

# Baillie, *God Was in Christ*

D[onald] M[cpherson] Baillie. *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948.

## **PREFACE**

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“The person with whom I am arguing is myself.” July, 1947 (p. 7)

## **FOREWORD TO THE NEW EDITION**

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Appendix to Chapters II and III, completed by October 1954 (p. 8)

## **I. CHRISTOLOGY AT THE CROSS-ROADS**

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“No more Docetism [denying the humanity of Christ], no more Monophysite [one-nature] explaining away of the human character of the life that Jesus lived, but a full and unreserved recognition of His human nature as ‘homo-ousios’ with our own, which means ‘essentially the same as ours’: that lesson of the historical movement has been well learnt on all hands, and it is common ground to-day.” (p. 10)

At the same time, the newer Form Criticism has played into the hands of dogmatic theology, subordinating the historical Jesus to the Christ of dogma, saying ‘No more historicism.’ (p. 10)

### **I. THE END OF DOCETISM**

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“It may safely be said that practically all schools of theological thought to-day take the full humanity of our Lord more seriously than has ever been done by Christian theologians.” (p. 11)

The full humanity of Christ has always been the orthodox position, but the church seems not to have realized the significance of that. (p. 11)

“The Lord’s experience in the days of his flesh was limited by the conditions of human life and human nature in this world.” (p. 12)

(a) *The human limits of our Lord’s knowledge.* (p. 12)

(b) *The human character of our Lord's miracles.* (p. 13)

“If there is one particularly fruitful insight that has been gained in the modern world in the interpretation of the Gospel story, it is this: that the problem of the ‘mighty works’ can be disposed of neither by denying them out of hand as unhistorical, nor by accepting them as sheerly supernatural portents because a divine Christ can do anything, but is to be met only by regarding them as works of faith, wrought by the power of God in response to human faith for which all things are possible.” (p. 13)

(a) *The human character of our Lord's moral and religious life.* (p. 14)

Note especially his habit of prayer. (p. 15)

“Karl Barth is quite clear that the Word became not merely Man, but *a* man, and insists that the *anhypostasia*, the ‘impersonality’, never meant that the humanity of Christ had no ‘personality’ in the modern sense (for which the Latin word would be *individualitas*), but that it had no independent existence.” Barth says that Christ assumed “fallen” human nature in the incarnation; he became flesh. (p. 16)

Barth recognizes that “from the historical point of view Jesus was a man, living His life wholly within the conditions and limitations of humanity....His human life was not a revelation, but a concealment, of God.” (p. 17)

Brunner also emphasizes the humanity of Christ. (pp. 18-19)

“Christology cannot solve its problem by turning into psychology. And the real problem for all schools which take Christology seriously at all is: **In what sense do we believe that this human life of Jesus of Nazareth was at the same time**—not in some ‘psychological’ way, but on a deeper level, in a more ultimate analysis, in a transcendent ‘dimension’—**the very life of God himself?** And what is the relation of that transcendent belief or affirmation to the historical approach that we make to ‘the Jesus of history’ when we study the Gospel story?” (p. 20, emphasis added)

## II. A NEW HISTORICAL RADICALISM

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Form criticism has brought a very radical, even sceptical Gospel criticism into the citadel of positive theological thought. (p. 21)

Bultmann and Dibelius agree that our Lord never regarded himself as the Messiah. (p. 22)

“That is the novelty in this new radical criticism, so far as concerns its bearing on theology and Christology: it is pursued to its somewhat negative conclusions not by enemies of Christianity, not by ‘liberals’ and modernists, but by representatives of a new biblicist and confessional orthodoxy, who are glad to use it as a weapon for the destruction of the ‘liberalism’ of the ‘Jesus of history’ movement.” (p. 22)

“It is largely on the Continent of Europe that this new and surprising development has taken place, the criticism of the Gospels tending to be more ‘radical’ than it was a quarter of a century ago, and the dogmatic theology tending to be more credal, confessional and biblicist than it has been for generations.” (p. 23)

