THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

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Preface

Recent years have seen renewed controversy in a number of different Christian circles over the orthodox doctrine of the Person of Christ. Usually these controversies have centred around teachings which have been understood to deny or depreciate the full deity of Christ: and there is no doubt that in our modern sceptical age it is that truth which is most foreign to the spirit of the times.

In circles from which most members of CBRF come, however, there are opposite difficulties, as Professor Bruce so lucidly shows in his article in this issue of the *Journal*. The papers by Professor Bruce and Dr. McDonald were first read at the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship in 1971, and met with a considerable welcome. Does it matter so much if the true humanity of our Lord is impugned, provided that His deity is upheld? Professor Bruce shows that *both* truths are essential to the Christian Gospel: but the implications of the truth of the humanity of Christ extend also to our whole understanding of the world in which we live and our behaviour in it. It is to be hoped that these pages will advance the glory of Him of whom they speak, and the effectiveness of His Church.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

F. F. BRUCE

'Jesus: the man who fits no formula', is the title of one of the chapters in Eduard Schweizer's recently published book *Jesus:*[1] the same words will serve admirably as a motto for what I have to say.

If Godhead is to be revealed in the created order, it will be revealed most adequately in manhood, since man was created in the image of God. It is fitting, then, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Word who became flesh, should in His one person be both altogether God and altogether man—not something betwixt and between as so many, from Arius (and before Arius) to Jehovah's Witnesses, have supposed. The more, then, we emphasize our Lord's real humanity, the more we do justice to His true nature, for it is in that real humanity—*in* it, and not merely *through* it—that we see the Godhead shine.

I

My instructions are to deal with the biblical teaching about our Lord's humanity, but to bear in mind, as I do so, the imbalances that need to be corrected in Brethren tradition. This can most easily be done if, before I survey the biblical evidence, I present some prolegomena—prolegomena which, I fear, will absorb the greater part of my time. What emerges from these prolegomena is this: a weakness on the doctrine of our Lord's humanity, verging at times on Docetism, has been endemic in certain phases of the Brethren movement.

The reason for this is that, almost at the outset of the movement, Brethren found themselves involved in debates on the Person of Christ of a kind which, more especially among the rank and file, caused any emphasis on His *normal* manhood to be almost suspect.

The trouble, I think, really goes back to Edward Irving (1792-1834). Irving, who was a leading participant in the Albury Park conferences (1826-30) and visited Lady Powerscourt at Powerscourt Castle in September 1830, published in the latter year his work on *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of our Lord's Human Nature*, in which he promulgated views which he had already ventilated in his preaching, and which led, three years later, to his conviction for heresy by the Presbytery of Annan and his expulsion from the ministry of the Church of Scotland. In his own words:

> The point at issue is simply this: whether Christ's flesh had the grace of sinlessness and incorruption from its proper nature, or from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. I say the latter. I assert, that in its proper nature it was as the flesh of His Mother, but, by virtue of the Holy Ghost's quickening and inhabiting of it, it was preserved sinless and incorruptible.[2]

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In other words, since it was fallen human nature that needed to be redeemed, it was fallen human nature that Christ assumed. As Dr. H. C. Whitley paraphrases Irving's argument, 'the deliverer must go into the prison-house where the captives were held, and be Himself a prisoner, so that by His own escape He might open the prison-door for His brethren'.[3]

Because of Irving's popularity as a preacher, his views received wide currency, and called forth several rebuttals. The leaders of the Brethren movement probably felt themselves under a special obligation to rebut them, because Irving, like them, was intensely interested in unfulfilled prophecy and because—also, but not likewise!—he aimed at the restoration of apostolic church order.

One such rebuttal of Irving's views, entitled 'Doctrines of the Church in Newman Street, considered', was contributed by B. W. Newton in 1835 to the second volume of *The Christian Witness*, and amplified by him in a second edition of the volume. (It was to Newman Street, London, that Irving and his followers moved in October, 1832, five months after his deposition from the ministry of Regent Square Church.) In the course of his rebuttal of Irvingism, Newton endeavoured to set forth a more biblical account of the human nature of Christ by exploring its relation to the 'federal headship' of Adam. Newton stood in that Reformed tradition which maintained the 'covenant theology' of Johannes Cocceius and other early seventeenth-century theologians (including the Westminster Divines). According to this school of thought, God, upon creating Adam, entered into a 'covenant of works' with him, a covenant which was conditional on Adam's perfect obedience. When Adam broke the covenant by eating from the forbidden tree, he incurred suffering and death not only for himself but for his descendants: since he was their 'covenant head' or 'federal head', his sin was imputed to them, and they reaped its fruit. Along these lines Rom. 5: 12-21 was interpreted. Now, Christ was undoubtedly ('according to the flesh') a descendant of Adam, and while Newton repudiated Irving's view that Christ accordingly inherited a sinful nature, he suggested that it was because of His *federal* relationship to Adam that He inherited such side-effects of the fall as 'hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow, etc.', together with 'the being possessed of a mortal body'. Some years later he repudiated this view in favour of one which accounted for Christ's suffering such ills as flesh is heir to 'in virtue of His having been made of a woman'. He realized that the view he had previously expressed might be thought to imply the corollary that Adam's sin was imputed to Christ just as (in terms of covenant theology) it was imputed to every other member of the human family, so he not only repudiated it as an exegetical error but (so sensitive was his theological conscience) confessed it as a sin, for which he sought the Lord's pardon.[4]

In other papers Newton gave further consideration to the subject of Christ's sufferings during His life ('non-atoning' sufferings, as he reckoned them) by expounding some of the 'individual laments' in the Psalter in a christological sense. It was notes of such an exposition of Psalm 6 that provided the immediate occasion for the doctrinal controversy at Plymouth in 1845-47 which split the Brethren movement.[5]

We can see, more easily than our predecessors could at that time, that much of the trouble arose from mistaken principles of Old Testament exegesis. It is an instance of the irony of history that J. N. Darby, who led the attack against Newton, ran into trouble himself twelve years later because of papers on 'The Sufferings of Christ' contributed to *The Bible Treasury* in 1858 and 1859.[6] Here he distinguished, in addition to Christ's ill-treatment at the hands of men and the atoning sufferings endured vicariously on men's behalf (the 'cup' which His Father gave him to drink), a third category, endured under the 'governmental' dealing of God when He 'entered in heart into the indignation and wrath that lay on Israel', in sympathy with the righteous remnant of the end-time. Here also the psalms of individual lament were brought into play. While Psalm 22 was (naturally) expounded in relation to Christ's atoning sufferings on the cross, Psalms 69 and 102 were related to the third category of sufferings.[7] While this thesis was not identical with Newton's, both were based on mistaken exegesis,[8] and some of Darby's most faithful followers saw little to choose between the two, since both implied that Christ endured divine wrath otherwise than vicariously and by way of atonement.

To revert to the Plymouth controversy, one of its effects was the growth of a morbid scrupulosity about the use of certain time-honoured language concerning our Lord's manhood, arising from fear lest the terrible stigma of Newtonianism should be incurred. Newton, for example, had spoken of our Lord's body as 'mortal', in the perfectly proper sense of its being 'capable of dying'. The application of the epithet to Christ in manhood had well-known orthodox precedent, as, for example, in Isaac Watts' lines:

> Arrayed in mortal flesh
> The Covenant Angel stands—

or:

> Down from the shining heights above
> In joyful haste he sped,
> Entered the grave in mortal flesh
> And dwelt among the dead.

But Newton's use of the word was chalked up against him as heresy. In 1850, replying to this misrepresentation, he appealed to its common use in a hymn by J. G. Deck which had been freely sung by the Brethren ever since its composition about 1837:

> Such was Thy grace that, for our sake,
> Thou didst from heaven come down;
> Our mortal flesh and blood partake,
> In all our misery one.

Here was a to-do, to be sure! The unfortunate hymn-writer had to wear a white sheet in public. On November 14, 1850, Deck issued a *Confession of a Verbal Error in a Hymn*. He admitted that the offending word had been 'long used by godly brethren without consciousness of evil' and explained that he meant no more than 'capable of death'—which no one doubted. But since Newton's use of the word had been pronounced heretical, it was thenceforth taboo among Brethren who valued their reputation for 'soundness'. Deck's hymn had to be altered, and was weakened in the

process: the new form of the line in question—'With us of flesh and blood partake'—was but a pale reflection of the original.[9] If the term 'mortal' became taboo among Brethren, however, Newton's cousin and champion, S. P. Tregelles, reacted vigorously by making willingness to use it a test of orthodoxy: its deliberate avoidance, in his eyes, was a sign of Docetism.[10]

In October 1848 Henry Craik was severely criticised by G. V. Wigram for using language about our Lord's humanity which, while not including the taboo word, emphasized that 'He was in all things made like unto His brethren, sin only excepted; that the flesh which He assumed was the flesh and blood of the children; that the physical or chemical properties of His body were the same as ours'. The 'necessary inference' from his critics strictures, he said, 'would be, that the Blessed One did not take our flesh, but flesh and blood essentially different from ours'.[11]

Darby knew very well that there was nothing heretical in what Craik had written, and is reported to have said that, when he received Wigram's criticisms of Craik, he put them at the back of the fire. He must have seen, moreover, the docetic direction in which Wigram's arguments tended. But for purposes of ecclesiastical politics Wigram was too useful a henchman to be disowned.

One symptom of this docetic tendency appears in the description of our Lord's manhood as 'heavenly humanity', found in the works of C. H. Mackintosh and others.[12] In His present exaltation He does indeed wear a heavenly humanity,[13] but if the expression is used of the manhood of the historical Jesus, the natural conclusion would be that His humanity and ours were different.

As quoted by W. B. Neatby, F. E. Raven used this expression in a context which makes its docetic intention plain. He remarked that one of his critics, Gladwell by name, appeared to be 'in great ignorance of the true moral character of Christ's humanity. He did not get that character by being born of a woman, though that was the way by which He took man's form, but Manhood in Him takes its character from what He ever was divinely. "The Word became flesh". He does not seem to me to have any idea of a real heavenly humanity'. These words, as Neatby says, are unintelligible unless they mean 'that Christ was not man of the substance of His mother, but that He derived from her only the outward form of a man. It is hard to distinguish this from the doctrine that He was man in semblance only'.[14]

Raven's critics charged him with Apollinarianism—the doctrine (condemned at Constantinople in A.D. 381) that in our Lord's incarnate being the Divine Logos took the place that in other men is taken by the rational mind and spirit. Whether this is the proper label to attach to him is doubtful, because of the cloudiness of his language on this subject (as on many others). But he manifestly did not believe in our Lord's *personal* humanity and would not subscribe to the affirmation of the Athanasian Creed that 'God and man is one Christ'. When someone, at a discussion meeting in 1895, quoted Darby's comment on Col. 1: 15f. ('We say, Christ is God, Christ is man; but it is Christ who is the two'),[15] Raven replied, 'Yes; but you must be careful how you take up an expression like that. In Person He is God; in condition He is Man'. And again: 'Unity is not a

happy word as applied to the Lord. The teaching of Scripture is incarnation'.[16] Raven was repeatedly urged to make his meaning plain, but on no occasion (so far as I am aware) did he make an unambiguous statement of our Lord's perfect and unimpaired manhood, although it would have been easy for him to do so, had he been so minded. On the contrary, when, in the course of the same conversations, someone referred to man as comprising body, soul and spirit, and asked if this was true of our Lord —'you do not contend against His manhood?'—Raven replied: 'No; but you might be near error there. You get on dangerous ground in applying such things to the Lord. He is a divine Person in manhood'.[17]

