps the point is most clearly brought out in this passage from A.E. Taylor's The Christian Hope of Immortality, p. 76:

There was, indeed, a very good reason for the Christian insistence on the "resurrection of the body." The Christian's "world to come" is not one of solitary speculation, but one where the members love one another, are united in the "bond of charity"; and such a relation between persons who are irreducibly separate—for if they were not, they could not love one another—demands a "body" in the sense of a medium of inter-communication of thought and affection.

102. Human Destiny, p. 49.

fact is a perennial check on all attempts to give to eschatology a completely "realized" character, as well as a check on all individuals and institutions which claim for themselves a fuller revelation of the purpose of God than has in fact been granted. The resurrection of the body is something which is known by Christian hope. We have already seen how Canon Quick related the resurrection motif to the need for the death of the self in the moral life of the individual. Prof. Niebuhr makes the same point: in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the meaning and completion of human life are located in a source beyond man.

We can participate in the fulfilment of the meaning only if we do not seek too proudly to appropriate the meaning as our secure possession or to erect the fulfilment by our own power.¹⁰³

f. Further remarks on the meaning and value of the doctrine.

Apart from the theologians already studied, it is true that no thorough analysis of the resurrection of the body has been made in recent years. As a matter of fact, this is an important task waiting to be done in British theology. But there are a number of straws in the wind, and one can discern perhaps four approaches to the doctrine that have been made by British theologians during this century. We shall take these up in turn.

1. The resurrection of the body has been used to point up the Christian belief in the value and salvation of the total human personality. This note has come up again and again, and we have already touched upon it in this chapter. We saw it as one of the character-

103. Ibid., p. 298.

istic emphases of Prof. Niebuhr. H. M. Relton, for example, quotes with approval the plea of Miguel de Unamuno:

I dread the idea of having to tear myself away from my flesh; I dread still more the idea of having to tear myself away from everything sensible and material, from all substance.¹⁰⁴

This, Dr. Relton adds, is a perfectly sound Christian instinct.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the whole man involves an attitude towards the things of the flesh and the bodily life which is essentially derived from the teaching of the Incarnation with its hallowing of matter and its benediction upon all that pertains to our bodily life.¹⁰⁵

Christianity, it has been pointed out, seeks no escape from the evils and misery of life. It accepts them at their worst and attempts to change them into occasions for joy.¹⁰⁶ It "excludes the notion that our treatment and use of our bodies is spiritually irrelevant."¹⁰⁷

104. The Tragic Sense of Life, p. 47. Dr. Relton refers to this in his article, "Immortality and Resurrection" in The Church Quarterly Review, Vol. XCIV, April, 1922, pp. 98-139.

105. Op. cit., p. 137. He does not consistently hold to this high estimate of the body, however, for earlier in this same article he speaks of the "untiring Biblical warnings as to the essential unreality of the things of sense in comparison with the things of spirit; we can never say that we were not warned of the relative value of the material and the spiritual." Cf. pp. 123-4. This article is a perfect example of a conflict that can be found so often in Anglican thought between a genuine understanding of the religion of the Incarnation and a moral idealism that defines the human dilemma in terms of a war between things of the flesh and things of the spirit.

106. Cf. William Temple, Nature, Man and God, pp. 461-7.

107. Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England, p. 209. Paul Tillich has said that the resurrection of the body "points to the truth that the totality of personal life, including the human body, belongs to the ultimate meaning of existence." The Kingdom of God and History, Vol. III in the Church, Community, and State series, pp. 119-20.

Resurrection of the body, Prof. Webb has written,

implies a conviction, however strangely expressed, of the ultimate connection of soul and body, of the indispensableness of the body to the fullness of human nature, which is quite at variance with Orphic or Platonic notions of the body as the temporary tomb of the soul and much more in harmony than they with the convictions of modern science.¹⁰⁸

A. E. Taylor stated the same conviction. The doctrine implies, he wrote,

the sound thought that the life which is to be a worthy destiny for man must not be that of a part of our nature persisting after the destruction of the rest; it must be a life of the whole man, in which he is not less, but infinitely more, alive than he was before his decease.¹⁰⁹

A passage from Baron von Hügel will sum up our point; that resurrection of the body can remind us of the unity of body and soul, the saving concern of God for the whole man.

Christianity, by its explicit teachings, and even more

108. C.C.J. Webb, Studies in the History of Natural Theology, pp. 260-1.

109. The Christian Hope of Immortality, p. 14. Again we must refer to Paul Tillich who has seen this side of the truth more clearly than perhaps any other living theologian. In The Shaking of the Foundations, p. 85, he writes: "The resurrection of the body—not an immortal soul—is the symbol of the victory over death. The bodiless spirit...is not the aim of creation; the purpose of salvation is not the abstract intellect or a natureless moral personality. Do we not see everywhere the estrangement of people from nature, from their own natural forces and from nature around them? And do they not become dry and uncreative in their mental life, hard and arrogant in their moral attitude, suppressed and poisoned in their vitality? They certainly are not the images of salvation. As one theologian has justly said, 'Corporal being is the end of the ways of God.'" Later, on p. 86, he points out how Christian art has always understood the unity of spirit and body, for in such art we are able to see that "spirit becomes body, and that nature is not strange to personality. The system of cells and functions, which we call 'body,' is able to express the finest change of our spiritual being. Artists have often understood the eternal significance of nature, even when theologians have emphasised a bodiless spirituality, forgetting that the first thing by which Jesus revealed His Messianic vocation was His power to heal bodily and mental sickness."

by its whole drift and interior affinities, requires the survival of all that is essential to the whole man, and conceives this whole as constituted, not by thought alone but also by feeling and will and the power of effectuation; so that the body, or some unpicturable equivalent to it, seems necessary to this physico-spiritual, ultimately organic conception of what man is and must continue to be, if he is to remain man at all...Now all this fits in admirably with the whole Jewish-Christian respect for, high claims upon, and constant training of the body, the senses, the emotions, and with the importance attached to the Visible and Audible,--History, Institutions, Society.110

2. The resurrection of the body underlines the unique Christian understanding of history. History can be defined as the arena in which the body works. All human history, writes Prof. Dodd, "is bounded by the death of the body and the final extinction of human life on earth."¹¹¹ Or, as has been said, the body "is the capacity in man to expose himself to what is other."¹¹² Body, in other words, is the condition of man's status as a maker of history. Time, history, body—these terms are closely related; and the Christian consummation does not involve the annulment of any of them. Although Paul declared that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," this did not lead him

to the conclusion that everlasting life annuls all histor-

110. The Mystical Element of Religion, Vol. 2, pp. 194-5. Cf. John Oman, Vision and Authority, p. 251; and H.R. Mackintosh, Immortality and the Future, p. 165.