In the precritical period theologians believed all the material in the Gospels to be historically true. When historical criticism appeared, this was questioned in a wholesale way, but even the ‘liberals’ assumed (and, as the Form Critics would say, assumed far too naïvely, having got the historico-critical lesson all wrong!) that at least it was possible from the evidence of the Gospels to reconstruct the life of Jesus and recapture His personality, and indeed that modern criticism had made this more possible than ever. But now this is just what the Form Critics regard as a wild-goose chase. **‘It seems, then,’** says Professor R. H. Lightfoot, **‘that the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us.’** (pp. 26-27, emphasis added)

Question: *Can we know enough about Jesus to build a Christology upon him?* (p. 27)

### III. THE CROSS-ROADS FOR CHRISTOLOGY

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The radical rejection of historicism leaves Christology where it has never been before. Baillie argues (Chapter II) that they are not right. **“There is no stability in a position which accepts to the full the humanity of Christ but has no interest in its actual concrete manifestation and doubts whether it can be recaptured at all; which insists on the ‘once-for-all-ness’ of this divine incursion into history, but renounces all desire or claim to know what it was really like.”** (p. 28, emphasis added)

At the same time, a Jesus of history is not adequate; we still need Christology (Chapter III). Rejecting these two reductions, Baillie will reexamine the Person and work of Christ (Chapters IV ff.). (p. 29)

## II. WHY THE JESUS OF HISTORY?\*

(See Appendix, p. 211; p. 16 below)

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“In this chapter we must try to understand both the ‘Jesus of history’ movement which was so dominant in theology at the beginning of this [twentieth] century and the strong reaction against it which is so unmistakable a feature of theology to-day; and we must try to see what the issues really are and where the truth lies. That is an indispensable preliminary to the attempt to work out a Christology, for the controversial issue which separates these two movements largely determines not only the answer to be given to the Christological problem, but also the very meaning of the problem and the questions that have to be asked.” (p. 30)

## I. THE RETURN TO THE HISTORICAL JESUS 30

In an age of doubt, “the rediscovery of the Jesus of history came like a new revelation... It seemed to be a rediscovery of the right starting-point for an understanding of the Christian faith.” (p. 31)

“It made theology more Christocentric.” (p. 32)

## II. THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM 34

Now, by way of reaction, people are saying that the ‘Jesus of history’ movement was all wrong. (p. 34)

“The reaction is most unmistakable in certain schools of Protestant theology on the Continent of Europe, especially in the circles indicated by such phrases as ‘the Dialectical Theology’, ‘the Theology of the Word’, ‘the Theology of Crisis’. The fullest treatment which Christology has received in those circles is in Professor Emil Brunner’s massive and impressive book, *The Mediator*. To Brunner the very heart of Christianity undoubtedly is the conviction that the Word was made flesh, that God became man, in an actual historical life on earth, the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet it is impossible to read his book without getting the impression that Brunner is not vitally interested in the life and personality of the Jesus of history, but only in the dogmas about Him... **‘Faith presupposes, as a matter of course, a priori, that the Jesus of history is not the same as the Christ of faith.’** There could hardly be a more radical rejection of the Jesus of history than that.” (pp. 34-35, emphasis added)

“Yet the reaction is even more violent in the theology of Professor Karl Barth. The whole of that remarkable enterprise of modern scholarship, the attempt to write the life of Jesus and to reconstruct His personality, is in Barth’s view quite irrelevant to Christian faith. **The idea that faith is in any sense based on the impression made by the personality of Jesus is completely mistaken.**” (p. 36)

Bultmann: “Interest in the personality of Jesus is excluded.” (p. 37)

“What he [Dr. Edwyn Bevan] is maintaining is... that unless we begin with the dogmas, we cannot see anything particularly notable or divine in that life and personality at all.” (p. 39)

## III. TRUTH AND ERROR IN THE REACTION 39

(a) One level of criticism is simply that the ‘lives of Jesus’ are not good enough. But the contemporary criticism is much more. (p. 39)

(b) It could also mean that the Jesus of history is not enough. “It soon becomes a weary business to keep straining one’s eyes into the distant past for a heroic figure which we have to try to imagine as vividly as possible, when what we need is the living God here and now.” Some who worship Jesus as a hero seem not to need God. (pp. 40-41)

© The reaction could also mean that we cannot do without a Christology. “It is a question of the whole Christian doctrine of God. Nothing can be plainer than that the great Christological controversies of the early centuries were fundamentally concerned with the question of the nature and purpose of God.” (p. 42)