Raven's christological eccentricity provoked a healthy reaction in the group which in 1890 withdrew from association with him, the Lowe party, which united in 1926 with the Kelly party. William Kelly's followers (who had separated from the main stream of Darbyism in 1881) were fortunate in having as their leader a master of biblical and historical theology who held intelligently to the Chalcedonian definition of our Lord's person[18] and taught his disciples accordingly. Several years ago, in conversation with the late John Weston, a well-known leader in the Lowe-Kelly party, I mentioned that Apollinarianism was the besetting heresy of evangelical Christians. He expressed interest in my opinion, but added, 'Not among us.' But what could happen in the Raven succession was shown in 1927, when James Boyd of Brighouse, Yorkshire, not a 'Taylorite' but a 'Glanton' brother, published a pamphlet on *The Incarnation of the Son* in which he said, 'That the Son was the spirit of His own body I have not the slightest question . . . The assertion that Christ has a *human* soul and spirit is in principle a denial of the incarnation of the Son'.[19] These statements were made in a polemical context, and when the good man realized the furore which they created he withdrew them, but plainly he could not see what was wrong with them. It is better to remember Mr. Boyd gratefully as the author of the beautiful communion hymn, 'O teach us, Lord, Thy searchless love to know',[20] than as one who inadvertently perpetrated a doctrinal deviation which occasioned a minor ecclesiastical cleavage.[21]

The fact is that, in certain strands of Brethrenism where the issues have not been clearly faced, views subversive of our Lord's manhood find a measure of acquiescence such as would never be extended to views subversive of His deity. Have you, for example, ever come across in Brethren circles the Valentinian view that from conception to birth our Lord passed through the body of His mother 'like water through a pipe', deriving no part of His humanity from her?[22] I have met it—not, of course, in a responsible teacher but in a local leader whose expression of opinion was regarded by some of his followers as doing honour to Christ. Writing in 1901, W. B. Neatby said, 'A year or two ago I heard an address from a Brother of the Open Section, who actually taught that Christ did not die from crucifixion, but by a mere miraculous act. The good man was certainly not a responsible teacher, nor did I ever know a man of weight to set Holy Scripture aside with quite so much definiteness and completeness; but I have heard much that glanced in the same direction'.[23] And so have I, and probably you have too. Our Lord's statement, 'No one takes it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord' (John 10: 18) must

be taken along with other New Testament passages which state explicitly that His enemies 'killed' Him (e.g. Acts 2: 23; 10: 39; 1 Thess. 2: 15, etc.). To deny the reality of His death is an ancient form of Docetism (represented in some apocryphal Gospels[24] and later in the *Qur'an*),[25] against which John the evangelist had to polemicize as early as the first century.[26]

Or we may think of the disapproval visited even today on those who interpret our Lord's temptations realistically[27] or take at face value His words which place limits to His knowledge. I remember the criticism voiced about forty years ago by William Hoste in *The Believer's Magazine* of a statement about our Lord in C. F. Hogg's pamphlet, *The Traditions and the Deposit:* 'What He did not know, He knew that He did not know'.[28] Mr. Hogg's statement was based on our Lord's own unambiguous language in Mark 13: 32 (=Matt. 24: 36). But Mr. Hoste may well have been particularly sensitive in this regard, because the interpretation of Mark 13: 32 figured in the 1923-24 controversy over Theodore Roberts' alleged unorthodoxy, in which Mr. Hoste had played a leading part.[29]

In my youth I remember the holy horror expressed by a ministering brother because someone else had, in an address, taken for granted that our Lord in His boyhood went to school. The very idea that He should have had to learn His letters from a human teacher was judged an intolerable aspersion on His perfect knowledge: 'He owed *nothing* to earth', said the speaker. As I listened to him, I felt glad that Luke stated expressly that 'Jesus *increased in wisdom*' as well as 'in stature' (Luke 2: 52), for I suspected that, if one of our own contemporaries had made such a statement on his own initiative, the speaker would have been horrified at him too. Our Lord's deity is not enhanced when men, thinking to do Him honour, detract from the completeness of His manhood.

II

We turn now to the biblical evidence, and it will be convenient to consider the main divisions of the New Testament one by one.

The Synoptic Gospels and Acts. While the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, like all the New Testament documents, are written from a 'post-Easter' perspective, yet they preserve a clear impression of the historical Jesus—Jesus as He was known to his associates and others during His Palestinian ministry. While full justice is done, especially by Mark, to His being the Son of God,[30] His real manhood is axiomatic for all three writers: it is assumed rather than asserted. The disciples realized, indeed, that He was no ordinary man: 'Who then is this?' they exclaimed in amazement when He awoke and stilled the tempest (Mark 4: 41)—but they knew that the one who, a few minutes earlier, had been lying asleep with His head on a cushion, was a real man, whatever else might be said of Him. Two of the Synoptic evangelists give some account of His birth, which was perfectly natural—it was His conception that was supernatural. The same two evangelists trace His ancestry back through many generations: Matthew back through David to Abraham (Matt. 1: 1 ff.), Luke back through David to Adam (Luke 3: 23-38). All three writers refer to His family relationships; and none leaves any doubt about the reality of His death. After His resurrection and exaltation He is described in the apostles' preaching as 'a

man (*aner*) attested . . . by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him' (Acts 2: 22), as the 'man' (*anēr*) appointed by God to be the future judge of living and dead (Acts 17: 31), and His descent from David is repeatedly emphasized (Acts 2: 30 f.; 13: 23). If I have not adduced the designation 'the Son of Man' in this connexion, that is because this phrase does not primarily connote His humanity but rather His identity with a figure of Old Testament prophecy and apocalyptic who is exalted after humiliation. Even so, in so far as it comes to mean 'the representative man' or 'the Proper Man whom God Himself hath bidden', it is not without its relevance here.

The Pauline Corpus. More important is the testimony of Paul, whose words about no longer knowing Christ 'after the flesh' (2 Cor. 5: 16) are frequently taken to mean that he had no interest in the historical Jesus, concentrating exclusively on the now exalted Lord. What Paul is really contrasting in these words is his own former, pre-Christian attitude with his present attitude as a believer; his meaning is brought out well in the N.E.B. rendering: 'With us, therefore, worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man; even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so now no longer'. No one would dispute, indeed, that Paul was immediately and permanently conscious of Jesus as the exalted Lord, raised high above the universe (Phil. 2: 9-11; Eph. 1: 20-23), embodying the fulness of deity (Col. 2: 9), as he also identified Him with the Wisdom of God, the agent through whom all things were brought into being and maintained in being (1 Cor. 1: 24, 30; 8: 6 b; Col. 1: 15-17). Yet for Paul He who was the eternal Wisdom and the exalted Lord was personally continuous with the historical Jesus, true man, 'descended from David according to the flesh' (Rom. 1: 3), 'born of woman, born under the law' (Gal. 4: 4), who met His death upon a cross (Gal. 3: 1; Phil. 2: 8, etc.). In his death the death-blow was given to sin in the sphere of human nature where sin had usurped control, and redemption was procured for sinners. When, in the place where he teaches this most explicitly (Rom. 8: 3), Paul says that God sent 'his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh'—literally, 'in likeness of flesh of sin' (i.e. flesh which is dominated by sin)—the word 'likeness' modifies 'sin', not 'flesh'. His flesh was the same as ours, otherwise the death-blow given to sin in His death would not have broken its power in our lives; but His flesh—His human nature—was not dominated by sin, as ours is. (Perhaps it should be mentioned here that the similar phrase in Phil. 2: 7, 'being born *in the likeness* of men', may be rather a rendering of the phrase 'one like a son of man' in Dan. 7: 13.)[31] As 'first-begotten from the dead' (Col. 1: 18) Jesus is head of the new creation, but since the new creation comprises a new humanity, not a new order of divine beings, His own humanity persists in His risen life.

In the Pastoral Letters the one who was 'manifested in the flesh' (1 Tim. 3: 16) is the 'one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim. 2: 5), whose 'good confession' before Pontius Pilate provides an example and incentive to His followers to be faithful confessors in their turn (1 Tim. 6: 13 f.).

Hebrews. For the writer to the Hebrews, as for Paul, Jesus is the Son of God 'through whom also he made the worlds' (Heb. 1: 2) and is addressed in Old Testament scripture not only as 'Lord' (Heb. 1: 10) but actually as 'God' (Heb. 1: 8 f., twice); but there is no New Testament writer who more emphatically underlines the necessity of Jesus' humanity if there was to be any gospel for mankind. Since . . . the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death' He might 'deliver' them (Heb. 2: 14 f.). 'He had to be made like his brethren in every respect' if he was to be their effective high priest: 'it is not of angels that he takes hold; he takes hold of the descendants ot Abraham'[32] (Heb. 2: 16 f.). Far from being an impassive visitor from another realm, playing a set part on the world stage with Olympian detachment, He sympathizes with the weaknesses of His fellow-men and knows how best to help them, for 'he himself has suffered and been tempted'—tempted indeed 'in every respect . . . as we are, yet without sinning' (Heb. 2: 18; 4: 15). There is nothing impassive, there is everything that is warmly and appealingly human in the picture of one who poured out His soul in 'prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death', and 'learned obedience through what he suffered' (Heb. 5: 7 f.), who blazed the trail of faith and persevered to the end, enduring the cross and despising the shame, putting up with sinners' hostility so that His people, profiting by his example, need not 'grow weary or fainthearted' (Heb. 12: 2 f.).

The General Epistles. Of the General Epistles (apart from 1 John, which is considered below), the only one that contains material directly relevant to our subject is 1 Peter. In 1 Peter, as in the Pauline letters, Jesus is now the exalted one 'who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him' (1 Pet. 3: 22); yet He was 'put to death in the flesh' (1 Pet. 3: 18), enduring unjust suffering uncomplainingly on His people's behalf, that they might learn by His example and follow His steps (1 Pet. 2: 21). The writer claims to be a witness of the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 5: 1), and there is much in his language about those sufferings which bears out this claim, even if the language be largely indebted to the fourth Isaianic Servant Song (so especially in 1 Pet. 2: 22-25). Christ's sufferings and death were real: on their reality their redemptive and exemplary efficacy depends.

The Johannine Writings. The Apocalypse may be passed over briefly, since it concentrates on the exalted Christ to such a degree that it contributes but little to our purpose. Yet the exalted Christ is pictured, *inter alia*, as the Lamb that was slain (Rev. 5: 6 ff.), and the repeated references to the redeeming and cleansing virtue of 'the blood of the Lamb' (Rev. 5: 9; 7: 14; 12: 11) leave us in no doubt that His present exaltation is the consequence of His humiliation and death. If His followers win their victory through being faithful unto death, it is because He won His thus and has shown them the way.

But the Johannine Gospel and first two epistles are quite outstandingly germane to our theme. The evangelist who expounds so eloquently the divine character of the eternal Logos who was manifested on earth in Jesus Christ set his face uncompromisingly against docetic tendencies in the

church of his day and made as sure as he could that no docetic inferences should be drawn from his exposition. (If, nevertheless, such inferences have been drawn, the fault is not his.)[33] He does not content himself with saying that the Logos assumed manhood: in the most positive terms he affirms that the Logos 'became flesh' (John 1: 14). This affirmation cut at the root of the dualist presupposition that the spiritual and the material orders were too incompatible to be congenially associated. The incarnate Logos, moreover, according to John, was capable of weariness, thirst and grief, and died as only men can die. John will not allow that there was anything unreal about the death of Jesus: the solemn eyewitness testimony to the effusion of blood and water which followed the piercing of His side with the soldier's lance (John 19: 34 f.) is adduced in order to emphasize, against much contemporary docetic speculation, that He really died.

So essential, indeed, is Jesus' true manhood to the authentic gospel that in John's first epistle the confession of this is a criterion of membership in the family of God (1 John 4: 2; 5: 1), while its denial is a mark of the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4: 3; cf. 2 John 7). Some Docetists might hold, as Gerinthus apparently did, that the Christ-spirit came upon the man Jesus at his baptism but left him before his passion. In the Gospel of Peter the cry of dereliction is reinterpreted in this sense: 'My power, my power, thou hast left me!' But to all this speculation John says No: 'This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and with the blood '(1 John 5: 6). If the one who was baptized was the Son of God, as the heavenly acclamation confirmed (cf. John 1: 32-34), the one who died was equally the Son of God. And the witness of the blood attests that, as the Son of God's manhood was real, so was His death.

