THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE THEOLOGY OF P. T. FORSYTH

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

Department of Religion

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
I. The concept of holiness as the key to understanding the place of Jesus Christ in the theology of P.T.Forsyth.	16
The Holy Father	20
The process of change	22
Holiness and the Cross	28
Holiness and satisfaction	31
Holiness and sacrifice	37
Holy love	41
II. Atoning for sin--The work of Jesus.	48
The meaning of salvation	54
The Nature of the Atonement	61
III. The concept of the solidarity of the race.	79
Racial solidarity in sin and salvation	82
The solidarity of Jesus with the race	85
The idea of election	93
Election and mission	103
IV. The Body of Christ in the world.	110
Jesus and the new humanity	110
The missionary task of the church	115
Church and society	118
The Christian and politics	127
The authority of the church	130
V. The life with Christ.	135
The life of the sacraments	135
The sacrament of the Word	142
The life of Prayer	146
Eternal life	150
Faith and experience	156
VI. Christ and the Scriptures.	162
The authority of the Bible	165
The Bible and criticism	170
The Bible and theology	173
The Bible and the Divine holiness	182

VII. Some Christological Questions. 188

The divinity of Jesus 190
The relation of eternal salvation to historical event 202
The problem of sinlessness 209
The self-consciousness of Jesus 214
The historicity of Jesus of Nazareth 224

NOTES 230

Introduction 230
Chapter I 231
Chapter II 235
Chapter III 239
Chapter IV 243
Chapter V 245
Chapter VI 247
Chapter VII 249

BIBLIOGRAPHY 252

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

In the beginning was the desire to read and understand some of the message of Forsyth. Between the desire and its fulfillment, however, there are many steps, steps which would never have been taken but for the patient encouragement and gentle prodding of Professor H. Gordon Harland, head of the Department of Religion, and the suggestions made from time to time by the members of the Committee. In addition to Dr. Harland, I would like to express appreciation to Professor Egil Grislis and Professor Larry Hurtado of the Department of Religion, and to Professor George A. Schultz of the Department of History, and Dean A. M. Watts, Dean of Theology at the University of Winnipeg. Their faith in me and patience in reading are deeply appreciated.

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Preface

Peter Taylor Forsyth was almost fated to be ignored in his time. When the tendency of British theology was to a conservative and traditional style, Forsyth was on the side of the young liberals of the church. When the insights of the greatest of the liberal scholars of Europe had percolated into the British church, Forsyth had rediscovered the Bible as the source-book of his own theology. By the time the resonant theological voice of Karl Barth had shaken the liberal optimism of both British and American theological thinking, Forsyth was long dead and, except by a few, forgotten.

He has, however, been "rediscovered" by a public which has responded to his vigorous style and deep personal insights. Forsyth's strength lay precisely in the fact that he was not merely a thinker, but a man who had experienced a deep and lasting "conversion". His teaching, therefore, has both the profundity of the scholar and the warmth of a disciple. His phrases roll from the pages of his writings as if they flowed from his tongue rather than his pen, as indeed many of them did. He was first of all a preacher of the Gospel, and secondly a communicator of verbal truth. His lectures carry conviction because of their passion as much as because of their profundity. One is caught up as one reads him with a sense that one is walking on holy ground.

It is not too much to say that Forsyth has deeply influenced more than one generation of theological students other than those whom he taught at Hackney. Yet he remains relatively unknown still in the churches, at least on this side of the ocean. Perhaps his message was delivered too soon, and the giants of dialectical theology have overshadowed him. Perhaps, because he was never in the mainstream of British theology, most of us have simply overlooked him. Whatever the reason, his message has a word for our day, reminding us that the Man of Nazareth is still central to the world's history.

Under five main themes--holiness, atonement, solidarity, the church, and the relation of the believer to his God --I have examined the teachings of Forsyth in order to develop the thesis that only through a renewed experience of the holy love of God in Jesus Christ could Forsyth see any hope for a solution to the religious problems that beset the early part of our century. In doing so I have placed the larger emphasis on his major works, even though the theme of God's holy love is to be found in all of them. Whether dealing with specifically theological issues or writing treatises on marriage or art or war, Forsyth saw Jesus Christ, as God's saving revelation, at the heart of all things.

In two further chapters I have examined (a) Forsyth's attitude to the Bible, since, as a biblical theologian, what he thinks of the Bible is crucial to his conclusions;

and (b) five christological problems that arise from his theology.

We find Forsyth to be a modern man in many ways, dealing with problems that trouble us if they did not trouble our grandparents. For him, as for most Christian theologians of our century, Jesus Christ is and will remain the central question of religious thought.

INTRODUCTION

The year 1848 was an important one in the history of Europe. Multitudes were being deeply stirred by a spiritual unrest that was productive of various forms of political, economic and scientific change. Radical and often violent movements were in the air on all sides. Barricades were, as before, erected in the streets of Paris, and it is safe to surmise that in many an aristocratic heart there was once again a fear similar to that which had once before plagued the better neighbourhoods of the city. King Louis-Philippe was forced to abdicate, leaving room for the formation of the Second Republic. Throughout Europe similar events were taking place, causing the privileged and wealthy to tremble, and giving the dispossessed a new, if temporary, hope. The Austrian Empire shook as Czech and Hungarian nationalists asserted their right to self-determination. The government fled and a short-lived Committee of Public Safety took control of Vienna. Only the intervention of the Czar's troops prevented wholesale disorder and the beginning of republican government. This was the year of the publication of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, the radical social document written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels for the Communist League. The document was written in January in German and published in French later in the same year.

In England potential violence was tempered, as is so often the case in that country, by the phlegmatic common sense of most. The Communist Manifesto was not yet published in English, and would not be for another two years, and even then was resisted by the trade unions and their conservative membership. Yet even there events such as the Repeal of the Corn Laws aroused the normally passive countryside into a furor of activity that threatened the stablility of Parliament itself. A sense of the unfairness of society made itself felt both in the capital and beyond.

The liberalizing tendency which was so obvious in the public political sphere was observable in intellectual questions as well. Charles Darwin's Origin of Species would not be published until 1859, but his famous voyage on the H.M.S. Beagle was already a matter of history, and his theories were already well formulated. By the year 1848 Herbert Spencer was beginning the massive output of books and essays which would rank him among the leaders of the scientific and evolutionary study of the cosmos.

By the time a child born in 1848 had reached the university, the ideas of Darwin and Spencer would be commonly accepted in most academic, and many non-academic, circles; these ideas would already be shaping the thought-patterns of the young. Acrimonious debates would be taking place between upholders of the new evolutionary outlook and

the older traditional view. Thoughtful people, both clerical and lay, on both sides of the debate, would by then recognize the challenge posed to traditional values by Darwin's theories. Some would fear it; others would rejoice in it; still others would respond simply by adapting to it.

On another front traditional values were being shaken by the critical and historical study of the Bible. Questions concerning its authorship, its style and the miraculous were being debated more vigorously than they had ever been before. Critics such as Ewald were breaking down the view of the Old Testament as a monolithic book all of one piece. The giant of German theology at the time, Friedrich Schleiermacher, through his writings and lectures (particularly the Speeches and The Christian Faith) was able to provide a strong intellectual basis for a more liberal handling of both the Bible and the doctrines of the faith. In so doing he was able to influence subsequent generations of theologians as few have been privileged to do.[1] About the same time D. F. Strauss was presenting a theological approach, actually a philosophical theology, that upset and enraged the more conservative elements of the church in Europe. Although rejected on every hand, Strauss nevertheless greatly quickened the currents which were then liberalizing European views of religion.[2]

When The Origin of Species was published in 1859, fresh impetus was given to the movement to apply evolutionary

principles to literary and biblical questions. Not only were the texts submitted to a criticism that increasingly saw in them an evolutionary development, but even the ideas and doctrines contained in them were treated from a similar point of view. Deep and impassioned feelings were aroused on both sides of these issues.

Into this atmosphere, then, and into a poor home in Aberdeen, Scotland, on the twelfth of May, 1848, Peter Taylor Forsyth was born. As he grew up, in keeping with the tenor of the Scottish community in which he lived, Peter learned the value of a good education, and learned also to work hard for it. At the age of sixteen he entered the University of Aberdeen to study Humanities. His father was a postman whose income never matched his high hopes for his son, and which could never have kept Peter in the University had his mother not augmented the family income by taking in boarders. These were generally impecunious young men from the Highlands who could barely find the wherewithal to pay their way. To each she offered the only thing she had to give, encouragement. Hunter tells us that she would sometimes say to a student down on his luck, "Dinna ye fash. Gin ye find the siller for your fees, I'll find ye bed and bread."[3] It was only the competitive and democratic system of scholarships at Aberdeen that allowed a young man with ability, who was willing to work hard, to find a place there. Work hard

Peter did, however, eventually graduating with first-class honours in classics, though permanently injuring his health in the process. For some time he remained at the University as a tutor in Greek. His academic interests and his genuine ability in this regard indicate that he might profitably have followed a career in the University, had he not instead been persuaded to turn to a future in the Christian ministry.

In 1870 Forsyth went to Germany for a semester to study under the famous Ritschl at Gőttingen, then considered the best place in Europe for aspiring students in theology. Without doubt this was one of the great influences of his life. Here his interest was directed toward the Bible as the source of the faith in which he had been nurtured. The strong moral emphasis of Ritschl's teaching and his deep commitment to the biblical revelation left a lasting impression on Forsyth, the moral content of whose teaching, whether on the nature of God, the centrality of the Cross or the place of Jesus, is one of the characteristic elements of his theology.

The following year he returned to England and entered New College, Hampstead, to prepare for the Christian ministry. Unfortunately his health, which had been injured in his student days at Aberdeen, did not allow him to finish his course, and, after one semester, he was allowed to withdraw. From London he went to Yorkshire, there to assume the pastorate of the Congregationalist Church at Shipley.

It was suggested above that in the struggles between the new approaches and the traditional there was little room for middle ground. Those who took sides did so passionately and sometimes with little charity. Forsyth early decided on which side of the fence he stood, and uncompromisingly took his place with the newer and more liberal elements of his church. Undoubtedly his classical training gave his mind a bent in a more liberal direction, and his experience at Göttingen made him shrink from the obscurantist spirit. Ritschl, in spite of his biblical emphasis, was no biblicist; nor was Forsyth, even in his most conservative years. With the ardent spirit of the reformer, then, he gladly espoused the cause of the younger elements of the Congregational Union.

This liberal outlook was noted by his senior colleagues from the beginning of his ministry. In the first place, the church at Shipley of which he was now the pastor had never been recognized by the Congregational Union of Yorkshire because of its liberal leanings. In the second, he allied himself quite openly with a group of young ministers in the organizing of the "Leicester Conference". This conference was tactlessly called to coincide with the regular annual meeting of the Congregational churches of Britain in 1877, and Forsyth moreover accepted the invitation to be one of the principle speakers. This unfortunate juxtaposition of

events aside, Forsyth's address served to establish his reputation as a brilliant member of the liberal wing of his denomination. While views such as those he espoused there would today serve only to welcome him into the majority party of any church, at that time he was quite consciously out of step with the majority of his own. Ironically, as his views changed over the years, so did those of the churches, so that later in life he would find himself once again "out of step" with the majority. In the year 1877, however, these young ministers saw themselves, quite rightly, as the leading edge of a new style of theology.

Forsyth does not tell us much about the decade between the Leicester Conference and the beginning of the great output of his writing which left such a mark on later British theology. We know, however, that in 1877 he married Minna Magness and that she died in 1894; that in the meantime he served pastorates in Shipley, St. Thomas' Square (Hackney), Cheetham Hill (Manchester), and Clarendon Park (Leicester) and that, at the time of his wife's death, he had just entered on his ministry at Emmanuel Church, Cambridge. In the meantime his views had undergone a profound change. In some ways he never ceased to be a liberal. He was always open to new ideas, and welcomed the contributions of science and the newer discoveries of biblical criticism. He rejoiced in the freedom afforded him by the latter and thrilled to

the deeper and more theological study of the Bible which it made possible. There was, as we mentioned above, no room in his thinking for any kind of obscurantism.

Yet, at the same time, he had come to appreciate the depth and richness of the traditional Christian doctrines. Recognizing the fact that much contemporary religion was either a blind acceptance of, or an equally blind reaction against, the liberalizing spirit of the century, Forsyth reached back to the past and within to his own experience for a spiritual anchor. The past provided him with a gospel (a "positive" gospel he would call it) and his experience gave him a conviction concerning that gospel's power.

In spite of his voluminous writings, Forsyth appears to have been a very private sort of person. We catch only rare glimpses of his inner life and are left with his mature thinking on subjects that interested him. There is, however, one passage in which he opens his heart to his readers.[4] In his Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind he allows us a rare glimpse of the turmoil of soul through which he had gone. He tells us that there had been a "time when I was interested in the first degree with purely scientific criticism."[5] The emphasis, of course, is on the phrase, "in the first degree." He was always interested in scientific criticism, but he came to use it as a servant, to illuminate the depths of the Gospel.

What effected the change in his outlook we cannot say

with certainty, but there are indications in the above-mentioned passage as well as in what we know of his family life and of his education. As the product of a kindly, sensitive, yet strict Scottish home, he combined the virtues of hard work, thrift and self-reliance with a deep piety and trust in Providence. Such was not only a picture of the Forsyth family, but the typical Scottish background of the time. It was a time in which Peter's father thought nothing of working faithfully for years, nor his mother of taking in boarders to pay expenses.

Even though his training under Ritschl was brief, it affected him in a number of ways, not least of which was his genuine love of all things German. It was an occasion of pain and sadness for him that Germany should have entered upon a course of war in 1914, and that she should prove to be, in his view, so cruel a foe. In a special way, Ritschl's reverence for the "given" and, above all, his genuine respect for Scripture were all to have their effect on Forsyth's ministry.

His own words, however, tell us that the major impulse toward his newfound style of faith was his entry upon the calling of preacher and pastor. In the ministry of a congregation Forsyth found himself obliged to preach his conclusions, and, to his horror, they were found wanting. The people to whom he ministered were "people in the press and

care of life"[6] who had neither the time nor the training to investigate the issues of life and death from the standpoint of "purely scientific criticism." They needed a place to stand from which they could wrestle through the great issues. Turning "from much of the scholar's work" and giving his attention "to those theological interests which come nearer to life than science, sentiment or ethic can ever do,"[7] Forsyth discovered theologians, preachers and hymn-writers who turned him back to the Bible and to a theology of the Cross.

> There is that amiss with the churches which free criticism can never cure, and no breadth or freshness of view amend. There is a lack of depth and height, an attenuation of experience, a slackness of grasp, a displacement of the centre, a false realism, a dislocation of perspective, amid which the things that make Christianity permanently Christian are in danger of fading from power, if not from view.[8]

This change of point of view has been spoken of as a "conversion." Forsyth himself might have preferred the term, "new birth," though I cannot find that he applied either term to himself. He did, however, describe the experience as being "comparable" to a birth.

> The great change was not a somersault I succeeded in turning, with some divine help; it was a revolution effected in me and by Him, comparable only to my entry upon the world.[9]

Five years before his death he was to say, with reference to his great principle of the moralization of life,

> Principle can only work through personalities, which cannot be thoroughly moralized until they are born again.[10]

Yet he could also see his "conversion" as the result of struggle and effort, the end of a process of discovery. In The Person and Place of Jesus Christ he wrote, "I cannot myself claim to have been freeborn in this faith; with a great price have I procured its freedom."[11]

It is a tantalizing mystery of which he speaks. We know next to nothing of the circumstances surrounding this, the grand experience of his life. The Leicester Conference, at which Forsyth became known as one of the bright young liberals of his denomination, took place in 1877. In 1893 he produced an article in Faith and Criticism entitled, "Revelation and the Person of Christ." One need not go beyond the title to know that by this time Forsyth had rejected much of his former stance, even though in the process some of his major views had remained unaltered. He had come to hold what he would call a "positive" theology, an evangelical view of the person of Jesus and a more or less supernatural view of revelation. It is a coincidence that the above-mentioned essay was published while he was pastor of the Clarendon Park Church in the very city in which he had first made his reputation as a liberal. It was this essay which first drew him to the attention of the noted preacher-theologian R. W. Dale, who is said to have remarked, "Who is this P. T. Forsyth? He has

recovered for us a word we had all but lost--the word Grace."[12]

It appears, then, that at some point between 1877 (the date of the Leicester Conference) and 1893 (the publication of the essay in Faith and Criticism) and probably before 1886, in which year he published Pulpit Parables for Children, Forsyth underwent the radical change of which his writings give us next to no details. This "conversion" may or may not have been sudden in its climax, although, as we have seen, his nurture and education had led him along lines that made such a change both possible and even probable.[13] Whether the change was sudden or not, we may certainly speak of it as radical. The principles he began to espouse at this time and in his subsequent theological writings are the same as those he was teaching at the end of his life. The change was complete.

In 1877 he had been ready to challenge the orthodoxy of his day. Thirty years later we find him with as much energy attacking the new orthodoxy, which was nothing other, as he saw it, than the old liberalism. In 1907 the pastor of London's prestigious City Temple, Robert J. Campbell, gave the secular press a statement of his theological position. It "rocked the theological world."[14] Forsyth's discomfiture was not caused by the sight of a Christian preacher adapting his presentation of the Gospel to the needs of his age. Forsyth was ready to do the same. What

troubled him was that what he saw as the heart of the Gospel should be so emasculated. Campbell believed in the essential oneness of God and man and believed man to be "the revelation of God." He urged that "every man is a potential Christ" and saw sin as an offence against "the God within."[15] The blurring of the distinction between God and man robbed the Gospel, in Forsyth's view, of its power to heal man's fragmented nature. Campbell, backed into a corner, admitted that his view was indeed a "higher pantheism,"[16] which, looked at so many years later, is perhaps the kindest thing that can be said.

Forsyth's career was not, for the most part, occupied in controversy. His productive ministry, exercised in the churches mentioned above, was capped by a most successful pastorate in Cambridge (1894-1901) and further crowned by the principalship of the Congregational College then known as Hackney College. He held this post until his death on November 11, 1921. A bibliography of his works can be found at the end of this thesis. A prolific writer, he offered his thoughts to the world in books and journals over a period of fifty years. Yet his greatest works were all written in one decade, beginning with Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind (1908) and ending with his last book, This life and the Next (1919). Such a prodigious output of energy was bound to take its toll on his body, nor are we surprised that it did.

During all the time that Forsyth was preaching, lecturing and administering a college, he was labouring under great physical and personal burdens. Just as he was about to enter upon his pastorate at Cambridge, his health suffered a breakdown from which he never completely recovered. At the same time his wife had "suddenly become an almost helpless invalid."[17] Three months sick-leave had little effect, and she died shortly after their return to the city. His own physical weakness did not pass off. He later said, "I cannot remember since boyhood passing a day without pain."[18] His second marriage in 1897 to Bertha Ison, a woman much younger than himself, renewed his outlook, if not his health, and "made possible for him the twenty-four years in which his greatest work was done."[19]

During his years of severest stress he was yet able to formulate and preach the sermon which caught the attention of the Christian community as marking the emergence of the new Forsyth. Entitled The Holy Father and the Living Christ, it enunciated some of the principles which marked his ministry to the end. It is again ironic that the Congregational Union meetings at which he preached this sermon were held that year (1896) in Leicester.

In the course of this thesis it will be my purpose to demonstrate that the meaning of the life and death of Jesus was found by Forsyth to lie in an interpretation of the Cross; that the Cross represented for him an action

on the part of a holy God to "deal with" sin at its most radical level, thus redeeming the human race; and that having reached this conclusion about the place of Jesus in the understanding of God, the destiny of the race and salvation, Forsyth applied the same yardstick to every other area of his interest. Whether the theme was theological, ecclesiological, ethical or aesthetic, Forsyth viewed it from the perspective of Calvary and the work of a holy God. The preacher's art was, therefore, an instrument by which God continued the work he had begun on the Cross, and Forsyth encouraged young preachers thus to look upon their calling. This "positive" theology is what we shall try to outline in the pages that follow.

CHAPTER ONE

The concept of holiness as the key to understanding the place of Jesus Christ in the theology of P. T. Forsyth

The conversion through which Forsyth passed impressed on him a sense of wonder that he of all people should be able to appear before the Holy One. It was the nature of his conversion that with it he entered upon a new understanding of the Divine Being. Overwhelmed as he was with a sense of unworthiness, he was also flooded with the sense of relief which came from being forgiven, an experience he could only understand in terms of grace. This grace he saw as the saving activity of a holiness which must judge in order to save.

Long before his conversion Forsyth had been taught by Ritschl to stress the moral as over against the merely experiential in religion. Though liberal in his attitudes to Scripture and science, he had never completely accepted the view of God as a God of love in the sentimental sense. Neither training nor temperament had permitted him to do this. Holiness, in terms of moral righteousness, was familiar enough to him. What his conversion did was to allow him to experience the holy as a moral grandeur such as he had never felt before.

A clue to the nature of this experience is to be found in John Newton's hymn, which Forsyth speaks of as "almost holy writ."[1] This hymn, sometimes included as an appendix to

Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, casts suggestive light on that experience which changed his attitude to religion so completely. The hymn goes as follows:

I ask'd the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favour'd hour,
At once He'd answer my request,
And by His love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with His own hands He seem'd
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Cross'd all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourd, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried,
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
" 'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break the scheme of earthly joy
That thou may'st seek thy all in me." 2

Newton pictures a religious person, one of prayer, even of mystic tendencies. He is the evolutionist of religion, who prays that "in some favoured hour" God would give rest from sin by the subduing power of his love. Instead of that slow and peaceful growth in heavenly grace,

Newton had been made to feel his sin as a great burden. He saw the blasting of life's hopes and, apparently, of his health as well. Perhaps Forsyth was attracted to this hymn because he saw in it some reminder of the serious illness which had brought him close to death. The hymn-writer had been led through his trials to seek God rather than God's gifts. An interesting question would be, "Did Forsyth go through the same wilderness?" If so, it is not to be wondered at that he could say of his conversion, "I was turned from a Christian to a believer, from a lover of love to an object of grace."[3]

It seems clear that Forsyth sees in this hymn an expression of his own experience. Certainly he was led to see the deep contrasts between the holiness which is God and "the hidden evils of my heart." Out of this experience he was enabled to look upon Jesus from this point on both as an object of theological study and, even more, as an object of worship. He wrote:

> In the first form in which we know it then, the religion of Jesus was the religion of which Jesus was the object and not the subject. He was never regarded as the first Christian. 4

Forsyth refused to consider Jesus as part of the sinful world, except insofar as he became such for salvation. He was not on a par with the humanity he had come to save. To think of him merely as the chief figure of the race smacked of the

"New Theology" which, in his view, was "no more, sometimes, than a theology of fatigue, or a theology of the press, or a theology of reviews, or a theology of revolt."[5] In one sense, Jesus does indeed stand on our side facing God, but this is true only because, in a greater sense, he stands on God's side, facing God for humankind.

If Jesus was not merely the greatest of men, but a truly divine intervention in the world's history, then Forsyth was right in seeing him less as the revelation of man's best and more as the revelation of God's best. The incarnation of Jesus was an invasion of the race by a God who cared enough to communicate. "He was part of His own Gospel. He could teach nothing without indirectly teaching himself."[6]

Again, Forsyth looked on Jesus no longer as the religious hero, so beloved by many Christians, but as the Redeemer. "He has overcome the world. That is the faith that distinguishes the cheery egoist in religion from the humble confessor."[7] Forsyth greatly admired the hero who risked his all in a great cause, and cited with approval the story of a Belgian railwayman who saved many from death by his willingness to offer his life.[8] But, although the Redeemer could not be dismissed as a "hero" in the conventional sense, he is nevertheless heroic. He is the conqueror of the world.

Forsyth's new perspective on Jesus did not, however, allow him to neglect the necessity of disciplined study.

Without doubt he took more seriously the aspect of divine revelation (he would have uttered a pious "Amen" to the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:17: "Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my father in heaven.") just as he insisted on the importance, even the necessity. of having a direct and first-hand experience of the living Christ. But he saw his task as one of unraveling the meaning of the Gospel through diligent study so that he, and all preachers, might interpret the words of Scripture and thus display the power of Christ.

> To preach Christ is not to declare our experience of Christ only or chiefly. It is so to study His Gospel, so to wind ourselves into His slow, yielding secret, that from a problem He becomes a power to us, and we become not only His witnesses but His sacraments. 9

The Holy Father

When Forsyth preached before the Congregational Union his sermon entitled, The Holy Father and the Living Christ, the attention of the religious public was caught by the novel setting forth of the concept of holiness as the definitive category of theology.[10] In this sermon Forsyth argued along these lines: (a) The biblical idea of Fatherhood points beyond itself to the holiness which is the essence of Fatherhood. (b) Unless that holiness finds satisfaction in answering holiness, the concept of Fatherhood ceases to have

religious meaning. "We cannot put too much into that word Father. It is the sum and marrow of all Christian divinity ...But we may easily put into it too little."[11] (c) We put too little into the concept by (i) falling below the level of natural fatherhood, or (ii) not rising above that level. We do the first by being merely religious. We do the second by treating God's love as if it were analogous to human love, thus failing to appreciate the full dimension of the concept of grace. Human fathers may well be patient and forgiving, but divine fatherhood is much more. The latter involves the destruction of sin, and it deals powerfully with guilt. (d) It can do this only by atoning such sin. No mortal man can atone, for atonement is grace, and grace is too costly for man. (e) Christ comes therefore to deal with guilt in the utter loneliness of the completely holy. (f) We may speak of holy love when we think of God, but not merely of father love.

This, in bare outline, was what made many turn to listen to this new voice. This was what Forsyth's conversion had led to. This was also, we may reasonably assume, in part the product of other influences as well. Even though "father love" fell short of holy love, we have to recognize that "father love" was a sacred thing in his eyes. He had learned the power of this love in his own home life. The sacrifices willingly made by loving but poor parents could not fail to affect his sensitive nature. That this love

was sanctified and almost divine in its nature he could easily come to feel as he grew older. The obvious affection with which his daughter writes of him indicates the continuity of a style of fatherhood that surely helped to give meaning to the words of Jesus.

Again, the impact of Ritschl's teaching should not be underestimated. In his description of his own spiritual pilgrimage, given us in Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, he credits first F. D. Maurice and then, "more mightily", Ritschl for urging him to turn from academic pursuits to more theological concerns, to those interests "which come nearer to life than science, sentiment, or ethic can ever do."[12] Forsyth writes of the "moralizing of dogma," and the strong emphasis on the moral as over against the speculative undoubtedly had its roots in part in Ritschl's teaching. Morality is not holiness, but it is on the way to holiness. Love is not holiness either, but as Forsyth subjects it to his strong moral critique, it leaves sentimentalism behind and becomes holy love.

The process of change

That this must have been the process by which Forsyth came to believe that holiness was the key to understanding the nature of God is an assumption supported,

therefore, by what we know of the life of this private man. That his parents were loving we deduce;[13] what his German teacher taught him we know;[14] how his conversion affected him he tells us in part. The result was a conception of holiness which went far beyond mere morality. Forsyth admired Ritschl deeply, and acknowledged his debt to him. Yet he faulted him for his "evasion of the idea of the holy as the perfect harmony in God of the Moral and the spiritual."[15]

We may speak of Forsyth's movement from liberalism to orthodoxy, though neither word does justice to him. In doing so, however, we must raise the question as to why he felt that there should be such a movement at all. Forsyth did not consider a person's doctrinal position to be the ultimate determinative of his salvation. Even though one's spiritual health would be affected by the opinions one held, yet ultimately it is one's relationship to God that decides the question of eternal life. His concern for the holiness of God, however, is threefold. First, he is deeply anxious to maintain the dignity of God. Toward the end of his life he wrote,

> It is not enough to say that the Kingdom of God is identical with the spirit of Sonship. For that might be compatible with a conception of Fatherhood which eliminates all the holy majesty of love that was most distinctive of fatherhood in Christ's mind. 16

By definition God must be pre-eminent. His majesty is not to be slighted with impunity. Forsyth felt that Christian

theology had an obligation to state this majesty in the strongest possible terms, and for this reason his grace must be seen and glorified.

Forsyth's soteriology provides a second reason for stressing the holiness of God. He believed that only holiness can save and that therefore holiness must save.

> Because He is holy to see, I must not approach Him, but because He is holy to save, He must come to me, that no speck of His world remain which is not covered, claimed, and cured by Him. 17

It was Forsyth's profound conviction that salvation, which only God can achieve, must cover the race or it covers none. Therefore he stresses the necessity of the Cross ("He must come to me") and links that necessity with the universality of the atonement ("no speck of His world...").

> With all His power, He was there for one vast eternal deed, which can only be described as the Redemption, the new Creation of the race. 18

Since it is my intention to deal in Chapter 3 more specifically with this aspect of universality, I will leave it at this point, making reference only to the fact that in that chapter there occurs much more documentation of the subject.

However, by the same token, he who saves in holiness must save, else he is not holy. In The Church and the Sacraments Forsyth argued that God's eternity is the logical corollary of his holiness and the Cross its logical outcome. Apart from the Cross there can be no confidence that a holy

God is also a loving God.[19] Indeed,

> the Cross was required not simply by God's love, but by His holy love. It was required by His holiness and given by His love. 20

By laying stress, therefore, on the holiness of God, Forsyth is able to produce a high doctrine of salvation designed to meet the need of the human community, and not only the human. God must deal also with his own righteousness in such a way as to establish and justify it in the world.

> That Cross was not simply the martyr height of Christ's moral fidelity; it was the crucial act of a present holy God Who in love deals morally and once for all with His own righteousness there. 21

In the third place, he insists that, while it is not necessary that John Smith as a believer hold a pure doctrine of the holiness of God in its entirety, it is essential that the Church hold such a doctrine. This means that its clergy and its teachers must surely do so. If the church does not have a doctrine that exalts God's nature (as he believes the doctrine of holiness to have) and guarantees human salvation, it fails in its purpose. Since its clergy are the ones who set the tone for the Church's concept of God, he urges an effort on their part to educate an entire generation in the meaning of holiness. He was sure that the previous generation had been failed by its pastors in this respect. The views of the clergy had been not so much wrong as insufficient for the providing of a strong soteriological base.

> We have to saturate our people in the years that are to come as thoroughly with the idea of God's holiness as they have been saturated with the idea of God's love. 22

Incidentally, later in the work just quoted he indicated the rich meaning of the concept of holiness, while bringing home the redemption implicit in it.

> How much fuller of meaning is such a word as "holy" or "holiness" than either "pure" or "purity". Purity is shamed by human sin. Holiness carries it as a load, and carries it to its destruction. 23

It would be well at this point to retrace our steps in order to emphasize Forsyth's concerns. Holiness, he believed, is the concept without which neither the Father nor Jesus can be understood. As he says, "The permanent thing in Christianity must be that which gives it its chief value to God."[24] Or again,

> What then is the church there for? The great product of a church, I say, is that which makes God God; it is holy love. The first business of a church is to worship that; then, through this confession in worship, public and private, to acquire and to confess it in character and work, to reproduce it in person and conduct. 25

It is on this rock of God's holiness that he believed all Christian religion must be founded, and the Christian faith will never be understood properly if one does not grasp that. Further, lest his readers assume that the well-being of mankind, or of society, be a higher thing than the godliness of God, Forsyth made it clear that to put the race first is to destroy it; to put God first is the only

way to save the race.

> There is a phrase that I never tire of quoting, and it is this: 'The dignity of man is better assured if he were broken upon the maintenance of that holiness of God than if it were put aside just to give him an existence...' 26

Forsyth had once counted himself among those "advanced" preachers who sincerely believe that, by trying to meet man and his needs, they have the emphasis in the right place. He came to believe that this was not Jesus' way. Where did Jesus stand in relation to the "godliness of God"? There was no doubt in Forsyth's mind. He wrote, "The vital thing in Fatherhood for Christ was that holiness which made the Father royal."[27] This is evidenced by the fact that

> the Father in heaven meant for Christ the holy Father. The Sonship is the sonship of holy love. Be perfect, be holy, said Christ, if you are to be the sons of the Father in heaven. 28

It was Forsyth's conviction, not only that Jesus was himself the core of his own teaching,[29] but that his views of the Fatherhood of God were closer to Forsyth's own than they were to the liberalism of the nineteenth century. Jesus conceived of Fatherhood in moral terms. God was a Father not only loving but just, and just even if it meant turning his back on his own son. The "cry of dereliction" was drawn from Jesus' lips not through surprise at the Father's attitude, but as a further confession of his holiness.

Holiness and the Cross

If it is true that Jesus so conceived of fatherhood, and looked upon holiness as the norm of fatherhood, then the cross becomes an unavoidable part of his ministry. If it is true that salvation demands the satisfaction of divine holiness by a corresponding holiness in human terms, then a holy life lived in the context of humanity is called for. If it is true that the cross of Jesus does indeed reveal and satisfy that holiness, then salvation is made possible through the cross, and through it alone. Human morality is brought into being and made possible by the cross.

> The cross as the public satisfaction and revelation of God's holiness is the source and principle of Christian ethic, private and social. 30

For Forsyth, we may safely say, the concept of holiness is the sine qua non of deity. Were God not holy, he would not be God.

The most overworked word in religious usage is the word "love". Calling up warm feelings drawn from many and close human contacts, "love" creates the impression of a God whose tenderness toward his erring children outruns his justice. He overlooks unrighteousness. He is a divinity ready to pardon any fault. The cross becomes a mere display of divine emotion. Forsyth would have nothing to do with this. "Herein is love," he wrote, paraphrasing the language of John,

"not that we loved passionately, but that He loved holily."[31]

Nor did he, in spite of his sympathy for one whose outlook was in so many ways similar, accept the interpretation of J. McLeod Campbell. The latter appeared to keep holiness and love as separate and distinct, but equal, categories. He wrote:

> The necessity which has, as we have seen, been felt by earlier and later Calvinists, in attempting to specify the elements of the Saviour's sufferings, to keep within the limits indicated by who and what he was that suffered, has obliged them to recognize holiness and love as what in Christ made the source of pain specified, sources of pain to him; and if the sinfulness of sin, and the misery to which it exposed sinners, were painful to Christ because of his holiness and love, then they must have been painful in proportion to his holiness and love. 32

For Forsyth this was not good enough. Campbell's otherwise evangelical stance fell short of wholeness by using the intensity of Jesus' pain as the measure of the effectiveness of his sacrifice. His approach also treated holiness and love as divisible categories. Forsyth invariably spoke of love as holy love, love and holiness being for him inseparable. He said, referring to the suffering of Jesus, "The atoning thing was not its amount or acuteness, but its obedience, its sanctity."[33] Not that Jesus loved God, but that he obeyed God--this is the sign of his holiness and the power of his sacrifice. Forsyth made much of the idea of obedience, both in relation to Jesus and to human ethical

responses. It was Forsyth's belief that Jesus so yielded himself to the holiness of God that he became holy in the same divine sense, and thus became the bearer of the Kingdom of God.