(d) The reaction may also mean that “the modern interest in the historical personality of Jesus is something quite alien to the true meaning of the Christian religion.” (p. 43)

“Concentration on the development of personality or the cultivation of character does not really produce a soundly integrated personality, and certainly does not produce Christian character. The good man, in the Christian sense, is not centred upon himself, but on God” (p. 44)

But, Baillie says, there is a legitimate interest in the New Testament in the human character and personality of Jesus. (p. 45)

“It may much more reasonably be maintained that Christianity, through its persistent and inevitable interest in the historical episode which it calls the Incarnation, gave birth to a new historical outlook, and thus in due course to the whole movement of modern historical research.” (p. 46)

The same people who dismiss the gospels as unreliable guides to the Jesus of history use them to reconstruct the *kerygma* of the early church! (pp. 46-47)

#### IV. CAN WE DISPENSE WITH THE JESUS OF HISTORY?

48

“If there is no revelation, no ‘unveiling’, of God in the human personality and career of Jesus, but only a ‘veiling’; if God in Christ is as much as ever a *deus absconditus*, not a *deus revelatus*; what are we the better of the coming of God in Christ?” (p. 49)

“It remains true that the revelation came to Peter as an inward witness to the Jesus whom he knew in the flesh, and it comes to us as a witness to the Jesus whom we know as an historical personality through the Gospel story.” (p. 51)

“It is because the school of Karl Barth repudiates all these things that it has incurred the charge of not having a truly incarnational theology. One almost ventures to say that it does not take the Incarnation quite seriously....His theology has become so austere a theology of the Word that...it is hardly a theology of the Word-made-Flesh.” Bailey calls this “Logotheism.” (p. 53)

“If revelation is by the Word alone, then Christ *lived* for nothing, and the Word was made flesh in vain. That is the ultimate answer to our question as to whether we can dispense with the Jesus of history.” (p. 54)

## V. CAN WE KNOW THE JESUS OF HISTORY? 54

The rejection of the Jesus of history may mean that we cannot find a Jesus different from the Christ of faith, or it may mean that we cannot find the human Jesus at all. Baillie says the latter problem is brought on by Form Criticism, which is often defeatist and subjective. (pp. 55-56)

## III. WHY A CHRISTOLOGY?\* (See Appendix, p. 211; p. 16 below) 59

### I. CHRIST WITHOUT CHRISTOLOGY 60

“They hold fast to the Jesus of history, and not merely as teacher, but as leader and guide, as pioneer of faith and supreme revealer of God.” (p. 61)

But what do you mean by “God”? And what do you mean by “history”? (p. 62)

### II. CHRISTOLOGY AND THE NATURE OF GOD 63

“It is vitally important to learn, as the whole development of modern theology has been helping us to learn, that the real Christological question is not simply a psychological or an historical question about Jesus, as to His psychical constitution, as to how His mind worked, as to His ‘self-consciousness’, and what claims he made; but is fundamentally a question about the nature and activity of God.” (p. 63)

If Jesus was the great discoverer of God, what God did he discover? The one who does not wait to be discovered but who searches us out. (p. 63)

If Jesus was right, then we have to say something Christological. “Surely the Incarnation is not an added difficulty, but is rather the sole way in which the Christian conception of God becomes credible or even expressible.” (p. 64)

**“A true Christology will tell us not simply that God is *like* Christ, but that God was *in* Christ. Thus it will tell us not only about the *nature* of God, but about his *activity*, about what He has done, coming the whole way for our salvation in Jesus Christ; and there is no other way in which the Christian truth about God can be expressed.”** (pp. 66-67, emphasis added)

“The Dialectical theologians of our age are most impressive in their assertion of this principle, that Christology is not a subsidiary study, or a limited department of

Christian theology, but is at the very centre, and indeed is all-inclusive, because it is fundamentally concerned with our doctrine of God.” (p. 67)

“The New Testament gives us not the final theology but the supreme and classical testimony to Christ.” (p. 69)

### III. CHRISTOLOGY AND THE MEANING OF HISTORY

71

For Paul Tillich, the Christological question is “the most immediate problem of our present existence’, because it is the question of the interpretation of history. (p. 72)

Christology shows us that the vantage point from which to interpret history is Christ. (p. 73)

“The reason we must have a Christology is because the question of Christology is identical with the question of the meaning of history, and that the answer to this question is that Christ is the center of history.