The gospel of our salvation depends upon the genuineness of our Lord's humanity, and so does the value of His life as an example for His people to follow. The power of that example is weakened if we can say, in extenuation of our own failure, 'It was different, or easier, for Him'. Only as He presents himself to us as perfect man can we in turn be validly encouraged to grow up, not only individually but corporately, 'to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Eph. 4: 13).

'A Saviour *not quite God*', said Bishop Handley Moule, 'is a bridge broken at the farther end'.[34] With equal truth it must be said that a Saviour —and an Exemplar—*not quite man* is a bridge broken at the nearer end. 'The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever'.[35]

NOTES

(1) E. Schweizer, *Jesus*, E.T. (1971), chapter ii (pp. 13 ff.).

(2) E. Irving, *Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened* (1830), Preface, in *Collected Writings*, V (1865), p. 4.

(3) H. C. Whitley, *Blinded Eagle* (1955), p. 90.

(4) Newton's *Statement and Acknowledgment respecting certain Doctrinal Errors* (1847) is conveniently reproduced as Appendix B in F. R. Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (1968), pp. 292 ff. It is surprising that W. B. Neatby was unable to procure a copy of 'this important tract', as he justly calls it in *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (1901), p. 344. It contains salient quotations from Newton's *Christian Witness* article of 1835.

(5) Cf. Neatby, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 ff.

(6) Reproduced, in a revised edition, in J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings* VII, pp. 212-361.

(7) *Collected Writings* VII, pp. 240, 273 n., 306; cf. the exposition of Ps. 102 in Darby's *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* II, pp. 212 f.

(8) For another example of this mistaken principle of exegesis—mistaken, for all the noble precedent it could claim—cf. S. P. Tregelles's difficulty in interpreting Ps. 119: 67, 176, as the words of Christ, described by himself in *Three Letters to the Author of 'A Retrospect of Events that have taken place among the Brethren'* (2nd edition, 1894), pp. 53 ff.

(9) Cf. S. P. Tregelles, *Five Letters to the Editor of 'The Record' on Recent Denials of our Lord's Vicarious Life* (2nd edition, 1864), pp. 29 f. The amended line stands as quoted in *Hymns for the Little Flock* (3rd edition, 1903), No. 327, *Hymns for Christian Worship*, No. 328, and *Hymns of Light and Love*, No. 70. The wiser path was perhaps followed in *The Believers' Hymn Book*, No. 128, which omits the controversial stanza. One might have thought that objection would have been taken to the word 'confessed' in the couplet

> 'Our sins, our guilt, in love divine,
> Confessed and borne by Thee'—

but evidently not.

(10) 'The orthodox word "mortal" has become a kind of keynote. Let it be observed, that no one professing to be a *teacher* can be accepted as sound in connection with our Lord's spotless and vicarious life of obedience, who does not, without hesitation or equivocation, avow his acceptance of this term, as used habitually by sound Christians. He who *rejects* it, cannot *really* hold the incarnation of our Lord, that He took the same flesh and blood as His brethren: he must hold some part at least of the false doctrine of the "heavenly humanity" ' (*Five Letters*, p. 30). This was carrying the war into the enemy's camp with a vengeance!

(11) Cf. Heb. 2: 14 ff.; 4: 15. In the issue of *Pastoral Letters* which Wigram attacked, Craik allegorized the 'shittim' (acacia) wood, of which the ark of the covenant was made, in terms of our Lord's humanity, linking it with the words of Isa. 53: 2, 'a root out of a dry ground'. See Neatby's account of the matter (*op. cit.*, pp. 165 ff.).

(12) See C. H. Mackintosh, *Notes on the Book of Leviticus* (2nd edition, 1861, pp. 28 ff.) (the exposition of the meal offering of Lev. 2: 1 ff. in terms of our Lord's humanity), especially pp. 35-38. Some unguarded expressions in the first edition (1860), which I have not seen, were removed or modified in the second edition. So unprejudiced a critic as Horatius Bonar, in the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* (which he edited), charged him with Valentinianism! But this was absurd for, in spite of the imprecision of his devotional style, Mackintosh on p. 37 made it plain that our Lord had 'a real human body—real "flesh and blood".' Darby, while finding Mackintosh's occasional expression 'objectionable' (and rightly so), wrote trenchantly in his defence (*Collected Writings* X, pp. 49 ff.).

(13) The 'heavenly man' or 'man of heaven', whose image believers are to wear (1 Cor. 15: 49), is Christ in His resurrection life. This is the reference also of 1 Cor. 15: 47, 'the second man is (the Lord) from heaven', which Mackintosh (*op. cit.*, p. 35) seems to apply to our Lord's earthly existence.

(14) Neatby, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

(15) Darby, *Synopsis* V, p. 16. On our Lord's personal humanity Darby expressed himself wisely: 'the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth, but the moment you *deny* personality in the man Christ Jesus you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied is Christ's individuality as a man' (*Collected Writings* XXIX, p. 322).

(16) *Notes of Addresses and Readings at Quemerford* (1895), pp. 132 f.

(17) *Ibid.*, p. 135. N. F. Noel quotes him as saying, 'Where the unity of the Person is got from, I know not. It seems to me perfect nonsense' (*The History of the Brethren* [1936], p. 511).

(18) For this definition, adopted at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), see my *The Spreading Flame* (1958), p. 313.

(19) J. Boyd, *The Incarnation of the Son* (1927), pp. 14 f. In an open letter dated March 28, 1927, he said the pamphlet should have ended with p. 13, and took the 'opportunity of withdrawing the passage referred to as extraneous to the main question'.

(20) *Hymns for the Little Flock* (1903), No. 350.

(21) The 'West Philadelphia Cleavage' (Noel, *History*, pp. 410 ff.).

(22) Cf. the summary and scriptural refutation of the Valentinian doctrine in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* i. 7. 2; iii. 16. The doctrine is sometimes called Melchiorite, after the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffmann (d. 1542).

(23) Neatby, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

(24) Compare what is said below about the *Gospel of Peter*. Basilides is said to have taught that Simon of Cyrene was crucified in Jesus' place, while Jesus stood by wearing Simon's form (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* i. 24. 4).

(25) Sura 4: 156 ('they did not kill him, neither did they crucify him; he was made a semblance to them'). By an unhappy accident, Muhammad apparently derived his knowledge of the gospel story from a docetic source.

(26) John 19: 34 f.

(27) As witness some reactions to G. F. Hawthorne's note on Heb. 4: 15 in *A New Testament Commentary*, ed. G. C. D. Howley (1969), p. 547.

(28) *The Traditions and the Deposit* (n.d.), p. 4. The edition which evoked Mr. Hoste's critical review was published by Pickering and Inglis; it was a reprint of a pamphlet originally issued by so orthodox a body as the Bible League. It is to this earlier issue (I think) that reference is made by T. Roberts in *The Word became Flesh* (1924), p. 6, where he points out that Mr. Hogg used 'our Lord's assertion that He did not know the time of His Second Advent as proof of His infallibility where He claims to know'.

(29) See *The Doctrine of Christ* (1924), a document signed by thirteen brethren, criticizing T. Roberts' teaching on biblical inerrancy and on the person of Christ. Controversy on the latter issue was sparked off by a letter to *The Christian* early in 1923 in which Mr. Roberts wrote, with reference to Mark 13: 32, of 'our Lord's plainly stated ignorance of the date of His second advent'. That Mr. Hogg did not agree with the thirteen signatories to *The Doctrine of Christ* (one of whom was Mr. Hoste) is evident from an open letter of his, dated July 17, 1924, in which he reported that at an interview 'what Mr. Roberts put before us seemed to me an explicit acknowledgment of the true, essential and unchangeable Deity of Christ'.

(30) Cf. Mark 1: 1. That Jesus is the Son of God is twice proclaimed from heaven (Mark 1: 11; 9: 7), but is for the most part concealed on earth until it is affirmed in Jesus' reply to the high priest (Mark 14: 62) and acknowledged at the climax of the passion narrative by the centurion (Mark 15: 39).

(31) This may be said also of the phrase 'being found in human form' in Phil. 2: 8a.

(32) The RSV rendering, 'it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham', is too weak; the verb is that found in the phrase 'I took them by the hand' in Heb. 8: 9.

(33) Our Lord's words in John 4: 32, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know' (viz. the doing of the Father's will and accomplishment of His work), do not mean that he was immune from physical hunger.

(34) H. C. G. Moule, Prefatory Note to Sir R. Anderson, *The Lord from Heaven* (1910), p. vi.

(35) *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1647), Answer to Question 21.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

H. D. McDONALD

The Jesus of the Gospels was no phantom figure; no unreal, unearthly visitant who passed our way as a shadow of the evening steals across the sky. He was certainly human: however more than Man He was and we know Him to be, He was not less Man. He was quite literally and truly a Man.

He possessed a human body; that fact was made abundantly clear. He took upon Himself our nature with all its limitations, its feelings, its openness to suffering and pain. He came into life in the human way of natural birth after the lapse of the requisite time. He felt tired; He ate; He slept, and so forth.

He possessed a human soul. He displayed those human elements of man's psychical nature which distinguish him from the animals and which make him more than a different sort of somatic creature. He possessed a human mind. He revealed those properties of mind which are characteristically human. He clearly followed the normal mental processes of gaining information by asking questions, by making inferences, and the like. He possessed a human will. Throughout the days of His flesh there were occasions when He had to steel Himself with purpose against temptations and to set His face as a flint to fulfil His vocation. He had choices to make, temptations to meet; all of which show Him to have been conscious of responsibility. What are called the virtues of the will are particularly exemplified by the steadfastness and persistence with which He continued loyal to His friends (Mt. 16: 22), and stood firm amid the constant hostility of His enemies (Mt. 12: 14).

Jesus was, then, both Man and *a* Man: He possessed human nature in all its fulness in the totality of a single personality.

This reality of Christ's full humanity has always been regarded as a necessity for faith's adequacy. So it has always been proclaimed: but the Church has not always been successful in maintaining the reality and the integrity of the human nature of the Word of God incarnate. In broad terms it may be said that in an earlier day, when the "spiritual" world was more readily believed in than the material, the Church found it more difficult to give actuality to our Lord's humanity. Belief in the presence of divine beings was then general. But in recent times the reverse is the situation. The existence of a spiritual realm has receded far from the thinking of modern man: we have become so aware of the material world—the world of space and time—that life and even faith have become secularized. In such a context a Christ more-than-human is less easy to comprehend.

Thus the early Church, while giving assent to Christ's humanity, tended to detract from its reality and integrity in the interests of Christ's deity. He was known by experience and revelation to belong squarely to the divine side of reality, so the question was, how far can such a Being

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be human? The present-day Church, under the influence of the kenotic Christologies and the emphasis upon the divine immanence, knows Jesus as human; as the Peasant of Galilee, the Man-for-others. What authentic meaning, it is being asked, can be now given to His divineness?

For several reasons the post-apostolic Church tended to detract from the full humanness of Christ, while at the same time being aware of the need to safeguard the truth of it as a basic necessity of salvation. Thus there arose, in the period, those who became heretics on this very score; and those who were hesitant within the Church lest by asserting our Lord's humanity they should detract from His deity. But both were found to rob Christ's humanity of its full actuality. The Docetae, it is well known, denied the integrity of Christ's human nature. Even as early as Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, the notion that Christ's body was somehow unreal had taken hold. Against such a doctrine Paul had to accentuate that, 'In him all the fulness of the Godhead took up residence in *bodily* form'. The Letters of John, too, show that docetic ideas had flourished and that there was a readiness abroad to deny that Christ had come in the flesh. But if the heretics sought to reduce Christ's body to a phantom so as to accentuate His position as a spiritual aeon in the hierarchy of emanations, the hesitant within the Church tended, in the interests of maintaining His full deity, to lessen the authenticity of Christ's human existence in the body of flesh.