> It was above all something done in love for the holiness of God, both positively in setting up His Kingdom in Christ's holy soul, triumphant and universal, and negatively in destroying the Kingdom of evil. 34

Is this what Dale meant when he said that "Christian holiness is nothing else than a revelation of the inexhaustible energy of the holiness of Christ."?[35] It certainly comes close to Forsyth's own words:

> If the atoning thing is holiness (which it is), and not suffering (which is is not), then Christ atoned by an act which created a new holiness in us and not a new suffering. 36

Forsyth was not, of course, speaking of a holiness that was merely formal or ritual. "Holiness cannot be established except by making men holy."[37] That is, holiness must be moral righteousness at the very least.

Of course, the holiness God creates through Jesus is not <u>only</u> moral, if by this we understand the commonly accepted notions of morality. There is a numinous quality about holiness which does not adhere to morality. We speak of the holiness of God, of his right to demand holiness, and of the rightness of his condemnation of sin. When this is recognized by the redeemed, these believers are "holy" even though they are not yet to be considered morally perfect. They will aim at the moral life, however, because they have

been made holy, and they will understand their new relationship to God as involving a deeply moral commitment to life. He wrote,

> The Church is the Holy Church; but it is not so because of its actual sanctity or fraternity; it is so because of its choice by a holy God, and its redemption by a holy Christ...Indeed, it is actually a holier church today than in the first century. 38

Even though Forsyth would moralize religion, he will not accept morality as understood by the world as an alternative to the transforming relationship in which God makes his people holy through Jesus Christ. Indeed,

> The Church rests on the grace of God, the judging, atoning regenerating grace of God, which is His holy love in the form it must take with human sin. 39

Holiness and satisfaction

Specifically, therefore, Forsyth was obliged to deal with the question of how one can satisfy the holiness of God. Mediaeval notions of honour had led many to view atonement as essentially a satisfaction of the divine honour. God's honour, so the theory went, had been impugned by human rebellion. His honour had therefore to have satisfaction. The Cross was God's way of meeting that requirement in that a man was able to offer the perfect obedience to God. The problem was that this required a legal fiction, in the sense that the man offering the satisfaction was also the divine

being. There is no assurance that sinful man is ready to do the same. In spite of this, however, Anselm's contribution to theology in this respect remains as important today as it was then.

The Reformation brought forth a modification of this theory, in that justice rather than honour was the thing to be satisfied. If God's law demands punishment, God's justice is satisfied only when someone is punished for the crime. Yet the Socinians asked, as we might ask today, whether the punishment of the innocent does anything to satisfy a justice which demands the punishment of the guilty. Grotius' theory that the Cross was an affirmation of the right of God to demand punishment, and therefore a vindication of the majesty as well as the righteousness of God, seems to meet the objection, although it has not held as high a place in Christian theology as the theories of Anselm or the Reformers. Yet perhaps Forsyth comes nearer to Grotius than he does to any of the others in this respect at least.

Many theologians have rightly urged that "satisfaction" as defined above has a hollow and false ring to it.[40] It reads into the divine nature the barbaric customs of an earlier age. It applies abstract principles of jurisprudence to divine-human relations, and not very successfully. Ethically the idea that divine law can be satisfied by the punishment of the innocent makes mockery of all law.

Indeed, what can satisfy law but justice? And what

can satisfy outraged honour but the restoration of the state of affairs which existed before the insult was offered? At this point Forsyth introduced the concept of holiness once again into the discussion.

> There is only one thing that can satisfy the holiness of God, and that is holiness--adequate holiness. To judge is to secure that at the cost of any pain both to the judge and the culprit...The confession must be adequate... The only adequate confession of a holy God is perfectly holy man. 41

What Jesus did, in Forsyth's view, was to live out, in the human situation, the holy life demanded of us all, offering back to God the one thing that could satisfy him. "For the only adequate confession of a holy God is perfectly holy man." For God, who desires of mankind a life marked by holiness, can find that desire fulfilled only when he finds, in a human life, that holiness which responds to him. Jesus is the Saviour because, on behalf of all, he responded with holiness to a Father who is himself utterly holy.

Nor was he merely acting out a drama, his lines memorized from the beginning. In an echo of the New Testament author who said of Jesus,

> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him... 42

Forsyth said,

> Christ worked out our salvation by working out his own, for His was the soul of humanity. 43

In other words, Jesus seriously struggled with life, its

temptations and testings, in order that his holiness might be a joyful offering back to God of what God had first of all given.

There are two related concepts by means of which Christ's holiness became clear to Forsyth. These are Judgement and Sacrifice, and they are crucial to understanding him. In the first place, the Cross is the sign of God's judgement on sin. "You cannot separate the idea of holiness and its kingdom from the idea of judgment."[44] Because it is true that "holiness must suffer in the midst of sin," it is also true that

> it was a sacrifice made to the holy... Holiness and judgment are forever inseparable ...God must either punish sin or expiate it ...Expiation, therefore, is the very opposite of exacting punishment; it is assuming it. 45

He declared with assurance that "judgment is the negative side of love's positive righteousness,"[46] although it is easy to misunderstand him at this point. Because it is "negative" it is not therefore unimportant. On the contrary, if we use the analogy of a coin, both the head (righteousness) and the tail (judgement) are inseparable parts of the same thing.

Jesus himself acknowledged the righteousness of God's judgement. For this reason he could feel himself to be God's servant in the process of making a world holy. Forsyth contended that Jesus understood his own death as God's judgement on sin, a judgement which he of all people could

not evade.[47] A life spent in the service of the good and destroyed by those who had no sympathy for it might be counted the highest martyrdom. This, however, was not how Jesus saw his own death. If we are to take seriously the words of Mark 10:39-45, Jesus saw himself as part of a divine plan for the salvation of mankind. His death was as necessary to the completion of that plan as was his life.

The "Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) is but a step from the Lamb who bears the sins of the world. The New Testament bears evidence that its writers saw Jesus as part of the humanity he came to save. In the Letter to the Hebrews especially we see the frailty and human weakness of one who "learned obedience through what he suffered",[48] and who "cried with tears and supplications" that his destiny might be other than it was.[49] The Evangelists, too, indicate that in his last hours Jesus felt himself to be caught in a fate that, by right, ought not to have been his, but that, because of God's purpose and his own dedication, he was ready to bear.[50] Paul goes out of his way to say that Jesus was "born of a woman, born under the law,"[51] a law that justly condemned all mankind to the end that God might have mercy on all.[52]

But there are also indications that Jesus looked upon his death as a victory over the forces of evil. He "saw Satan fall like lightning" from heaven;[53] he spoke of

the Son of Man "coming in the clouds,"[54] he promised his fellow-sufferer upon the cross a place in paradise.[55]

This is all supported by the New Testament writers who saw in the cross an act of reconciliation for the whole world,[56] or who linked the Lamb and the Lion as co-equal symbols of the sufferer who, because of his suffering, is King.[57]

If one understands one's own death as part of a divine plan in which one participates both as the victim and as the victor, one can accept it in a confident and triumphant manner. Apart from the "cry of dereliction", this is how the New Testament writers portray Jesus, and even in "Lama sabachthani" one sees the victor the more clearly because of the self-consecration of the victim.

The New Testament portrays Jesus as one who does indeed understand his death in this fashion and who therefore sees it as a divine judgement on evil itself. This is so, first, because he accepts God's right to punish sin and acknowledges the justice of God's judgement; and second, it is so because he maintains his own integrity in the face of injustice of a most blatant kind. Forsyth tends to emphasize the first of these rather than the second. If Jesus, who is God's gift and representative, accepts the judgement of God on sin and accepts it in his character as <u>man's</u> representative, then sin is truly judged. It is evil and it is seen to be evil. Therefore the victims of sin, in solidary relationship with

Jesus, emerge triumphant with him. Sinners are judged and found righteous because their judgement has been born by the Saviour. For this reason Forsyth tended not to look forward, as orthodox theology has done, to the final judgement. He said, "The last judgment is past. It took place on Christ's cross."[58]

Holiness and sacrifice

In the second place, Forsyth saw the Cross as a sacrifice in the best sense, i.e. as a gift of life to God. He worked with this idea in a special way in The Cruciality of the Cross. There he argued that sacrifice is, first of all, something that is God's act and not man's. "The Cross does not in the New Testament exhibit God as accepting sacrifice so much as making it."[59] Therefore, since sacrifice is God's act, its purpose cannot be to change God's love for man but to reconcile God and mankind. The emphasis placed on the Cross tends to be less and less that of punishment and more that of reconciliation.

Secondly, the sacrifice of Jesus is not only something done by the Father, but it is also willed by the Son. Since there is an indivisible unity of Father and Son, and since Jesus is holy as the Father is holy, then the will of Jesus coincides completely with the will of God in every respect.

"Everything turns, not on His life having been taken from Him, but on its having been laid down."[60]

Or again, the important part of the sacrifice of Christ is not found in the amount of pain suffered, as we have seen, but in the fact that the innermost core of this man was surrendered totally to the divine will. Divine holiness is met with a holiness which alone can satisfy the righteous demands of God. Not suffering, which is physical, but obedience, which is personal, is the key. Suffering is a mediaeval notion when applied to redemption.

> The essential thing was not self-sacrifice ...but sacrifice of the central self--not sacrifice by self but of self... 61

In dealing with the idea of sacrifice Forsyth had at some point to refer to "the blood of Christ," a phrase popular among both Roman Catholics and conservative evangelicals. Not only the phrase, but the meaning behind it, is part of the reality dealt with in the doctrine of the atonement. Referring to the Old Testament practice of blood-sacrifice, Forsyth emphasized the personal nature of such a sacrifice. In the Old Testament, sacrifice was always a personal act.[62] At this point he appears to say two contradictory things. On one page of The Cruciality of the Cross he maintained that for Judaism sacrifice "was taken as an opus operatum,"[63] while, on the next page, he so spiritualized the act of sacrifice that

> the blood was shed with the direct object, not of killing the animal, but of detaching and releasing the life, isolating it, as it were, from the material base of body and flesh, and presenting it in this refined state to God. 64

He seems to mean that the blood itself may have been understood in ancient times to have had a direct effect on God, but that in reality the effect was produced by the giving of a life, and, if we may speak this way about animals, by the sacrifice of personality. Personality was involved even in animal sacrifice, for in this way a human being destroyed gladly for God's sake that which he held to be of great value.

In the same way he saw Jesus' sacrifice as the giving, not merely of flesh and blood, but of life and personality. Its value consisted in its total surrender.

> The shedding of blood means the total surrender of a personality from its centre by the one means wherein personality both receives effect and produces effect--by means of a personal act of conquest which requires (but also releases) the whole resources of personality. 65

> When we speak of the blood of Christ we mean that what he did drew upon the very citadel of his personality and involved His total self. 66

For if Jesus himself understood his life in terms of holy obedience and the surrender of his will to his Father, then the "blood of Christ" is the best, or perhaps the only, way of making that surrender.

This concept can be found in other of Forsyth's

writings. His gift of the apt phrase, the startling paradox, can be seen clearly in his dealing with sacrifice. In The Work of Christ he reiterated the contention that this was God's doing alone, and added, "It was not human nature offering its very best to God. It was God offering His very best to man."[67] Quite apart from apt phrases, however, he will not allow us to look on the cross as something done "from man's side," even if the one on the cross is seen to be infinitely better than the rest of us.

> We are tempted, I say, to declare that it was the offering of a sacrifice to God outside of Him and us, the offering of a sacrifice to God by somebody not God. 68

He resisted the temptation. Sacrifice, he maintained, is not a human quality. Self-denial is not sacrifice. If the good Greek denied himself the lower pleasures for the sake of the higher, and the good Christian the higher pleasures for the welfare of others, neither action is in itself a sacrifice.[69] "Before I admire sacrifice, or any ardour, I wish to know its object, its inspiration, its methods."[70] He firmly believed that the accomplished egoist could accept sacrifice, or, we must suppose, make something that could pass for it. Only the truly divine can sacrifice in the sense spoken of above.[71]

Therefore he was emphatic that "the effective principle in the work of Christ" was to be found in sanctity rather than suffering, and in Jesus' "confession of God's holiness" rather than in a "sympathetic confession of our sins."[72]

McLeod Campbell was, of course, in his mind when he wrote that, for Campbell had maintained that Jesus' love, in revealing God's sorrow and love, could make us penitent before God.[73] Jesus therefore offered to the Father a perfect confession of sin and a perfect righteousness, both of these lived out under the conditions of humanity. Not so, replied Forsyth. Jesus' confession was of God's holiness, of God's right to make righteous demands upon us. Both Campbell and Forsyth wanted to "moralize" the cross, but the latter succeeds much more nobly. In Forsyth there is no legal fiction of a real righteousness bestowed through the medium of a real confession of sin, since he knew that Jesus could not confess sins he had not committed; nor do we actually become righteous of a sudden, but rather through a divine-human act in which our basic relationship to God is altered.

Holy Love

In searching for what is uniquely Christian in Forsyth's contribution to religious thought, one sees Jesus standing at the centre of all his thinking. The Christian faith in some of its forms may produce theologies which recognize the love of God as a great motive force for religion and morality.[74] Such a theology may even consider Jesus' own words as an attempt to say in his own way what other religionists have said in theirs.

On the other hand, other forms of the same faith may produce teachings which emphasize the necessity of moral righteousness. Either or both of these approaches may offer a "way of salvation," rituals of regeneration or paths to perfection. Forsyth, however, saw the specifically Christian contribution as the combining of holiness and love in one person and in one act.

> The holy is the Christian and ethical form of the mystic. The supreme and omnipotent thing is not mystic love but holy love. We have the two factors perfectly blended only in the revelation of holy love, of the holy (ethical) as the redeeming (religious) principle. 75

This combination of holiness and love, in which holiness is the modifying term, places the emphasis where Forsyth thought it should be--on the ethical principle in religion. By so doing, he was convinced, he was sounding the one note that could give religion a chance to capture the world's allegiance. In our own day this is the note that religion needs. Love has been distorted into everything from sexuality without commitment to sentimentality without discernment, with the result that it no longer serves a redemptive purpose. Forsyth would give it such a purpose by giving it an ethical core. Henceforth, he declared, love in the Christian sense will be seen as that which lives for what is <u>right</u>. "The keyword of the New Testament is not love, but holy love."[76]

What did he mean by this statement? His Christian per-

spective leads him to see the whole of the redemptive history of the race behind each mention of the word "love" in the New Testament. If "God so loved the world that he gave his only son,"[77] love must have something to do with Jesus. Yet the love the world has seen in Jesus is incapable of overlooking sin and guilt. His ministry was as harsh in dealing with sin and unrighteousness as it was gentle in dealing with weakness and failure. Both the harshness and the gentleness have a common purpose, that of destroying evil while restoring the evil-doer to God's righteousness. As James Denney said,

> There is no guilt of the human race, there is no consequence in which sin has involved it, to which holiness and love made manifest in Christ are unequal. 78

Denney's words are evidence that there were others beside Forsyth who were thinking along these lines; they also add strength to Forsyth's conviction that Jesus is the focus and manifestation of both holiness and love.

The concept of holy love could be applied, and was applied by Forsyth, to the problems raised by World War I. At one point he declared that "God does not love one nation at the cost of the rest."[79] Was he expecting to be taken seriously when he wrote that? Even as he declared God's impartial love, he justified his nation's involvement in the was on the grounds that Germany had sacrificed all ideals of humanitarianism and justice. It was his category of

holy love, however, that provided him with a criterion of judgement, and enabled him to believe that God loved Germany in such a way as to visit judgement upon it.

When James Denney wrote that "we are fighting the battle of truth and humanity, which is the Lord's battle,"[80] he was expressing a feeling common to many, we must suppose, of his country and generation. Today it is possible to think this the statement of one who was combining religious jingoism, piety and politics, and placing them all in the service of one's country. Not so Forsyth, who agreed with the sentiment wholeheartedly. He looked upon contemporary historical movements as part of God's activity in saving and judging the world, and therefore as manifestations of his saving love. He seems to us today so one-sided in his evaluation of the war simply because he believed much more strongly than does our generation in the universality of the claim of holy love, and, therefore, of Jesus. Because the whole world is subject to God's law, the whole world must submit to his judgement. The whole world is also the object of Christ's redemption.

If this is so, obviously Jesus is the crux of human history. The holy love seen in Jesus' cross leads through judgement to redemption. Jesus is central both to the atoning act by which the race is reconciled and to the devotional experiences of the race which finds this redemption and applies is to its situation. We take as an example Forsyth's

understanding of prayer. It is in prayer, he argues, that we come to know Jesus most intimately, and in prayer that one recognizes God's righteous judgement on the race, which recognition is the effective moment of salvation. "It is in prayer that the holiness comes home as love, and the love is established as holiness."[81] This is so because prayer is the only form of personal communion with Jesus available to the modern believer. The one who prays is forced to reflect on the holy love of God which he has seen in Jesus, and to apply it forcefully to his own soul.

We do well to note that Forsyth is not talking about anything which a modern might think of as "pious" when he speaks of the holy love of God in the sacrifice of Jesus. He could not abide a merely negative religion, but spoke constantly of "masculine" religion, which for him carried with it overtones of strength, courage and a practical approach to life's battles. He always associated faith and action. The holiness of God and God's righteous deed at Calvary inevitably went together. In an interesting footnote he said,

> Perhaps I ought to have been explicit before now that by holiness is not meant anything to abstract or subjective as mystical absorption, but the whole concrete righteousness of existence, sustained at white heat. 82

There can be no doubt that this quiet, scholarly, and somewhat delicate man lived his own faith in this way. He was deeply concerned with the social issues of his day. He was concerned

that holiness and action be treated as inseparable. In a characteristically vivid expression he said, "We have been too much with the religious troubadours, and too little with the Knights of the Holy Cross."[83]

Holiness demands holiness. That is, the holiness of God demands answering holiness on the part of humanity. The fact that no-one but Jesus can return such holiness does not relieve others of the responsibility for righteous living, nor can any pious talk take its place. "It is not ideals that save, nor guesses; not dreams, sacrifices, nor genius--but sanctity."[84] Nevertheless (and this is where holiness is such an important part of his conception of Jesus) holiness is impossible except insofar as one responds to what Jesus did. "The 'Saints' in the New Testament are not the holy, but those who have been chosen by the Holy..."[85] This is what he understood by the work and person of Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. Jesus, because he alone of all humanity shares fully in the holiness of the Holy One, is able to carry mankind with him as he offers that holiness back to the Father. We can only be holy "in Christ," holy because he is holy. We are holy because God has called us.

Such a view explains why a man of liberal leanings should have embraced a religious viewpoint so radically different from his former one. It is highly unlikely that Forsyth would ever have made this gigantic step of faith had it not been for his

vision of holiness. Having seen God primarily as the Holy One rather than as Love, he could see no other way for unrighteous humanity to cross the divide. It was necessary to provide another method by which the holiness of God could be acknowledged in deed and not in word alone. This led him to his theory of Atonement; it led him first, however, to Christ and the experience of redemption which he professed, and finally to the concept of a race redeemed. Having reached that point he felt that he could rest his faith in his new-found Saviour. With Jesus, God's holiness could legitimately reach out to unholy man, and the idea of the love of God could be legitimately reintroduced into theology.

> Holy souls are so precious in the world because they carry the note of a holiness above the world, they are earmarked for it, and their destiny is the image of God. 86

That was his dream. We turn now to see how in practical terms it was to be brought about.

CHAPTER TWO

Atoning for sin - The Work of Jesus

> Moral realism means that a man, an age, a church, should face its sin and judge it and the ethical situation it creates.1

In his treatise on Missions in Church and State Forsyth faced one of the problems of his day and used it, as he so often did, to focus his readers' attention on the grand themes of sin and salvation. These were the real issues, the issues of life and death, the only themes worth dealing with. Whether examining the virtues and vices of a political system, attacking flagrant economic abuses, or discussing the meaning of prayer, Forsyth never strayed far from the work of Christ in making sinful people holy.

It should be said at this juncture, at the peril of repetition, that by "holiness" Forsyth always thinks of a kind of numinous righteousness attributable to God alone. Human beings, whose nature does not include this numinous quality, cannot in themselves be thought of as holy. Neither can they, through piety or righteous conduct, achieve holiness in the sense in which God is holy. Men and women can be made holy only by being "covered" by God's holiness. It was to show that God could include sinners in his holy love, and to justify this inclusion, that Forsyth wrote with such emphasis of the Atonement.

For this reason, even in dealing with the missionary task of the church, Forsyth approached his subject from the standpoint of sin and atonement. He saw sin at the root of all of our problems; he believed that sin could only be cured by a change in our relationship with God; he held that this change was the result of vigorous moral action; and while the action itself must be carried out from the human side, it is, in all essential particulars, God's action. The sentence quoted at the beginning of this chapter is part of an argument which begins with the death of Jesus and moves on to demonstrate that this death was the judgement of God on sin. The universality of Christian faith, upon which alone missionary activity is based, is impossible without this death, since in this way God attacks the universal problems of sin and judgement, by introducing a moral solution. Both missionary zeal and missionary apathy are related to the church's perception of the need for the Cross of Jesus.[2]

This was, in Forsyth's opinion, the meaning of the phrase "moral realism." Moral realism means facing and "dealing with" the sin which besets us all constantly. The situation created by sin, our own and the sin of the race, is dealt with only as we recognize what God has done and, in an act of moral decision, make it ours. It is realistic to lay hold on what God has done; it is unrealistic to believe that we can make any significant change by our own efforts. (In

The Work of Christ Forsyth wrote that "we have to do with a world in a bondage it could not break.") It is realistic, in a morally energetic act, to confess our weakness; it is unrealistic, in what is essentially an act of pride, to try to lift ourselves by what amounts to psychic levitation.

On the other hand, it is equally unrealistic to defy the religious demand for a holy life. In quite a different context, but moved by the same methodology, Forsyth declared,

> It is one thing to confess ourselves too weak or wayward to keep an ideal which we yet recognize as a law, and it is another to challenge the ideal itself. 4

The race, it would appear, is both under obligation to be holy and at the same time powerless to achieve this holiness. James Denney wrote,

> Sin is, in fact, nothing else than...that in which wrong is done to the moral constitution under which we live...it is a violence done to the constitution under which God and man form one moral community. 5

Simply put, sin has destroyed even the possibility of the restoration of community from the side of humanity. Sin must be dealt with, but it can only be dealt with from the side of God.

When Forsyth spoke of "dealing with sin," the necessity laid upon God to do so was, as always, a moral necessity. "Sin is the death of God," he wrote. "Die sin must or God."[6] Since he had no thought of a literal "death" of God, we

understand him to mean that, if sin be allowed to perpetuate the disruption of the moral community of holiness, God cannot continue to be God. Since God's death or abdication is unthinkable, sin must be dealt with, and dealt with by God himself.

It is at this point that the concept of atonement becomes religiously necessary, both for salvation and for theology. Forsyth could not imagine a theology that had no room for a doctrine of atonement, any more than he could visualize a salvation without the fact of the Atonement. The alternative to atonement can only be punishment, locking the race forever in the unholiness which is death. To ignore sin, as we have seen, is impossible for God. R. W. Dale had written, "If God does not assert the principle that sin deserves punishment by punishing it, He must assert that principle in some other way."[7] But even Dale's alternative is ultimately unsatisfactory. In Forsyth's thought, the mere punishment of sin does not go far enough, nor could its punishment satisfy God's righteous demands. As we have seen, the satisfaction of holiness is possible only through reciprocal holiness. God, therefore, in dealing with sin, must atone, since atonement is the only satisfactory answer, and since only God can provide that answer.

Atonement, of course, involves suffering. The temptation in dealing with the subject of suffering is to think of

it in quantitative terms--so much suffering for so much sin. Again, there is the temptation to treat all suffering as equally redemptive. Forsyth deals with suffering by recognizing that it is indeed possible to confuse two meanings of the word "evil". Evil may be seen as the problem of pain, on one hand; and, on the other, it may be seen as the problem of sin. Both are evil, but they are evil in quite different ways. God, in dealing with them, therefore, must deal with them in different ways.

> In any theodicy...His treatment of evil as suffering and as sin is different, to our Christian faith at least. The power in him can convert suffering to a sacrament, but it must destroy sin. 8

Again, on the next page, he wrote,

> His conversion of the one is the same act as His destruction of the other. 9

Punishment must be visited on the sinner. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, punishment is never good enough. Destruction, however, is visited on the sin, and the sinner is thereby made whole. This achieves the purpose which must perforce lie at the heart of any religious idea of atonement, i.e. the restoration of the community which existed between mankind and God before sin destroyed such community.

Further, as Forsyth made clear in The Cruciality of the Cross, the atonement which destroys sin, thereby rescuing the sinner, is something which must take place in the arena

of man's moral decision. Perhaps this is why moderns have turned aside from any doctrine of atonement, since theories of atonement can so easily be misunderstood as if they were describing something which happens outside of our experience. A careful reading of the Old Testament rituals would show that not even in the race's early religious history was such the case. Atonement there could not be effected by the priest apart from the sacrificial gift of the worshipper; nor could the sacrifice be effective if it did not also involve the moral conscience.[10]

Forsyth recognized that "if sin there be, man is the sinner," and that

> there must be a central and solidary treatment of sin and one whose responsibility is borne in man, even though it be vicariously. 11

This is a distinctive element in Forsyth's atonement theory. Even though plainly only God can deal with sin, the moral conscience must be involved. The radical depths of our moral being must be plumbed, or else sin is still sin. The Cross, therefore, is not merely the sacrifice of a perfect man's life to God; it is the giving of Man's life to God in such a way as to recognize and honour the holiness of which we spoke in the last chapter. He said,

> Christ experienced sin as God does, while he experienced its effects as man does. He felt sin with God, and sin's judgment with men. 12

The meaning of salvation

Before going on to discuss the meaning of atonement and Jesus' place in the process, we must pause to ask what this salvation is toward which atonement moves. Forsyth wrote,

> Christ did not die simply to affect men but to effect salvation, not simply to move man's heart, but to accomplish God's will. 13

What is this salvation which is "God's will", and which is so utterly different from a mere emotional stirring? It is apparently the one purpose for which the Cross existed, the one goal of Jesus' ministry, since his ministry is understood only through his death. Jesus' entry into the moral conflict of the race is elicited by man's need for salvation. What Jesus' death accomplished, then, is what we will call "salvation", and that alone. For this reason Forsyth could not stop short with anything in which the primary ingredient was emotional, psychological or intellectual. It had to be a moral change, else it fell short of the will of the Holy One.

> We are not saved by believing truths, but by trusting ourselves to the reality of Christ's work upon the moral universe. 14

Atonement, therefore, can be looked at from various points of view. An intellectual approach to salvation might conceivably frame the doctrine as a "way" or a "plan" of redemption. One would then understand the doctrine as a divine revelation, something to be grasped and understood by faith. From another

point of view, one might think in terms of punishment for sin, and of the Cross as the justification of the sinner. Or again, one might see the Cross simply as a way of restoring purity to the race. At one time or another Forsyth tackled the subject from each of these points of view, dismissing them as inadequate to the full meaning of the Gospel. He believed that the Cross revealed God, judged sin, appealed to the soul and restored purity. Yet none of these effects is possible by itself or without the idea of a moral regeneration.

For instance, the question of revelation, treated intellectually, can lead to what he referred to above as merely "believing truths". This is neither salvation nor the path to salvation, in Forsyth's thinking. Revelation is concerned with allowing us to see the reality of God. To see this reality, however, involves heart, soul, will and mind. Revelation is not that which causes us to be redeemed; revelation and redemption are ultimately the same thing. "There is no other way of revealing God to sinners but by redeeming them."[15] It is fundamental to Forsyth's theological outlook to realize that the intellectual, however important it may be, is itself in need of redemption, and the road to the redemption of the intellect lies through the redemption of the will. Man's <u>will</u> must be transformed, or else his mental orientation will remain clouded.

Again, as we have already seen, judgement in Forsyth's

theology is not the same as punishment, even if it involves punishment. "The ultimate, the fundamental, judgment is an adjustment between persons--God's and man's."[16] That form of judgement which is content to inflict punishment does not reach the heights of the divine judgement. The latter, though severe in the extreme, has but one purpose, and that is to take the person who has sinned and to restore that person to a proper relationship with God. A theory of atonement which sees the Cross merely as if one person were accepting punishment for another falls far short of Forsyth's high view of what Jesus did for us.

A popular point of view, if we use "popular" to refer to what is accepted by uninformed and untrained believers, is that the Cross appeals to the heart, and thus effects some kind of change in people's attitudes and actions. Forsyth saw sin as far too radical for that. If an appeal to the heart could lead man to be good, the Cross was unnecessary. But the Cross affected man much more deeply than that. Forsyth showed what he meant by turning, in a discussion of war and peace, to the Christmas story. There he wrote that

> The message is not peace and goodwill among men; it is peace only for men disciplined into God's will, for men of such good-will. 17

"Men of goodwill" may, of course, be born with the kind of character that produces goodwill; or, with luck, they may find that education and circumstances are able to produce the same

effect. Forsyth, however, wishes to go beyond birth or education, beyond what is merely human. People "disciplined into God's goodwill" are reborn people. They have been redeemed by the Cross so that their wills are no longer their own.

The dream of a golden age of innocence has never disappeared from among men, nor has the belief that such innocence is desirable or attainable. But for Forsyth innocence is a retrograde, and not a forward step. The difference between holiness and innocence can be seen in the Genesis story itself, for innocence is merely the "not yet" of sin. The innocent is unable to protect himself against the blandishments of evil. Holiness, on the other hand, is a state in which sin has been overcome, and therefore is the very opposite of innocence. Innocence is purity sustained by ignorance; holiness is righteousness through Christ. Therefore, in his major work on the Atonement, if it be true that Forsyth had a "major work" on this subject, he said,

> To deliver us from evil is not simply to take us out of hell, it is to take us into heaven...we are won from sin by an act which at the same time makes us not simply innocent but holy. 18

Forsyth saw the positive act, not the negative, as the real heart of the matter.

But if salvation is none of these things by itself, what is it? I find no better statement of what salvation <u>is</u> than this word taken from the early stages of <u>The Justification</u>

of God:

> The true end is that completion of the schooling of the soul, will and person which earthly life divinely means...It is the surrender to God, not of our personality, not of our existence as persons, but of our person, of our egoism as persons... 19

Salvation is that condition in which a person no longer sees himself as a separate identity, but as a being in relation to God. This is what the Cross achieves. The "will of God" is salvation; that is, the whole purpose of atonement is to bring man back into perfect harmony once again with the holy Father. This can be accomplished only through the Cross.

Forsyth had, as we have mentioned, some incisive and memorable ways of putting across his point. They lead us sometimes into the great difficulty of determining just how "literally" he wished to be taken. Was he a systematic thinker first, or a preacher and communicator? It is precisely in some of those insights which could so easily be dismissed as mere homiletical tricks that we find that which is most fruitful for understanding the radical newness of so much of his thought. This is evident in the relationship of the Saviour to the Salvation which he effected.

There can be no problem with a sentence such as "The soterology turns on a soteriology,"[20] by which Forsyth obviously meant that the doctrine of the Saviour depends on what we believe about the doctrine of salvation. The

implication is far-reaching. One cannot begin with an a priori conception of what Jesus, or the Incarnation, or the divine/human encounter must be like. One must begin with the fact of the Cross, understanding God as well as his activity in the light of that event. This was the material of any positive Christian theology. For this reason Forsyth wrote nothing on natural religion, and did not really come close to a purely philosophical religion. Jesus, as the man and the Saviour, is his starting point. The Cross, as the place where sin is dealt with, is "ground zero". Thus, if "an 'eternal sin' means an eternal Saviour,"[21] the Cross must be and remain always as the place where God deals with human sin. The Saviour's work is "unfinished" (and therefore the Cross is not yet irrelevant) as long as there remains one segment of the race unredeemed.

In fact, it is by means of the Cross of Jesus and the salvation produced by it that Forsyth defines the nature of God and of Jesus. "The one God is He who makes the new man."[22] God is defined in terms of what he does, specifically in relation to the redemption of the race. Forsyth was even more specific about Jesus, whom he saw as inseparable from his work. "He is the Redeemer because He is identical with His own redemption."[23] On the face of it, both Jesus and the Father are defined in terms of what they have done and of what they do, insofar as this action is salvific. Their

reality is seen in its effects. Had there been no salvation, faith in God in a Christian sense would have been impossible.

One last thing must be said about the nature of salvation before we pass on to the meaning of the Atonement. He did not believe that Salvation was a private contract between God and an individual man or woman.

> What we are tempted to think of in our common version of Christianity is a mass of people, great or small, a mass of individuals, each one of whom makes his own terms with God and gets discharge of his sin. It is salvation by private bargain. 24

Salvation in the Christian sense cannot be a purely individual thing, even though it is a personal one. In the first place, our salvation has a historical lineage. The same God who acted through the Cross to save Paul and Peter acted at the same time to save me.

> I am not saved by the apostle or his experience, nor by the Church and its experience, but by what saved the apostle and the Church. 25

In the second place, no truly religious meaning can be given to an act of atonement that affects only some of the race. "I am forgiven and saved by an act which saves the world."[26] This broad sense of the inclusiveness of the atonement worked out on the Cross is one of the most appealing and most characteristic of Forsyth's ideas.