111. History and the Gospel, p. 182.

112. W.A. Whitehouse, "The Christian View of Man," in the Scottish Journal of Theology, March 1949, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 70.

ical reality for which "the body" is the symbol. He believed rather that "it is sown a natural body and is raised a spiritual body" and that the consummation means not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon." In that succinct phrase the Biblical hope of a consummation which will sublimate rather than annul the whole historical process is perfectly expressed.¹¹³

God has promised a resurrection of the body, and this means that in this life the historical process is of infinite value to him; that it will be taken up and preserved—not by man's power but by his—into the eternity of the world to come.¹¹⁴

3. The resurrection of the body has been made to point to the existence, in the life to come, of a real personal identity, of real means of communication and self-expression. This doctrine, in other words,

excludes the notion that the future life is impoverished and ghostly. On the contrary, that life is as full as, and fuller than, the life here...It safeguards the conviction that we shall have the means of recognising each other in the future life.¹¹⁵

The life to come, just as this life below, is not to be purely mental or purely spiritual. Such a life would be quite uninteresting.

In our experience in this life the body serves the double purpose of expressing our own purposes and of enabling us to enter into social relationships with others. The view of the future life as involving an appropriate organism (however its origin and nature may be conceived) does seem to supply the possibility of personal identity, of communication between and expression of personalities, all of

113. Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Destiny, p. 298.

114. Cf. Ibid., p. 295.

115. Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England, p. 209.

which are important elements in the Christian view.¹¹⁶

We shall be ourselves; we shall have an identity; we shall have what we here call personality; we shall be able to recall the past.¹¹⁷

In an interesting book C. J. Shebbeare has gone even further than this. If there is no warrant in the Christian faith for calling the life of the body evil, he asked, then why do we hesitate to postulate a bodily life in heaven?

If we are to see and touch, what do we gain by supposing the absence of material organs and objects? Can we give any meaning to a conscious life which includes no sense-experience?¹¹⁸

And if sense-experience, he continued, then why not change and variety?

Are we to be conceived of as still making history in Heaven, or merely as interpreting and contemplating that which has been already made?¹¹⁹

Time, space, sensuous pleasure; these all we may expect in the life to come, Dr. Shebbeare suggested. If this is imaginative fancy, he

116. F.T. Lord, The Unity of Body and Soul, p. 234.

117. This kind of speculation about the life to come and the resurrection of the body was much in fashion before the recovery of biblical theology pressed theology into saying even deeper things about it. The following references all suggest the same sort of approach: resurrection of the body means self-expression, communication, etc. Cf. H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 235; E. Griffith-Jones, Faith and Immortality, pp. 312 ff.; J.H. Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, pp. 78-80; V.F. Storr, Christianity and Immortality, pp. 22, 110-3, 222-3; H. Wheeler Robinson, Redemption and Revelation, pp. 298 ff. The best that can be said of this kind of analysis is that it is true but inadequate.

118. The Problem of the Future Life, p. 72.

119. Ibid., pp. 81-2.

claimed, there is at least warrant for it in the Christian hope of a bodily resurrection.

4. The resurrection of the body is said to make the idea of a final judgment intelligible. This idea of the final judgment at the end of history has been rediscovered in recent years. The main reason for this seems to be that, with the breakdown of a confident belief in inevitable progress, the Christian view of history needed the assurance which the doctrine preserves that history is fundamentally a moral and meaningful process.¹²⁰ But the last judgment applies not only to history but to the individual. It defines the true sense in which the individual can be said to have a unique value. Each of us will be brought, sooner or later, to this judgment.¹²¹

Because man is a rational being, he cannot avoid this sense of the necessity of a final sentence on himself and his works, passed on an unerring knowledge of those works as a completed series, and fixing their worth and his beyond the possibility of a revision of judgment. If he has lost belief in a real divine tribunal from which such a sentence is to proceed, he will still persist in the illusion that he can find a substitute for that tribunal in a future which can never come, in a past which has never been, in himself endowed with an omniscience and an equity which he knows he does not possess. The vitality of this demand for a last judgment of God is, indeed, not demonstration that such a judgment is a reality, but it is, at least, evidence

120. For discussions of the relation of the last judgment to historical destiny, cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, pp. 21-2, Human Destiny, pp. 48, 291-3, Faith and History, pp. 214, 235, 237; E.C. Rust, The Christian Understanding of History, pp. 296-7; and, in a book over fifty years old, James Denney, Studies in Theology, p. 240.

121. Cf. Edwyn Bevan, Hellenism and Christianity, p. 222.

that the belief in it is no mere illusion of a superstitious fancy but an exigence of our nature as reasonable itself.¹²²

If this is a true instinct, then the resurrection of the body can be seen as the means by which the individual is "identified" as an individual person. This is a suggestion we owe to Canon Streeter; the final judgment, he said, requires that we be in a recognizable bodily form; and it may even be that the form of the new body will be determined by our character as judged in the light of Christ.

Even in this world the outward appearance of the body is to some extent modified by the life of the soul within, which profoundly affects both its general health and vigour and the expression of the face and carriage. But if we accept in any degree at all the view that the "spiritual" body of the next life will be one which will be a more perfect organ than is our present body for the expression of the spirit, then in the next world the body will no longer be able to disguise, it will, on the contrary, perfectly reveal the personality... There is no reason to suppose that the mere act of dying, as such, will bring about any miraculous change in our characters or ideals, but it will in our bodies; and it will completely revolutionise our circumstances. It will be the great revealer. We shall all of us be "found out."¹²³

From this summary of the recent treatment accorded to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, we now turn in conclusion to an investigation of some contemporary theological problems which have had new light thrown upon them by the sort of approach to the doctrine that we have been examining.

III

Some Theological Problems Dependent on the Doctrine

122. A.E. Taylor, The Christian Hope of Immortality, p. 88.

123. B.H. Streeter, op. cit., p. 126.

1. The Problem of Eschatological Symbolism

We have already called attention to that significant change in attitude in regard to the resurrection of the body: how, in recent years, attention has shifted from considerations of its truth to treatments of its significance, its value, or its relevance. Yet the former problem can never be completely by-passed; therefore some notice ought to be taken here of recent thinking about the nature of eschatological truth. To what extent are eschatological symbols purely pictorial? To what extent do they point to genuine events? There was, of course, throughout the first nineteen centuries of Christendom the general agreement that

the world-process would be consummated in a cosmic drama, whereby every individual who had died upon the planet would pass from the state of a disembodied spirit to that of a spirit endowed with bodily organs—the Resurrection of the Body, Resurrectio Carnis—and would be confronted with Jesus Christ as Judge.¹²⁴

This century has seen this demolished as a description of actual historical occurrences, and many contemporary forms of Christian thought reject even the symbolic or pictorial validity of the old scheme. But it is by no means unfashionable to take this scheme seriously today. Indeed, the return to theological orthodoxy has tried to do precisely that. R. G. Collingwood wrote with great shrewdness about the significance of religious language, and tried to set the problem that has to be faced.