In the letters of the Apostolic Fathers, the immediate successors of the apostles, two broad facts stand out. On the one hand, assent was given to Christ's humanity. Polycarp of Smyrna, for example, in his letter of the Philippians, regards the Docetae as 'of the devil', and he quotes against them 1 John 4: 13. Ignatius, too, expresses a profound belief in Christ's humanity. He indeed introduces the term 'truly', or 'genuinely' as a sort of watchword against those who were tempted to regard Christ's human life as in any sense unreal. On the other hand, there was awareness of the fact that there was something about Christ which could not be expressed in mere humanistic terms. Christ was among men as the bearer of God's salvation. Inevitably the question arose, Who precisely, then, is this One in whom God is so evidently encountered? The soteriological interest led on to the Christological. Hovering around the borders of the Church's life were those who sought to construe Christ altogether in one or other of His relationships as Mediator between God and man, by regarding Him as a human creature only or as a Spirit being entirely.

Thus arose the heresies of Ebionism and Gnosticism. Ebionism regarded Christ as a human figure "adopted" by God on account of His own goodness and the bestowal upon Him of God's Spirit at the baptism. Gnosticism was "pneumatic" in its basic principles and thus discounted the reality of Christ's human body. Ebionism anticipated the Arian view that Christ is no more than a creature of God; and Gnosticism the Eutychian denial of the permanence of our Lord's humanity.

The Ebionism and Gnosticism of the second century stood opposed to each other; and against each of them the faith of the Church was equally at odds. But both stand as a witness to the fact that a Jesus human only, or a Christ divine only, was not the Jesus Christ of authentic primitive

faith. The names Ebionism and Gnosticism passed away, but the ideas for which they stood reappeared in the third century under that of Dynamistic and Modalistic Monarchianism.

The belief in the sole "monarchia" of God was of course, a fundamental tenet of Hebrew monotheism of which the Christian Church was heir. But however could such a view of God, such a faith, be reconciled with the Christian view of Christ's person? Where the theological interest prevailed there was an exaltation of the divine unity at the expense of Christ's divinity. A special influence or "dynamism" of the One Monarchia came to reside in the man Jesus, who was accordingly made Son of God by adoption and grace. On the other hand, where the Christological interest dominated there was an identification of Christ with the one Monarchia. In this case the Incarnation was conceived as a mode or expression of God. From this developed Sabellianism in which the Son came be to regarded as one of the modes in which the one Divine Being was revealed. In neither view was there a true incarnation. And for authentic Christian faith a real incarnation is a soteriological necessity. Thus, Irenaeus declares, it is in the Incarnation, in Christ the God-man, that God came savingly present and is united to His creatures. Irenaeus emphasises Christ's essential humanness in the way he stresses the stark factuality of the Incarnation. Christ, he asserts, was not a human frame inhabited by a divine presence. It is the Gnostic error to maintain that Christ came "through" the Virgin mother but 'took nothing from her'. 'For if He did not receive the substance of flesh from a human being He neither was made man nor the Son of Man; and if He was not made what we are, He did no great thing in what He suffered'. Again the same Irenaeus declares: 'But if the Lord became incarnate for any other order of things, and took flesh of any other substance, He has not then summed up human nature in His own person'. Tertullian likewise gives strong statement to the actuality of Christ's humanness, although as few before him had done, he affirms in the strongest terms the absolute deity of Christ as the Second Person within the Trinity. It is indeed to Tertullian we are indebted for the formula, Three Persons and one God. Tertullian sees the Incarnation as the union of two substances, the human and the divine, in the one person of Christ. But he heavily underscores the actuality of the human against Gnostic docetism. Referring to Christ he says, His was 'a thoroughly human condition'. 'Let us examine', he states again, 'our Lord's bodily substance for about His spiritual nature we are all agreed. It is his flesh that is in question. Its verity and quality are the points of dispute'. The Incarnation was, he affirms, a veritable assumption of flesh. Christ was born "of" a Virgin. We must not, he argues, rob the "ex" of its proper force. It is not, as the heretics would have it, "through" a Virgin and "of" a womb. She who bare, bare: and although she was a Virgin when she conceived, she was a wife when she brought forth. A phantom Christ with an unreal body, he insists, is of no value to the saving of men. He would be but a cheat and a deceiver: not the High Priest of our salvation but a conjuror in a show. This is to be by all means believed because it is absurd.

Despite these strong statements, however, there were hesitancies about giving Christ's humanity too human actuality. Even Irenaeus sees no

incongruity in referring to His body as a "shadow"—'a shade of the glory of God covering him'. Origen, too, conceived of His body in such a "spiritual" manner as to raise doubts about its reality and integrity. And the great Athanasius could contend that Jesus ate not because He needed food, but because He would make concession to the faith of His followers.

We have seen that according to the Gospels Christ had a human body: the Docetae and Gnostics denied it because in their view "flesh" was too mean and too sinful a condition for the divine to make contact with. The Church maintained that it was necessary for God to enter fully into human flesh that man might be redeemed. But some were hesitant like the Ebionites and Arians, who in making Him fully human ended up with a Christ human only.

But Christ has a human soul, according to the evidence of the New Testament. Here again failure to give the clearest recognition to the fact led to hesitancy and heresy. Athanasius left out of reckoning the possession by Christ of a human soul in order to secure his changelessness. While he does not in so many words reject the human soul in Christ as a 'physical factor'; he certainly does reject it as a 'theological factor'. He was of the opinion that the manhood of Christ is confined to the assumption of a body only. It is for this reason that he has to explain the psychical displays as bodily conditions which Christ permitted but which were not real to Him. He asks the question, 'Is Jesus Christ man, as all other men, or is He God bearing flesh?' He has no doubt about the answer. He is no ordinary man: for if He were He would have 'to advance' according to the stages of human life. But what advance had He who is equal to God? he asks.

But if Athanasius refused to Christ a human soul to repudiate the suggestion that He underwent development, Arius took the same line for exactly the opposite reason. It was Arius' avowed purpose to show that Christ as Son was neither free from change or from the possibility of sinning. He contended firmly that Christ took a body without a soul. The soul element was supplied by the Word and since Christ showed feelings, acknowledged ignorance, admitted to change, this means that the Logos element in Him could not be authentically divine because imperfect and mutable.

The Arians adduced such passages as Luke 2: 52 as allowing for Christ's moral growth: Jn. 12: 27 as evidence for His anxiety: Mt. 26: 39 as illustrating His fear of death: and Mk. 13: 32, Jn. 11: 34 and 13: 31 as proof of His ignorance. But in their effort to show the reality of His human experiences they failed altogether to take account of the complete data for a full understanding of the person of Christ, which both the biblical picture and Christian experience provided. It is not then without significance that they preferred the phrase 'made flesh' to that of 'was made man' which was favoured by the Fathers of Nicaea.

According to the biblical witness Christ had a human mind. For the very best of motives Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicaea about 361-390 refused to allow that Christ in the days of His flesh possessed a human mind or *nous*. Apollinarius was concerned to refute the view that Christ was a mere man indwelt by God and that He was morally changeable. He

therefore denuded the humanity of Christ of a human soul or mind and replaced it with the divine Logos. Thus, while normal humans are made up of the trichotomic elements of body, mind and spirit; Christ possessed the three constituents of body, spirit and Logos. For Apollinarius, Christ was a combination of the human and divine in which the human element was virtually deified by being taken up into the divine pre-existent Logos. Christ is not, then, a unity of two natures; but a 'new nature' and 'a wondrous mixture', as he puts it. Apollinarius wanted above all to deny to Christ the possibility of free choice. According to the current psychology the human mind was regarded as possible of self-determination by being impelled by its own volition. Yielding to temptation became consequently virtually inescapable. To avoid this conclusion in the case of Christ, Apollinarius substituted in Him the Logos for the human mind thereby guaranteeing His removal from openness to sinning. The human mind, he says, is the prey of filthy thoughts; but His mind was divine, changeless and heavenly.

Honourable as was Apollinarius' intention the result was to make the temptations of Jesus unreal. They were addressed to One who, by the very constitution of His nature, could make no response.

And, as Gregory of Nazianzus was not slow to point out, the more serious issue was to undercut the whole doctrine of salvation. For if Christ did not take a human mind, which according to Apollinarius was the seat of sin, then we are not redeemed: what is not assumed, declared Gregory, is not healed.

The result of this excursion into the history of Christian doctrine will be to show (i), the fatal consequences which follow when any one element is dropped out of reckoning Christ's humanness. It needs a Christ fully human to redeem humans fully. The Incarnation was neither a metamorphosis nor a masquerade. It shows (ii) that the acceptance of the New Testament witness to Christ's humanity becomes a challenge to faith's thinking.

Right here comes the problem of Christology. For if the New Testament presents Jesus as in all essentials a human reality, and efforts to explain His person by eliminating some aspect from His human make up only leads into error, then no account of the relation in Him between the human and the divine is possible which detracts from the human in the interests of the divine; or, indeed, of the divine in the interests of the human.

There must be consistency in relating the facts. And the facts are clear enough. He knew He was fully Man and He knew He was more than man. Yet He presented Himself as One Christ; not as two beings in one skin. There was nothing schizophrenic about Him. In the one person of Jesus Christ the fulness of manhood and the fulness of Godhead unite: and unite in such a way that there is no diminution of either.

Jesus Christ does not present Himself as a juxtaposition of two beings overagainst each other. It is not, therefore, proper to speak of Him as God *and* man, with the conjunction "and" suggesting a separation. He is rather to be spoken of as the God-man; as God "enmanned".

Of course there are questions here which cannot be avoided. There is the pressing issue of Christ's knowledge. Was His knowing process normal? All of us know that human learning must follow the slow process of here a little, there a little. It is for us certainly true that knowledge is built up by stages. But what of Him?

In this connection two statements from Scripture may be put side by side. Luke 2: 52, 'And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man'. John 3: 25, 'he needed not that any man should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man'.

We would suggest that we have here reference to two types of knowing arising from the duality of Christ's person. As regards the first in which knowledge has reference to human realities Jesus learned as others learn. He surely attended school and gave Himself to acquiring knowledge. And there in the carpenter's shop He came to an understanding of the methods belonging to His trade. He learned to live with others—and for them.

But there is another way of knowing—a knowledge of spiritual things arising from man's relation to God. For us, for whom that relationship is broken by human sin and folly, that way of knowing is not natural. For us it arises only from a restored relationship; a relationship brought about by God's own initiative in grace.

But with Him that relationship was unbroken. There was no stain or strain upon it. His fundamental unchanged community of being with the Father was the source from which His knowledge of spiritual realities sprang. There is a knowledge of human things which can only come in the human way of learning; and He was human, truly human. But there is, too, a knowledge of spiritual things which derives from union and communion with God. For Him that union was never torn nor was that communion ever tainted. In the realm of spiritual realities such knowledge was for Him intuitive, immediate and inclusive. Jesus, we can accept, learned the history of His people like any young Hebrew. But the God of Israel He did not come to know. Some things He must learn as any other: but what belongs to God He need not learn. For He has not lost His contact with God; He lived with God always. While He was here in the days of His flesh He was still the Son of Man which is in heaven.

There is another question here concerning the knowledge of Christ: Was Christ's knowledge imperfect? Again two statements from the New Testament may be set side by side. Mark 13: 32 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father'. Matthew 11: 27 '. . . and no man knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any man know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him'. Something has been already said about *the way* of knowledge when we brought into juxtaposition the other two verses. The two now before us have to do with *the area* of Christ's knowledge. We have Christ's own statement that there was one thing He did not know;—did not know because it was something which could not be known by inference or learned by observation.