The nature of the Atonement

Now, however, let us see what Forsyth meant when he spoke of Atonement. Words such as "redemption", "reconciliation" and "atonement" are related intimately to each other, so much so that it is possible at times to use them almost interchangeably. It is certainly not always possible to disentangle them in Forsyth's usage. Yet "atonement" has a specific orientation not possessed by those other, related, words. If redemption refers to man's release from the bondage of sin, and reconciliation to the bringing together again of man and God, atonement specifically has in mind the action of God which makes the others possible. Probably atonement and reconciliation are more nearly related than any other two words, in large part because of the etymology of the former. Yet even here Forsyth used it with a specific referent. He said,

> By the atonement is meant that action of Christ's death which has a prime regard to God's holiness...and finds man's reconciliation impossible except as that holiness is divinely satisfied once for all on the cross. 27

The two essential ingredients of atonement, then, are the death of Jesus and the satisfaction of God's holiness. Let us look at the second first. In Chapter I it was stressed that holiness was the central category for the divine being, and that the satisfaction of holiness was the only possible

method for bringing about a rapprochement between the divine and the human. Forsyth wrote,

> There was a cloud between God and the race, til...there was not only confession of sin but confession of holiness from sin's side ...Then judgment had done its perfect work.
>
> The race's sin was covered and atoned by it, that is, by the God who bore it. 28

Any good man, convicted of his failure, could confess his sin. But "confession" takes on a different meaning when one speaks of holiness. One can "confess" sin by words, and by refraining from sin; one can only "confess" holiness by being, and continuing to be, holy. Ergo, the one who can confess his sin cannot "confess" holiness. Such a confession can only be made through the acceptance of God's judgement on sin, and can only be made "from sin's side" by a God who was himself holy.

Forsyth saw the Cross as first of all an act of judgement on sin, and secondly as the acceptance by Jesus of that judgement, acknowledging it to be right and proper. Essential to this view was the concept of Jesus as God in a human mode, so that human sin could not vitiate the real atonement. Forsyth took this extremely seriously. Without atonement there can be no reconciliation, but as we saw above, without such reconciliation and redemption there can be, quite literally, no God. How foolish it seemed to him to look upon atonement as a mere means of placating God's anger!

> We can no longer treat the atonement as a deflection of God's anger...We can no longer speak of a strife of attributes in God the Father...There can be no talk of any mollification of God...Procured grace is a contradiction in terms. The atonement did not procure grace, it flowed from grace. 29

Although it is not our purpose here to engage in a discussion of Trinitarian doctrine, it may be said that Forsyth has made belief in the Christian doctrine of God easier for those who shy away from what sometimes verges on tri-theism. His unitary view of the person of God in the process of atonement makes clear his belief that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."[30] Atonement is God's activity, one might even say, God's self-justification. In fact, in The Justification of God this is precisely the line that Forsyth took, indicating how God's "credibility" in the eyes of mankind is to be found in the way he undertakes to make sinners holy.

What more, other than that "God was in Christ", can be said concerning the place of Jesus in the activity of atonement? If the activity of God in atoning sin had been a heavenly action only, or a theological doctrine and not an historical event, the result would have been quite different from what the church believes. Similarly, even though the Cross-event took place in history, if it had been only a demonstration and not the divine action itself, the Christian faith would have had no foundation. "By a real atonement," he declared in The Christian Ethic of War, "I mean one not

shown but done on the Cross."[31] Action is what counts. Indeed, "If God in Christ simply said the most powerful word about His goodwill...God would be saying more than He did..."[32]

Jesus' death is the atonement for two reasons. First of all, a mere statement about God's good intentions and love could never give the soul the needed assurance of salvation, even if that statement took the form of a sacrificial death. In reference to the dominical parable of the prodigal son, Forsyth said that the prodigal "is sure because the Father not only says, but pays,"[33] He went on to say, "His mere repentance could not make him sure...". Forsyth was quite certain of his own standing in grace because, whether he believed it or not, an action had taken place on Calvary which had its roots and its effects on Zion. The soul in its agony needs to know not only that something can help him, but that something has already been done to help.

Jesus' death is also the atonement because out of it a church has been born. Only a real atonement, in Forsyth's view, could have formed and established an organism with the spiritual power of the Church, and "it was the atoning death of Christ that founded the Church."[34] Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith,"[35] in a fuller sense than merely being its "pioneer and perfecter."[36] Forsyth believed that Jesus was not "primus inter pares," but the creator of the Church and therefore its Saviour.

We come back, then, in our discussion of the meaning of atonement, to the place from which this paper started, namely the holiness of God. Believing that "a holy God self-atoned in Christ is the moral centre of a sinful world,"[37] Forsyth proceeded to demonstrate in every possible way the centrality of Jesus to this "moral centre". I am conscious that to speak of the centrality of a moral centre is as tautological as to speak of the cruciality of the Cross, a problem referred to with humour and sympathy by Robert McAfee Brown.[38] For Forsyth the moral centre of the world itself has a core, an indivisible nucleus which makes the rest hang together. This nucleus is Jesus, the crucified man offering his holy life to a suffering God who again is represented by Jesus. He demands holiness; he lives in holiness; he makes holiness possible. This is the heart of the Christian faith.

The essential thing in a New Testament Christianity is

> that it came to settle in a final way the issue between a holy God and the guilt of man. <u>All else is secondary</u>. 39

It is this that Jesus, according to Forsyth, did for the race. While recognizing Jesus' teaching as of supreme value, his influence as a personality on the spiritual minds of the world, and the lasting effect of his brief ministry, Forsyth at the same time believed that

> Nothing he did <u>on</u> man could do so much <u>for</u> man at last as <u>his</u> hallowing and satisfying, <u>as</u> man, of God's holy soul. 40

Jesus is the atonement of God.

Historically the doctrine of atonement has undergone many phases, ranging from somewhat barbaric interpretations of Ignatius' "ransom" suggestion to more modern views inspired, perhaps, by Peter Abelard.[41] Forsyth himself considered four things to be essential in atonement-theory. First, atonement had to be objective, taking place at a level outside of man's psychological attitudes. Atonement occurs whether or not man believes it. This is over-simplification, though perhaps for the moment necessary. Second, atonement must be effective, actually accomplishing its purpose of reconciliation. This statement tends to modify the first. Third, atonement must be an event or an act. He believed the most important faculty of personality to be the will rather than thought, and would have agreed whole-heartedly with Kant's dictum that "there is nothing in the world which can be termed absolutely and altogether good, a good will alone excepted."[42] Finally, atonement must in some way recognize the moral aspect by honouring the holy God at whatever cost to man's freedom.

If one were to attempt to resuscitate the ancient view of the transaction with the devil, as Gustaf Aulén has tried to do,[43] or as Sydney Cave has also attempted,[44] one would of course note the strongly objective element which was present, however crudely it may have been expressed,

from ancient times.[45] It is difficult, however, to see in what way this transaction is necessarily connected with the event of Calvary, except perhaps mythically. Morally, as has been pointed out often, any idea of transaction with Satan is questionable, to say the least. Even if the theory be modified so as to take out the element of a "deal" with the evil one, thereby substituting the idea of a victory over evil, it still does not help us to understand how the Cross can be ultimately effective. Forsyth wanted atonement to be real quite apart from man's psychological response; nevertheless its effectiveness would have to take this response into account.

During the Middle Ages notions of honour, brought to flower in the institution of knighthood, pervaded religious thought. The idea that sin was an insult to God's honour could take hold in such an atmosphere. Naturally, such an insult would necessitate the same kind of response as any other insult. It is to the credit of Anselm of Canterbury that he was able to formulate the idea of satisfaction of the divine honour in a way that has caught the attention of Christians ever since. If God's honour has in fact been impugned, either an infinite punishment or an infinite satisfaction is required. The obedience of the pure, offered as a sacrifice to God, can alone make that infinite satisfaction.[46]

The idea of sacrifice involves age-old images of the

shedding of blood, animal or human, for the propitiation of God and the expiation of sin. Mediaeval honour could be satisfied by drawing blood in a fight, though more often it required the death of one's opponent. Such ideas can also be seen in other contexts in the blood-feuds of early American history, in the human sacrifices made by the Aztecs and in the legend of the "Maid of the Mist". From Forsyth's standpoint, such a theory of atonement in the religious sphere lacks all moral justification and power unless it can show that it has the power to moralize human life.

Hugo Grotius also proposed a theory which focused on the divine law rather than on outraged honour. Denying that the death of Christ was a payment for the penalty of sin, Grotius insisted that it must be an affirmation of the honour and respect due to the divine law.[47] Grotius, as a lawyer, was very much concerned with the rule of law, and undoubtedly felt that his theory made a real contribution to the ongoing debates in Holland at the time. Yet the modern mind, sensitized to the rights of individuals and perhaps less inclined to grasp the idea of the solidarity of the whole race, insists that the impersonality of law, which in human legal terms is its safeguard against injustice, cannot be carried to the extreme of seeking punishment for its own sake. If any victim is acceptable, and not simply the wrong-doer, then the law is indeed an ass.[48] In fact, even

if the wrong-doer is punished, from Forsyth's point of view this is not morally satisfactory if he is not also changed.

More recently there have been those who have felt the importance of this criticism and have responded by sacrificing the objectivity and (it seems to me) the effectiveness of the atonement. Ultimately they have sacrificed its reality as well. I refer to one modern writer only, Dr. Hastings Rashdall,[49] Dean of Carlisle at the time of his death in 1924. Uncompromisingly opposed to all penal views of the atonement, Rashdall argued that the death of Christ was the revelation of the love of God, and no satisfaction either of justice or of honour. One is won to God by the knowledge that God cares for him. But by treating the cross as God's appeal to the sinner, he has robbed it of its power, since there seems to be nothing to indicate the need for a moral change in the sinner. Such a theory assumes that, being moved by the sight of suffering love, one will be transformed. In fact, mankind, whose sin is at the core of his being, is unable to respond to any appeal until his relationship with God has itself been altered. Such a theory, then, loses its objectivity since no objective act has taken place to alter the relationship between God and man. In effect, it is assumed that the relationship of mankind with God has never really changed for the worse, and it is, therefore, not thought to be in any need of a change for the better. To this

Forsyth replied in words already quoted,

> Christ did not die simply to affect men but to effect salvation, not simply to move man's heart but to accomplish God's will. 50

Contemporary with Forsyth, and writing just a little before him, two British theologians were also trying to correct what they saw as the inadequacies of the atonement-theory of their day. One of these, the Scot John McLeod Campbell, was rewarded for his pains by being treated as a heretic himself, and removed from his pulpit by the General Assembly. In introducing Campbell's great work on the Atonement,[51] E. P. Dickie says,

> Over against a theology of pure transcendence on the one hand, and on the other, the sole reality of man's rational convictions, we have a theology of encounter involving not an opinion about the nature of the universe but the acceptance of a divine gift, and commitment to the praise and service of God. 52

Campbell believed that attempts to soften the old orthodox views of atonement as the satisfaction of God's justice could not succeed within the Calvinist framework. B. A. Gerrish, in Tradition and the Modern World, has written that Campbell's opposition to Calvinist theory was directed chiefly at the idea of "limited" atonement.[53] Campbell was not a universalist[54] nor did he believe in "cheap grace". On the other hand, he was not a legalist, nor would he look upon the death of Jesus as in any sense a punishment for sin. The suffering of Jesus was not a punishment since it was not

brought on by sin but by divine love. The sin Jesus bore in the act of atonement was "laid on him" by his identification with us. In Campbell's view atonement is necessary in order to maintain the integrity of the moral government of God.[56]

Jesus handled the problem, according to Campbell, by making a perfect confession of sin to God. Campbell's inspiration for this approach came from a reading of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards had suggested that identification with us either by bearing a punishment great enough to cover our sin or by making a confession great enough to include it all.[57] Campbell chose the latter course, since he did not view Jesus' suffering as in any way penal. He proposed, therefore, what amounts to a legal fiction:

> Christ's confession of our sin must be seen in connection with our relation to the righteousness of Christ, and the sin confessed, and the righteousness in which it is confessed, must be seen as if they were in the same person--being both in humanity. 58

Gerrish offers conclusive proof that Campbell was in the mainstream of nineteenth century thinking. He quotes Otto Pfeiderer to the effect that

> This is manifestly the same reconstruction of the Christian doctrine of salvation which was effected by Kant and Schleiermacher in Germany, whereby it is converted from forensic externality into ethical inwardness and a truth of direct religious experience. 59

Gerrish criticizes Campbell because he refused to recognize that he was in the line of the Reformers, and this

failure is attributed to the fact that Campbell shows no evidence of having read the Reformers extensively. He maintains that Campbell's criticisms of "Calvinism" could be directed against Campbell himself.

> He would surely have felt less at home with Schleiermacher than with the new Ritschlian school, which...in many ways he anticipated. 60

Gerrish seems to feel that Campbell, by turning away from the legalism of his contemporaries, should have followed the way of internalization, rather than falling back on a restatement of the old doctrine.

Forsyth, who owed so much to Ritschl, was also critical of Campbell's approach, but for different reasons. In reference to Campbell's theory of the "great confession" he wrote:

> It speaks too much, perhaps, about Christ confessing human sin...How could Christ in any real sense confess a sin, even a racial sin, with whose guilt he had nothing in common? 61

(Incidentally, Forsyth made the same criticism of Moberley's Atonement and Personality.)[62]

Closer in spirit and even in phraseology to Forsyth was his Congregationalist predecessor and friend, Robert W. Dale. The two struck up a close friendship not long before Dale's death. Dale argued[63] that it is necessary to choose between thinking of the death of Christ in direct relationship to the remission of sin and thinking of it as a mere moral

influence. He chose the former and his book was an attempt to demonstrate the link between the death of Christ and the remission of sins. He too rejected many "orthodox" ideas, arguing that the ideas of sacrifice, ransom and propitiation were nothing more than the mere illustrations of atonement. He argued that God is the personal embodiment of the Moral Law.

> His relation to the Law is not a relation of subjection but of identity...In God the Law is alive; it reigns on His throne, sways His sceptre, is crowned with His glory. 64

Because the moral law is supreme, punishment is neither reformatory nor vindictive. It is penal and must contain the idea of retribution. The only idea of punishment that is acceptable, he said, is one "which represents it as pain and loss inflicted for the violation of a law."[65] Atonement is a divine act which asserts the principle that sin should be punished. Jesus does in fact assert this principle, but by enduring suffering rather than by inflicting it. This, therefore, was a far greater act than any other could have been.

Dale, I believe, foreshadowed Forsyth's doctrine of the solidarity of Christ and the race by arguing that the power of the life of Christ can be seen in the moral life of the believer, and that our relationship to God is determined by Christ's relationship with the Father. Forsyth went much farther than this, but otherwise found this approach

satisfying. Like Dale, he could not see the Cross as a "confession of sin". Unlike Dale, he did not dwell on the exigencies of moral law as if this were the major aspect of the Atonement. His concept of holiness seems to me less rigid, and allowed him to look upon atonement in terms of reconciliation rather than of retribution. Law may, presumably, be satisfied with the infliction of suffering; holiness can only be satisfied as mankind is made holy.

At this point a summary of Forsyth's views as presented in The Work of Christ would be in order. In this book he came closest to putting forward a systematic doctrine of atonement. He believed that the church's salvation lay in clarifying what faith is, more than in winning thousands to that faith.[66] He set about doing that in what he referred to as a series of ex tempore lectures.

Since the Church is the expression of the New Humanity, one must ask in what way the Church's sacrifices might differ from Christ's. Forsyth establishes the priority of Christ at the very beginning. Jesus' death differed from any other, he maintained, in that no-one at the time knew what Jesus was doing when he died, but afterwards they responded to it, the power of responding having been created by that very death.

> The death of Christ had not simply to touch like heroism, but it had to redeem us into the power of feeling its own worth. Christ had to save us from what we were too far gone to feel. 67

It was his faith that no-one could truly hear the Gospel without being affected, whether for better or for worse. The Gospel is, in effect, an opus operatum.

The great sacrificial work of Christ is to reconcile.[68] Christ crucified is the great central fact of Christianity, since doctrine and life go together. But if Christ's great work is reconciliation, this latter must rest on atonement, since reconciliation and atonement are not precisely the same thing. (Although Forsyth insisted that these two terms were different in meaning, he went on to use "reconciliation" as if it were indeed the same thing as "atonement".) Atonement works by judging the guilt of the world and by affecting both God and the race. The objective part of atonement consists in the fact that it is God who actually makes the sacrifice, and that this sacrifice takes place in the actual concrete historical world. But if the sacrifice was made because of God's grace, in order to effect reconciliation, the question concerning the one to whom the sacrifice was made loses its validity. The solidarity of Christ and the race, of Christ and the Father, rules out any real and meaningful answer to such a question.

The object of the Atonement is the reconciliation of the race, and without atonement the achievement of this goal is impossible, since atonement (because it satisfies the demand of divine holiness for a life that is itself holy)

removes any barrier to a complete reconciliation of the race with God. With reference to two otherwise different personalities, Hegel and Ritschl, Forsyth wrote:

> While they preached the doctrine of reconciliation in different senses, they both united to obscure the idea of atonement or expiation. 69

Forsyth then proceeded to say that God reconciled himself in Christ. In a sense, a sacrifice of holy obedience was made to God. Since this obedience was offered on behalf of the race, we are saved in an act which at the same time saves the world. Since no-one is an absolute individual in Forsyth's thinking, the action of God on the moral unity of the race makes the world God's world. If the old orthodoxy spoke of substitution in the sense that Christ bore the punishment for sin, Forsyth believed the new orthodoxy to be concerned with solidary reparation, in that Christ bore sin's penalty, though not its punishment. This means that Christ accepted the penal consequences of the race's sin, a penalty both merited and right. He himself was not conscious of personal sin, however, and Forsyth never speaks of Christ as being punished by the Father. Jesus accepts his death, therefore, in the spirit of one who puts his shoulder to someone else's burden to help relieve it, and not as one who bears a burden that is rightly his. By thus lending support to the race of sinners, Christ repairs the breach between man and God. This reparation through atonement results in the reconciliation

of the world.

Forsyth believed that he had captured, as had Augustine and Luther before him, a new insight into Christian theology. He wrote:

> Augustine's rediscovery was this, justification by grace alone; Luther's side of the rediscovery was justification by faith alone--...What is our modern point of emphasis? Justification by holiness and for it alone. 70

His new contribution was to introduce holiness, not only as the qualifying characteristic of God, but also as the major category for the understanding of the doctrine of atonement. He "moralized" all dogma, even that (especially that) of the Atonement, which is to say that he understood atonement to be the justifying of God's holiness at the cost of infinite sacrifice. Like his orthodox predecessors, he believed that the relationship between God and man had to be changed; but he believed strongly that the only moral source of such a change had to be God himself, not dealing with the race "at arm's length," as he believed some Trinitarian views suggested.[71] Like his "classical" predecessors, he saw God in his unity dealing with sin; he also believed strongly that sin was inherent in the relationship and not merely the cause of its deterioration. Sin does not separate us from God; sin <u>is</u> separation from God. Like his liberal contemporaries, he believed that God's love and grace are seen in Christ's cross; but he saw the cross as the action of God which clears the way for our response,

and not merely as a plea, however moving, that mankind should return to the Father. The work of Christ he viewed as a moral victory, not merely an official one, and a victory not merely instead of man but a victory of man in Christ. A modern commentator has written:

> Dr. J. K. Mozley thinks that Forsyth's outstanding contribution to the idea of the atonement is his effort to ethicize the whole conception, to rid it of all material elements, to purge it of all legal, governmental and transactional conceptions and to base it broadly on moral and spiritual foundations. 72

With such a moral approach to the idea of atonement, Forsyth naturally saw the active principle in the work of Christ to be obedience rather than suffering. Not for him the measuring of "equivalent pain", or the balancing of merits and sins. What Jesus did was to enter into the heart of the Father in such a way as to share completely his will and purpose. His identity with the Father at this level produced a style of life and death which were nothing other than the Father's own activity in the world. Only God is holy; to speak of Jesus as holy is to say that he shares the nature of God. "The holiness that atones must be the gift of the holiness that is atoned," wrote Forsyth.[73] Jesus' power to atone, that is, to reconcile God to man and man to God, lies in his being able to take God's initiative in healing the breach created by human rebellion. The work of Christ has thus committed us irrevocably to God.[74]

CHAPTER THREE

The concept of the solidarity of the race

The individualism which Weber saw as the product of the Reformation was attributed by Forsyth to movements of later vintage which were not themselves part of the Christian Gospel.[1] He wrote,

> ...the charter of that [i.e. individualism] is not there [i.e. in the Reformation]. It is rather to be found in the Rationalist movement and the French Revolution.[2]

He argued his case in The Work of Christ as follows: Modern scholarship has shown us clearly that in the Old Testament God stands over against the people of Israel and not over against the individual Jew.[3] Therefore, since the New Testament has built its theoretical superstructure on the Old Testament base, "to reduce the reconciliation to the aggregate of individual conversions would be a total misrepresentation of New Testament reconciliation, which is both solidary and final."[4] This is what makes the work of Christ more than a "mere impressive declaration."[5]

It was not difficult for the New Testament saints to understand the work of Christ as a "solidary judgment." Our difficulty in the matter is due to "our modern individualism."[5] If asked whether or not salvation is personal, he argued that it "is personal, but it is not individual...It is personal in its appropriation but collective in its nature."[6] When we become Christians

we do not lose our individuality, for we never had such a thing. We become rather members of a Church, whereas previously we were "members of the world."[7]

We should be clear that Forsyth did not ignore the individual, nor treat in cavalier fashion the concept of individual salvation. As an evangelical Protestant he could hardly do that. Yet he was concerned that we should see the race as a whole before moving to the individual. The process of becoming a believer was a process of growing more and more personal, rather than less so, but that personal dimension had always to be seen in the light of a corporate act which involved the race. He was quite clear that the Christian experience dealt first with the whole, and that individual members of the Body of Christ gained their individuality only through Christ.

> What we have to do with in the New Testament is the individualism of a corporate salvation, not the incorporation of the individual.[8]

It is clear that he rejected mere individualism, nor did he confuse it with evangelical Christianity. But how, then, did he understand the process of salvation? Wherever we look, in whichever of his writings, we find that he is emphatic on the corporate nature of salvation. For instance, in Revelation Old and New:

> The Cross saved the world and not a selection from the world, not a section of it. And it saved it in a complete and finished salvation.[9]

> Christ's salvation is set out in the New Testament as the finished salvation of the race, and not the tentative salvation of an indefinite group of individuals.[10]

If we pick up his argument in The Work of Christ we find the same emphasis. Not only are we not "mere individuals" but our salvation is to be thought of always as a corporate and finished salvation. It is

> not a person here and another there, snatched as brands from the burning; not a group here and a group there; but the reconciliation of the whole world.[11]

He felt this to be the logical outflowing of his passion for an objective atonement worked out by an objective God.

> The real objectivity is that which is objective to the whole human race, over against it, and not merely facing you or me within it.[12]

The Scripture says that "God so loved the world," and this means

> Love in the first instance directed upon the world, but directed upon the world in such a way that it should be taken home in every individual experience.[13]

This is what he calls the "classic experience of God," an experience realized in a saved conscience, that leads us from the point where we say, "I am certain," to that where we are able to declare, "It is certain."[14]

Our Gospel becomes more "positive" and more easily announced, he believed, in such a faith. For if "it was a race that Christ redeemed, and not a mere 'bouquet' of

believers," and if "each soul is saved in a universal and corporate salvation,"[15] then

> we must carry forward his creation of such a new world at His cost (for He did not thus war merely to affect a few select souls). We are regenerated in the regeneration of the race.[16]

Racial solidarity in sin and salvation

Forsyth shows his originality in his concept of "racial sin". For him this was the great sin. Racial sin was the rebellion of the whole people of God against the Holy Father. Individual men and women may lie, cheat or kill, but a race sets the tone for its age, and it is the tone of the age which makes or breaks the whole. Dealing with the "sin against the Holy Ghost," for example, he showed it to be not the failure of an individual here or there, but the sin of the race, or of the age in which the race lives.

> The sin against the Holy Ghost is real enough; but it is the sin of an age rather than of an individual; and it is the sin of an age's religion; not of its indifference or paganism, but its religion, its Church.[17]

The sins of individuals are outcroppings, as it were, of the great sin, what he would have spoken of as the "solidary" sin, of the race. It is that sin which is most characteristic of the highest and best of mankind at any time. Even in the very best the world has to offer, one finds what isolates it most from God; for by offering the best, we find

that the best fail to believe, and "the sin of sins is not transgression, but unfaith."[18] With remarkable sensitivity and a real insight into the pettiness of both human nature and moralistic religion, he wrote,

> We are more taken up with the wrongs so many men have to bear than with the wrong God has to bear from us all.[19]

Forsyth insists that it was not the pettiness of religious leaders, the political jealousy of the various parties nor the passions of the mob that were the chief culprits in sending Jesus to the Cross. It was the religious self-centeredness of the time, and this was a sin of which not only the individual members of the nation were guilty, but the nation as a whole. Religion in Israel was at its noblest in the dedication of the Pharisees; it was also capable there of reaching its most egocentric depths.

> It was a national, a spiritual, an 'eternal' sin that slew Him, saturating the very religion of decent Israel, unredeemed by the purity, the wisdom, the kindness of a Hillel or a Gamaliel.[20]

Such a sin underlies and permeates a nation and a people. Racial sin will permeate different religions, different peoples and different ages in different ways.

Forsyth found the common thread in this to be "unfaith." If God has "an argument with his people,"[21] it is an argument on a racial scale, an argument with humanity as a whole and not merely with its individual members. That

being so, Forsyth saw the Cross as an atoning act on a racial scale as well. For him it was the heart of the Gospel. This was what the "Gospel" was all about.

> By which word Gospel, once for all let it be said, I mean neither an orthodoxy, a talisman, a mascot, a shibboleth, nor a magic spell, but the grace of God in historic, moral, mystic action always upon racial guilt.[22]

It was in the grand scope of racial sin and racial atonement that Forsyth felt confident that the individual could find his own assurance of forgiveness. Since

> a man needs something to make him confident that his past sin, and the sin he is yet sure to commit, are all taken up into God's redemption,[23]

then the sins of this generation and those of past generations need the assurance of a real and effective redemption. But the assurance of this depends on the reality of a racial victory on the cross, which is a victory won on behalf of all people of all times. Otherwise the Cross would not be God's last word. It would have to be repeated for each age and even for each separate person. In such a case the missionary enterprise would have no firm base on which to preach a Gospel of redemption, yet this is precisely what the Atonement does provide us.

> Our missions but proclaim on the housetop what is told us in the most secret place. The world has been saved. We live in the midst of a universal salvation, even if the whole world lie in wickedness. If all men else denied that, we know it.[24]

There can be no doubt that reconciliation has been achieved for the world as a whole. Since "missions cannot thrive except upon a faith which means the universality of Christ's work,"[25] the church's function must be to believe in this universality, to proclaim it and to appropriate it both corporately and individually.[26]

The solidarity of Jesus with the race

We have already established that the Incarnation derives its importance from the work Jesus came to carry out; it is the Atonement which is the decisive thing. Yet precisely because of the Atonement, which is to say because of the Cross, the Incarnation has importance for the believer. Forsyth recognized that it was both difficult and useless to try to convince the unbeliever of the divinity of the Saviour. The believer, however, would respond on other grounds, for the Incarnation is the field on which the drama of redemption is to take place, for "His incarnation is an evangelical and not a logical demand."[27] He wrote,

> The theology of the Incarnation is necessary to explain our Christian experience and not our rational nature, nor our religious psychology.[28]

In typical epigrammatic style he said that the real miracle was "not the Word made flesh but the Holy made sin for us."[29]

He would have considered the Unitarians to be the most liberal of all Christians, yet, in spite of his differences with them, he suggested that evangelicals differ from them less on the incarnation than on the atonement.[30] The Cross, for him, took priority over all else.

One would have difficulty in discovering what Forsyth thought of the birth of Jesus. He does not expound on the Christmas theme, and deals with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth only slightly and almost casually.[31] He maintained that the historical facts of the life of Jesus always come to us accompanied by an interpretative Word in the New Testament, apprehending us with the truth they convey.[32] Our only certainty lies in the Word, and not in the facts themselves.[33]

He expanded upon the purpose of the historical incarnation in The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, generally regarded as one of the most important of his writings. There Forsyth saw the coming of Jesus as part of a divine plan to restore and redeem the race. Jesus the man came into being through a decision made beyond time by God Himself, who entered time and took on human nature because it belonged inherently to him.[34]

> That act of His is the clue to all His action...for He was born as the result of a death He died in the heavenly places before the foundation of the world.[35]

This, and not any philosophical doctrine, is what lay at the root of Forsyth's idea of the solidarity of Jesus with the

race. It was his decision beyond time to take part in humanity for man's salvation that resulted in the event in which, within time, he was part and parcel of our life.

The precise purpose of Jesus' solidarity with man is seen in that which only he could do, and that was to make "adequate" confession of God's holiness. As we have seen, such confession is possible only to one who is himself holy. Forsyth insisted that this was his point of union with the race. He himself did not sin--could not sin[36]--but he could and did experience the burden of guilt that sin imposes; and he could and did accept the penalty such guilt carries with it.

> What Christ presented to God for His complete joy and satisfaction was a perfect racial obedience...He presented before God a race He created for holiness.[37]
>
> This obedience...includes...the idea that in obedience Christ accepted the judgment holiness must pass upon sin, and did so in a way that confessed it as holy from amidst the deepest experience of it.[38]

The following points, then, emphasize Jesus' solidarity with the human race in its lostness: First, Jesus shared the physical condition of humanity, its pressures, temptations and weaknesses. In a sense Forsyth could not insist that Jesus was free from the racial guilt and sin shared by all others without distorting his personality. What he does insist upon is his personal freedom from sin. If there is a racial guilt (as, for example, when a nation or an age must

bear responsibility for what its lifestyle or goals have done to another nation or age) Jesus bears that guilt as his own, or so we must suppose, though I do not find that Forsyth is clear upon this point. Second, Jesus accepted the penalty that such guilt incurred, and accepted it as right and proper that a holy God should visit judgement on a guilty race. Third, Jesus indicated, by his life as well as his death, that the holiness of God was to be honoured by holy living. Here no grand leap of faith need be made, for Forsyth asserts that Jesus did this on behalf of all.

> Christ is to us just what His cross is...And all that man's moral soul needs doing for it eternally was done centrally there.[39]

In coming to the Cross--without doubt for Forsyth the central event of Jesus' life--he has come to the real ground of the solidarity he sees linking Jesus and the race. In The Work of Christ he is more explicit than anywhere else concerning just what the Cross means in this respect.

> When He died for all, all implicitly died. The great transaction was done for the race ...in such a way that He and His are one by faith in a solidarity corresponding from beneath, mutatis mutandi, to the solidarity between Father and Son from above.[40]

Or again, in The Justification of God, he declares, "He was, in His victory, the Agent of the race. He did not overcome the world as a cloistered saint might, who conquers it in his solitary soul."[41]

In speaking of Jesus as "the Agent of the race," Forsyth has chosen an effective way of expressing Jesus' solidarity with humanity, though the previously quoted metaphor is much more vivid. To liken the relationship of Jesus and the race to that of the Father and the Son is, even with the qualification "mutatis mutandi", a daring comparison. Never, of course, would Forsyth for one minute have allowed a genuine comparison of the divine solidarity of the godhead with the soteriological solidarity he is here dealing with. His metaphor depends on the "mutatis mutandi."

He is much more effective when he moves into the category of judgement as an illustration of Jesus' solidarity with us. Jesus was without a doubt most expressive of the divine holiness when he was confessing God's right to judge the sinful race. We are touched most profoundly when we hear him say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." By the same token, mankind comes closest to God as it accepts God's judgement and acknowledges it to be right. In confessing God's right to judge him, he is confessing God's holiness. Forsyth argued that, if God has judged me, that is proof enough that he is on my side.[42] He is surely using mythopoeic language when he writes,

> a judgment upon man alone would have destroyed him. And a judgment born by God alone would be manqué. But born by God in man, in such a racial experience as the Cross of Christ, it is a condition of a new conscience and of a new ethic of the race.[43]

The concept of judgement (as was stated before) is not considered to be a method of punishment (at least, not that alone) but primarily a method of salvation. Forsyth quoted Harnack approvingly, "In the paradox of the Saviour -Judge, Christianity possesses one of its most characteristic ideas."[44] If judgement has altered our status and our relationship, then "to have borne our judgment gave him the sole judgment right over us."[45]

Such is the solidarity of Jesus with the race that there is no _further_ judgement which can alter the situation he has brought about. Future judgement is but an _ad hominem_ expression born out of our temporality.

> The 'last judgment' is but a time expression of this ultimate judgment, now inherent, perpetual, and fundamental. Ever since, human history has been a living in this final judgment, and living it out.[46]

Again,

> All that is yet to come, with all its fearful expectation, is but the working out of that final and eternal solemnity which transpired when in the Cross of Christ the prince of this world was judged, and cast into outer darkness.[47]

This is the key to the solidarity of Jesus with the race. Bearing its guilt to its conclusion and its destruction, he has forever transformed the race. He is its Judge and therefore its Saviour. Ultimately this means that he is also its Lord.

At the beginning of _Faith, Freedom and the Future_, Forsyth

made clear that this was indeed the starting-point of his work. He believed that Jesus in the final analysis was the Lord of the race. He wrote,

> The conviction in which the writer lives is that...Christ is no revelation of a glorious humanity except as He is the Incarnation and Agent of God's purpose and act with a sinful Humanity; that He is no splendid creature, but the New Humanity's holy Creator.[48]

Much later in the same work he returned to the theme of the Lordship of Christ. This book does not deal specifically with the question of solidarity, whether of sinners with one another or of Jesus with the race he came to save. Nevertheless, in the midst of a discussion of the relationship of the church to social issues, Forsyth urged that the church's chief business is the proclamation of a God who is Lord of all.

> To bring and establish in men's hearts and business such a God is the church's commission from Himself, and the last and greatest service it can render to mankind.[49]

The basis of such Lordship is, as he points out elsewhere, the redemption won by the Saviour on the Cross.