“There is deep truth, it seems to me, in the idea the Christology stands for the Christian interpretation of history as against other interpretations.” (p. 76)

**Christology overcame the ancient cyclical view of history. It also stands “against modern misinterpretations of history, particularly the purely humanistic, evolutionary and ‘progressive’ view.”** (p. 77, emphasis added)

“Christology stands for a Christian interpretation of history, but it can stand for that only because it stands for the conviction that God become man in the historical person of Jesus. We must have a Christology in that sense, or we have no Christology at all, and we cannot escape from its traditional problems by turning it into a symbolical philosophy of history.” (p. 79)

### IV. THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTOLOGY

79

**“That is the perennial task of theology: to think out the meaning of the Christian conviction that God was incarnate in Jesus, that Jesus is God and man.”** (p. 83, emphasis added)

## IV. CRITIQUE OF CHRISTOLOGIES

85

### I. ANHYPOSTASIA

85

“Several modern theologians have taken up and sought to work out in modern terms the ancient doctrine that Christ is not a human person, but a divine Person who

assumed human nature without assuming human personality—the doctrine that gave rise to the familiar phrase, ‘the impersonal humanity of Christ’.” (p. 85)

“Jesus lived His life in complete dependence on His Father, as we all ought to live our lives. But such dependence does not destroy human personality. Man is never so truly and fully personal as when he is living in complete dependence on God. That is how human personality comes into its own. That is not ‘impersonal humanity’, but humanity at its most personal. The only *anhypostasia* in the case is not a denial of personality, but a denial of independence, and it seems to me to be misleading to call it by that name.” (p. 93)

## II. KENOSIS

94

“The Kenotic Theory of the Incarnation belongs distinctively to modern times.” It draws its name from Paul but cannot draw direct support from Paul. (p. 94)

“According to the central idea of the Kenotic Theory, what happened in the Incarnation was that the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Divine Logos, laid aside His distinctively divine attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence) and lived for a period on earth within the limitations of humanity.” (pp. 94-95)

Baillie does not think that this will bear examination. (p. 95)

1. What happened to the rest of the universe during such an incarnation? (p. 96)
2. This appears to be only a temporary theophany. (p. 96)
3. When Christ resumes his divine attributes, would not his humanity end? (p. 97)

## III. LEADERSHIP AND LORDSHIP

98

Christ as *Führer* hardly seems worthy. (pp. 99-101)

## V. THE PARADOX OF THE INCARNATION

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**“We must now come to grips directly with the central problem of Christology, for which the foregoing chapters have been clearing the ground. What do we mean by saying that God was incarnate in Jesus? In what sense was Jesus both God and Man? How could that one life be both completely human and completely divine?”** (p. 106, emphasis added)

## I. THE PARADOXES OF FAITH

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“There is a sense in which the *mysterium Christi* must always remain a mystery.... The Incarnation present us indeed with the supreme paradox, and I do not believe that we can ever eliminate from it the element of paradox without losing the Incarnation itself. But this is not the only point at which we are beset with paradox in our Christian belief: this is rather the point at which the constant and ubiquitous paradox reaches its peak.... The mistake is not to assert paradox in the doctrine of the Incarnation, but to miss the paradox everywhere else.” (pp. 106-107)

“The reason why the element of paradox comes into all religious thought and statement is because God cannot be comprehended in any human words or in any of the categories of our finite thought.” (p. 108)

“Paradoxes of faith... are inevitable, not because the divine reality is self-contradictory, but because when we ‘objectify’ it all our judgments are in some measure falsified, and the higher truth which reconciles them cannot be fully expressed in words, though it is experienced and lives in the ‘I-and-Thou’ relationship of faith toward God. (p. 109)

The doctrines of creation and providence are also paradoxical. (pp. 110-113)

## II. THE CENTRAL PARADOX

114

**“A far greater and deeper paradox than those which we have been considering lies at the very heart of the Christian life and vitally affects every part of it. It is what we may call the paradox of Grace. Its essence lies in the conviction which a Christian man possesses, that every good thing in him, every good thing he does, is somehow not wrought by himself but by God.”** (p. 114, emphasis added)