Does this mean that His knowledge was therefore deficient and imperfect? We need to be clear first of all that in the Matthean reference Jesus makes it certain for us that He possessed a knowledge of the Father

which was absolute. He knows the Father utterly as He is so known by the Father. But in the context of His human condition He cannot know that which cannot be known by the human process of learning.

This fact is not to be read as evidence for any imperfection in Christ's knowledge, but rather as proof that He was fully human. Perfect knowledge, if by that is meant complete knowing of everything that can be known, is not a property of even a perfect man. To be human is by definition to be limited. Not to have complete knowledge is a fact about man *qua* man, and since He was made man He was not ashamed to say "I know not". Far from this meaning that His knowledge was imperfect, it is rather to be taken as affirming that the area of His knowledge as man was conditioned by His nature as truly man.

We are not, in saying what we have just said, breaking the ancient dictum,—neither to confuse the natures or divide the person. We are simply making the important point which the biblical data demand: that the dual nature of the one person of Jesus Christ shows evidence of a dual knowledge. There is a knowledge which must follow the human process, and a way of knowing God which is not attained by that method. This fact is not only shown by a reading of that whole tenor of the New Testament record, but is suggested by a remark of Peter when he said to our Lord, 'Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee'. Peter uses two distinct words for 'know'; which tie in with the point we have been making. You know all things; Yes, Christ did know all things because of who He is; but you know by your experience of me, Peter adds, that I love you.

All of us are aware of what the whole New Testament makes clear that there is one way by which we come to know earthly things and another way of knowing the things of God. These two ways of knowing must inevitably be exemplified in Him who is at the same time the God-man. Because He confesses that the day and the hour He did not know, He shows Himself to be authentically of man: and because He declares that no man knows the Father except the Son, He reveals Himself to be absolutely of God.

It is not necessary at such a time as this and in such a place to say anything about the theological and spiritual significance of the doctrine of Christ's humanity. But the fact of His full humanness is a comfort and a challenge to faith. It is something to know that there is a Man on the throne of glory; One who knows every twist and turn of our human ways. The Epistle to the Hebrews draws out the meaning of Christ's humanity for us; and the divine sympathy which it assures and the full salvation that it implies.

There is no reason, then, to sell Christ's humanity short. For it is the plain fact of the New Testament and the highest claim for the Divine Revelation of God in Christ that it be frankly recognised that He was a Man. Adam, as Irenaeus says, was the first potential man, while Jesus was the first actual human. And because He is that He shows us that human life is a God-given condition. He makes clear also that concern for human life is a God-given requirement: and by being a Man in the conditions of our human experiences, thus linking Himself with humanity,

He tells us plainly that the human family is more significant than a particular people.

In His living as man Jesus had the victory which controls but does not eliminate temptations: and as Richard Baxter says,

> 'Christ leads me through no darker rooms
> Than He went through before'.

GOD IN HUMAN FORM: A THEME IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

D. J. A. CLINES

God's becoming man in Jesus Christ is of course a unique event. It is unique not simply in the sense in which all historical events are unique, that is, unreapeatable because they are bound up with particular times, places, and persons. It is unique also in the sense that it is an extraordinary *kind* of event. Many events can be categorised and grouped with other similar events; we even speak, loosely, of history 'repeating' itself, when we mean that we recognise a pattern or category of events that we have seen before. But that is not in any strict sense true of the incarnation. There have been no other incarnations of God; nowhere else in human history has a human life expressed in its totality the reality of God.

But that is not to say that the incarnation of God in Christ has no analogies or parallels at all. What I will be suggesting in this paper is that a central element in the incarnation, namely God's manifestation of himself in human form, is not a bolt from the blue but the supreme example of a whole category of similar manifestations. There has never been another God-man, but that God should take human form and clothe himself with flesh as he did in the incarnation is a fact that has its antecedents and anticipations, its reflections and repercussions. The incarnation is not an eccentric item in our theological vocabulary, but may be seen as the outworking of what we might speak of as a tendency in the divine nature towards incarnation.

None of the similarities to the incarnation which I will be discussing here is equivalent to the incarnation; there is more to the incarnation than the elements for which I can find analogies elsewhere in the Bible. So there is no question of minimising the uniqueness of the incarnation. To take a parallel situation: if one were to point out the parallels between the teaching of Jesus and that of the Old Testament and of contemporary Judaism, one could undoubtedly show that much of what he said was not unique or original to himself. But such a demonstration would not undermine the authority or the truth of what he taught. No more should it undermine the significance of the incarnation—rather it should enhance it—to show that in himself becoming man God has not done some totally novel, quite unprecedented thing, but has climaxed a manner of his self-manifestation.[1]

1. *Anthropomorphic language.* Biblical language which speaks of God in human terms is part of the divine movement towards revealing himself in human form.

Frequently in the Bible, God is spoken of *as if* he were a man. Three types of anthropomorphism in Old Testament language can be distinguished:[2] 1. Bodily parts are attributed to God. He is said to have eyes (Am. 9: 4), ears (Isa. 59: 1), a face (Gen. 32: 31), a mouth (Jer. 9: 12),

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hands (Am. 9: 2), fingers (Deut. 9: 10), feet (Isa. 60: 13), a heart (Gen. 6: 6). 2. He often is said to behave like a human being: he can walk in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3: 8), lock the door of Noah's ark (7: 16), smell the smoke of sacrifice (8: 21), come down from heaven to see the tower of Babel (11: 5); he can speak (Gen. 1: 3), laugh (Ps. 2: 4), and whistle (Isa. 7: 18). 3. Perhaps even more surprisingly, he is credited with human emotions: he rejoices (Zeph. 3: 17), has delight (Jer. 9: 24), loves (Deut. 4: 37), and also hates (Lev. 20: 23); even jealousy (Ex. 20: 3), anger (Deut. 29: 20), and change of heart (repentance) (Gen. 6: 6) are attributed to him.

Such anthropomorphisms have long been an embarrassment to Jews and Christians alike. Already in the second century B.C. the translators of the Septuagint removed many of the anthropomorphisms of the Hebrew Bible, though whether they did so on theological or literary grounds is a matter of dispute.[3] But certainly the first-century Jewish theologian Philo was affronted by the Biblical anthropomorphisms. In his treatise *On the Unchangeableness of God* he affirms that although the Bible says both that 'God is not like a man' (Num. 23: 19) and that he is like a man, 'the former statement is warranted by firmest truth, but the latter is introduced for the instruction of the many (*hoi polloi*)',[4] those 'whose natural wit is dense or dull, whose childhood training has been mismanaged, and are incapable of seeing clearly'.[5] But to suppose, for example, that God really had second thoughts about the creation of man (Gen. 6: 6) would be blasphemy: 'what greater impiety could there be than to suppose that the Unchangeable changes?'[6]

While Christianity has produced some extremists who have believed, like the fourth-century Audiani,[7] that the Biblical anthropomorphisms were to be understood literally and that in view of man's creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) God must have a body, the bulk of Christian thinkers have tended in the opposite direction. Few have gone as far as the second-century Marcion, who totally rejected the Old Testament representation of God, partly on the basis of its anthropomorphism, as depicting another God than the God and Father of Jesus Christ.[8] But most have attempted, in one way or another, to explain away Biblical anthropomorphic language.

One method of explaining away anthropomorphisms has been to say that they belong to a primitive stage of revelation and are replaced later by more 'spiritual' and 'refined' conceptions of God. A second method is to regard them as mere metaphors. Both these methods are employed in the short entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* under 'Anthropomorphism': 'Scripture, especially in the earlier books of the OT (e.g. Gen. 3: 8, 32. 24ff., Exod. 4: 24) in order to be intelligible to less developed minds, frequently uses anthropomorphic language, which is in most cases clearly metaphorical'.[9] But the objections to both these methods are overwhelming. To the first it can be objected that anthropomorphic language is not confined to, or even most concentrated in, the earliest parts of the Bible; it is in the prophets, for example, that we find some of the most striking anthropomorphisms, as when God is depicted as screaming and panting like a woman in childbirth (Isa. 42: 14) or as a warrior returning from the slaughter, red with the blood of his slain

enemies (Isa. 63: 1f). Furthermore, anthropomorphism is not left behind when we reach the New Testament; 'God loved the world', 'God sent his Son', are no less anthropomorphic sentences, though the anthropomorphism involved there is not so striking.

To the second method it may be objected that while the first category of anthropomorphisms, those that speak of the 'bodily parts' of God, can be understood as metaphors for his activity, it is difficult to imagine what the other categories of anthropomorphism could be metaphorical for. For, while statements about God's hand or eye may easily be interpreted as metaphors for his activity or providence, for what is the speech or the love of God a metaphor?[10]

The impossibility of interpreting all anthropomorphic language about God as mere metaphor is made plain by a study of the anthropomorphisms of Hosea, one representative prophet. Here, as U. Mauser has pointed out,[11] God himself is presented as acted upon by and participating in the experiences of his people. In five oracles of retrospect (9: 10, 13; 10: 11f.; 11: 1ff.; 13: 4ff.) God's disappointment with the way Israel has turned out is expressed poignantly, so humanly that, had we not ben told in advance that it was God who was speaking, we might suppose it was the voice of a frustrated father or a betrayed lover. Even more significant is the note of bafflement or tension in God's response to the faithlessness of Israel: at some points he determines upon abandoning Israel (4: 6; 9: 15; 11: 5ff.), but at others he is overcome by pity and will not execute his anger (11: 8f.; 14: 4). Even as he contemplates the fate in store for Israel, he says 'My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender' (11: 8; cf. 6: 4). One need not doubt that God has known the end from the beginning, that nothing in Israel's history has taken him by surprise, that he has always known what he will do and how he will act. But the prophet says nothing of that. If that kind of language about the unchangeability of God were all that could truly be said about God, Hosea's prophecy, full as it is with the anguish of God, would be false and hollow. What can most truly be said of God in relation to Hosea's Israel is that he is wholly implicated in the history of his people, suffering, puzzled, or rejoicing. This is not some extended poetic, metaphoric, fancy on Hosea's part, but the prophet's experience of the personhood of God.

Anthropomorphic language is, therefore, not some element in the Biblical texts for which excuses have to be made, but part of the revelation itself. It is to be evaluated, not negatively as accommodation to human language or as God's condescension to human understanding, but positively, as a vital element of our knowledge of God. It is not simply a question, either, of our being unable to do without anthropomorphism when speaking of God, or of all talk of God being of necessity anthropomorphic to some extent. It is rather that God has willed to reveal himself anthropomorphically, and that is how he has been experienced by men.

G. van der Leeuw, the comparative religionist, has affirmed that 'the one-sided opposition to anthropomorphism is always a sign of rationalism and religious decadence',[12] and Kornelis Miskotte in his fascinating book *When the Gods are Silent* has made the striking point that 'wherever the naiveté of the Old Testament [in which he includes its anthropomorphisms]

is lacking, the exposition and application of the New Testament always runs into the danger of evaporating into 'spirit', 'light', and 'love'—the supreme expressions of a universality which is tenderly cherished by natural theology as the most elegant form of flight from the reality of God'.[13]

The positive function of Biblical anthropomorphism is twofold at least. In the first place, it has prevented the Hebrew-Christian tradition from developing any idea of God in animal form (theriomorphism). That such an idea is ludicrous to Western men, whether themselves believers or not, is testimony to the influence of the Biblical anthropomorphic outlook. For in most, if not all, of the religions of the ancient Near East, among Egyptians, Hittites, Canaanites, and Mesopotamians, gods were frequently conceived of in animal form (cf. also Rom. 1: 23). Many animals possess superhuman qualities, whether of size, strength, speed, fecundity, or terror, and in so doing were not unnaturally thought to embody the divine. In Israel, however, not only is the making of theriomorphic images of God forbidden (Ex. 20: 4), but the whole conception of the created order of the world explicitly ranks animals beneath man (Gen. 1: 28; 9: 2; Ps. 8: 6ff.), no animal being even a 'helper equivalent to' man (Gen. 2: 20). It is likewise noteworthy how infrequently metaphors and similes from the animal world are used in the Old Testament in connection with God.[14] In societies in which animals rank above man, or are equal to him, there is a different atmosphere from that inspired by the calm, orderly process of creation pictured in Genesis 1. Animal gods are usually the focus of religious terror,[15] and in totemistic societies where animals are humanised as the ancestors of the community little room is left for the personal freedoms essential for man's development and humanisation.[16] From what depths of human bondage and ignorance of God the Biblical anthropomorphisms have rescued us can only dimly be imagined.

