THE THEOLOGY OF P. T. FORSYTH
(1848 - 1921)

BY

WILLIAM LEE BRADLEY

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree.

- May 2, 1949 -
In recent years there has been such a renewal of interest in the theology of Peter Taylor Forsyth that at the present time several studies are being devoted to this subject. Already two books have appeared: Griffith's *Theology of P. T. Forsyth*, which is a valuable general introduction to the man, and Escott's *Peter Taylor Forsyth*, which reveals the beauty of Forsyth's devotional and so-called "minor" works.

This dissertation is intended to fulfil a function not attempted by Griffith or Escott; namely, the presentation in systematic form of a general outline of the theology of Forsyth with special reference to his opinions on the Atonement, the person and work of Christ, and the Church. I hope that in systematising the thought of a man who was opposed to systems I have not vitiating the power of his ideas. That there is a place for such a presentation is clear from the fact that even today there are many who consider him to have been gifted with a flashing insight but lacking in integration. That this is a premature opinion I hope to indicate in the pages that follow. My contention is that throughout the years in which he produced the works by which we remember him, Forsyth was motivated by the desire to mediate between the orthodoxy of his youth and the liberalism of his more mature years. It is because he refused to abandon the central truths of orthodoxy, yet adopted the methods of scientific criticism, that he appears to us as a
modern theologian, speaking to our age with a voice of authority and inspiration.

In the course of my studies I have discovered material which sheds considerable light upon the early years of Forsyth. In fact, the only period for which I have been unable to find any data is that between his resignation from New College, London, and his installation as the minister of the Congregational Church of Shipley. Because of this new material, I have divided the thesis into two parts, the first of which is devoted to a general review of the life, early writings, and influences working upon Forsyth; while the second part deals with his theological thought.

There are many to whom I am indebted in the preparation of this study. I have had invaluable help from my advisers, Principal Charles S. Duthie, B.D., and Rev. Professor G. T. Thomson, D.D. Both Principal Sydney Cave, D.D., and Rev. James B. Binns, M.A., of New College, London, have kindly offered information and suggestions. It was due to a remark by Dr. Cave, in fact, that I began to search for data on the early ministry of Forsyth. Rev. J. M. Collins, of Coventry, kindly made available certain of Forsyth's pamphlets which could not be obtained elsewhere, while Mr. Edward W. Watt, L.L.D., Former Lord Provost of Aberdeen, has also added to my knowledge in many ways. I am indebted also to Rev. Harry Escott for his interest and advice, to Rev. Professor James Wood, M.A., and Rev. Professor D. R. Scott, Ph.D., D.D., of the Scottish Congregational College, to Dr. Sidney M. Berry, D.D., Secretary of the International Congregational Council, and to Rev. F. H. Toseland, General Secretary of the Yorkshire
There are three to whom I am especially grateful, however. It was through the inspiration of Principal Duthie that I undertook this study, and to him I owe a debt which cannot be put into words. The Rev. Andrew Graham, M.A., B.Com., has kindly read the manuscript and suggested many changes in style and structure which have rid it of expressions peculiar to American speech. Mrs. Jessie Forsyth Andrews has also read the manuscript and offered suggestions which have been adopted. She has made available material which has been of great value, and she has taken an interest in this work which must have taxed her time and energy.

Finally, I thank the staff of the National Library of Scotland, whose generous and hospitable efforts have made possible the study of many ponderous journals. The typist, Mrs. Alastair McKinnon, has worked patiently to put this thesis into acceptable form. And to my wife, who has suffered long throughout the writing of this dissertation, and has been a help and inspiration in countless ways, I express my gratitude.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE ••••••••••••••••••• ii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART ONE**

**CHAPTER I**

THE LIFE OF P. T. FORSYTH ••••••••••••••••••• 1

**CHAPTER II**

FORSYTH'S WRITINGS: WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS UPON HIS EARLIER WORKS •••••••••••••••••• 57

**CHAPTER III**

THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND OF FORSYTH •••••••••••••••••• 85

**PART TWO**

**CHAPTER IV**

THE HOLINESS OF GOD AND THE SINFULNESS OF MAN •••••••••••••••••• 107

**CHAPTER V**

THE NEED FOR ATONEMENT ••••••••••••••••••• 136

**CHAPTER VI**

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST ••••••••••••••••••• 176

**CHAPTER VII**

THE CHURCH ••••••••••••••••••• 218

**CHAPTER VIII**

CONCLUSION ••••••••••••••••••• 258

**APPENDIX - TWO LETTERS BY FORSYTH ON THE LEICESTER CONFERENCE** • 285

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ••••••••••••••••••• 292
CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE OF P. T. FORSYTH
Aberdeen in 1848 was a rapidly growing city: the population had reached nearly 71,000; approximately 25,000 vessels - nearly half of them steam - put into her port that year; the total revenue of the burgh exceeded £ 23,000. This was a period of transition for Aberdeen as well as for all of western Europe. Within the next ten years three railways were to be opened (the first railway train entered Aberdeen in 1850), while in 1853 the first telegraphic connection with the south was to be established.\(^1\) It was a time of social unrest: in 1847 and 1848 the Special Constables were called out by the Magistrates, who "anticipated a breach of the public peace in consequence of the high price and scarcity of provisions...."\(^2\) The first efforts at forming unions had been made as early as 1846, when joiners and masons combined to form a temporary trades council in support of a strike in which the former were then engaged.\(^3\) This was to be the first year in which the public was admitted to meetings of the Town Council; it was to be the last in which there would be a public procession of the Magistrates to Church each Sunday. And in the beginning of 1849 the Police Board

\(^1\) - All these facts are to be found in Ross, J. A.: Municipal Affairs in Aberdeen, 1889, pp. 122-23, 101-04, 128.
\(^2\) - Ibid, pp. 115-16.
resolved "that the custom of calling the hours by the night watchmen be discontinued, except half-past four, five o'clock, and half-past five."¹

Until 1862 the water supply was taken from the river at the Bridge of Dee, at the outskirts of the city. In 1848, it must be remembered, Pasteur had yet to make his important discoveries about disease, and therefore it is not surprising that Aberdeen should have had so unsanitary a practice as this.

In 1848 Queen Victoria landed from her yacht, "Victoria and Albert," and passed through the city on her way to Balmoral. The ancient custom of "perambulating the Marches" led to a dispute in September of that year, so that we can mark this as the last time in the city's history in which the boundary stones were to be inspected by citizens and Town Council in an annual ceremony which still takes place in a few Scottish towns and villages.

Aberdeen lies between two rivers, the Don and the Dee; at the mouth of the latter is a harbour which, by means of dredging and construction of piers, has been made into a fine port. Thus, the city has traditionally been associated with shipping and fishing. Formerly there were two cities, Old and New Aberdeen, which with other parishes have now been joined into one. In Old Aberdeen, which lies in the northeastern sector, are situated the Cathedral of St. Machar (fourteenth century) and King's College (1505-06). St. Machar's is the only granite cathedral in all Britain. Unlike the other cities of Scotland, which are constructed of sandstone, Aberdeen is built of granite, quarried there

for more than three hundred years. It is this stone which gives to the
city a sparkling cleanliness sadly lacking in many other Scottish cities.

On the northern edge of the city is the Parish of Old Machar,
which was not included within the boundaries of Aberdeen until 1871.
It was here that Peter Taylor Forsyth was born on May 12, 1848. His
parents had been married in Old Machar in June of the previous year by
the Rev. George Thomson, minister of Blackfriars Street Congregational
Church.1 At the time of his marriage, Isaac Forsyth was a merchant,
while Elspet was housekeeper to Peter Taylor, a well-to-do retired shoe-
maker, who, upon his death, bequeathed his house to the Forsyths. The
Forsyths were thrifty, intelligent, and deeply concerned with spiritual
matters; but they were never prosperous. Isaac was from Cabrach, the son
of a weaver. Although a hard and earnest worker, he never was able to rise
above poverty. The records show that he was a "merchant" in 1847,2 and
that he became a "book deliverer for Mr. Virtue, London," in 1848,3 a trade
which he followed until 1853. In the latter year we see him recorded as a
book canvasser in one source,4 and a "letter carrier" in another.5 Meanwhile his wife had begun to take boarders in 1851, the same year in which
the family had moved to a new home on Marischal Street, near the docks, not
long after the death of Peter Taylor. Until his death in 1880 Isaac
Forsyth was to remain a postman, and his widow was to keep lodgings for
years after that. Isaac was thirty years of age when he married. A
picture taken of the family when Peter was a small boy reveals the

1 - Marriages in Old Machar, 1847, p. 589.
2 - Ibid.
3 - Baptisms in Old Machar, 1848, p. 483.
4 - Post Office Directory, Aberdeen, 1853-54, p. 103.
5 - Births and Baptisms, City of Aberdeen, 1853, p. 83, no. 401.
sensitivity of the father; deep lines of sorrow mark his face. A religious man, he was a deacon of Blackfriars Street Congregational Church for a number of years.¹

Elspet McPherson (entered also in contemporary records as Macpherson) was a year older than her husband. The daughter of a crofter, she had been born and brought up in Kingussie. A spirited description of this woman, whose personality did so much to shape the character of Peter, is to be found in Jessie Forsyth Andrews' Memoir of her Father.² Elspet was a hard-working, homely sort of woman, and so self-forgetful that she delayed her marriage to Isaac for nine years because of a vow to Peter Taylor's dying wife that she would faithfully look after the old man.³ Her life can never have been easy, for she had a family to care for and lodgings to keep, and two of her five children were lost in early life; yet, we may judge that it was through her strength of character and physical stamina that the family was able to carry on through years of poverty, illness, and deprivation.

The records reveal that there were in all five children, of whom Peter was the first. Elspet was born in 1850, Isaac in 1852, Jessie in 1853, and Elizabeth Ann in 1856.⁴ We can discover no record of the young Isaac, other than that of his baptism; but because his name seems never to be mentioned, and because Sir Alexander Glegg, the life-long friend of P. T. Forsyth, spoke of Peter as the only son,⁵ it is probable that this

¹ A. Glegg in the Christian World, Nov. 17, 1921, p. 4.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Baptisms in Old Machar, 1850, p. 521; Births and Baptisms, Aberdeen, 1852, p. 58, no's. 196, 197; Births and Baptisms, Aberdeen, 1853, p. 83, no. 401; Deaths in District of St. Nicholas in Burgh of Aberdeen, 1858, p. 6, entry 17.
⁵ Glegg, op. cit.
child died at a very early age. Elizabeth Ann lived to be but two years old. Jessie died while yet a young woman. Elspet outlived Peter. Perhaps it was because of the increasing responsibilities to his family that Isaac finally gave up his efforts to be a bookseller and took on the exhausting job of postman; for, despite the meagre salary of eleven shillings a week, there was at least the assurance of a wage. It must have been a great defeat to this man who loved to read, to have to give up his own business and accept a position in the post office. The penny post had been instituted in 1839, and although the business of the Post Office had increased tremendously, total revenue had gone down. Sir Rowland Hill attempted to maintain the revenue by reducing postal salaries; this resulted in an effort by the Post Office employees, led by the postmen, to remedy their grievous conditions. The matter came before Parliament in 1858 and 1860, but met with no success.  

At the same time the Sabbatarians were calling for the abolition of the Sunday post, but it was not for many years that anything was done about it. In Aberdeen, for example, the Council resolved in 1850 "to petition in favour of all Postal labour on the Sabbath day;" yet, in 1883 the Trades Council was still calling for the abolition of Sunday deliveries, and it was not until 1891 that payment for Sunday work was finally conceded and the working-week based upon six rather than seven days.  

Peter Forsyth once declared that his father had never earned more than thirteen shillings a week - a sum considerably lower than the

---

1 - See, notice of Forsyth's election as Chairman of the Congregational Union, British Weekly, May 12, 1904, p. 108.  
3 - Municipal Affairs in Aberdeen, p. 102.  
4 - Diack; op. cit., pp. 222-23.  
5 - "Death of Principal Forsyth," Christian World, Nov. 17, 1921, p. 3.
eighteen shillings given in the Civil Service guide for the year 1860.
But at least we can infer that as late as 1872 Isaac Forsyth was earning
no more than the maximum weekly wage of eighteen shillings, plus emoluments.¹
It is not surprising that throughout his life Peter Forsyth was intensely
concerned with social issues, and that during the earlier part of his
ministry he participated in political debates both through the press and on
the public platform.

The records of Peter Forsyth's baptism are confused. In the
first record, in Old Machar, we read that:

"Isaac Forsyth, Book Deliverer for Mr. Virtue, London, residing
at No. 100 Chapel Street, and his spouse Elspet McPherson, had a
Son born on the 12th May 1848, named Isaac Peter, baptized by the
Rev. W. Grant, in presence of Peter Taylor and Mrs. Strutt.¹²

When, however, the children were registered in Aberdeen shortly after the
birth of the second son, the eldest was listed as Peter Taylor Forsyth,
and the youngest as Isaac.³ Further inconsistencies are revealed in the
names of the minister and one of the witnesses, who, in the later record
appear as the Rev. Samuel Grant and Mr. Stott. In view of the fact that
the second son was named Isaac, it seems reasonable to assume that the Old
Machar record is in error. At any rate, the eldest lad was always known
as Peter, never as Isaac.

He was never a strong child, and from boyhood had one sickness
or another. Throughout his life he was troubled with some sort of a
digestive complaint which led him to write many years later, "I cannot
remember since boyhood passing a day without pain......"⁴ In this respect

¹ - See, A Complete and Practical Guide to Her Majesty's Civil Service,
1860, Appendix, p. 45; 1872, p. 269.
² - Baptisms in Old Machar, 1848, p. 483.
³ - Births and Baptisms, Aberdeen, 1852, p. 58, no. 195.
⁴ - Forsyth: Missions in State and Church, p. 41
Glegg remarked of him, "As a boy he was never robust, and rarely went in for outdoor games. While we were at our bats, he was at his books."¹ This did not prevent him from indulging in the ordinary snowball fights and games of the schoolboy, however. One such fight, in which he sustained a very black eye, has been graphically described by him.² Even as a young boy he was noted for his intelligence, and throughout his years at school he won prizes in his studies.³ He graduated first in his class at the Grammar School in 1864, thereby winning the gold medal for that year. Throughout all these years his parents skimped and denied themselves in order that their son might have the best possible education, both at the Grammar School and at the University.

In October of 1864 he was ready for the annual Bursary Competition of the University - one of the outstanding features of Aberdeen in those days. On the last Monday of that month young men from every part of the land assembled at King's College to pit their skill against one another in an examination which consisted of but one question: translate a given English text into impeccable Latin. For most of the men who sat the examination this meant the only possibility of their continuing their studies at the University level; there were some who came back year after year in a desperate attempt to win one of the bursaries, no matter how small it might be.⁴ Unlike many other Universities, Aberdeen was noted for its democratic spirit: here the poorest Highlander stood on equal terms with the wealthy city lad, and each was judged purely on the basis of his ability. In that

---

¹ - Glegg, op. cit.
² - Forsyth: "When we Were Boys", Bon Record, 1906, pp. 259-60.
³ - Ibid; also, Glegg, op. cit.
⁴ - For a full account of Bursary Competitions, see McLean,N. N.: Life at a Northern University, Quatercentenary ed'n., 1906, Chapters I-III.
competition of 1864 Forsyth was placed twenty-first in a class of two-hundred-and-four, thereby winning the Cargill Bursary, valued at £20 per year for four years of study.¹

The University of those days has been variously described, according to the bias of the writer. Quite naturally, most of the graduates had a sentimental attachment to their alma mater which flavours the character of their reminiscences. The average age of the "bagueant" in 1868 was eighteen years; the youngest student was thirteen; the oldest, twenty-nine.² The course of study, which was of four years' duration, was based primarily upon the classical languages. The first term of study consisted of two hours each day of both Latin and Greek, with three hours weekly of English (taught by Bain). In the second year Latin and Greek were cut to one hour a day each, and to these were added two hours a day of Mathematics and one hour a day of Natural History. The third term comprised one hour a day of Mathematics and eight hours weekly of both Natural Philosophy and Logic. For the final year, students studied Chemistry and Natural Philosophy for an hour each day, while devoting eight hours in the week to Moral Philosophy.³

The life of a professor was a difficult one, particularly in cases where the students lost respect for their teacher: then they were relentless in their persecution. In Forsyth's time the man least able to control his classes was Professor Martin, who taught Moral Philosophy. "Occasionally his classes resembled Bedlam - when, for instance, a fowl was secretly

¹ - Ogilvie, J.: Book of Bursary Competitions, unpublished clippings, King's College Library, Aberdeen, 1913. The Cargill Bursary, established in 1616, is published in Mortifications under the Charge of the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of Aberdeen, 1849, p. 48.
² - Notes on the Evolution of the Arts Curriculum in the Universities of Aberdeen, 1908, p. 13, Note.
introduced and let loose during a lecture." 1 Perhaps the only man of
lasting prominence was Alexander Bain, to whom Forsyth felt himself greatly
indebted, as Glegg has emphasised:

"He was a student of Bain, and though his theological and philo-
sophical view differed widely from those of his Professor, he
used to say that it was at the feet of Dr. Alexander Bain that he
learned to think clearly and follow out his thoughts to their
logical conclusion." 2

Forsyth was but one of many who felt that the regimen of the
University was too difficult; he stated in an interview years later that
his health had been permanently injured by the heavy work. 3

'The whole atmosphere of the place was one of hard, steady labour.
Most of the men were aware that they were having their one chance
in life, and if they threw it away they could never repair the
loss. Very few indulged in sports of any kind." 4

"I remember my father's telling me," adds Mrs. Andrews in a personal
note,"that he and other poorer lads used to borrow certain essential
books from the college library, in rotation, and sometimes he worked
on a book a whole 24 hours round without stopping, that being the
period allowed for the loan!"

The poverty of Aberdeen students is pictured by Nicoll in these
graphic words:

'Then we were poor - poor, I imagine, to a degree quite unknown
now....I had an attic of my own....for four shillings a week. My
bill for food amounted to another four shillings, and it was expected
that all my expenses of every kind should be covered by two shillings
more, and this was done....There were students even poorer than my-
self, and I am firmly convinced that one....well known to me, died of
sheer starvation. Poor fellow! he had in a corner of his room a
large barrel of meal, and he seemed to get all his sustenance out of
that barrel....Many of us had our constitutions permanently injured

1 - Darlow, T. H.: William Robertson Nicoll, 1925, p. 17. See also pp. 15-
16; Bruce, W.S.: Records of the Arts Class 1864-68, 1912, pp. 16, 26.
3 - 'Lorna': "Dr. P. T. Forsyth of Cambridge," British Weekly, Mar. 7, 1901,
p. 530; Reprinted in part, Nov. 17, 1921, p. 162. (Lorna' was Miss Jane
Stoddard, Assistant Editor to Dr. Nicoll).
4 - William Robertson Nicoll, op. cit., p. 20.
by lack of good and adequate food. Far too large a proportion of my fellow students died early."  

Although Peter Forsyth lived in the city, and thus had to pay no rent, it is clear from Nicoll's account that there was little revenue to be gained by taking in lodgers, and that Mrs. Forsyth's addition to the weekly salary of her husband, therefore, could not have been great. 

Peter Forsyth entered the University that October, at the age of sixteen. His first year was one of outstanding scholarship, in which he vied for honors with his close friend, Thomas Nicol. He took second prize in Junior Greek, first in the Section of Proctories (Junior Greek), fourth in Junior Humanity, and first in English.  

In his second year he took second prize in Senior Greek, was third in the Section of Proctories (Senior Greek), and in Senior Humanity won a "Special Prize for Excellence in Latin Composition, Prose and Verse."  

Of this year, W. S. Bruce notes:

"The classical men...advanced and climbed to loftier steeps. There was a distinct march of mind in our Semi-Year. Nicol shot ahead; and Forsyth followed, par nobile fratum."

Because of illness Forsyth was unable to complete his third year. We find no mention of prizes in 1867-68, when he returned to the University, but by the final session he was back at the top. He graduated with first-class honours in Classical Literature, and tied for first prize in Moral Philosophy. Throughout this period he was a well-known figure

1 - William Robertson Nicoll, op. cit., p. 18; See also, Life at a Northern University, op. cit., Ch. XXI.  
2 - Aberdeen University Calendar, 1866-67, pp. 23-4.  
4 - Records of the Arts Class 1864-68, p. 6.  
5 - Aberdeen University Calendar, 1870-71, pp, 23, 22, 30.
in the University.

"Forsyth was one of the ablest students that Aberdeen University ever boasted. He was not only a great prize-taker, but was a brilliant personality. You could not be about the University during this time without being aware of him. He had an eminent gift of speech, and showed a limitless courage in advocating and enforcing his opinions. He was also well worth hearing on literary subjects...It is not to be wondered at that his fellow students should cherish the highest hopes for his future. It was smilingly admitted that he had a tendency to grandiloquence, and indeed, he had."1

It was sometime during this period that he became influenced by the preaching of John Hunter, an Aberdonian born also in 1848. Hunter appears to have made a lasting impression upon the students of that time, and, although as yet unschooled himself, had an evangelical power which drew large crowds whenever he preached. He and Forsyth worked together on a project which they had conceived somewhere around 1870.

"In the vacation of 1870 or 1871 Hunter and Peter Forsyth...conceived the idea of resuscitating a Congregational Chapel in Dee Street which had been preached empty by its last minister and recently closed. They held afternoon services and drew large congregations. Of that time is the criticism which an old Aberdeen beadle made to his minister: 'Mr. Peter Forsyth has all young Johnny Hunter's ability, but he lacks his grace' (grace being used in the sense of piety). This brief enterprise was the beginning of a lifelong friendship."2

Nicoll has a word to add about this same venture:

"I remember my great friend, Robert Neil...going with me on a Sunday afternoon to Dee Street Chapel, a defunct place of worship which John Hunter and he (Forsyth) had plans for reviving. Forsyth said, 'Scotsmen, with thirteen centuries of Scottish history climbing about your shoulders.' Neil whispered, 'Why thirteen?' And so the incident has remained in my mind. But there were collections of nouns and adjectives which were even more mysterious, and altogether we were aware that Forsyth's genius was not always accomplished in perfect taste."3

2 - Hunter, L. S.: John Hunter, 2nd ed'n, 1921, p. 12. 1871 appears the more probable date, for in that year the Rev. David Wallace left Dee Street, after a tenure of thirty years. See Ross, J.: A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland, 1900, pp. 217, 245.
3 - Lorna, op. cit.
We know little else about the religious life of the young man. He grew up in the Blackfriars Church (now Skene Street Church), where his father was a deacon, and which Peter Taylor had helped to build. Glegg mentions an early incident, when he and Forsyth were called upon to make their maiden speeches at a church social; even then, reports Glegg, the boy "was soon soaring above our mental vision."\(^1\) We know, also, that he was not particularly pious in the accepted sense, for he once shocked Glegg's father by saying that Abraham could not read.\(^2\) The minister of Blackfriars during Peter's formative years was the Rev. Thomas Gilfillan, "a cultured and able minister of the liberal school, with a well-marked vein of humour and sarcasm."\(^3\) In an interview in 1901 Forsyth paid tribute to this man, stating that he had "a grateful recollection of Mr. Gilfillan's preaching and private influence."\(^4\) Gilfillan did not publish; only his sermons are to be discovered. However, one of these, "Christian Sabbatism: or Divorce from the Law and Marriage to Christ," contains statements which bear a striking resemblance to the theories of the mature Forsyth. For this reason we have taken the liberty of quoting extensively from sections of this sermon, which was preached in Blackfriars Church in 1865, when Forsyth was seventeen years of age.

"The name by which our Lord almost invariably chose to speak of Himself was Son of Man - as if he would thus keep reminding us that he was no stranger and foreigner, but one of ourselves.... We are human beings, but he is the man - 'the man Christ Jesus' - the Representative of mankind at large. In our room and stead He voluntarily undertook to obey the law which we had outraged - to demonstrate by a life of perfect obedience that the law was 'holy, just, and good.'"\(^5\)

---

1 - Glegg, op. cit.
2 - Ibid.
4 - Lorna, op. cit.
5 - Gilfillan, T.: "Christian Sabbatism," 1865, pp. 4-5 (italics, author's)
"Fulfilling the law by a life of the most perfect obedience, however, was no such satisfaction to its claims as our case required. A broken law demands a penalty, else the Lawgiver is dishonoured, and the law confessed to be unjust. In this case the penalty was death. The law demanded a victim, and imperiously cried for blood. The law which our Lord declared He came to fulfill was one whose gory altars and bleeding sacrifices had proclaimed incessantly from age to age that it could not be satisfied without blood. Our Lord... was fully prepared to meet this demand by paying the penalty of His own life... A stainless life like His would have had no such agony and shame as its close had He not been acting as the Representative and Substitute of sinners... To Christ, the holy and the just, obedience to law was His very life... In His voluntary death the claims of the law upon Christians are forever cancelled."1

"(The) moral law existed from the very beginning of creation... The abrogation of moral law and obligation is a monstrosity generated in the dust and heat of reckless controversy. We might as well speak of the abrogation of the Almighty ruler of the Universe! For what is the moral law but the expression of His character and will?"2

"God gave the law to men once and again. But to you He has given something more glorious than grinding subjection to a law which you know you have broken. He has sent His Son to fulfill all righteousness in your stead; to bear the law's last penalty for you."3

One other Aberdeen Church connection must be mentioned in passing: In September of 1872 Fairbairn became the minister of St. Paul Street Congregational Church. At this time Forsyth was either on the Continent or just ready to commence his studies at New College, London. However, he mentions having known Fairbairn in Aberdeen;4 it is quite possible that the friendship was formed between the years, 1874-76, after Forsyth had resigned from his course at New College as a result of health, and before he assumed his first pastorate in Yorkshire.

Throughout his University career Forsyth had earned money by

---

4 - "Tributes to Principal Fairbairn," British Weekly, Feb. 15, 1912, pp. 568, 574.
tutoring. After graduating, he spent at least a year as private tutor to the family of Patrick Davidson of Inchmarlo. For the academic year 1871-72, he was Professor Black's Assistant in Humanities. In view of the fact that Black was one of the most popular of professors, it is likely that Forsyth enjoyed his year there. His task is indicated in the Calendar:

"There are two Latin Classes. The Junior Latin Class meets two hours a day for five days in the week. During the first hour, the whole class is taught by the Professor; during the second, it is divided into two sections, one of which, consisting of the more advanced students, is taught by the Professor; the other being about one-third of the whole, is taught by the Assistant. The authors usually read are Virgil, Horace, Terence, Livy, and Cicero...."

"The Senior Class meets one hour a day for five days in the week. An advanced section, comprising about one-third of the whole is taught by the Assistant for two days in the week during three months of the Session; with this exception, the class is taught by the Professor. Portions are usually read from three or four of the following Authors: Lucretius (in the advanced section), Plautus, Catullus, Horace, Persius, Juvenal, Cicero, and Tacitus...."

Whether Forsyth had hoped to become a teacher, only to change his mind, or whether perhaps he took this position in order to save money for further studies, we do not know. At any rate, his close friendship with W. Robertson Smith, just then commencing his brilliant though controversial career as Professor of Hebrew at the Divinity Hall, prompted the latter to urge him to take a term of study at Göttingen under Ritschl and Stumpf. We have no record of this period other than a letter which appears in the biography of Hunter, by means of which we are able to ascertain definitely that Forsyth went to the Continent at the close of the academic session in 1872. In a brief note which Hunter wrote to the Rev. A. J. Griffiths from York shortly after Easter of that year, he states, "I have

1 - Lorna, op. cit.
2 - Aberdeen University Calendar, 1872-73, p. 3.
3 - Aberdeen University Calendar, 1873-74, pp. 15-16.
Forsyth here just no on his way to Göttingen."¹

That term, short though it was, proved to be one of the most significant periods in his life; the impress of Ritschl was never wholly to leave him. Göttingen had a rather large English colony, due to the magnetism of Ritschl. He himself was aloof; yet, his teaching was so powerful, and his influence so great, that he shaped the minds of all who listened to his lectures. His was a positive contribution, doing much to offset the destructive theories of Baur and his school.²

In September of 1872 Forsyth was accepted on probation at New College, London.³ Why he had chosen this college we do not know; possibly it was to be near Baldwin Brown, a London minister and the Nonconformist closest to Maurice. We shall probably never know what it was that impelled the young Scot to pursue his studies so far from Aberdeen; but once he got to England he was never to return to his native Scotland save for short visits and holidays.

He was fully admitted to the Theological Course in February of the following year,⁴ but did not complete the full course of study. Cave quotes the letter which Forsyth wrote to the college at the time of his resignation:

'My health will not permit of the prolonged attendance on classes which would be necessary were I to resume my College work. I expect to do much honest work in the Christian cause but I find it can only be by having in my hands the entire disposal of my daily time to that end.'⁵

---

1 - Hunter, op. cit., p. 34.
2 - Lorna, op. cit.
4 - Ibid, No. 25, 25th Feb., 1873.
His resignation was accepted by the College — and for the next two years we have no record of him at all.