The distinction between what we say and what we mean, between a symbol or word and its meaning, is a distinction in the light of which alone it is possible to

¹²⁴. Edwyn Bevan, Hellenism and Christianity, p. 202.

understand religion; but it is a distinction hidden from religion itself...Religion cannot translate itself not because it has no meaning, for it has a very definite meaning, to elicit which is the progressive task of theology and philosophy; but because, although it has a meaning and knows that it has a meaning, it thinks that it has expressed this meaning already. And so it has, but only metaphorically; and this metaphorical self-expression, this fusion of symbol and meaning, requires translation just because it thinks it does not require it.¹²⁵

"Resurrection of the body" is just such a symbol or metaphor or myth. Only a pure orthodoxy thinks that it is self-explanatory. All the theologians we have dealt with in this chapter were trying, in one way or another, to translate it. It is not, of course, a rationally consistent conception. But neither are any of the other symbols of fulfilment; immortality of the soul, for example.

The fact is that the unity of historical existence, despite its involvement in and transcendence over nature, makes it no more possible to conceive transcendent spirit, completely freed of the conditions of nature, than to conceive the conditions of nature transmuted into an eternal consummation. Either idea, as every other idea, which points to the consummation beyond history, is beyond logical conception.¹²⁶

The special character of symbols of fulfilment requires them to be

125. Speculum Mentis, pp. 129-30. The truth in this analysis is partly vitiated by the semi-Hegelianism of the author. He misunderstood religion when he said that it thinks it has already expressed its meaning. This is precisely what theology at its most honest knows that it can never do. It knows that all its language, even its best, is partially false to the truth. Secondly, Collingwood seemed to believe that philosophy is able to give precise formulation to religious truth in a way that religion itself can never do. This is, of course, the Hegelian illusion. Religion must constantly be translating itself; but philosophy, particularly idealist philosophy, is ill equipped to do this. Religion itself must do it, knowing that its task will ever be imperfectly done. One would have liked from Collingwood here a clearer definition of and distinction between religion, theology, and philosophy.

126. Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Destiny, pp. 294-5.

pictorial rather than rational. They speak of something beyond time in terms of time and experience. Because we are both finite and sinful, we cannot evade distortion.¹²⁷ Three things, perhaps, must be said of such a symbol as "resurrection of the body." It is not literally true; it is an important and relevant symbol; it is, therefore, a true symbol.

The Biblical symbols cannot be taken literally because it is not possible for finite minds to comprehend that which transcends and fulfills history. The finite mind can only use symbols and pointers of the character of the eternal. These pointers must be taken seriously nevertheless because they express the self-transcendent character of historical existence and point to its eternal ground. The symbols which point towards the consummation from within the temporal flux cannot be exact in the scientific sense of the word. They are inexact even when they merely define the divine and eternal ground of history in terms of contrast to the temporal. They are even more difficult to understand when they seek to express the Biblical idea of an eternity involved in, and yet transcending the temporal.¹²⁸

Eschatological symbols are symbols of the end: of the end as finis and of the end as fulfilment or telos. Literalism, in affirming them in the former sense, destroys the latter altogether. Modernism, rejecting the former, cannot explain the problem of fulfilment at all.

All eschatological concepts become meaningless when they are deprived of their relationship to history. In this instance they are supposed to represent an independent sphere of objects and events. But such a sphere is a mere product of imagination and cannot be understood as reality

127. Cf. E.C. Rust, op. cit., p. 299.

128. Reinhold Niebuhr, Human Destiny, pp. 289-90.

at all.¹²⁹

The chief symbolic value of "resurrection of the body," then, is that it is able to describe fulfilment (the telos of history) by pointing to something of positive value in this life—the body and all that it stands for—and to say of it that it will be preserved and perfected in the world to come. Yet, at the same time, the doctrine prevents us from giving absolute value to history as it now exists. We cannot be complacently satisfied with the world of the body here and now, because resurrection of the body is change, transformation, renewal, and not merely preservation of the old. This function of the symbol has been well expressed by Prin. John Baillie:

The true purpose of these symbols is to serve as limiting conceptions, and as such they must certainly be retained. It is only when they are conceived as dateable events of a kind similar to the events of history itself—only when the end of time and space is regarded as from within time and space and given, as it were, a temporal dating and a spatial location—that the Second Advent, the Last Judgment and the General Resurrection fail in their effective grasp upon our thought and life. But when taken as symbols of a reality unimaginable by us save in this symbolic form, they become quite indispensable, protecting us against complacent satisfaction with an earthly order in which we are at best "strangers and pilgrims," without robbing that order of all significance through the concentration of interest on an event conceived as lying in the distant future.¹³⁰

The symbol of the resurrection of the body is, in a sense even beyond this, a true symbol. It is, perhaps, truer or more adequate than any alternative symbol available to Christian thought for the

129. Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History, p. 283. Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 33.

130. The Belief in Progress, pp. 214-5.

expression of the idea of fulfilment: i.e., immortality of the soul, eternal life, vision of God, the communion of saints. We have already seen one reason why this is so: the symbol is able to suggest the difficult biblical truth that temporal existence will be transformed but not cancelled out in eternity. H. R. Williamson has described another sense in which this symbol can be called true.

The most important thing about the myths is, of course, that they are true. The stories they tell may never have happened, but the events they embody are always happening. The perpetual struggle between light and darkness, summer and winter, youth and age, and the resolution of the conflict by resurrection—that paradox of life through Death—is the Law which governs alike individual and universe, man and society. In himself, and in himself in relation to other men—that is to say in psychology and in history—man has the clue which needs little learning to understand.¹³¹

So when we have called the symbol of the resurrection of the body true, we have already said that it is more than a symbol.

Ought we to affirm that the term "body" is no more than a mere symbol of our belief that, in some way at present inconceivable, spiritual values such as individuality, capacity for action or affection, and the possibility of mutual recognition are conserved? Or ought we to affirm that in the next life there will still exist an organ of expression of the activity of the spirit which, though not the same as the flesh and blood body of this life, has some recognisable analogy to it, and possibly even some direct connection with it?¹³²

"Resurrection of the body" is not, therefore, merely a phrase we happen to use to describe an attitude to history and human experience. It is a true symbol of the end because it accurately describes our faith in what God will make available to the faithful beyond death.