> We are in a world which has been redeemed; and not in one which is being redeemed at a pace varying with the world's thought and progress, or the Churches' thought and work.[50]

By "progress", of course, Forsyth had in mind the popular doctrine of his day, and his desire was to liberate the church from the complacency or the despair which could result from

such a faith. But he was also concerned about the evangelical belief that the Lordship of Jesus could be spread through a process of individual conversions. Neither doctrine was acceptable to him. The idea of progress in the popular sense left out of account both the sin of man and the grace of God. But a salvation which was merely the enumeration of all individual conversions fell short of the racial dimensions of what happened at Calvary. Jesus is Lord, and history is the working out of that Lordship.

Therefore the State as a social and political institution has its place in the oneness of a redeemed world.

> A State may or may not establish a church, but it is morally bound to establish the Kingdom of God in its conduct with other states, and to carry out that righteousness with other nations.[51]

I believe that Forsyth was unfortunate in his choice of words. He certainly did not believe that a state could establish the Kingdom in any ordinary meaning of that word. What he did believe was that, because the state was part of a world redeemed, it was under obligation to live under the moral rulership of God. States were but part of a greater "State" than their own. Earlier he had written,

> Christ died not for a scattered elect but for the conversion of history, by making the Kingdoms of this world the provinces of the other.[52]

Because Jesus was one with the world, God's act of atonement indicated his divine claim on the whole world.

The idea of election

Having established that the race is a unity, to be treated as such whether in its sin or in salvation from sin, and that Jesus, by his birth and even more by his own choice, is one with the race, Forsyth thereupon argued for a doctrine of election in which the solidarity of the race is fully acknowledged. In so doing he would range himself with the Calvinist position as opposed to its Socinian opposite, and with those Calvinists who held to a more moderate understanding of the doctrine of predestination. But first, we must describe that doctrine.

Jean Calvin had argued for the sovereignty of God by maintaining that the salvation of mankind was completely dependent on the divine will, and on no human merit of any kind. While his intention was clearly to establish the divine sovereignty and to combat the error of salvation by works, Calvin's language at least had allowed room for misunderstanding. Nor is it altogether certain that Calvin did not intend to press some of his concepts to their logical conclusions. He declared that

> We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he determined with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.[53]

Calling upon Scriptural support for his thesis, he established the principle that the nation of Israel had been chosen by God's grace, and proceeded to show that individuals were in the same way chosen or rejected according to the good pleasure of God. Not only does God choose some, but he so chooses as to make his choice effective in their souls.

> ...his free election has been only half explained until we come to individual persons, to whom God not only offers salvation but so assigns it that the certainty of its effect is not in suspense or doubt.[54]

Lest he be misunderstood, he summarizes the case thus:

> As Scripture, then, clearly shows, we say that God once established by his eternal and unchangeable plan those whom he long before determined once for all to receive into salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, he would devote to destruction. We assert that, with respect to the elect, this plan was founded upon his freely given mercy, without regard to human worth; but by his just and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment he has barred the door of life to those whom he has given over to damnation.[55]

That many understood Calvin to be saying that God both declares some to be destined for salvation and others to be destined for damnation is indicated by the fact that Calvin devotes the twenty-third chapter of Book III to a defence of his doctrine against such critics. Constantly on the defensive, Calvin was obliged to maintain his position against both Catholics and Protestants, many of his own people in Geneva

being reluctant to adopt what they considered to be a harsh doctrine. Williston Walker argues that his political position was saved by the fortuitous appearance in Geneva of Miguel Servetus, whose trial on charges of heresy forced Calvin's opponents to yield him ground rather than risk the appearance of supporting a notorious heretic.[56]

That many of a later day understood Calvin in the same sense may be indicated by the way in which supporters of the doctrine of predestination argue the case for a more moderate doctrine. Berkouwer, for example, argues that Calvin did not teach that election to life and election to death were decrees of the same order. Quoting the Canons of Dort (Berkouwer leans heavily on the Canons for his interpretation of Calvin) he says that they deny "that in the same manner in which the election is the fountain and the cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety."[57]

Berkouwer argues against a strict causality between God's decree and the fact of faith, and, quite rightly, maintains that it is unthinkable that God's foreknowledge should be considered to be the grounds for his decree of election. Yet it is possible to find in Calvin statements indicating a causal dependence between unbelief and the antecedent decree, so that unbelief may be said to be part of God's predestination. In the Institutes, for example:

> The decree is dreadful indeed, I confess. Yet no one can deny that God foreknew what end man was to have before he created him,

> and consequently foreknew because he so ordained by his decree...And it ought not to seem absurd for me to say that God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and in him the ruin of his descendants, but also meted it out in accordance with his own decision.[58]

Forsyth is aware of the fact that there is disagreement in the interpretation of the Reformer. He tries, however, not so much to explain away the different passages in Calvin as to establish a sound basis for a doctrine of election, a basis which will lessen the difficulties in the idea of "rejection." In The Principle of Authority he argues (i) that the certainty of salvation rests on the loving will and choice of God;[59] (ii) that the election of individuals is election as part of a Church, the new humanity;[60] (iii) that every human being has the right to claim that he or she is among the elect;[61] and (iv) that election flows from the holiness of God, which is the central feature of his being.[62] Forsyth guarantees the universality of the doctrine of election by founding it upon the nature of God.

Calvin had found the decree of reprobation "dreadful", yet the logic of his position led him to justify it finally by stating that mere mortals had no right to question the wisdom of the creator.[63] Forsyth, on the other hand, does not see faith or the lack of it as caused by God's decree, and is therefore not so embarrassed by the problem. Faith

is neither the cause of grace nor its consequence;[64] not the former because then grace would not be grace, and not the latter because then faith would not be free. "It is simply the personal receptivity of it, the response to it." The doctrine of election is something that can never be discussed on a Christian foundation as a merely philosophical question. It can only be arrived at as a religious experience, with the result that those who are believers may declare that they are among the elect, but never that others are reprobate. Forsyth's temperament and training were such that he was reluctant to discuss the theoretical possibility of reprobation. He did not think it good theology.

> Does it not become probable that the most of the difficulties and doubts which beset faith, and especially in connection with the central certainty of election, are due to a false method, and especially a false start? We start with nature, or the observed course of history, or our empirical experience, what we call our knowledge of the world, instead of with Christ and the new creation.[65]

From such a "false start" it would be impossible to arrive at a doctrine of a God of grace.

Our perception of nature, he said, leads us to categorize all of our experience into two types: we see all things as belonging to the "good" or the "bad". We then falsely attribute the origin of the good and of the bad to the same divine cause.

> We conclude from the two irreconcilable phenomena a twofold cause, a double predestination, one election of some to life, another of some to death.[66]

The resulting "double predestination" is seen to be an error, and Forsyth refused to accept it. He did not believe that Calvin's doctrine was the cause of such a misunderstanding. Rather, the natural tendency of our unregenerate nature was supported by what he termed a "false orthodoxy". The fact that it was a "false" orthodoxy indicates that he interpreted Calvin, as well as Calvin's predecessors, Paul and Augustine, in the more moderate light indicated above as taken by Berkouwer.

If one is unwilling to accept the doctrine of reprobation, it would appear to be necessary to explain why so many people have not accepted the faith of the elect. One solution would be to declare that all are elect and therefore that all will ultimately be saved. Hints and intimations found throughout Forsyth's writings lead one to conclude that he hoped for an ultimately universal salvation. He believed that this was the will and purpose of the God who came to the Cross.

But there are unbelievers. Since faith is always a free response, the possibility of unbelief is always a real one, even if there are no actual unbelievers. Forsyth faced the issue squarely by admitting that there is a "preference" in the divine way of dealing with people. The unbeliever is

one who, because God has exercised his preference, has for the time being been left out. It is important, however, to note that "the chosen are but preferred, not secluded. The left are but postponed, not lost."[67] Ultimately, in another if not in this life, it is hoped that such will freely respond to the love of God.

Like Karl Barth after him, Forsyth could not conceive of any who were finally and completely doomed by a decree of God. His reason is the same. Jesus Christ is the central figure in the race's spiritual history, both as the God who saves and as the man who is chosen. He represents the race in an election in which the race is called and chosen. Barth says,

> Man can become a sinner and place himself within the shadow of divine judgement which his powerless representation of the man rejected by God is unable to escape. He does all this. But he cannot reverse or change the eternal decision of God--by which He regards, considers and wills man, not in his isolation over against Him, but in His Son Jesus.[68]

Barth's argument is that human rebellion is negated by the call and election of Jesus, and that the rebellious person confesses by his rebellion that it is God who is calling him. I suggest that there is something very similar in Forsyth's suggestion that the freedom by which an individual refuses to believe is also part of the election of God.

> Freedom is well within the scope of a divine election. The self-determining power of the

> individual is part of the ordered predestination of God, and of the necessity felt by His love to endow man with a freedom like His own...[69]

Or again,

> What our faith answers in Him is election as Love's mode of action, God's election of the world to salvation, and its effective and solidary salvation accordingly.[70]

In 1954, Pierre Maury, then retired from the presidency of the Reformed Church of France, gave an address which he entitled "Predestination".[71] In similar fashion to Forsyth and Maury's good friend Barth, the address viewed election in terms of the calling of Jesus Christ, and of mankind in Christ. He makes bold to state that Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther and Pascal had missed the point that in God's mind there was but one thought, and that was Jesus Christ. Had they seen this point, he said, they would neither have considered election to be "dreadful" nor would they have left us so much to worry about.[72] Jesus accepted the damnation of God's judgement so that nobody else would have to do so.

Maury agreed that it is impossible to state categorically that all election will have positive results in the salvation of all, but we can, he said, appeal to the grace of God that it might be so. An anecdote related by him places the point in perspective:

> One day an Indian friend of mine asked me: 'Do you believe that Gandhi is saved?' In

> all good conscience I could only reply: 'I do not know if Gandhi is saved. But I know that Jesus Christ is Gandhi's Saviour. And I believe in Jesus Christ.[73]

What, then, is the election of God? If one is not elected to be saved, what is its purpose? Of course one is first and foremost elected to salvation, for one is elected in Jesus on the grounds of God's holiness. But election is also and perhaps primarily for the sake of those who are not yet aware of this election. One is chosen, as Jesus was, for the service of the world.

Forsyth saw in the period of British history known as the Protectorate a very good example of what he meant. Freedom, in Cromwell's era, was based on the belief that since all people were created by God for salvation, then all should begin here and now to enjoy the privileges of the saved.

> Thus an Independency based on the soul's predestination and nurtured in a spiritual experience has been carried from the predestination of some to the predestination of all.[74]

If Christ has died for the race, and not merely for individual members of it, then (as he was to say later), "the blood of Christ is the sap of humanity."[75]

This is not universalism. It represents a belief that our salvation, as our political status in the State, depends not so much on the fact that we know God as that he knows us. God is the object of faith, but it is as subject that he is

the Saviour.[76] Although God does not "create faith" in anyone, all are known by him.[77]

To what purpose are some awakened to faith while others are not? In an early work[78] Forsyth argued for the importance of the church as a religious and social unit. His doctrine never changed. "A man is saved," he wrote, "not as a unit but as a member of a community,"[79] and he went on to say,

> Faith is not the act of a lone individual toward another lone individual, however great and good...It is the act of a social unit towards One who is the unity of His society.[80]

Obviously Christ, whose blood is the "sap of humanity," is in a very special way the "unity of His society", though never to the detriment of those outside the society. The Church is elect for the sake of the non-elect. It is inconceivable that a believer could exist outside the society of such a fellowship.

> The Reformers would have said that the faith that did not force a man into church association was no real faith.[81]

It remained for a later work to put into words precisely the point that the election of (as it seems) some is real only so that the world may know the election of all.[82]

> There was set up another collective unity, the Church, the new Israel, the spiritual Israel, the landless, homeless, Israel, whose home was in Him, the universal Israel...The Church became the prophecy and prefiguration of the unity of Humanity.[83]

The Church is, to use a biblical word, the firstfruits of what is to be, the outcropping of the Rock which underlies the world. There is no faith outside the church, and ultimately the humanity of the human race draws its reality from the salvation effected by Jesus on the Cross. If his word is true:

> the same act which sets us in Christ sets us also in the society of Christ. It does so ipso facto, and not by a mere consequence or sequel, more or less optional. To be in Christ is to be in the same act in the Church,[84]

then certain consequences also follow. Since Christ died for the race as a whole, and since salvation means to be "in Christ", and since also to be in Christ means to be in the church, then either the whole race is to be included in the fellowship of the church, or those outside of its fellowship cannot be considered to be saved. Forsyth does not face the question in such stark terms, but he does make it clear that the church of which he speaks is not merely the visible body one sees, but more; and that his hope for the race is that eventually the race as a whole will believe and be included in the Body of Christ.

Election and Mission

One other word needs to be said concerning the idea of election for the sake of others. The solidarity of the race

in Christ must inevitably lead to a strong missionary endeavour. Both the beginnings of our missions and the goal of all such activity takes for granted that what Jesus did he did for all. "For we are saved in a saved world. It is on this faith our missions stand."[85] Similarly, "the missionary goes to save not souls only, but the future of the race to which he is sent,"[86] and therefore ultimately the future of the human race as a whole.

There are two remaining questions in connection with the idea of solidarity. The first is the question of freedom. The second deals with human destiny and God's purpose in Christ. The question of freedom must inevitably arise when one treats atonement on a world scale. To put it another way, the problem is to explain why some people respond to the Gospel and others do not, why some live for righteousness and others for evil, or why many good people lack faith while many who profess faith do not appear to be good.

We have already indicated two of the lines followed by Forsyth in answer to this problem. The first was that the atonement is a racial atonement, accomplished for the sake of the world. Since the debates with the followers of Arminius and the Synod of Dort (1618-19) two of the accepted doctrines of "official" Calvinism had been that the atonement was limited to the elect and that it was effectual, i.e. that it resulted in the salvation of the elect. Forsyth, who considered

himself to be a Calvinist, nevertheless held a position which was neither purely Calvinist nor purely Arminian. He believed the Atonement to be for the whole world (as did the Remonstrants) and was reluctant to deny that it was an effectual atonement, or that salvation was dependent on human faith. His doctrine of solidarity, however, while it enabled him to talk of salvation in racial rather than individual terms, did not get rid of the problem raised above.

The second line was to say that faith is simply the way in which we respond to the grace shown us in Christ. Faith, being neither given nor created by grace, is a human response and as such is totally free. As has already been said, this leaves the possibility that there will be those for whom Christ has provided an atonement who will ultimately refuse to believe.

It is the third line of argument, however, that makes the first two most meaningful. He argued that, since salvation comes through divine judgement, and since judgement may have varying effects on different people, then the differences in people's responses are to be explained by the effects of judgement, understood here in terms of punishment. Punishment will sometimes harden one; sometimes it will bring him to his knees.[87] Freedom, then, (and we speak of freedom here in the sense of liberty to choose ultimate ends) consists chiefly in our reaction to the punishment inflicted on the race and

on ourselves as part of the race. That some believe while others do not implies no selection on the part of God.

At this point Forsyth chose a reverent agnosticism. He could not believe that God would force any to choose the right; He would not believe that God would reject anyone.

> We are obliged to leave such questions as universal restoration unresolved. Even when we recognize the absolute power of God's salvation, we also recognize that it is in the power of the human soul to harden itself.[88]

Agnosticism was a luxury that Forsyth would not permit himself for long. It does not appear often in his writings. He believed in man's right to harden his heart, but he believed much more strongly in the power of God's grace in Jesus Christ. It was this that changed him from a "Christian" to a "believer."

He was much more preoccupied with the reason for an atonement worked out by Jesus Christ in intimate solidarity with a race of sinners. Human destiny is not merely the destiny of an individual, but of the New Humanity. He believed in "one God, one Saviour, one Church...a social salvation...a final salvation."[89] He believed in God's purpose to reconcile the world to himself and he found in the biblical witness three compelling reasons for that faith. First, he saw in the Old Testament testimony to the fact that God had called a nation and not a collection of believers. Second, he found that the Bible had the power to create such a faith as his in the church. Third, it was his conviction that the Apostles, under

the stimulus of the Gospel, had felt themselves called to a world mission.[90] The church's mission to the world is based on such a faith.

> The many are only blessed in the Infinite One, the One is only fulfilled in the many. The exclusiveness of Christ is universal. Everywhere and for every man it must be none but Christ for salvation. It is not a sectional exclusiveness. He is not the exclusive possession of a sect; He is the inclusive possession of all mankind. Because he excludes all rivals, He includes all souls.[91]

The destiny which Forsyth saw for the race was to "fulfill the Infinite One," that is, to bring to completion the work of Christ. An exclusive Christian claim for a unique Christ is really a declaration of faith in the solidarity of all in Jesus. It cannot be sectarian.

If God's purpose is to fulfill himself in the new humanity, then humanity exists also to find its blessedness in Christ.

> The supreme object of creation and of history is to bring every man before the judgment-seat of the grace of Christ. It is not to provide each with a minimum of three acres and a cow, and keep his pot boiling.[92]

This is the fulfillment of Christ. In effect it is the justification of God. To create the world was not enough, since "to redeem creation is a more creative act than it was to create it."[93] Forsyth, in keeping with his times and the Puritan roots from which he had sprung, regarded the great act of redemption as the noblest act of God.

If man's ultimate destiny is to fulfill and to glorify

God, what is the purpose of life in the here and now? The only valid reason for life today has to be to reflect the eternal destiny of the race in a life of sustained righteousness. This, of course, brings us back to the key concept in Forsyth's theology, namely, the holiness of God. The only adequate satisfaction of his holiness is to be found in reciprocal holiness. Jesus has fulfilled that requirement, and we, since we are one with Jesus in his great redemption, must also offer the same holiness to the Father as has already been offered on our behalf. The real ethical problem of the day, Forsyth believed, was to live in such a way as to demonstrate, not our holiness, but the fact that Christ's holiness has included all in the sacrifice of the one. Near the end of his life he was to complain that

> we have yet to convince men that we have the secret that rules all humanity and orders the destiny of all History. We do not yet reflect on them a Christ who redeemed Humanity and not merely a section of it.[94]

This is the righteousness that Forsyth believed necessary, a righteousness that would open our eyes to the fact of Jesus. Since our destiny is salvation, our duty is to minister to a sick and needy world.[95] Nor can we claim any righteousness or power of our own since "it is to our faith that grace is given, yet not because of our faith, which is no more perfect than our repentance."[96]

Jesus, the reflection of God's holiness, the Atoner and Reconciler of the world, achieves his purpose by becoming one with the sinful race, sharing its penalty, and creating it afresh for a new holiness and a new destiny in God.

CHAPTER IV

The Body of Christ in the World

There is no doubt that Forsyth understood the self-identification of Jesus to be with the race both in its sin and in its judgement. He accepted the burden and guilt of the one and the rightness of the other. Similarly, Forsyth believed, Jesus was one with the redeemed race in its future destiny. In putting forth this idea so strongly Forsyth was in danger of losing touch with the historical Jesus. For one who might not agree with the concept of a Christ who shares the weakness of the race there would still be no difficulty in grasping the meaning of the idea. It would be much more difficult,however, to envisage a Christ who is the leader and representative of a race yet in the making, if only because this would set him on a plane above and apart from humanity. He would no longer be one of us.

Jesus and the new humanity

If the image is difficult to picture, however, the theoretical proposition is not difficult to formulate. First, Jesus represents the race of sinners condemned by God's judgement; second, through the atonement he represents the race forgiven by God; finally, he is able to show what

the race will yet be under the Lordship of God. His leadership, therefore, is essential if the new humanity is to progress in its onward march toward God. Therefore the divinely chosen way for the race to participate in the future age is the church which is his body who represents the new humanity. The foundation and authority of the church are to be found in the Gospel, and it is this Gospel which is the saving act of God.

This is a bold statement and requires analysis. We have already seen what Forsyth meant by the term "Gospel". If it is true, as Forsyth claimed, that the death of the man Jesus has the power to reconcile mankind to God, then the church's "charter" must indeed be found in the cross. Forsyth did not try to link the existence of the church with a specific act of institution or a specific teaching of Jesus, "who, perhaps, never used the word church."[1] He found, rather, the "charter" of the church in the reality of the atonement, so that the reconciliation effected by Jesus' death made the existence of a society of believers a necessity.

Simply stated this means that those who believe themselves to be reconciled to God will experience that reconciliation in terms of a vertical and a horizontal relationship; they will know themselves to be at peace with God, and, at the same time and by the same act, made to be at peace with all other believers. This leads them to

become a society with but one purpose--to demonstrate and bear witness to this reconciliation. He wrote,

> The church is not there to exhibit progress and its optimism, but to reveal Christ and His regenerating power.[2]

This regenerating power was God's method of transforming the race, breaking down the barriers which separated man from God, and putting the game, as it were, under a new set of rules. Forsyth was insistent that on the the cross something was done. Seeing the cross as an act of God, he would not allow that God had merely promised to do something. He would not treat the cross as the mere pledge, shadow, seal or foretaste of the new humanity. The new race was created by the atonement.

> He destroyed the kingdom of evil, not by way of preparation for the Kingdom of God, but by actually establishing God's Kingdom in the heart of it.[3]

God establishes his kingdom first of all in the life of the believer, so that the believer's experience is always an experience of the Kingdom. The Christian experience is neither purely private nor purely mystical. It is an experience of "being-in-community," of belonging to a God who is a "God-in-community." By a redemption which is always a process of setting people in community, God establishes his kingdom in the world with each new experience of it.

He does it, in the second place, by creating a church to be the locus of the Spirit's presence in the world. The

community which is of the essence of the Christian experience is neither a mythical entity nor yet an ideal to be achieved. It is, as was the cross, a historical existent comprising all believers. Its imperfections are those of its members; its essence is that of the God who gathers it. God establishes his kingdom in the world by setting such an imperfect body in society to bear witness to the cross.

If, then, the Kingdom is actually established in the soul, and if the church is actual in the world, then it becomes obvious that the new age has begun and the new humanity is already in existence. The future is with us now.

> For the leaders of the Reformation, the gift was not an institution...but the Holy Spirit as personal life...What they presented to us was a Kingdom finally won in Christ, and not one yet to be won by any faith or work of ours.[4]

By this Forsyth would have us believe that the Kingdom is real, not ideal. We neither strive for it nor dream of it, nor yet grow nostalgic over it. With the church's existence and the reality of the Christian experience, the Kingdom has come. It is in the world now.

Forsyth's argument up to this point has been that the future has been established in the present. The cross has made the new humanity of the future a present reality. What, then, can be said of the temporal future? The future is the arena in which the Kingdom develops. That is to say, the Kingdom, though present, grows and expands spatially and temporally, and becomes in fact what it is in principle. The future is that part of space-time in which the potential becomes actual and the bud develops into the full flower.

In The Christian Ethic of War Forsyth wrote,

> All history in its deep long meaning, in its slow substantial meaning, is Christ coming into His own. It is the self-exposition, the self-effectuation, of the Redeemer.[5]

How Hegelian this sounds! We could consider it a form of Christian Hegelianism (Forsyth was influenced by Hegel too) were it not for its strongly ethical emphasis. Forsyth's insistence that dogma must be "moralized" meant that he could never subscribe to a dialectical theory involving any concept of the inevitability of future development. If God identifies himself with mankind in order to redeem it, he enters a world of suffering. But suffering such as the cross exemplifies involves freedom, since it means that the world has not unfolded as it should, and that someone has had to put himself at risk in order to bring about an adjustment. It is hard to imagine a Hegelian world in which things did not unfold exactly as they should. Yet the Gospel has to do with an atonement made necessary by sin, and

> the church is a preacher, not a saint, and it stands or falls by its Gospel, not its exploits.[6]

On the other hand, though the Kingdom must grow and expand, and become actually what it is potentially, Jesus' relationship to the new humanity is not that of a seed which needs to be developed, but of a Saviour who must be obeyed. It is the experience of believers, argued Forsyth, that the fact of being "in Christ" creates a need to bear witness

to the truth, an obligation laid upon one who is a member of the new humanity which has thus been created in Christ. The new humanity, therefore, is a missionary body, made so by the fact that it is new not through its own efforts or its own righteousness, but through a holiness which is beyond itself. It is this holiness which has determined "before the foundation of the world" to create humanity in the image of God. It is this same holiness which chose the cross as the ethically consistent way of exalting God and redeeming mortals. Having done all of this, this same divine holiness declares the new humanity to be the instrument for bearing witness to these facts before the whole world.

The missionary task of the church

Forsyth addressed himself to the justification of the missionary enterprise in a book entitled Missions in Church and State. He began with a familiar theme: the cross is a judgement and without that judgement there is no mission, since the Saviour has gained his sovereignty through death. He emphasized the moral reality which is so central to the cross, expressing his own longing that everyone should feel a conviction of sin. God's fatherhood is won through the cross, and so is our sonship, and therefore our brotherhood. The lack of this conviction is what destroys the missionary spirit in the church. He felt that the chief problem in contemporary missiology was the church's failure to grasp the Gospel as a moral power which recreates man in God's

likeness.

On the other hand (he argued) where missionary zeal does exist, it is because this moral power has been truly experienced, with the result that the highest missionary service aims not at conversion (from one religion to another) but redemption (from evil to righteousness).

> There is a grander word even than "conversion": it is "redemption"...You convert the soul but you redeem the whole man.[7]

In "redeeming the whole man" entire races are to be changed and brought into the family of the new race of God's people.

From this summary of the argument of his book it is easy to see that the missionary task is not a voluntary obligation, but a duty laid upon the believer. "You are bound by your Christianity to be interested" in missions, he wrote, and went on to argue forcefully for the linkage between our debt to God and our debt to humanity.[8] Nothing short of a revival of the Christian spirit in the church would, he believed, send us out again as missionaries.

> The great and real charter of missions, therefore, lies not in any express command of Christ...Our missions will escape from chronic difficulties when our church recovers the ruling note of the redeeming cross and the accent of the Holy Ghost.[9]

Later he went on to write,

> The ground of missions is neither generous pity nor "sailing orders" from Christ, but inspiration, the inspiration and genius of his world Gospel.[10]

Happily Forsyth believed that he saw the beginning of such a revival in his day. For this he earnestly prayed.

If our experience of God's grace as he sets us in his kingdom is what makes us members of the new humanity, surely our knowledge that this grace is open to the rest of the world makes it important that we be exercised over the state of the "heathen" so-called. They too are part of the humanity for which Christ died, and they too need and deserve the redeeming experience which it is the responsibility of a missionary church to declare. Christianity, therefore, is a missionary religion or it has failed its founder. "Missions are not an accident of the church's life...they belong to its essence."[11] The missionary church is not operating in order to grow, but to be faithful to a Gospel which includes the race.

We note that Forsyth did not consider missions to be primarily a humanitarian movement, nor to have humanitarian foundations first of all. The first motive for missions was a sense of "belonging"; the whole world belongs to God and the church is under obligation to share its conviction in this respect. The second motive was a sense of obligation. Christians are those who follow Jesus Christ, who bore the cross to bring the world to God. Christians, therefore cannot choose whether or not they will do the same. Jesus and his cross are, therefore, the inspiration of the missionary enterprise.

The third motive is a sense of the universality of the message. Jesus is the Lord of a missionary church,

and he is such because he has involved himself in the cosmic issues of the race. These great issues (life and death, sin and salvation, judgement and redemption, conflict and victory) must be resolved for mankind and not just for the individual, and it is these which assure Jesus of his place in the universe. Forsyth complained that the church has so often preoccupied itself with the miraculous element in religion, and not enough with universal morality.

> It has thought of the miracle of God's presence as a cosmic miracle of birth rather than a moral miracle of grace, a miracle of holiness, conflict, death, judgement and victory.[12]

It is a grand inspiration of Forsyth, drawn from his reading of Maurice, which sees the race as a whole in the forefront of the theology of redemption. The missionary church must catch the same vision if its Gospel is to be as grand.

Church and society

While Forsyth was interested to a large degree in the missionary task of the church, he saw the church's attitude to the world in even broader terms. Those who take Jesus seriously, to the extent that they enter into the experience of the Kingdom, must begin to act on new principles in the society they live in. He believed that there was much to be done toward shaking the church loose from pietism, and setting it on a more Christocentric

course. Its false position vis-a-vis society and the state had begun, he believed, very early, even as far back as the later Roman Empire. As the church of that day became acceptable and respected,

> the city of God was no more foursquare every way. What it gained in width it lost in height. Striving to be one and catholic, it ceased to be holy and apostolic.[13]

In the Empire's attitude to the church there was a continuing danger for the latter, as well as in the church's increasing accomodation to the state.

> Byzantium describes any system whose aim or whose tendency is the subjection and utilization of the church for the purposes of the state. Papalism is the inevitable shape of the system which aims or tends to the subjection or utilization of the state for the advantage of the church.[14]

If, from the above, one were to deduce that Forsyth anticipated or desired a total separation of church and state, one would be wrong. He did not consider the state to be the natural enemy of the church, nor was it beneath the church's notice.

> For the state is an ethical institute of God for us as much as the family is, and it is in its way equally, though less obviously, powerful for our moral growth.[15]

Now it is possible that he was led (a) through his strong conviction concerning the moral rightness of the British position during the first World War, and (b) through an equally strong conviction concerning the moral decay of the German nation, to substantially alter his point of

view in the eight years from the writing of The Charter of the Church to The Christian Ethic of War. It seems much more likely, however, that his abiding sense of righteousness was simply finding expression in the idea of the state as a powerful ethical institution. Deeply immersed in the Pauline Scriptures, Forsyth was well aware of the Apostle's attitude to a state much less attractive than the Great Britain of 1916, and perhaps even less attractive than the Germany of the same time. Yet his sense of righteousness was being applied at a national level. The one who could speak of redemption in universal and not just personal terms is able to apply moral principles to nations and not just individuals. He wrote,

> Righteousness is the form divine love takes between men and nations, as it takes the form of affection between souls in a church.[16]

This is so because "national righteousness means much more than the sum of individual excellence."[17] It is clear that Forsyth believed that the Christian, and even the church as an institution, had the obligation of becoming involved in the life of the state, in order that the state might become a righteous instrument in the world.

Forsyth's involvement in political action, insignificant though it seems now in comparison with his theological work, was at the same time a genuine outgrowth of his passion for national righteousness. He was no radical. (No radical could have declared the brake to be "the real

instrument of progress"!)[18] Yet he instinctively sided with the poor and the workingman in the name of national righteousness.

> Love, when we pass beyond instinctive or domestic limits, and when we enter into its historic Christian principle, is the desire to see our neighbours in the possession of their best right, dignity, and liberty, which is a common life in the loving and saving righteousness of God.[19]

He believed that the state had a part to play in the establishment of this righteousness, because the state was also part of the humanity redeemed in Christ. The state, being more than the sum of its individual members, is able to exercise its power to shape the common good of all. It can guarantee its members a minimum standard of safety and of plenty. At one point early in his career Forsyth even threw in his lot with the Liberal Party in an effort to improve the lot of the poor.[20]

In a time of war, however, there arises a problem as to the distinct interests of the individual and his sense of righteousness and his duties toward the state of which he forms a part. Obviously, in his view of the war then raging he saw a Christian state (Great Britain) at work to establish a righteousness which had been forgotten in Germany. Is a state, however, necessarily representative of all of its members? Is it possible to be a believer and at the same time participate in a state which has lost the sense of Christian righteousness? Can one be a Christian in a non-Christian state, or an unbeliever in

a Christian one? Obviously the last question can be answered more easily in the affirmative,even if it is certain that an unbeliever will be affected,whether he will or not, by the principles of the Christian state. The believer living in an unbelieving state, however, or the believer who lives in a completely secular society, has a different problem. In what sense can he live as a Christian when the society in which he lives either opposes or ignores the values which, as a Christian, he holds? If, for instance, we assume that the believer wishes to practise the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, how does he propose to do this if society is intolerant of peacemakers? Forsyth answered this question, not on the basis of the believer in a non-Christian or an anti-Christian society, but on that of a believer in any society at all. In a highly Christian society one may hold to the Sermon on the Mount as a goal; in no society would it be possible to treat it as a law.

> If the Christian man live in society, it is quite impossible for him to live upon the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. But also it is not possible at a half-developed stage to live in actual relations of life and duty on its principle except as an ideal.[21]

Further, the individual who lives as a believer in an unbelieving state shares in the moral plight of that state. The state is a moral instrument, for good or evil. While individuals may stand out from the society in which

they live, by exhibiting moral excellence to a greater or a lesser degree, they cannot divorce themselves completely from it. For better or worse, we are all part of a society.

Our assumption, therefore, that we are able to live a righteous life (in the sense of fulfilling the requirements of the law) is shattered by the reality of life in the world, for not only war, but all irrational or wicked actions of the state are "fatal to the piety of pony carriage, shaven lawn, or aesthetic tea."[22] We err first of all in imagining ourselves to be simply and solely individuals. "No man is an island," and no-one can live without both affecting his society and being affected by it. In modern society, even more than in those of more primitive times, the individual becomes part of the whole. Forsyth's answer to our dilemma was that "the problems of the private life are often so intractable because they are not conceived in any but private relations."[23] See the world in terms of solidary guilt and solidary salvation and life's problems will yield to rational attempts to find solutions.

We err also because we are men and women without Christ and we live life apart from the Gospel. We seek not only our private goals but our personal and individual liberty. To a race dedicated to the pursuit of liberty above all other things, Forsyth cried, in a phrase born out of the agony of war, "we are not here for freedom, but for responsibility. We are responsible for our very freedom."[24]

Therefore the life of faith vis-a-vis the secular state, or even the anti-religious state, is bound to be one in which the individual must seek for national and personal righteousness while at the same time accepting responsibility for his part in the total guilt of the whole society. He can do this only as part of the redeemed community created in Jesus, that is, as part of the church. He works to redeem society (or the nation) since this is what God in Christ is doing. Responsibility based on solidarity, and evangelism based upon his religious experience, will necessarily be his guidelines. Forsyth's argument has, therefore, centered up to this point on the concepts of solidarity and responsibility for others, and the necessity of an experience which will include both of these ideas.