Mrs. Andrews has suggested in her Memoir that her father may have been a misfit in New College. There is no means of substantiating this theory. However, there is a pointed reference to the College in a memorial to one of its professors which might bear her out:

"Professor Godwin's record is left in the minds of the students, on many of whom he produced an extraordinary impression. He was not considered orthodox, and was at one time much denounced by Brewin Grant and others of that fraternity. Probably it is owing to this that New College has got its inexplicable reputation for advanced views, although it sacrificed on the altar of orthodoxy the ablest man who has studied for the Nonconformist ministry in this generation."  

Whatever the benefits may have been from these two years in New College, two other things stand out in this period of his life: He met Minna Magness, whom he was to marry in 1877; and he came under the spell of J. Baldwin Brown, one of the outstanding Congregational preachers of the age. Forsyth became a member of his congregation, and every Sunday used to travel out to Brixton to hear him. Probably it was their common love of Maurice, whom Brown had known, which drew them into close bonds of friendship; yet, it was not this alone, for Brown was a noted champion of the younger men in the denomination, many of whom he had defended against their more orthodox seniors. Forsyth once spoke of him as "the greatest Independent of our time."  

---

2 - The Work of Christ, p. xi.  
3 - British Weekly, Mar. 8, 1889, p. 300.  
4 - Lorna, op. cit.  
5 - E.g., the "Rivulet" Controversy, 1855; See Peel, A: These Hundred Years, 1931, pp. 221 ff.  
"To us juniors he was always young, and always, till he became ill, accessible. It was new life to come from the dogmatists with their exclusions, to this great generous believer and comprehensive anti-comprehensionist."

"He had something of Maurice's suspicion of popular religion, and was inclined to think there must be something good, and for the hour very necessary, in a man whom the societies and denominations united to taboo."^1

From Forsyth's analysis we learn that Brown had the same sense of need for a deep ethical core in Christianity which Ritschl was teaching; this must have meant much to the young student. Perhaps the finest tribute to the man is found in these words:

"We think of the unusual blending of ethical passion, spiritual insight, intellectual grasp, and personal piety. We think how admirable is his union of fine morality and masculine religion, of apostolicity and fairness, faith and charity.....He was more a Paul than a John."^3

We do not know what Forsyth did between the time of his resignation from New College in 1874 and his acceptance of a call to Shipley in 1876. It is possible that he spent some of the time in Aberdeen - the fact that he knew Fairbairn before the latter went to Airedale College, Bradford, in 1878, points to this. It was difficult for a liberal young minister to get a charge in those days; this in itself may account for the long period in which he remained unsettled.^4 However, through the intercession of Baldwin Brown he was settled in a Congregational Church at Shipley, near Bradford, in 1876, where he was ordained by Brown and Principal Newth, of New College. (One of the guest speakers at the Public Tea and Meeting was Silfillan). At last he was ready to begin the work for which he had been preparing himself for the past eight years.

3 - Ibid, p. 142.
4 - See, "Death of Principal Forsyth,"Christian World, op. cit.
Yorkshire in those times was orthodox to the extreme, and for this reason the younger men were received coolly by the older ministers. Years later Forsyth could state, "When I began to preach the chief test was orthodoxy. And I had the honour to suffer something alongside those who have changed that."\(^1\) John Hunter, for example, had met such opposition at the beginning of his ministry in York that he was nearly forced to resign.

The most drastic action was taken in Huddersfield against J. T. Stannard, who was evicted from his pulpit by the trustees in a legal proceeding which shocked the Congregational world.\(^2\) The Shipley Church was not included in the Yorkshire Union

"...because some of its leading men refused to have a 'church,' or inner membership, as distinct from the ordinary congregation. There were many amongst them who sympathised with the wider views of Baldwin Brown, rather than with those of Dr. Mellor of Halifax and the old school of theology."\(^3\)

Writing of her father's ministry of this period, Mrs. Andrews remarks that "He attracted such unexpected people that his church was nicknamed 'The Cave of Adullam'..."\(^4\)

There appear to be three reasons why Forsyth was never admitted into the Yorkshire Union. The first: his church did not conform. The second can be attributed to his role in the Leicester Conference of 1877 and 1878. The third - and most important - was a sermon which he preached in 1878 or 1879 entitled, "Justice and Mercy." We shall deal with these last two points in order.

The Leicester Conference of 1877 rocked the Congregational Union to its foundations, and left upon Forsyth an impression which he never forgot.

---

2 - See Hunter, op. cit., pp. 35-43.
3 - Lorna, op. cit.
4 - Work of Christ, pp. xii-xiii.
It was called by two of the more prominent young ministers of the Union, Allanson Picton and Mark Wilks, both of whom were members of the London School Board; and it met during the Autumnal Assembly of the Union at Leicester. A leaflet advertising this conference, 'open to all who value spiritual religion, and who are in sympathy with the principle that agreement in theological opinion can no longer be held essential to religious communion,' was distributed among the delegates. At an evening meeting two papers were read - the most important being that by Picton - and soon the place had been reduced to bedlam. At the next Union Assembly, when the whole problem was dealt with, the rebels were thoroughly defeated in a motion which was brought before the Union opposing all such heresies.

At the same time, however, a second meeting was held by the Conference, and this time Forsyth delivered a paper, the title of which we cannot discover. A committee was formed, with the Rev. Joseph Wood as Secretary, but the Conference was short-lived. Its purpose is best summarized by Bishop Hunter:

"The intention of the group was to encourage a wider bond of fellowship than conventional orthodoxy. The County Congregational Associations of the time were inclined to boycott the more liberal men. The orthodox identified faith too exclusively with theology and in consequence they were not living in the present, but in the past. The younger 'heretics' were perhaps equating religion too exclusively with conduct. They desired to have fellowship with all men, irrespective of their theology, who have 'the life of goodness in them, who manifest a Christlike life and spirit.' They have in mind particularly men like Martineau and J. J. Tayler - the modern Christian wing of Unitarianism."

That Forsyth was in the centre of this conflict can be seen from a letter of his which appeared in the English Independent, November 8, 1877,

2 - Ibid.
as quoted by Hunter:

"We have been delivered by the grace of God and Luther from the Church. May it not be the work of this second, and more silent, Reformation, to deliver us from the weight of a too speculative and over-defined Christianity. We have been thrown back on Paul. We have yet, as a church, to learn to lean simply on Christ. The power of His name has been more than the power of His creed. That is my contention. Call all who worship the goodness of Christ members of Christ."1

Leading the fight against these young men was Dr. Mellor; but R. W. Dale— at that time editor of the Congregationalist— also played a prominent part. At the Spring Meetings in 1878 Mellor moved a resolution in denunciation of the Conference as opposed to Congregational principles. Dr. Parker, the City Temple, offered an amendment striking out specific reference to the Leicester Conference, on the grounds that there were many sincere men who would be hurt by such a statement. Dale then took the floor, and argued that

"...the circumstances under which the Leicester Conference had been held, with the countenance of such able and eminent Congregational ministers as Messrs. Picton and Mark Wilks, might invest it with a dangerous importance unless some such measure as was proposed were adopted. As to Dr. Parker's amendment, he thought it would be better to do nothing at all than to suppress all reference to the Leicester Conference. For himself, he was on the platform to protest against its conclusions."2

Put to a vote, Parker's amendment was defeated by approximately 1000 to 40; only 20 voted against the original motion by Mellor.3

1 - Ibid. T. Gasquoine, in a letter to the British Weekly, Mar. 14, 1907, p. 634, quotes from the official report of the Conference: 'Object: The promoting of religious communion in worship and work amongst those who, while retaining their individual beliefs, agree in recognising the existence of spiritual life outside the limits of their own theological creed.'


3 - Ibid. For further data, see the Congregationalist: Nov., 1877, pp. 688, 700-01; Dec., pp. 797-23; June, 1878, pp. 326-32.
We can get some idea of Forsyth's interest in the Conference by reading what he had to say about it years later.

"I remember in 1877 taking part in...the Leicester Conference, whose promoters said their principle was that 'religious communion does not depend on theological agreement.' I say that still...But it is another matter when you are not speaking of occasional worship but on the standing existence and action of a Church in the world."¹

In prefacing his remarks upon R. J. Campbell's "New Theology," however, Forsyth gives us the best picture of the meaning of the Conference in relation to its period:

"Some thirty years ago I took an active part in what was known as the Leicester Conference. Its object was to utilise the occasion of the meetings of the Congregational Union, especially in London, to promote the exchange of thought and devotion irrespective of dogmatic basis. It was a useful enterprise. I belong to a valuable society today with a similar end.² But the Leicester Conference came to grief because it was thought to be an attempt to give Unitarianism a footing within the Union - which it was not, to any knowledge of mine. Wherein it seems to some to differ from the situation we have to deal with today."³

"Issuing then, as the churches were, from a stiff and thin orthodoxy (held, all the same, by many fine, virile, and beneficent men), it was inevitable that the great demand should be for freedom. It was not so much a demand for positive truth. It was an escape from truth which had become too positive in a wrong direction, too detailed in its positivity, more positive as truth than as deed and power. What was claimed was light and air, room and freedom....The supreme interest was the interest of freedom - freedom from something they knew too well, freedom in something they felt it was good to breathe, freedom, however, for they knew not what. It was the age of impressionism, now dying."⁴

No sooner had the threat of the Leicester Conference been met and defeated by the old guard than Forsyth published a sermon, probably

² - London Society for the Study of Religions, of which Forsyth became President shortly before his death.
⁴ - Ibid.
entitled "Justice and Mercy." If not the first, this is one of the earliest
of his pamphlets to have been printed; at least two appeared in 1878: "The
Weariness in Modern Life" and "Maid, Arise" — this latter, a sermon to school-
girls. It is possible that an undated pamphlet, "Pfleiderer's View of St.
Paul's Doctrine," was published a year previously. Yet, this sermon is of
particular interest for two reasons: it deals with the substitutionary
theory of the Atonement; and it was responsible for a row within the Bradford
District which threatened to split the Yorkshire Union. Unfortunately we
have found no copy of this sermon, but we have a rejoinder by an anonymous
author to "Justice and Mercy" which gives an idea of the contents and leads
us to believe that it is the sermon which caused the rift. Mention of the
incident is made by Francis Wrigley:

"A rather significant thing happened in 1879, which called forth
an equally significant reply. I have before me now a legal-looking
document, entitled, 'The Complaint and Protest of some Members of the
Bradford District of the Yorkshire Congregational Union, respectfully
presented by them to the Executive Committee of the same, April, 1879.'
This document is signed by Dr. Fairbairn, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Duff,
Alfred Holborn, S. Dyson... J. A. Hamilton..., and other well-known
ministers and laymen.

"What was their 'Complaint and Protest'? It was that at a
meeting of the Bradford District at Rawdon, Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A.,
then the newly-elected minister of Shipley, was, by a majority vote,
refused admission as a member of the Union. It was held that this
was invalid because of the grounds on which it was reached.

"On what ground was that decision taken? Because of a sermon
preached by Mr. Forsyth in which he denied the substitutionary
theory of the Atonement. The protestors claimed that the Bradford
District was acting ultra vires in making that, or any theory of the
Atonement, a test of Christian Faith and a condition of Christian
fellowship; that such a procedure was quite contrary to the genius
of Congregationalism; and that it was not right to commit the Union
to an expression of belief in a doctrine which, in its cruder forms,
was not held by a great majority of Congregationalists, and which
had been repudiated by every theologian of eminence in our Churches.

"They asked that the matter should be reopened and the whole
matter discussed at the Annual Meetings. Here, then, were all the
materials for a first-class theological conflict; but happily the
question did not arise at the Assembly because meanwhile Mr.
Forsyth had accepted an invitation to Manchester.¹

The printed attack upon Forsyth is interesting chiefly because it shows the manner in which the older men attempted to prevent the advance of modern thought. The unidentified author of the pamphlet² takes great pleasure in a minute analysis of Forsyth's sentence structure: by a clever attack upon major and minor premises he manages to confuse the meaning of the sermon so completely, that, to judge by what is quoted in this pamphlet, the sermon is but a string of contradictions.

"If one might venture to give advice, it would be that both preacher and hearers should study more and more closely the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the accredited leaders of the theology so outrageously misrepresented and travestied in this sermon. One's pity is called forth towards both hearers and speaker, if they think such a performance as this sermon the production of advanced thought. The old evangelical doctrines have nothing to fear from such thinking, and one sits down in contented expectation that it will prove to be of the things the fashion of which passeth away because it is not founded upon abiding principles."³

Judging by the review, Forsyth had already begun to develop his dialectical style. God's love is found to be the fundamental aspect of His nature; Forsyth opposes the 'whole immoral theory of substitution.'

"And what are the doctrines or truths taught in this sermon....? The purpose is stated to be to speak on the relation of mercy and justice 'in the eternal divine nature.' These are, first of all, said to be co-equal in all fundamental qualities, and then that, in some sense, not to be very literal, they are so very different, fundamentally, that mercy is in God the very essence of His nature, while justice is but a manifestation of love, - 'simply love taking shape.'"⁴

In his introduction to the pamphlet the author indicates the place which Forsyth had assumed in his brief time at Shipley:

¹ - Wrigley, F.: The History of the Yorkshire Congregational Union, 1923, pp. 81-3. Two facts are incorrect: Forsyth was not newly-elected to his charge; the invitation had come not from Manchester, but St. Thomas's Square, Hackney. Unfortunately, the document to which he refers is no longer to be found.
⁴ - Ibid, pp. 7-8.
"The publication of this sermon affords an opportunity of which I avail myself to examine the work and the pretensions of a school of writers and speakers which makes for itself very high claims. The rank and file assume for themselves the position of advanced thinkers; they speak of many differing from them as old-fashioned and narrow; and Mr. Forsyth they acknowledge as a leader and champion in this district."1

Two other highlights of the Shipley period must be mentioned. In 1877 Forsyth and Minna Magness were married by Baldwin Brown in a small church near Notting Hill Gate, London, close to Minna's Bayswater home. She had been an Anglican, but became a devout Congregationalist after meeting Forsyth.2 The other event was the arrival of Fairbairn in Bradford, where he became Principal of Airedale College in 1878. Thus, an acquaintance begun in Aberdeen when Forsyth had attended Fairbairn's classes there, was continued in Bradford, where Fairbairn soon instituted a class for young ministers in the district.3

When Allanson Picton resigned his charge at St. Thomas's-square, Hackney, Forsyth was ready to leave Shipley. "Lorna" has stated that Picton arranged for Forsyth to follow him,4 but her article has been challenged by a member of the church at that time, who gives us a clear picture of the situation:

"Mr. Picton never 'arranged' for Mr. Forsyth to succeed him in Hackney...It was the Rev. Baldwin Brown who recommended the committee to hear Mr. Forsyth, which they did, with the result that might have been expected. I remember Mr. Picton at the installation saying that he knew it would be a recommendation to many of us that his successor's views were quite opposed to his own."5

---

1 - Ibid, p. 3.
3 - Selbie, W. B.: Life of Fairbairn, 1914, p. 94. A letter from Fairbairn to Forsyth, 1877, appears on pp. 79-80.
4 - Lorna, op. cit.
5 - "Dr. Forsyth in Hackney," Letter by "M. C." to British Weekly, Apr. 11, 1901, p. 664.
This statement sheds valuable light upon the theological position of Forsyth in this period, for we know that Picton was becoming more and more pantheistic in his views. That Forsyth never embraced such pantheism can be seen from this letter as well as from the sermons preached by him during the latter years of his ministry at St. Thomas's. Nonetheless, there is evidence that Forsyth experienced in Hackney the deepening of his faith to which so much allusion is made today. A letter written to the British Weekly shortly after Forsyth's death clearly makes this claim; it is unfortunate that there is no further evidence on the subject:

"...I see no mention of the fact that it was after he succeeded.... Picton as minister of St. Thomas's Square Church, Hackney, that Dr. Forsyth had that great spiritual experience to which allusion is made as determining the trend of his life and ministry. Up to that time it had seemed probable that the young minister might follow his predecessor along lines that led the latter ultimately to sever his connection with the churches, and to devote his noble powers rather to the exposition of Spinoza than of any faith distinctly Christian. From Mr. Picton himself I had at the time the story of Dr. Forsyth's conversion."

This, the only specific reference which we can find to the experience which Forsyth himself mentions in general terms in Positive Preaching, indicates that he reached religious maturity much earlier than is commonly supposed.

From the illuminating reminiscences of those who knew him as their minister in Hackney we get a fair idea of the kind of work he did. His congregations were small, yet he was well-known in the city. His evening lectures, on the other hand, drew large audiences, as did those on Art; and once each month he delivered a children's sermon which en-

---

2 - Forsyth: Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, 1907, pp. 281-90
thrall older adults as well as children. Although urged by his congregation to publish these children's sermons, he declined on the grounds that they were not good enough.\footnote{1} One of his congregation recalls this striking sentence from Forsyth: 'For one brief half hour a man gives himself, and men go home and call him clever!\footnote{2}'}

Not the least important contribution which Forsyth made to the life of Hackney was his influence upon young people:

"As a medical student, unsettled in matters of belief by the scientific teaching of the materialist school, such help as Dr. Forsyth was so well qualified to give was invaluable to me. I still have notes of a course on the origin of the Gospels which he gave at that time, and which first attracted me to St. Thomas's-square. They were given on week evenings, and he used to write on the black-board before the lecture a summary of the chief points. Questions and discussions were invited. \footnote{3} At the end of this series of lectures he gave one or two evenings to reading with us Browning's poem, 'A Death in the Desert'... his literary lectures were a great treat."

"(A) sentence.... that has remained fixed in my memory was this: 'Make it the one aim and supreme endeavour of your life to understand Christ, for of all Divines He is the most divine.' He was an advocate of the higher criticism, but would never admit that it furnished any valid excuse for refusing the appeal of Christ. I heard him preach his farewell sermon at St. Thomas's-Square, and recollect vividly his dramatic denunciation of the men who had applauded him for preaching a more liberal religion because it seemed to them to permit the moral laxity which they preferred to a higher life. Looking up from his manuscript he peered round among the congregation. 'I hope I have offended such men,' he said. 'I think I see some of them here tonight.'...In those days some of his ministerial brethren looked askance at him, considering him almost heretical in his advanced views. But to students like myself, unsettled in their religious thinking by the current materialism of the day, it was a godsend to find a preacher of outstanding intellectual power, who had fairly faced our modern difficulties for himself, and yet preached Christ with all the fire and earnestness of a prophet...."

"In my notes of his lectures on the origin of the Gospels the following striking passage occurs: 'The Word of God was not the Bible; it

\footnote{1}{Letter by "M.C.", op. cit.}
\footnote{2}{Ibid.}
\footnote{3}{"A Medical Man's Tribute to Dr. Forsyth," Letter to the British Weekly, Dec. 1, 1921, p. 203.}
was left for us to get down as low as that. The Bible contains the Word of God - Jesus Christ."

It was while a minister in Hackney that Forsyth was at last admitted to the Congregational Union. His sermons of that period do not seem heretical today: "Pessimism," for example, which is based upon a comparison of contemporary German philosophy with Christian revelation, contains the germ of his later thought.

"The solution of life is not to be found in grappling with pain, but in conflict with sin. The strongest soul that ever lived was crushed by sins rather than pains, by sins not his own, not by pains which were. Here lies the centre and secret of Christianity, not in the miracles of healing, but in the miracles of forgiveness, and in the cross, the greatest of them all."

"The deepest sense of evil is possible only to a believer in redemption - not a redemption that shall be one day, but that is now going on..."

Another of his sermons, preached shortly after the death of Baldwin Brown, and commemorating that great figure, shows not only the extent of Brown's personal influence upon Forsyth, but also that the idea of the Cross was not a later development in his thought. In speaking of Brown's melancholy (perhaps akin to that of Forsyth's father), he declares:

"The joy of the Incarnation was tempered and chastened by the sombre shadows of the Cross - which represented, not a redemptive expedient, but an eternal factor in the nature of God."

"Baldwin Brown always carried about with him the sense of what civilization and progress costs, as Paul bore about continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, and he seemed never to cease hearing the friction of the human spirit as it ground along the heavy grooves of change, and became developed, or, as he preferred to say, redeemed. His favourite definition of man was, that he was a being born to be redeemed, an heir of pain and glory, to come only by sorrow to rest."

1 - Ibid.
2 - Congregational Year Book, 1885, p. 383. This states that he began his ministry in 1884, at Hackney: an error not corrected until 1889.
4 - Ibid.
6 - Ibid.
Another of his published writings of this time, "Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner,' An Exposition and Sermon from a Modern Text," appears to have been one of the evening lectures mentioned previously.

In addition to his preaching and pastoral work Forsyth was involved in political affairs. While in London, he appeared on the platform with Fawcett and Wilks, taking an active part in municipal and political meetings.¹

In 1885 Forsyth removed to Cheetham Hill Congregational Church, Manchester, which, interestingly enough, had been the first pastorate of Allanson Picton. His installation sermon, "The Pulpit and the Age," might well be republished today, for it deals with problems as relevant now as they were then. He begins with his idea of the minister's function:

"You have called and I have answered gladly. But it is not your call that has made me a minister. I was a minister before any congregation called me. My election is of God. Paul speaks of 'a faithful minister of the new covenant.'...In this covenant...are God and man. God's fulness meets man's need. The divine nature meets human nature, and the union is a wedlock, first made in heaven. It is set forth visibly in Christ.² The minister of this covenant, therefore, the minister of Christ has his call, first, in the nature of God and God's truth; second, in the nature of man and man's need."³

The influence of Ritsohl is apparent in the sermon: Forsyth stresses the Kingdom of God in a manner typical of the Ritschlian school. He identifies the Church as the servant of the Kingdom; he finds encouragement in the fact that

"...it is more ready than ever before to recognize the Christianity outside the Church, and to admit that God has a controversy with men not covered by ecclesiastical discussions."⁴

¹ - Lorna, op. cit.
² - Compare, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 333.
³ - Forsyth: "The Pulpit and the Age," 1885, p.3.
⁴ - Ibid, p. 4.
This, though a dangerous assumption, is partly protected by the statement that "the Church, no more than the minister, exists to meet man's expectations."¹

Even at this date Forsyth was concerned with the importance of the Sacraments: to those of Baptism and Communion he added the Sacrament of the Word, which is "the distinctly Protestant Sacrament."² Furthermore, the doctrine of the Cross was an important aspect of his theological thinking:

"The message of God is no mere statement made by God, but a person and an act embodying His own self and nature.... We preach Christ crucified - a person in an act.... The character of Christ is inseparable from the work of Christ, the image of the Father from the work of the Father. The character needed the cross. God could not only live but die. The living God is the dying God.... The cross is embedded in the very principle of Revelation. It is for the putting away of sin, but not for that alone. It is also for the illumination of the pure. The cross was in God before sin was in man, and it will be our vital principle still when sin has been clean destroyed. It is not an expedient or a medicine only. It is the Eternal principle of Eternal life, which is always and only possible even to God by Eternal Death."³

This interesting passage, which combines in a questionable way a strong evangelical faith with what appears to be a rather pure Hegelianism, gives us a possible clue to the place at which Forsyth began his serious thinking on the Atonement.

It took little time for him to become a leader in his new community, so that his work began to extend far beyond the limits of his congregation. "Although Mr. Forsyth has been but a short time in his new sphere," reads an account in 1887, "his work is telling as his power gets known and his influence extends."⁴ Two of his sermons indicate that he

---

¹ - Ibid.
still places the stress upon God's love rather than justice, as he had in Shipley; yet he warns against a sentimental, effeminate kind of love, becoming so common at that time. In "Sunday-Schools and Modern Theology" he expresses relief at the new trend of teaching which breaks away from the idea of a sudden conversion of the child. Then he adds a paragraph which shows how vividly aware he is of the coming dangers of a liberalism carried too far; here is the prophet speaking:

"This leads us to remark upon the extraordinary stress laid by the newer views on the ethical side of Christianity. The ethical aspect of the Atonement is the side which, under the name of the moral theory, has done so much to modify, if not expel, the old forensic idea, with its quid pro quos and its dubious ethics of substitution... It is the ethical rather than the strictly evangelical aspect of Christianity which it has been the function of our day to turn to light. A time may come, I admit, and may not be distant, when we shall have to do what Paul did. It was chiefly in his conflict with Judaism that he pressed the expiatory aspect of the work of Christ. It formed the substance of his protest as it formed the essence of Luther's. And a protest may be forced on us which will cause us to renew our emphasis on some theory of the Atonement for the sake of a true view of Incarnation. We may have to go back on the more strictly evangelical aspect of Christ's work to save us from a one-sided morality, from a despotism of propriety, a deification of 'conduct,' and an ethical pharisaism which is all law and no Gospel, all practical, with no food or kindling for the living spirit at all. But I doubt if the Sunday-school has, on the whole, reached this point...."  

Within four years he was to be calling for that return to the Gospel, but not at the expense of the hard-won gains for which he and his colleagues had fought from the time of the Leicester Conference.

While in Manchester, Forsyth published his first two books. The earliest, Pulpit Parables for Young Hearers, published in 1886, was written in collaboration with J. A. Hamilton, one of his colleagues in

---

the Bradford District. It consists of children's addresses by these two men, and indicates why Forsyth was so highly regarded as a preacher to children. Possibly these are some of the sermons which the people in Hackney had unsuccessfully begged him to publish earlier. Religion in Recent Art, which appeared in 1889, was developed from two sources: a series of lectures which he delivered in 1887, at the time of the Manchester Exhibition, to a Working-Man's Club, founded in Ancoats, one of the poorest quarters of Manchester, by William Rowley, an art-dealer; and the music of Wagner, which Forsyth was able to hear in Bayreuth in 1882. The plan of the book ingeniously leads the reader from one plane of existence into another, using the works of the artists to develop a philosophy of art which was considered by many to be the best English interpretation of Hegel's Aesthetik. He begins with "Rossetti...the Religion of Natural Passion," giving the artist credit for having freed men of the Puritanical suspicion of natural beauty. Yet, says Forsyth, natural passion is not enough, as can be seen by the morbid sorrow of Rossetti himself at the death of his wife. Thus, we must go higher: to "Burne Jones...the Religion of Praeternatural Imagination." where myth is given a place in artistic interpretation. This, too, is insufficient; art must be spiritualized. "Its message is a spiritual message. Its camera is the soul." Watts...the Religion of Supernatural Hope" succeeds in freeing the mind of its natural bonds, yet it does not bring us to a Christian art. This is left for Holman Hunt in two final lectures upon Art. In his two chapters on Wagner and Parsifal Forsyth continues the theme which had engrossed him in previous years: German Pessimism. He was disturbed by this

phenomenon, yet felt that in it there were the first stirrings of a spiritual revival:

"Nothing is more remarkable in Parsifal than the return to European culture of the sense of sin, the need of forgiveness, and the faith in its possibility. Those that wait for the Lord may take it as an earnest of His second coming to the civilised mind. As the darkest hour is just before the dawn, so the darkest system of philosophy that ever shadowed the Western world may be the prelude to a profound Renaissance of spiritual faith. Pessimism, with its soul-hunger, is mere progress and civilisation reduced to an absurdity."  

In addition to his preaching and lecturing Forsyth was actively involved in political debate. From 1885-89 he wrote political and social essays for the Manchester Examiner under the pseudonym, "Publicola" and when, at a district meeting of the Manchester and Salford Association of Congregational Ministers and Deacons, a paper defending the extreme individualist theory of society was read, Forsyth lost no time in delivering a reply. This paper, "Socialism and Christianity," indicates not only that he was a socialist in earlier days, but also that he based his belief upon a theory of organic solidarity which later was to be fundamental to his Christological thought.

"...God is not an individual. He is the absolute personality, in whom all persons have their ground, but who is more than all. He is above all, and through all, and in all.... It is His humanity, His Christ, that is the element of every soul.... We are created in Him as a rational race, an organic whole. It is the divine society that is the ground of the soul."  

"God is the Absolute or none. The unity of Society as a rational and spiritual organism stands or falls with the unity and reality of God.... It is in His unity that society coheres. And thus the cohesion of Society is no consensus of self-interests, but the Christian organism of the cross, of self-realisation by self-sacrifice, articulated into endless variety and reciprocity."  

2 - Lorna, op. cit.  
4 - Ibid, p. 25.
In 1888 he delivered an address on "The Relation of the Church to the Poor" before the Lancashire Congregational Union. 1 His interest in social problems appears to have been at its height during these years in Manchester.

If we have quoted rather extensively from his Manchester writings, it is in order to show that he was a mature thinker at this time, well aware of the problems facing the Church, and possessed of a keen insight into the direction in which the world was moving. It is true that he did not yet stress the holiness of God: this not through ignorance of that aspect of Christian truth; rather, because he felt the need to be elsewhere. Here was a man who, throughout his life, spoke and preached to the needs of the hour; who, even in his early ministry, showed evidence of the prophetic imagination which was to become so well known in later years.

From Manchester Forsyth moved to Leicester, where, in 1888, he became minister of Clarendon Park, a suburban church which had but recently been founded. His was a task of building, and he did it well. He called his church the 'Mayor's Nest,' because several of the deacons were former mayors of the borough. 2 As in Manchester, he rapidly became involved in the political debates of the city: the great Dock Strike of 1889 had his support; 3 and Picton - now the city's representative in Parliament - was one of his friends.