131. "The Necessity of Resurrection," in The Hibbert Journal, April, 1942, Vol. XL, p. 250.

132. B.H. Streeter, op. cit., p. 96.

Our thinking at this point must move beyond symbolism because it will in fact be the case that the person who passes through death will receive a new embodied life and will

In some mode or other, really experience the presence of Christ, of the same Person who on earth was known as Jesus the Nazarene, now recognized as bearing the irresistible authority of God, and, as a consequence of that presence... [will] see as he never had seen before, the real quality of the life he lived on earth and of the character he... made for himself by it, without any possibility of excuse or self-deception—an experience in which there may be keen pain and shame even for those to whom the presence of the Lord brings at the same time an overwhelming joy. 133

2. Can There Be Time in the World to Come?

The recent rediscovery of the distinctive biblical attitude towards history has been, at the same time, a rediscovery of the high value given by the Bible to time. Into the classical world of cyclic and meaningless time the Christian faith went, proclaiming certain redemptive events, flattening out the circle of time into a purposeful line. But this estimate of the value of time is also an estimate of the value of the body. For the body is the organ of time, and both it and time can be called principles of individuality.

The connection between time and the body was seen by Prof. Pringle-Pattison:

Time (and space) are to be regarded, in short, as the principia individualitatis, the forms of finite individuality, but as somehow transcended in the ultimate Experience on which we depend. Philosophers sometimes speak as if we could ourselves transcend these conditions. The mind, it is said, is not in space, and as knowing succession, some thinkers like to speak of it as itself timeless. But although the philosopher may constitute

133. Evelyn Bevan, Christians in a World at War, p. 100.

himself, in Plato's phrase, spectator of all time and all existence, his timelessness or spacelessness is only in a manner of speaking; for he views all time from his own "Now" and all space from the "Here" of his own body.¹³⁴

For the biblical writers time was the one reality, so that any future reality must involve an extension of time, duration. Edwin Bevan pointed to the "high" estimate of time to which Christians are committed. The Christian faith, he said, has no place for hostility to time or to "more events." Such a hostility

is plainly incompatible with the Christian view of the world which gives supreme importance to events in time... It seems quite inconsistent to believe that Christ lived and died, not as a symbolic myth, but in a series of actual events, and to be shocked if anyone believes in a future meeting of Christ and individual men, as a real event... I think we have to recognize that value is not lowered or coarsened by being embodied in events; it is only when embodied in events that it is real.¹³⁵

There is a sizeable literature in British theology on the meaning of the biblical words for eternal: alam, αἰώνιος, τοῦ αἰῶνος. Ever since the famous dispute between F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley—when the former affirmed and the latter denied the presence of duration in eternity—¹³⁶ this debate has been going on. F. H. Brabant, V. F. Storr, and S. D. F. Salmond have all published de-

134. A.S. Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of God, pp. 364-5.

135. Christians in a World at War, p. 101. There is a longer defence of time by Dr. Bevan in his essay in The Kingdom of God and History, pp. 52, 54-5. Cf. also H. Wheeler Robinson's essay, "The Christian Doctrine of Eternal Life," pp. 132 ff., in E.A. Payne's biography, Henry Wheeler Robinson.

136. Reported in a detailed note on the meaning of eternity by H.D.A. Major in The Journal of Theological Studies, October, 1916, Vol. XVIII, pp. 7 ff.

tailed investigations on the meaning of eternity. They are all in general agreement, furthermore, that the root idea of duration is hard to read out of the biblical usage. Time, they have all granted, is thoroughly real in the Bible. Here is Canon Brabant's conclusion:

To sum up, we may say $\alpha\iota\omega\nu\iota\omicron\varsigma$ could at a pinch always (except perhaps where it is used of God) be translated "age-long." But the context (together with the influence of Hellenistic and Hebraic usage) generally inclines the balance towards the sense of "everlasting."¹³⁷

One of the most significant contributions to this discussion has been made by Prof. John Marsh in his article on "Time" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible. He attempts to steer a middle course between those who find "eternity" to be a purely qualitative description of life and those who admit only the meaning of "endlessness." He points out that in Hosea and Jeremiah olam is used in such a way that a distinction between quantity and quality of time is implied.

But [he goes on] the distinctive fact about the NT is that not only the OT, but also, and more particularly, the events of Christ's life and death and resurrection, help to impart a new meaning to eternity. Thus St. John says that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood shall not die, but live for ever (John 6:50-8). This does not mean that such persons will continue in this mortal, temporal existence for ever; it means that by a new relationship to God set up through Jesus Christ, a new dimension of life is opened to man, eternal life. This is not life without temporal limits, but life-in-Christ and Christ-in-life. The transition to this eternal life can be made in time;

137. F.H. Brabant, Time and Eternity in Christian Thought, p. 258. Cf. also pp. 45, 131, and the appendix, pp. 235-62. There is a detailed study of the biblical words for eternal and eternity in V.F. Storr, Christianity and Immortality, pp. 159 ff.

but the temporal boundaries of human life do not affect it....So the eternal in the NT is not an uncharacterized duration; it is a "filled" magnitude—Christ-filled... Beyond history, then, the NT writers discerned the living ground of a purpose that had been latent and yet active all through history; active because the time of Christ's coming was the fulfilment of "the time," and latent because only in that coming was the purpose fully revealed. But in that revelation man had been able to see at once both the real nature of time and history and the true character of the eternal.¹³⁸

If there has been disagreement on the meaning of "eternal" in the Bible, there has also been disagreement on the role of time in the life to come. Of course, one's answer to the former question naturally affects the latter. Dean W. R. Inge has uttered a most unequivocal denial of the need for space and time in eternity.¹³⁹

On the other hand, thinkers who are not predisposed to detect evil in change and contingency as such have often tended to affirm, perhaps too unequivocally, the existence of a simple durational time in the world to come. J. H. Leckie gave a clear expression to this view. The very thought of

a timeless state of existence (he wrote) is the symbol of something lower, and not higher, than our present life. Succession, a before and an after, is an essential characteristic of spiritual being. Without it there can be no progress, no service, no fellowship with kindred souls, no hope and no memory. To think of the future state as without these things is to deny that it has any attribute of life, as life is known to us here. It is really to assert that existence, such as we have experienced or can imagine, ends at death...But why should we revolt against the thought of living forever under temporal conditions? Why should we count it desirable to escape from the realm of change? There is no evil in

138. John Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-7.

139. Cf. Outspoken Essays, First Series, p. 276; God and the Astronomers, p. 282. Cf. also F.C. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-10.

succession, if it be a succession of blessed hours.¹⁴⁰

But many have refused to grant such an unambiguous role in the eternal world to time as we know it. The new creation, after all, is not to be realized under earthly conditions.