In order to see how this works in practice, let us take the question of war. There can be no doubt that Forsyth looked upon war as unalterably evil. He spoke of it as "moral anarchy," declaring ironically that "nothing is so efficient as a bomb."[25] His views, however, changed perceptibly with the coming of World War I. Before that he had written satirically that

> we had great religious authorities voting for our last wicked Afghan war on the ground that it would be the means of introducing the Gospel to Afghanistan. That is cooking God's meat over hell fire.[26]

During the war (the First World War) he continued to look upon war as evil, but by that time he had come to see that

ethical choices are often tainted as well as limited, and that all that believers can do is to seek the righteousness which is God's by means of the unrighteous instruments at hand. Writing of war at that later time he said,

> It is moral pestilence. It is wrong on both sides. But it may be the only moral choice left.[27]

In light of this we view a comment such as the following:

> Loyalty to church or State is the form in which loyalty to conscience is most safe and effective.[28]

What agony of soul it cost him to urge his non-conformist conscience in this direction we can only guess. The patriot's loyalty to his country may or may not be well-founded, but Forsyth was convinced that it had a better foundation than those forms of protest which rely on one's private judgement. Truth must not be left to private interpretation, since in such a case there is no bedrock of authority to give it credence. He was always concerned to guard the truth from merely individual interpretations, arguing instead for the responsibility which is created and sustained by a sense of one's solidarity with Christ.

If the church is the Body of Christ, one's membership in the church commits one to share in its decisions and in its corporate life. In like manner the State, as a servant of God and of the people, should be able to expect from its subjects either obedience or a dissent based on still higher

principles of righteousness. If one has no higher righteousness by which to justify dissent, one ought, at least for the time being, to trust the leadership of those in authority.

For this reason, his nation being at war, he was unable to sympathize with the pacifist position. "Conscience," he maintained, "is not against the use of force but only against its dominion."[29] Whether this would be acceptable to all would depend on the meaning of the word "force". Conscience, at least that of the pacifist, is indeed against the use of force in the sense of violence. The conscience of most pacifists is not, however, against the use of sanctions, which are a form of force. But Forsyth assumes force to be the use of armed might as applied in international relations. His conscience did not rebel against the application of such force in certain cases, and he clearly felt that the circumstances of Europe in 1916 warranted its use.

Behind the above statement, therefore, lies his great religious principle that atonement is based on judgement, and salvation on the destruction of evil through the cross. If God judges sin, and employs violent death to overcome and destroy it, Christians must be prepared to do the same. It is not that the cross turned the violence against God's enemies, but rather that it absorbed the hatred of those enemies, and took it redemptively to itself. It is hardly fair, therefore, to speak of the

pacifist position as a "religion which preaches love without judgment either in the Cross, or history, or life..."[30] Forsyth is carried away by his strong moral reaction to what was going on in Europe. Nevertheless, for all that might appear to be jingoistic in his attitude, he believed firmly that the war, sinful though it was, could with all its attendant evil serve a profoundly religious purpose.

> This war's revelation of human wickedness may perhaps do something to relieve us of a comely and aesthetic type of religion which is founded, not on a salvation, but on the divine excellence of that glorious creature man...[31]

On this note of highly theological irony we can turn from his discussion of the Christian and war.

The Christian and politics

If we turn to the related spheres of politics and social action we see Forsyth employing the same principle. His early socialism and lifelong support of liberalism in politics were not allowed to overcome his conviction that the final answer was a religious one, and the final Saviour, Christ. There was no conflict in his mind between political action for righteous causes and the theological convictions of the church, provided (and it was an important proviso) that the subordination of the first to the second was acknowledged. Public righteousness was the secular, or political, form of the Christian

virtue of love. "The form that Christian love takes in political affairs is not sentiment. It is righteousness."[32] Again, "The public and business form of love is righteousness."[33] To be involved politically, however, was both right, from the viewpoint of justice, and inadequate, from the standpoint of Christian commitment. The believer who entered the political arena as a believer, intent on making God's righteousness effective in the world, was doing a praiseworthy thing. To imagine that such political action could substitute for Christian faith, or even that political action could find an adequate rationale apart from faith, was to stray from the truth. He abandoned his early socialist sympathies because "socialism is simply the Christianity of the natural man, the church of the not yet born again."[34] That quotation in itself indicates the relative value he placed on politics of all kinds.

Nevertheless Forsyth so linked the struggle for justice with the Gospel as almost to confuse the former word. Justice may be thought of, and often is, in terms of the social struggle for liberation from all kinds of human bondage. Forsyth also sometimes thought of it in this way, but more commonly he used the term to signify that which is opposed to mere sentimentality in God's dealings with sinners. If God were sentimental, he could overlook our sins. Because he is just, however, he must "deal with"

our sins in such a way as to destroy sin and make us righteous. In this sense Forsyth placed charity in opposition to justice when writing of the work of Christ: "Charity does not reconcile; only justice does."[35] Elsewhere, in dealing with human relations, he did the same in a slightly different sense when he wrote: "Were there more justice we should need less charity."[36] But here the meaning of "justice" more closely approximates the secular use of the word. He is obviously thinking of what we might call "fairness" in our dealings with people of other races.

Nevertheless it remains true that, in general, "justice" in Forsyth's terminology refers to the way in which God sets right the soul in its relations with other souls and with the divine. Justice as "fairness" in the human sense is not his chief concern.

The cross being as central as it is to Forsyth's theology, however, these shades of meaning are not as disparate as they might appear. If the result of Jesus' act of atonement was the establishment of a new humanity in the Kingdom of God, such an act must at the same time create in the world the conditions which make this new humanity actual. If justice is God's way of dealing fairly with mankind, it must become also man's way of dealing with his fellows. Politics must involve justice, therefore, because politics inevitably involves Christ.

The ideal situation in a democratic society would see a church busy calling the people to a faith-response to

God's revelation, while those who had made such a response were busy creating just laws and a just society. In this sense only is there a separation of church and state, the functions of each occupying different space in the universe.

The authority of the church

The ethical norms under which believers participate in society are created by the same Gospel which incorporates them into the Kingdom. If Jesus meant through his sacrifice to establish holiness, and if he died for a world and not for a clique, the holiness of his reign must be the touchstone of all ethical action. In The Church and the Sacraments Forsyth made this clear.

> The Kingdom therefore is set up by more than filial love. It has more than an affectional atmosphere; it has a moral constitution. Its King shall reign in righteousness. It is not simply the sense of sonship to the infinite benignity; it is not just the fine fellowship of the dear Father; it is the practical worship of the holy Father. It is not the response to love natural but to love wonderful and incredible, love which arises to grace and sovereignty. And it orders its going by an ethic of grace, i.e. of the holy, not simply of the kind--of the holy which makes the love miraculous, and not simply of the paternal, which makes it just what we should expect.[37]

Christ is seen as the de jure ruler of the new Kingdom of God, and righteousness is inevitably the hallmark of the Kingdom. The comings and goings of the Kingdom are governed by his righteousness, a holiness which is the foundation of the equitable treatment of others.

Forsyth was not slow to recognize that a strict view of ethics could hold the church back in its efforts to evangelize the world. He was not willing, however, to accomodate the church's message to the world in order to win more converts. In fact, he gloried in the anomaly.

> One reason why the church has been so slow in its progress in mankind and its effect on human history is because it has been so faithful to His cross...You cannot expect rapid success if you truly preach the Cross...[38]
> (Emphasis mine.)

Why should this be so? The answer is twofold. First, the rigorous fairness of the method God uses to win the world does not sit well with our human standards. It is the conviction of the natural man or woman that God should treat him or her better than others. The group to which one belongs is always considered to be more righteous and more worthy than other groups. But the Gospel "condemns all, that God may have mercy on all."

Second, the sin which is part of all of our human nature does not allow us easily to accept the idea that there is any need for an atoning act. This sin pervades the church, and, even though Forsyth believed that the church had been faithful to the Cross, he was quite sure that it could be held at fault in not being rigorous enough in its standards. The church, like any human institution, is often more concerned with its own existence than it is with the Gospel.

The moral failure of the Church at this point was a major source of concern to Forsyth. He believed that

"it is the public and social failure of religion that is our chief trouble at this hour, either at home or abroad,"[39] and by "this hour" in this context he meant the catastrophe of the first World War. The church's failure was a result of its unwillingness to come to grips with the ethical element in Christ, and its inability to apply Christ's Gospel to the world situation. He believed that "we are not seeking first the Kingdom of God and His holiness, but only carrying on, with very expensive and noisy machinery, a 'Kingdom-of-God-industry.'"[40] That was the church's ethical failure.

Intellectually also it had failed by the fact that "we have a convertible Christianity without weight with the public because without moral nerve or insight on a world scale, a theological scale."[41] The church's moral authority in the world, as the Christian's in society, was in question, but not because its message was weak or ineffective. Quite the contrary. It was in question because the church had not proclaimed that message thoroughly. It had not, in Forsyth's view, preached the cross.

He felt that it had neglected its first responsibility, which was to be the people of God in the world. The power of the Gospel and of the cross lay in their ability to transform peoples and nations. In Missions in Church and State, Forsyth declared,

> Judgment is not primarily punishment, nor is it a mere declaration of the state of the law, but it is the actual final establishment of righteousness upon the wreck of sin.[42]

In our discussion of the believer in the world, and of the church in society, we have come back to the concept of judgement as Forsyth saw it represented in the cross. Forsyth's moral convictions would not allow him to accept a cheap and easy solution to the world's problems. Nor would they allow the church to escape easily the responsibility of being God's people in the world. If to have faith was difficult, given the state of the world's sin, it would be even more difficult to understand and to believe if such sin did not find its judgement in the cross. This was the church's responsibility, so to proclaim the cross that God's judgement would be seen as both inevitable and desirable.

> Indeed, if it is hard to believe in a theodicy with things as they are, it would be harder still to trust Christian righteousness if disaster did not follow from things as they have been. The present situation is a monument to the failure of the church.[43]

The moral authority of Jesus is rigorous and demanding. "The more we believe in the Kingdom of God, the more we must believe in judgment."[44] The church's responsibility in the world includes the obligation to be strict with itself and uncompromising with its message, to the end that judgement should be finally effective in the world. If such rigour should have the double effect of making some believe and turning others away, it would be doing just what the cross has always done. "If it draws some near to God, it repels others into distance and estrangement."[45] This is an unfortunate by-product of an ethical and holy faith, and one Forsyth did not shirk. His hope continued to

rest in the divine holiness which had atoned for the sin of a race, not a collection of individuals. This allowed him to believe in the power of grace to redeem, eventually, the rebel and enemy of God through the same cross which redeemed the church.

We have seen the church's mission to the world to be that of participating in the world's redemption. Individually and collectively the Christians of the world are to be the bearers of a message of holiness, the holiness of God in Christ which works for the holiness of a race. The church, both by preaching and by action, is under obligation to bring justice to the world, since the church is Christ's body in the world, and since, in the end, only the cross can make the world righteous.

CHAPTER V

The Life with Christ

The idea of a devotional life in which Jesus Christ is the object of devotion creates enormous problems both for the intellect and for religion. The Christian faith demands that true spiritual communion be centered on the divine being alone. True piety boggles at the thought of exalting a human figure to what is essentially a spiritual realm. What do we mean when we speak of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth? In what sense is it possible to hold spiritual intercourse with such a figure?

The life of the sacraments

Forsyth had no doubt about what he meant by "the divinity of Jesus". For him Jesus was the earthly manifestation of deity. He handled the problem of how this might be conceptualized by elaborating a doctrine of kenosis in which Jesus' personality was seen to be fully human as well as divine. Yet he too had problems with the idea of personal communion with Jesus. Since he was not in his own estimation a mystic, he chose to look upon the sacramental as the route to divine communion. Fellowship with Jesus was a sacramental fellowship, discovered in the gifts of God to his people rather than in mystical experience. He applied this sacramental

concept to a number of areas of the spiritual life, notably (apart from those usually spoken of as "sacraments") the ministry, and, as a sub-category, the preaching function of the ministry.

A sacrament was not, for him, a physical influence or power. It was, as stated in the Book of Common Prayer, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." It was, in the words of the Oxford English Dictionary, "a channel by which divine grace is imparted." Above everything else, it was a method of communicating moral power, effectively to alter human and human-divine relationships.

> Grace was not an infusion of vital substance or supernal influence, but it was a relation of active persons. It was a moral thing and not a physical. It was mercy and not magic. It was not virtue going into us; it was the gracious will of the God of love acting on the soul, and (as He is the holy God) centrally on the moral soul, acting, through the church's faith, as a felt forgiveness and a power for goodness.[1]

Essentially the sacraments are the Gospel in action. That is to say that the church, whenever it celebrates the sacraments, is both declaring the Gospel and calling on the power of the Gospel. Their power as well as their form and meaning all find their source in the total event which Forsyth described as "Gospel". We have already noted that Forsyth did not justify the mission of the church by an appeal either to the teaching or to the direct command of Jesus.[2] Rather, the whole inspiration of missions derived from the events which transpired at Calvary. This freed him to see in the church's mission far more than avid proselytism or tender humanitarianism; he discovered through his great insight into the Gospel that

the church was engaged (in its missionary activities) in claiming the world for a God who had already declared it to be his own.

Forsyth was aligned with the Western rather than the Orthodox tradition in holding to the priority of the Cross over the Incarnation. He preached salvation and forgiveness rather than the divinization of humanity, and declared the fact that Jesus bore our sin to be a much more important thing than that he became human.

> It is the simplifying principle that the spiritual virtue of a sacrament is not drawn from the ethereal action of the Word made flesh for us, but from the moral action of the word made sin for us, and unto us righteousness, and from the social action of the Word made Church.[3]

What happened when Jesus offered his life as an atonement? We have already pointed out that at the heart of his self-offering was an act of obedience to the Father, an act which recognized the Father's right to demand and to judge, and therefore to condemn, his creatures. Divine holiness needs no other justification than itself. The sacrifice of Jesus, since it was a perfect act of obedience, met the holy and just requirements of God and, even more important, made it possible for us to speak of him as entering into divine power. He is now, in a sense which could not have been affirmed before the Cross, God's Christ, "anointed" to bring the world to salvation. Even though Forsyth believed most emphatically that the man Jesus was the incarnate image of God, he avoided the dangers inherent in exaggerating this to the exclusion

of the moral struggle and victory of Jesus of Nazareth. He had much Scripture on his side, for Jesus was (according to Paul) "declared to be the son of God by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4) and, according to the author of the Hebrews,"being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him."(5:9) This elevation, which was but a return to the position he had left behind, assures the church that the risen Christ is able to minister to the needs of his people.[4]

The sacraments, then, are the proclamation of this power to save. Let us take baptism as an example. The sacrament of initiation is an announcement that membership in the body of Christ is dependent on something done <u>for</u> us and not <u>by</u> us. It signifies, by the use of water, the power of God to cleanse us, and, because it is observed in the company of the church and by its authority, it is a proclamation of the new life of the Kingdom. Unless we recognize the power of the sacrament to declare truth and to preach Christ, we are in danger of losing its inner meaning.

> It is our individualism that has done most to ruin the sacrament of Baptism among us. We get a wrong answer because we do not put the right question. We ask, What good does Baptism do me or that child? instead of, What is the active witness and service the Church renders to the active Word of Christ's Gospel in the baptism of young or old?[5]

In the second place, if the sacraments are the proclamation of Christ's power and the power of the cross to save, they are to a certain extent effective. There is always some

difficulty in speaking of the power or effectiveness of the sacraments, a difficulty created perhaps by the confusion between what the cross does and what the proclamation of the cross does. Yet putting the question that way immediately assumes a separation between the Gospel as event and the Gospel as proclamation. Forsyth was not willing to make that separation in quite so clear-cut a fashion. The Gospel is the total event in which God atones the sin of the world and saves mankind; but the proclamation of the event is an integral part of it.[6] We might characterize the Gospel as the Incarnation-Cross-Resurrection-Proclamation event. Such a linguistic monstrosity would at least prevent us from separating Gospel and proclamation in our minds when speaking of the power of the sacraments.

The power is that of the atoning cross; the power of the sacrament is a derived power, but a power nevertheless. In the Communion of the Lord's Supper the worshiper is made aware of the sacrifice of Jesus and of the forgiveness offered through the Cross. He is also able to leave the table assured of that forgiveness, even though he came to the table burdened and carrying guilt. According to Forsyth, this is due both to the action of God on his soul and the common faith of the church which is celebrating. "Grace acts through the church's faith as a felt forgiveness and a power for goodness." (see note 1 above.) Forsyth would not, I believe, have been happy with the phrase opus operatum, but was ready to accept the

phrase opus operans as descriptive of the power inherent in the church's sacraments.[7]

A third factor has to do with the fact that the witness to the Gospel is taking place in the context of the believing church. We have already noted (#3 above) that "the spiritual virtue of a sacrament is...drawn from...the social action of the Word made church." This linking of what happens to the individual in the sacrament and what happens in the church is quite typical of Forsyth. It is physically impossible to proclaim the Gospel and perform the sacrament in utter solitude, if for no other reason than that the sacrament and the proclamation have been passed on through the church over the centuries. If we were to imagine the unlikely situation of a communion service in which the celebrant were the only recipient, or a baptism in which the candidate baptized himself in the desert, this hypothetical person would still be performing acts and professing a faith which belong to the church. The churchliness of the sacraments is true also of "all worship", as he wrote. For

> by His atonement to the Holy he converted all worship, all mysticism, and all sacraments from the aesthetical to the ethical; and he set the longings or enjoyments of religious feeling on the ethical foundations of a moral redemption which truly contains spiritual communion for the soul, but on the basis of a salvation for the conscience and the eternal life of a Kingdom.[8]

Again we may refer back to the citation mentioned above (note #1) in which it is "the church's faith" through which grace acts on the soul. The church bears its witness and

declares forgiveness, just as the church proclaims the Gospel and receives the believer into its fold.

Forsyth mentions at least three problems which arise in connection with the use of the sacraments (although their non-use would probably give rise to many more). These are: the question of magic, the question of mysticism and the question of memorialism. When Christians speak of the sacrament as "magic", they are usually disparaging a view of the sacraments which stresses the inherent power of the physical act itself apart from the psychological effects produced. Catholic theologians are quick to respond to the charge that their doctrine is "magical".

> In the controversy over the phrase ex opere operato, it is sometimes interpreted as implying "magic", of an immoral and mechanical concept of sanctification; Catholics assert this to be a radical misunderstanding of the theandric realism of their sacramental theology.[9]

In spite of this, and in spite of his deep respect for many Catholic practices, Forsyth did consider the Catholic doctrine to tend to the "magical", and it was to this that he referred when he wrote that grace is "mercy and not magic."

The term Forsyth used when writing of mystical tendencies was "aestheticism", a word for which he was possibly indebted to Kierkegaard, to whom he acknowledged his indebtedness on other points. Aestheticism is an attitude that derives its pleasure from the sacraments because of their beauty and style rather than from the moral changes produced through them. But if the sacrament is itself the word of the cross, there can be no aestheticism, but rather a rigorous and

demanding experience of God's presence. Forsyth dismissed aestheticism with as much disdain as he did the "magic" he saw in some ideas of the sacraments.

His most scathing comments, however, were directed at "memorialism", presumably the Zwinglian or Anabaptist interpretations of the Lord's Supper.[10] In typically humorous style he wrote,

> As to the sacraments, it may be surmised that the writer holds a mere memorialism to be a more fatal error than the Mass, and a far less lovely.[11]

In summary, Forsyth understood the sacraments (essentially Baptism and the Communion, although the same applies to "the Sacrament of the Word") as being related to the cross as symbol and referent. Just as the symbol has no meaning without the referent, but whenever it is expressed becomes the very presence of the latter, even so the sacraments point to the cross and bring the power of the cross into visible existence whenever they are observed. The sacramental acts are witnesses to Christ's atonement, and they bring the power of that atonement to bear on those who receive them. They are signs that God has reconciled mankind to himself, and derive their power from the act in which this happened, effecting their work through the church's witness and faith.

The sacrament of the Word

Forsyth goes beyond the traditional Protestant sacraments and includes two others in his list. (As is so often true of him, he shows his very "catholic" tastes while

remaining thoroughly Protestant.) His two "new" sacraments have no precise correspondence with the Catholic sacraments, although one is something akin to the Sacrament of Ordination. The first of these two is what he would refer to as the Sacrament of the Word. For him this was a far greater act than either baptism or the eucharist, for it gave meaning and value to the latter.

> That sacrament of the Word is what gives value to all other sacraments. They are not ends, they are but means to that grace. They are but visible, tangible modes of conveying the same Gospel which is audible in the Word.[12]

Here Forsyth appears as a true Protestant in the tradition of the Reformers, placing the emphasis on intelligible, verbal communication. Preaching is the Sacrament of the Word and as such it is bound to Scripture and therefore to the cross. Preaching continues the process of divine communication and, allowing the hearer and the Saviour to be brought into an ethical relationship, it becomes sacramental.

But Forsyth also shows that he is catholic. If he is Protestant in his insistence that the power is not to be found in the materia (the words of the sermon) but in the divine power behind them, he is Catholic in his equal insistence that the power is a real power.

> Let us rise above the idea that the preached word of God is a mere message warmly told. It is a creative sacrament by the medium of a consecrated personality. It is more than good news fervently spoken, it is a soul's life and power from God.[13]

Preaching fulfills the criteria for a true sacrament. It is more than a mere sign, but it does not function ex opere operato; it has power because it is the proclamation of Jesus and his cross. It is a moral act which attempts to bring people into an ethical relationship with God, and therefore its power is divine. It calls for and needs faith to make it fully effective, for preaching cannot be carried on in a vacuum. It is a churchly and not a private act. It is an act that witnesses both to the church and to the world.

The other sacrament emphasized by Forsyth parallels to a certain degree the Catholic sacrament of ordination, though the minister and not his ordination is for Forsyth the sacrament. Indeed, in treating the minister as a sacrament for the church, Forsyth is touching on a seminal idea in which he also speaks of the church as a sacrament to the world. He does not expand on this view as much as we might wish, but it is implicit in much of his writing, and references such as the following indicate that the sacramental church is the bedrock from which the sacramental ministry and its functions derive. He wrote, "The ministry is sacramental to the Church as the Church itself is sacramental to the world,"[14] and this was written in the context of a discussion of "effective" or "valid" orders. "And what does effective or valid mean? It means sacramental."[14]

In discussing the idea of a sacramental ministry, he said that "the true sacrament is a holy personality,"[15] and that therefore the consecrated personality, the "man of

God," is himself, in his office, sacramental.

> It is enough to sober any light man, tame the rude man and exalt the meek to know and feel that he is ordained to be a sacrament to his Church, to be, through his own soul's faith, the living channel of the creative word of grace.[16]

There is no gainsaying the fact that Forsyth held a "high" view of the ministry just as he held a "high" view of the church and of its sacraments. It is a Protestant view, without a doubt, but none the less high for that. Forsyth could no more envision a church without clergy than he could a Christianity without a church. In another place and another context he wrote,

> It is only a Church of true priests that can withstand a church of false ones. It cannot be done by a church of no priests, which is indeed no church.[17]

The sacramental, therefore, is of the essence of the church, in Forsyth's view. Without it the church is no more than a gathering of like-minded people. If the church holds a truly sacramental view, it will preach the Word as the supreme sacrament, and see baptism, communion and the ministry as God-given means for bringing men and women into true fellowship with God. In this Forsyth has rendered distinguished service to the church, calling it back to the cross as the source of meaning and power for what the church has almost instinctively practised from the beginning. If the church has been in danger of losing its roots in the atoning work of Christ, as Forsyth believed it was, it could do no better than to return to the rich

and full-bodied doctrine of the sacraments expounded by this man.

The life of prayer

Ultimately the power of either sacrament or ministry will be seen in the effects they produce on the individual soul. Forsyth believed fellowship with Christ himself to be fundamental in this respect, and the church and its sacraments were not the only avenues open to one who sought such fellowship. These were necessary, but there was also the life of private prayer, which could bring the believer into intimate and personal communion with the Saviour and with God. The devotional life of prayer was exceedingly important in Forsyth's own life, because in the final analysis he held Christianity to be an experimental religion. True religion depended less on one's theology than on the experimental fact of having been reconciled to God.

> The fulcrum of any vital doctrine about the person of Christ must be an experimental faith in Him as Redeemer. Christ is very God to me because, and only because, He has been God's very grace to me as a sinner...[18]

His desire for theological depth was amplified rather than modified by this insistence on "experience" as the basis of religious faith.

Yet the purpose of the atonement effected by Jesus' death is always a genuine moral reconciliation and not a legal fiction. As we have already seen, it is the moral

note that makes Forsyth's theology from start to finish. The life of prayer has for him the moral purpose of furthering this reconciliation until Christ and the believer are in true moral communion. In his beautiful devotional book on prayer entitled The Soul of Prayer, he wrote,

> All along Christ is being darkly formed within us as we pray; and our converse with God goes on rising to become an element of the intercourse of the Father and the Son, whom we overhear, as it were, at converse in us.[19]

The Soul of Prayer is a devotional book in an unconventional sense. It is not a "book of devotions", but a theological treatise on prayer in which the author is truly at worship as he writes, so meaningful is the subject to him. The book begins with an indictment of the prayerless Christian. Lack of prayer, he wrote, is at the same time the cause, the result, and the punishment of sin, and is itself the soul's greatest sin. Prayer is the highest kind of action. It helps to develop our discernment of spiritual things and (as we mentioned above) draws us into a genuinely mystical experience as we enter into the conversation of the Father and Son. It is a commitment to a kind of life and a quality of action that draws on the divine will. In prayer we enter into a sort of communion with the heart of nature, for prayer is the fulfillment of the laws of the universe.

Forsyth described prayer as adoration, thanksgiving and petition. Prayer is related to the holy for it recognizes the priority of the holy, knows God through the revelation

of the holy, and asks because of its freedom in the holy. Prayer helps us to grow in discernment, in truth and in repentance.

Since prayer is a relationship with the holy Father, it must become an expression of our true selves. The injunction to "pray without ceasing" is meant to create the "bent" of the soul. It therefore demands frequent use of various acts of prayer performed because of an inner discipline. In such prayer nothing lies outside the range of its interest.

Finally, Forsyth said that prayer depends on the desire to make God's will our will. In prayer the believer is being brought close to God and ought not, therefore, to cease easily from praying. He thought of prayer as "wrestling with God" and believed that the one who prays ought to resist God until God in turn overwhelms his resistance. "Prayer is the assimilation of a holy God's moral strength," he wrote.[20]

That this element of communion is the chief purpose of the life of prayer is made plain even in those passages in which Forsyth was stressing the aspect of petition. "A faith," he declared, "which is based chiefly on impetration might become more of a faith in prayer than a faith in God."[21] Though the petitioner ask for health or wealth, for protection or wisdom or guidance,the main object of his attention must always be God himself, for it is not what one asks for, but

the act of asking, that makes prayer what it ought to be.

> The man whose passion is habitually set upon pleasure, knowledge, wealth, honour or power is in a state of prayer to these things or for them. He prays without ceasing. These are his real gods, on whom he waits day and night.[22]

Here we begin to see what Forsyth meant when, quoting Scripture, he urged "unceasing prayer." Prayer that is focused on "things" is idolatrous, since these things become the centre of the soul's devotion. Prayer fixed on God will bring all things into that heavenly relationship, so that one is indeed constantly in prayer. Yet "things" will not come naturally to one who prays; this is not the purpose of prayer. It is the praying, the asking, the being refused only to ask again, until, in God's good time, one receives a sense of having discovered God's purpose in it all. In typically vigorous prose he writes,

> Resist God in the sense of rejecting God, and you will not be able to resist any evil. But resist God in the sense of closing with God, cling to him with your strength, not your weakness only, with your active and not only with your passive faith, and He will give you strength. Cast yourself into His arms, not to be caressed, but to wrestle with Him. He loves that holy war. He may be too many for you, and lift you from your feet. But it will be to lift you from earth, and set you in the heavenly places which are theirs who fight the good fight and lay hold of God as their eternal life.[23]

Although Forsyth makes much of this kind of prayer life, he links it always to the objective fact of atonement. Since Jesus died to reconcile mankind to God, the reconciliation effected in prayer must partake of the same objective reality of the cross.

He wrote,

> The only devotion worth having is that which is made inevitable by the nature of faith as itself the fontal devotion, an act of obedience far more than a state of experience, a submission to a real objective with a native right and power to rule us from the centre.[24]

That is, without the objective act of atonement, prayer itself would not suffice to bring us into communion with God.

We ought not, on the basis of these words, to take for granted that Forsyth considered the only effective prayer to be one consciously directed to the atoning God on the basis of a consciously believed atonement. He does not take for granted a profound theology in the individual. He does, however, take for granted a profound theology in the church, and if its teachers have expounded Christ as the atoning Saviour, and God as the holy Father, then prayer becomes a genuine act of devotion. Only the removal of the guilty burden of sin can make prayer real; only an atonement can remove the guilt. But the guilt having been removed, the worshiper is able to pray meaningfully, whether he understands the process completely or not.

Eternal life

A third area in which the believer finds himself drawn into Christ is found in the conception of eternal life. In The Justification of God (1917) Forsyth referred to a conception

of eternity which undoubtedly lay at the heart of his own understanding of life.

> What is meant when we speak of another world? We do not mean only one which begins at death. We do not mean a new tract of time beyond the grave, but another order, another dimension, of things, that both haunts the precincts and fills the spaces of this life always.[25]

Perhaps this brief reference to the life to come in the midst of a "theodicy in time of war" was all that could be expected of him at that moment. In This Life and the Next (1918), however, Forsyth was able to concentrate his failing energies on the subject. He demonstrated that his primary concern was moral rather than intellectual by sub-titling his book, "The effect on this life of faith in another." He pointed out that a belief in the finality of death led to apathy and moral blindness in the long run. On the other hand, belief in a life to come could lead to a highly moral attitude toward the world.

For anyone who would challenge the Christian believer on the ground that such faith in the life after death was self-centered, Forsyth had a ready reply. Even election (he said) must be considered to be a calling to serve in this life in the expectation that in the life to come both server and served may continue to be related to one another in love. A desire for life after death is not simply egotistic, for, if our hope is truly Christian, our thoughts about immortality will always be directed toward others.

Death is never the last word on life. There are many who think it is, and in the midst of life Forsyth suspected that they had a longing for death. Evidence for this was to be found in the fact that often people court and invite death, as, for example, in suicide. The soul, however, that can choose death for the sake of others shows itself to be superior to death, and therefore able to survive it. We believe in a life beyond death because we believe in Christ. Forsyth went so far as to declare his belief that prayers for the dead were possible and even desirable if one were convinced that death is not the final arbiter of our fate.

Immortality, or, rather, the contemplation of and belief in it, becomes an instrument for the enrichment of life. As we practise living "eternally", we experience life in a different way. This strange expression was Forsyth's way of calling for a life style that wasted no time debating the issue of immortality, but instead accepted eternal life as a real and present fact. To debate the issue and to contemplate eternity as a mere possibility, wastes life so that at the end we find we have nothing at all, neither the life eternal nor a satisfactory record in this one. Eternity has a way of working itself out in time, so that the one who believes in eternity lives in the present with a more complete participation in the life he now has. In this sense immortality has an effect on life. Forsyth believed that the soul is not made for the life of earth, but for something far better. If so, then the best way to spend

time in the present is to spend it learning to transcend time. This is living "eternally" today.

Forsyth stressed the personal nature of immortality. That is, since personality is developed and worked out only in a community, immortality too can only truly be understood in a social context. This is in keeping with his concept of the solidarity of the race. As we cannot live in this life absolutely alone, no more can we conceive of life eternal without the redeemed race about us. This social context for the idea of immortality involves a society in God, or as he would have said, in Christ. In fact, the holy love of God is far more important that the mere continued existence of any of his creatures. Yet it is certain that the holy love of God includes my continued existence, for only as redeemed, and therefore as a member of the new race, can I be sure of myself as a continuing entity. To long for the holy love of God is the only guarantee of my existence as an individual. Therefore we can experience immortality in fact only as we experience Christ and are redeemed by him, this redemption being the making of the new person in the kingdom. If this is so, then all of our earthly experience, our failures as much as our successes, are used and transformed by God in the process of regenerating the soul.

Accordingly Forsyth saw three main facets to the Christian hope of immortality. Each of these is related to the Christian's faith in Christ. The first of these is that

God is logically prior to eternal life. This means that eternal life is a product of the affirmation of God's holiness in the atonement. Jesus and his sacrifice have procured the establishment of the holiness of God in human life, without which immortality would have no Christian significance.

The second is that eternal life is not mere duration. Indeed, it is possible to believe that for Forsyth it was not a matter of duration at all. If eternal life does not uphold the righteousness of God, it has no place in a Christian theology. So he seems to say when he writes,

> Even when by the other life we mean eternal life in its aspect of duration, we still prize it only for its quality. We want it, not because there is a lot of it, but because it is good.[26]

The life for which the believer yearns is one filled with God rather than with days.

The third facet is that life eternal is a community affair. No-one can receive or enjoy it alone. Forsyth's thought is rooted in the Bible of both Old and New Testaments. God calls the people of God in the Bible, and not just individuals, nor did any of the Jews of the Old Testament look for salvation for himself alone. Moses wept for his people, and for himself as part of the people, when it seemed that they had been deserted by Yahweh.[27] Isaiah received his calling to a prophetic ministry in an experience in which he was aware of both his people's sin and of his own.[28] Indeed, in both cases it would be difficult to imagine

how they might have understood their forgiveness apart from the community of Israel.

The New Testament carries on this tradition. Paul wished that he could be accursed for the sake of his people, the community of Israel.[29] This is not a sign that he was an individualist in his conception of salvation, since he understood his life to be bound up with the new Israel, which was the community "in Christ." When, in our individualist culture, we find "evidence" of an individualizing tendency in Paul's writings, we may be confusing his emphasis on a personal appropriation of salvation with an individualism that is more at home in the twentieth century.