"There were big controversies in Leicester in those days, and there were giants, too. Allanson Picton... was then member for the town; and I can recall a meeting in the old Temperance Hall at which Picton and Forsyth were the speakers, and how Forsyth swept us off our feet in the rage of his passionate defence of Mr. Gladstone. We followed

---

1 - Congregational Monthly, Mar., 1888, p. 64.
2 - Lorna, op. cit.
3 - Forsyth: 'Socialism, the Church and the Poor,' 1908, p. 44.
Forsyth everywhere after that. There was personality in him. What struck us in those earlier days was his fearlessness, and the trick he had of blazing the trail for us; his hatred of smug, comfortable, smiling religiousness; and his saying that religion meant paying big prices, both for truth and liberty, and also for salvation."1

His interest in art continued in Leicester; in 1893 he was appointed a member of the Museum and Art Gallery Committee of the borough.2

His reputation was not confined to politics and art, however. When, in 1891, he became Chairman of the Leicestershire and Rutland Congregational Union, his address from the chair made a deep impression, not only upon those present, but also upon Congregationalists in other parts of England.3 This may have been one of the chief reasons why he was asked two years later to contribute an essay to Faith and Criticism. He returned to Bradford in 1892 for the Autumnal Session of the Congregational Union, and there, eleven years after his rejection by the Bradford District, delivered a paper on "The Duty of Congregationalists to provide for Church Extension in our Large Towns, in View of the Rapid Increase and the Revived Activity of Sacerdotal Churches."4 Peel credits him with having been responsible for the Church Extension movement which grew out of that Assembly.5 The following year he was appointed College Pastor at Mansfield College, Oxford, for the period between March and Easter;6 and in 1892 he became intimately acquainted with Dale, the man who had fought so heartily against the Leicester Conference fifteen years previously.7

1 - "Dr. P. T. Forsyth, His Influence in Congregationalism," Letter to the Christian World, Nov. 24, 1921.
4 - Congregational Year Book, 1893, p. 30.
5 - These Hundred Years, pp. 333 ff.
6 - Congregational Monthly, Feb., 1893, p. 51.
The writings of this period are not extensive, quite possibly in consequence of Forsyth's increasingly bad health, which was occasioned by over-work. Yet, two writings stand out: his Chairman's Address, "The Old Faith and the New," and his contribution to Faith and Criticism. It is surprising that the former piece has received no mention, for it is a valuable guide to his early thought, and appears to be his earliest written work on the holiness of God. In it we see that his earlier prediction had come true: it was time to restore the evangelical aspect of the Gospel to its necessary place in Christian thought. He writes:

"What has been called the New Evangelicalism seems.....to be in some danger of ceasing to be evangelical at all. And the risk is two-fold. On the one hand it is inward. While full of moral sympathies the new style sometimes lacks moral sinew. ....On the other hand, it incurs the risk of becoming over-engrossed in the outward and social questions which monopolise the journalism of the hour....

"In either case we cease to be Evangelical, for that word loses its meaning when the love of God takes the place in religion which is due to His holiness, and when the divine justice is conceived to be more engaged with wrongs than in the war with sin." 1

It is the contention of this paper that the new liberalism has gone too far in a task which in itself was necessary and good; that there is an element in the old evangelicalism which cannot be discarded without fatal consequences to Christianity. He proposes to correct this by combining aspects of the old and the new bringing together into a dual relationship the Cross and the Kingdom: "Christianity is an ellipse, and its two centres are the Cross and the Kingdom." 2 "We need to revise the Doctrine of the Cross in the light of the Kingdom.... We need to explain the Kingdom in the light of the Cross." 3

He corrects the old by changing the emphasis of redemption from the

1 - Forsyth: "The Old Faith and the New," 1891, p. 3.
2 - Ibid, p. 4.
individual to the community:

"....It is the Kingdom that interprets the Cross. The spirituality, the theology of the Cross must be of an ethical and social quality. It demands a Church. It is complete as a Kingdom...."

"It follows that the interpretations of the Cross must be less legal and more moral. It was not by satisfying the law of God, or even the holiness of God, that it redeemed us,... It was by satisfying a holy God. Its essence is loving obedience."¹

"It is this change from justice to holiness that marks the transition from the forensic Cross to the ethical."²

The transition has been made, declares the author, but not with the desired results. The moral theory of the Atonement has proved to be onesided:

"It deals only with the work of Christ as God's representative with man.... It has nothing effective to say about Christ as man's representative with God³.... What we need is the return of that element which leads people to talk of a reconciled God, even if we insist that he is self-reconciled."⁴

Interpreted by the Cross, the Kingdom is seen to be one of forgiven men: it is based upon Redemption - the theme which is lacking in liberal theology.

"The Cross is.... the certainty of the Kingdom. It is not only its revelation but its creative, constitutive revelation. The same act which reveals the kingdom sets it up."⁵

At the close of this paper Forsyth adds a lucid paragraph which, better than any other statement, reveals the course of his spiritual development:

"Our youth begins in surprised impatient joy. We are all reformers and our sires were fools. We discover soon that even the spirit of the age can fail, and that many of our contemporaries are not wise. For they will not at our bidding part with the folly of the creeds. A little longer and we misdoubt our own complete wisdom. Still longer and we are troubled most with the sin of our fathers and brethren. And at last we give in. No sin has hampered us like our own. We were on too good terms with our own conscience. We can never trust our breezy selves again. We have all our world and all our hope to reconstruct at the foot of the Cross. Our new views must

3 - Ibid, p. 16.
4 - Ibid, p. 19.
arise from our new selves. And the Kingdom can only come by the humbled valour of those who have entered in, and who witness of a forgiveness they have seen, and heard, and known.\textsuperscript{1}

*Faith and Criticism* was published not long after *Lux Mundi*, and sought to do for Nonconformity what the other had done for Anglicanism. Both were written by young ministers and theologians. The Congregational essays never received the acclaim which greeted *Lux Mundi*; Forsyth's paper was considered by many to be the best in this group. Entitled, "Revelation and the Person of Christ," it is patterned after the thought of Neurmann, to whom Forsyth gives credit in a note at the beginning (he adopts the theological, but not the philosophical, position of this school, he declares). The fundamental thesis of this essay is that Christ and Revelation are identical. "Revelation... may be defined as the free, final and effective act of God's self-communication in Jesus Christ for man's redemption."\textsuperscript{2}

Revelation is an act, but more than that; it is the act of a person. "Only a person's act and experience can be a revelation to a person."\textsuperscript{3} The work of Christ is

"to realise and transfer to us the experience of God's holy love in the conditions of sin. It was not to give an equivalent for sin, but to effect in man God's own sense of what sin meant for His holiness. Christ's sorrow and death were a sacrifice offered by God to His own holiness."\textsuperscript{4}

By this time Forsyth was emerging as one of the most promising of the younger men in the denomination, and thus it is not surprising that he should have received a call from Emmanuel Church, Cambridge, in 1894. Apparently he was loathe to leave Clarendon Park. Great pressure was put upon him, however, as we can see from the statement which he made upon

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid, p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Forsyth: "Revelation and the Person of Christ," *Faith and Criticism*, p. 116.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid, pp. 141-42.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
resigning his Leicester church:

"The principal factor in influencing his decision was a letter he had received signed by the leading men of the Congregational Union.... The letter urged the importance of the sphere to which Mr. Forsyth was invited. The church there was to be valued not simply because of its influence in Cambridge, but also in the University, and it was of primary importance that the pulpit should be fitly and influentially filled. The signatories.... asked him to consider the matter as being no mere balancing of the church at Cambridge with the church at Leicester, but as a case where the field was measured rather by the University and the opportunities it supplied.... His acceptance of the call would be not only in the interests of a local church, but of all the Congregational churches in the country."¹

Forsyth was a sick man, and was on the point of collapse from over-work. Added to this was a concern for his wife, who, heretofore the stronger of the two, had suddenly become an invalid. At the advice of his doctor he took a complete rest of three months' duration, and prepared to begin his ministry at Emmanuel Church in September.²

Within a week after his opening service in Cambridge, his wife died suddenly of paralysis.³ There began for him a period of sorrow and depression which threatened to develop into a chronic neurosis. He lived alone with his daughter, Jessie, then a girl at school; his health grew worse, so that he was forced to curtail his pastoral work to a great extent. But the church gave him loyal support through those unhappy months, and one member paid for a four-wheeler for the Sunday and week-night services. Finally, in 1898, he remarried, his second wife being Bertha Ison. The understanding with which she cared for him did much to remove the pain of those last few years, and undoubtedly made it possible for him to regain his power.⁴

The University of Aberdeen recognized his achievements in March,

---

¹ "Notes of the Churches," British Weekly, Mar. 8, 1894, p. 322.
² Memoir, Work of Christ, p. XV.
⁴ This period is well described by Mrs. Andrews in her Memoir, Work of Christ,
1895, when it bestowed upon him the degree of D. D., in absentia. The following year is considered by many to have been the turning point in his career: he was chosen Union preacher for the Autumnal Assembly at Leicester, and there delivered a sermon, "The Holy Father," which was hailed as one of the greatest ever preached before the Union. Both the Christian World Pulpit and British Weekly reprinted it in full. In the same year - 1896 - two of his books were published. Intercessory Services in Aid of Public Worship is a small volume containing services which he developed and used regularly in Leicester - they indicate the extent to which he had become "High Church." The Charter of the Church was considered important enough by the British Weekly to be reviewed in its leader, a review which recognized the important role which Forsyth would play in theological circles. 1897 saw the publication of The Holy Father and the Living Christ.

Perhaps 1899 should stand out as one of the high points in his career. He was sent as one of the English delegates to the International Congregational Council, which was convened in Boston in September of that year. He sailed with Fairbairn, Brown, and Selbie on the maiden voyage of the "Oceanic," truly a magnificent ship for its day. There were five hundred delegates in attendance at Boston, and the meetings were held in Tremont Temple, where curious crowds filled the main hall every day. Forsyth read a paper on "The Evangelical Principle of Authority," which, though it came on the second afternoon of the Council, remained the out-

4 - Congregational Monthly, Sept., 1899, p. 205.
standing feature of the week. The impressive scene was described by Selbie, who served as correspondent for the British Weekly:

"(Forsyth's paper) was the event of the day so far. It was a great utterance, delivered with strange power and animation, and held the audience from the first word to the last...."

"The address was greeted with applause, again and again renewed, and the whole audience felt that the fitting thing had been done when the chairman suggested that it should be followed, not by discussion, but by the singing together of the hymn, 'In the Cross of Christ I glory.'"

Forty years later, J. D. Jones could still remember this address:

"...it was in the address of Dr. Forsyth that the Council reached its climax.... His paper resolved itself into a passionate plea for the Cross as the central thing in our Christian faith. I heard Forsyth on many an occasion both before and after. But I never felt thrilled by him as I did that day. He spoke as a man inspired. He flamed, he burned. He came after two rather dry and arid addresses. He brought us back to the heart of things. He spoke of the redeeming Cross with such passion and power that he subdued the great audience listening to him.... The Chairman invited one or two to speak - but we were beyond speech.... I wonder whether it was that great afternoon... which first made us here in England realize what a great gift God had given to our Churches in the person of Peter Taylor Forsyth."

After his triumph in Boston Forsyth was invited by Bishop Sanday to participate in a conference on Priesthood and Sacrifice which the latter was arranging for December of that year. It was Sanday's opinion that much of the controversy over Priesthood and Sacrifice - wherein arose the dispute over Sacerdotalism - was verbal, and that if groups of Churchmen holding varying views could be brought together, a considerable part of the misunderstanding might be resolved. Accordingly, he invited representatives of Anglican and Nonconformist churches to attend a two day conference on the subject at Oxford. In preparation, a set of twenty

2 - Jones, J. D.: Three Score Years and Ten, 1940, p. 132.
questions was sent to each participant; the replies were then printed in pamphlet form; and the pamphlet issued to those same men well in advance of the meetings.

"(It) was decided to aim at bringing together three groups: a group of High Churchmen, a group of Nonconformists, and an indeterminate group of Churchmen, who could not be called 'High' .... roughly, speaking, the Conference fell into three equal groups of five." 1

Among those present were Moberly, Gore, Scott Holland, Cosmo Lang, Sanday, Fairbairn, Salmond, Davison, and Forsyth. The Conference is of particular interest because in its report we can read Forsyth's concise interpretations of the meaning of such doctrines as Sacrifice, Priesthood, and Apostolic Succession.

Two more books were published by Forsyth in 1899; Christian Perfection, and Rome, Reform and Reaction. Neither can be classed as a major work, and yet there are profound insights in each.

At the May Meetings of the Union in 1900 Forsyth preached the annual sermon of the Colonial Missionary Society, "The Empire for Christ." 2 He was nominated Chairman for the following year, but placed third in the balloting behind Parker and Scott. 3 In 1901 his book, The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, appeared. A book of sermons, it contains the first record we can discover of Forsyth's acceptance of the Kenotic Theory, as set forth in the sermon, "The Divine Self-Emptying." 4 The fact that he was preaching the Kenotic Doctrine in 1895, and had worked out the outline of perhaps his greatest book, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, in 1899 -

---

1 - Sanday, editor: Different Conception of Priesthood and Sacrifice, 1900, p. viii.
2 - Christian World Pulpit, May 16, 1900, p. 305.
3 - Peel: These Hundred Years, op. cit., p. 328.
4 - First published in Christian World Pulpit, May 1, 1895, p. 276.
ten years before publication¹ - indicates that by the time he left Cam­
bridge he had reached theological maturity.

His Cambridge sermons combine a fine evangelical urgency with
a balanced intellectual and aesthetic content; they are filled with the
remarkable antitheses and epigrams which attracted some to this man and
repelled others. One sermon is marked by an awesome beauty: based on
the text, "I will be as the dew unto Israel," it stresses the silent,
soothing power of the Father. Another places in opposition the two
texts, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and "Judge not." Still
another deals with Christian irony - the type of humour which Forsyth
liked most (possibly the influence of Kierkegaard is shown here) - which
he develops from the words of Jesus to the Pharisees, "They that be
whole need not a physician, but they that be sick."²

Forsyth accepted a call to the Principalship of Hackney College,
Hampstead, in the spring of 1901. Before commencing his new duties, he
and his wife took a holiday in Europe, where he was able to revisit the
places which he had last seen in the 'eighties.'³ Upon his return he
assumed the task to which he was to devote the last twenty years of his
life. His was not an easy responsibility, for although Alfred Cave had
done a great deal to raise the standards of the college, an untimely
death had cut his work short. There was to be a never-ending problem of
of finance, while the general quality of applicants was to be a constant
source of complaint.⁴ One of the most valuable accomplishments of Cave
had been the consolidation of the London Theological Colleges into one

¹ - Forsyth: Person and Place of Jesus Christ, 1st edition, 1909, p. ix.
² - Taken from unpublished notes of Forsyth's sermons, 1897-98, by
Beatrice H. Macintosh.
⁴ - Cave, op. cit., p. 111.
faculty. Forsyth became Dean of this faculty in 1911.

The Congregational Monthly, in mentioning Forsyth's acceptance of the call, stated that,

"The late Dr. Cave was a fine scholar, who defended with great ability a rather conservative position; the position of the new Principal of Hackney is not so easily definable. Sometimes he appears to be a mystic and a Cyprian, sometimes he speaks like a Genevan Calvinist; and then the tenderness of Maurice and the incisive critical faculty of the best present-day scholarship appear in all his words."¹

On the other hand, the same journal noted in 1904 Horton's opinion that Forsyth 'has the most original mind in the Congregational ministry.'²

The effect of this man upon his students was remarkable. At first they were inclined to consider him aloof, yet soon they felt the warmth of his affection for them and the intensity of his passion for the success of their work in the ministry.³ In the training of students he stressed theology in its service of the Gospel, as the following interview shows:

"'We keep,' said Dr. Forsyth, 'the preaching side uppermost.'

"What is your view of the manuscript in the pulpit,"

"'My advice to the men when they enter a charge is to write out carefully one sermon, and to speak the other from rough but not careless notes, also to do such with exposition. It is too much to expect three finished sermons a week from a young man."⁴

He gave the heart of his training succinctly in this ordination charge:

"The duty of the Christian minister is not to satisfy human need, but to preach Christ, who does satisfy human need.... The Word is much more than the man.... It is not well that the minister should expose his soul to his people; but he can preach in such a way that they shall know there are great resources behind the word."⁵

¹ Congregational Monthly, April, 1901, p. 3.
² Ibid, 1904, p. 83.
³ Cave, op. cit., p. 112; Watts, S. M., in "More Tributes to Principal Forsyth, "British Weekly, Nov. 24, 1921, p. 185.
Most descriptive of his teaching is this, however:

"I remember a visitor once coming to Hackney.... a man widely known for his evangelical earnestness, who expressed the hope that the salvation of souls was the main business of the college. Like a flash of light there came one of those startling antithesis which puzzled and offended some - 'Our chief concern here is not with souls, but with the Gospel.'"¹

But Forsyth did not confine himself to the work of Hackney College; until the time of the World War he was engaged in many outside controversies. It is hard today either to imagine or comprehend the struggles with which the Independent Churches were faced throughout Forsyth's generation. Even at the beginning of this century, although the Nonconformists numbered approximately half the total population of England, they were accorded few of the religious and educational rights of the Established Church. Each gain was made only by hard and relentless battle. One of the most serious of these contests was concerned with the question of education. Dale, in his day, had led the fight of the Free Churches for a free and unbiased education for all, regardless of religious denomination; but the issue arose again in 1902 and 1906, long after his death. In 1902 the Nonconformists felt that the Bishops were using the Education Act as a means of teaching - by subtle inference - Anglican doctrines in the schools. At a special meeting in the Memorial Hall Forsyth proposed a resolution condemning the Bill and its proponents:

"The audience listened with rapt attention, breaking out at the end into a long-restrained applause. It was a remarkable speech which showed Dr. Forsyth at his best. The effect it produced was like the singing of a grave Psalm by an army which is ready for battle."²

The Nonconformists lost that fight. As a result of this Act many teachers throughout England underwent a period of passive resistance, and some were even imprisoned. In 1906 the Liberals, advocating repeal of the Education Act, swept into power in a mighty victory at the polls. The new Bill which was soon brought forward was a compromise measure which appeared to be acceptable to both sides, though important concessions had to be granted by the Nonconformists. But at this point the House of Lords altered the Bill drastically. The challenge was accepted by the Nonconformists with alacrity:

"For the first time since its formation seventy-five years ago the Congregational Union... held a special assembly. The object was to protest against the Lords' amendments to the Education Bill, and delegates came up at their expense from all the thirty-seven county unions in which the 4,000 Congregational churches are organized."¹

The leader of the fight, John Massie, J.P., then made the following resolution:

"This assembly recognizes in the Education Bill the desire of the Government to give effect to the demand expressed at the election for popular control of all State-aided schools, and for freedom of the teachers from all religious tests. This assembly views with resentment and indignation the changes made by the House of Lords as a defiance of the House representative of the people, and as destructive of the principles of the measure, being sectarian in spirit, distrustful of the local authority, and disastrous to efficient administration."²

In seconding the motion, Forsyth stated that, "The Lords were ranging the national Church against the nation."³ Previously, at a mass meeting in Holborn, he had stated, in a letter which was read from the platform, "We can concede no more, and we must harden our face, for my part with a sure but unwilling heart."⁴ No accord could be reached on the Bill, which accordingly was dropped. Forsyth's attitude towards the Education Bills

² - Ibid.
³ - Ibid.
⁴ - "Dr. Forsyth on the Education Crisis," British Congregationalist, Nov. 8, 1906, p. 369. See also, Peel: These Hundred Years, Ch. XVI: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 7, pp. 984-85.
is of importance in an understanding of the man, simply because the subject recurs again and again in his books. He considered the issue to be of prime importance in the relationships between Church and State.

Another problem with which he was concerned was the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal. An ordinance for the introduction of these workers into the South African mines had been brought before the House of Commons in 1904; Forsyth was quick to muster an attack against what he considered to be disguised form of slavery. His resolution on this subject at the May Assembly of the Union in that year was the high point of the meetings. He further pursued the controversy in 1906, thereby attracting the ridicule of Tory writers, who accused Forsyth and other Liberals of making an election issue of the problem.

Yet, the Education Bills and Chinese labour were of little note as compared with the "New Theology" controversy which began in 1907. When we read the accounts of that struggle today, we wonder why Forsyth was singled out by R. J. Campbell for particular abuse, for there were other voices raised against the City Temple preacher. One of the most scathing reviews of Campbell's New Theology was written by Fairbairn, who received but a simpering reply from the popular but emotional author. Nicoll published an analysis of the man in a leading article in the British Weekly which must have made Campbell smart with embarrassment; yet, it was Forsyth whom Campbell attacked. Briefly, the "New Theology" amounted to a poorly understood Hegelian monism verging on pantheism; a very weak doctrine of sin, which was considered by Campbell to be but the question of a wrong choice of action in any

---

1 - "Congregational Union", British Weekly, May 12, 1904, p. 108.
2 - See his letters to The Times, Jan., 1906; 18th, p. 4; 20th, p. 12; 25th, p. 11; 26th, p. 7; 29th, p. 7.
given situation; the divinity of Christ, though never denied, was minimized; it was held that every man has the same spark of divinity which Christ had, but to a lesser degree. This theological position was popular with laymen; but there were few Congregational ministers who agreed with it, and Forsyth was merely voicing their protests when he argued against Campbell. Ultimately Campbell himself saw the dangers of his position, and in 1911 withdrew the book from publication. In 1915 he resigned his City Temple charge and returned to the Anglican communion.¹

In meeting the challenge of this new liberalism, Forsyth compared it unfavourably with the Leicester Conference, declaring that that struggle had been on entirely different grounds.²

"The demand which used to be, and had to be, for an atmosphere of freedom now comes to be for the focus of freedom. It was a demand for liberty; now we want to know what makes, and keeps us, free, and what we are free for. The old interest was the range of freedom; the new is the limit, the content, the guarantee of freedom."³

"The present conflict in the Church is more critical for Christianity than any that has arisen since the second century.... The whole of the Christian Gospel is involved, the whole of religion indeed."²

Although Forsyth was accused of being ruthless, and even libelous in his attack upon Campbell's position, Arthur Hallack indicates that he spoke with great reserve:

"No definite reference was made... to the 'New Theology,' but there was just the rumble of distant thunder. There was no fierce word or stinging epigram uttered."⁴

Probably one of the chief causes of misunderstanding between the men was the fact that Forsyth was speaking theologically, while Campbell seems to have

2 - See p. 22, above.
3 - Forsyth: "The Newest Theology," p. 581; see p. 21, above.
been incapable of thinking in other than personal terms. Whenever Forsyth (or anyone else, for that matter) attacked his ideas, Campbell immediately took it as insult to himself; he could not distinguish between the two. A caustic, yet probably fair, analysis of the man - that which Nicoll printed in the British Weekly—characterized him as a man of moods and inspirations, poorly trained for the ministry, badly read, and unsuited to the level of debate which he had chosen.

The controversy smouldered after the first great conflagration of 1907, until in 1910 Forsyth, in a speech at Hull, made pointed reference to the kind of liberal preacher who uses his pulpit for his own ends. Perhaps unwisely he used the words, "quack," and "adventurer." Campbell interpreted this as a direct slur upon his character, and in a dramatic moment at the Assembly, asked the Chairman, Silvester Horne, if it were the desire of the Union that he should resign his pastorate. Horne dismissed the question on the grounds that the Union had no jurisdiction over such matters, which were the concern of the individual churches.

However, in 1911 Campbell declared that he had changed certain of his Christological views. In a moving speech before that Assembly Forsyth declared that such a statement removed any contention between the two men. With one mighty roar of approval the audience rose to its feet and cheered the amicable conclusion of what had become an odious battle to all concerned. Yet, even then Forsyth was not free of the matter: in letters to the British Weekly several ministers who had taken no active part in the

---

affair accused Forsyth of having given in too soon. It was fitting that these two men, who had been friends before the controversy, should settle their differences publicly, for at one time Forsyth had hoped that Campbell might succeed him at Emmanuel Church.

During the first half of his Principalship, Forsyth was engaged in some of the most significant events of his life: the Chairmanship of the Congregational Union in 1905; the Yale Lectures in 1907; an address before the Third International Congregational Council in 1908; the Congregational Lecture in 1909; and a series of lectures at Campbell Morgan's annual summer conference for young ministers, also in 1909. Out of this period came most of Forsyth's greatest books.

When, on the third ballot of the 1904 Assembly, Forsyth was elected Chairman of the Union for the following year, he made one of the few public references to his early life. It was typical of him that at the moment when he had achieved the highest honour in the denomination, he should have thought back to his childhood and of the debt he owed his parents:

"I want to say.... here and in these moments, how much I owe to two Scotch peasants, long passed away, but for whose scraping and toil and self-denial, I should not have been here tonight."

He was ill throughout much of 1905, yet his two addresses from the Chair were outstanding in their brilliance. The first, "A Holy Church the Moral Guide of Society," was too long to be read in full, and so he cut most of

1 - "Dr. Forsyth and Mr. Campbell," British Weekly, Nov. 1911: 2nd, p. 132; 9th, p. 170; 16th, p. 196.
2 - Campbell: A Spiritual Pilgrimage, p. 83; Cave, op. cit., p. 113.
3 - Congregational Year Book, 1905, p. 4.
4 - "Spring Assembly," British Weekly, May 12, 1904, p. 108.
5 - Cave, op. cit., p. 113; British Weekly, May 11, 1905, p. 128.
the theoretical part out of it. Dr. Clifford saw in this address the beginnings of a new trend in the Nonconformist approach to the problem of the Church and Labour.¹ In the Autumnal Assembly the Union sermon - interestingly enough - was preached by R. J. Campbell; but it was overshadowed by Forsyth's address on "The Grace of the Gospel as the Moral Authority in the Church." F. A. Russell compared it with Forsyth's achievement in Boston in 1899.

"All whom I have met are agreed that in many respects it is the greatest address that has been delivered from the chair of the Congregational Union by a minister."²

1907 proved to be a busy year for the Principal: in January the New Theology controversy opened; in February he was stricken ill suddenly;³ in March he was in America, delivering the Yale Lectures; and in August he was at the Cambridge Summer School of Theology.⁴ His lectures on preaching at Yale, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, made an immediate impression upon theological thought both in America and Britain. In this book, which in some respects bears resemblance to the pamphlet of 1891, "The Old Faith and the New,"⁵ he brings together the evangelical power of the older school and the intellectual range of modern liberalism. This is one of the most readable of his books; its problems remain with us today. Forsyth enjoyed that visit to America. Upon his return he stated that he had found Americans to be vitally interested in philosophical problems, but weak in theological preaching. Two problems, he found, absorbed their interest above all others;

---

¹ - "Dr. Clifford on Principal Forsyth's Address," British Weekly, May 18, 1905, p. 147.
² - "Congregational Union at Leeds," British Weekly, Oct. 12, 1905, p. 4; "Dr. Forsyth's Burden," same issue, p. 3.
³ - British Congregationalist, Feb. 7, 1907.
⁴ - See p. 47, above.
⁵ - See pp. 35-7, above.
the Negro issue, and money. Little has changed in the last forty years.

His address before the Third International Congregational Council at Edinburgh, "Forgiveness through Atonement the Essential of Evangelical Christianity," was later incorporated in The Cruciality of the Cross. Response to this address varied, as one reporter, J. G. Stevenson notes:

"Surprise overcame me when delegates later complained of his lack of lucidity.... As a rule, he affects by intellectual dominance and sheer energy of conviction. But towards the close of his address he was appealing; and appeal is a method I had not earlier associated with him."2

So moved was W. A. Bartlett, of Chicago, that he testified during the meetings:

"I should like to sit under his preaching.... I felt the tears come to my eyes again and again as he spoke.... If I had heard nothing else in coming across the sea than this great address, which, it seems to me, is an epoch-making one, I should have felt fully repaid."3

Forsyth delivered his Congregational Lecture in April and May of 1909. Entitled The Person and the Place of Jesus Christ, it established him as the greatest living theologian of the Congregational Churches. Had there been any doubt as to his right to rank with Dale and Fairbairn, it was now ended; today he is considered more fundamental than either. The plan of the lectures seems at first to be rather peculiar for a theological discourse, but it reveals the poetic imagination of the man. There are twelve lectures in all, each with a normal title; yet they are grouped into four sections, as follows - Reveille and Password; Reconnaissance; The Advance; the Advance in Force. Most authorities regard this to be his finest

1 - "Principal Forsyth's Impressions of America," British Weekly, April 25, 1907, p. 59.
2 - British Congregationalist, July 9, 1908, p. 33.
3 - Proceedings of the Third International Congregational Council, 1908, p. 73.
writing. It is more carefully planned than most of his other works; the fact that he had worked out the original plan ten years previously raises it above the level of much of his occasional writing. Furthermore, there is a unity here which is lacking in the greater number of his books, and there are fewer digressions.