“The truth is that in the last analysis a Christian does not live by practising any ethic or moulding himself on any ideal, but by a faith in God which finally ascribes all good to him.” (p. 116)

“The grace of God is prevenient. The good was His before it was ours.” (p. 116)

“What I wish to suggest is that this paradox of grace points the way more clearly and makes a better approach than anything else in our experience to the mystery of the Incarnation itself; that this paradox in its fragmentary form in our own Christian lives is a reflection of that perfect union of God and man in the Incarnation on which our whole Christian life depends, and may therefore be our best clue to the understanding of it.” (p. 117)

### III. THE GOD WHO WAS INCARNATE

118

“With what conception of God have we embarked on our Christological quest? What do we understand by the word ‘God’? . . . If the Incarnation has supremely revealed God, shown Him to us in a new and illuminating light, put a fresh meaning into the very word that is his name, *that* is the meaning that we must use in facing the problem of the Incarnation, because that is what God really is.” (pp. 118-119)

**The word “God” means “the One who at the same time makes absolute demands upon us and offers freely to *give* all that He demands.”** (p. 121, emphasis added)

This is a distinctively Christian conception of God, and it coheres with the doctrine of the Trinity. (pp. 122-123)

“There is a sense in which we should not expect or attempt to ‘explain’ the Incarnation. Our theological task is to try to make sure that we know what we mean by it, what it means and what it does not mean; to try to make sure that, while it remains the *mysterium Christi*, it is not sheer meaningless mystery, but becomes a truly Christian paradox to us.” (p. 124)

### IV. TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

125

“The Man in whom God was incarnate would claim nothing for Himself as a Man, but ascribed all glory to God.” (p. 126)

“According to Barth, the holiness of Jesus means that He did not treat His own goodness as an independent thing, a heroic human attainment. His sinlessness consists in His renouncing all claim to ethical heroism. He did not set up at all as a man confronting God, but along with sinners—who do *not* take this attitude—He threw Himself solely on God’s grace. The God-Man is the only man who claims nothing for Himself, but all for God.” (p. 127)

“A toned down Christology is absurd. It must be all or nothing—all or nothing on both the divine and the human side.” (p. 132)

## VI. THE INCARNATION AND THE TRINITY

133

“We are bound to ask how all this is related to what we may call the antecedents and the consequences of the Incarnation—to what the Church has always believed about the pre-existence of Christ as the eternal Son of God, and about the continued ministry of Christ and His presence with His people in every age through the Holy Spirit. This raises the whole question as to what we mean by the distinction between the Father and the Son,

and what we mean by the further distinction of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.” (p. 133)

## I. TWO TRENDS OF TRINITARIAN THOUGHT

133

Two divergent if not opposite directions: “In one camp the tendency is in the direction of what in its extreme form might be accused of modalistic heresy. In the other the tendency is in the direction of what might be accused of verging on tritheism.” (p. 134)

(a) “The outstanding representative of the first of these tendencies in recent theology is Karl Barth. He goes so far as to maintain that it is better to speak of three ‘modes of being’ in the Godhead than of three Persons, so that he might on a superficial view seem to be tending in a modalist or Sabellian direction.” (p. 134)

(b) “On the other hand there is the tendency, mainly among Anglican theologians, to sharpen the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity, and to go farther than theology has been accustomed to go in the direction of regarding them as distinct personal beings between whom there can be a ‘social’ relationship.” This could be regarded as ultra-Cappadocian. (p. 137)

“The contrast between this and Barth’s interpretation is plain. The one prefers to speak of one Person in three modes of being: the other school prefers to speak quite frankly of three Persons in the highest kind of personal and social unity.” (p. 140)

## II. THE MEANING OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

140

The Cappadocians emphasized their doctrine of *perichoresis*, the mutual interpenetration of the three persons. The qualifications make the doctrine very different from any modern idea of three personalities. “The reality is a much deeper mystery.” (pp. 141-142)

“It is even more important in the modern world to emphasize this truth that God is always and wholly and in every respect *personal*. Nothing in God is impersonal. His Word is personal. His Spirit is personal. Personality in God must indeed be a very different thing from personality in us. But that is because we are far from being perfectly personal. God is the only perfectly personal Being. So when Christians speak of any one of the *personae* of God, Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, they do not say ‘It’, but ‘He’ and ‘Him’. Yet when they speak of the Triune God, they do not say ‘They’ and ‘Them’. God is three ‘Persons’, but He is also the infinite and universal Person in three ‘modes of existence’.” (pp. 143-144)