Jesus' emphasis on the Kingdom of God, and his call to all to enter that Kingdom, must be construed in the same sense. It was a Kingdom which his disciples were to seek, and those who entered it could count themselves blessed in the day of wrath. To look for eternal life was to look for the Kingdom, and to find one's place in the Kingdom was to have eternal life.

Forsyth's argument at this point may be even more relevant to the last quarter of the twentieth century than it was to the first. A diminishing of the belief in "life after death" has taken away some of the sense of being part of the "communion of the saints," a fellowship which spanned the centuries. Forsyth must have been criticized by many Protestants of his own and other denominations when he wrote,

> How natural...to turn to prayer for the dead... We should resume prayer for the dead, were it only to realize the unity of the Church and our fellowship with its invisible part.[30]

It was the power of a faith that could link the saints of the past to those of the present, and all of them with the Saviour, that Forsyth longed for, and the burden of This Life and the Next is simply to help the church to realize the nobility and the grandeur of the company to which they belonged. To seek salvation apart from the fellowship of the holy of all ages was both impious and empty of result.

Faith and experience

The final thing that should be said with respect to the life with Christ concerns the religious experience of the believer. This is quite fundamental to Forsyth's theology, for in the Christian experience of the believer he saw the key to the meaning of the atonement. Barry has rightly judged Forsyth's concern at this point:

> What has been too often left out of sight... has been the essential Gospel itself--the good news of free and unmerited forgiveness. It has been forgotten that what is really at issue is not our judicial standing before God but our personal relation to him.[31]

To this Forsyth would undoubtedly have given his hearty approval, for he believed that the Christian experience involved an intensely personal and existential decision,

on which a person staked his life. Such a person had something to go on, of course, since his decision could never be a blind one.

> To trust him is not a leap in the dark, but it is a venture none the less. It is a venture of courage, and not of despair, of insight and not of bewilderment.[32]

If one risks his life, one always has the Scripture and the church to be his guides. The "light which lightens everyone who comes into the world" does not leave the believer without help, but ministers through the channels of grace to make faith credible and sure. If one makes a commitment to the Saviour on grounds that are sufficient, at least for the moment, the result, he believed, was the certainty for which we are all searching.

> What we want for our faith, to stake our eternal soul on, is absolute certainty. The matter of religion is God Himself in the soul; the result of it is certainty.[33]

It is clear that true certainty comes about as a result of the Christian experience. The reason is existential, for the logical Reason, however necessary and important it might be, cannot replace the Will as the primary element of personality. Therefore the "willing" individual must venture himself or herself in order to find God, and can never make the discovery without the venture. If one is content to lurk in the shadows of uncertainty, one will never discover the spiritual pleasures of divine communion. On the other hand, if one will know God, one must take the uncertain risk of faith. Only this is the true Christian

response, and only this can produce the sense of certainty in the soul. He wrote, "Indeed, the only true confession of the Incarnation is living faith."[34]

This living faith, while social in all of its ramifications, is nevertheless highly personal (as distinct from individual). Somewhat unfairly, perhaps, Forsyth said that the difference between the evangelical faith and the Catholic is that

> in the one there is put first direct relation between the soul and the Saviour; in the other there is demanded first an intermediary faith--a faith in the church.[35]

Unfair as we would deem it today, the statement fairly sums up Forsyth's strongly held conviction that the church is the product of a living faith and an experience of redemption, and not their cause. "We belong to the Church as a consequence of belonging to Christ," he wrote a few pages later.[36] The Christian experience, then, is an experience of life with Christ, nourished through the sacraments, fed by private prayer as well as public, and sustained by a conviction that life's dimensions are grander than the present life can possibly show.

Basic to such an experience is the recognition of the holy judgement of God. One recognizes his own sinfulness and willingly accedes to the fact that God's judgement is just. At the same time there is a recognition that Jesus' death was a willing sacrifice for the world, and this in turn leads one to accept the forgiveness offered through the cross. One then knows himself to be a forgiven child of God. It is never an easy process, and Forsyth is careful to

guard against giving the impression that it is. It is not a matter of the various elements in the experience occurring in temporal succession, as if penitence, pardon and peace flowed inevitably through the consciousness, each as a result of the previous one. The Christian experience of forgiveness, in fact, is always at war with a sense of unworthiness and of sin. Our modern emphasis on the necessity of forgiving one's self and on being able to live with one's self is met head on by a statement such as the following, so typical of Forsyth's real conviction: "None are so deeply forgiven as those who never forgive themselves."[37]

I believe that Forsyth was quite aware that there are psychological dangers in the inability to forgive one's self. He is here writing of those who <u>will</u> not forgive themselves because they are overwhelmed by the transcendent holiness which has redeemed them. This is not the same thing. The latter are forgiven, and do not carry the psychological burden which is the nemesis of the former. They know, however, that their redemption is none of their doing, but that it was obtained through the obedience of Jesus on the Cross. Grace, for Forsyth as for Bonhoeffer, was always costly, never cheap.

We sense, in his insistence on the moral dimension of religion, a genuine anxiety lest the Christian faith degenerate on the one hand into a sentimental pastime, and, on the other, into an empty and formal rite. At times he criticized the Church of Rome or the Church of England

for their perceived failures in these areas, but he was equally hard on his own church.

> The free churches have tended to idolize liberty at the cost of the truth and power which makes liberty--at the cost, therefore, of reverence, penitence, and humility...The Catholic Churches have tended, on the other side, to idolize unity, to sacrifice the church's holiness to her catholicity, and to lose the moral of the Gospel in a type of piety or in canonical correctness of procedure.[38]

His point had to do with the sacraments, but it is applicable to a broader area. Truth and holiness are to be upheld at all costs. The moral is always at the heart of the spiritual. The life with Christ is neither sentimental nor pious, but righteous. To maintain this is never easy. "Life is not a riddle for a tea-party, but a battle of blood," he wrote toward the end of his life.[39] He was convinced that, if faith were to grasp the essentially moral and therefore non-sentimental aspect of communion with Christ, all would be well.

> Yet it is the faith that needs moralizing most. If conduct is wrong, it is the religion that needs reforming; the life will follow the faith.[40]

Is it, however, true that "life will follow faith"? That is not easy to answer, nor do I intend to attempt it at this point. Given the presuppositions, however, that form the basis of Forsyth's theology, it is a justifiable conclusion. For if the holy Father enters into fellowship with imperfect mortals, it must be on the basis of an atonement of the holy. If Jesus offered the atonement, perfectly fulfilling the requirements of God for obedience to his divine will, then God's holiness can and does enfold

imperfect mortals in solidarity with Jesus. Mankind will not therefore be perfect, but will know itself to be set apart for God. Their only hope for righteousness consists in their being "in Christ".

If, then, this is the believer's faith, his actions will "follow faith" in two senses. First he will be moved by the spirit within him to imitate the way of Jesus. This means that he will try to model his life according to what he thinks will please God most, aware always that success is never guaranteed. In the second place, his "life will follow faith" in the sense that even such imitation is not possible except for the fact that God in his holy love has acted for mankind's salvation. Moral action has at its root God's holy action on the cross.

In this sense the life with Christ can become meaningful, primarily as a response to the loving redemption of God, and secondarily as a means of asserting the primacy of Jesus Christ in the process. The sacramental actions of the church affirm, and the life of prayer maintains, the union of the believer and the Saviour in a relationship that is at once mystical and ethical.

CHAPTER VI

Christ and the Scriptures

As a theologian committed to the biblical revelation, Forsyth took a positive stance vis-a-vis the Scriptures. They were the source-book for his theology and the moral and spiritual guide for his thinking. His early studies had made him a careful student of the Bible and his evangelical experience a devout one. He accepted, however, whatever he could learn from the critical study of the sources, so that no-one could ever think of him as a literalist. He sought the Gospel in the gospels, never binding himself to the viewpoint or the statements of the Evangelists. Even while searching for Jesus' own evaluation of the Scripture, Forsyth would not allow himself to be limited by it, since he recognized the limitations placed even on the apostolic writers (and Jesus himself) by their time and place. He was an evangelical who found the tools of criticism to be invaluable in opening up the Bible in a new way.

Because he bound himself to the revelation of the Gospel as contained in the Bible, Forsyth wanted to know what Jesus' attitude to the Bible (in his case, the Old Testament) had been. At the same he recognized (as stated above) that Jesus of Nazareth was a man of his day, even though he was God's revelation to the world. He therefore

held the commonly accepted viewpoints of his time in cosmogony and history, and most especially in relation to the Bible. Forsyth's delicately worked out theory of Kenosis, as found in his Person and Place of Jesus Christ, allowed him room to deny Jesus' omniscience as a man while affirming his complete and absolute divinity. One would be surprised to find that Jesus held a thoroughly twentieth century view of any scientific problem. If, then, Jesus is a man and not a divine apparition, we must also insist that his view of Scripture be contemporary and not an anachronism even in his own times. If this is so, then his view of the authorship of Genesis, for example, can make no conceivable difference to our understanding of the same, any more than his view of the shape of the world would affect our acceptance of the Copernican theory.

By now we can see what not all of Forsyth's contemporaries were able to see, that when he speaks of "Christ" he means far more than the man Jesus. "Christ"represents the fulness of the Gospel revelation, whereas Jesus is the man of Galilee. "Jesus" was born in Bethlehem and was recognized by some at least as a teacher of repute, whereas Christ is the revealing Son of God. Forsyth will insist that Jesus is the Christ, but also that we cannot expect omniscience within the limits of a human brain.

All of this seems so ordinary and matter-of-fact to us, but Forsyth was struggling against two types of opponent. On one side there were those who, like Campbell of the City Temple, agreed with this analysis of Jesus the God-man, but who therefore denied in effect the divine side of the paradox; on the other were the orthodox of the day who effectually eliminated the true humanity of Jesus by insisting that his view of the origins of the world or the authorship of Scripture must be taken as literal truth.

Forsyth was much more interested in the witness of Scripture to the meaning of Jesus' life and ministry than he was in the views held by Jesus about Scripture. There is a sense in which Forsyth exalts Jesus above the Scripture far more than did his more conservative contemporaries. It was the Scriptural witness to Jesus, and not the dominical witness to Scripture, that captured his attention. He made little of one that he might make much of the other. The result is that, when he wants to find an interpretation of the meaning of Scripture in the Bible itself, he turns to the apostles rather than to Jesus. The reason, as he might say, is that the apostles bear witness to the Gospel, whereas Jesus, in his life and work, is the Gospel itself. This can best be seen by examining Forsyth's own teaching concerning the Bible.

The authority of the Bible

Without a doubt Forsyth conceived himself as "a man set under authority". He believed that human beings could not live without some kind of authority in their lives. At the heart of the Christian faith, indeed, of any faith, there lies the primary question of the nature of the authority under which it operates. "The first condition of religion is authority," he wrote, and set about to demonstrate the point.[1]

As a Protestant Christian he believed that the authority for Christian faith and conduct lay in the Bible, but he was not so naive as to accept that statement in its literal sense. Religious authority is always more than a mere book, however venerated. It includes the power that lies behind the book, and it includes the experience out of which the book was produced. Yet, having said that, we must repeat that the Bible does lie at the heart of the Christian faith. He maintained that "the Bible is not our standard simply, but our source."[2] That means that it is a living font of experimental religion instead of a rule book for doctrine and piety. Like the church and the preacher, the Bible is part of the sacramental nature of God's revelation, becoming the locus of real encounters with deity.

The Bible's authority lies in a principle which is neither literal nor verbal in nature. In fact, Forsyth had

no patience with any theory of "verbal" inspiration, if by that is meant that the words of Scripture are written in such a way as to guarantee their freedom from all error. This would be to remove them from the ordinary rules of life and literature, and would deny their truly sacramental nature. He would have considered it unthinkable to go to the Bible for facts about the origin of the world or the composition of the stars, as unthinkable as it would have been to go to a scientist's biography for authoritative information about religion, unless that scientist were writing not qua scientist but as an experimentally religious person. The Bible is not and cannot be a mere repository of truths, since this would destroy its value as a source of divine Truth.

> Inspiration has not to do with information but with insight. It has to do entirely with the theology of the matter, and not with its historicity.[3]

The genius of nonconformity, at least in the British setting in which Forsyth knew it, was to be found precisely in this "spiritual" approach to Scripture. Mechanical methods of inspiration were to be discarded in favour of sacramental, and only thus could one preserve the fundamentally moral and spiritual nature of revelation.

> The Idea of Nonconformity, if we may look away from its foreign and imperfect forms, is the autonomy, supremacy and ethical quality of the spiritual principle.[4]

If this is true of nonconformity, how much more must we be careful to apply the principle to the larger and more catholic churches of Christendom. If he was unwilling to grant any principle of inspiration but the sacramental to guide our interpretation of Scripture, how much less would he allow a church or the church's authority to govern it. While Forsyth was, as we have noted, sympathetic in many ways to the deeper and richer insights of the catholic tradition, he was nevertheless convinced that at its heart lay a fundamental disordering of priorities. By bypassing scriptural authority and by substituting for it the authority of the church, the catholic churches (whether Roman or Anglican) had lost hold of the crucial authority represented by the Bible. A principle under the control of the church was in danger of denying the authority of the Word itself, which authority lay not in its rules but in its ability to open up communion with God. He sincerely believed that many churches, Protestant as well as Catholic, had made this substitution. He wrote,

> [There is but] one seat of revelation, which is the Bible; and one principle of revelation, which is the Gospel. We have to go back to the Bible and interpret it by its own inner light of the Gospel, and not by the Church. It is the Bible that interprets the Church, however the Church may expound the Bible.[5]

Forsyth held the apostolic interpretation of the Gospel to be the true one. In fact, he goes to some pains to show how Paul, for example, understood perfectly well what Jesus meant in certain circumstances, and how he

expounded Jesus more accurately than those modern commentators who would deny Paul's place in the matter. Paul is the true servant of Jesus in that he truly expounds the meaning of Jesus' life and work and not merely the meaning of his words.

> The Spirit visited the prophets; they had the Spirit; but Christ, the living Word, was identified with Him, with not only the power, but the holiness of God. When Paul in Romans 1:4 says that Christ rose by the spirit of holiness, the meaning of holiness there is not merely ethical...[it] means the majesty and sublimity and godhead of a God that transcends even the ethical world.[6]

Karl Barth has drawn attention to this same passage (Romans 1:4) in a very similar way, finding the "true significance of Jesus" in the trans-historical nature of the declaration of Sonship through the resurrection.[7] One fails to appreciate the subtlety of Paul's argument if (a) one thinks that he believed in a "deified man", or if (b) one considers that he was mistaken in looking for deity at all. Paul told his friends in Corinth that he "no longer knew Christ after the flesh," but in saying so he was not forsaking the historical roots of his faith.[8] It would be better to say that Christ was the window through which he glimpsed a glory he had not known through religion. Of such a man as he had become through this insight he could boast, he said, since he had been drawn by Jesus to the open window of heaven, seeing things not permitted to mortal eyes. This is how he understood it.[9]

Barth says,

> Within history, Jesus as the Christ can be understood only as Problem or Myth. As the Christ, He brings the world of the Father.[10]

In this sense, then, Forsyth saw the holiness of God touching the transcendent and suprahistorical realm of the Spirit, a realm so far beyond earthly experience that we cannot even say that it exists, only that such a world is known to us in our faith-experience. Kierkegaard asks if there is a "teleological suspension of the ethical," taking as his "text" the story of the sacrifice of Isaac.[11] His answer is pertinent to this point since he too saw the knight of faith as passing beyond the ethical because of his relationship to the world of the Spirit. An ethical life, noble as it is, does not cross over to the godward side of reality; only faith, commitment and decision can do that. This has been the argument of Forsyth throughout, that God's holiness is a transcendent reality perceived only by faith, and never by human goodness. As he understood the Bible, and particularly Paul's letters, he saw faith as the response to the self-revelation of God, and holiness as a gift never to be earned, but only gratefully received.

The authority of the Bible, then, arises from the fact that it reveals the Gospel in words as Jesus revealed it in act. It is the "alphabetization" of the Word as Jesus was its incarnation. But unlike Jesus, the Bible is the servant of the Gospel, in that it must faithfully proclaim the Gospel, yet at the same time it is the one place to

which appeal can be made when differences arise as to what the Gospel truly is. The Bible demands to be proclaimed and preached.

Forsyth urged Christian preachers to be theologians and scholars of the Word of the Bible, even though he satirically commented more than once that the British public was unwilling to expend the mental energy required to follow such preachers.

> We have come to this -- that if you penetrate into the interior of the New Testament you will be accused of being a theologian; and then it is all over with your welcome.[12]

Yet, he said, it is ultimately worth the effort, if only because those who do hear and understand the Word of the Bible will have grasped what is central in the Gospel and in the faith. He advised preachers,

> Do not be afraid of long texts, long passages. Preach less from verses and more from paragraphs.[13]

He would have the British public know the true and spiritual meaning of the Bible, thus coming under its authority. Forsyth was a preaching-oriented theologian.

The Bible and criticism

What marked Forsyth out from many evangelicals of his own and of a later day was his readiness, even his eagerness, to accept the work of biblical critics and to use the results of their work as a tool for his own studies. As a scholar who spent a great part of his life in an

academic setting, Forsyth valued the disciplined mind and the gifts of scholarship. He despised the Christian preacher whose knowledge of the Bible was no better than that of a serious reader. Such a preacher can have but glimpses of the truth, and, if he were to enter into serious theological discussion, could make no real contribution to the merits of the case.

> This is the misfortune of the self-taught who goes straight to his Bible for the materials of his theology[14]

but can make no headway with understanding the real Gospel meaning contained in the words of the Bible. This led him to comment further that

> the Bible is enough for our saving faith, but it is not enough for our scientific theology.[14]

He could not abide the self-taught ignoramuses who might be able to quote pages of Scripture to back up previously taken positions, but who, having no firm ground from which to sally forth, could do no more than to compound ignorance.

He held criticism, however, to be a tool for understanding the Bible, and nothing more. The truth produced by criticism was not saving truth. The critic was a scientist or historian whose job it was to search for clarification, but who could not expound (qua critic) the sacramental significance of the Scripture. This scientific search for clarification enabled the theologian to carry out an equally scientific search for meaning. Thus, if one were to look for the historic meaning behind Scripture,

one might be able to

> get rid, for example, of the idea that Paul was thinking about us who live 2,000 years after him. He was not thinking about us at all. He did not expect the world to last a century.[15]

If one can clear such hurdles as this, through the help of dedicated biblical criticism, one can then approach Scripture in a religious, as opposed to an academic, fashion. Small wonder that he could say that "modern scholarship has made of the Bible a new book."[16]

At the heart of the human soul, whether recognized or not, there is a religious need. This was a basic assumption behind all that Forsyth wrote. To be fully human, one needs a relationship with God. This being so, he believed the religious purpose of the Bible to take precedence over all other purposes. It was not to be looked upon as a scientific book, even though the scientific comments of the Bible were valuable insofar as they served the basic religious purpose of the book. This is not to say that Forsyth ignored the scientific side of the Bible, however. He wrote,

> We read the Bible, not for correct or historical knowledge, but for religious purposes...But it has its dangers. You need the other ways to correct it.[17]

Fortunately for this combination of scientific interest and religious devotion, he believed that true scientific criticism also had, as its ultimate purpose, a religious encounter with the Almighty. The best critics are

religious people, whose hearts are served by their minds. He was convinced that scientific criticism of the Bible at its best is concerned to produce the possibility at least of a truly spiritual theology.

> The most advanced New Testament criticism is now concerned to show that the main interest of the evangelists is not biographical, but dogmatic.[18]

In other words, the best criticism yields the best theology.

He urged a "return to the Bible" in the truest sense of that phrase, a sense in which "Back to the Bible" would be eminently unsatisfying. A return to the Bible that is merely a return to the old literalism cannot produce the needed results in terms of the spiritual renewal of the church. A return to the Bible, however, that is truly scientific can clear the way for the revival of spiritual life.

> This return to the Bible is but a beginning. The scholars clear the ground and show the way to the crucial point. And their work is more needed than most things. But it is not the one thing needful, which is a fresh realisation of the holy grace of God in the heart and conscience of a church now distracted because devitalized.[19]

The Bible and Theology

There was yet another reason for Forsyth's insistence on a scientific approach to the Bible, besides his concern that the spiritual power of the Bible should be experienced.

He believed that a scientific understanding would allow the church's leaders to settle some of the theological arguments which plagued the church.

> Let us find out first what the Bible really says, and then discuss whether the Bible is right or wrong.[20]

If the Christian pastor, aided by the biblical theologian, could settle the questions of meaning and content in the Bible itself, he could then turn his attention to shaping the message to be offered to the heart and soul of mankind. We can sense as we read his work the burden he felt for the students for the ministry who were under his tutelage. Thrust out into a world that was dying for the message of life, they were like sailors without a compass unless they could find in the Bible their master chart. Forsyth had struggled often enough with the problem of finding material for a weekly sermon to know and understand their difficulty. However,

> it is a light matter having to cast about for a text to face Sunday compared with having to cast about for a message to face our world.[21]

Ultimately, this is the purpose of the scientific study of the biblical text.

One asks whether or not the religious outlook of one age is able to satisfy the spiritual needs of a later one. Answers to such a question will vary from a flat negative to an equally emphatic affirmative. Forsyth believed that there was a core of truth which did not change, and which would be present ideally in all interpretations

of the religious message. This core is what he spoke of as the Gospel, a message of life communicated through and achieved in Jesus' death on the cross. This was the mighty act of God whereby he redeemed the world, and neither the act itself nor the effect of it could ever change.

This is not, however, the same thing as the testimony of the church to the Gospel. Such testimony may and should vary from age to age. The theology of one age is not the theology of the next, nor should it be. Theology is the exposition of the central truths of religion, and, since it must expound its truth to a specific age and time, it must adapt itself even though its central message remain the same.

Forsyth saw this as the preacher's task. The central message of the Gospel is the action (as we have said) of Jesus in incarnation and atonement. The Bible is the apostolic, and therefore relatively unchanging, witness to this action.[22] In this sense the Bible itself will not change, since it is the historically conditioned account of those who were witnesses to what Jesus said and did. What they said about Jesus may be right or wrong, but it remains said.

The testimony of the apostles and other witnesses, however, remains with us as a guidepost to the Gospel. It is not itself the Gospel. Those who come to the Bible to discover the meaning of these great events are bound to listen to the testimony about the Gospel, but they are not bound to repeat it verbatim. It must be interpreted to the world, and the preacher is the person called to

provide the interpretation in the language and thought-forms of his day.

In this case, then, the Bible is the source book for theology. The interpreter must begin with the Bible, even though he declares it in ways that will be understood by his hearers. How closely he is bound to his source book is a point that will always remain debatable, since the only "safe" position would be one that opts for a literal repetition of the biblical word. This Forsyth rejected, and in his own preaching he believed sincerely that he was interpreting what Paul and the others had said in a way that would have satisfied the apostles; he also believed that he was declaring to the twentieth century the old Gospel in a theology that was new and vibrant. In Revelation Old and New he gave it as his conviction that

> an ideal ministry must not only be positive in its Gospel, it must be flexible in its thought. It must be capable of preparing a new theology for the old faith. It must learn how to express the old reality in terms of the new age.[23]

It will therefore sometimes be necessary to differentiate between various parts of the Bible, or various parts of the New Testament, and even parts of the same Gospel story, as to their relative merits from the point of view of the central core of the message. Forsyth did not hold all parts of the Bible to be equal in value, since not all parts gave equal prominence to

the Gospel. The Gospel is his lodestone. He does not even turn to the ethical statements of the New Testament as the chief documents for Christian ethical theory, since

> the source of Christian ethic must be the same as the source of Christian worship. And that is not the Sermon on the Mount, but the moral inwardness and creativeness of the Cross, which the sermon but illustrates.[24]

Even though one may tire of repeating it, the central core of the Bible was for him the Gospel, and all else revolved around that. He in any case never tired of repeating it, and over and over we are reminded that the Cross informs all of his theology. The corollary is that all else may be ignored, contradicted or re-evaluated if necessary, in order that the Gospel remain firm.

Even when speaking of the Cross, of course, Forsyth was not interested merely in the physical aspects of it, the wood and the nails, or even in the agony of a condemned man hanging on it. He was no more interested in that than he was in a mere "flesh-and-blood" Jesus. Paul said,

> From now on we regard no-one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer.[25]

We have already made the point that the human manifestation of Jesus was not to be thought of as the "Christ" in the fullest sense of the word, even though Forsyth would say that "Jesus is the Christ." The "Christ" must include the risen Lord, as well as his continuing personal presence

with the believer. In the same way the "Cross" is not merely an instrument of execution, or even the event in which the man Jesus was placed upon it. It also includes the divine purpose and a decision that goes back much farther than the man of Nazareth.

> Science explains its universe by going back to the action of infinite power for millions of years; but faith explains its world by going forward to God's action in eternity.[26]

Nowhere was Forsyth clearer in his statement of his own position than in a passage in Faith, Freedom and the Future in which he says that for him the Bible and the Word of God are not to be confused.

> When I speak of the Word here I do not identify it with the Bible...The Word is man's responsive and inspired act of confessing the Gospel as the new creative act of God. It took effect first in the apostles, and then in the continuous and manifold publication of their message by the church.[27]

The Word is an inclusive term which brings together God's purpose, Jesus' action, the biblical witness, the church's proclamation and, ultimately, the believer's response.[28]

What was it that gave Forsyth the freedom to assert so boldly his own theology as the true Gospel? His authority lay ultimately where all (Christian) authority must rest, and that is in his experience of redemption through the atonement of Jesus' cross. He tried to keep from subjectivity in his reference of all true and authoritative experience to the atonement of Jesus' act on Calvary. Nevertheless it remains true that for him it was

the experience of that event that was ultimately meaningful. In reference to the Reformation he declared, in defence of his own spiritual experience, that

> the inspiration of that movement was spiritual autonomy on ethical principles -- the free religion of the forgiven conscience, the experimental liberty of the redeemed.[29]

Such an experience, he believed, had already liberated thousands from the tyranny of church and priest, and would continue to do so.

The principle of the "free religion of the forgiven conscience", since it had been the inspiration of the Reformation, should also be applicable in some way to the Bible. That is, since the Bible has the potential of being used as the tool of a new class of priest, exercising its own tyranny over the mind, the experience of redemption must free the believer from this tyranny too. Forsyth knew very well the kind of mind-set that could take the words of the Bible and make of them an authoritarian weight for the soul. It was the mind-set that saw in Genesis the history of the world's beginnings and in Revelation a detailed pattern of the world to come. But, he wrote,

> the Bible is not a sketch-book of past things, nor a picture-book of last things.[30]

Neither the dogmatists who look to the Bible for their science nor the visionaries who look to it for their predictions can take away from the true believer the experience of redemption which is his.

If the authority to which the believer must yield is his experience of redemption, then the Bible will have to take second place to something higher than itself. This "something higher" is the Gospel. It is the Gospel which both tells of the experience and leads us into it.

> The foundation of the church in every age is not a common system, but this common Gospel; wherein Christ is neither mere symbol of spiritual Humanity, nor the mere sacrament of God's love, but the full Saviour of the race.[31]

He went on to say that while there were many divisions of thought in the early church, there were nevertheless "representative apostles" of whom the New Testament was "their register and index."[31] The New Testament, and specifically the apostles who defined it, are therefore to be considered the criteria for the evaluation of the truth of our doctrine.

The experience which validates the New Testament is therefore an experience of knowing Christ.

> What we crave is strength, power, confidence, a stand-by (παράκλητος) -- One Who is our peace. To grasp that is faith; and by that we live, and not by our own experience as such.[32]

Thus we see that the experience which saves is an experience of salvation itself. That is, as was said above, it is an experience of Jesus. This conviction leads us out of merely subjective experience to the universal Christian experience, from the place where we say, "I am certain," to the place where we say, "It is certain."[33]

If Forsyth will not allow us to find our authority in subjectivism, neither will he rest content with mysticism. Merely personal experience is fleeting; and mysticism has no rock-hard base. Nor will he rest on biblicism, for biblicism can be tyrannical. None of these will produce the kind of experience of Christ which he wants. Yet of these, he felt that our experience of Christ had most in common with the last, for it must be based in the scriptural revelation, since even though the Bible takes second place to Jesus, it remains the only sure guide we have to the person of Christ and what it means to have a personal experience of Christ. Without the Bible, the seeker becomes a wanderer, though

> one cannot but feel sympathy for the honest and forthright person who...cherishes a doctrinal agnosticism on a pathless moor of liberty in a warm mist of charity.[34]

Such gentle irony indicates both his kindly spirit and, even more, his strongly held conviction concerning the nature of the biblical authority.

He had another concern in this respect. It had to do with the missionary proclamation of the church, in which he had a life-long interest. He believed that the simple biblicism which is often the underpinning of the missionary movement should be replaced by a sophisticated understanding of the Gospel. Of one particular area of concern in this regard he wrote,

> It may be plainly said that the theology with which the missionaries went out a century ago will not do what has to be done for India.[35]

The context of this statement dealt with the fact that the educated classes of India had failed to respond to the Christian Gospel as it had been hoped that they would. Forsyth found the failure to lie in the theology of the past which had been too uncritically biblical. Those missionaries had seen all foreign (non-European) nations as heathen people to be won to the faith and civilization of the West. The appeal of their Gospel had been individualistic, and particularly appealed to individuals of oppressed or depressed groups. It appealed hardly at all to the educated or influential classes of what we now call the "Third World," and it was this that led Forsyth to challenge the church to find new methods. He argued, long before such an approach was popular, that the nations of the world would have to be won to Christianity by their own people; and if so then Christian missions would have to concentrate on winning those with the natural capacity for winning their own. Christian theology and the Christian understanding of the Bible would have to change if the Christian faith was to challenge the minds of the world's thoughtful and educated people.

The Bible and the divine holiness

One can see in the foregoing that Forsyth considered the Bible to be of the nature of a sacrament. I cannot find that he called it such, yet its effect is similar to the effect of the ministry on the church, or the church in

the world. It is, of course, a collection of the literature of a people, a record of the spiritual pilgrimage of the church of God and a book describing the ethical and theological principles of the life of the spirit. Its power for the church, however, lies in its being a means of grace, a doorway through which one is enabled to pass to an experience of God.

This in part explains his readiness to accept, on one hand, the fruits of biblical criticism and, on the other, his wariness of those he referred to as "the extreme critics." That he was wary of the latter there can be no doubt, for he saw in them a threat to the Bible, not as literature, but as a means of grace.

> If the extreme critics are right with the Jesus they construct scientifically from the records, then we know the real Jesus rather in spite of the New Testament than by it.[36]

He had come to know "the real Jesus" through his encounter with the Bible of the Christian believer, not that of the critics, and was unwilling to let it go.

Just as he drew a distinction between the Bible of the literalists and that of the evangelical believer, so too he distinguished between a Bible that is a compendium of propositional truths and one which is able through words to express the divine Truth. Revelation was for him a personal thing, offered, that is, through the life and person of Jesus.

This is not to say, however, that he considered the Bible as merely an occasion of revelation. It was more than that, for the statements of the Bible, while not themselves revelation, were important to the understanding of what that revelation was.

> Revelation did not come in a statement,
> but in a person; yet stated it must be.
> Faith must go on to specify.[37]

This was itself sufficient reason for the theological task of formulating propositions, or indeed for the reverent acceptance of the apostolic witness as given in the Bible.

To support his view that the Bible was sacramental in nature, Forsyth sought for what he believed to be Jesus' own purpose in his ministry. Behind the telling of a parable or other didactic story there could lie at least two different purposes. One of these is instruction, or the communication of truth; the other is motivation, or the leading of the listener to the adoption of an attitude, a belief or a decision. Forsyth believed this latter to be Jesus' main purpose and declared that "the ruling idea of the Bible in Christ's hands had been righteousness, and not religious knowledge."[38] This is in fact what the Evangelists appear to have seen in Jesus' teaching ministry. However puzzling it may have seemed to them at the time, they nevertheless record that Jesus told stories more to confuse than to enlighten his hearers.[39] Presumably this is not intended to mean that Jesus wanted to turn people

away, but that he sought the kind of divine encounter which could lead disciples to a proper knowledge of God. When Matthew records the spontaneous confession of Peter at Caesarea Philppi, there is no hiding the pure joy in Jesus' reply: "Bless you, Simon bar-Jona! This has not been revealed to you by human lips, but by the father in heaven."[40]

Because he had encountered the holiness of God in Jesus of Nazareth, Forsyth looked for and expected to see the same divine manifestation in the book which spoke of Jesus. He expected the Bible to be less a book of information than a means of opening the eyes of the reader to the light of eternity. As in Jesus, so in the Bible we are to meet with God and experience the redemptive holiness of God.

We repeat that the revelatory nature of the Bible is sacramental, and this because it does not reveal God directly, but through "means". The writers of the New Testament back up their chief purpose, that is, of leading people to God, with a mixture of exhortation, theological teaching and ethical instruction.[41] In so doing, they were aware that they were creating the conditions necessary for faith. The Fourth Gospel says,

> These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.[42]

What fills Forsyth's theology of the Bible with spiritual power is the same thing that gives his theology of the Atonement its dynamic, namely a conviction that in

Jesus Christ the holiness of God has made its great triumphant bid for the soul of mankind. As the cross is God's great act, the Bible is God's great word; and in the act witnessed to by the word, and in the word which bears its witness to the act, can be seen the holy God reclaiming his creation by the destruction of the sin that holds it in thrall.

As the cross was the means whereby the holy Christ made mankind his own, the Bible is the witness to the fact that it happened. It has therefore a unique status among all of the signs of God's grace, for without it there would as a matter of fact be no witness at all to the cross-event. The Bible is, therefore, not "holy" by itself, but derivatively. It is Jesus who is at the centre of Forsyth's theology of the Bible. He is sure that he stands here with the apostles, for "the apostles never separated reconciliation in any age from the Cross and blood of Jesus Christ."[43]

To take the Bible seriously, then, frees one from other types of authority, since one is able to recognize only the miracle of holiness in the person of Jesus Christ. One has no other master, since Christ, the Christ of the Bible, is his only head.