It may be a question how far the future blessedness is itself in time. One thing is certainly true: even if the future blessedness of the glorified Community is a succession in time, that blessedness cannot be realized under earthly conditions. It can never be realized on earth as it is in heaven. Its coming implies that the whole earthly order of things, the physical world as we know it, comes to an end, or is left behind. It can be no part of earthly history.¹⁴¹

So there seems to be no clear decision between the alternatives we have set out. The ambiguity of the relation of time to the eternal life was acutely described by C. J. Shebbeare. He quoted from "a well-known teacher":

I do not wish for extinction—at death or later. Yet to go on living for ever seems infinitely wearisome. Nor do I care to think of myself as absorbed in God. Nor do I find comfort in a doctrine of the unreality of Time. In the first place, I believe that Time is real; but if I thought it unreal, I do not see how that would help me.

Dr. Shebbeare then commented on this:

When someone objected that we cannot have it both ways—that we cannot say that it is bad that conscious life should end, and also bad that it should continue—the speaker replied that nothing could alter the fact that to him no way of conceiving the future, neither extinction nor any form of continuance, brought any satisfaction. The frame of mind thus revealed is common.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰. Op. cit., pp. 322-3. For a similar point of view cf. A.S. Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of Immortality, p. 205; S.H. Mellone, The Immortal Hope, p. 7; W.R. Sorley, Moral Values and the Idea of God, p. 524.

¹⁴¹. Edwyn Bevan, in The Kingdom of God and History, p. 55.

¹⁴². C.J. Shebbeare, The Problem of the Future Life, p. 3.

Most of the answers to this problem have openly admitted the reality of the dilemma, and have refused to decline eternally either as timelessness or as everlastingness. Several attempts to steer a middle course may be noted. We have already called attention to the article by Prof. John Marsh. ¹¹³ Others have declared that if we cannot say that God is in time, at least time must be somehow "in him," as part of his experience.

He may seem to change His plans, but He never changes His mind; He may seem to do what He has not done before; He never does what He has not thought of before; or...
 [In other words] God is not in Time but sustains and directs the Time process from His Eternity. ¹¹⁴

Prof. H. H. Farmer has also tried to hold both halves of this truth together.

The Christian faith [he writes] must affirm that the new world is exempt not only from sin and death, but also from the essential limitations of the time-form as such. Such a new world is by definition so profoundly discontinuous with the world we now know that it might seem that it would involve after all the annihilation of the latter, even though another of an utterly inconceivable sort be substituted for it. It is in part this sense of the radical discontinuity which is necessarily involved in the very idea of the realised kingdom of the eternal God which makes the eschatological hope rest in a transcendent act of God. Yet, as against this, the thought that this world is somehow taken up into the kingdom, the old being thus somehow

¹¹³. It should be noted that this problem is precisely equivalent to the problem of the body and history in relation to eternity. The body somehow abides; yet it is raised, and therefore transformed. History is not annulled; it is fulfilled and preserved; yet it is changed. This problem of time and the problems taken up in the two following sections all depend for their solution on a solution to the fundamental problem of the relation between what has already been revealed to faith, and what is yet to be revealed and which now we know only by hope.

¹¹⁴. F.H. Brabant, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-3. Cf. also this author's essay, "God and Time" in Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, esp. pp. 349-50.

continuous with and consummated in the new, has its value, even from the narrower point of view of understanding it as a training place for personality.

Any rational solution of these contradictions must, it seems, lie ever beyond us, if only for the reason that they arise from the bringing together of two disparate dimensions—time and eternity, the finite and the infinite—and the attempt to grasp them both in categories appropriate to one of them only.¹¹⁴⁵

As Prin. John Baillie has pointed out, it is

absurd to refer to a particular time a life that is essentially timeless (i.e. that is not in time); hence we cannot speak of a timeless life to come... [For] to contemplate the enjoyment by ourselves of an entirely non-successional life would be to claim for ourselves the prerogative of deity. For successiveness is the very mark of finitude, the very mark of distinction between finitude and the Infinite.¹¹⁴⁶

Both the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and the Christian attitude toward time, therefore, point to the rationally absurd idea of an eternity which includes the conditions of time. By doing this the Christian faith at least escapes the errors of alternative faiths which portray an eternity which annuls all time, which find meaning only in the flow of nature-history, or which assume that present history will at some particular moment in time transform itself into an earthly Utopia.¹¹⁴⁷ Our discussion of the resurrection of the body has thus led us to demand both that the time of this world be continuous with the world to come, and at the same time

¹¹⁴⁵. The World and God, pp. 305-6.

¹¹⁴⁶. And the Life Everlasting, pp. 269, 70.

¹¹⁴⁷. In this way the Christian attitude toward time can be defended against false views, even when the logical coherence of the Christian view is admittedly imperfect. Cf. on this question, Reinhold Niebuhr, Faith and History, pp. 137-8.

that it will be taken up and transformed in eternity.¹⁴⁸

3. Continuity and Discontinuity between This World and the World to Come

We have already seen how the Pauline phrase "spiritual body" has been used to express the double truth that bodily individuality will be preserved, and yet that beyond death a completely new body will be given by God. We shall not be unclothed, but clothed upon. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body thus suggests "some continuity with the earthly body as well as the idea of a new spiritual organism."¹⁴⁹ The same double truth is suggested by the idea of the new creation; it is new, yet it is related to and does not imply the destruction of the old creation.

What from one point of view is the same body transformed is from another point of view the same organism in a new form which may be called a new body. The one way of speaking emphasizes identity of essence notwithstanding change of form. The other way of speaking emphasizes difference of form notwithstanding identity of essence. So there is organic continuity from the "body" which dies to the new "body" which rises from the grave.¹⁵⁰

Since the first creation was not made in vain, Canon Quick said, we cannot imagine that God intends ever to scrap it altogether.

Therefore, there must be some continuity, even in the utter discontinuity, between the old world and the new.

148. For a statement of the relation of God to time that avoids both the Greek idea of timeless eternity and the idea of pure "everlastingness," cf. D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, pp. 190-1.

149. F.J. Taylor, article on "Body" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson, p. 35.

150. L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 265.

The old order would be brought utterly to an end, the new established. Yet the new must bring the old to fulfilment; there must be continuity in God's work, a single purpose completed from beginning to end. It was precisely this continuity through discontinuity that the doctrine of resurrection ensured. The old must rise again into the new—otherwise God would have failed.¹⁵¹

There is little doubt about the importance of discontinuity between the old and the new. What has already been said about the meaning of death and the impossibility of natural immortality has stressed this side of the truth.¹⁵² But we must also acknowledge that the fact of continuity must be affirmed. This side of the truth brings out the powerful ethical element in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The characters we develop, the decisions we make in this body, are never wholly to be shaken off.