Baillie suggests that the New Testament view of God as loving and the theological view of God as Trinity are convergent and ultimately identical. The two need each other. (p. 144)

**“All this seems impossible to systematize, and indeed it does not make sense until we remember the historical facts and experiences out of which it arose, and attempt to relate them to the eternal God. When we do that, the doctrine of the Trinity sums up the Gospel by telling us that the God of grace, who was revealed through the Incarnation and Pentecost as the One who paradoxically works in us what He demands of us, is the same from all eternity and for ever more; so that where men of old sang: ‘Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory’, Christians can sing: ‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.’”** (p. 147, emphasis added)

### **III. THE BACKGROUND OF THE INCARNATION**

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“Thus the doctrine of the Trinity, which inevitably arose out of the historical Incarnation, gives us its eternal background in the only possible terms.” (p. 151)

### **IV. THE LEGACY OF THE INCARNATION**

151

“The humanity of Christ continued and is permanent.” (p. 152)

“Christians need not be content with either an old story at second hand or a precious memory of the past, and those who never know Jesus in the flesh are at no disadvantage as compared with those who did; because the divine Presence which He brought into the world goes on for ever in the hearts of His people through the Holy Spirit.” (p. 153)

“It is not that no distinction is made between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; but all three come at every point into the full Christian experience of God.” (pp. 153-154)

“Or, to put it otherwise, the God who was incarnate in Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit; and that is the secret of the Christian life.” (p. 154)

*Note:* **“That great missionary, Temple Gairdner of Cairo, whose life-work it was to give the Christian message to Mohammedans in face of their antagonism to any Trinitarian conception of God, wrote some deeply interesting words on this subject out of his experience. After reminding us that the Mohammedans themselves have a kind of borrowed doctrine of the Holy Spirit, a heavenly being quite distinct from Allah, he speaks of the missionary’s task of showing them that the Holy Spirit ‘is not a sort of second and inferior deity, but is God in our hearts’. ‘The glorious truth is that the Christian synthesis yields a true monotheism, which the Muslim dilemma does not.’ He goes on to say that what Christianity, with its doctrine of the Trinity, is really up against in facing Islam is the Mohammedan conviction that God is unknowable. And as regards Christ and the Holy Spirit: ‘The Spirit of God, which was in Him, and which through Him is the divine means of grace to-day’, ‘we have nothing else to give the Muslims unless we give this.’** (See the Report of the Jerusalem

meeting of the World Missionary Council in 1928, entitled *The Christian Message*, pp. 264ff., 279ff.)” (p. 154, footnote 2, emphasis added)

## **VII. WHY THE ATONEMENT?** 157

### **I. CUR DEUS HOMO?** 157

Today’s question of relevance is similar to the Patristic and Medieval questions: “Why did God become man? For what purpose did Christ come down from heaven?... Was the Incarnation part of God’s original and eternal plan for mankind, as the true end and crown of creation? Or was it made necessary only by the Fall of Man and the consequent need of redemption? Would Christ have come if Adam had not sinned? If man had not fallen, would the Incarnation perhaps have taken place in a different way and under different conditions? Or was it simply in order to die on the Cross for human salvation that Christ came at all: And was it necessary that human salvation should be accomplished by that one method? Could not God have saved man in some other way, perhaps in a less costly way, by a mere fiat of His will?” (pp. 157-158)

“If your Christology is true, what difference does it make? How are we the better off, in the actual business of living, for having such a Christ?” (p. 159)

“The full answer cannot be given without a consideration of the whole problem of sin and forgiveness, atonement and reconciliation.... Thus Christology was continually passing into Soteriology.” (pp. 159-160)

### **II. THE NEED OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS** 160

Modern man may not have a sense of sin, but there is a strong sense of inferiority. There is real moral failure. Psychoanalysis cannot help this. (pp. 160-164)

“If we have come to be so orientated towards God that we are more concerned about Him than about our own characters, then we can accept His forgiveness and find release and a new beginning.” (p. 165)