Secondly, the Biblical anthropomorphisms have assured the recognition in the Jewish-Christian religion of the personality of God. 'They avoid the error of presenting God as a careless and soulless abstract Idea or a fixed Principle standing over against man like a strong silent battlement'.[17] Against all tendencies to reduce the personhood of God to an abstract idea, such as 'the deity', or 'heaven' or 'providence', or as in Rabbinic terminology, to call God simply 'the name' or even 'the place',[18] the Old Testament bears witness. 'The faith of Israel sets its face against both an abstract concept of deity and a nameless "ground of being". Both the intellectualist and the mystical understandings of God are rejected'.[19] Whatever may be the force of those theological arguments which urge that God is 'beyond personality', not 'a person', since there are many ways in which the categories of personality are not applicable to him, we must accept that in our religious tradition, especially when it has been faithful to its origins in the Bible, the personhood of God has been stressed. But the doctrine that God is personal is not taught anywhere in the Bible in so many words; it is entirely grounded on the fact that he is everywhere represented as acting as only a person can; that is, he is spoken of anthropomorphically. If we would make excuses for the Biblical anthropomorphisms we had better begin to make excuses for the idea of a personal

God which rests upon them.[20]

In fact, I would argue, the Biblical anthropomorphisms are not the accidental form of the substance of the Biblical message, but announce a tendency in the divine nature toward self-incarnation in human form.

2. *The angel of the Lord.* The figure of the 'angel of the Lord' is a manifestation of God in human form.

In many cases of the appearance of the angel of the Lord, his identity seems to merge with that of God himself. Thus when the 'angel of the Lord' finds Hagar in the wilderness, he speaks to her as if he were Yahweh himself: 'I will greatly multiply your descendants' (Gen. 16: 10). Hagar is said thereupon to have 'called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "Thou art a God of seeing" '. "God and his emissary are practically interchangeable concepts".[21] Similarly when in Judges 2 the angel of the Lord goes up from Gilgal to Bochim, he says, 'I brought you up from Egypt . . . I said, "I will never break my covenant with you".' (2: 1). Here also it is plainly God himself who is speaking.

The angel of the Lord, however, is obviously regarded by men as another human being. Frequently it is only toward the end of the conversation with the angelic messenger that his real identity is revealed. Thus Gideon, when he receives a visit from the angel of the Lord, speaks as if he were another man, and speaks of Yahweh in the third person: 'Pray, sir, if Yahweh is with us, why has all this befallen us? . . . But now Yahweh has cast us off'. (Judg. 6: 13). At that point the reader learns that the heavenly visitant is no other but Yahweh: 'Yahweh turned to him and said, Go in this might of yours . . .' (v. 14). Gideon has not yet realised whom he is speaking to, for he continues to address him as 'sir' (Heb. *'adōni* 'my lord', a polite form of address) in v. 15.[22] It is only after Gideon's gift has been miraculously consumed and the visitor has disappeared that Gideon 'perceived that he was the angel of Yahweh' and was dismayed, saying, 'Alas, my Lord Yahweh, for I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face' (v. 22). Here the 'angel of Yahweh' is clearly a substitute for Yahweh, and the word 'angel' may even have been inserted by pious scribes, for it is seeing Yahweh himself, not his angel, that is dangerous ('no man shall see me and live', Ex. 33: 20,[23]), and it is because Gideon has had a sight of Yahweh that the word is spoken: 'Do not fear'.

It is similar with the case of the three visitors to Abraham (Gen. 18), who, although they are not expressly called 'angels' until the beginning of chapter 19, plainly have the same function as the 'angel of the Lord'. Here too it only gradually transpires who the visitors (or, the visitor with two attendants) are. At first Abraham receives them as ordinary human guests, but in vv. 10, 13 it is 'Yahweh' who is speaking. When he has finished speaking—and eating—the 'men' set out (v. 16), but 'Yahweh' speaks (vv. 17, 20); and the 'men' go toward Sodom (v. 22). Strangely, when the 'men' depart, 'Yahweh' remains (v. 22); presumably two of the 'men' leave for Sodom, while Yahweh the third stays to speak with Abraham. But the two who visit Sodom speak to Lot as if they too were themselves Yahweh (19: 13 'We are about to destroy this place').[24] Not all the problems of this episode can be speedily resolved, but the main point at issue is clear: Yahweh has appeared on earth from time to time in human form.

Several explanations of the figure of the 'angel of the Lord' have been offered which evade this conclusion. The first is that the 'angels' of these narratives are no more than messengers (the Hebrew *mal'ak* means 'angel' or 'messenger'), whether human or heavenly beings. They are not Yahweh himself, but only speak as if they were Yahweh because it is usual for a messenger to deliver his message in the name of the one who sent him. A clearer case which may be adduced as a parallel can be found in Judges 11: 12f.:

> 'And *Jephthah* sent *messengers* unto the king of the Ammonites saying, 'What have *I* to do with thee that thou art come unto me to fight against my land? And the king of the Ammonites answered the *messengers of Jephthah:* Because Israel took away my land when he came out of Egypt . . .; now therefore restore *thou* them peaceably'.

Relevant here may seem to be the use by the prophets of the messenger speech-form, in which they speak as if they were God himself, even sometimes omitting the introductory 'Thus says Yahweh' (cf. e.g. Isa. 3:4; 13: 11; 41: 1; 52: 13).[25] But while such speech-forms may explain why the 'angel of Yahweh' speaks as if he were Yahweh, they cannot explain why the narrators themselves frequently identify the 'angel' with Yahweh.

The second explanation is a development of the first. Aubrey Johnson has claimed that such instances as that of the messengers of Jephthah are evidence that the messengers of a man were regarded as 'extensions' of their master's personality; they are 'treated as actually *being* and not merely as representing their '*adōn* ('lord')'.[26] In parallel fashion, the 'angel of Yahweh' is spoken of as if he *were* Yahweh, although he is only an 'extension' of Yahweh.[27] But it has become clear recently that the concept of 'extension of personality' and that of 'corporate personality' on which it is founded are misleading as they have been applied to Hebrew thought.[28] Corporate decisions and responsibility were no more familiar to the Hebrews than they are to us, and we have no reason for doubting that the Hebrews saw the distinction between a man and his messengers as clearly as we do. That being so, it would be strange to find such oscillation between the 'angel of Yahweh' and Yahweh himself had not the narrators accepted the identity of the two.

A third explanation that has sometimes been offered is that the references to the 'angel of Yahweh' have been introduced into the text of the Old Testament only at a comparatively late date in its transmission, when it was felt improper to represent Yahweh himself as appearing in visible form to men. Certainly in the development of Jewish religion in intertestamental times there was a tendency to believe that God acted in the world only through intermediary angels or messengers, and not directly himself. Some early signs of this tendency may be traced in the Old Testament itself, most clearly in 1 Chronicles 21: 1 where the accusing angel, Satan, incites David to number Israel, whereas in 2 Samuel 24: 1 it is Yahweh himself who incites David. But such an explanation, while suiting some passages, does not suit all, for the substitution of 'Yahweh' by the 'angel of Yahweh' has not been carried through consistently; it is impossible to believe, for example, that the 'angel' whose blessing is invoked in Genesis 48: 16 is intended to be a substitute for an original

'Yahweh', since God's name is already used twice in the preceding verse. Rather this passage is further evidence that the angel of Yahweh is nothing else than a manifestation of Yahweh in human form.

W. Eichrodt reaches the same conclusion in his study of the 'angel of Yahweh': 'The ancient narrators . . . saw in the *mal'ak* Yhwh ['angel of Yahweh'] in certain cases the operation of God himself . . . In the quasi-human form of the messenger he can temporarily incarnate himself in order to assure his own that he is indeed immediately at hand'.[29] For Eichrodt, however, the 'angel of Yahweh' is only a 'dummy' or 'mask' by which God reveals himself. Yet the Old Testament does not, I think, hint that there is any question of the humanity of the 'angel of Yahweh'; the 'angels' (Gen. 19: 1) who visit Abraham are equally 'men' (18: 2).[30] There is undoubtedly a metaphysical puzzle here, but the main thrust of the 'angel of Yahweh' passages seems clear enough: it is that God chooses to manifest himself in human form.

3. *Man as the image of God.*[31] God is permanently present on earth in human form in the person of his representative image, man.

This remarkable statement springs from a consideration of the idea of the image of God in man as it is expressed in Genesis 1: 26 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'. What precisely is meant by this affirmation of the creation of man in the image of God?

The image of God is not some *part* of man, such as reason, personality, creativity. The whole man is the image of God.

Throughout most of the history of Biblical interpretation, theologians have attempted to identify some part or aspect or faculty of man as the image of God. The result has been a wide variety of opinions about what it is in man that is the image of God. Karl Barth has shown in a brilliant survey of the history of the doctrine how each interpreter has given content to the doctrine solely from the anthropology and theology of his own age.[32] For some of the Fathers, the image was the soul, or rationality; for the Reformers it was the state of original righteousness enjoyed by Adam before the Fall, the 'entire excellence of human nature' which since the Fall is 'vitiated and almost destroyed, nothing remaining but a ruin, confused, mutilated, and tainted with impurity'.[33] According to some nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars, the image of God has been variously thought to be man's self-consciousness, capability for thought, immortality, reason, personality, vitality and nobility. In all these respects, it is true, man is to some degree *like* God, but it is very much to be doubted whether any or all of these aspects were in the mind of the author of Genesis 1. Barth in fact concludes his catalogue of interpretations with the sardonic remark: 'One could indeed discuss which of all these and similar explanations of the term is the most beautiful or the most deep or the most serious. One cannot, however, discuss which of them is the *correct* interpretation of Genesis 1: 26'. For it is only by considering what meaning the phrase could have had to the author of Genesis 1, and not at all by working from general philosophical, religious, or even Biblical, indications of the likeness of man and God, that we can discover in what exact sense we may use the term if we wish to expound the content of the Biblical revelation.

In the last few decades it has come to be realised by a number of scholars that the image of God is not to be sought in some part or aspect of man. Several kinds of evidence have pointed in this direction:

(a) The word for 'image' (*tselem*) is used normally for three-dimensional objects, viz. statues, sculptures, reliefs, of gods, men, or other living beings. A metaphorical sense of 'image' is not attested in the Old Testament. But has God such a physical 'image' according to which man could be created, a form which could serve as the model for man? The anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament do not prove that. For the significance of such depiction of God in human terms is not that He has a body like a human being, but that He is a person and is naturally thought of in terms of human personality. Nor do occasional references to the physical appearance of Yahweh, notably in Ezekiel 1: 26 ('a likeness as it were of a human form'), amount to sufficient evidence, for it is always noticeable how reticently such statements are phrased: Ezekiel does not say he saw a human form, but only a 'likeness' 'like the appearance' of a man, i.e. the divine appearance is at two removes from human form. The typical Old Testament experience of God is that while He may be heard He cannot be seen; thus when Israel stood before Yahweh at Horeb, they 'heard the sound of words, but saw no form' (Deut. 4: 12).