By accepting the fact of the empty tomb and deducing from it the doctrine of the general resurrection...the Church recognises and proclaims that this material order is not antagonistic to God and outside the range of His power and love. It is not, that is to say, inherently evil; but, on the contrary, it is of God, and it is capable of recording and conserving spiritual values. The human body is, therefore, to be reverently regarded as the temple of the Holy Ghost...¹⁵³

151. O.C. Quick, The Gospel of the New World, p. 110 (italics mine).

152. Paul Tillich has pointed out that in a world which finds despair rather than complacency its chief mood, the discontinuity has a special right to be affirmed. "If we no longer understand the words of the psalmist, that the loss of body and life and of earth and heaven cannot deprive him of the ultimate meaning of his life—or if we no longer feel what the poet means when he says that all our running, all our striving, is eternal rest in God the Lord—if all this has become strange and unreal to us, then we have lost the power of facing reality without cynicism and despair." The Protestant Era, pp. 187-8. The fact of discontinuity saves us from placing absolute meaning in anything this side of God.

153. Oscar Hardman, The Resurrection of the Body, p. 51; cf. pp. 49-52, 62-7.

A particularly vivid description of the ethical side of the doctrine of the bodily resurrection was given by John Darragh in his study, The Resurrection of the Flesh.

The man who believes intelligently in the resurrection of the body cannot rest content with slum dwellings for the people; nor with hours of labour so exhausting that there is no time nor thought for a man's higher life... A medically unfit people is an offence against high heaven, as well as an indictment against any industrial system that breeds it or suffers it.

When the testimony to the body that the doctrine implies is forgotten,

men think it right to exploit other men's bodies as a cheap mechanism to pile up profits withal; and the exploited, too besotted to uphold the sanctity of God's handiwork, sink into depths of degradation undreamt of by the prophets of Israel...No man has a right to treat his brother's body as a convenience, and far less his sister's.¹⁵⁴

There has been considerable interest in recent years in the doctrine of the redemption of the physical order, the transfiguration of nature. This hope is certainly suggested by the fact of continuity between this life and the next which we have been discussing. It is of a piece with the whole Christian conviction of the goodness of nature and history, and reminds us that the symbol of the new heaven and the new earth has always been part of the Christian inheritance. Perhaps "resurrection of the body" is the clearest way to express this truth.

Nature will not be discarded, in order that man's souls alone may be salvaged and saved. The life of nature here and the life of the body which links us to nature will not

154. John Darragh, The Resurrection of the Flesh, p. 263. Cf. L.S. Thornton, op. cit., p. 254.

be as a ladder, whereon we may climb to heaven and fling it aside when the ascent is finished. Rather will all that God has made have its place and its counterpart in the new heaven and the new earth. "Immortality" will be put on; but "this mortal" will find there its clothing and its home.¹⁵⁵

This idea of the redemption of nature is usually related to a sacramental approach to theology, which we have already commented upon at the close of the last chapter. And while it is certainly true that "we must guard against excluding all Nature from Heaven,"¹⁵⁶ many of the exponents of the doctrine of cosmic redemption cannot be said to have given sufficient attention to the other side of the truth—the fact of discontinuity between this world and the world to come. Grace does not simply perfect nature; it also shatters it and transforms it. Perhaps A. M. Ramsey has put the twin truths together as carefully as can be done.

Man, nature and history have their solution not within themselves but within a divine kingdom that transcends them. This divine kingdom cannot be realized as a cli-

155. A.M. Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ, p. 115. The emphasis on the redemption of nature has been brought out by many writers in the sacramental tradition. Cf. Charles Gore, The Holy Spirit and the Church, p. 305; V.F. Storr, op. cit., pp. 193-4; Ashley Sampson, "The Resurrection of the Body" in Theology, Vol. XXXVII, no. 223, September, 1938, pp. 160-7; F.H. Brabant, Time and Eternity in Christian Thought, p. 223; Alan Richardson, article on "Hell" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, p. 108; C.S. Lewis, Miracles, p. 81; E.L. Mascall, op. cit., pp. 147-8. It is interesting to note also that theologians influenced by the revival of Luther studies have recovered this emphasis of the Reformer on the transformation of nature; cf. Paul Tillich, the sermon "Nature, Also, Mourns for A Lost Good," in The Shaking of the Foundations, pp. 76-86, and his essay in The Kingdom of God and History, p. 120; cf. also P.S. Watson, "Immortality" in the Expository Times, August, 1949, Vol. LX, p. 298.

156. Von Hügel, Essays and Addresses, First Series, p. 213. The whole passage here, pp. 213-4, is an excellent defence of the scholastic view that grace must perfect nature.

max of human progress upon the plane of history, nor yet as a movement of mankind to an immortality that belongs to it by right. It will be realized by God's act in "raising up" mankind and delivering it from the contradictions which neither history nor immortality can solve. Yet this divine kingdom will not be far removed from nature and history; for in it both nature and history will be "clothed upon" and fulfilled.¹⁵⁷

4. This-worldliness and Otherworldliness.

Here is yet another way of stating the problem which we have set out in this final section of the chapter: that resurrection of the body is a symbol or myth which is true yet not literally true; that it affirms the taking up but not the cancellation of time into eternity; that it affirms both continuity (as resurrection of the body) and radical discontinuity (as resurrection of the body) between this world and the next. The problem of the place of otherworldliness in Christianity is merely another way of posing this fundamental question. In this form, however, it is a problem of peculiar practical urgency, for much of the less informed rebellion against Christianity today is in fact a justified reaction against the too simple otherworldliness which has been said to constitute it. Christian ethics, for example, shows how the motifs of this-worldliness and otherworldliness can be intertwined. Christian ethics is clearly otherworldly in the sense that it is other than what the world advises, unnatural to man, a scandal to sinful human nature. Yet it is thoroughly this-worldly in regard to the arena in which it is to be worked out. Just as Paul's

157. A.M. Ramsey, op. cit., p. 114. Canon Hodgson has pointed to the analogy between man's relation to his body and mankind's relation to the world. Resurrection of the body, in other words, points to the redemption of the world. The Doctrine of the Atonement, pp. 122-3, 132-3.

so-called Christ-mysticism took its stand firmly on events that happened in this world, so Christian ethics can be described fairly as a this-worldly (and not an otherworldly) supernaturalism.¹⁵⁸ Christianity is through and through concerned with this world. The meaning which it gives to this world is not, however, derived from it.¹⁵⁹ Only an eschatological faith, of which "resurrection of the body" is the most accurate symbol, can provide an answer to this problem of ultimate meaning which does not empty the world of its proper derived significance. It does this, as Prof. Farmer has written, by defining human fulfilment as the end of the present world-order in both senses of the word end: as both finis and telos.