### **III. FORGIVENESS AND PUNISHMENT** 167

The real punishment here for sins is not so much in the suffering as in the alienation from God. “Once the reconciliation has come, the sufferings are the same and yet different.... If a man’s sins are forgiven, that is an end of them; and now the suffering they have left as their legacy is simply part of his lot, a divine discipline, perhaps, but not a divine punishment.” (pp. 167-168)

“The Christian way is the very opposite. It sets us free for the service of God and man by delivering us from ourselves. And so its ultimate confession, as we have been seeing throughout these chapters, is: Not I, but the grace of God.” (p. 170)

“**Only God can deal with our sins.**” (p. 171, emphasis added)

#### IV. BUT WHY ATONEMENT?

171

In reply to the easy modern rejection of the need for atonement, Baillie asks: “Is there no difference between a good-natured indulgence and a costly reconciliation? There is an immense moral and spiritual difference between the two. And which of them are we to attribute to the love of God? Does the whole process of reconciliation cost Him nothing? Is His forgiveness facile and cheap? And if it were, or if we accepted it as such, would it have the liberating power, to set us free for a new and better life?” (p. 172)

“*God alone bears the cost.*” (p. 175)

### VIII. THE LAMB OF GOD

180

“I have tried to exhibit the Christian experience of reconciliation in order to work back from it to a consideration of that which made it possible, the Cross and Passion of Christ.” (p. 180. Note that this is the *same* move made by John McLeod Campbell 100 years earlier!)

#### I. WHY DID JESUS DIE?

180

“It is true, I believe, that Jesus accepted the Cross as from the will and purpose of God. But it was by human faith that He did it, not by the superhuman knowledge which can ‘declare the end from the beginning’.” (p. 181)

“It is true in the plainest historical sense that He died for sinners: it was His love for them that brought Him to the Cross.” (p. 183)

#### II. THE CROSS AND THE LOVE OF GOD

184

**“The crucifixion of Jesus set men thinking more than anything else that has ever happened in the life of the human race. And the most remarkable fact in the whole history of religious thought is this: that when the early Christians looked back and pondered on the dreadful thing that had happened, it made them think of the redeeming love of God.**

“**Not simply of the love of Jesus, but of the love of God.**” (p. 184, emphasis added)

“It all takes place within the very life of God Himself: for if we take the Christology of the New Testament at its highest we can only say that ‘God was in Christ’ in that great atoning sacrifice, and even that the Priest and the Victim both were none other than God.” (p. 188)

### III. HISTORICAL AND ETERNAL ATONEMENT

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“God’s reconciling work cannot be confined to any one moment of history.” (p. 191)

“The divine Atonement cannot be confined within any one moment of time, but, so far as it can be described in temporal terms at all, is as old and as endless as the sin with which it deals.” (p. 197)

### IV. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE ATONEMENT

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**“What, then, is the divine Atonement, which is thus both historical and eternal? Is it an ‘objective’ reality, something done by Christ, something ordained and accepted by God, in ‘expiation’ of human sin, quite apart from our knowledge of it and its effect upon us? Or is it a ‘subjective’ process, a reconciling of us to God through a persuasion in our hearts that there is no obstacle, a realizing of His eternal love? Surely these two aspects cannot be separated at all, though the attempt has often been made to classify atonement-theories in that way. In theological argument on this subject we are apt to forget that we are dealing with a realm of personal relationships and nothing else. If we use the terminology of an ancient sacrificial system, we should remember that in the last analysis the only offering we can make to God is the offering of ourselves in faith and love. What Jesus offered to God was Himself. But to offer oneself thus to God means at the same time to love men without limit, and so to carry the load of their sins. That is what Jesus did, in a passion which included physical suffering, social persecution and obloquy, even to the point of a shameful death, and above all the spiritual agony of seeing other lives go wrong. But if, on the deepest interpretation, this was not only an offering made by a man to God, but also a sacrifice made by God Himself, then it is part of the sacrifice that God is continually making, because He is infinite Love confronted with human sin. And it is an *expiatory* sacrifice, because sin is a dreadfully real thing which love cannot tolerate or lightly pass over, and it is only out of the suffering of such inexorable love that true forgiveness, as distinct from an indulgent amnesty, could ever come. That is the objective process of atonement that goes on in the very life of God.”** (pp. 197-198, emphasis added)