Further, the human form in which Yahweh appears as the 'angel of Yahweh' does not seem to be anything more than a form which he has temporaily assumed. H. H. Rowley is probably basically correct in saying: 'In the teaching of the Old Testament God is nowhere conceived of as essentially of human form. Rather he is conceived of as pure spirit, able to assume a form rather than having in himself a physical form'.[34]

It seems best, therefore, to take the 'image of God' phrase, not as meaning that God has some image according to which man has been made, so that he resembles his Creator in some respect, but that man himself is the image of a God who has no image of His own. 'In our image' may in fact be translated 'as our image', 'to be our image', and several recent scholars have followed this interpretation.[35] A classic example of such a meaning for the particle 'in' is to be found in Exodus 6: 3 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty (El Shaddai)', where 'as' is literally 'in', that is, 'in my capacity as, in my nature of'. In similar fashion it can be claimed that Genesis 1: 26 means 'Let us make man to be in essence the image of God'. Thus man does not *have* the image of God, nor is he made *in* the image of God, nor is some *part* of him the image of God, but he is himself the image of God.

(b) This understanding is confirmed when we consider the meaning of images in the rest of the ancient Near East. Of course the meaning of images cannot be satisfactorily deduced from the Old Testament, because Hebrew faith was strongly opposed to the use of images and accordingly no rationale for them can be found in its pages. The only Old Testament references to images scorn those who make them and are obviously not sympathetic attempts to understand what images signify. In order to discover their meaning, we must find out what they signified to those who used them in worship. In only this context of the 'image of God' doctrine was the thought of images acceptable to Old Testament faith, and so we

are forced outside the Old Testament itself for the background of the concept of an image.

The function of images of gods in the ancient Near East was to be the dwelling-place of spirit or fluid emanating from the god. This fluid was not immaterial, but was usually conceived of as a fine, rarified, intangible substance which could penetrate ordinary matter, so it is often spoken of as 'breath' or 'fire'. The essential thing about an image is its possession of the divine fluid or spirit; it is that which relates it to the deity whose image it is, and which makes it an object of worship. The image does not necessarily look like the deity or like anything at all; some ancient images were unhewn lumps of rock or mere standing stones without any particular form. So obviously a representational portrayal of the god is not the chief purpose of making an image, though of course most images did look like something and were intended to portray some aspect of the deity. As the bearer of divine spirit, the image was consistently regarded as a living being, and invested with a life and daily routine of its own. In Babylonia, for example, the images of the gods were ritually awoken in the morning, dusted and washed, presented with a meal, and so on. An injury done to the image was a crime against the deity and was punished as such; hence images were seldom destroyed in war, but rather carried into captivity, where the image still remained an image of the god. It is along these lines that the Genesis doctrine of man as the image of God is to be understood, with the necessary adjustments, of course, to the fundamental beliefs of the Old Testament.

(c) A third type of evidence consists of the references in ancient Near Eastern literature to human beings as the image of God. Thus, for example, an Assyrian court-official can write to the seventh-century king Esarhaddon, 'The father of the king, my lord, was the very image of Bel', using the Assyrian word *tsalmu* cognate with the Hebrew *tselem* as employed in Genesis 1: 26. An Assyrian proverb says: 'A free man is like the shadow of a god, a slave is like the shadow of a free man; but the king is like unto the very image of god'. The use of the term 'image of God' for the king was even more common in Egypt, where especially in the 18th Dynasty (16th century B.C.) of the New Kingdom the pharaoh is often entitled 'image of Re (the sun god)', 'living image on earth', etc. Amosis I is 'a prince like Re, the child of Qeb, his heir, the image of Re, whom he created, the avenger, (or, the representative), for whom he has set himself on earth'. The god Amon-Re addresses Amenophis III: 'You are my beloved son, who came forth from my members, my image, whom I have put on earth. I have given you to rule the earth in peace'. Although these passages concern the king alone, and not mankind, their resemblance to the Genesis passages is plain, and once more the image is regarded as the whole person.

Since man is made as the image of God, and the function of the image is to be the local and bodily representative of the God who is neither local nor corporeal, we can see in this doctrine yet another sign of the movement on God's part towards enfleshing himself. When God wishes to be present in the world, according to Genesis 1, the manner of his presence is the uniting of spirit with matter which man, his image, is. God's image is neither spirit nor matter, but a unique union of the two. There is more

than a hint of the incarnation here, for the very creation of man seems designed to make possible the incarnation. It is no accident, therefore,that in the New Testament the language of the image of God is used to express the mystery of the incarnate Christ. He is 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1: 15), like Adam the 'first-born of all creation', the 'likeness of God' (2 Cor. 4: 4), the image who reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his character' (Heb. 1: 3). Thus Christ is, in a heightened sense, what Adam was, what man is; in him man sees what manhood was meant to be. The movement towards the realisation of true humanity does not begin with Jesus, but is climaxed by him; it begins with the creation of man as the image of God.

4. *The Christian believer as 'incarnation' of God.* Several aspects of New Testament Teaching about Christian believers represent them as, so to speak, 'incarnations' or 'enfleshments' of God: they are indwelt by the Spirit of God and by Christ, they are sons of God, images of Christ, and partakers of the divine nature.

First, it is surely worthy of attention that in our religion in which the incarnation of God in Christ is of central importance as a unique event, it is legitimate also to speak of the indwelling of God in Christians. Both the Holy Spirit and Christ himself are said to be 'in' or to 'dwell in' Christians. It is true that the Holy Spirit is not said to have indwelt Jesus, though the Spirit did descend upon him at his baptism (Mk. 1: 10; Mt. 3: 16; Lk. 3: 22), and according to John remained 'on' him (1: 32). And if the indwelling Spirit is the source of all good in the life of the believer (Gal. 5: 22f.), it is inconceivable that Jesus himself was not indwelt by the Spirit. To understand Jesus as a man in whom the Spirit of God dwelt without let or hindrance in fact goes quite some way toward appreciating the mystery of the incarnation.

Against this background it is significant to find in the theology of Paul that the Spirit of God indwells in believers: 'You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you' (Rom. 8: 9; cf. 11).[36] They are the temple of God and God's Spirit dwells in them (1 Cor. 3: 16).[37] The Spirit has been sent into their hearts (Gal. 4: 6), and has been given as an earnest of the eschatological redemption in their hearts (2 Cor. 5: 5; cf. 1: 22). Other references to 'receiving' the Spirit (e.g. Gal. 3: 2, 14; 2 Cor. 11: 4), and to being 'in the Spirit' may have the same background of thought of the indwelling Spirit (cf. Rom. 8: 9 which means 'You are in the Spirit if the Spirit is in you'), but it is not certain in such places whether the Spirit is being regarded as indwelling, or simply as a gift; so such references must for the present be left out of account.

In Johannine thought, the same concept is clearly expressed: the 'Spirit of truth' which believers receive 'dwells with you and will be in you' (Jn. 14: 17). The 'rivers of living water', symbolising the Spirit, which flow out from the inner being (RSV 'heart'; AV 'belly') of the believer (Jn. 7: 38f.) plainly presuppose the indwelling of the Spirit. A John-like passage[38] in Matthew (10: 20), encouraging Christians on trial before magistrates, presumably has the same implication: 'what you are to say will be given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you'; that the believer is to be simply a mouthpiece of

God appears too shallow an interpretation, and[39] it may be that the indwelling Spirit controlling the words spoken is to be thought of here.

Not only the Spirit, but also in a few passages Christ is said to indwell believers. Romans 8: 9f. makes plain that to be indwelt by the Spirit of God is to be indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, and that in turn is equivalent to Christ being in the believer. The mystery of the ages that has now been made manifest is "Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Col. 1: 27). Paul himself says, 'Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2: 20), which, whatever it means precisely, is surely more than a mere reversal of the familiar phrase 'in Christ'.[40] Jesus himself, according to John 17: 26, prays that he may be 'in' his disciples, and in 1 John 4: 15f. we find that God himself abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

What all these passages show is that it is possible, in New Testament language, to speak of God, Christ, or the Spirit dwelling within a human person. It is not easy to see what the difference is between this concept and incarnation. We would doubtless not be content to say that the incarnation of Christ meant only that Jesus was indwelt by God in the same way, though to a higher degree, as Christian believers are; yet this must be a substantial part of what we mean by the incarnation.

Secondly, the sonship of believers may be related to the same set of 'incarnational' ideas. For not only is the son an expression of the father in human form (Adam begets a son in his own likeness, after his image, Gen. 5: 3), but also the Son of God is a name for the incarnate Christ. Once again it is surprising that the term 'son of God' should not in New Testament language be reserved exclusively for Jesus Christ as part of the New Testament understanding of his person. In fact it is applied also to Christians. This would signify that the New Testament writers, while conscious of the uniqueness of Christ, were conscious also of the similarities that exist between him and believers.

Thus the Spirit who indwells believers is precisely the one who makes them conscious of their status as sons of God: 'Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" '. (Gal. 4: 6). 'All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (Rom. 8: 14), the Spirit himself 'bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (8: 16). The Spirit of adoption as God's sons has been received by believers (8: 15), and 'adopted sons are no whit inferior in status to a son born in the ordinary course of nature'.[41] Christ is the 'only son' of the Father (Jn. 3: 16), yet he is also the 'first-born among many brethren' (Rom. 8: 29).

This characteristically Pauline conception of sonship is not however peculiar to him; it may be found also in the Johannine and Petrine literature, and in Hebrews, as well as in the teaching of Jesus. In 1 John we have: 'See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are' (3: 1 RSV; cf. also 3: 2, 10); 'every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God' (5: 1). Though John uses *tekna* 'children' for believers and reserves the term *hyios* 'son' for Christ, no important distinction is implied.[42] Both Christ and Christians are equally 'born of God' (1 Jn. 5: 18; cf. 4: 7; 5: 4); believers are 'born of' Christ (2: 29) or of the Spirit (Jn. 3: 5-8). They are even perhaps regarded

as sharing the virgin birth of Jesus, being born, like him, 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (Jn. 3: 13).[43] In 1 Peter also the concept of Christians as 'children' of the 'Father' appears (1: 14-17), though not so markedly as in Paul and John. In Hebrews, Jesus as the Son is seen as 'made like his brethren in every respect' (2: 17), 'bringing many sons unto glory' (2: 10), his 'brethren', the 'children God has given me' (2: 12f.). In the teaching of Jesus, the peacemakers are called 'sons of God' (Mt. 5: 9) because they display the character of God, and in the same fashion Jesus' followers are exhorted to 'Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven' (5: 45).

Since the son is an expression of the father, the sonship of believers, so well attested in the New Testament, signifies that God expresses himself in human form in the person of his sons.

Thirdly, the references to believers as the image of Christ may point to the same kind of idea of the expression of God in human form. As we have seen above in connection with the Old Testament doctrine of the image of God, the image is a representative of the character and quality of the one it represents. Christ himself is several times said in the New Testament to be the image or likeness of God (e.g. 2 Cor. 4: 4; Col. 1: 15; Heb. 1: 3), and believers likewise are thought of as the image of Christ. Those whom God foreknew he also 'predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom. 8: 29); as they behold the glory of the Lord they are 'being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another' (2 Cor. 3: 18). Complete conformity with the image of Christ is not yet attained, and it is only in the future that 'as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven' (1 Cor. 15: 49). Yet already the vitality of the image of Christ is at work in believers: 'You have put on the new man, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator' (Col. 3: 10). So that already Christians are the image of Christ, and so express the character of God in human form.

Fourthly, perhaps the most striking examples of the application of incarnational ideas to believers are those where Christians are said to share the divine nature. Admittedly such statements are rare and on the whole do not belong to the mainstream of New Testament tradition, but it is noteworthy that within the New Testament we find that to believers it has been granted that they 'may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4).[44] Similarly in 1 John we find: 'No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature (RSV; lit. 'seed') abides in him' (3: 9). In Hebrews we have it said that 'he who sanctifies [Christ] and they who are sanctified have all one origin' (2: 11), and that believers have 'become partakers of the Holy Spirit' (6: 4). These various expressions must prove difficult to those who would maintain an infinite qualitative difference between the nature of God and the nature of man. Certainly they suggest that it is in the divine nature to share itself in some way with men, and thus to be revealed in human form.