Somehow there is at work within the limitations and frustrations of this world a divine purpose which transcends it and cannot be comprehended in terms of it. The consummation of that purpose will therefore at one and the same time mark the end of this world and be the fulfilment and justification of it. And the divine will, which will be fully realised only then, can none the less be served now...Eschatological faith is thus both pessimistic and optimistic in regard to this world. It says yes and no to it at one and the same time. It is God's world and yet it is not God's world in the fullest sense, being only preparatory

158. Cf. Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, pp. 132, 144, and the remark of Luther, quoted on p. 138, that love for others directed to their finite and this-worldly concerns is preferable to a high spirituality or otherworldliness which is concerned only with their eternal destiny or salvation.

159. The truth that this world can only have a meaning that from beyond the world receives an interesting, if negative, validation, from a remark by Somerset Maugham: "If one then puts aside the existence of God and the possibility of survival as too doubtful to have any effect on one's behaviour, one has to make up one's mind what is the meaning and the use of life...Now the answer to one of these questions is plain, but it is so unpalatable that most men will not face it. There is no reason for life, and life has no meaning." The Summing-Up, p. 282.

to it.160

Yet the fact remains that in practice the Christian "no" to the world has been louder than the Christian "yes." The Christian faith ought not to be concerned at all with eternal life except as it presses in upon us here and now, calling us to make decisions, claiming moment by moment responses. Its true business is here in this world where God has placed us. Here, John Oman said,

the evil of the day is sufficient, and we are not to take thought for the morrow. No more are we to be merely prospective saints in glory and not mortals doing our best with time, than a child is to be merely a prospective man and not a child....May it not be that one at least of the reasons why religion fails to touch so many of the most genuinely religious souls, more especially at the time of life when they most willingly respond to generous impulses, is the absence from the common religious teaching of this sense that religion is blessedness in our present life?...Young and generous souls are, and ought to be, intensely conscious of life. Nothing could convince them, nothing should convince them, that life is not their immediate and urgent concern. When, therefore, persons, who, in spite of their chilled blood, are manifestly as tenacious of life as ever, exhort those standing on life's threshold, with all life's glorious possibilities before them, to say with an aged, imprisoned saint, "It is better to depart and to be with Christ," the result is merely a sense both of unreality and of dismay, as though religion, finding no meaning of any sort in this life, had, in desperation, to fling itself upon another. Weakness, captivity and old age have a

160. The World and God, pp. 214-5. This is an excellent theoretical statement of the prophetic or eschatological position as opposed to the sacramental. The latter is only able to say "this is God's world," while the latter must say it is and yet it is not. Prof. Farmer is on less certain ground, however, when he comes to apply this principle. The Christian motive for social reform, he says, is "not that there should be more material comfort and security for everybody, but that there should be right personal relations. The latter might be achieved in an era of general want." Ibid., p. 218. But this is not this-worldly enough. What is wrong with material comfort and minimum security? If it were the case that in a situation of poverty there were decent personal relations, should the Christian moralist be content? In this case, the secular radical would be wiser.

right to be weary of life; youth and vigour under the open sky have not.¹⁶¹

The estimate of the "bodily" life that all along we have seen implied by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body certainly ought to be able to turn away the

charge of "puritan" blindness to the glories of the secular and the charge of "quietistic" indifference to the preventable outward evils of our earthly existence.¹⁶²

The only place the Christian has to work is in this world; and work there he must, to the limit of his strength and ability, and beyond. But—the one place where he must not place his ultimate trust and security is in this world. The Christian is a pilgrim who must work in this world without assurance that things will grow noticeably better on earth before the end of history.

The devotion to the glories of earth must, within the most generous possible limits, be allowed to be a law unto itself, but in the last resort it must take its law from beyond itself.¹⁶³

This tension between the this-worldly and the otherworldly is contained in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and this doctrine alone is able to maintain the tension and to avoid a reaction into either extreme.

161. John Oman, Grace and Personality, pp. 277-9. Cf. E. Griffith-Jones, Faith and Immortality, p. 200, and Alec Vidler, Christian Belief, p. 115.

162. John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, p. 307.

163. Ibid., p. 311.

CONCLUSION

At the close of his massive theological trilogy, Bishop Charles Gore presented the following conclusion to demonstrate the unity and wholeness of Christian thought. All Christian truth, he wrote, points to a single set of facts.

The fundamental Biblical idea of creation involves a high estimate of the physical creation and the human body. Whatever God made was "very good." The Oriental and Hellenistic idea of matter as somehow evil, and of association with the material body as the source of pollution to the soul, is quite alien to the Bible. Sin is rebellion, and its seat is in the will. Once the will is brought back to its right relation to God, the whole body is on the way of redemption. So when the thought of God's justice, and the sense of the fellowship with God into which the individual soul is admitted, forced the Jew forward to believe in a life beyond the grave, his faith took shape in a belief not in the immortality of the bare soul, but in the resurrection of the body. And the actual resurrection of Christ, in which this faith in a corporal resurrection found its confirmation, is regarded in the New Testament not only as the pledge of the like destiny for men who are Christ's brethren, but also as a pledge of a glorious future for the material world as a whole. Again, in Christ's person the Word, who is God, is made flesh. Thus the dignity of the material nature is vindicated by its becoming forever the organ of Godhead; and the same great principle interprets the sacraments. In them also material nature and the human body receive their consecration, and the material is seen as the organ of the spiritual.¹

Thus, what we have in this thesis been calling the Christian doctrine of the body is taken by Bishop Gore to be the key to the whole of theology.

We have tried to show in this thesis that the whole of Christian thought bears uniform witness to the goodness and worth of the body.

1. Charles Gore, The Reconstruction of Belief, pp. 950-1.

Yet we have also observed the need for a caution. For if the creation is good, it is also fallen; and the body participates in that fall. If sin's source is not in the body, if finiteness is not itself sin, at least man who is in the body is apparently inevitably tempted into sins which do affect his bodily life. If Christ was a fully human person in a true human body, he cannot be fully explained in merely those terms. If matter can be said to bear spiritual meaning, it also has an autonomous meaning of its own. The church may be called the body of Christ, but it must not be identified too absolutely with him, nor must it be supposed to share his perfection. If Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper, his body is not materially present and the church can never claim that Christ is controlled in the sacrament. If the body may be said to be raised, we must not confuse this conviction with a belief in a restoration of the material particles of the earthly body.