From his lectures in August of that same year Forsyth produced another of his more important books, *The Work of Christ*. Unfortunately, this book is inferior to his *Person and Place*: the lectures were delivered extempore, and Forsyth merely corrected a short-hand copy of them for publication. He intended that *The Cruciality of the Cross*, and *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* should be read together as a unity, but as Cave has remarked, the first and last are not on a par with the Congregational Lecture.¹

The writings of the Hackney College period are the finest of his life. Although they will be dealt with in the following chapters, it may be well to mention here that 1909 does not mark the high point in his career, after which there was to be a gradual, yet perceptible, decline. Some consider his greatest book to have been *The Principle of Authority*, written in 1912; while his final work, *This Life and the Next*, is unmatched for spiritual depth and beauty.

The war years were a constant sorrow to Forsyth, not only because of what it meant to such a sensitive man to see the suffering of men throughout the world, but also because of the role which the German theologians played in the conflict. He found it hard to forgive them when they gave their

¹ Cave, op. cit., p. 117.
support to the Kaiser in his invasion of Belgium, and he drew many a moral from it. The Christian Ethic of War is based upon this theme. It is, however, inferior to The Justification of God. Despite his patriotism towards his own nation, Forsyth could see through the illusions of his contemporaries, who thought that victory would in itself assure a future of peace and happiness for all. He warned that the peace must be prepared for in the midst of conflict, lest the whole tragedy be in vain.

Forsyth lived long enough to see the victory, but also long enough to see the struggle between the Allies over the conference table. In 1920 he was stricken with a final illness, which gradually reduced his strength for a year; by the end he was wasted and extremely weak, yet to the end he maintained his love and his faith. It was on the fourth Armistice Day, November 11, 1921, that he died, at the age of seventy-three.

An evaluation of Forsyth is extremely difficult. He was mourned at his death as the greatest Congregational theologian of them all. Yet, in the years which followed he was nearly forgotten. It took another war to bring him back into prominence once again. The liberalism against which he had warned his contemporaries swept through Britain and America, this time taking ministers as well as laymen. Forsyth became the last of the orthodox; his evangelicalism seemed rather embarrassing, and definitely old-fashioned in this modern age. But even while Forsyth was being relegated to the quaint but unimportant past, there arose on the Continent a man who was saying much the same thing - with less humour and kindness: Karl Barth. Strangely enough, Barth is better known in Britain and America than is Forsyth, although now at last Forsyth is being rediscovered by his own people.
Forsyth was a man of his times. He spoke to the needs of his age. With the vision of a prophet he could adapt himself to the changing conditions of his age, thereby maintaining the central truth of his message. There is a consistency in his thought which can easily be overlooked: God's act of grace is heralded throughout his preaching. Let us review his life very briefly, and see how he addressed each of the important problems which arose:

In his earliest ministry, it was the problem of freedom. Truth was stifled by an orthodoxy which refused to accept the benefits of modern scholarship. Forsyth at this period spoke out for the new methods of textual criticism. At the time, it is true, he had the impulsiveness of youth; he admitted this in later years. Yet, the battle which he and his colleagues fought was a necessary one. At the same time he was concerned with another problem: the growth of pessimism in the wake of positivism. Long before most men had seen the dangers of an uncritical adulation of science and materialism, Forsyth was crying out against them. And at this time he supported the aims of socialism, seeing in it the opportunity of restoring men to their rightful place in a society gone mad in its worship of "free" enterprise.

Even then, however, Forsyth was prepared for the day when it would be necessary to review the claims and achievements of liberalism, and in the light of the total Christian message, reconcile it with the older evangelicalism. Thus, as early as 1891 he was speaking out against the excesses of a liberalism turned sentimental. This was to be his theme throughout the rest of his life, for although he had been instrumental in bringing
liberalism into a respected place in England, he could not, by himself, succeed in preventing it from getting out of control. Most ministers agreed with him; but they did nothing about it. R. J. Campbell was in the minority in 1907. He himself saw the folly of his position within a very few years. Yet, after Forsyth's death the errors of Campbell and his school were accepted generally by Christians in America and Britain.

There is a constant danger in Christian ethics that the Gospel will become secondary to good works. Forsyth's place in the teaching of Christian ethics is important simply because he did not succumb to this error. While he was at one time a socialist - at least in theory - it was not socialism which attracted him, but rather that aspect of Christianity which makes a social ethic essential. When R. J. Campbell allied himself with Keir Hardie and the Labour Party, and referred to the work of Hardie as truly Christian; when ministers began to fall into the Roman Catholic error of placing the deed higher than the faith; Forsyth struck out boldly in defence of Protestant teaching on this subject. While labour was weak, he defended it; but when it threatened to swallow up the Church, he fought against a too-close identification of the two.

He was neither tall nor handsome; but strangely enough, those who heard him speak often spoke of him in those terms. He seems to have been one of those men who, in the fervour of their message, assume in the minds of their audience a stature and a countenance quite unlike the original. To one American, for example, Forsyth was like Theodore Roosevelt - himself a man who gave the impression of being a giant:

"He bestrides the earth like a Colossus. His sheer intellectual and spiritual power has won him a respectful hearing in the enemy's country. He is for the theological world what such a man as Roosevelt is for the political world - a stone of stumbling and a
rock of offence. Like all masterful personalities, he makes men decide either for or against him."

Yet Forsyth would not have had it that way; one must decide either for or against Christ, not Forsyth. That was his theme. It was the Gospel that spoke through him. The Gospel of the grace of a Holy God was the central theme of all his preaching - the Gospel with the Cross of Christ at its very centre. All poverty, sorrow, deprivation, and loss - yes, even a life-time of pain - were but a temporary burden to him who could proclaim the love, the everlasting mercy, the holiness of God.

---

CHAPTER TWO

FORSYTH'S WRITINGS: WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS UPON HIS EARLIER WORKS
One who knew nothing about Forsyth's life and activities might, upon seeing but a partial list of his writings, think that he had been a professional journalist. It seems almost impossible that this man, plagued as he was by pain and illness, should have been able to write so many essays, sermons, and books within his lifetime, yet still continue his career as minister and educator. While it is true that a large proportion of his articles were written with certain contemporary issues in mind, they are more than mere occasional writings; for each is related to his deepest religious convictions in one way or another.

Many of his published essays were later incorporated into books. The majority of his articles appeared in the *Expositor*, *London Quarterly Review*, *Hibbert Journal*, *Contemporary Review*, or *Constructive Quarterly*. Such books as *The Cruciality of the Cross; The Church and the Sacraments; The Justification of God; Theology in Church and State; Marriage, its Ethic and Religion; Socialism, the Church, and the Poor; Rome, Reform and Reaction; The Soul of Prayer; and The Power of Prayer* appeared in part or whole as individual essays prior to publication in
book form; while The Holy Father and the Living Christ; The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace; and Missions in State and Church consist of sermons originally printed in the Christian World Pulpit, the British Congregationalist, or the British Weekly. Thus there are few of his books which were published without preliminary airing of certain of the views therein. His two works on art and three of his major theological works are numbered in this group. Yet even these were delivered first as lectures.

The fact that so many of his books - in fact, all his greatest ones - consist of lectures cannot be over-stressed. Forsyth was primarily a speaker, then a writer. His books were written, not for the eye, but for the ear. Perhaps this is why his style, which might not appear as obscure in the class-room as on the printed page, is sometimes confusing. It is the style of the preacher. Even in the greatest of his works, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, the note of the preacher - the evangelical urgency of the theme - is apparent in every chapter. In only a few of his books, which, interestingly enough, were written in one brief period (1911-12), does he depart from the hortatory style. These: Christ on Parnassus; Faith, Freedom, and the Future; and The Principle of Authority seem far more scholarly than the others, simply for this reason.

Whether he was writing on Chinese Labour or the holiness of God, the mature Forsyth always centred his argument upon the theme of the Cross. Despite his interest in politics and his participation in the struggles of the Liberal Party, he never allowed his political writing to become mere journalism. Rather, he was a minister who saw that the Gospel must be applied to every political situation. In his review of The Life of R. W. Dale he mentioned the error which Dale had made in
having three careers at the same time. We learn from Forsyth's comments on Dale that he himself had discovered that a minister cannot dissipate his energies on all the issues of the hour without losing his religious influence. Thus we can expect to find Forsyth a cautious supporter of political measures, at least from 1899 onwards; and when he does lose himself in the heat of battle over such a measure as the Education Bill we may be justified in emphasizing its importance. It is possible that at the beginning of his career, when he was sceptical about the role which the Church may play in the solution of contemporary problems, he departed from his religious centre in the heat of an argument. If such be the case, we have no record to that effect; in every political essay or letter which we have been able to discover, the ethical theme is paramount, and for him the true ethical must be Christian. This is as true of "Socialism and Christianity in Some of Their Deeper Aspects" (1886) as of Socialism, the Church, and the Poor (1908). Within that time many of his views had altered - notably those on socialism and democracy - but the ethical theme had not. The same may be said of his essays on art and literature. In his opinion these were fundamentally religious subjects, calling for a religious analysis. His respect for Milton, George Eliot, Browning, Ibsen, and Hardy was often expressed, for he felt that these writers presented the world's problems in a truly religious perspective. Where they failed was in their solution of the problems.

There will always be an argument about his style. Often it is needlessly obscure and involved. His letter to the English Independent (Appendix One) on "Religious Communion" shows how ponderous and complicated his writing could become. Some of it indicates a tendency

to be too literary; such a criticism could be levelled against the letter mentioned above. Then too, his writing gives one the false impression that he was in a hurry. The fact that he could not set himself the task of preparing an index for even one of his books shows how true this criticism is. Much of his writing is obscure because of this defect, which meant that although he worked very diligently in the revising of his manuscripts (a sample copy is so covered with corrections that it is almost illegible), he did not devote sufficient time to pruning and deletion. But these arguments, valid though they are, do not explain his style. He lived at a time when simplicity and directness of thought were the rule; today we realise, as he did even then, that great truths can never be expressed in simple terms. The use of paradox and epigram, with all its faults, is sometimes more exact than a seemingly more direct method of attack. Forsyth understood that language is incapable of exhausting the meaning of such mysteries as Atonement, Resurrection, and Incarnation, and that only by the tortured twisting of our words can we convey, even slightly, their significance. More than that, in one of his deepest insights he realised that history can be interpreted only by the man of faith. Thus to be true to his vision he used the language of faith. The Sacrament of the Word was a vital theme to him; if language be a sacrament, it must be used with reverence and truth. Perhaps his books could be simplified, but it is hard to believe that Positive Preaching or The Person and Place of Jesus Christ could be rephrased to advantage, while The Principle of Authority is a masterpiece of orderly thought. We might wish that Forsyth had been less ready with the epigram. Yet even this is a minor complaint, and he who puts aside a book by Forsyth simply on these grounds is depriving himself unreasonably. Forsyth is hard to read, but in our present situation we can understand that easy solutions
are false simplifications of problems which lie at the root of human sin. Men who have been trained in the thinking of Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, and Maritain should not find Forsyth inordinately difficult to comprehend.

In the balance of this chapter we shall attempt to analyse Forsyth's writings in a general way according to subject-matter: indicating the development of his thought in the early years of his ministry, and hoping to show within fairly narrow limits when certain of the major theological doctrines first appeared in his writings. For the most part, then, this chapter will deal with his early writings which appeared before 1896, when his sermon on "The Holy Father" was published. But since there is no place in the main body of this dissertation for the full treatment of the sociological thought of Forsyth, a small section will be devoted to the subject within this chapter. The list of books, essays, sermons, and letters of Forsyth which have been arranged in the Bibliography indicates the extensiveness of his activities as well as the periods in which he wrote most frequently. It must be remembered that he was ill in the first part of his Cambridge pastorate, in 1904-05, the early part of 1907, and 1914, and for this reason a smaller output is to be expected for those years.

There never was a time when Forsyth could be complacent about the physical conditions of his fellow men. This is natural in view of the poverty of his own childhood. Added to this is the fact that it was common in the last century for Nonconformist ministers to take a leading part in the political struggles of their time. The outstanding man of the later nineteenth century was Dale, who led the Nonconformists in the fight for a fair Education Bill, took a leading part in relief work during the winter
famine of 1877-78,^1 edited the Congregational Monthly, lectured and wrote
on theology, and became so embroiled in the Home Rule controversy that it
led to his resignation from the Congregational Union. So one-sided was
another man, Miall, in his zeal for the cause of Nonconformity, that his
name became a standing joke in portions of the popular press.2 It was a
period when Independency and political action could hardly be separated.
It is not unnatural, then, that Forsyth, with his enthusiasm for social
issues, should have taken a leading role in the struggles of his time.

The first of his political pamphlets which we have discovered
was written in 1886. Entitled, "Socialism and Christianity in Some of Their
Deeper Aspects," it deals with the correctness of an organic theory
of society as opposed to the popular individualism of the day.

"Socialism may one day be a system, but at present it is, and should
be, little more than an idea.... The greatest Socialist thinkers,
like Marx, are properly reticent on details, and this, instead of
being a weakness, is a strength. It shows that they are not wholly
doctrinaire, but have some sense of political perspective."3

He did not care for the French socialist thinkers, as opposed to the Ger­
man. "The French," he writes, "treat society much as Renan treats Jesus-
with sentimental rationalism."4 He admits that German Socialism is not
Christian in its metaphysics, but sees in it more hope than in the French:

"I certainly think that pure and sheer Pantheism is the philosophic
creed of Communism, which is its social counterpart and consequence.
...But between Theism and Pantheism there is a mediating idea of
God as the universal Trinity, which may be the religious base of a
Socialism as far from Egoism on the one hand as from Communism on
the other."5

Individualism, claims Forsyth, is contrary to the nature of Society, "which

1 - Life of Dale, p. 346.
3 - Forsyth: "Socialism and Christianity in Some of Their Deeper Aspects,"
   1886, p. 4.
4 - Ibid, p. 5.
5 - Ibid.
is not to be the mere aggregate of units."1 The organic solidarity of society rests upon the unity of the Godhead, the society of persons in the Trinity.2 Individualism can never become better than a negative philosophy:

"Individualism resting, as it does, on philosophic scepticism, must, in the fall of outward authority, glide into Agnosticism at least.... Take it at its best, in its highest moral product, and it cannot rise above Stoicism."3

Furthermore, there is no lasting hope to be found in Individualism: no solution of the crying injustices of the hour is possible through mere well-wishing on the part of individuals.

"We have hosts of individuals whom we know not how to help, and who have come to this pass by the ruthless exercise on the part of others of individual rights. Philanthropy cannot remedy this, for it means charity. Justice alone can help, for it re-incorporates these dehumanized individuals into an organic place in the body social, and gives them a freedom whose features, and not its area alone, are prescribed in their very nature."4

To clinch the argument he rests his case upon the logical meaning of Christianity as applied to social problems.

"The tendency of a religion which reveals man to himself by the revelation of the triune God must always be in the main towards Socialism of some sort. A social God, a God who is Himself a social unity, must work a social salvation. He has a purpose for the race, the race has a function in Him...."5

"Surely if we believe in an Atonement at all we believe that Christian love is not confined to that beautiful sentiment, but that it works also by justice, and by public justice, too. But we have some of us, by a one-sided Paulinism, got to this, that we think law and justice had nothing but an obstructive part to play in the Redemption by God; and accordingly we give Redemption no place among the functions of public law and the positive offices of the just State. But if justice no less than love led God to redeem, I fail to see that social Redemption can be entirely dis-

---

1 - Ibid, p. 15.
2 - See p. 22, above,
3 - "Socialism"..., p. 19.
4 - Ibid, p. 20.
avowed by the Government that shows likeliest God's.  

Forsyth was to change his views on Socialism as it developed; the dangers of a too popular and uncritical democracy became apparent to him in later years. Yet the idea of organic unity, of racial solidarity, was to remain one of the fundamental conceptions of his thought throughout the remainder of his life. Perhaps during the earlier part of his ministry he had a rather uncritical attitude towards the role of the preacher in political affairs. No doubt in his youth he had an excess of exuberance. But by 1899 he was saying that,

"A Church might speak on a grave political issue when it is solid; but no political issue is worth action (on the part of ministers at least) which would rend the Church. They are first ministers of the gospel and Church, and then citizens of the State."  

By 1907 he had advanced even further in his caution. When, at its Autumn Assembly the Congregational Union passed a resolution favouring the strikers in the Railway Dispute, Forsyth wrote:

"Personally, I am with the men in this quarrel, but for the whole Church or denomination as such, to cast itself for them by a deliberate vote is one of the worst services we could do them or ourselves."  

This action on the part of the Union led to a series of essays by Forsyth entitled, "Sociality, Socialism, and the Church," which later appeared with another essay in Socialism, the Church, and the Poor. Here we can see the reasoned views of Forsyth at the height of his mental powers.

His argument is two-fold; a warning against those who would equate Christianity with any form of political structure; and a re-emphasis of the belief that Christianity must concern itself with sociological problems.

1 - Ibid, pp. 30-1.
2 - See The Work of Christ, p. 96.
3 - "Dr. Dale," p. 217. See also Forsyth: Charter of the Church, 1896, pp. 36-37.
It is his contention when the Church identifies itself with political theory, it loses its power and harms not only itself but also the party which needs its guidance and admonitions rather than its acquiescence.

"Christianity is not bound up with any particular scheme, dream, or programme of social order. Its essence is redemption as forgiveness or eternal life, and the Kingdom of God as flowing from these. And the eternal life can be led under almost any form of society. The Sermon on the Mount presupposes such men as the Cross alone can make. And it is this Cross, not the Sermon on the Mount, that is fundamental Christianity."^1

"...there are no truer apostles of Socialism, in any solid sense of the word, than those who are toiling to spread the moral power of Christ and His Cross among the public. They may do it in Christ's name, or they may do it without His name, by preaching the principles to which He alone can give effect. But any social change which is to give greater scope to humanity must go with a growth in the moral power of humanity, else it is neither safe nor stable. And the great lever for this purpose is positive personal religion."^2

"There is but one interest supreme for Christianity, and it is the moral interest."^3

Forsyth's intense dislike of Keir Hardie appears to have been due in part to the association the latter labour leader with R. J. Campbell, who saw in him one of the finest examples of Christian action. The Socialism of G. B. Shaw served also as a target for Forsyth. A remark made in 1912 reveals not only the weakness which Forsyth saw in Shaw himself, but also that which he felt was vitiating the whole of the Socialist movement in Britain:

"It is no wonder.... that Mr. Shaw, with his literary skill and grotesque wit, has much vogue with the Socialism that feels things to be wrong without heart enough to feel how wrong, without heart, in the Bible use of the word, with a heart for man's suffering from man but none for God's."^4

---

^1 Forsyth: Socialism, the Church, and the Poor, 1908, pp. 6-7. See also Forsyth: "Calvinism and Capitalism," Contemporary Review, July, 1910, p. 82.
^2 Ibid, p. 27.
^3 Ibid, pp. 29-30.
Basically, the social issue resolved itself into a struggle between liberalism and a positive gospel. The very weakness of the theological liberalism which appeared long before the New Theology controversy became apparent within the labour movement, and contributed to Forsyth's growing distrust of an uncritical democracy. Thus he replaced the idea of religion by plebiscite with that of theocracy with Christ as King. The whole of one book, *The Justification of God*, deals with this theme.

At the same time as he was growing ever more distrustful of the direct participation of the Church in social movements, he was calling for a renewed effort on the part of the Church to keep uppermost the task of the redemption of society. Accordingly, it can never be said of him that as he grew older he became less interested in social action; if anything, the reverse is true. Rather, with increasing understanding he realised that it is only the disinterested Church which can serve the needs of men, and then only by focussing attention upon man's sin against God. It is for this reason that his teachings on social ethics remain relevant today. Had he become first a Socialist or Liberal, then a Churchman, our interest in him could be historical. Because he saw that as a Churchman he had to speak to the needs of men, his teaching is as important now as it was thirty and forty years ago.

Such an idea as a monarchy with Christ the King is religious, not political; it leaves the way open for changes in the political structure according to the exigencies of time. But it never excludes Christianity from its central place in the affairs of men, as so many of our social theories do, whether they be propounded by religious or secular interests.

Some of Forsyth's most interesting writing is of a philosophical nature. He never adopted the philosophy of Positivism, which became so popular in his youth. His term of study in Germany gave him an opportunity to view with interest the development of Pessimism at a time when optimism
was overwhelming the mind of Britain. Yet even in Britain he could detect a sense of frustration not unlike that in Germany. To this subject he addressed himself at the beginning of his career. In a sermon, which, through internal evidence, we can date in the spring of 1878 - "The Weariness of Modern Life" - he sets forth the nature of a problem which just then was first becoming evident in sophisticated London circles: a problem which plagues us to this very day.

"Nature has burst upon man, and in a sense crushed him. The inward is appalled by the outward.... Just as the Kingdom of Grace in the first century eclipsed the glory of Nature, and threw Art and Science into an ignominious shade, so now the kingdom of Nature is having its revenge. Its illumination has partially extinguished the inspiration of the soul. We are bewildered in full view of broken order. The chart never was so clear, but the compass is overboard. We see more than our forefathers, but we are not so sure of our way, because we believe less. And we know too much for our feelings as well as for our faith. We have no surplus of emotional power left to overflow into joy. More than all our sympathy is absorbed in the abyss of our knowledge. We are in a state of spiritual exhaustion. No wonder we feel weary.

"...Science....has flooded us with a knowledge of Nature and men. But along with this expansion of our world there has also grown the sense of our relationship to it. It is more impossible than ever to isolate ourselves.... We are conscious of a demand for sympathy which comes in from both animate and inanimate Nature. And we know too that we cannot evade that demand. We acknowledge the claim. What then is our misery? It is bankruptcy. We have no assets - at least they are inadequate. And there is no compounding with creditors like these. No wonder we feel crushed and weary.

"...It is not for Redemption men crave so much as Revelation. And consequently in theological circles that keep pace with the time, the centre of gravity has changed. It has passed from the Atonement to the Incarnation. The question is not, What has God said? so much as, Has He spoken at all?"

Similarly, in Religion and Recent Art, 1889, Forsyth strikes the same theme.

"The soul which has won the power to see a huge universe has grown also to feel its inadequacy. And so we have the nineteenth century weariness, amounting in cases to despair, pessimism, nihilism, and

---

reckless revolt."\(^1\)

Pessimism, declares Forsyth, "is the last infirmity of noble minds."\(^2\) Or, in another sermon,

"Pessimism...is the bottomless, godless abyss between the ideal and the actual. It is applied Atheism. It is in one respect a result of over-education."\(^3\)

How, then, do we overcome this weariness, this pessimism? In "The Weariness in Modern Life" Forsyth is better able to list the solutions which will not succeed than to give a clear answer which is positive and final. We do not solve the problem by stifling science, he states. The solution must be inward, not outward. It implies the stiffening of the back which bears the burden, the strengthening of the soul. Only Christianity can help. Yet Christianity not Christendom: this is not a problem which the Church in the past had to face. Rather, it is in part a creation of the Church. Neither can theology as a science be of service: it, like other sciences, will merely add to the confusion. The only help is to be found through Christ, experimentally:

"The world's sorrow is borne by God. Christ shews Him bearing it. What a power of sympathy that means on the divine side. And what a fulness of life which bears all that, and yet wears on his face pearly spring mornings and evening sunshine amid the tender green! If you did believe in a power which knows and bears all that possibly can be known and borne, and does it in virtue of a sympathy which is perfect, and a love that overcomes everything; and if you could become one with that power, would you, too, not have at command a sympathy that could not flag, and a fulness of life that could not be crushed by anything created? That there is such a power - that God is such - is the prime meaning of the revelation of Christ. To put us in unity with Him is the prime purpose of His work. That is saving souls - infusing fulness of life. It was not to produce conviction what Christ chiefly came, it was to infuse new fulness of life. The conviction came after as the expression of that fulness - so far as it can be expressed. First the life, then the light."\(^4\)

---

1 - Religion in Recent Art, p. 60.
2 - Ibid, p. 245.
3 - Forsyth: "Pessimism," p. 43.
4 - "The Weariness in Modern Life," p. 15.
By 1884 he was better able to answer the problem which he had raised:

"To deal with pessimism.... we must have an ideal which is something more than an idea of ours, something more than an ambition of ours... We must have a God, in brief, who is at once our Mighty One and our Redeemer."¹

"Here lies the centre and secret of Christianity, not in the miracle of healing, but in the miracles of forgiveness, and in the cross, the greatest of them all."²

Christianity has a greater knowledge of the dreadful state of things than pessimism, he declares: "(The) Saviour knew the evil in the world, even as Schopenhauer did not."³

"we can never know things at their worst till we stand where they are at their best. The worst of it is our sin; and that we can never realise till we havemade the best of it in God. It is only as we share the Redemption of Christ that we know what Redemption is....Only from God's height can we sound man's depth....Our great salvation is our worst condemnation."⁴

Forsyth's conclusions on this subject seem to have remained unchanged throughout the years, for when in 1912 he wrote of Thomas Hardy's pessimism, he stated, "We understand life round us not by what we find in it but by what we bring to it."⁵

The philosophical and theological differences which are so obvious between the sermon of 1878 and that of 1884 give substance to the letter mentioned above (p. 25) which declares that it was while in St. Thomas's Square, Hackney, that Forsyth underwent a decisive change in his outlook. Surely we cannot imagine the Forsyth of 1884 speaking of God as one who "wears on his face pearly spring mornings and evening sunshine amid the tender green." This diagnosis of the symptoms of the nineteenth century illness remains the same; but prescription for the cure is changed.

¹ - "Pessimism," p. 43.
² - Ibid. Quoted more fully, p. 27, above.
³ - Ibid.
⁴ - Religion in Recent Art, 247-48.
It is also worthy of mention that at the beginning of his public ministry he showed a distrust of theology which characterised the Ritschlian school. Although we can discover no thorough-going repudiation of theology, we can, at least, discern a tone of scepticism in his attitude. For example, in his letter on Religious Communion he states:

"We are, in the long run, ruled more by our ideals than by our defined beliefs. Christ has done more for Christianity as a moral and spiritual ideal than merely as the centre of a system of faith. The power of His name has been more than the power of His creed. All our theology sprang out of a mere personal devotion at first. If we but agree on the basis of His 'Name,' His character, and in anything be otherwise minded, God will reveal even that unto us. The creed of Christ will develop out of the spirit of Christ."

"You can't in the very last resort stake the Christianity of a mighty nation, or the communion with Christ's spiritual God, on this or that historical fact, which permit on the part of specialists of so much dispute. If there is one indisputable fact in the world, it is the answer of the human conscience to Christ. It is to the conscience Christ makes His appeal."[1]

He makes his point more clear in "The Weariness of Modern Life," when he elaborates the meaning of the phrase he considers of fundamental importance:

'What think ye of Christ?'

"When I speak about the nature of Christ, I am not referring you to theological explanations of His person. These have their place and certain of them are profoundly true, but they do not serve the purpose of this moment. They raise most intricate questions of vast moment and absorbing interest. But they introduce new scientific difficulties to conjure out the old. Now we cannot find the inspiration for one science in another. Mental science will not free us entirely from the weariness of physical science. And theological science will not ease the strain of mental science. When I raise questions in the present connexion about the nature of Christ, I mean this - Do you find experimentally that there is in Him the power of an endless life? Is your theology a mere science or is it an art? I do not ask you for your convictions about Him such as logically to warrant the further belief that He does possess the secret of renewed life. But I ask, Have you made an exhaustive trial and satisfied yourself finally that He does not possess this power?"[3]

While allowing for the probability that Forsyth was not addressing a group of theologians on this occasion, and very possibly not even a preponderance

2 - Ibid.
of Church members, we must conclude that this sermon indicates a theological position inconsistent with that of later years. While he never was to lose the ethical note with its emphasis upon the conscience, he soon came to see that a more objective approach is necessary than "a mere personal devotion." Nonetheless, it must be remembered that the fight he waged was a necessary one: only thus was freedom secured for his generation. Insofar as theology had degenerated into an arid science with no vital content, Forsyth was justified in his scepticism. That he altered his standpoint early in his ministry is clear from the text of his inaugural sermon at Cheetham Hill, Manchester, in which he stressed the importance of the Sacraments, and particularly of the Sacrament of the Word. By 1887 he could speak of theology as more than mere science:

"Theology is the queen of the sciences, and must exhibit...the vital feature of a science; which is to change, progress, grow full and rich, and escape from the inevitable limitations and mistakes of the past."¹

"My complaint is that so much of our inculcated piety is flabby, and the simplicity of Christ becomes pietistic wish-wash. And I think the sentimental and untheological nature of some of the new tendencies in religion has much to do with this defect. We abuse the proverb that the heart makes the theologian. But to be untheological is to be irrational. Theology is a science, and the teaching of a rudimentary theology ought to form part of our elementary science teaching."²

He has not lost the scientific habit of mind which makes allowance for honest doubt within a positive system of thought. He has discovered theology to be an essential study, not only for the religious scholar, but for all who seek to understand the nature of the universe.