The result of the present section is to disclose, according to the New Testament, the same tendency in the divine nature toward self-manifesta-

tion in human form which we have observed earlier in the Old Testament material.

5. *The incarnation of Christ.* Although this paper is not directly concerned with the incarnation itself but with ideas that are analogous to it, some brief reflections on the significance of our observations for the understanding of the incarnation may be in order.

First, the basic thrust of the present paper has been toward establishing that the incarnation is not without its analogies, and represents but one example, albeit the climactic one, of a set of self-manifestations of God in human form. This fact has its bearing upon our approach to the interpretation of the incarnation, for its character may be illumined and its mystery further explored by reference to those analogies to it which we have commented upon.

Secondly, to see the incarnation as the climax of a number of self-manifestations of God illuminates the significance of those manifestations. Thus, for example, the Biblical anthropomorphisms take on a new character as anticipations of the incarnation, as well as being significant revelations of the divine nature.

Thirdly, the prevailing tendency to represent the incarnation almost exclusively as an act of condescension of God's part is modified when we recognise how much the manifestation of God in human form has been part of his activity throughout human history. That the incarnation imposed limits upon Christ goes without question, but it is clear that the acceptance of self-imposed limitations is not always to be viewed as an act of condescension. When a poet or composer determines to express himself in sonnet form or sonata form, he takes upon himself a host of limitations which do not depreciate but only enhance the quality of the work, and do not diminish but only make possible the adequate self-revelation of the artist. May we not speak likewise of the incarnation as a self-expression of God which is not only an act of condescension, but also a self-expression whose limitations do not prevent it from being a perfect expression of God's intentions. In becoming man God suffered no diminution of his godhead, any more than a composer suffers a diminution of his talent when he adopts sonata form; and just as a Beethoven can produce a quintessentially Beethoven sonata by taking on sonata form, so God produces a quintessentially God man by taking on human form.

Fourthly, this tendency we have observed in the divine nature toward self-manifestation in physical human form makes us wonder whether the distinction between spirit and matter which is so fundamental to modern man's world view is really so important after all. In a perceptive essay Karl Rahner[45] has argued that though spirit and matter are separate entities they are fundamentally alike, not dissimilar, since God is the author of both. In our mind, because they are different, they are conceived of as polar opposites, but for God one is not inferior to or opposed to the other.

Fifthly, may we go on from here to suggest that for God incarnation in physical form is as natural as existence in spiritual form? Was not Duns Scotus correct in maintaining that the incarnation would have occurred even if sin had not entered the world? To enter upon such questions would

take us too far beyond our present purpose, but it may be emphasised that such a question is not at all speculative in intent, though it is cast in a speculative form, for it really enquires about the relationship between incarnation and salvation.

Sixthly, may it be that the New Testament analogies to the incarnation provide us with some helpful insights into the nature of the incarnation itself? Donald Baillie has suggested as a clue to the nature of the incarnation of God in Christ the 'paradox of grace', as he calls it, by which Paul can say, 'I live and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me', and by which any Christian can say that the good that he does, while his own act, is nevertheless not his own, but all God's doing. 'May we not find a feeble analogue of the incarnate life in the experience of those who are His 'many brethren', and particularly in the central paradox of their experience: 'Not I, but the grace of God'? If this confession is true of the little broken fragments of good that are in our lives—if these must be described on the one hand as human achievements, and yet on the other hand, and in a deeper and prior sense, as *not* human achievements but things actually wrought by God—is it not the same *type* of paradox, taken at the absolute degree, that covers the whole ground of the life of Christ, of which we say that it was the life of a man and yet also, in a deeper and prior sense, the very life of God incarnate?'[46] And again, 'Jesus Christ is the one in whom human selfhood came fully to its own and lived its fullest life, as human life ought to be lived, because His human selfhood was wholly yielded to God, so that His whole life was the life of God. That was the one life which was wholly divine and wholly human. He lived his life in such a way that it was the life of God incarnate; but also, since the initiative is always with God, He lived it as He did *because* it was the life of God incarnate'.[47]

Our examination of the analogies to the incarnation therefore leads outward, to the disclosure of a tendency in the divine nature toward self-manifestation in human form which expresses itself in various manners, and inward, toward a re-appreciation of the significance of the incarnation itself in the light of its Biblical analogies.

NOTES

(1) This is not a subject that has attracted the interest of theologians greatly. I can mention only the following works as being on the same lines as the present paper: U. Mauser, 'Image of God and Incarnation', *Interpretation* 24 (1970), pp. 336-58, an extract from his book *Gottesbild und Menschwerdung* (Tübingen, 1972), which I have not seen; H. M. Kuitert, *Gott in Menschengestalt. Eine dogmatisch-hermeneutische Studie über die Anthropomorphismen der Bibel* (Munich, 1967). Several points made in the paper may also be found in G. A. F. Knight, *A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 1) (Edinburgh, 1953).

(2) See for further examples L. Koehler, *Old Testament Theology*, (Eng. trans., London, 1957), pp. 22 ff. Most comprehensive is F. Michaeli, *Dieu à l'image de l'homme* (Neuchâtel, 1950).

(3) See S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 270f., 311.

(4) *Quod Deus immutabilis sit*, XI.53 (Loeb edition, ed. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, London, 1930, vol. iii, p. 37).

(5) *Op. cit.*, XIV.63 (Loeb edition, p. 43).

(6) *Op. cit.*, V.22 (Loeb edition, p. 21).

(7) See F. L. Cross (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London, 1957), p. 104. Since we know of the 'Anthropomorphite' Audiani, followers of the layman Audius, only from their opponents (principally Epiphanius, *Refutation of All the Heresies*, and Cyril of Alexandria, *Against the Anthropomorphites*), it is possible that they have been maligned, and that they were in fact a rigorist sect with an anti-cultural attitude, of which their refusal to join in contemporary philosophising of the Biblical anthropomorphisms was only a part (see Kuiper, *op. cit.*, pp. 16f.).

(8) On Marcion and his followers (Schleiermacher, Harnack, Fr. Delitzsch, Hirsch, Bultmann), see J. Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament* (London, 1967), pp. 60-79. A similar rejection of the anthropomorphisms may be seen in the possibly third-century *Clementine Homilies*, where for example Genesis 6: 6 ('God repented') is said simply to be 'false' (3: 43) (J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. ii, p. 139).

(9) *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 61.

(10) Thus against H. H. Rowley's remark: 'Most of the anthropomorphisms we find in the Bible are mere accommodations to human speech, or vivid pictures used for their psychological effect rather than theological significance' (*The Faith of Israel*, London, 1956, p. 75), we may set the judgment of B. W. Anderson: 'Something more than metaphor is involved; for the OT, without engaging in metaphysical speculation, unhesitatingly and consistently views Yahweh as a distinct person' (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. A. Buttrick, New York/Nashville, 1962, vol. i, p. 423).

(11) Mauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-55. Similarly Anderson, *loc. cit.*

(12) Art. 'Anthropomorphismus' in *Reallexikon fur Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart, 1950), vol. i, col. 449, quoted by T. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1958), p. 173 n.l.

(13) K. H. Miskotte, *When the Gods are Silent* (Eng. trans., London, 1967), pp. 177f.

(14) Cf. J. Hempel, 'Die Grenze des Anthropomorphismus Jahwes im Alten Testament', *Zeitschrift fur die altestamentliche Wissenschaft* 57 (1939), pp. 75-85.

(15) K. H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild* (Berlin, 1956), pp. 52f.

(16) Cf. C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London, 1966).

(17) Koehler, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 24f.

(18) See G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), vol. i, pp. 430f.

(19) W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Eng. trans., London, 1961), vol. i, p. 206.

(20) A similar point is made in the interesting article by E. Lab. Cherbonnier, 'The Logic of Biblical Anthropomorphism', *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962), pp. 187-206, in which he examines the consequences for traditional language about God, such as the terms 'infinite', 'unchangeable', of taking Biblical anthropomorphism seriously.

(21) R. A. Stewart, 'Angel', in *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas et al. (London, 1962), p. 37.

(22) The Masoretic text of v. 15 actually has *'adōnai* 'my lord', the form of address reserved for God, but the development of the story makes it plain that the reading *'adōni* 'my (human) lord', attested by some Hebrew MSS and Codex Vaticanus of the Septuagint, is to be preferred.

(23) That is to say, unless God deliberately permits a man to see him and live (cf. e.g. Ex. 24: 10f).

(24) Cf. also G. von Rad, *Genesis* (Eng. trans., London, 1961), p. 206.

(25) See C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Eng. trans., London, 1967), pp. 98-128.

(26) A. R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God*, 2nd edn. (Cardiff, 1961), esp. p. 6.

(27) *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

(28) Cf. J. Rogerson, 'The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality: A Re-examination', *Journal of Theological Studies* 21 (1970), pp. 1-16.

(29) Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Eng. trans., London, 1967), vol. ii, p. 27,

(30) Cf. also the 'angel of the Lord' (Mt. 28: 2) who is the same as the two 'men' of Luke 24: 4 and the two 'angels' of John 20: 12.

(31) On the whole subject, see for further detail and references my article, 'The Image of God in Man', *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968), pp. 53-103.

(32) *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III/1 (Eng. trans., Edinburgh, 1958), pp. 192ff.

(33) J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. i (Eng. trans. by H. Beveridge repr. London, 1953), pp. 164f.

(34) *The Faith of Israel*, pp. 75f. I would query the phrase 'conceived of as pure spirit, as being not an Old Testament expression, and would be more prepared than Rowley to entertain the possibility that Yahweh has a 'form', but one which is rarely visible to men. Like Cherbonnier (cf. n. 20 above), I would tend to accept R. Bultmann's statement: 'God is not invisible to the senses as a matter of principle . . . God is invisible because he wills to be so' (*Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (New York, 1956), p. 22).

(35) So e.g. von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 56; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Eng. trans., London, 1958), pp. 167f.

(36) Commentators do not usually remark on this analogy to the incarnation, though F. J. Leenhardt calls the indwelling of the Spirit 'mystical', by which he refers to 'the belief that the gulf separating the divine and the human may be overcome and a union established between them' (*The Epistle to the Romans*, Eng. trans., London, 1961, p. 208).

(37) In 3: 16 the reference is probably to the Spirit's indwelling of the Christian community (see C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London, 1968), p. 90; F. F. Bruce, 1 *and* 2 *Corinthians* (Loondon, 1971 pp. 44f.).

(38) Cf. D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London, 1972), p. 189.

(39) A. H. M'Neile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London, 1915), p. 140, rightly observes that 'the Spirit, though it is that of the transcendent Father, is immanent in the disciples'.

(40) As H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (Eng. trans., London, 1969), p. 209. Nor is it simply that 'he has become so identified with Christ, that what Christ does, he does' (D. Guthrie, *Galatians* (London, 1969), p. 93).

(41) F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London, 1963), p. 166.

(42) Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

(43) Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London, 1955), pp. 137f.; W. Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* (Eng. trans., London, 1968), p. 142.

(44) J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London, 1969), p. 304, notes here 'the substitution of a metaphysical terminology for the earlier language of sonship and fellowship, and the postponement of the realization of the promised grace to the consummation'.

(45) 'The Unity of Spirit and Matter: A Christian Understanding', in *Man Before God* ed. D. Burkhard et al., pp. 25-51; see also O. Schilling, *Geist und Materiein biblischer Sicht* (Stuttgart, 1967), esp. pp. 18-34.

(46) D. M. Baillie, *God was in Christ. An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (London, 1948), p. 129.

(47) *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

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