> The principle of the autonomy of faith prescribes that neither prince nor premier be head, or even be called head, of the church; but only Jesus Christ...[44]

While Forsyth directed this barb at the Established Church of England, in principle he wanted to liberate the church from the tyranny of Popes as well as Princes, and, we must presume, of majorities and power structures of all kinds. The apostolic witness is our best defence against tyranny because it binds us so closely to the holy Saviour.

If the Bible opens a window on the holiness of God, it intends us to be filled with reverence and awe. This is so in those numinous moments when Israel's God spoke to his prophets as in those later days when we see the King of Kings and Lord of Lords taking his throne in the eternal kingdom of the Apocalypse. But there is no moment in the Bible so filled with this sense of reverence as the one the Evangelists make so much of, when Jesus cries out both in agony and in triumph. At that moment we are led into the mysteries of judgement and reconciliation, and we are present as a new people is created ex nihilo, as it were. Forsyth will have us see a world restored to its rightful place in the plan of God. The Bible, a collection of the religious literature of a people, becomes in such a moment the "Holy Bible."

CHAPTER VII

Some Christological Questions

The thesis of this paper has been that Jesus Christ is at the heart of the theological writing of Peter Taylor Forsyth. That statement by itself, however, is not very illuminating, since the picture of Jesus as it emerges from the pen of Forsyth is not one that would be universally accepted. It is not the "Jesus of History" of a previous era; nor is it a Jesus who would fit easily into the thought of a rationalist age. The Christ who is at the centre of Forsyth's theology is a personality both human and divine, but exemplifying in his life and work the holiness which is a characteristic properly of divinity alone. Thus our thesis has also dealt with the concept of holiness as the characteristic of divinity which sets Jesus apart from all who have been religious leaders in the past.

It must be admitted that the bulk of Forsyth's thinking concerning Jesus is centered on Jesus' death rather than his life. He spent little time in his writings on Jesus' ministry to the sick and the outcast. The parables do not occupy much space either, with the notable exception of his book Pulpit Parables for Young Hearers, which was not designed as a theological work. Even when, as he did from time to time, he used a parable of Jesus in a sermon or elsewhere, it soon became apparent that his interests

lay rather in the atoning cross than in the healing or teaching ministry.

His terminology is an indication of this tendency. Undoubtedly the Apostle Paul used "Christ" in preference to "Jesus" as the proper name of choice for the Saviour. (If we count the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians as genuinely Pauline, we find that Paul used "Christ" 210 times as compared to 31 times for "Jesus" and 111 times for the combined form "Jesus Christ". If we discount Ephesians and Colossians we find that it is 164 times for "Christ", 29 times for Jesus and 86 times for the combined form.) A generation or two of students brought up in the liberal tradition which Forsyth fought so hard have learned to distinguish between the two names, generally using "Jesus" by preference and reserving the word "Christ" for occasions in which the risen, exalted or divine Lord is specifically meant. Thus the use of the proper name or the messianic title could become a shibboleth to distinguish between the liberal or the evangelical approach. Forsyth would, I am sure, have been shocked.

Nevertheless he was undoubtedly Pauline in this respect. Almost invariably he uses "Christ" as the proper name, and, like Paul, his interest centres less on the daily life of Jesus and more on the exploits of the Redeemer, or the Lordship of the heavenly being. Such an approach is undoubtedly biblical if one views the Gospel, as Forsyth did, as primarily dependent on the <u>apostolic</u>

witness. Not only did he accept the apostolic witness as determinative of the "Gospel", but he defined "apostolic" very largely in terms of Paul. This approach is, we repeat, biblical, but it nevertheless raises questions for those whose understanding of the four Gospels has been conditioned by a liberal historical view of the life of Jesus. Such questions must inevitably be faced if the historicity of Jesus is to be maintained, and there can be no doubt that Forsyth at least looked upon such historicity as essential to the theology of atonement. Four such questions are suggested in what follows. They are: (i) The divinity of Jesus; (ii) the relationship of eternal salvation to historic event; (iii) the problem of sinlessness in Jesus; and (iv) the question of Jesus' own self-consciousness.

1. The Divinity of Jesus

It was a basic premise of Forsyth's theology that the Jesus Christ of whom he wrote and spoke was a divine being, or rather, a manifestation of the divine being. His sometimes unorthodox approach to traditionally orthodox issues may be seen at its best here, and illustrates that in fact he belonged neither to the liberal nor to the traditional camp. The traditional but hackneyed words that express the essence of divinity (omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence) are not the categories he used to write about God. If these concepts are used to describe the "deity"

of God, obviously different concepts, or re-interpretations of the old ones, will be necessary in speaking of the "deity" of Jesus of Nazareth. Omnipresence at the very least must be rejected as having little significance in relation to the son of Mary.

Clearly, then, even the most orthodox of theologians have always had to deal with the fact that in some ways Jesus appears to have been limited in ways that are not appropriate to deity. If Jesus' knowledge were complete, it is apparent that he went to some pains to disguise that fact. He professed ignorance, in a very familiar passage, of the date of the Parousia.[1] In another he made reference to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, a view with which modern biblical scholarship is not generally in agreement.[2]

A more philosophical line of argument has maintained Jesus' limited nature by the difficulty of compressing the universe of knowledge into a small boy's mind, or by raising the problem of the governance of the world during the time that God was in the tomb. Is it possible to limit infinity, even temporarily? Is it possible that the infinite can even voluntarily limit itself? It is a specious if witty argument that would point in response to the limited infinity contained in the mathematical infinity of fractions between 1 and 2!

Naturally, orthodox Christianity had offered solutions to the puzzle of finite divinity. The

Christological controversies of the earlier centuries of the Christian era had produced a formula that had been accepted as an orthodox statement of the Christian view of the nature of Jesus. The Council of Chalcedon had devised a form of words which set a standard for such discussion in the future. It was, of course, a compromise, politically arrived at, that satisfied neither of the schools of thought that had made it necessary. But it was considered to be an adequate statement of the divine and human natures of Jesus, a plumb-line for the future. The difficulty was that no-one could find anything better.

Forsyth felt that the problem of Chalcedon lay in the concept of personality. The men of Chalcedon, whether from Antioch or Alexandria, had dealt with nature and not personality. But it is inconceivable to a modern mind that a "person" should have two different and apparently irreconcilable natures. He wrote,

> It [Chalcedon] conceived it as an act of might, of immediate divine power, an act which united the two natures <u>into</u> a person rather than <u>through</u> a person.[3]

The prepositions are important, for personality is more than the pot into which natures are placed. The personality is active and creative. Perhaps, however, we should not expect too much of the fifth century of the Christian era, creative as it was in so many ways. At least Forsyth's contemporaries took personality more seriously, without being much more successful than was

Chalcedon in solving the puzzle of the divine humanity. One, Gottfried Thomasius of Erlangen, who died in Forsyth's twenty-seventh year and just a year before the latter was ordained at Shipley in Yorkshire, proposed a theory which in the opinion of many distorts the personality of Jesus as much as Chalcedon could possibly do. Seizing on the second chapter of Philippians, and especially the word ἐκένωσεν, Thomasius suggested that the Second Person of the Godhead laid aside the distinctively divine attributes which he possessed and lived for a while as a human being. While others had seen the idea as allowing possibilities for devotional approaches to Jesus, Thomasius' theory was a distinctly modern one.

It depended on a differentiation in the value placed on the divine attributes. The distinctively divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence were to be laid aside, while others such as purity and holiness and love were to be kept intact. Obviously, Jesus of Nazareth could not be thought of in any meaningful way as being "omnipresent", but does this mean that omnipresence is a more divine attribute than holy love? If so, was Jesus less divine after his great sacrifice than he was before (thinking of his "great sacrifice" in terms of the "decision" to become human)? Can Deity lay aside any of its attributes and remain deity? If power is to be thought of as distinctively divine, and therefore as essential to the nature of divinity, is love not the same?

Among critics of Thomasius' theory I select but one for some fundamental criticism of this approach. Donald M. Baillie asks whether, when God had emptied himself into human form, the rest of the universe was without a divine hand.[4] Temple's criticism, which Baillie is here repeating, is a reductio ad absurdum, designed to press on what critics feel is the Achilles' heel of the kenotic theory. In my opinion, Baillie's second criticism is much more to the point, for he suggests that Thomasius had proposed no more than a temporary theophany. "He had been God, but now He was a man," is Baillie's way of pointing out a purely temporary condition, for the man returned to being God again.[5] A third criticism offered by Baillie is even more damning. If Jesus took on human form, laying aside his divinity temporarily, has the Son of God sloughed off his humanity now, and is Jesus no more? "Thus, on the Kenotic theory...He is God and Man, not simultaneously in a hypostatic union, but successively--first divine, then human, then God again."[6]

Forsyth produced, in The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, a variant of the Kenotic theory which I believe is not susceptible to this criticism, nor to Baillie's second. It may be more open to the first. Two principles guided his thinking in this respect. First, he believed that personality was more important than power. If personality is the primary category, then such terms as "omnipotence" or "omnipresence" cease to be of importance in defining

the nature of deity. Second, he believed that deity includes rather than excludes all possibilities of personal expression. Finite humanity, therefore, is not necessarily a limitation of deity. It may be a possibility for the expansion of God's personal being. In other words, the classical understanding of finitude as a limitation of the infinite is rejected in favour of a theory which includes both finitude and infinitude as modes of God's self-existence. If, indeed, God cannot experience finite human existence, Forsyth argued, this in itself is a limitation of God.

> The conditions of time must lie within the possibilities of Eternity, the growth of man within the infinite mobility of the changeless God. Finitum non capax infiniti is the principle of Deism; the principle of Christian theism is infinitum capax finiti. If the finite lies beyond the infinite, and outside it, then the infinite is reduced to be but a larger finite; the infinite can only remain so if it have the power of the finite as well.[7]

Forsyth's theory, therefore, although he speaks of it as "kenosis" is different from that of Thomasius in that the divine kenosis involves taking on the human mode of existence rather than of laying aside the divine. This "kenosis" was not accomplished immediately, but in reality only through a "plerosis" by means of which God, through his taking on of human nature, became more truly divine.

This needs exposition. Forsyth maintained that an attribute cannot be laid down. An attribute is not a

thing or entity, but only "the Being himself in a certain angle and relation."[8] He therefore redefines the "essentially divine" attributes. Omnipotence means that God is equal to all that is involved in his will of love and is determined by nothing outside himself. Omnipresence means that God is not hampered by space but that he can enter spatial relations without being tied by them. Omniscience he is unwilling to discard, for it means that God has actual intelligence absolutely and simultaneously "as a necessary feature of his being." But, as with the two previous attributes, it may exist as discrete or empirical omniscience or it may retire into potentiality.[9]

One must consider the Incarnation of Jesus, therefore, as God taking on himself the human mode of life. All other possible modes of existence remain possible for him. Because he is not "laying down" the attributes of divinity, but rather "taking up" the conditions of humanity, God is still fully God even during the Incarnation.

At first the man Jesus is unconscious of his difference from those who surround him. He asks questions of the teachers in the Temple, and presumably learns the trade of carpentry in the same way that any other youth would learn it. Slowly he becomes aware of himself and of his special relationship with God. It is characteristic of Forsyth's approach that it is the volitional rather than the intellectual that is stressed here. The Letter to the Hebrews says that "he learned obedience through what he

suffered."[10] Forsyth might paraphrase it thus: "He learned divinity through his obedience." Jesus was never more divine than when, hanging on the cross, he seemed most doubtful of his relationship with the Father.

The concept of Kenosis is Forsyth's way of expressing his belief that God assumed in Jesus a human mode which was eternally "there". He adds, I believe, a powerful dimension to his teaching when he couples the idea with that of "plerosis", for the two are part of the same thing in his theology. The latter term is applied to the step-by-step self-awareness and spiritual development of Jesus, for development is essential to any theology that deals with Incarnation as realistically as his does. As Jesus learned to obey, he became more and more what he already was by nature. The ultimate obedience consisted in his self-oblation, and therefore the cross was the final step into his own and proper sphere. We might use the phrase (though Forsyth would not), "he became divine," as a realistic description of the final and complete self-awareness of Jesus. He entered into the glory that (potentially) had been always his.

At the same time, and it is essential to note this as part of Forsyth's message, Jesus was accepting more and more the limitations inherent in any human life. As a baby, all of life's possibilities were open to him, but he was least like "the Son of God". As a prisoner of Pilate he faced death. He had become more and more human,

through the same processes by which he had become more and more divine. God had entered more and more and more into the human mode as Jesus had entered more and more into his divinity. The progress was identical. Kenosis and plerosis are two movements, each necessary to the other, of Incarnation.

Although Forsyth does not wish to speak of attributes as if they were entities separable from the personality of the one who possesses them, he insists that throughout the "kenosis" of the Son there is one element which does not change. The holiness of God is never laid aside, nor is it held in abeyance, in a state of potentiality. Holiness is not a negotiable item. If God can be both finite and infinite, he cannot be both holy and unholy. Although finitude is a limitation on infinity, unholiness is not a limitation on holiness, but its contradiction and its destruction. Therefore Jesus of Nazareth cannot sin, even though he can be tempted "in all points just as we are." Jesus of Nazareth, weak as any other mortal, not sharing the wealth of intellectual resources of the Father, is nevertheless sinless.

The problem of how a sinless man can be tempted in any fashion that makes sense is answered by Forsyth by calling on the limited knowledge of Jesus the man. Jesus could not sin, but perhaps he did not know that he could not sin. If this be true, then temptation could be real enough, and the moral struggle strong enough.

Forsyth argues that any form of guilt or sin in Jesus the man would have impaired his ability to sympathize with the weaknesses of humanity.

> That is an axiom of modern experience. The guilty cannot escape from himself, cannot empty himself. And the incarnation was a moral act so supreme and complete as to be possible only to a conscience at the pitch of the perfectly holy.[11]

He argues, secondly, and in the same place, that the truly human is not sin, but the power to be tempted to sin. Jesus could not sin, because he was true God. But he he could be tempted for the same reason.

> He could be tempted because he loved; he could not sin because he loved so deeply, widely, infinitely, holily, because it was God he loved--God more than man.[12]

If we ask whether such sinlessness might be possible to a mortal, the answer comes in a re-affirmation of the qualitative difference between God, even God incarnate, and humanity. Holiness is not possible to a mortal, at least in the sense in which God is holy, or Jesus of Nazareth was holy. We are called upon to be holy, as the Father in heaven is holy, but the word is not used in the same sense.

> For the creature to be holy is <u>to be for God</u>; for God himself to be holy is <u>to be God</u>.[13]

In this qualitative diffecerence can be found the secret of the holiness of the Incarnate God.

It is not difficult to see that Forsyth differs from his predecessors in his use of kenotic theory. For first,

Forsyth insists that at no time did Jesus "lay aside" any aspects or attributes of divinity.

> The Godhead lost nothing in the saving act. It took the whole power of godhead to save; it was not the Son's work alone; far less then was it the work of any impaired Son.[14]

The power possessed by the divine Son was held in abeyance, or, to use Forsyth's own metaphor, was compressed powerfully into potentiality. This was done in a moral act before time began. The real sacrifice of Christ was made before and not after the incarnation.

Second, this implies that none of the attributes of divinity are expendable. God remains God, even in incarnation, and takes on human experience by adding it to his total experience, rather than by denying part of the reality that already was.

I believe that in this way Forsyth avoids the criticisms which I summarized on page 194 above. Even the most telling of Baillie's criticisms is satisfactorily answered by this approach. (i) The crude separation of the Father from the Son against which Baillie protests has no place in Forsyth's statement of the theory. God is not divided and the godhead takes on the experience of humanity without sacrificing its godhead. Thus the question does not arise as to "who was in charge of the universe" during the period of the Lord's earthly life. (ii) Nor is the Incarnation a mere theophany, for the Saviour divests himself of nothing in order to become

a man. There is no temporary alteration in the nature of God, which Baillie quite rightly regards as a mockery of the Christian doctrine of God. (iii) Finally, if the "potentiality" of the human mode becomes "actual", the very terminology that Forsyth uses makes it clear that he regards the eternity of the divine and the human in God to be of the essence of his doctrine of Incarnation. To "compress powerfully" the universal knowledge of God (for example) into potentiality implies its continuing existence. Likewise, when Jesus withdraws into the Kingdom of the Father the human experience is not abolished, but retained as an essential part of the total experience of God.

Forsyth insists that it is the soteriological principle, and not the metaphysical, that must be the starting-point for any discussion of this subject. Because of that he refuses to speak of personalities or of natures, but prefers to think of personal movement.

> It might be better, it might save us much confusion and collision, if we were less concerned to speak or think of the two natures within the life of Christ, as we have long ceased to think of two persons, or two consciousnesses. Neither does justice to the interest of salvation. As that interest is the interest of personal communion, and not of human deification, it might be better to describe the union of God and man in Christ as the mutual involution of two personal movements raised to the whole scale of the human soul and the divine.[15]

This statement fits well the theology of one who thought of the Will as the primary aspect of the soul.

In a series of lectures to a group of pastors in Neuchâtel in 1940, Karl Barth delivered himself of some remarks that support the general position of Forsyth. He was commenting on Calvin's Catechism and said,

> We cannot, as Calvin does, portion out the qualities of God upon three persons; God the Father as the origin, the Son as wisdom, and the Holy Spirit as God's virtue. The persons in the Trinity are more than qualities in the Godhead.[16]

Forsyth, in beginning from the soteriological question, and in thinking of Incarnation as the action of God rather than as a metaphysical problem, has established, in my opinion, a firm basis for talking of the divinity of Jesus without surrendering his genuine humanity.

2. The relation of eternal salvation to historical event

In the Philosophical Fragments Kierkegaard discusses the question as to whether an historical event can really have eternal consequences for the soul.[17] Arguing that such an "event" as the Incarnation is neither an "eternal truth" (for then its historicity would not matter) nor an historical event like any other, he concludes that it is something open only to faith. To say that it is discernible to the reason as an eternal truth is to rob it of its historical validity. To say that it is open in its fulness to historical investigation would be to deprive the event of its divine awesomeness. Kierkegaard solves

the dilemma by urging that the truth of the Incarnation is open to faith; that it is always believed as a Paradox; that the faith which grasps the Paradox is given as a condition sine qua non by God himself in what he calls the "Moment"; and that in believing the Paradox the believer is "so related to the Teacher as to be eternally concerned with his historical existence."[18] Thus it is not the historical event that is decisive for the eternal welfare of the soul, but the Moment in which the Paradox is accepted by the Reason, as Paradox. This union of Reason and Paradox is accomplished in Faith.

Forsyth's solution to the problem has more in common with the Dane's than with the views of his liberal or even of his orthodox contemporaries. He recognized that many people in his day could not make the connection between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on one hand and the first century on the other.

> Some resent the dragging back of the vast, teeming, vivid, mighty present to so remote a past as that of Judea.[19]

The problem was (and is) undoubtedly a real one. Kierkegaard had distinguished between the contemporary disciple and the "disciple at second-hand" but had shown that, if the problem is not merely an historical one, the former have no advantage over the later disciples. Forsyth also placed the effective connection between historical past and eternal welfare in the realm of relationships. For the Danish Christian, one became related to the Christ through faith

which grasped the paradox of Incarnation; for the British theologian it was a moral decision which made one contemporaneous with Jesus.

> Your opinion is not asked about the miracle of His birth or any other single point. What is the actual, practical, habitual relation of your whole moral self to Him as a living personal whole?[20]

The historical event was important in that it provided the occasion for the moral decision.

One need not repeat what has already been said concerning Forsyth's attitude to the cross and its meaning. If Jesus had never existed, Forsyth's theology would have had no firm grounding, for he wrote not of abstractions but of concrete realities and relationships. Eternal values no more than eternal truths can effect the ultimate destiny of the race in God. As sin is a concrete fact, so must atonement be. For the latter to be real, it had to be offered in the concrete realm where sin is king. It was not enough to declare God's love; God demanded holiness, and, in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth, he was offered precisely that. This can be seen in one place where Forsyth, writing of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, contrasts the teaching of truth and the historical action of the Christ. He wrote,

> The parable tells us of the freeness of God's grace, and its fulness, but the Cross enacts it and inserts it in real history.[21]

Forsyth believed that the historical cross was of supreme importance.

Yet the Cross is much more than an event in history, even if it is at least that. By treating Jesus as the Divine Son (as well as the teacher of Nazareth), and by insisting that his self-oblation was an act of the divine (as well as the human) will, Forsyth has lifted the whole event into another realm. Were he to hold that the Cross was merely the martyr-death of the best of human beings, it would be impossible to argue that the destiny of the soul or of the race depended upon it. Forsyth, however, looks upon the Cross as what Karl Jaspers might have called an "Axial Point" of history, except that for the former there can be only one such event.[22]. It takes place on two levels, the historical (in which Pilate ordered the execution of a man dangerous to the state) and the spiritual (in which God makes the sacrifice which atones the sin of the world). Only in this way can he say that one's attitude to the details of a historical event may not be important, but the reality of the event itself is. Above all, the moral response one makes to the event is the decisive thing.[20]

In an article in the Expositor for April of 1915 he argued that preaching could take one of two approaches to the Cross-event. On one hand the preacher might be leading a tender flock gently to the Cross and to faith. This sort of preaching is essentially pastoral. On the other hand, one might expound the inner meaning of the cross, as a teacher illuminating the road for his hearers. Undoubtedly Forsyth saw himself more in the latter than in the former role.

But it must be noted that neither of these approaches is the Gospel.

> Preaching up to the Cross is one thing, and some are but at that disciple stage. Preaching down from it is another, and that is the work of an apostle. The Saviour belongs to neither category. He is not the preacher, but the thing preached, the Gospel itself.[23]

The preacher is the bearer of witness to the event which is itself the good news, and is therefore as one who tells a story about things that have indeed happened.

In further illustration of this point we may look at a question raised in his last book, a question which bears indirectly on the subject. He was dealing with whether or not there is any possibility of "conversion" after death, or whether death is the final arbiter of eternity. The historical event which determines eternity, as far as Forsyth was concerned, was not death, but the Cross, and therefore he refused to be limited in the concept of a moral relationship to the cross by the mere fact of the termination of life. Rejecting the view that "when we speak of another life we mostly mean a second cycle of this life better oiled,"[24] he went on to speak of that life as a continuously growing experience. In opposition to traditional Protestant views on the subject, he declared that "there are more conversions on the other side than on this."[25] If death is the historical event which determines eternity, obviously he could not say this, and therefore the act of "conversion" is a non-temporal

event.

> The fate of the soul is not finally determined then. Those lives and those generations which were elect here were chosen for the service and good of those whose turn was not to come in this life.
> ...death does not fix the moral position of the soul irretrievably.[26]

We may say, then, that in the view of Forsyth the historical event of the Cross is essential to the eternal well-being of the soul, but that no other historical event has this characteristic. The faith which is morally related to the cross is itself not conditioned historically. This is possible because the historical nature of the cross is only one side of the totality of what God did at Calvary.

The historical event which makes all conversions possible is trans-historical in another sense. What any individual person does may or may not affect other people. Some actions are purely personal in nature, while others will affect varying groups of people from one's family to a much wider grouping. Forsyth's contention is that the act of the man Jesus of Nazareth in the historical setting of Calvary affected all of mankind. An event which affects mankind universally, however, even though it take place in a limited historical context, is more than a merely historical act. This is quite clearly Forsyth's view when he could write: "Forgiveness, we say, comes by the Cross. But Christ forgave before the Cross. That is because he was always on the redeeming Cross."[27] Here the

Cross is more than the historical event; it is the eternal grace of God at the same time.

The nature of the doctrine of atonement makes it inevitable that the Cross should take on something of a suprahistorical aspect, for the primary "transaction" or "battle" takes place at this suprahistorical level. Orthodox believers, according to F.D.Maurice, when they think of God's action in redemption,

> have believed that He rescued them out of the power of an enemy by yielding to his power, not that He rescued them out of the hand of God by paying a penalty to Him.[28]

Recognizing that Maurice is dealing with controversial views of atonement in this passage, it is enough to note that his comment also assumes a non-historical quality in the historical event. Similarly Forsyth said that in the Cross God "brought evil to a moral head and dealt with it as a unity."[29]

We accept the fact, then, that the atonement, being a racial atonement, is trans-historical. In what sense was it necessary to effect it through a historical cross? The answer lies in the effectiveness of the historical cross. A fable has no power to change people in the final analysis. To preach universal love and forgiveness is beautiful but finally ineffective. "It is as ineffectual to preach pardon without expiation as it is to preach pagan theories of expiation."[30] The historical cross is effective because it is a window opening on to the suprahistorical decision of God in eternity. It is a

crossing-point at which the historical life of mankind meets the eternal grace of God. Without the crossing point, all talk of forgiveness or atonement would be speculation.

3. The problem of sinlessness

Forsyth's doctrine of Atonement presupposes the moral perfection of Jesus of Nazareth. By "moral perfection" is here meant a conformity of will and action with the holy purposes of God, such that the perfect individual agrees with and accedes to the divine will at all times. There is a constant moral unity between the divine and the human.

Normally Forsyth does not deal with arguments that involve metaphysical assumptions, but in the case of Jesus there is a necessity to deal with such. If Jesus were morally perfect because he had striven for and succeeded in achieving such perfection, is he but one of several who could do or have done the same? In other words, is the moral perfection of Jesus merely an example of a class of perfect people, which class may have (but need not have) only one member?

Forsyth's answer is that Jesus is morally perfect, in tune at all times with the divine will, because he is the incarnation of God. He alone of all mankind shares in the ontological nature of God. He is not an example of

a class which happens to contain one member, but the whole of a class which by its nature can contain only the one.

This raises two problems, one of which has been dealt with in part already.[31] The first of these is whether or not Jesus' sinlessness is to be considered a moral victory over temptation or whether it is a function of his divine nature. The second has to do with the reality of any temptation which is attributed to a being who is by definition sinless.

With Forsyth's emphasis upon the moral as the major category of theology, one would expect him to stress the moral victory of Jesus over sin. So he does, in two ways. In the first place, he understands the real moral struggle and victory to be pre-historical and therefore part of the divine nature. To put it in temporal terms, we might say that long before the nativity of Jesus, the Divine Son committed himself to an act from which the whole subsequent life of Jesus flowed. Since it was a decision taken in the freedom of the divine soul, it was essentially a moral decision, an act of will based purely on what was good and right.

> We have to make our renunciations in life alone; but he made his before life. We have no choice as to our birth; he had. His will to die was also his will to be born. It is only by such a moral act, and not in the course of some ideal process, that we can think of his entry from a world of power and glory upon the conditions of earthly life. Only by a moral act could he incarnate himself in human life,

> which is in its nature a grand act, choice, and venture, which is moral at its core, moral in its issues, and moral in its crown.[32]

In the second place, Jesus himself made the moral decisions in life which resulted in the way of the cross at the end. It is possible to conceive of different decisions having been made which would not have involved Jesus in sinful acts. To have said and done all that he did say and do, not in Jerusalem but in some other city or town, might not have resulted in the crucifixion, and might have conceivably been within the moral options before him. But such speculation is not historical, and the decisions Jesus made were indeed consciously taken as being in keeping with what he saw as his Father's will and purpose. Given any freedom of action at all, Jesus must be assumed to have made such conscious moral choices. In this twofold way, then, Forsyth assures us of his moral stature. His moral nature is both part of his ontological unity with God and also part of his moral unity with God in his human life.

Having called upon ontology to help answer one difficulty, however, we are thrust into the other, namely, in what sense a person who is assumed to be sinless by nature can possibly be tempted. We ask unhistorical and speculative questions again, but we want to know whether a man who was truly tempted to sin, if he actually yielded to the temptation, could have remained divine. From the perspective from which Forsyth thinks and writes the very

possibility of such a thing is literally unthinkable. But if Jesus could not possibly have sinned, in what way was he tempted?

In The Person and Place of Jesus Christ he tackles this very real problem. Briefly, his answer is that while Jesus could not have sinned, he could not possibly have known that it was impossible. Only in this way can Forsyth see a way out.

> But sin? There, indeed, we do reach a limit. Non potuit peccare. But then, it is at once said, his personality and manhood were not real.
>
> But what if it were thus? What if his kenosis went so far that though the impossibility was there he did not know of it? The limitation of his knowledge is indubitable--even about himself...Did that nescience not extend to the area of his own moral nature, and so provide for him the temptable conditions which put him in line with our dark conflict, and which truly moralise and humanise his victory when potuit non peccare?[33]

In other words, the temptation to choose lesser (not necessarily evil) means to achieve greater ends, as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, must have caused him to agonize over his decision as much as anyone else would have done. The fact that it was impossible for him to have yielded to the satanic proposal made his ultimate choice no whit less moral.

In a sense, to say that Jesus chose the right because of his background is the same as to say that anyone else does precisely the same. Many who are tempted by anger could not possibly kill, as many who are hungry cannot

bring themselves to steal. Their background has determined the route they will follow and the values that will guide them no less than did Jesus' background and values. Their moral will is none the less involved in their decisions.

Thus a statement concerning Jesus' divinity does not automatically preclude a real moral will in Jesus himself. His sinlessness must be affirmed if one believes him to be the revelation of God. His sinlessness cannot be the final word however. The moral struggle, which is of first importance, must be as real in Jesus as in those who opposed him, with perhaps more anguish and demanding more courage. Whatever the reason for sinlessness, it remains true that those whose moral choices are consistently found on the side of righteousness strive much more strenuously for their results than do those who too easily yield to the pressures of the world, the flesh and the devil. It is in the spirit of Forsyth's teaching to say that Jesus, had he faced temptation lightly, yielding to it easily, and had he been saved from it only by the impossibility of sin in the divine being, would have possessed a sinlessness far less moral than the righteousness of those he came to save. His divinity would have been far less easily affirmed. Jesus stands at the heart of Forsyth's theology not only because he was God, but because of the moral struggles through which he passed.

4. The self-consciousness of Jesus

In the preceding section the statement was made that Jesus, though sinless, must have been unaware of the impossibility of sin if we are to understand his temptations as in any way real. To this extent his self-consciousness was a limited one. What of his God-relationship as a whole, insofar as his own understanding of it is concerned? The Fourth Gospel certainly gives the impression that Jesus was conscious of a special filial relationship with God, and the Synoptics, while less explicit, do not lead us to a different conclusion.

Forsyth dealt very little with the historic life of Jesus of Nazareth. There are no pictures for us, therefore, of Jesus' psychology. He seemed to consider the inner thoughts of Jesus to be inaccessible to the student, but he was quite positive that what we can know of Jesus we know through what he did. In an article entitled The Preaching of Jesus and the Gospel of Christ he said,

> Whatever He may have thought it expedient to preach about Himself, He has left us, by the very way He preached other things, nothing but Himself to preach.[34]

Nevertheless, he did have some things to say about what Jesus thought of himself. In the following we shall be quoting largely, though not exclusively, from The Person and Place of Jesus Christ.

In keeping with his view,which I can only describe as "Kantian", that the moral will alone deserves to be spoken of as good, Forsyth believed that we cannot know anything of the nature of Jesus through merely intellectual means, but only through his deeds. Quite clearly he wrote,

> Theologically, faith in Christ means that the person of Christ must be interpreted by what that saving action of God in Him requires, that Christ's work is the master key to His person, that His benefits interpret His nature.[35]

I take this to mean that, if the atonement requires us to speak of a special relationship with God, or even to declare that Jesus had knowledge of such a relationship, then we are justified in so doing. Otherwise we are limited by his actual deeds, and, to a certain extent, by what he said about them.

Forsyth certainly believed that the work of Jesus compelled us to make both of the statements mentioned above, that Jesus both had a special relationship with God and that he was conscious of such a relationship. He would not, however, go beyond those simple statements in an effort to psychoanalyze Jesus.

> Jesus believed in His Sonship for reasons entirely between His Father and Himself, for reasons quite past us. We believe in the Father because of Christ; why He believed in the Father He has not told us.[36]

Thus, if our doctrine of atonement through the death of Jesus requires that we affirm Jesus' divine sonship and his own self-consciousness of that sonship, it does not

thereby permit us to explain that sonship completely, nor require that we state clearly what Jesus thought about the subject. This was basically Pauline doctrine, and Forsyth was quite ready to accept that, but he believed the Pauline doctrine to be in all essentials identical with the doctrine of the church of his day, and that means with that of the earliest Christians. This in turn he believed to have behind it the words or at least the authority of Jesus himself.

By this means, then, Forsyth found his authority for what he affirmed about Jesus' own self-consciousness. (i) We can only make statements about Jesus' interior life by drawing conclusions from his deeds; (ii) his deeds, by which we mean his atonement, require us to assume a special God-consciousness; (iii) this conclusion is that of the primitive church; (iv) the primitive church had behind it the implicit or explicit authority of Jesus himself. Pauline Christianity could not have existed without Jesus' authority. Had Paul so changed the face of the primitive faith as liberal Christianity in the nineteenth century seemed to think, he could not have won what appears to be the almost unanimous approval of all segments of the ancient church.(It is worth noting at this point that Forsyth appealed to one whose name was used freely by those Forsyth considered to be liberal, and appealed to him for support against the liberals of England. "Extreme critics" had in his view exploited the words of Harnack for their own ends.

> He says, "What belongs to the Gospel as Jesus preached it, is not the Son but the Father alone." In quoting these words it is common to overlook the important qualification, "As Jesus preached it." Now what Jesus preached was but part of the whole Gospel...In respect of Harnack's meaning, the author puts himself right in the sentence following that I have quoted, where so many stop and do him wrong: He goes on "Jesus belongs to his Gospel not as a part of it, but as its embodiment."[37])

In adopting an essentially Pauline view in this matter, Forsyth saw himself as yielding to the same authority to which Paul had yielded. He was certain that "for Paul, the Gospel of Christ was not only a Gospel which treated of Christ, but one which proceeded from Christ."[38] He was convinced that the Gospel he himself preached was the same Gospel of Jesus Christ, proceeding from his work and resting on his authority.