One of Forsyth's recurring themes is sentimentalism, the "pietistic wish-wash" of so many Nonconformist churches in his day. The paragraph quoted

² - Ibid.
above appears to be his first published reference which he made to the sub-
ject. Later, he emphasised the fact that the fault could be ascribed to an
undue stress upon God's love rather than His holiness. He himself, however,
placed the emphasis of his own preaching upon that very theme during the
eyear years of his career. For example, in "Justice and Mercy" justice is
'simply love taking shape.' Likewise, in a sermon based upon one of Tenny-
son's poems he states that,

"The true infinite is the infinite of Love. God is not the immen-
sities, any or all of them, but God is Love....Love is more eternal
than either space, or time, or force; and, indeed, gives them any
eternity they have."2

In speaking of Watts' art, he expands this theme:

"Would that the professional expositors of things divine had done
more to teach us that the soul's one eternal power is, however
manifold in form, in its nature Love.... We hear enough of love
as the charm and happiness of life. We do not hear enough of it
as the moral principle of life."3

Here is one of the few places where we are fortunate enough to glimpse Forsyth
in transition from one theological attitude to another. He still maintains
the supremacy of Love, and uses the term continually; but the Love of which
he speaks is not that which is intended by the popular mind.

"We hear plenty about love as a sentiment or as a passion, but we
have not yet practically learned to confess it as our God. Love
as a sentiment is beautiful.... But Love as the principle of life
and godliness, as the genius and spirit of true religion, as the
ideal and standard of eternal and immutable morality, is something
which sentimental lovers are not always eager to entertain."4

An even more doubtful note is struck in his sermon on Sunday-schools:

"We follow the age and rely on a religion of love - but love which is,
in most cases, more amiable, perhaps, than effective. We make love
a sentiment rather than a principle, and we work by emotion to the
neglect of character."5

1 - See pp. 23, above.
3 - Religion in Recent Art, pp. 120-21.
4 - Ibid.
Once Forsyth had got this theme, he never dropped it. Long before R. J. Campbell developed his popular but dangerous "New Theology", Forsyth was warning his age of the vitiating effect of an emphasis upon a sentimental interpretation of Christianity at the expense of the holy. In a characteristic bit of irony he once spoke of Dale as "a son of God among the daughters of men."¹ He noted Nonconformist churches were becoming, as never before, centres of worship for women and children, but not for men. His article on Dale deals with this question at length, declaring,

"I am myself so weary of the mawkish talk about faith as the spirit of the child that I try always to avoid the expression 'a child of God,' for 'a son of God.'"²

While in 1887 he had seen the chief cause of this shift in emphasis from the older, more rugged type of Nonconformity to a weaker sort, by 1889 he could discern a more complex and disturbing reason. In fact, he attributed to Dale himself a part of the blame. It was one of the tragedies of Dale's life that by the time of his death his congregation was clamouring for a less Pauline type of preaching; and Dale complained that even his own congregation, trained as it had been for years by his preaching and instruction, could not follow his sermons. Why should this have been, asked Forsyth: Partly because Dale, though preaching a sound theology, had devoted far too much time and energy to active work so that he had become known not as a minister, but as a journalist and politician. Were not men like Dale to some extent blameworthy for the fact that religion had come to be associated with activity rather than motivation?

Like other Ritsdhlians, Forsyth originally distinguished between the Cross and the Kingdom. We recall his Leicester Address of 1891, which

² - Ibid, pp. 211-12, footnote.
bears that title, and in which he speaks of Christianity as an ellipse, with the two poles (Cross and Kingdom) rather than one. In later life he repudiated this theory, though we do not know when first he was to reject it. There are two specific references to the idea in his later writings. In Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind he says that,

"...the doctrine of Christianity as an ellipse, with its two centres of the Kingdom and the Cross, will not hold good. If we speak of two centres they must represent the two great categories for interpreting the Cross - Reconciliation and Redemption, which pass but do not fade into each other."2

We have made passing reference to Forsyth's belief, in 1878, that Christ, but not Christendom, held the answer to nineteenth century weariness. This indicates that he became "High-Church" sometime later than his ministry at Shipley. The statement reads as follows:

"It has been said that the two great arguments for Christianity are Christ and Christendom. In this particular case we must exclude Christendom. Appeals to what has been already done are easy, but they always seem to miss fire as aimed at present needs. The reason .... is, that people feel instinctively, whether they are students of history or not, that the difficulties of to-day cannot be exactly the same as those of centuries ago... The very operation of Christianity itself has introduced new elements into the problem, which the fathers of the Church did not see. It is useless, and indolent, and faithless, to tell us, as the petrified apologists do, that the same questions have been answered over and over again. They are not the same questions. You cannot say so without denying the continual evolution of the human spirit, and the unceasing revelation of God to it. Apologists who take that line do but sacrifice one-half of their creed to the momentary exigencies of the other.... And it is the living half they destroy....

"It is not to the history of Christendom we must go then. We must seek our satisfaction in the nature of Christianity. To put it more simply and accurately, I will say, the nature of Christ."3

His letter of 1877 shows a less reasoned and respectful attitude than the above, perhaps because it was written in the heat of argument:

1 - See pp. 34, above.
"The Church has never been generous, which may be why it has so feeble a hold over the generous period of life - youth. She has guarded her doctrines as a miser his gold. She has thought more of what she could do for her faith than of what her faith could do for her. She has been jealous, exclusive, watchful. She has never, since her very first years, let herself loose on the wind of her direct inspiration from God. She has been timidly anxious about crushing error, and criminally careless about meeting those who were consumed with desire for truth.... Apart from being simpler and truer, shall we not gain vastly by letting it be openly known that our Church means all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, all who revere the character as supreme, leaving them free to select.... the facts which they themselves find essential to the character. The facts are of no other use than as they make us realise the character."¹

"It is within our choice with whom we will work together. Therefore pulpit exchanges are private and secondary affairs. But it is not within our choice with whom we shall pray or commune. That is not the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man - in voting or otherwise - but of God, who utters His will in the desire of all who wish to commune with us."²

This is a far remove from the idea of the Church which Forsyth presents as early as 1885. "The Church, no more than the minister," he writes, "exists to meet man's expectations."³ It is, rather, the servant of the Kingdom of God (a Ritschlian conception, and therefore one which we imagine must have been in Forsyth's mind in the Shipley period, though perhaps in less developed form).

"And generally, it may be said that a Church is in itself an organic living body, and therefore, as such, beautiful and valuable for its own sake, like a human being or a human family, apart from such purposes of outward utility as it may be calculated to serve."⁴

"I regret the tendency to make little of the Sacramental side of our common religious life. It is our neglect of the Sacraments, our abandonment of their culture to the priestly party, that makes the strength of sacerdotalism.... The church, which for the sake of social intercourse, or even benevolent work, neglects its proper, special, quieter and more solemn Sacramental functions, is killing its Christian life in the eye. Its worship is not healthy, nor is its work."⁵

These same topics were to be dealt with at length in The Church and the

³ - "The Pulpit and the Age," p. 4.
⁴ - Ibid, p. 5.
⁵ - Ibid, p. 6.
Sacraments (1917). It is interesting to discover that the sacramental nature of preaching was an idea which came to Forsyth early in his ministry. He discarded the notion of the Church as the servant of the Kingdom, however, in favour of the idea that it is "not a means to the Kingdom, but the Kingdom in the making."  

Forsyth's Congregational Union Sermon of 1896, "The Holy Father," is considered by some to have been the turning point in his career. Undoubtedly this is true in the sense that it placed him in the forefront of the younger ministers just emerging into prominence. Yet the ideas there embodied, though expressed with a new clarity and incisiveness, were not new to Forsyth. The obedience of Christ, for example, not only appears in his essay in Faith and Criticism, but is to be found much earlier in Religion and Recent Art:

"His life was a continuous prayer, a long act of access, and self-oblation to the Father. Here lay its priestliness. That daily intercourse with God was not something which went alongside the work of Redemption, or as a preparation for it. It was that work. He was priest for others by the same act in which he was priest for Himself, and His priesthood lay in the atoning death of His daily prayer and complete renunciation; as it lay nowhere else when the day came for the shape these took on Calvary."  

As we have already noted, the first mention of God's self-reconciliation appears in "The Cross and the Kingdom" (1891). This pamphlet was created with enthusiasm by the Congregational Monthly, but doubt was expressed in regard to the concept of a reconciled God. In response to this criticism Forsyth wrote a letter to the journal which reveals how far his thinking had progressed on the Atonement by this early date:

1 - See in particular Chapter VII.
3 - Faith and Criticism, p. 128.
4 - Religion in Recent Art, p. 198, Note.
"Your reviewer makes this remark, 'He contends that by the death of Christ God is reconciled to man'; and I desire to indicate... that I go on to say that God is self-reconciled. The idea that God is reconciled is to some unwelcome and it is because they think... of something extraneous being offered to God to effect the change. But there seems to be no reason why we should not say that Christ was the reconciliation of God with men, so long as we understand that he was the sacrifice offered not by man to God but by God to Himself. The thought is not indeed explicit in the New Testament, but is it wrong to say that Christ embodied the process by which God overcame His own holy work, or, as Bushnell says, propitiated Himself? May we not say that God was in Christ reconciling Himself to the world? Is any view complete which has no room at all for the idea of God being reconciled? ... And is any view worthy which does not urge that if God was reconciled it could only be by Himself? May I emphasise... that the pith of the old position is surrendered as well as its sting extracted when we recognise that Christ's satisfaction was offered to the holiness and not the justice of God."

Recalling the review of Forsyth's sermon, "Justice and Mercy," in which it was pointed out that he objected to the idea of justice without love, we can see what importance this last sentence, above, had in his mind. With the idea of holy love he had discovered a means of giving moral content to love, thereby circumventing that conception of justice which is merely legal.

At this stage he was still a Ritschlian. Therefore the Cross, though assuming increasing importance to his thought, could not take the central place in his theology. Whereas in later years he could write of "The Cross as the Final Seat of Authority," in 1894 it was still Christ as Redeemer who held this place.

"He becomes...for us the test of all else. He is, in this capacity, the evangelical principle of Authority. The seat of authority for the whole human conscience, and therefore the whole of human history, especially in the future, is the Redeemer."  

1 - Ibid, Jan., 1892, pp. 2-3.
2 - See pp. 23-4, above.
4 - Forsyth: "Mystics and Saints," Expository Times, June, 1894, p. 403.
This is very close to the final position which Forsyth was to take on the
question of authority. The particular essay in which it appears was writ-
ten in answer to criticism following his chapter in Faith and Criticism.
It develops in a concise manner what Forsyth at that time held to be the
heart of Protestant teaching:

"1. The final certainty by which we test all, is a moral certainty.
It is a matter of conscience.... 2. But we do not go far in a ser-
ious way into moral certainties till we discover the sense and cert-
ainty of guilt.... 3. But if we are not to be left there, we must
pass in our moral experience to the deeper and still more earnest
sense of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of a world reconciled, a
redemption, and atonement. 4. And there lies the world's last ethical
certainty, the basis of all ethic which is at once humane and imper-
ative - in a religious experience, the experience of guilt abolished
by holy love.... 5. But to take the next step, this experience, in
the great volume of competent testimony, is inseparable from the
experience of the living presence and action of the historic Jesus as
Redeemer.... 6. He becomes, therefore, the test of all else....
7....the criterion is not subjective, mystical, individual, and in-
tense, but objective, historic, positive, universal and morally im-
perative where the deep decisions lie in a soul that is thorough
with itself."1

Although it is true that later he placed the greatest emphasis upon the
Cross, rather than upon the person of Christ, as the seat of authority,
a comparison of this statement with that which follows indicates consid-
erable similarity:

"There is but one Authority....for human life - that life being
what it is. It is its historic Redeemer, in the one critical
and creative moral act of its history.... (The) prime content
both of Christian and human experience is the Saviour, triumphant,
not merely after the Cross, but upon it. This cross is the
message that makes the preacher."2

Although we can discover no exact date at which Forsyth
began to consider Cross as the great principle of the Protestant faith,

2 - Positive Preaching, p. 71. See also The Cruciality of the Cross, 2nd
we are able to point to a time when he did not hold this view with complete enthusiasm. Religion in Recent Art contains a passage on the importance of Holman Hunt's interpretation of religion which has this to say:

"It is art inspired by the spirit of the Resurrection rather than of the Crucifixion... (He) paints the Cross in the spirit of the Resurrection; whereas Rossetti would have painted the Resurrection in the spirit of the Cross. The one treats Christianity in the Protestant temper, the other in the Catholic." 1

We must be careful even here, however, not to read too much into this statement; for at the end of the paragraph he adds that,

"The Catholic is too prone to dwell on the consolation of the cross, while the Protestant sees in it not that only, but the inspiration of all the renewed life of the future, and the principle of all great life in the past." 2

Another of Forsyth's great themes, the Kenotic Doctrine, first appears in the sermon, "The Divine Self-Empting," published in 1895. This doctrine, which plays a major role in the argument of The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, is matched by that of the plerosis. Where, then, does the idea of Christ's human-divine self-fulfilment first appear in Forsyth's writings? In Religion and Recent Art:

"The sinlessness of Christ was a sinless growth. A perfect life must be a perfect evolution. God's will for life is growth, and Christ completely met it. He grew not to God but in God." 3

"Not even God could create a character full blown. It is producible by the soul's moral conflict alone. And the great, the crowning act of a divine character must be all of a piece with the process which reared the character.... His complete salvation of the world from sin was effected in the completeness of His own personal conquest of it, His own victory over it in the actual passion of the experience, and His own entire harmony with the will of God through the deepening history of His spirit's career." 4

2 - Ibid, pp. 156 ff.
3 - Ibid, pp. 197-98, note.
4 - Ibid.
Compare with this the classic expression of the doctrine in *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*:

"(The) sinless growth of Christ's character is in the very act of growth also of his objective achievement for us. It is the moral process of man's salvation, and the gradual act of God.... Christ worked out the salvation he was. It was only in history and its conditions that he could realise all that was superhistoric within him.... The deepening of his faithfulness was the emergence of his deity."\(^1\)

"(The) essence of humanity is conscience. It is man's moral relation to a holy God. And Christ's manhood, therefore, consists in the moral reality of his experience, his conflict, and his growth."\(^2\)

Even after he had arrived at these advanced theological views he favoured the use of great modern poetry for occasional expository sermons. In his Yale Lecture he recalls with humility the fact that he had once been far too literary a preacher.\(^3\) Yet his advocacy of such sermons in "Preaching and Poetry," 1890, sounds both reasonable and convincing.\(^4\) The subject, however, is not important, and need not be dealt with here, save as it shows that the development of his thought was slower in some directions than in others.

Finally, we may mention the fact that the idea of a positive gospel combined with the best in liberalism - a theme which he so beautifully presents in his Yale Lecture - had been envisaged by him fully twenty years before the publication of *Positive Preaching*. In "The Pulpit and the Age" he declares that the "Christianity required to-day must be at least four things." It must be positive, rational, liberal, and social.\(^5\) It must be

---

2 - Ibid, p. 351.  
3 - *Positive Preaching*, p. 28.  
real and positive: "More and more religion must come to correspond with the absolute nature of God and the absolute needs of men." It must be rational—not Rationalist. It must be liberal, as opposed to a "Christianity merely authoritative, traditional, and crystallized." Finally, it must be a social (not sociable) religion.

"The great test for Christianity in the future is the social test. Can it readjust the social machine, and give us all the blessings and none of the dangers of Socialism? Can it give us, without Revolution, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and raise these to solidly significance?"

One of the most significant aspects of Forsyth's thought is the consistent demand for a positive, aggressive gospel, but never at the expense of truth. The religion which he taught was that of the socially-conscious man, ever aware of the problems he faced, ever considerate of the suffering of an over-burdened society, yet fortified and inspired by an intimate, personal awareness of God's saving grace. Intelligence alone is not enough; sympathy by itself can lead but to despair; liberalism unchecked becomes a vapid humanism. Only the positive Gospel can redeem: a positive Gospel which is free to take the best in modern thought and use it for the reconciliation of a world disorganized by doubt.

It could be argued that most of the issues which Forsyth fought against in later life were those with which he had battled within his own soul as a young man. There is insufficient evidence either to support or refute this claim, however, and thus we can but point to certain data which might shed light upon the discussion. On the question of creeds, for example, he took two standpoints. In 1877 he could write as follows:

"Finally, you speak of the Congregational Union adopting a formulated creed. Are you serious? When all the religious world is groaning

1 - Ibid, p. 15.
under creeds....are we to have the spectacle of the Congregational Union abandoning its old and absolute faith in the Divine Spirit, to sit down and construct for its abode a temple made with hands ....?"

By 1908 he was not as certain about the undesirability of a creed. He never favoured a creed for the Congregational Union which should be binding upon all members, but he did suggest a basis for a minimum creed on one occasion. In the *Contemporary Review* he wrote that in the future it could be expected that some Free Churches would no longer be evangelical:

"They might plead their creedless liberty; overlooking the fact that a creedless liberty would neither have arisen nor continued except on the basis of a tacit covenant and honourable understanding as to evangelical fidelity. In the absence of such an understanding the existence of an express creed might be the lesser evil."3

Forsyth envisaged a general article of faith for a united Church of the future. In substance it is a rewording of older articles, save that it makes no mention of virgin birth.4

Forsyth's attacks upon religion grounded on sympathy might also be used in argument that he was fighting a battle once waged within himself. Such a remark as the following, made in 1878, would not have fitted into his later thought:

"Christ's courage like your courage was one that rested on love rather than on strength. It was in love that his strength to be independent was rooted. Love Him as He loved God, and you will find it comparatively easy to be large-minded as well as loving and gentle. It is only in God that we are sure justice does not kill love or love thwart justice."5

The quotation from "The Weariness of Modern Life" (p. 68) shows how close Forsyth once was to the very sentimentalism which he later grew to despise.

---

Such a subjective and sentimental outlook is not in keeping with any of his more mature writing. The fact that he had formerly thought of Christianity in these almost humanistic terms gives credence to the suggestion that in his sometimes over-emphatic struggle against the New Theology he was fighting a ghost of his own past.

But the topic which offers most ground for the argument is the Church. The statements reproduced above (pp. 74 ff.) indicate the extent to which he changed his views within the first ten years or so of his ministry. Similarly in the case of theology: from a position of scepticism he came round to the opposite point of view.

It would not be inconsistent with his character were it to be proved that his main struggles were first fought within himself; for he was a man who preached and taught from his own experience. Christianity was never theoretical to him. God's grace was a reality only because he himself had experienced it in all its fullness. Why, then, should he not have discovered within himself the very dangers of the age? Could not his prophetic vision have been directed first inward, then outward? Could not his belief in the organic unity of the race have led him to see that his own errors were also the errors of his generation? The argument is plausible; but there is insufficient evidence with which to test it. Such an interpretation, surely, is not out of keeping with his character. There may be some who will see in it a clue to the intensity of his thought and the thoroughness of his attacks upon what he considered to be a challenge to the Church as serious as that which came in the second century.

An expression which is used more frequently than any other by Forsyth is: "The question of the hour is...." The question of the hour, the problem of the immediate present, held for him a great fascination. How, then, is it that his writings seem as vital now as they did at that
time? The situations to which they were written are chiefly past, and although we live in an age of fear not entirely unlike that of the war years of the second decade of the century, that alone could not suffice to make his words relevant; for most of the writings of that period seem old and dated. It is because his answers to the questions of the hour were rooted in the Gospel that his words have meaning for us now. The principles with which he met his problems were so fundamental, so lasting, that they seem to us as fresh as they were then. And so, while others of his generation disappear, Forsyth, through writings produced for issues of his times yet founded on the timeless relevance of the Gospel, begins to assume an importance in this generation which he never held in his own.
CHAPTER THREE

THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

OF FORSYTH
The influences which played upon Forsyth in his formative years are not easily traced, because nowhere does he give specific references to books which helped to shape his thought. However, he has stated in several places how great a debt he owes to such men as Maurice, Ritschl, Baldwin Brown, Dale, Fairbairn, Kähler, and others; so that by searching diligently through the writings of these thinkers we can discover many of the themes which are characteristic of Forsyth's theology. Furthermore, we can find in certain of his essays and sermons references not only to these men, but also criticisms of their thought. By these means we are able to draw general conclusions about the sources of many of Forsyth's ideas and get a better picture of the development of his theology.

He indicates his attitude towards the adoption of other men's ideas in the following manner:

"Much of our work has been to steal. That does not matter if it is done wisely and gratefully. When a man gives out a great thought, get it, work it; it is common property. It belongs to the whole world, to be claimed and assimilated by whoever shall find."1

1 - The Work of Christ, p. 66.
Perhaps the underlying reason for the lack of indices or footnotes in Forsyth's books lies in the fact that most of them originated as lectures, where such critical apparatus would have been out of place.\(^1\) Thus, there are occasions when he paraphrases *sentences*, paragraphs, or even pages of German theologians with a bare reference to the fact that he is indebted to the author for that particular theme. He readily admits the debt, however: "In certain moods, as one traces back the origin of some lines of thought or even phrases of speech, the words come to mind, 'What have I that I have not received?'"\(^2\) Yet it would be a mistake to place a heavy emphasis upon his indebtedness to others, for those ideas which he adopts become his own and reappear only after they have become a part of his very nature. He is not an eclectic, seeking to bring together many points of view under one system; rather, his thought exhibits an individuality which can only be the result of careful deliberation and a constant search for truth. If the ideas of a particular writer impress him, it is because they happen to accord with his own experience, and can therefore be subsumed under his principle of authority. The truth of this may be observed in the fact that he continually corrects and adapts the ideas of the two men who meant most to his development: Maurice and Ritschl.

While speculations about the hidden influences upon Forsyth's thought are valuable, our principle in this chapter will be to accept the man's own word wherever he has declared it. Thus, we shall look primarily to those he mentions for representative ideas and doctrines. In this manner we hope to avoid the danger of propounding theories for which supporting

\(^1\) He makes this point in his preface to *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. viii.
evidence is only circumstantial, and for which no tests other than content and literary style are possible.

One other point must be mentioned in introduction: namely, that a review of nineteenth century thought discloses a similarity of ideas in writers working independently of one another. For example, the idea of Christ as Universal Head of the race may be found in Maurice and his followers in Britain, and in German theologians of the same period. Because Forsyth received his training both in Britain and Germany, we must be careful lest we ascribe influences exclusively to the one place or the other when the facts do not justify such a conclusion. It may be ignorance rather than knowledge which makes possible such a narrowing down of influences to one man or one school of thought.

We have already mentioned Thomas Gilfillan, Forsyth's minister at Blackfriars Church, Aberdeen, and have quoted a sermon in which he speaks of the representative aspect of Atonement. Forsyth mentions his debt both to Gilfillan and to the people of that church, but these references are too general to be of value. The influence of another whom Forsyth first knew in Aberdeen, A. M. Fairbairn, can be traced more definitely, however. We know that Forsyth attended Fairbairn's lectures in Aberdeen, and that when Fairbairn removed to Bradford Forsyth became a member of his class for young ministers:

"Ever since Fairbairn entered my knowledge with the wonderful Sunday lectures... in Aberdeen..., and especially since he came to Bradford College when I lived there, he has been such a friend and a boon that it is hard to hold him at arm's length and write about him. A critical

2 - See pp. 12ff., above.
3 - Lorna, op. cit.
Nevertheless, it is difficult to discover what exactly Forsyth drew from Fairbairn. Although Forsyth states that it was Fairbairn in particular who interested him in Hegel's Logic, and we find in a letter from Fairbairn to Forsyth suggested reading, there is not a great deal of affinity between the thought or the style of the two men. It is probable that Fairbairn's influence consisted chiefly in directing the younger man into a deeper, more comprehensive study of German thinkers at a time when his mind was filled with many questions. Yet certain themes appear in the earliest works of Fairbairn which are characteristic of Forsyth as well. For example, emphasis is placed upon conscience. The statement: "The hour of death was the moment of supreme obedience...," reminds us of Forsyth. An interesting parallel can be found in references to German Pessimism by both men, while both refer in like manner to Pfleiderer's Paulinismus. We might even be a little suspicious of the fact that Forsyth's review of the English translation bears a similarity to the views expressed more briefly at an earlier date by Fairbairn. Other themes of Fairbairn which resemble Forsyth's thought are the following:

"Through the priest man seeks God, but through the prophet God seeks man...."

"There is a true apostolic succession, but it is a succession spiritual, not official." "He (Christ) could be the High Priest of Humanity because

2 - Positive Preaching, p. 285, Note.
3 - Selbie, W. E.: Life of Fairbairn, 1914, p. 79.
4 - Fairbairn, A. M.: Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and of History, 1876, pp. 43, 45. Fairbairn's letter is in reply to one from Forsyth in reference to this book; Selbie, op. cit.
Humanity, - its Head; in idea a Person that was the Race."¹ Most striking is Fairbairn's use of the term, "solidarity of the race,"² one of Forsyth's favourite expressions. While it is true that Forsyth may have heard most of these lectures before they were published, we are not warranted in assuming on the basis of this slim evidence that the influence of Fairbairn was direct. It is probable, for example, that Forsyth's adoption of the theory of racial solidarity resulted from a reading of Maurice prior to Forsyth's meeting with Fairbairn; while his studies in Göttingen must have influenced him still further. Yet, the connection between the two men is apparent: that Fairbairn exerted at least an indirect influence cannot be doubted.

Forsyth's debt to other thinkers in respect to the Kenotic Doctrine is difficult to trace. His point of view resembles that of Bruce, particularly regarding the ethical interpretation which the latter places upon the self-emptying.³ There is also an affinity to Gore, who holds that Christ laid down "such divine functions and powers, including the divine omniscience, which would have been incompatible with a truly human experience."⁴ Forsyth's interpretation differs from Fairbairn's in that the latter considers the problem in metaphysical terms, while Forsyth rejects such an approach.⁵ Bruce's important contribution to the development of the doctrine first appeared in 1881; Gore's first mention of Kenosis, though very general, was in Lux Mundi (1889); Fairbairn's opinions were expressed in 1893. We cannot ascertain whether Forsyth may have become interested in the doctrine through Fairbairn's teaching because there is no treatment of the subject in the

¹ - Ibid, p. 6. This literary style, typical of Fairbairn, is quite unlike that of Forsyth.
³ - See Bruce, A. B.: The Humiliation of Christ, 5th Ed'n., 1900, pp. 22, Lecture IV.
⁴ - See Gore, Charles: Dissertations, 1895, pp. 94-97, 202-25.
⁵ - See Fairbairn, A.M.: The Place of Christ in Modern Theology, 7th Ed'n., 1897, p. 475 ff. While Fairbairn states his concern for the ethical purpose of Kenosis, he explains it in terms of external and internal attributes
latter's earlier writings.¹

We have mentioned the influence of Fairbairn before that of Maurice because Forsyth knew Maurice only through his books, while his relationship with Fairbairn was personal. Yet there can be no doubt that F. D. Maurice exerted a far greater effect upon the mind of the young Forsyth than did any other thinker except Ritschl. "I withdrew my prime attention from much of the scholar's work," writes Forsyth, "and gave it to theological interests, imbibed first from Maurice, and then more mightily through Ritschl..."² This statement clearly indicates the direction which research into the sources of Forsyth's thought must follow. Miss Stoddart speaks of these same two influences, remarking that perhaps Maurice's was the greater because the first.³ There is reason to believe, however, that the Ritschlian background was of more lasting significance.

Dr. Vidler's recent book, The Theology of F. D. Maurice, is of great value for those who wish to compare Forsyth's thought with that of Maurice; in this brief work Vidler has compressed the most important themes of Maurice, quoting extensively from him. References to Maurice will be directed mainly to this volume.

In what may be the earliest published writing of Forsyth - the first of two letters to the English Independent in 1877 - we find a typically Maurician theme: the differentiation between sect and Church. In this particular letter Forsyth refers to Congregationalism as a sect, and con-

---

¹ - For a review of the doctrine, see Lawton, J.S.: Conflict in Christology, 1947, pp. 11 ff.
² - Positive Preaching, p. 285.
³ - Lorna, op. cit.
"He would be a bold man who should say that any sect today represents the Church that will exist a century or two hence.... I sympathise with Congregationalism mainly because it seems wisely advised to contain more than any other sect the promise and potency of a higher form of ecclesiastical life."1

Although in later years Forsyth modifies his point of view to the extent that he no longer considers Congregationalism a sect, he still embraces the Maurician principle that any group which emphasises a particular doctrine to the exclusion of others is sectarian.2 Forsyth owes much to Maurice for his theory of the Church: both speak of Christ as Head of the Church;3 Forsyth's theory of Baptism corresponds to that of Maurice;4 we find a similarity in their opinions on the Lord's Supper.5 On the other hand, Forsyth's idea of the ministry differs from that of Maurice, particularly in respect to the validity of the episcopacy and its relation to apostolic succession.6 Maurice sees in the Establishment the best means of developing the religious life of the people,7 while Forsyth comes to the opposite conclusion.