Bishop Aulén, ‘Christus Victor’: “The Atonement is essentially, from start to finish, the costly but victorious conflict of God Himself, in Christ, with the forces of evil. This is a cosmic warfare against a very real enemy, and it involves divine self-sacrifice, but it is thereby triumphant over evil, with an eternal victory which is ever-present as well as past.” (p. 200)

“But since it is neither a ‘material’ nor a ‘legal’ victory, neither a battle conducted outside human life altogether nor a transaction completed as it were behind our backs or before we were born, but a spiritual process in the realm of personal relationships, the objective work cannot be separated from its subjective aspect by which it becomes a reality in the hearts and lives of men. And this happens above all through the story of the Cross of Christ, the point in human history where we find the actual outcropping of the divine Atonement. That is what brings us individually back to God.” (pp. 200-201)

“When we receive that message, and accept the forgiveness of our sins, then we begin to be set free from ourselves.” (p. 202)

## **IX. EPILOGUE: THE BODY OF CHRIST**

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The purpose of God is for humanity to live in a true and wonderful fellowship with each other and with God. But something has gone terribly wrong, with each person being self-centered, self-worshipping. (pp. 203-204)

Jesus “was content to lose Himself entirely in the life of God and the life of His fellow-men, living without reserve the life of community, which is the very life of God Himself, though there was no community that would live it with Him, or even tolerate His living of it.” (p. 207)

A few weeks after the crucifixion, the church was formed. Looking back, people realized that God was dealing with them through the crucifixion. (p. 208)

“It [the church, the new community] cannot be content until all men have been drawn into its fellowship, even if the perfect consummation must lie beyond the bounds of terrestrial history.” (p. 209)

“Thus the Church is God’s instrument of reconciliation through the ages. And to that end the perennial function of the Church is to proclaim, by Word and Sacrament and by its whole life, the message of what God has done in Jesus Christ. It is the Church, and it is only the Church, that can tell the story, the ‘sacred history’, because it is a confession and a testimony among men: TO WIT, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM, AND HATH COMMITTED UNTO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.” (pp. 209-210)

## **\*APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS II AND III: CHRISTOLOGY AND MYTHOLOGY**

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“Bultmann’s fundamental thesis—so well known now among students of theology that it need not be described at great length—is that the original Christian message, in the

New Testament, was conceived and stated in mythological terms and needs to be ‘demythologized,’ to be interpreted in ‘existential’ terms, if modern man is to understand and receive it.” (pp. 211-212)

Bultmann made it clear that “the incursion of God into history in a particular man, Jesus Christ, is determinative for his theology.” But Baillie asks: In what way? “So far as concerns the subject of this book, the question really is: **How is our faith in Christ, or our Christology, related to what we can actually know about the historical Jesus?**” (p. 213, emphasis added)

## I. CHRISTIANITY AND MYTHOLOGY

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Bultmann seems to be willing to retain mythological language, at least in liturgy, if it is reinterpreted. Barth does not want to admit that the New Testament contains any myth, by which he seems to mean general or eternal truths unrelated to history.

Baillie: “I believe, for example, that Christianity can quite soundly speak of the myth of Creation and the myth of the Fall. The Creation and the Fall do not belong to history in the proper sense, and yet they are not purely timeless realities, out of all relation to time and history. And a Christian myth is a symbolical way of stating something which is neither history nor timeless reality, and which therefore cannot be stated either in purely historical or in purely conceptual terms.” (pp. 215-216)

“The questions then are: Can Christianity dispense entirely with myth in the sense which I have indicated? And is such myth unintelligible, or incapable of being made intelligible, to the modern mind? And my answer to both questions is: *No.*” (p. 216)

## II. CHRISTIAN MYTHOLOGY AND THE HISTORICAL JESUS

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“If Christianity contains both a mythological and a historical element, where does the line fall between them? And how are they related to each other?” (p. 218)

Bultmann thinks the resurrection was an eschatological event. Barth thinks it had objective reality in space and time. Baillie finds it difficult to understand what Barth means. (p. 220)

Even harder to understand is Bultmann’s isolation of the crucifixion from the life of Jesus. It is difficult to see what the cross means apart from whose death it was. (pp. 221-222)

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