That this Christian doctrine of the body is a deeply important one is seen from the number of significant related problems that it can cast light upon. We have pointed out in the course of this thesis that many of the problems that are concerning contemporary theology—such matters as the meaning of history, the significance of death, the rediscovery of the sacraments in Protestantism—are clarified by a reminder of the central role of the body in biblical thought. Outside the strictly theological sphere, however, lie other points of contact with the doctrine of the body. The Christian attitude to sex and the emotional life, for example. A recovery of the

meaning of the body can suggest a positive attitude to sex to correct the damage that much Protestant moralism has done. The Christian response to communism, again, may well take the form of a rediscovery of the resources in the gospel for a "materialistic" concern for the total existence of man: his leisure and work, his money, his housing. A rediscovery of the Christian doctrine of the body performs, therefore, three important theological tasks. It serves to correct a too spiritualistic rendering of the faith which denies the whole material side of life; it corrects a too pietistic reading of Christianity which forgets the social and corporate dimension of existence; and it corrects, finally, all uncritical forms of sacramentalism which, in their eagerness to affirm that matter can bear spiritual meaning, forget that in the sacred story matter, the body, particularized existence itself—all have a religious meaning of their own.

One of the most interesting points of contact between the biblical doctrine of the body and contemporary culture can be seen in the problem of the body and the mind. In many different philosophical quarters today Cartesian dualism is being impugned, and in the process the biblical understanding of the body is receiving an indirect validation. Man, it is being said, is a single organism, a body-mind, and there is "no proper line to be drawn between the physical and the mental constitution of experience."² Prof. Pringle-Pattison gave a formulation of this anti-dualism in modern

2. A.N. Whitehead, Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect, p. 23. Cf. Prof. Whitehead's Religion in the Making, pp. 105 ff., and 116 ff., for a detailed critique of the Cartesian position.

philosophy which revealed vividly the affinity between this philosophical emphasis and the biblical doctrine:

If we realize, then, the fact of life and its nature, we escape at once from the hopeless dualism between pure spirit on the one side and a dead world of physical forces on the other. The living body is the concrete reality with which we have to deal, and we recognize that the scheme of mass-points and forces to which the physicist reduces the world, so far from representing the ultimate reality of things, is no more than an abstract construction for his own immediate purposes. Some one has wittily remarked that the customary conception of man treats the human being as a "mechanical union of a corpse and a ghost." This is, at any rate, no inapt description of the Cartesian theory or of the Epiphenomenalism in which the corpse drags the pithless ghost unresistingly in its train. But the living being bridges the imaginary gulf. Pure spirit, so far as our experience goes, is an abstraction. If we start with the living body as the embodied soul, the problem of interaction ceases to exist and laboured schemes of parallelism become unnecessary.³

However interesting and important all of these suggestions are, I should like to suggest another use for the Christian doctrine of the body. I think this doctrine can best be understood as providing a theological foundation for Christian ethics. Recent attempts to provide a theological basis for Christian ethics have nearly all been vitiated because one particular Christian doctrine is chosen as the foundation. William Temple and Charles E. Raven ground their ethical thought on the Incarnation, for example,⁴ but this approach

3. A.S. Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of Immortality, pp. 91-2. Cf. F. Townley Lord, The Unity of the Body and Soul, pp. 164 ff., and especially the quotation from T.P. Munn on p. 192. Cf. also R.G. Collingwood, The New Leviathan, pp. 11, 14, 16 (paragraphs 2.43-5; 3.12,3; 3.54). Here Dr. Collingwood rejected both parallelism and interactionism, calling mind and body two different ways of knowing the same unity. His "psychological sense of the word body" (p.16) is almost a perfect definition of the biblical meaning.

4. Cf. William Temple, Christus Veritas, pp. 203-4 and Charles E. Raven, The Gospel and the Church, p. 77.

nearly always ends with too shallow a view of sin and too confident a belief in the goodness of the created world. Sometimes the resurrection of Christ is taken to be the key to ethics⁵ and sometimes the doctrine of the church.⁶ Lutheran theological ethics usually begins with the doctrine of the Fall, and is thus often unable to provide a motive for creative participation in cultural activity, save in the form of uncritical obedience. Today on the continent of Europe an eschatological ethic has arisen out of the atmosphere of despair. This ethic is perhaps the most plausible and the most dangerous of any of the alternative forms; it is making a virtue out of rather than combatting the moral paralysis that the historical situation has engendered.

All of which is to say that Christian ethics must not proceed from a single theological doctrine. It must flow, as it were, from the whole sacred story; it must be related to each of the great doctrines of faith, and to all. Now it might be objected at this point that we are simply substituting as the foundation for ethics the single doctrine of the body for the alternatives we have criticized. But the doctrine of the body is not so much a separate theological doctrine apart from the rest, as it is a truth that emerges from all of the doctrines, from the total picture of God's plan of salvation. Each part of the sacred story, we have been trying to maintain, witnesses to the unique Christian significance given

5. Cf. L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, p. 254.

6. Cf. Daniel T. Jenkins, The Nature of Catholicity, p. 145.

to the body: creation and sin, Incarnation and Atonement, the church and the sacraments, resurrection. The doctrine of the body as we have set it forth could, it is claimed, form a really suggestive basis for a Christian ethic and, at the same time, provide material for a definition of Christian ethics as concern for the body and for the "bodily" dimension of life.⁷

But quite apart from the theological or systematic use to which the doctrine of the body may be put, it is at any rate seen to be a central and crucial motif in the whole continuum of Christian truth. It is a doctrine which is equipped in a peculiar way to do what theology must ever do: to serve the church. If the central Christian concern for the body and its life can today be preached, understood, and passed on, not only might the church save itself from self-righteousness and self-deception, but many obstacles might be removed that now hinder God's access to those who cannot or who will not acknowledge him. If the church does not rediscover this deep dimension of its message, it may well come to be as impotent as the class and culture whose presuppositions it now so often takes as its own. It is not too much to say that the distinctive Christian doctrine of the body can give the church a new form for its old story today: a form new enough to challenge ancient evil with courage and to speak creatively to a troubled people; yet a new form that reveals and

7. Two distinguished contemporary theologians have, in different ways, brought Christian ethics and the doctrine of the body together. Cf. D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, p. 209, and Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era, pp. 166-7. In a succinct phrase, the latter relates the theological and the ethical concerns for the body: "the whole man is the subject of the religious demand and promise" and therefore "the help of man to man must involve the whole man, body and spirit together."

does not obscure the biblical message about God and human existence: the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

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