The most significant contribution which Maurice has made to Forsyth's thought appears to be the conception of universal humanity. At a time when individualism was becoming an increasingly popular theory, Maurice opposed the view with all his strength. The conception of racial solidarity is typically Maurician,8 as may be seen in the following passage:

3 - Vidler, p. 71.
4 - Vidler, pp. 111, 115 ff.; Forsyth: Church and Sacraments, pp. 204-10.
6 - Vidler, pp. 149 ff.
7 - Vidler, pp. 191 ff.
8 - Ibid, p. 69.
"That idea (of Baptism) assumes Christ to be the Lord of men; it assumes that men are created in Him; that this is the constitution of our race; that therefore all attempts of men to reduce themselves into separate units are contradictory and abortive."1

In this brief passage we find statements expressing attitudes which are also characteristic of Forsyth: 1) that Christ is Lord or King; 2) that He is the Creator of mankind (the new Humanity); 3) that we as a race are constituted in and through Him alone; 4) that there is nothing in the facts to support an individualist interpretation of culture.

The social theory of both men stems from this fundamental conception of universal man. It is interesting to note that although each was deeply concerned with social problems, a healthy scepticism protected them from the excesses of unreasoned political action. Forsyth's fear of the unchecked power of democracy is to be found in the writings of Maurice.2

In a reminiscence of the Leicester Conference Forsyth expresses most beautifully his debt to F. D. Maurice:

"We were then emerging from the dregs of a scholastic orthodoxy. Naturally it was done in many cases with a good deal of spluttering. But in many other cases it was done with much power, grace, and tenderness.... I am one of many who owe their soul in this respect to the great Maurice. And it was Maurice at his core who provided the continuous evangelical centre to which we returned from all such excursions and alarms which attracted eager spirits in such an age. I can never be thankful enough for that evangelical base, and that early impression of austere love, solemn sanctity, exalted irony, and insatiable penetration which a few such men left on life in those formative days."3

Forsyth did not remain uncritical of Maurice. His remarks on Hort indicate a certain independence from Maurice at least as early as 1894:

"There is much....to remind us of McLeod Campbell and the whole

3 - Forsyth: "The Newest Theology", op. cit.
school he represents. It may be described as the school of a theological mysticism, not, indeed, unhistorical, but uncritical. This it shares with Maurice, but lacks his keen ethical and social interest."

Throughout his life Forsyth retained many of the ideas which he had derived from Maurice, but it is probably more correct to think of Maurice's lasting influence as inspirational rather than intellectual.

The influence of Maurice was extended through the personality of one of his greatest admirers: J. Baldwin Brown. Forsyth gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to Brown on several occasions. Because the latter works are less easily obtainable than Maurice's, we shall quote more extensively from him. In his memorial sermon to Brown, Forsyth characterises the thought of his friend and adviser in such a way as to reveal similarities with his own. The miracle of God's redeeming grace, for example, plays a large part in the thought of Brown as well as Forsyth: "To him Christianity was the gospel of free individuality, and the great Church, the fraternity of the emancipated, the redeemed, the realised, who had received their own souls for a prey." Forsyth's preference for formal, liturgical public prayer may be traced at least partly to Brown, Forsyth speaks of the part which sorrow played in the older man's thought, so that the Incarnation (Brown's favourite theme, along with the Fatherhood of God) is tempered in his mind by knowledge of the tragic price of Redemption. In looking at Brown's works we find many statements which are also characteristic of Forsyth. The following passage on guilt, for instance, bears striking resemblance to Forsyth's thought: "The sense of guilt is

3 - Ibid, p. 177.
4 - Ibid, pp. 141-42.
among the most real and deep of human experiences.... It is not of God; it is not from God. God hates it; God cannot dwell with it.... It is universal."¹ His point of view toward the Atonement is of interest also.

"The sacrifice of Christ was needed to declare God's righteousness in the forgiveness of sins.... If righteousness be not here instrumental to love, words have no meaning."²

"Out of this arises the need of a work of redemption...."³

"I regard the God-man as the representative of the sinner - of the sinful race.... I regard Christ as standing for men....in His recognition and confession of the exceeding guiltiness of man's sin in man's nature before God.... The way, the one way in which the Being whose fatherly care for the universe had established the law, could work out the salvation of the guilty, was by Himself becoming one with them, that they in Him might offer to the law a full satisfaction, while He in them should lift them to life and glory."⁴

Brown speaks also of Christ as the man, so that in the Atonement "man was dealing with the Father, and the Father was dealing with man in Him...."⁵

Finally, he speaks of Christ as having suffered for the Church: another idea to be found in the writings of Forsyth.⁶

In Brown there is an analysis of conscience such as we have been able to discover in no other writer with whom Forsyth was in touch during his early years. Brown states,

"The history of conscience....I hold to be conclusive - the profound, universal, unalterable conviction of the moral consciousness in man, that his sin springs out of an 'I' which is not God; that his sin is his own, his creature, for which he is as responsible as God is for the order of the world."⁷

² - Ibid, p. 32.
³ - Ibid, p. 33.
⁴ - Ibid, p. 38.
There is, furthermore, the same distinction between sin and guilt which appears in Forsyth. Sin is a "tincture" which runs through the whole of the human race.¹

"But guilt is another matter, it can attach to the individual alone, in the deliberate exercise of his developed will; through a deliberate, wilful choosing of the evil, when the good was plainly within his sight and choice."²

The necessity of a redemption in which righteousness is restored is, according to Brown, essential to the conscience of the individual. "The righteous soul alone is blessed," he writes. "Pardon is a slight thing to a man who cannot pardon himself."³ Finally, the conception of redemption as being within the eternal personality of God appears in the writings of Brown long before Forsyth has reached maturity. The following passages not only contain ideas which we find also in Forsyth, but the literary style is hardly different from Forsyth's:

"Redemption is no accident. The need of being a Redeemer lies deep in the nature of God, and not only was man's sin foreseen, but all things were ordered with a view to the great drama of Redemption, from before the foundation of the world."⁴

"God without a race to redeem by sacrifice, and to rule redeemed, must have kept the glory of His Godhead veiled."⁵

Brown, voices the same distrust of democracy as does Maurice, when he declares,

"The middle-class has made the latest failure; it is the turn of democracy next....and we or our children will witness a great democratic experiment to establish....some fair image of the Kingdom of heaven - and it will fail like the rest...."⁶

In the matter of style, Forsyth resembles Brown and Maurice more closely

---

1 - Ibid, pp. 34-35.
3 - Ibid, p. 86.
4 - Ibid, p. 16.
5 - Ibid, pp. 21-22.
6 - Brown: "The Perfect Law of Liberty," 1878, p. 44.
than any others. He is fond of the second-person form of address, especially in his lectures; in this he resembles Maurice.\footnote{See Maurice: The Conscience, 1868, for this type of writing.} In general form his style is more like that of Brown, however. Maurice tends to be didactic, while Brown and Forsyth are fond of involved, antithetical constructions.

Despite these apparent influences, we must be cautious in ascribing too high a value to Brown's importance in the development of Forsyth's theology. Forsyth himself notes that although the immediate impression made by Brown was deep, Dale's was more lasting. "It is remarkable," he writes in 1899, "how Brown's influence has declined while Dale's continues to grow."\footnote{Forsyth: "Dr. Dale," op. cit., pp. 220-21.} Nonetheless, it would be difficult to analyse the influence of Dale upon Forsyth. They did not meet until 1892, when Forsyth spent three weeks in Wales with Dale and his wife.\footnote{The Life of Dale, p. 636.} Thereafter the friendship between the two men seems to have become very strong. We may question how much Forsyth drew from him because of the words of the younger man when reviewing The Life of Dale:

"This biography is a great textbook of positive and spiritual Non-conformity. And the present writer can say so the more effectively as he learned the same principles elsewhere, of Word, Church, and Sacraments, and found in Dale a most welcome expansion and support."\footnote{"Dr. Dale," p. 196.}

He states that it was he who introduced Dale to the thought of Ritschl, "perhaps for the first time, in a serious way."\footnote{Ibid, p. 202.} Is it not possible that through Dale Forsyth acquired an interest in the Atonement which heretofore he had not felt? Support for this hypothesis is to be found in the fact that it was not until his friendship with Dale that Forsyth appears
to have abandoned the Ritschlian distinction between the spiritual and ethical aspects of Christianity. Perhaps Dale's most important influence was one of example, however. We find Forsyth devoting many pages of his review to an analysis of the tragic repudiation of Dale by the Congregational Union at the time of the Partition crisis, and drawing from it the conclusion that a minister must never immerse himself in political issues to the extent of weakening his mission within the Church.1

There are, nevertheless, certain theological ideas in Dale which bear a close resemblance to those of the mature Forsyth. For example, the distinction between the teaching of Jesus and the Gospel of Christ is to be found in Dale.2 The self-consciousness of Christ in respect to His Mission and death is also stressed.3 Dale's remark, that "sin is a personal act,"4 is likewise typical of Forsyth. When Dale speaks of Christ as "the Moral Ruler of the Human race: moral responsibility is responsibility to Him,"5 we are reminded of Forsyth. Another point in common is to be seen in Dale's view of the Cross as "the very symbol of infinite righteousness and of the infinite love of God,"6 while in summarising the work of Christ Dale includes every aspect of atonement which appears later in Forsyth's theory.7 In defining the meaning of Christ as the Representative, Dale refers, as does Forsyth, to the earlier use of the term, "Federal Head of the Human race, or of the church."8 Racial redemption is a theme found also

3 - Ibid, p. 51.
4 - Ibid, p. 345.
7 - Ibid, pp. 432 ff. (Forsyth omits Ransom, but includes Expiation, Vicarious action, Representative action, Satisfaction, Sacrifice, and propitiation. See pp. 170ff, below).
in Dale. Still another idea which is common to both thinkers is that which considers Revelation to have been extended beyond the death of Christ into the Apostolic period. Finally, Dale, like Forsyth, conceives of religious truth as stemming from the actual, objective experience of Divine grace.

There are other British influences which must have worked upon Forsyth in his formative years. Butler's Sermons, which Forsyth must first have read while a student of Martin in Aberdeen, stress the authority of conscience. McLeod Campbell's work on the Atonement contains themes which may also be found in Forsyth, such as: conscience; sin and guilt; the suffering of Christ conceived essentially as holy obedience; the reality of God's wrath as well as His grace; and Christ as God-man conceived as man confessing and God forgiving. Campbell speaks also of Christ tasting death, a theme which Forsyth develops in one of his small books. Since, however, Forsyth is critical of the philosophical position of McLeod Campbell (p. 92-3, above), we must not assign too great a weight to any apparent similarities. Forsyth's theory of Atonement seems to combine elements of McLeod Campbell's and Dale's: confession (Campbell), and submission (Dale); but because Forsyth's theory of Atonement is so closely linked with his Christology, other influences, such as Kahler's, cannot be ignored.

1 - The Life of Dale, p. 658.
6 - Ibid, pp. 8-9, 11-12.
7 - Ibid, pp. 102-03.
8 - Ibid, p. 117.
Reference must be made to Forsyth's emphasis upon holiness, wherein he differs from every theologian of his generation. To trace the development of his interest in this theme is probably impossible, but the writer whose mind seems closest to Forsyth's on this topic is Thomas Goodwin, the Puritan. The fact that Forsyth refers to this thinker frequently in his later books, and mentions specifically his *Expositions on Ephesians*, makes credible the hypothesis that it was from Goodwin that Forsyth received initial inspiration in this important aspect of his theology. The following passages from Goodwin indicate a remarkable affinity to ideas found in Forsyth. When Goodwin states, for example, that "holiness is for God, to glorify God: and as holiness was first in God's eye, his aim and care, let it be chief in ours," we are reminded of Forsyth. "Holiness, which is the fruit of Election, is the image of God, and such a likeness unto him as makes us capable of communion with him."2

"In that holiness is a necessary and essential concomitant to our being in Christ....God can never cast a thought of our being in Christ without our being holy: it would be as absurd to make a beast a son and member of Adam, as one unholy a member of Christ."3

"God chose us to be in Christ," Goodwin continues, "and because Christ is holy, we must be holy: holiness therefore is essential to our being in Christ."4 Certainly Forsyth's belief in universal election arises from his reading of Goodwin and other Puritan writers; but may it not be that he is similarly indebted to this almost forgotten man for one of the most significant features of his theology? Unfortunately we may only guess at the answer.

There are literary figures and philosophers to whom Forsyth is

---

2 - Ibid, p. 57.
3 - Ibid, p. 59.
4 - Ibid, p. 61.
also indebted, notably George Eliot, Hardy, Browning, Milton, Carlyle, and Ruskin. Continental writers include Ibsen, Goethe, Lessing, and Schelling. In addition to Kant and Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche seem to have been carefully studied by Forsyth.

We come now to that other side of Forsyth's background: the Ritschlian. We find the influence of Ritschl best indicated in Forsyth's own words:

"(The) movement which arose out of Schleiermacher to correct Schleiermacher, the movement associated with the principle of Ritschl (and going far beyond his system), is the movement to an objective Gospel carrying a theology that does not arise in experience, but only makes its appeal to experience."1

"(Ritschl) had to outgrow Schleiermacher... to secure an objective base for both theology and religion... He found the base in history, in a positive act of revelation... It is oned-sided to say that Ritschl's great work was to cast us anew upon Christian experience. He cast us upon the experience of revelation, of an objective, historic, positive Gospel as the soul of the Bible and its reason for being. Schleiermacher said that religion was the sense of dependence. The result of this is mere impressionism. Ritschl moved at least two steps forward... He said faith was an act of judgment - a judgment of our whole man on a certain fact's value; its effect and worth for us, and not on its mere existence. And he said further that it was an act of obedience, of total submission corresponding to the absolute nature of the Gospel fact and its demand."2

The community of the Kingdom of God - created by Christ - is a typical Ritschlian idea;3 furthermore, it is characterised by him as moral. Through moral identification with it the individual becomes a part of the totality.4 Ritschl also stresses the conception of Christ as the Representative of humanity;5 while the distinction between His priestly

---

2 - Ibid.
4 - Ibid, p. 503.
and prophetic work is to be found in the German theologian. In this respect, however, Ritschl seems to rule out almost completely the atoning work of Christ, and it is here that Forsyth parts company with him. In Ritschl we find the objection to the substitutionary theory of Atonement which may well have inspired Forsyth's controversial sermon in Shipley.

We have already mentioned Forsyth's adoption and later rejection of Ritschl's conception of spiritual and ethical polarity (the ellipse). The German thinker also stresses the Fatherhood of God, as do Maurice and Brown. The growth of Christ, conceived in terms of His self-development, is likewise a Ritschlian conception: "What Jesus actually was and accomplished," he states, "that He is in the first place for Himself." In other words, Christ not only performs His earthly task for the sake of mankind, but in order to fulfil His vocation of Lord and King. In Ritschl's opposition to the two-nature theory of Christ's person we see the basis for a similar judgment by Forsyth. We cannot know Christ's nature in metaphysical terms, he declares. "The nature of God and the Divine we can only know in its essence by determining its value for our salvation." He also suggests the idea of a kingdom of sin; but his view of sin is so unlike that of Forsyth that we may question how much the latter has drawn from him at this point. In respect to the Sacraments, Ritschl, like Forsyth, sees the action of God within the community, with the lesser emphasis upon His action upon the individual. The whole of Ritschl's book is opposed to pietism and mysticism, and it is obvious that Forsyth was greatly

1 - Ibid, pp. 482ff.
2 - The Work of Christ, pp. 66, 76.
5 - Ritschl, p. 93.
6 - Ibid, p. 442.
influenced by Ritschl on this subject.

There are two aspects of Christology wherein Ritschl's view does not correspond with that of Forsyth. Firstly, although Ritschl gives assent to the pre-existence of Christ, he qualifies it by saying that Christ is pre-existent "only for God, since for us, as pre-existent, Christ is hidden."¹ Secondly, he is strongly opposed to the Kenotic Doctrine, which is an essential feature in Forsyth's thought.²

Ritschl's most lasting contribution to Forsyth lies in his method of approach to an understanding of Christianity. It is through Ritschl that Forsyth appears to have become concerned with the moral category. If Forsyth may, in a qualified sense, be called a voluntarist, it is because of Ritschl's inspiration. The latter owes a great deal to Kant and Lotze, through whom he came to understand the significance of the active will rather than the passive intelligence.

Mozley mentions the fact that what characterises the Ritschlian thinkers is not an acceptance of their leader's system but rather the adoption of his methods and principles.³ These are the principles which Forsyth notes in the quotation given above (p. 100): 1) the act of judgment, based upon the effect and value of a fact in the totality of our own personal existence; 2) obedience to Christ. Other Ritschlians, while adopting these principles, depart from their teacher's results to varying degrees. The effect of Ritschl upon Forsyth extends, therefore, to the whole school. Foremost among the followers of Ritschl who have contributed to Forsyth's thought are Herrmann and Kaftan. Harnack, though the most often quoted by

¹ - Ritschl, p. 471.
² - Ibid, pp. 408-09.
³ - Mozley, pp. 10-11.
Forsyth, appears to have exerted little influence in the formation of his theology.

Forsyth's debt to Herrmann is restricted to the early years of his ministry; and yet it is possible that Herrmann's correction of Ritschl was instrumental in changing Forsyth's point of view during the critical years between 1879-84. In a note at the beginning of his essay in Faith and Criticism, Forsyth gives credit to Herrmann for the theological ideas, but not the philosophical.\(^1\) Herrmann's basic theme is revelation, through which he contends we are admitted to the "inner life of Christ," or communion with God.\(^2\) The danger of this theory lies in its subjectivism. We are not surprised, therefore, to find Forsyth disagreeing with Herrmann's point of view in later years:

"Of all the German theologians on the liberal side, Herrmann...is the one whose theology is most bound up with personal religion; but does Herrmann get to the core of evangelical faith as a revolutionary power...?"\(^3\)

"There is something in Herrmann to suggest in Christ a fixed quality... And there is too little to suggest His atoning work and His new creative power.... Indeed the whole value of Christ for him seems more sacramental than creative."\(^4\)

We find occasional reference to Kaftan in the writings of Forsyth, and there is one instance in which Forsyth paraphrases him at length.\(^5\) Such a statement as the following shows resemblance to the thought of Forsyth:

"Christianity is a supramundane reality, i.e., wherever it is realized it is a creation of the Divine Spirit and of its activity in the human heart. So regarded it needs no proof, because it proves itself...."\(^6\) Yet, Forsyth's

---

1 - Faith and Criticism, p. 95.
2 - See, Herrmann, W. The Communion of the Christian with God, E.T., 2nd Ed'n., 1906, esp. Ch. VII.
5 - Positive Preaching, pp. 251ff.
strictures against monism and idealism would apply to Kaftan, who claims that an Idealistic philosophy alone can cope with the problems of dogmatics.¹

Principal Cave has indicated the similarity between Kähler's and Forsyth's definition of the personality of Christ; he offers parallel passages from the two thinkers which are unmistakably similar.² Dr. Cave quotes from the third edition of Kähler's Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre published in 1905. Forsyth must have known an earlier edition, however, for he states that he had organised his lectures on The Person and Place of Jesus Christ by 1899. The second edition of Kähler's book appeared in 1893; it is not unlikely that it is this which first attracted Forsyth's attention. Before 1895, when he preached "The Divine Self-Emptying," there seems to have been little mention of Christology by Forsyth.

Tillich describes Kähler as

"a man who in his personality and theology combined traditions of Renaissance humanism and German classicism with a profound understanding of the Reformation and with strong elements of the religious awakening of the middle of the nineteenth century. The historians of theology count him among the 'theologians of mediation'...."³

The features of Kähler's contribution to Christology which Cave mentions are

an emphasis upon Christ as Saviour, a rejection of the two-nature theory, and the substitution of a dialectical theory of two personal movements within the personality of Christ. In this latter view Forsyth adopts Kähler's language and thought almost word for word. The latter's treatment of the holiness of God does not appear to bear close relationship to Forsyth's, however.⁴

¹ - Ibid, p. 424.
Other Germans from whom Forsyth drew inspiration include Schlatter (whom Forsyth quotes and terms one of the finest of New Testament scholars), Loofs, Bunsen, Zahn, Seeberg, and Ihmels. In fact, the list is too long to quote fully; and an analysis of the many Continental influences would require a full-length book.

Mention must also be made of the Reformers, whose thought proved increasingly important to Forsyth as he grew older. There is a trend in his writings away from Luther (where he began with Ritschlianism) towards Calvin and the Puritans, so that by the time of his publication of Faith, Freedom, and the Future he is laying the greatest stress upon Calvinism as tempered by the British mind. Melancthon’s Apology seems to be one of his favourite writings.

Pascal and Kierkegaard also find a place in the thought of Forsyth. In these times when we like to believe that Kierkegaard is being discovered by the English-speaking peoples for the first time, it is noteworthy that Forsyth refers to him several times in his works.

Harry Escott, in his excellent book on Forsyth, suggests that other influences may have been important. He mentions in particular William Law and Dora Greenwell. However, we have discovered only one reference to Law, occurring in a passage in which Forsyth rejects theosophy in favour of theology; while the only mention of Dora Greenwell appears in Forsyth’s introductory words to his section of The Power of Prayer. While it is likely that Forsyth was well acquainted with the thought of both, we cannot credit them with an influence comparable to that of Maurice, Ritschl, Dale, and

---

3 - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 286.
others to whom he constantly alludes.

Three facts must be borne in mind when we seek to discover the influences operating upon Forsyth. In the first place, it is apparent that only those opinions which fitted into the facts of his own experience made an impression upon him. Secondly, those influences which helped to shape his thought bore the mark of the New Testament. That is to say, his theology is a New Testament theology, and for this reason he seems to have been receptive to ideas which were rooted in the Scriptures. The Kenosis and Plerosis, the holiness of God, the Sacrament of the Word, the priestly Church, and similar ideas refer not to philosophical theories primarily, but to the Bible. The importance of the Reformation as a key to the interpretation of contemporary theories is complementary to this. His criticism of R. J. Campbell's *New Theology*, for example, is, "It antiquates the Reformation. Every modern tendency has to be discarded which does that." In the third place, he grew beyond the men from whom he learned, and for the most part became critical of their views. He was highly selective; he accepted only that which had meaning in his life. This is well illustrated by the fact that although he was a favourite of Bain, and must have felt grateful to the latter's teaching, he never appears to have adopted the position of the utilitarians. While learning how to think logically, he chose for himself what he should think.

We are justified in stating, therefore, that Forsyth cannot be comprehended in terms of the thought of those who influenced him most deeply. To read Maurice, Brown, Dale, Ritschl, and others en bloc is not to arrive at Forsyth's point of view. He assimilated the thoughts of others, then produced something distinctively his own. This may explain the fact that today he is just beginning to receive the notice he deserves, while the others have for the most part been relegated to historical study alone.

---

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HOLINESS OF GOD AND THE SINFULNESS OF MAN
It is the popular view that although Forsyth was a man inspired, his thought can best be gleaned from striking epigrams and short quotations: that his works as a whole are marked less by consistent excellence than by sudden and compelling insights. Many there are who regret the fact that Forsyth never devoted enough time to the great Christian doctrines to produce the works which might well have overshadowed those of his contemporaries. Principal Cave, for example, declares, "I have long felt that one of the greatest books on the Atonement would have been the book Forsyth might have written but did not write."¹ Canon Mozley mentions the "almost incidental" manner in which the central themes of Christian theology appear in Forsyth's pages.² It is true that there is a lack of coherence in most of his writings, and that in very few of his books is there even a systematic development of the subject; yet there is an underlying consistency in his thought which should not be overlooked. Behind it all lies the theme of the Cross, which is held as a personal fact of history central to everything before or since. This theme can be discovered in all the writings of his mature years. Thus

¹ - Cave, op. cit., p. 117.
despite the loose construction of many of his books, despite the fact that
he liked to put his thoughts into the form of sharp epigrams and dialectical
paradoxes which we remember while overlooking the unity of the whole, there
is a consistency of thought in his writings which gives each of them impor-
tant meaning.

There is another way in which we may think of his consistency, and
that is in respect to his purpose in writing. It seems to have been his inten-
tion, as well as his mission, to mediate between the old and the new; to
maintain the truth in orthodoxy while at the same time adapting it to the
discoveries of liberalism. While always a scholar ready to accept the evi-
dence of new data, he was also a preacher fired with the evangelical message.
In respect to purpose, it is our contention that throughout his life he was
consistent and persistent in his efforts to show that the Christian faith is
a living faith, bound to no particular age but relevant to every period of
history. Read in this light, his works reveal a consistency which is less
readily apparent otherwise.

It is indeed impressive that a man whose interest included so many
different aspects of life should have been able to comprehend them all under
the heading of religion. Yet, his two books on Art are religious; his politi-
cal and social writings are based upon a specifically Christian philosophy
of history; and wide though his literary tastes seem to have been, they are
all correlated with the main religious themes. Within the Church he was
preacher, pastor, teacher, priest, and politician, yet to each of these activ-
ities he carried the same quality of mind. Because of the Cross of Christ
he felt compelled to take an interest in all the affairs of men, whether they
were predominantly religious or not. The ethic of the Cross is a universal ethic
In the Cross lies the underlying unity of Forsyth's thought. The fact that Christ died for our sins is fundamental; it gives the clue to an understanding of history. That God should take upon Himself the burden of man's guilt is so mysterious, so overwhelming, to Forsyth that he judges everything by this one final act of the Holy Father. To understand his thought, one must share with him this particular view of the Cross. Only if we can see the world through his eyes shall we be able to test the validity of his conclusions, otherwise they may be intriguing, fascinating, and even thought-compelling, but not vital. And if his theology does not fill us with the awe which he experienced, we shall have missed the point of it. Strictly speaking, Forsyth did not have a "point of view:" such a term is better applied to spectator than participant, and Forsyth was always a participant. He was too much involved in life to stand off and observe it "objectively." (He would never call such a view objective). Yet in his eyes it is impossible for man to be a mere observer, and therefore objectivity does not lie there. Objectivity can be determined only by content, never by attitude. We are all participants in life and must draw our knowledge from our activity. Withdrawal, if it can be achieved, leads only to a distorted view.

Everyone, then, has a point of view. It becomes necessary, therefore, to know that point of view in order to comprehend the thought. In some cases this is not as important as in others; with Forsyth it is essential. Insofar as possible we must see the universe as he sees it. Forsyth himself

---

1 In one place he even writes, "... in the death of Jesus it was God that died" (Faith and Criticism, p. 132).
declares, "Everything does turn on our footing, on our starting-point, on our notion of reality." Only as we comprehend his notion of reality can we realise the significance of his theology and understand its relevance to our present situation. Perhaps the chief reason he was so soon forgotten after death lies in the fact that the generation to which he was speaking did not have the same notion of reality, and could not, therefore, discover meaning in his words.

There are two ways in which Forsyth might have approached a study of theology in his day: beginning with the standpoint of man, or beginning with that of God. The former had become the more popular approach by the time he reached maturity. Although a conservative attitude still prevailed in the churches, the humanistic trend had become well developed by the Utilitarian and Positivist schools. The young minister was faced with a dilemma: to follow the pattern of critical thought was to fall prey to naturalism and humanism; to remain true to the more traditional pattern within the Church was to be tied to a conservative and often backward orthodoxy which still clung to the infallibility of the Scriptures. It seems apparent that Forsyth began with an anthropocentric approach in his Shipley ministry, then changed his attitude while at St. Thomas's Square, Hackney, through the stimulus of that religious experience about which we know so little. But unlike many who shift from a liberal to an orthodox theology, Forsyth did not entirely repudiate his earlier opinions. Here lies the difference between him and the average orthodox Christian; it is this difference which makes him so great a theologian to this day.

---

1 - Forsyth: The Principal of Authority, 1912, p.200; Ch. p. 405: "The more we have to do with God...the more important our starting point becomes" ("The Word and The World," British Weekly, Feb. 10, 1910, pp. 532-33).
Forsyth views everything from the standpoint of God. When he considers the problem of sin, it is with the question as to what it means to God and how it affects Him. As he ponders the significance of the work of Christ, he thinks primarily of the relationship of Christ to the Father and of the effect of His work upon God's conscience. What did the Cross mean to God? Did He suffer with Christ? Does He suffer in any way because of man's sin? These are the fundamental issues which concern Forsyth: when they are met we shall have time to deal with the question of man; but man, the creature, comes after God the Creator. It is not unusual to find this attitude in theologians today, when even in America liberalism is in decline and the scene is no longer dominated by naturalists and humanists; but in the earlier years of this century Forsyth must have felt rather lonely and often despised. While it is true that in the "New Theology" controversy a majority of ministers in the Congregational Union were on the side of Forsyth, it was R. J. Campbell who appealed to the people, and it was his attitude which became current in the churches.

How does Forsyth justify this approach which begins with God and works thence to man? Although most thinkers might agree that God stands at the centre of Christian thought, they would argue that it is only through a study of man and his problems that we can come to any understanding of the transcendent. How does Forsyth meet such a challenge as this? He bases his answer on experimental grounds. It is only through knowledge of God - through our being known by Him - that we can know of sin. Anthropology will not reveal sin. "We can never know things at their worst," he writes,

---

1 - See The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 27-28.
"till we stand where they are at their best."¹ In another passage he expands this idea:

"What life is can only be answered, explained, fulfilled, by including what it shall be. And what it shall be is a question that can be answered only by appeal to the power that has it in hand."²

We should be unable to envisage even the possibility of sin without a theocentric system of thought, for "who but the sinless could confess the sin of man?"³ Only Christ, the sinless, creates in us an awareness of the guilt which is ours. Any theology which does not reckon with or come to grips with the reality of sin and guilt is incomplete and unrealistic.