We have already noted that the boundaries of life and death were not so insuperable to Forsyth as they sometimes seem to us. He believed that the work of the Gospel went on after death; that there were conversions taking place on the other side; that Christians ought to pray for the dead if only because such prayers maintained the communion of the saints on earth. It is hardly surprising that he should not distinguish between a Gospel authority which rested on the words of Jesus of Nazareth and an authority based on the spiritual work of a risen and exalted Christ. The personality of Jesus was one, whether in the flesh or without it, for personality is to be defined in relational terms, not ontological. Because "He held a relationship to

God as Father that never existed in any man before," Forsyth could go on to say that "this relationship constituted His personality."[39] This personality was what gave to the New Testament, and to modern evangelical theologians, their authority for whatever they understood of the mind of Christ.

It is said that a hypnotized subject, while under the influence of the hypnotist, cannot be made to do things which, in a normal state, he or she would consider to be immoral or even embarrassing. Presumably this is because the governing principle of a person's personality does not "retire" merely because of an altered state of consciousness. In the same way we can understand what Forsyth was arguing in respect to the self-consciousness of Jesus. If the divine Son were to enter a new or altered state of consciousness (e.g. the human situation) he would not on that account lose what is essentially his own nature and being. Even if he were not completely aware of the special nature of his calling, he would still be governed by the essence of that relationship. Forsyth would argue that Jesus was probably <u>not</u> aware <u>in toto</u> of the divinity he possessed; but he was able to act on the assumption that there was nevertheless something very special about his relationship to God. The really essential nature was that which existed before the incarnation, and the important sacrifice was that which was made in eternity. Since this is so, Jesus' essential divinity lay in his

making his will to coincide with the will of the Father.

> It is not enough for Christian purposes that the Father should send; it is equally necessary that the Son should come, and that the one will should be as original and spontaneous as the other.[40]

In the unity of will is to be found the essential oneness of Father and Son, and the degree of self-consciousness necessary to sustain this is relatively unimportant. If the Son believes himself to be in a unique relationship with the Father, and acts upon that belief, and if the fact of the relationship leads him to make his will so completely one with the Father's as to be indistinguishable from it, then Forsyth feels justified in asserting the essential divinity of Jesus. Whether Jesus would have asserted his own divinity in these terms is no longer the determining question.

We conclude, therefore, that Forsyth's view of Jesus' self-consciousness lay in an area between extremes. He would not accept the understanding of Scripture which posited every Johannine statement on the subject as evidence of what Jesus thought of himself; nor would he allow his critical faculty to override his devotion. The act of renunciation which he believed to have taken place in eternity, "before" time, meant that Jesus lived a human life in the fullest sense. It also guaranteed that his living of it would be in essential conformity to the divine purpose. To live this kind of life, human yet free from sin, meant that Jesus had to be aware of the

special place he occupied to some extent. To live life as a human being meant, secondly, that he could not have been aware that this "special place" would always keep him safe from moral disaster. Between these two poles--the knowledge he must have had and the knowledge he could not have had--lies a vast area of psychology which Forsyth did not probe. Of one thing Forsyth always seems assured, and that is that the superhuman, in the sense of being incompatible with true humanity, had no place either in the life or in the self-consciousness of Jesus. The superhuman which was such by being the achievement of a personality completely in harmony with the will and purpose of the divine being had its place in both. That Jesus knew everything Forsyth denied; that he had insights which were the result of his moral and spiritual development he readily affirmed; that he came gradually to understand his purpose in life, and communicated that purpose in part at least to his disciples Forsyth had no doubt. This was the "mystery of the Kingdom of God"--the gradual unfolding of the nature and work of Jesus to himself and to his disciples. In Missions in State and Church Forsyth quoted approvingly a poem which ended:

"The Cross shall lead the generations on."

He went on immediately to say,

> But, strictly, it is not the Cross that leads after all. That may mean but the method of Jesus. It needs His secret. And His secret is Himself.[41]

We may use one example of the way in which Forsyth develops this thesis, that Jesus' secret consisted in a gradual self-disclosure of his own nature and purpose. We are familiar with two incidents in which Jesus, his time of execution drawing closer, indicated that he had expected somehow to avoid the inevitable betrayal and death. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me." According to the Marcan tradition, when he was on the cross he uttered what seems to have been a cry of despair. To draw from these two incidents the belief that Jesus expected to be delivered from death and was disappointed when he was not would seem reasonable.

Forsyth, however, disagreed with this approach. In Jesus' learning experience (for his experience was one of learning), he learned that death was part of his total ministry and that his moral development depended upon it. The Letter to the Hebrews says that "he learned obedience through what he suffered." Forsyth added that "He had seen death to be inevitable," and, because of the temper of his enemies, "now it is carried home to Him, how necessary it was from within, from His Father. He must not escape it."[42] This makes Forsyth's interpretation of the prayer in Gethsemane plausible, and fits the New Testament description of the change that seemed to come over Jesus when his time in the garden was done. The words, "Not my will, but thine be done," are as important as those that

precede them. When Jesus had finished his prayer, having seen the moral as well as the historical inevitability of the cross, he rose with a courage remarkably increased and went out to face his accusers.

How, then, are we to explain the so-called "Cry of Dereliction"? Are we to say that Luke or John have given a truer account of the final words of Jesus? If so, we must still ask why the Marcan words are recorded at all, for they must certainly be genuine. Or can we say that Jesus was merely beginning the comforting process of quoting from the 22nd psalm, a psalm which ends in triumph and assurance?

Neither fits in with the theology of holiness which Forsyth advocated. To interpret the cry of dereliction as a cry of hopelessness or fear requires that we make an assumption Forsyth was not prepared to make, and that is that Jesus was no more than we might expect a good man to be, or that he was totally unaware of any other relationship. But if, as has been maintained, Jesus was profoundly aware of God's holy being and of his own absolute surrender to the Father's holy will, then "it was not the darkness of death, but the damnation in it that struck through him and turned His sadness to His passion."[43] As the blackness of death closed in on him, Jesus realized not so much that his faith had misled him as he did the awful horror of the sin of the world, a sin that in effect set itself up in opposition to the Absolutely Holy. If, then, with the

Marcan tradition, we accept the cry of dereliction as possibly the last intelligible words of Jesus, we can nevertheless affirm the true divinity of one who, in spite of the horror, accepted this route as the only way to declare the holiness of God, and thus to redeem the human soul. This is precisely what Forsyth does affirm, and makes it clear at the same time that Jesus' awareness of the vast pit between the sin of the world and the holy God is what shows him to be divine.

There are indications in the Gospels that at times Jesus not only anticipated a cruel death at the hands of his enemies, but also believed that God would justify him by raising him from the dead. There are, of course, numerous critical problems in the verses that present this evidence. Those that would eliminate from the New Testament, however, all of those verses which portray Jesus as speaking in this fashion, merely on the grounds that Jesus could not have done so, would beg the question. If Jesus spoke in this fashion we have no idea what he had in mind at the time, or what he thought of as "Resurrection." Forsyth was unwilling to involve himself in the critical problems as such, though recognizing that <u>not all</u> of the verses in question may in the long run be accepted as genuine. His concern was theological. If Jesus spoke of resurrection, we ought to try to discover what he might have been talking about. He wrote,

> Take the case of resurrection. We do not get the full import of the idea of the resurrection if we see in it only a survival of personality, any more than if we treat it as a mere reanimation.[44]

Resurrection cannot be treated as a mere return to the status quo antes. If Jesus himself so looked at it, and the texts are not clear that that was what was in his mind, even that would not justify us in accepting that idea without further examination. Resurrection represents a break-through rather than a return, a step forward rather than a step backwards. If Jesus was conscious that such was to be his justification and his reward, then he had reached the highest possible point on the journey back to the throne, the plerosis of which Forsyth speaks in The Person and Place of Jesus Christ.

5. The historicity of Jesus of Nazareth

We have already noted that Forsyth treats of Jesus and his work on two levels, the historic and the suprahistoric. His interest is primarily in the latter, and the sacrifice which he posits as having taken place in eternity is what gives meaning and importance to the sacrifice of Calvary. When the divine Son yielded himself to the will of the divine Father, and took on himself the form of a servant, he offered a sacrifice which made the future history of Jesus of Nazareth both possible and believable. The atonement took place on a Judean hillside,

but it was really something done beyond time and apart from the merely local scene. In one of his most concise, yet most important books, Forsyth wrote, "The Crucifixion, of course, is an historic fact, like Jesus, but the Cross, the Atonement, like the Christ, is suprahistoric."[45] This did not mean, obviously, that the atonement was non-historic. It meant that it was not subject to the analysis of the historians in the same way as the birth, say, of Julius Caesar. But the crucifixion certainly was. What would escape the historian was the interpretation of the historical material which was open only to faith. Forsyth turned away from contemporary liberalism because it sought truth in the facts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth instead of looking beyond to the eternal.

> You will find people who say, "Let us have the simple historic facts, the Cross and Christ." That is not Christianity. Christianity is a certain interpretation of those facts.[46]

He was afraid that a religion which put the emphasis on the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth would miss the heart of an atonement which faced the world with the holy nature of the eternal God. Jesus would become merely an illustration of God's way and not God's way itself. Jesus must always be the message rather than the messenger.

When a writer speaks as highly and as movingly of the divinity of Jesus as Forsyth does, he may find it difficult to convince his readers that he is equally concerned with the humanity. This is sometimes a problem

for the reader of Forsyth. When, in the glowing language of The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, the author speaks of "plerosis", the gradual return to divinity of the Christ who had left it behind, what does he imagine to be the psychological process at work? The answer is that he is not concerned with the psychological process at all. His "picture" of Jesus is of a man supremely dedicated to the Father's will, so much so that he knows himself to be quite special in relation to the Father. The process he calls "plerosis" is not a psychological process at all. It goes on at the deeper spiritual level that we have observed on more than one occasion already.

> Not the man Jesus was perfected, but the Saviour, not the moral character so much as the work possible only to that character.[47]

Forsyth does not envisage, then, a man who was becoming better in every way, but a moral relationship with God which was, whether the man Jesus knew it or not, was fully aware of it or not, becoming more and more what it was intended to be. But the process depended on the fact of there being a man called Jesus of Nazareth whose own moral growth was lived on a parallel plane. It is impossible to conceive that Forsyth could have meant that an evil man might have produced or borne the Saviour. Indeed he is quite specific on this point, that the man Jesus too was growing and developing. The quotation above is typically Forsythian exaggeration, for he wrote just before it:

> To these questions the apostles give a certain answer. He grew as Saviour. He developed as Redeemer. He grew in his vocation rather than in his position, more even than in character...He learned a redemptive obedience--not indeed to acquire its nature, but to unfold its form as the crisis deepened.[48]

Only to such a character as that can one attribute the divinity of which Forsyth speaks; but only to a character such as that can the work of redemption belong.

Such comments simply add weight to the fact that Forsyth held the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth to be absolutely essential to the atonement. There could have been no theology of the cross without the judicial execution of a living man of such character. That Jesus lived and died was the bedrock upon which Forsyth's faith was founded, and without which his theology could not have been formulated. Forsyth was no abstract artist, developing a beautiful mythology without roots in the soil of human history.

Having said that, we must also say that it is true that the importance of the historical Jesus lies most of all in the fact that he existed. Forsyth insists that he was born, but is not concerned with the manner or miraculous nature of that birth. The ancient church used both the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and that of the Pre-existence of Christ to explain his work and person, but Forsyth believed that, since the former no longer possessed its power, we must put more emphasis on the second. Indeed the Virgin Birth by itself could give us a merely Arian theology.[49] Nor does

he lay as much stress on the resurrection of Jesus as he does on the Cross, since the latter is an historical event in a sense that the former is not.

In the same manner he avoids the words of Jesus to back up his statements, except on rare occasions. We have already noted that for him the apostolic witness to the work of Christ was of far more significance than the ipsissima verba of Jesus. The historical ingredients of Jesus' life could be accepted without comment because they were significant chiefly because they showed that Jesus was an actual person. They were all, however, open to the criticism of the scholars, and Forsyth was content to leave it at that. But the Cross the scholars could not touch, and it was here that his interest chiefly lay. Since the "Cross" meant not simply the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was executed (a fact of history) but that God had atoned the sin of the world (not a fact of history at all) Forsyth could concentrate his efforts at that point, and accept the restrained dicta of the scholars and critics without fear. Suggestions that Jesus might have been a myth or an invention of his time were unacceptable to Forsyth.

Jesus of Nazareth, then, lies at the heart of the theology of P.T.Forsyth. The historical facts of his life might be scanty, but at some point of history a man called Jesus, believing himself to be related to God as no human being had ever been before, was executed by the Romans with the connivance of local religious leaders. These

thought that they had silenced a heretic and a critic, but the world has discovered that Jesus was the true victor. The witness of the apostles and the experience of believers has ever since declared him to be right, and through his sacrifice the future of mankind has been changed. The holy God has reached out to a sinful world and has established his righteous reign at the heart of the same world. Ultimately those who will respond to that holiness will discover a new relationship with God impossible without Jesus of Nazareth, and the whole world will be remade in his image.

This is the grand design of God in his holiness, which is "beyond our definition, for it is God the holy; and we cannot define a person, far less the absolute Person." Forsyth goes on to say:

> [Holiness] is not simply His perfection either in thought or act. Its appeal is to something beyond both mind and will. It carries us deeper into God and man. We cannot define it, we can but realise it. And, as it is the last reality, we can but realise it in the last and highest energy of the soul. It is that in God which emerges upon us and comes home to us only in our worship. It changes that worship from dull abasement before God's power, or dumb amazement at the wealth of His nature, to the deepest adoration of what He personally is, and is for us.[50]

This was what Forsyth believed he could teach his generation by fixing their eyes on Jesus Christ and his work.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Welch says, "At least two consequences were to follow from Schleiermacher's program at this point. One was the shaping of a major tradition of hermeneutics as the study of the principles of interpretation (notably of ancient documents), developed especially by Dilthey and, in the twentieth century, by Bultmann and Heidegger. The other was the much more pervasive approval of Schleiermacher's position as freeing theology for the fullest acceptance of historico-critical investigations of Scripture. Here Schleiermacher's statement was to be the archetype for nearly all the later liberal theologians." Welch, Claude, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), Vol. I, p.85.

2. Of Strauss Karl Barth makes this wry comment, "In 1835 and 1836, repeating his course at Tübingen, he wrote his Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet (The Life of Jesus, a critical treatment), a work which made him at once and for many years to come the most famous theologian in Germany and ensured that he would never in his life be considered for any post in the church or in the academic world." Barth K., Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century (London: S.C.M. Press, 1972), p.541.

3. Hunter A. M., P. T. Forsyth (London: S.C.M. Press, 1974), p.14.

4. Forsyth P. T., Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind (London: Independent Press, 1907), pp.192-196.

5. Positive Preaching, p.192.

6. p.193.

7. p.195.

8. pp.195-196.

9. Forsyth P. T., The Person and Place of Jesus Christ (London: Independent Press, 1909), p.199.

10. Forsyth P. T., The Christian Ethic of War (London: Longmans Green, 1916), p.24.

11. Person and Place, p.255.

12. Andrews, Jessie Forsyth, "Memoir", in Forsyth P.T., The Work of Christ (London:Independent Press, 1938), p.xv.

13. His daughter, in her brief "Memoir", states most emphatically that it was not "sudden" and quotes from Positive Preaching, pp.281ff., to back up her view. The most relevant words are: "What is needed is no mere change of view, but a change and a deepening in the type of personal religion, amounting in cases to a new conversion." pp.xvi-xvii.

14. Brown, Robert McAfee, P. T. Forsyth: Prophet for Today (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), p.27.

15. The "British Weekly" of 17 January, 1907, quoted the London Daily Mail to this effect. See Brown, Prophet, p.29.

16. Brown, Prophet, p.35.

17. "Memoir", Work, p.xv.

18. Forsyth P.T., Missions in Church and State (Cincinatti: Jennings and Graham, n.d.), p.41.

19. "Memoir", Work, p.xviii.

CHAPTER I: The Concept of Holiness etc.

1. Positive Preaching, p.195.

2. p.258.

3. p.193.

4. Person and Place, p.59.

5. Positive Preaching, p.196.

6. Person and Place, p.36.

7. Forsyth P. T., The Justification of God (New York: Scribner's, 1916), p.231.

8. Work, p.11.

9. Forsyth P.T., Revelation Old and New (London: Independent Press, 1962), p.72.

10. Forsyth P. T., God the Holy Father (London: Independent Press, 1957). This is a compilation of five of her father's sermons put together by Jessie Forsyth Andrews.

11. Holy Father, p.5.

12. Positive Preaching, p.195.

13. This is a deduction based on the happy life of his home as recorded by his daughter, on the not unfounded assumption that one's own childhood experiences are often reflected in one's attitudes to one's children.

14. His studies with Ritschl are reflected in his moral and biblical emphases. He does not go into detail in telling us about these studies, but Ritschl's teachings are available to us.

15. Forsyth P. T., The Church and the Sacraments (London: Independent Press, 1949), p.89.

16. p.93.

17. Revelation, p.20.

18. Person and Place, p.209.

19. Sacraments, p.5.

20. p.5. Emphasis mine.

21. p.89.

22. Work, p.78.

23. p.160.

24. p.185.

25. Sacraments, p.26.

26. Work, p.128. Forsyth does not ascribe this quotation.

27. Sacraments, p.93.

28. p.93.

29. See note 6 above.

30. Ethic, p.137.

31. Revelation, p.13.

32. Campbell, J. McLeod, The Nature of the Atonement (London: James Clarke and Co., 1959), p.115.

33. Work, p.157.

34. Ethic, p.54.

35. Dale R. W., The Atonement (London: The Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1900), p.412.

36. Work, p.209.

37. Ethic, p.173.

38. "A Holy Church the Moral Guide of Society" (1905), p.24. Cited in Bradley W.L., P.T.Forsyth, The Man and His Work (London: Independent Press, 1952), p.216.

39. Sacraments, p.34.

40. This is dealt with in Campbell, Atonement, pp.129-191, where, taking a cue from Jonathan Edwards, he argues for an infinite repentance rather than an infinite punishment; and in Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, and Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, Vol.II pp.94-161. The last mentioned preferred a more subjective atonement.

41. Work, p.126.

42. Hebrews 5:8-9 (RSV).

43. Forsyth P. T., Religion in Recent Art (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), pp.196-197.

44. Work, p.127.

45. Forsyth P. T., The Cruciality of the Cross (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p.98.

46. Justification, p.186.

47. Ethic, p.149.

48. Hebrews 5:8.

49. Hebrews 5:7.

50. Luke 23:41,46.

51. Galatians 4:4.

52. Romans 11:32.

53. Luke 10:18.

54. Mark 14:62.

55. Luke 23:43.

56. 2 Corinthians 5:19.

57. Revelation 5:5-6.

58. Work, p.160.

59. Cruciality, p.92.

60. P.86.

61. p.87.

62. p.91.

63. p.88.

64. p.89.

65. p.87.

66. p.93.

67. Work, p.24.

68. p.92.

69. Revelation, p.28.

70. Missions, p.334.

71. p.29.

72. Work, p.201.

73. Campbell, Atonement, Chapter 7.

74. Such, of course, would include the theologies of Bushnell and Schleiermacher, to name only two.

75. Sacraments, p.89.

76. Ethic, p.103.

77. John 3:16.

78. Denney, James, The Atonement and the Modern Mind, (London:Hodder and Stoughton, 1903), p.106.

79. Justification, p.22.

80. Dehney, James, War and the Fear of God, p.29. Cited in Berton P., The Comfortable Pew (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1965), p.31.

81. Forsyth P. T., The Soul of Prayer (London: Independent Press, 1949), p.74.

82. Cruciality, p.78.

83. Ethic, p.128.

84. Missions, p.334.

85. Ethic, p.56.

86. Justification, p.127.

CHAPTER II: Atoning for Sin etc.

1. Missions, p.70.

2. Chapters 1 and 2.

3. Work, p.110.

4. Forsyth P. T., Marriage, its Ethic and Religion (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), p.5.

5. Denney, Atonement, p.54.

6. Justification, p.151.

7. Dale, Atonement, p.391.

8. Justification, p.138. Emphasis mine.

9. p.139.

10. This takes into account the distinction of Hebrew sacrifices into two types: "covenant-sacrifices" and "taboo-sacrifices". An atonement sacrifice would be of the latter type. It drew its effect from the ministration of the priest, but involved the

worshipper as an active participant. See Smith, W. Robertson, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites (London: A. & C. Black,1927).

11. Cruciality, p.22.

12. p.102.

13. p.18.

14. Missions, p.67.

15. Revelation, p.12.

16. Justification, p.187.

17. p.184.

18. Work, p.202.

19. Justification, p.74.

20. Cruciality, p.16.

21. Justification, p.28.

22. p.60.

23. p.61.

24. Work, p.116.

25. Person and Place, p.200.

26. p.204.

27. Cruciality, p.viii.

28. Work, p.133.

29. Cruciality, p.40.

30. 2 Corinthians 5:19.

31. Ethic, p.v.

32. Work, p.100.

33. p.111.

34. Missions, p.80.

35. Hebrews 12:2 (KJV).

36. ibid. (RSV).

37. Justification, p.93.

38. Brown, Prophet, p.66.

39. Person and Place, p.5. Emphasis mine.

40. p.40.

41. Ignatius is responsible for the comment in Adv. Haer., "The ruler of this age was deceived by the virginity of Mary, her child-bearing, and the death of the Lord."(19). Gregory of Nyssa is supposed to have been the first to take the idea of 'deception' and write of the "hook hidden beneath the form of human flesh ...to lure on the prince of this age...that then the divinity which lay beneath might catch him and hold him fast with its hook..." (Oratio Catechetica). See Bettenson, Henry, Documents of the Christian Church (Oxford: The University Press, 1963), p.34.

42. Kant, Immanuel, The Metaphysics of Ethics, 3rd. ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), p.3.

43. Aulén, Gustav, Christus Victor (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1951), pp.4-7.

44. Cave, Sydney, The Doctrine of the Work of Christ (London: The University of London Press, 1937).

45. "These metaphors show this, at least, that no age of the church has believed in a merely subjective atonement." Strong A.H., Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1907), p.747.

46. Anselm, Cur Deus Homo? (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1909), I.ix.(p.19).

47. Grotius, primarily a jurist, was caught in the controversies of his day, and suffered for it. His use of the word acceptilatio implied that he would not allow that Jesus was punished for mankind's sin, but that he offered an equivalent suffering for it.

48. Dickens, Charles, Oliver Twist (Oxford: The University Press, 1966), p.354. "If the law supposes that," said Mr. Bumble, squeezing his hat emphatically in both hands, "the law is a ass, a idiot."

49. Rashdall, Hastings, The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919), pp.421-22.

50. See above, p.54, note #13.

51. Campbell, Atonement.

52. p.19.

53. Gerrish B. A., Tradition and the Modern World (Chicago: University Press, 1978), p.80.

54. p.81.

55. p.82.

56. Campbell, Atonement, p.76.

57. p.xvi.

58. p.158.

59. Pfleiderer, Otto, The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant and its Progress in Great Britain since 1825, p.382. Quoted in Gerrish, p.95.

60. Gerrish, p.98.

61. Work, p.148.

62. p.149.

63. Dale, Atonement.

64. p.372.

65. p.383.

66. Work, p.xxxii.

67. p.18.

68. This is the title of Chapter 2 in The Work of Christ.

69. p.66.

70. p.80.

71. "So much of our orthodox religion has come to talk as though God were reconciled by a third party." Work, p.82.

72. Hughes, Thomas Hywel, The Atonement. Modern Theories of the Doctrine (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1949), p.38.

73. Work, p.207.

74. Work, p.226.

CHAPTER III: The Concept of solidarity

1. See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930). This discussion has spawned a most extensive literature. I refer only to two others: Tawney R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1926) criticizes some aspects of Weber's theory but agrees that individualism is a product of the Calvinist wing of the Reformation. A smaller and more limited discussion by Winthrop S. Hudson, "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism" in Church History, Vol. xviii (March, 1949) in part tries to repudiate both approaches.

2. Revelation, p.41.

3. Work, p.95.

4. p.100.

5. p.114.

6. p.119.

7. p.120.

8. Sacraments, p.53.

9. Revelation, p.34.

10. p.35.

11. Work, p.77.

12. p.93.

13. p.115.

14. Forsyth P. T., The Principle of Authority (London: Independent Press, 1952), p.81.

15. Sacraments, p.83.

16. Ethic, p.190.

17. Missions, p.57.

18. Work, p.151.

19. Justification, p.75.

20. Ethic, p.97.

21. Jeremiah 25:31.

22. Sacraments, p.131.

23. Cruciality, p.46.

24. Missions, p.46.

25. Work, p.94.

26. p.86.

27. Cruciality, p.79.

28. Person and Place, p.9.

29. Sacraments, p.196.

30. Cruciality, p.39.

31. Person and Place, p.261.

32. Authority, p.117.

33. p.117.

34. Person and Place, p.309. Forsyth argued that a God who could not take human form and finitude was less
35. than an infinite God.

35. Cruciality, p.68.

36. Although Forsyth qualified this sinlessness by insisting that Jesus could not have known that he was unable to sin. p.301. See Chapter VII of this thesis.

37. Work, p.129.

38. p.206.

39. Cruciality, p.25.

40. Work, p.236.

41. Justification, p.229.

42. Authority, pp.39-40.

43. Revelation, p.63.

44. Missions, p.114.

45. Ethic, p.56.

46. Justification, p.198.

47. Missions, p.74.

48. Forsyth P. T., Faith, Freedom and the Future (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p.xiv.

49. p.261.

50. Person and Place, p.249.

51. Ethic, p.162.

52. P.13.

53. Calvin J., Institutes of the Christian Religion, Library of Christian Classics, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), Book III, Chapter XXI,5, p.926.

54. III.XXI,7, p.930.

55. III.XXI,7, p.931.

56. Walker, Williston, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp.398-99.

57. Berkouwer G. C., Divine Election (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1960), p.175.

58. Calvin, III.XXIII,7, p.955. Emphasis mine.

59. Authority, p.353.

60. p.353.

61. p.354.

62. p.355.

63. Calvin, III.XXIII,5, p.952.

64. Authority, p.356.

65. p.358.

66. p.358.

67. p.359. This is basic to his argument in Faith, Freedom and the Future, as well as elsewhere.

68. Barth K. Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), Vol. II, second part, p.317.

69. Authority, p.357.

70. p.359.

71. Maury, Pierre, Predestination (London: S.C.M.Press, 1960).

72. p.61.

73. p.70.

74. Faith, Freedom, p.125.

75. Ethic, p.120.

76. Authority, pp.149, 154.

77. p.159.

78. Forsyth P. T., The Charter of the Church (London: Alexander and Shepheard, 1896).

79. p. 41.

80. p.41.

81. p.63.

82. The Work of Christ.

83. p.95. Emphasis mine.

84. Sacraments, p.61. Emphasis Forsyth's.

85. Missions, p.44.

86. p.222.

87. Work, p.161.

88. p.161.

89. Revelation, p.35.

90. Authority, p.131.

91. Missions, p.208.
92. Justification, p.80.
93. p.125.
94. Sacraments, p.112.
95. Authority, p.203.
96. Work, p.195.

CHAPTER IV: The Body of Christ

1. Charter, p.v.
2. Justification, p.55.
3. Work, p.224.
4. Person and Place, p.23.
5. Ethic, p.119.
6. Revelation, p.78.
7. Missions, p.176.
8. p.253.
9. p.12.
10. Justification, p.82.
11. Missions, p.253.
12. p.68.
13. Charter, p.78.
14. p.82.
15. Ethic, p.69.
16. p.104.
17. p.96.
18. p.28.

19. p.167.

20. p.23.

21. Justification, p.99.

22. p.2.

23. p.13. In The Principle of Authority he had argued that liberty must be subjected to the Gospel. He wrote: "We look to an electorate in no form, but to an Elector, His choice, His historic gift, and His Holy Spirit in His Church..." p.234.

24. Justification, p.10.

25. Charter, p.89.

26. Ethic, p.32.

27. p.65.

28. p.79.

29. p.37.

30. p.75.

31. Justification, p.12.

32. Revelation, p.27.

33. Ethic, p.68.

34. Person and Place, p.225.

35. Cruciality, p.96.

36. Missions, p.88.

37. Sacraments, p.94.

38. Work, p.21.

39. Justification, p.181.

40. Cruciality, p.23.

41. Ethic, P.163.

42. Missions, p.52.

43. Justification, p.132. The "present situation" was, of course, the first World War.

44. p.176.
45. p.176.
45. p.176.

CHAPTER V: The Life with Christ

1. Sacraments, p.195.

2. See p.116 above, notes #9 and #10.

3. Sacraments, p.196.

4. I refer, of course, to Kierkegaard's distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical.

5. Sacraments, p.177.

6. In Positive Preaching he wrote, "The real presence of Christ crucified is what makes preaching." p.55.

7. John Courtney Murray S.J. defines "opus operans" as "originally the activity of the minister and later widened to include the activity of the recipient." Opus operatum he defines as a phrase coined to "designate the sacramental rite itself in contradistinction from the opus operans..." Ferm V., Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945).

8. Sacraments, p.296.

9. Murray J.C., article on "opus operatum"; in Ferm, p.549.

10. In Sacraments, chapter xii, and in Faith, Freedom, chapter ix, Forsyth expands on the contribution of Congregationalism in particular and on the sacramental nature of the Eucharist.

11. Sacraments, p.xvi.

12. p.141.

13. p.142.

14. p.133.

15. p.141.

16. p.150.

17. Revelation, p.138.

18. Person and Place, p.244.

19. Forsyth P. T., The Soul of Prayer (London: Independent Press, 1949), p.24.

20. p.12.

21. p.17.

22. p.60.

23. p.92.

24. Revelation, p.71.

25. Justification, p.221.

26. Forsyth P. T., This Life and the Next (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1948), p.59.

27. Exodus 20:31-32.

28. Isaiah 6:5.

29. Romans 9:3.

30. This Life, p.37.

31. Barry F. R., The Atonement (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1968), p.172.

32. Cruciality, p.79.

33. Revelation, p.15.

34. Person and Place, p.243.

35. Charter, p.43.

36. p.45.

37. Missions, p.64.

38. Sacraments, p.xvi.

39. Justification, p.219.

40. Cruciality, p.27.

CHAPTER VI: Christ and the Scriptures

1. Sacraments, p.13.
2. Revelation, p.79.
3. Person and Place, p.160.
4. Charter, p.72.
5. Forsyth P. T., Rome, Reform and Reaction (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), pp.68-69.
6. Faith, Freedom, p.12.
7. Barth K., The Epistle to the Romans (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p.29.
8. 2 Corinthians 5:16.
9. 2 Corinthians 12:2-5.
10. Barth, Romans, p.30.
11. Kierkegaard S., Fear and Trembling (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1954), p.64.
12. Work, p.42.
13. p.35.
14. p.177.
15. p.38.
16. p.33.
17. p.39.
18. Cruciality, p.12.
19. Sacraments, p.76.
20. Work, p.55.
21. Revelation, p.103.
22. Forsyth uses the word "Bible" for what might more appropriately be called the New Testament. The Bible as a whole is undoubtedly his Scripture, but his focus lies of necessity in the events of

the last week of the life of Jesus. The Old Testament, therefore, is understood to find its meaning in the Gospels; the justification of the epistles and Apocalypse is that they "flesh out" the meaning of the story of the Gospels.

23. Revelation, p.108.

24. Sacraments, p.35.

25. 2 Corinthians 5:16.

26. Justification, p.157.

27. Faith, Freedom, p.1(note).

28. It is not even certain how, on the basis of the above statement, Forsyth could speak of the Old Testament as the "Word", although without any doubt he treated it as part of the Bible.

29. Charter, p.88.

30. Justification, p.206.

31. Authority, p.127.

32. p.80.

33. p.81.

34. Faith, Freedom, p.4.

35. Missions, p.146.

36. Person and Place, p.49.

37. Revelation, p.135. This same sentence is found in Person and Place, p.15.

38. Ethic, p.52.

39. Mark 4:10-12 and parallels.

40. Matthew 16:17.

41. 1 Corinthians 5 gives us an excellent example of this. Here Paul deals with a specific ethical problem in such a way as to use all of the above techniques. Yet his chief goal remains the same: to allow his readers so to come in touch with God as to measure their conduct by his holiness.

42. John 21:31.

43. Work, p.154.

44. Charter, p.50.

CHAPTER VII: Some Christological Questions

1. Matthew 24:36.

2. Mark 7:10. Properly speaking, those passages in which Jesus refers to Moses' authorship apply only to the passages cited. It is a reasonable assumption, however, that Jesus considered Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch as a whole.

3. Person and Place, p.223.

4. Baillie D. M., God was in Christ (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp.95-98. Baillie quotes from Temple, William, Christus Veritas where a similar critique is offered.

5. Baillie, p.96.

6. p.97.

7. Person and Place, p.309.

8. p.309.

9. pp.309-310.

10. Hebrews 5:8.

11. Person and Place, p.302.

12. p.303.

13. This Life, p.29.

14. Person and Place, p.319.

15. p.333. Emphasis Forsyth's.

16. Barth K., The Faith of the Church (London: Collins, 1960), p.35.

17. Kierkegaared S., Philosophical Fragments (Princeton: The University Press, 1936), chaps. 4 and 5.

18. p.50.

19. Missions, p.203.

20. p.60.

21. Work, p.111.

22. Jaspers K., The Origin and Goal of History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), chap.I.

23. "The Expositor" for April, 1915. Quoted in Bradley, p.186.

24. This Life, p.32.

25. p.37.

26. p.11.

27. Justification, p.228.

28. Maurice F. D., Theological Essays (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), p.124.

29. Cruciality, p.58.

30. Missions, p.82.

31. p.198f.

32. Person and Place, p.318.

33. p.301.

34. Forsyth P. T., "The Preaching of Jesus and the Gospel of Christ", in "The Expositor" (November, 1915), quoted in Bradley, p.184.

35. Person and Place, p.6.

36. p.40.

37. p.101.

38. p.177.

39. p.285.

40. p.287.

41. Missions, p.23.

42. p.4.

43. p.7.

44. Cruciality, p.87.

45. p.55.

46. Work, p.46.

47. Person and Place, p.126.

48. p.126.

49. p.261.

50. Authority, p.418.

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