We must have the criteria with which to see the world in its fullest light. The validity of Forsyth's approach is seen by the fact that his predictions for the most part have been realised since his death. The Church sees now the effects of a humanistic theology which does not take full account of man at his worst, while people throughout the world clamour for the authority which the Church has sacrificed through its own defaults.

All Forsyth's works deal with the rising danger of humanism, which he terms "the supreme heresy, that man is enough for himself and has a right in God."⁴ Although this doctrine became most pronounced in the writings of R. J. Campbell, Forsyth had been fighting the trend for twenty years before the sudden emergence of the "New Theology" in 1907. He considered the issue to be the most critical one which the Church had faced since the second century. Whereas Campbell and his followers concerned themselves chiefly with the humanity of Christ and the divinity in every man, Forsyth constantly stressed the difference between Christ and man,

¹ - Religion in Recent Art, p. 247.
³ - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 99.
⁴ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 91.
emphasising the fact that it is the difference which matters most. Here one might be tempted to classify Forsyth as merely another orthodox theologian; but the value of his theology is that it maintains the supreme importance of Christ's divinity without sacrificing the value of human personality. It is important to note that when Forsyth moved from his original liberal position he did not repudiate all his former views; rather, he incorporated the best of them into his new system of thought. That the transformation should have entailed a period of many years is not surprising; the unique thing is that, unlike many who undergo a drastic and critical religious experience, he could incorporate any of the old into the new. We might say that he took the best in humanism - its deep compassion for human misery - and adapted it to his more orthodox system. Perhaps this is due to the early influence of Maurice and Ritschl, who so imbued him with the necessity of an ethical theology that he never considered the temptation of ruling man completely out of the picture. The old fundamentalism never appealed to him.

Therefore, although not a humanist, he was profoundly concerned with the sufferings of men. His early poverty, the chronic pain which remained with him throughout his life, and a naturally sensitive nature made it impossible for him to forget the tragic conditions of human life, no matter how great his concern for God. His struggles for the Liberal cause, his efforts for the men of the great dock strike of 1889, his persistent fight for the cause of Chinese labour in the Transvaal; all these issues were important to him because of his interest in people. Similarly, although a shy and retiring man, he took an interest in his students, so that he is remembered by many to this day for a quality which some opponents thought he did not have. So opposed was he to humanism as a philo-
sophy, however, that he had little respect for those who adopted it.

There is another, more subtle, way in which Forsyth reveals the importance of man in his theology. The fact that man in his rebellion can upset the harmony of God's nature is testimony to his importance, though only negative. Because of man the Cross is necessary. Because of man's transgression God must come into history and take upon Himself the burden of man's guilt. Surely here is a more profound view of man's importance in the universe than any humanist doctrine which makes him the final culmination of an evolutionary process. By centring his theology on the Godhead, Forsyth actually enhances rather than depreciates the place of man in the universe.

This becomes clear when he considers the nature of God. In his conception of a holy God Forsyth demonstrates better than in any of his other theories the importance of his contribution to Christian thought; for it is here that he best combines that which is true in the older orthodoxy with that which is necessary and good in liberalism. His first attempt at synthesis we saw in "The Old Faith and the New", quoted above.\(^1\) Not until he developed his theme of holy love, however, did he succeed in bringing the two schools together in a satisfactory manner. Holiness is a qualitative, not a quantitative, concept. Conceived wrongly, it leads us directly into the worst sort of legalism. But if it is understood in the qualitative manner, it prevents either the extreme of an uncritical orthodoxy or an unchecked liberalism. The chief danger in an orthodoxy such as Barth's lies in the fact that it may become so concerned with God's rights that it makes the position of man hardly more than accidental. This

\(^1\) See pp. 32, above.
in turn may lead to a type of thought which is religiously totalitarian. It tends to rule man out of the universe as if he were an impostor. The danger in liberalism, on the other hand, lies at the opposite extreme: it makes too much of man and too little of God. It rules God out of the universe, while at the same time placing an impossible burden of responsibility upon man, who, in his impression of freedom forgets his weakness. In the one case there tends to be justice without love; in the other, love without justice. With his idea of holy love Forsyth takes the truth of each view while avoiding the excesses. To correct the orthodoxy of his day he substitutes the term, 'holiness,' for 'justice.' Thereby he avoids the legalistic tendency; for holiness has within it the idea of love, while justice does not. On the other hand, he protects his theology from the dangers of sentimentalism by qualifying the idea of love by holiness. Thus love becomes far more than sympathy.

Forsyth's point of view, then, is that of the participant who realises that something has been done to him by a power outside his own nature. His is the standpoint of the man who believes that salvation depends not upon himself, nor upon humanity, but upon that which has redeemed him from his own guilt. His is a theocentric approach, combining the best of the old theology with the new. While his standpoint stresses the centrality of a Holy God, it underlines the importance of man in the eyes of God. Forsyth's theology is one which appears more relevant today than it did twenty years ago; for adversity has led us to adopt the same standpoint for ourselves.

Forsyth's thought is framed in terms of life and death. His theme is crisis: the crisis of God and man in deadly warfare. Theirs is a struggle which must somehow finally be settled, for there is no possible
compromise between God's holiness and man's sin. The situation portrayed by Forsyth represents the relationship between man and God before the decisive event of the Cross; yet, the crisis brought by Christ remains for each of us individually in our relations with God. But first we must understand what is meant by the Holy Father:

The nature of God can be comprehended, says Forsyth, only if we think of Him as the Holy Father. Too long have men been accustomed to expressing the Fatherhood of God as if it were analogous to the natural fatherhood on this earth. Such a conception is false, for it leads us to believe that God is our Father in the same sense as He is Christ's. Actually we are not the natural sons of God, while Christ is.

"We put too little into that word Father, either when we think below the level of natural fatherhood, or when we rise no higher than that level."¹

While we cannot think of God as less than the natural father, that in itself is insufficient to yield an understanding of the holy Fatherhood of God, who has elected us to be His sons. In Positive Preaching Forsyth gives a succinct definition of holiness:

"The holiness of God is His self-sufficient perfection, whose passion is to establish itself in the unholy by gracious love. Holiness is love morally perfect; love is holiness brimming and overflowing. The perfection speaks in the overflow. It is in redemption. Love is perfect, not in amount but in kind, not as intense but as holy. And holiness is perfect, not as being remote, nor as being merely pure, but as it asserts itself in redeeming grace."²

With this statement in mind we might say that holiness can be ascribed to God only because He is active; that, as active through grace, God exhibits

² - Positive Preaching, p. 213. See also, Forsyth: The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 97.
holiness. In other words, holiness is not a dormant quality deep in the nature of God; rather, it is that in God's nature which makes Him the Redeemer. Holiness is a moral concept, for morality implies action. Although man becomes an egotist when he cares more for his own nature than for God's, it is necessary that "the Holy Father's first care is holiness."¹ This is not out of keeping with His nature, for if He cared less for His own holiness He would not in any way be concerned with man. "God would not be God," declares Forsyth, "if He loved His own holy nature less than man."² We must be careful here not to think in material terms, and to let the words bear only a qualitative connotation, for "God is not God physically but morally, not by power but by love.... The nature of the Godhead is Holy Love."³

To think of God's love without holiness is unsatisfactory, because it does not sufficiently guarantee the steadfastness of that love. It is holiness which assures us of its stability.

"If God's love were not essentially holy love, in course of time mankind would cease to respect it, and consequently to trust it. God's holy law is His own holy nature.... It is quite unchangeable."⁴

Forgetting his own warning against the use of quantitative terms, Forsyth writes: "The holiness of God is the sum of all His actions and relations to the world."⁵ This sentence, although vague, indicates yet another important aspect of his thought: namely, that the relationship of God to man must be eternal, for certainly holiness is. Forsyth does, in fact, speak of the pre-existence of Christ,⁶ and regards the Cross not merely as the historical manifestation of God's Atonement, but rather as the eternal symbol of God's

¹ - The Holy Father, p. 8.
² - Forsyth: The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, 1901, pp. 50-51.
³ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 313.
⁵ - The Work of Christ, p. 127.
⁶ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, Lecture X.
Holy love includes judgment, which is not a contradictory element, but belongs to the nature of love. Where there is sin it must be judged. God could not be supreme were He not the Judge of the guilty. Love as conceived by liberalism disregards this aspect of the question, and accordingly the moral note is lacking. It is through the idea of holiness that we introduce the moral theme into our theology, and therefore we must have a system of thought which includes the notion of judgement as well as forgiveness. "The love of God is not more real than the wrath of God. For He can be really angry only with those He loves."

We must not confuse judgment with justice. It was against the latter conception that Forsyth revolted in his early ministry, and he never adopted the word into his theological vocabulary. Justice is a legal term; judgment, moral. Justice implies law; judgment involves personality. Therefore, it is God's holy judgment against sin which Forsyth emphasises, and not God's justice. A holy God cannot countenance the unholy. He must, according to His nature, either destroy or redeem it; ignore it He cannot. A theology which ignores or minimises this aspect of God's love falsifies the data of experience. If God cannot be trusted to root out evil, who can? What bulwark have we against the aggressions of our own sin if not God? The whole of Christian history would be one gigantic hoax if God were not dependable, and the apostles the greatest fools of all. No, says Forsyth, the whole objective authority depends upon the steadfastness, the holiness of God.

Over against the Holy Father stands sinful man. His is a racial sin, a solidary one, which can be removed only in one final and complete act:

---

2 - See p. 23, above.
"Sin is not an influence which affects but a sectional conscience, or troubles but a few members of the race. In so far as it is real, it affects and vitiates the whole conscience, the whole man, that is, and the whole race in its moral aspect and reliability. That follows from the unit of personality and the race, from our solidarity."1

Each individual participates in this racial sin. There is no aspect of life which remains untainted. Not only do we sin against God and against our fellows, but even against our own souls.2 So tragic has man's plight become that we cannot conceive how bad it is. "It is impossible that the whole dimensions and heinousness of wickedness...should be grasped by any created soul."3 Even so, our knowledge is sufficient to reveal a picture of almost unrelieved gloom.

"The whole race is not only weighted with arrears, but infected with a blight. The train of history is not simply late, but there has been an accident, and an accident due to malice and crime. We struggle not only with misfortune, but with a curse."4

At a time when many of his contemporaries were speaking of man's inevitable progress, Forsyth could only say: "The soul needs not a development from within, but a rescue from without...."5 Man is God's opponent not His partner. "Our chief natural legacy from the past is distance and alienation from God."6 Nothing which we can do will bring us hope: no suffering, sacrifice, or expiation initiated by man will be of any use, for "man can contribute nothing to his own salvation."7 We are under judgment so severe that: "As we live we are being tried for our life."8

Forsyth distinguishes between evil, sin, and guilt, and although rather careless in the interchanging of the latter two terms, he makes

1 - The Principle of Authority, p. 457.
2 - The Holy Father, p. 34.
3 - Forsyth: The Justification of God, p. 31.
5 - Missions in State and Church, pp. 83-84.
6 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 18.
7 - Forsyth: Rome, Reform, and Reaction, 1899, p. 238.
8 - Positive Preaching, p. 240.
sufficient distinction between them for us to understand the difference.

Evil is amoral, having to do with pain and suffering which in itself has no moral context. It may be applied to nature, where there is no sin; here chance is dominant rather than will.

"Sin is unknown to nature, to natural relations, to natural love. Nature includes no holiness; and it is holiness that makes sin sin."¹

That this is not his final position can be seen by a much later and more carefully considered statement in which he suggests, "It is the holiness of God which makes sin guilt."² One thing is certain, however: that there is nothing accidental about sin, whereas in the case of evil there is.³

"Sin is essentially an act of the will."⁴ It affects the whole of one's personality:

"One sin is, in a sense, a sin in all. The whole nature is affected by it, and always.... It was I who, at my will's centre, did that thing. It was my will and self that was put into it.... It was my unitary, indivisible self that was involved and is infected."⁵

Sin is revealed to us by one means only: through the personal agency of Jesus Christ:

"Sin....is not measured by a law, or a nation, or a society of any kind, but by a Person.... He came to reveal not only God but sin."⁶

In Christian Perfection, a small book which deals with the paradox of the Christian who is sinless yet sin, Forsyth distinguishes between the sin unto death and sin not unto death. The difference, he finds, lies not in the deed, but in the predominant cast of personality. In the one case a person "loses the life of God from his soul permanently - I do not say eternally.... Sin becomes not an attack, an episode, or a lapse, but the

¹ - The Holy Father, p. 25. See also, The Justification of God, pp. 135-36.
² - The Work of Christ, p. 79.
³ - Faith and Criticism, pp. 100-01.
⁵ - Ibid, p. 6.
⁶ - Missions in State and Church, pp. 56-57.
principle of his life." In the other case, communion with God is not broken despite temporary failures and transgressions.

Even the term, 'sin,' is too impersonal, however. There is a sense in which it may be said to apply to the race as a whole but not to the individual in particular. The expression tends to become a generalisation without the application which is required, and therefore we must use another, more personal, word to bring home the grotesque nature of our crime to the individual. It is for this reason that Forsyth in his most profound works prefers the word, 'guilt.'

"It is the sense of guilt that we have to get back to-day for the soul's sake and the kingdom's; not simply the sense of sin. There are many who recognise the power of sin, the misfortune of it; what they do not recognise is the thing that makes it most sinful, which makes it what it is before God, namely, guilt; which introduces something noxious and not merely deranged, malignant and not merely hostile; the fact that it is transgression against not simply God, not simply against a loving God, but against a holy God."

Sin we can blame upon others. We may speak of original sin, and through the medium of such a deterministic philosophy absolve ourselves of ultimate responsibility. Not so in the case of guilt, the sense of which grips the heart of each of us with a terror unlike any other. Guilt invades our dreams; it catches us unawares; it strikes at the conscience. It raises moral problems, not intellectual; and it is intimate, personal - a concern of the will rather than the mind alone. There can be no reconciliation unless guilt is removed, as each of us knows in his heart.

"The last enemy to be destroyed was guilt. The problem of problems is the moral problem.... If we have any sense of judgment we have much reason to fear. I cannot understand how any one with any sense of judgment can discard the atonement and live without terror."
It is this knowledge of guilt and the fear of God's holy judgment which characterises the natural (unredeemed) man in his opposition to God.

"The essential thing in a New Testament Christianity," writes Forsyth, "is that it came to settle in a final way the issue between a holy God and the guilt of man." The rebellion of man against God has affected not only man's nature, but also God's. "Guilt affected both God and man." Once again we must examine the effects of this alienation from the two standpoints. That the break is final without some sort of supranatural intervention is obvious:

"Between us and the Holy Father there comes what does not come between us and any earthly father - sin. Sin, hell, curse, and wrath! The wrath and curse of God not on sin only, but on the soul." There is in the nature of God a deep and consuming anger against the soul of man, who has violated His holiness. We take for granted too much the forgiveness of God, warns Forsyth. Why should forgiveness, which is not natural to any man, be natural to God? We should not so easily assume that God can easily forgive that which repudiates his love.

"Real forgiveness is not natural. Nor is it natural and easy to consent to be forgiven.... We should realise how far from a matter of course forgiveness was for a holy, and justly angry, God, for all His love." The effect of man's transgression against God is not merely sorrow; it is real anger, which is an aspect of His holy love:

"We do not only grieve God but we provoke His anger.... The love of God becomes real anger to our sin, and to us as we identify ourselves with sin...." God's anger shows itself in many ways, one of which is the gradual alienation of the sinner from his Creator. The slow, relentless dead-

1 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 5.
2 - The Work of Christ, p. 84.
3 - The Holy Father, p. 22.
ening of the conscience, the atrophy of emotion: can we not say that these are caused not only by the habit of sin but also by God's angry penalty upon the sinner? Forsyth believes this to be the case, and states that we see the severest judgment upon individual sin in "its cumulative and deadening history."

It may seem that at this point Forsyth falls into the error of those whom he opposed in his earlier years. Does not love, in such a view, degenerate into merely relentless, unforgiving judgment? If Forsyth stopped at this point, the answer would have to be in the affirmative; but here we are only concerned with establishing the situation as it exists between a holy God and man yet unredeemed. To understand the difference between this idea of holy anger and that of the legalists, one must go beyond to Forsyth's doctrine of Atonement. Suffice it to say at this moment, however, that the difference is one of fundamental importance. In the old view, God judges by penalising either man or Christ; in the other, His judgment takes the form of self-reconciliation. The vital fact to be understood here is, that in order that there may be something permanent and unchanging in which to put our trust, God must honour His own holy law (or nature - in God, nature and law coincide). Without this certainty we can have no foundation whatsoever for our faith. Thus, wherever God's holiness is opposed - that is to say, wherever there is sin - God's love must take the form of judgment. His love of perfection implies His anger at wilful imperfection. (remembering, of course, that moral, not physical, perfection is here understood). God's holy law must somehow be honoured, else it ceases to be holy. If we consider this

1 - Ibid.
in terms of the moral category it becomes more clear: if God is morally perfect, and His nature is such that He loves the sinless, then it is impossible that He should love that which is ultimately contradictory—namely, sin. But since the sin cannot be separated from the will of the sinner, sin being personal and not ideal, there must be a judgment affecting not only the abstract concept, 'sin,' but the person as well. For this reason we should be aware of the wrath of God, for

"...there is everything in the love of God to be afraid of. Love is not holy without judgment. It is the love of God that is the consuming fire."¹

Forsyth speaks not only of the conscience of the individual and of the race, but also of the conscience of God. This conception, while difficult to understand and rather ambiguous as it is employed, points nevertheless to the basis of his idea of personality. He reasons that the relationship between God and man is that of persons; while there are joined in the one person of Christ both divinity and humanity—not as two natures, but as modes.² Man's conscience is due to Christ (as the pre-existent creator of Humanity), and is complementary to God's. When we consider how difficult it is for us to meet our own conscience, how much greater must it be to meet God's:

"...when your conscience begins to work and you begin to extenuate, when you try your hand earnestly at justifying yourself to yourself, you have some idea of how much more vast must be God's justification of you before Himself. You cannot cease to ask what charge conscience has against you. You then magnify that to God's charge. If your heart condemn you, His condemnation is greater than that of your condemning heart. Do you consider His conscience? His conscience has to be pacified as well as His heart indulged. And if His conscience be not met, ours is not sure."³

¹ - The Work of Christ, p. 85.
² - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 333, 337, 339 ff.
So serious is the effect of man's sin upon God that His very sovereignty is threatened. "Sin is the death of God. Die sin must or God."¹ While at its start sin may manifest itself as indifference to God, it must ultimately result in a hostility so complete that the very righteousness of God is at stake. Forsyth is careful here to distinguish between "the death of God" and man's.² He does not hold that the existence of sin means the annihilation of God:

"The sin of man has not destroyed the power of God.... God is no less King because of man's sin."³

Yet something is at stake; it is not a mere rhetorical question. Death for God means not the end of His existence, but an encroachment upon His harmony. "Sin....cost the Godhead not Its existence but Its bliss."⁴ This in itself is of tremendous importance if we see the situation as Forsyth did. That man should, through his arrogance, upset the holiness of the Godhead and make necessary a universal crisis affecting not only himself but God, is a mystery as great as creation itself. Surely this does not minimise the power of man, or his importance in God's sight. Man's rebellion has so upset the holy law of God that a supreme judgment upon the guilt is necessary. Therefore, a crisis is inevitable. Time and again Forsyth reiterates the importance of crisis in an understanding of Atonement. It is a crisis involving God and man alike, in which the Holy Father offers redemption to his undeserving sons.

Let us now observe how man himself has been affected by his guilt. Forsyth counters the popular notion that sin is but the choice of a lesser

1 - The Justification of God, p. 147.
3 - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 96. Also, The Justification of God, p. 148.
4 - The Justification of God, p. 148.
good with the declaration that man has no excuse whatsoever for his sin; that it cannot so easily be brushed aside or extenuated:

"Man is not a mere runaway, but a rebel; not a pitiful coward, but a bold and bitter mutineer."¹

"The disparity of God and man is not gradual, it is not a matter of degree.... What ails us is not limitation but transgression, not poverty but alienation. It is the breach of communion that is the trouble.... We are not His counterparts but His antagonists.... And as a race we are not even stray sheep, or wandering prodigals merely, we are rebels taken with weapons in our hands."²

Certainly there is nothing reassuring in Forsyth's outlook: he sees things at their worst, and in his opinion natural man is in a hopeless condition. Surely God is justified in exacting the gravest penalty for man's sin! How can we talk of a spark of divinity in every man when we look at the world from God's side? That is indeed a blasphemy! There is nothing whatsoever to be said in man's favour, for he is an enemy of his Creator. It is this gap between God and man which matters most: it refutes any theory that man has within himself a bit of divinity. It makes a sham of any sentimental words about the good in every man which is leading us slowly toward the Kingdom of God on earth. Left to himself, man will never arrive at any kingdom save that of the "Prince of this world."

If the guilt of man affects the conscience of God, it must also have its effect in man's own conscience. Despite our freedom, despite our avowed independence of a God whom we think we can rule out of the universe, we are bothered by conscience because communion with God has been broken. Were it not for this, man might be happy in rebellion, but now he can never enjoy his illusory freedom. The effect of this is to increase, not

1 - The Holy Father, pp. 140-41.
2 - Positive Preaching, pp. 55-56.
reduce, man's resistance to grace. The more necessary forgiveness becomes, the more difficult is it for man to accept it. This is true not only because of natural intransigence, but because we are often so unwilling to forgive ourselves that we refuse to allow God to forgive us as well.

"The natural man is a misus against God, against a God he cannot but feel. And the world's treatment of Christ shows that the higher and better God's will for us is, the more man repudiates, rebels, and fights against it. The authority which is really in question is the will of God. It is personal. And that is why our personality resents it."1

We seldom realise our true position in respect to God. Whereas we may prefer to think of ourselves as helping to bring the Kingdom, and even perhaps as cooperating on a minor scale with God in His great work, a realistic view would show that we are pleading for our very life. The most important question we can ask is, 'How do I stand before my judge?'2 Every day is one of parole. Thus we find ourselves in the position of a criminal pleading for undeserved mercy. God's wrath has justly been aroused: judgment is necessary and inevitable, lest His holy law be abrogated. That is the critical truth which we must understand. This is the position in which man, as unredeemed, stands before His God. Is it not natural for him to fight against God's judgment, which is a consuming fire, burning out man's pride and arrogance? Even with good intentions man obstructs the will of God. Therefore only one great, personal act, involving every man in the race, and final for all time, will right the balance, and restore man to communion with God. God's holiness is at stake; but so is man's:

"The central concern of religion is God's holy restoration of personal holiness to the guilty conscience of the race."3

The holiness of man is not the same as the holiness of God, it must here be

1 - Ibid, p. 70.
2 - The Principle of Authority, p. 45.
3 - Ibid, p. 74.
added; but it is essential that man's holiness be restored for the sake of God's as well. Holiness in man does not mean sinlessness, for man cannot avoid sinning as long as he is man. It means, rather, perfection as a man - human perfection - which is on a lower scale than God's but necessary nonetheless. Forsyth deals with this problem in *Christian Perfection*, where he says:

"The Church to-day is not a company of the sanctified, but of the justified.... They are but spiritual adults, not spiritual heroes. .... They are not all ideal characters. So are not even beautiful. But they will become so in time or eternity."\(^1\)

What man needs is a complete reversal of the process by which, in his guilt, he has become increasingly separated from God. The only hope lies in a justification, the need of which he is too blind to acknowledge, and over which he can exert no control. Only that which restores God's holiness can redeem man from the destruction toward which rebellion leads him with relentless agony and despair.

It remains to be shown how one may view the religious situation in the same manner as Forsyth. How did he arrive at this particular starting point - at this perspective of the universe? In briefest language, it was through revelation. Nothing which the intellect can achieve by itself will lead to such a theocentric position as this, to say nothing of this conception of holiness. Only that which is revealed from without can bring us to this point. Yet, the term, 'revelation,' is insufficient in itself. In the first place, it is a general term, and therefore meaningless except when specifically applied. More important, however, is the fact that only one revelation, that which comes in the person of Christ, is sufficient for

---

\(^1\) Christian Perfection, p. 103. See also, The Christian Ethic of War, 1916, p. 56.
our needs. In one of his earlier writings, Forsyth stresses the fact that "a real Revelation must be historic, and its power personal."¹ There is no revelation, strictly speaking, in Nature, whose "idea is harmony, not reconciliation."² Nor is it to be found in natural piety, since that which is natural to the heart is sin, not grace.³ Finally, philosophic idealism will reveal no such revelation as we require, simply because it separates the principle of divine Sonship from that of the person of Christ.⁴ It is not ideas which make possible this revelation, but power: the power of God to redeem us from sin. It will be seen, then, that one can understand Forsyth's attitude only by sharing in the active experience which produces it. The viewpoint results from, and does not produce, the sense of redemption. Revelation and Redemption are, for Forsyth, complementary terms (or better, facts) associated with the person of Christ.

It is Christ who reveals the holiness of God, and it is this holiness which makes sin guilt. Until we know Christ - or, more correctly, are known by Him - we shall never comprehend the depths of our sin, the insidiousness of our guilt, or even the holiness of God. In short, without this Revelation we shall always be rebels, yet unmindful of the nature of our offence. It takes the Cross, which in Forsyth's opinion is the final seat of authority, to reveal the crisis of God and man. Put in other terms, Forsyth's school of thought is as follows:

"It begins not with the problem of history, but with the revelation in history, not with a problem that revelation may solve, but with a crisis that revelation creates. Its problem is not Adversity but Guilt. It starts with Christ, not as a Symbol of man's aspiration,

¹ - Faith and Criticism, p. 99.
² - Ibid, p. 100.
³ - Ibid, pp. 100-01.
⁴ - Ibid, pp. 102-03.
or the hero of his resources, but as the Incarnation of God's purpose.... He is the centre of a system of Grace and Sin."

Only through Revelation can we realise the Crisis which Christ has brought: the enunciation of sin and guilt, and the necessity arising therefrom of a personal decision for or against Him. That which accomplished the reconciliation and atonement has opened our eyes to our needs. Natural man cannot possibly see the situation in this way; nor can any theologian whose preoccupation is with man rather than God.

Revelation is both historic and personal. As a student of Ritschl, Forsyth might be expected to emphasise the historical aspect of Christianity as well as the personal. But to be merely historical would be to fall into the danger of an abstraction as great as the gnostic error. Furthermore, it was through personal experience that Forsyth arrived at his theological position, not through a philosophical system. His theology is an active, vital one, and accordingly he can never assume the position of a disinterested observer when it is a question of religious insights. Thus, it is dangerous to think of his attitude in terms of a point of view: it is within the context of his total experience that he conceives the notion of a holy God. The word, 'action,' recurs often in his writings. Sin, revelation, prayer, and grace are active rather than ideal. Action and participation are vital elements in his thought, and one who approaches Forsyth from the purely contemplative viewpoint is not likely to share his opinions. This implies the important role which experience plays in the shaping of

2 - E.g., "holiness is action, and not mere process" (The Justification of God, p. 191). "Existence is not a quantity; nor is it a procession; but is an act" (The Principle of Authority, p. 208). "Faith is man's greatest moral act, as Grace is God's" (The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 332.)
his ideas. Though not a pragmatist, he is interested in the experimental method. He can speak of Revelation only because he has experienced it in his own life; of sin, only through having known its effects upon himself; of Redemption, because he has realized it personally and refuses to believe that what has altered his life completely can be illusory.

It is not, however, experience itself which is important; rather, it is the content of that experience which yields wisdom. In itself experience can render no criteria for judgment: "Experience is the method but not the measure of faith." For example, the experience of suffering, while important, is neither good nor bad save in regard to the end it serves. Likewise in the case of sympathy, which taken by itself is too subjective, too impressionistic. Experience serves as the carrier of Revelation. Though not the Revelation, without it Revelation would be impossible.

Forsyth's religious conversion, whereby he "was turned from a Christian to a believer," was so powerful that it altered the course of his life and thought. Because of this he attributes to the experience an objective validity which those of less experience may marvel at but hardly comprehend. Not the experience as such, but the content, had validity for him. Writing of it he states,

"I know God has made life out of my shipwreck. That is my experience .... I have only been saved by something which, in the same act, also saved the world. It took a world's salvation to save me.... And this God (Who saved the world) has told me how to act. He has told me to treat every man as saveable." 4

Although he is obscure in his theory of the solidarity of the race, and

1 - "For Christianity the Absolute is not in an idea but in an experience" (The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 249).
2 - The Justification of God, p. 88.
3 - Positive Preaching, p. 282.
4 - Missions in State and Church, pp. 340-41.
more closely approaches the idealism of Hegel than at any other point, we may infer from his writings three ways in which the theory might be supported: The first is by the means of history. If the apostles and early leaders of the Church were falsely inspired by the Spirit, then Christians have been the greatest dupes in the history of mankind. The second is through the objective fact of his own life-change. Knowing the reality of the change within himself, he reasons that the same must have been the experience of others whose beliefs had been shaken and renewed in this unforgettable manner. The third argument is philosophical, and rests in the idea of the New Humanity created by Christ. In Christ's Cross there is solidarity, established at a specific moment of time. In the redemption of man, Christ created the new race, of which we are each members.

Forsyth places great emphasis upon the value of struggle and travail in the gradual development of spiritual maturity. Inclined to look with scepticism upon a religious faith too easily acquired, he feels that one important weakness in the modern Church is its pale sort of religion which has minimised tumultuous conflict in the soul. Only through a long and exhausting battle had he come to understand Christianity as he did. Perhaps a little unfairly he differentiates between the two types of believers in this manner:

"There are men and women whose faith from their early years is simple, ready, and sure. They are not the victims of a deadly struggle. It is not theirs to clear a path with spiritual agony from darkness into light, and rise from despair into faith and hope. But that is the heavy destiny of many another.... Is the faith of the twice born worth no more than that of the once-born? Surely no. He who has fought his way to the light has a grasp and sinew denied to the other's gentle trust, and a power to lift others to his side. He knows the ground he has covered with armed vigilance as the cheery traveller does not.... And to the faith of the warrior a whole world of deep significance and rich association lies open...."

1 - Forsyth: Christ on Parnassus, 1911, p. 83.
If Forsyth is right - and there are many Christians who would support him in this contention - the only way to arrive at his point of view is through an active religious experience similar to his. It is not to be thought that such an experience need be a sudden and abrupt conversion, however. Quite the contrary: Forsyth appears to have been sceptical about the finality of such an experience in many cases. But it must be the kind of experience in which one knows his whole life to be at stake. It may be abrupt or painfully slow, extending, perhaps, over the period of a lifetime. But it is only through such a revelation that one can understand that dreadful seriousness of the religious situation: to comprehend as Forsyth did what man's guilt meant to God, and to see why Atonement was essential to the holiness of God and man alike.

Through the experience of personal redemption Forsyth arrives at his principle of religious authority. This topic, which will be dealt with at more length in the final chapter, is of paramount importance, as Forsyth stresses throughout his writings. He asks again and again what assurance we can have that the Revelation is objective and not merely a gigantic fraud perpetrated on wistful believers. In an early passage he reveals the dilemma of Christians should their faith be misguided:

"...by including what it shall be. And what it shall be is a question that can be answered only by appeal to the power that has it in hand. If that power be love, we are immortal.... But if that power be not love, if force has in it no revelation of a greater than itself, of moral nature and spiritual quality, then we are not immortal, and we are of creatures most miserable; because, being the most insignificant of all, we were tortured with dreams of an infinite wrath which made us battle for the true and the just, only in the end to be sealed within the iron hills or blown about with the dust of the desert."

That there is such a power, revealed in Jesus Christ, is not a principle of

thought but a datum of experience. That which has occurred in one's own
history is objective fact; it must be treated as such. The certainty of
Christianity lies in the action of Christ the Redeemer upon the individual
Christian:

"There is, and can be, nothing so certain to me as that which is
involved in the most crucial and classic experience of my moral
self, my conscience, my real, surest me.... The test of all
philosophy is ethical conviction. That is where we touch reality
- in moral action .... and especially in that action of the moral nature
which renews itself in Christ. Now, my contention is that my contact with
Christ is not merely visionary, it is moral, personal, and mutual....
Because what I have in Christ is not an impression, but a life change."¹

"If certainty do not lie there, where can it be found in life?....
Does the last criterion lie in sense, or even in thought? Is it not
in conscience?.... Do not forget that philosophy is but a method,
while faith, which is at the root of theology, presents us with a
new datum, a new reality."²

Of vital importance to Forsyth's reasoning is his differentiation between
impression and action. He holds faith to be an act: man's only correct
response to grace, which in turn is an act. An idea of grace, or an idea
of faith, is incomplete. As idea, it does not involve the whole of personal­
ity, the whole of life. Any change which may occur as a result of such an
idea will do so only in the mind; the will remains unaffected. Thus, an
idea about faith would be an impression; but faith itself is more than this.

It is action on the moral level.

Christian certainty rests not upon rational proofs, which have
little place here, but rather upon a faith in which the very life is in­
volved.

"Faith is the grand venture in which we commit our whole soul and
future to the confidence that Christ is not an illusion but the reality
of God."³

¹ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 197.
² - Ibid, p. 199.
³ - Ibid, p. 205.
It is this personal faith upon which Forsyth bases the whole of his theology. The doctrine of the Atonement, his Christological thought, and his theory of the Church all rest upon the certainty which comes to him through his own experience of forgiveness. Thus, we can understand the vital significance of the starting-point — of his notion of reality. Because he starts with the intimate experience of redemption, and draws from it all his important theological conclusions, we cannot adequately comprehend the significance of his thought unless we have some understanding of the nature of his own experience. Everything turns on it. If the final seat of authority lies in the Cross, the understanding of that Cross can come only through the experience of forgiveness implicit in it.

It is necessary, then, to read Forsyth not only as a theologian, but primarily as a devoted and humble Christian. It is as an evangelical liberal that he must be considered; else he will appear to be only a prophet, or only a poet, or only a theologian, but not all of these together. His ideas are far from abstract: if he uses antitheses, he does so with a purpose, which is to convey to the hearts of his readers the underlying crisis in man's relationship to God, and God's demands upon us.

1 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 10.
CHAPTER FIVE

- THE NEED FOR ATONEMENT -
The guilt by which man has become so corrupted, and which has affected God as well, must somehow be removed. The essential fact is that natural man is no longer in communion with his Creator, Who desires that the relationship should be restored. Yet communion with God is impossible so long as man's insidious offence remains unrecognised by him. God desires reconciliation, but He can neither reconcile nor be reconciled until His holiness is confessed, or praised, by man; and if man is to confess the holiness of God, he must confess his own guilt as well. Therefore, it is essential that any system of theology have an adequate theory of Atonement. Otherwise the system will collapse. "Every religion or system is to be measured by its interpretation of the cross."¹ In Forsyth's opinion the central fact of history, of personal experience, and of theology is the Cross. "Do not turn from the awful horror of the Cross," he writes, "or you will lose the solemn power of it."² It is in the Cross that

¹ Religion in Recent Art, op. cit., p. 114.
² The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, 1901, p. 77.
he finds the reconciliation of the two attitudes which were in opposition in his own mind early in his ministry: the orthodox and the liberal. It is in the Cross that he finds the explanation of Incarnation and Resurrection. It is here that he discovers the meaning of obedience. In his emphasis upon the Cross he adds a new dimension to the contemporary interpretation of the Fatherhood of God. Even Christian social action has its charter in Christ's obedience unto death on the Cross. Unfortunately Forsyth wrote no definitive work on the Atonement. The Cruciality of the Cross consists of essays and addresses which he revised and bound together under this title, but it is neither consistently developed nor uniformly excellent. It is most valuable for its many penetrating insights into the nature of the problem; taken as a unit it is not one of his best books. The Work of Christ makes a more important contribution to the subject; yet it, too, is a series of lectures copied in shorthand and later revised by the author before publication. Had he developed certain points in these two books, incorporating with them ideas which he barely mentions in his contribution to The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, we might have one of the classic treatments of the theme. Lacking this, it becomes necessary to reconstruct and systematise his thought by drawing from many sources, in order that we may present a view of The Atonement which must have been very clear in his own mind. The dangers of such a reconstruction are obvious: it is very difficult, if not impossible, to approach another man's ideas without certain presuppositions which seem likely to condition one's conclusions. The attempt must be made, however, for as it now stands, Forsyth's view of the Atonement appears ambiguous and confusing.

We have noted that the basic problem is the restoration of communion between man and God. We have seen that Forsyth is concerned not only with the wounded holiness of God, but also with the crippled spirit of
man as well. The problem in any theory of the Atonement is to see how, through the Cross, the holiness of God has been revealed and the guilt of man removed. In *The Work of Christ* Forsyth emphasises the word 'Reconciliation,' which (at that date at least), he prefers to 'Atonement.' The problem is one of reconciliation: somehow the alienation of man and God must be destroyed:

"The distinction I ask you to observe is between a change of feeling and a change of treatment.... God's feeling toward us never needed to be changed. But God's treatment of us, God's practical relation to us - that had to change.... The question is as to the nature of the change."¹

This distinction is important, for it indicates the indivisibility of God's love, which is never abrogated by His judgment. His love is never in question: despite all our sin He loves us. But the form which love had to take because of our guilt was judgment; and for this reason the relationship of God to man had become that of judge to criminal.

At this point we see the significance of Forsyth's distinction between a theology which is impressionistic and one which is objective. To the impressionist, God's feelings would be fundamental; to Forsyth, these feelings are unalterable. They remain the same, but assume the form appropriate to man's treatment of His holiness. Therefore something else is needed: an objective act. While feelings are subjective, relationships are not. Interest must be concentrated on that which is objective, since it is there alone that reconciliation, atonement, and redemption are possible. Forsyth declares that

"....God needed no placation, but He could not exercise His kindness to the prodigal world, He certainly could not restore communion with its individuals, without doing some act which permanently altered the relation."²

This relationship, which must be changed, can be viewed as well from man's side:

"Our chief natural legacy from the past is distance and alienation from God. The chief problem of the present...is to reduce and destroy that. It is reconciliation. But reconciliation is no aesthetic, or educational, or impressionist affair. It is not a revival.... It means changing a whole race's relation to God."¹

Despite Forsyth's seeming preoccupation with God's offended love, he has more to say about the effect of rebellion upon man than upon God, and he stresses man's desperate need for reconciliation. His interest in Atonement comes from his awareness of the weight of sorrow which most men must bear throughout their lives.

"Our supreme need from God....is not the education of our conscience, nor the absorption of our sin, nor even our reconcilement alone, but our redemption."²

In a typical epigram he states, "What the Cross must save is not human nature, but human lostness."³ This remark, though compelling, reveals Forsyth's weakness for picturesque language which does not always convey the clear meaning of his thought, for certainly when he writes of racial sin he intends more than a mere condition of lostness. However, there is this to notice in the epigram; in his reference to lostness he clearly means a relationship, not merely an idea.

Any reconciliation between man and God must take place on the scale of the race, declares Forsyth. While admittedly the individual is of the utmost importance, his salvation depends upon that of the whole of mankind.

¹ - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 18.
² - Positive Preaching, p. 56. See also p. 153.
³ - The Principle of Authority, p. 294.
"A soul can neither be saved nor sanctified without a world. To redeem the sin must be destroyed, a universe reorganised."¹

There is no assurance that the salvation of one soul would mean that all are saved, whereas any act which reconciles the race will guarantee the forgiveness of every member. Furthermore, only if this be a universal redemption can it be in any sense final. Atonement must cover racial guilt or none.

The power to redeem rests in the Creator. He must have foreseen the possibility of man's disobedience, and therefore must have been prepared to redeem him.

"There was never such a fateful experiment as when God trusted man with freedom. But our Christian faith is that He well knew what He was about.... If the first creation drew on might, the second taxed His all-might. It revealed His power as moral majesty, as holy omnipotence, most chiefly shown in the mercy that redeems and reconciles. Man is born to be redeemed. The final key to the first creation is the second; and the first was done with the second in view...."²

"...God would have created no man free to sin had He not known Himself to possess the power to redeem the creature He made. The whole resource of the Almighty did not go to create. The greater part was in reserve to save."³

It is this power in reserve, as well as the assurance that God's abiding grace can and will restore man to communion with Him once again, that makes possible the belief in Reconciliation.

Yet, Reconciliation is impossible without atonement to God's holy love. His conscience must be satisfied by one means or another. Reconciliation must rest on Atonement; the one is the end; the other, the means. Forsyth stresses the necessity of conceiving Reconciliation, Atonement, and Redemption as aspects of a single act. In order that there may be a Recon-

¹ - The Holy Father, p. 25.
³ - The Principle of Authority, p. 230.
ciliation, God's conscience must be satisfied; but concurrently man must be redeemed, for otherwise there can be no true reconciliation. This leads us back once again to the question of holiness:

"The more ethically we construe the Gospel the more are we driven upon the holiness of God. And the deeper we enter that sacred ground the more we are seized by the necessity (for the very maintenance of our spiritual life) of a real and objective atonement offered to a holy God by the equal and satisfying holiness of Christ upon the conditions of sin and judgment."¹

Unless God's injured love is atoned, there can be neither reconciliation nor redemption, for the key to man's freedom lies in his relationship to God. Yet the only reason that atonement is necessary is that God is holy. Were there not the fact of holiness, were God's love other than holy, atonement would not be essential. God could then forgive without regard to judgment.

"The great problem in connection with atonement is not simply to show how it was necessary to the fatherly love, but how it was necessary to a holy love, how a holy love not only must have it but must make it.... Without a holy God there would be no problem of atonement...."²

We see here how important the conception of holy love is in Forsyth's theology: it is this which gives his system its objectivity. Those who object to his repetitious use of the term fail to realise its significance as the one means of unifying what otherwise would seem a diffuse and disconnected theological structure. To discard his idea of holiness is to undercut the whole of Forsyth's contribution to an understanding of the Atonement.

Reconciliation rests upon atonement not only so far as God is con-

---

1 - Positive Preaching, p. 373.
2 - The Work of Christ, pp. 79-80.
cerned, but also in respect to man. Man cannot be certain that his guilt has been removed unless he believe in an objective atonement. Reconciliation without atonement can no more satisfy man's conscience than God's. "Nothing short of holiness could save the people from their sin," writes Forsyth. 1 Man depends upon the Holy Father, and must himself somehow become holy. Holiness in man, be it remembered, differs from holiness in God; it means, according to Forsyth, perfection on the scale of humanity. Man can be restored to this holiness only through an atonement which at once guarantees the holy law of God and cleanses man of sin. How else can we be sure that God has forgiven, that sin cannot win the final verdict, and that we as a race have been restored to communion with God? If we feel ourselves judged by conscience, how can we be satisfied that God's grace is final unless He has judged our sin and removed its power? Atonement is essential to our faith, and as atonement it must be objective and final.

"A man needs something to make him confident that his past sin, and the sin that he is yet sure to commit, are all taken up into God's redemption, and the great transaction of his moral life is done. The real complete forgiveness is the appropriation of the world's atonement." 2

Atonement of a Holy God requires holiness on the part of man. This raises another serious problem: because man is the guilty one, it is he who must atone. Yet being guilty, he can never be sufficiently holy to comprehend his guilt and confess it. Forsyth continually repeats the necessity for an adequate atonement, an adequate holiness. Mere confession is insufficient, for

"...nothing can hallow Holiness but Holiness, nothing else can satisfy it, nothing else can save. God's holy name must be saved that the sinner may be - and saved by an all-holy peer." 3

1 - Missions in State and Church, p. 232.
2 - The Cruciality of the Cross, pp. 46-47.
3 - The Work of Christ, p. 123.
"There is only one thing that can satisfy the holiness of God, and that is holiness - adequate holiness.... (The) only adequate confession of a holy God is perfectly holy man. Wounded holiness can only be met by a personal holiness upon the scale of the race, upon the universal scale of the sinful race, upon the eternal scale of the holy God who was wounded."¹

Such atonement must be complete in every way, for "there is no sin excluded from atonement."² Furthermore, it must be something other than mere pain or suffering, neither of which in itself is sufficient to meet the requirements. By obedience alone can man atone; pain, suffering, and penalty have meaning only within this context: "But a holy God could be satisfied by neither pain nor death, but by holiness alone. The atoning thing is not obedient suffering, but suffering obedience."³

There is this further requirement in an objective atonement: namely, that it be actualised within human history. It must be an act, an event, and not merely an idea or a principle. It is not something to be announced, but something to be done. Only thus can man's actual, historic guilt be dealt with; only thus can he know that he has been forgiven.

"The sinner's reconciliation to a God of holy love could not take place if guilt were not destroyed, if judgment did not take place on due scale, if the wrath of God did not somehow take real effect. ....The vindication, the judgment, must take place within human history and experience. It must take place in terms of human history, by human action, in a place, at some point, on a due scale and with adequate depth.... The idea of judgment is not complete without the idea of a crisis, a day of judgment."⁴

Such are the requirements for a reconciliation of the Holy Father and sinful man. Atonement alone will not suffice: it must be an atonement of the Holy by holiness. It must be actual; it must take place within the lifetime of real men; it must be made by man. It cannot be made by an individual merely,

1 - Ibid, p. 156.
2 - Ibid, p. 205.
3 - Ibid, p.
4 - Ibid, p. 132-33.
for it must represent the entire human race. It must be complete, covering all sins. What could ever thus atone for all mankind?

Atonement must be made by man; or at least it must come from man's side and not God's. This is fundamental. Nor can it be but an act whereby God transfers the accounts from one side of the ledger to the other. Yet such a task as that which is demanded is beyond the powers of any normal man to accomplish. "Man can contribute nothing to his own salvation."¹ The heart of Forsyth's teaching is to be found here. He argues that if man were capable of restoring the family relationship, God's sovereignty would not only be threatened but lost, and that we should cease to reverence the Father - having no longer any need of Him.

"It is at once easier and harder for God to forgive than man. Harder, because He is holy and feels the wound; easier, because He is holy and feels the moral power. In any case it is beyond us. It involves a sacrifice which costs more than sin-struck souls could pay. Sin steadily maims the sense of holiness and the power to sacrifice to it.... If we could satisfy the moral power we disturbed, our insufferable self-satisfaction would de-range it straightway.... We may sorrow and amend, but we cannot atone and reconcile."²

It follows that although man must atone, he cannot do so. Not only has he insufficient power, but because of sin he is unable to see the necessity for this deed. Can a third party intervene in such a case? No, for then it would not be man atoning and confessing his own sinfulness, which is a vital aspect of atonement. Therefore we are faced with a dilemma.

"God could not be reconciled by man nor by one neither God nor man. The only alternative, therefore, is that God should reconcile Himself."³

We are forced to this conclusion only because no other means of reconciliation remains possible. God cannot forget; man cannot atone; no

---

¹ - Rome, Reform and Reaction, p. 238.
² - The Holy Father, pp. 31–33; also, p. 34.
³ - The Work of Christ, p. 103.
disinterested agent can fulfil the needs of atonement. If God could forgive without judgment, the problem would not arise, but Forsyth contends that love without judgment is unthinkable.

"Do not think of God's judgment as an arbitrary infliction, but as the necessary reaction to sin in a holy God. There alone do you have the divine necessity of the cross in a sinful world - the moral necessity of judgment." 1

If there must be judgment, atonement is unavoidable. It is impossible for God simply to forget, leaving man the opportunity of making a new beginning without any kind of judgment.

"Do let us take the holiness of God centrally and seriously, not as an attribute isolated and magnified, but as God's very essence and nature, changeless and inexorable. The holiness of God is a deeper revelation in the Cross than His love; for it is what gives His love divine value. And it is meaningless without judgment. The one thing He could not do was simply to wipe the slate and write off the loss. He must either inflict punishment or assume it." 2

"The past cannot be erased, cannot be altered, cannot be repaired. There it stands. It can only be atoned; and never by us." 3

There are two reasons why the past cannot be forgotten, both of which relate to the conscience: Firstly, God's holiness could never so easily be satisfied, nor could his conscience forget so long as sin remained unjudged. Secondly, we ourselves should not feel that sin had been removed. Our conscience would not be free, and therefore the taint would remain.

It becomes clear that if there be Atonement, "the initiative rests entirely with God." 4 Here lies the greatest of Christian mysteries: the problem of grace. It is because of the seeming impossibility of so illogical an act as God's self-reconciliation that many people shrink from a positive theology. Theology must contend that,

"The Holy Father is one who does and must atone.... As Holy Father He is the eternal Father and maker of sacrifice no less than of man.

---

1 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 29.
2 - Ibid., p. 98.
3 - The Holy Father, pp. 34-35.
4 - Positive Preaching, p. 212.
He offers a sacrifice rent from His own heart. It is made to Him by no third party...but by Himself in His Son; and it is made to no foreign power, but to His own holy nature and law.\textsuperscript{1}

"God alone could fulfill for us the holy law He never broke, and pay the cost He never incurred."\textsuperscript{2} By Forsyth's own test the language in the second quotation, above, is ambiguous: such words as 'law' and 'cost' must be interpreted figuratively. Far better is the following statement:

"The sinner's reconcilement with a holy God could only be effected by God. And I press the effectuation of it... (With) God to will is to do; and the God who willed man's salvation must himself effect it - not accept it, and not contrive it, but effect it. Only he who had lost us could find us, only he who was wronged could forgive, only the Holy One satisfy His own holiness. To forgive He must redeem. Fully to forgive the guilt he must redeem from the curse. And only the creator knew the creature so as to redeem... Only God himself with us, and no creature of His, could meet the soul's last need, and restore a creation undone."\textsuperscript{3}

Such an interpretation of Redemption creates certain ambiguities: Atonement must be made by man, yet cannot be. No third person can effect it. Therefore, it has to be made by God. Yet, how can God, atoning Himself, really perform the task which must necessarily be borne by man, the sinner? This is the point where Christology and Atonement merge, for the only answer to this problem is to be found in the person and work of Christ. It is through Christ that atonement is made and reconciliation accomplished. Christ as Lord confesses God's holiness; Christ as Man confesses man's guilt. In this way God atones, and fulfills the requirements of a true and final reconciliation. This means that God must have become immanent at one point in history. It is well to stress the fact that Forsyth never contends that God is purely transcendent, despite his attacks upon the New Theology.

"If the Creator could not have become immanent in creation His infinity would have been curtailed by all the powers and dimensions

\textsuperscript{1} The Holy Father, pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{3} The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 85.
of space. And if immanence could not pass by a new act into incarnation then God would have been lost in his world, and the world lost to God."

The need for atonement is plain. The fundamental problem is that of reconciliation, for although God's feeling toward man is unchanging, His treatment has been conditioned by man's sin. The relationship of communion, broken by the arrogance of mankind as a race, needs to be restored; but this is impossible without atonement. God's holiness must be satisfied; likewise man's conscience demands an objective atonement. Such atonement must, and yet cannot, be made by man; for holiness demands an adequate holiness to satisfy it. Therefore reconciliation must be initiated by God, and God will have to atone Himself through the person of Christ the God-man. This is the position at which Forsyth arrives.

First, however, it is important to recognise the elements in Atonement theory which Forsyth rejects. In two of his writings he makes specific reference to notions with which he cannot agree, as follows: For one thing, states Forsyth,

"We have outgrown the idea that God has to be reconciled.... (The) satisfaction made by Christ, no less than the sacrifices of the law, flowed from the grace of God, and did not procure it."

Atonement is not made to a passive God; the reconciliation takes place between two active parties. The continuity between Old Testament sacrifice and the expiatory death of Christ is often stressed by Forsyth. In reading his criticisms of points of view no longer tenable, we are reminded of similar comments made by Baldwin Brown.

Secondly, Forsyth repudiates any view which maintains that the

2 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, 1900, pp. 64-72; The Cruciality of the Cross, pp. 40 ff.
3 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 64.
"Redemption cost the Father nothing.... We realise more clearly that the Son could not suffer without the Father suffering."\(^1\) The Father did not suffer in the same way as the Son: His was not the actual suffering of physical death. He did not suffer as did the Son, but with the Son. Any view which maintains less than this robs the Atonement of any real meaning, and fails to satisfy our requirements as well as God's. It makes Atonement hardly more than a transaction, and does not answer questions related to the necessity of Incarnation and Resurrection.

Forsyth also excludes all quantitative connotations from the doctrine of Atonement:

"We have outgrown the idea that Christ took our punishment in the quantitative sense of the word.... (What) fell upon Him was not the equivalent punishment of sin, but the due judgment of it, its condemnation. But we are also returning to see that what He bore was sin's condemnation, and not a mere sympathetic suffering."\(^2\)

The weakness of an equivalence-theory lies in its substitution of justice for judgment. The danger of an uncritical rejection of such a theory lies in its failure to see the tragic horror of the Cross for Christ.

Two errors are complementary, though they express opposite extremes of thought: One holds that it was easy for God to forgive - that forgiveness is "natural" for Him. This is the modern liberal viewpoint. At the other extreme is the opinion that forgiveness cost God almost more than even He could bear, and that it was not until Christ came to take the penalty of sin that God could forgive.\(^4\) In either case the error is obvious.

---

1 - Ibid.
2 - Ibid, p. 65.
3 - Ibid, p. 66.
4 - Ibid, p. 67.
Another opinion, associated with the thought of Anselm, contends that satisfaction had to be made to God's wounded honour, or to His punitive justice.\textsuperscript{1} But, declares Forsyth, it is not God's honour which was at stake, but His holiness. Nor did God need to inflict punishment for its own sake. 'Penalty' is a far better word than 'punishment'. Although he considers Anselm's contribution to have been both necessary and valuable, Forsyth is opposed to any modern attempts to think of Atonement in terms of honour, because that leads to a splitting of God's nature into attributes. It is God Who requires atonement, not His attributes.

Allied to this view is one in which the Atonement is framed in terms of a strife of attributes within the Godhead:

"We can no longer speak of a strife of attributes in God the Father, justice set against mercy, and judgment against grace, till an adjustment was effected by the Son."\textsuperscript{2}

It is not a question of a struggle within God's nature, for the unity of God was never at stake. Rather, it is a question of man's relation to Him. It is that relationship which must be changed, not the various aspects of God's own personality at war with one another.

Still another view which Forsyth cannot accept is that which attempts to separate Christ's life from His works:

"We can no longer separate Christ's life of obedience from His expiatory death. He was obedient, not simply in death, but unto death."\textsuperscript{3}

The whole of Christ's life and teachings must be interpreted by His death on the Cross. There is a sense in which the theory of Atonement must cover the whole life of Jesus as well as His final act of reconciliation.

\textsuperscript{1} - Ibid. See also, The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 41; The Work of Christ, p.135.
\textsuperscript{2} - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{3} - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 69.
Nor can we dispense with all theories and be satisfied with the fact alone:

"we are leaving behind us....the hazy idea that we have the fact of the Atonement and that no theory need be sought or can be found. The fact of the Crucifixion does not depend on theory, but a fact like the Atonement can be separated from theory of some kind only by a suffusion of sentiment on the brain, some theological anaemia, or a scepticism of the spiritual intelligence."

This, of course, is another of the author's blows at the growing liberalism of the day (it was written approximately seven years before the New Theology controversy); but its relevance is apparent even yet.

A further element which is unacceptable to Forsyth is the view "That any adequate treatment of this great and solemn theme can rest on the basis of a merely personal experience." This is an important point to notice, for it indicates one of the crucial aspects of his philosophy of religion. Without personal experience there can be no valid religious belief; yet personal experience does not guarantee validity. Any theory of the Atonement which is based upon personal experience alone will be subjective, impressionistic, and individualistic. Either the Atonement is objective or it is valueless. It cannot be left at the mercy of the individual, no matter how pious or sincere he may be.

Similarly, we must not think that expiation and forgiveness are mutually exclusive: e.g., "If a sin has been expiated the account is cleared; there is then no need of forgiveness or question of grace." Such a view of the Atonement makes it nothing more than a transaction. The two aspects are, according to Forsyth, inextricably bound up with each other.

1 - Ibid, p. 70.
3 - Ibid, pp. 71-72.
there can be no forgiveness; it is simply a question of how the expiation may be possible.

Nor can we treat the Atonement as "a deflection of God's anger, as if the flash fell on Christ and was conducted by Him to the ground, while we stood in passive safety...." Such a view makes the Atonement an issue between God and Christ, with man only an interested spectator. Forsyth can never accept a conception which leaves man passive, for he believes that man shares in the Cross so completely that when Christ dies, man dies with Him.

Furthermore, it is not a question of the procurement of grace. Atonement has nothing to do with the mollification of God, nor does it refer to some inducement which man or a third party has offered God in order to assuage His wrath. "Procured grace is a contradiction in terms. The Atonement did not procure grace, it flowed from it." Nor is it a question of suffering: "we must not think that the value of the Atonement lies in any equivalent suffering. Indeed, it does not lie in the suffering at all but in the obedience, the holiness." Nor has it anything to do with a transfer of guilt.

It is through these wrong emphases that the theory of Atonement has been discredited in the past. Yet there are aspects of the truth in these views which must be guarded, and it is interesting to see how Forsyth reinterprets such terms as expiation, penalty, substitution, and satisfaction in his own theological system, combining elements of Dale, McLeod Campbell, and Moberly.

1 - The Cruciality of the Cross, pp. 40-41.
2 - Ibid.
3 - Ibid. See also, Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, 1900, pp. 32-33.
4 - The Cruciality of the Cross, pp. 40 ff.
5 - See nn. 170. belo.
Having distinguished the negative aspect of his thought on the Atonement, we are ready to attempt an integration of the diffuse aspects of the positive side of his doctrine, hoping thereby to make a constructive theory. It is first necessary, however, to understand the terminology which he employs in order to be able to see wherein he differs from his opponents in the terms he uses. Reconciliation depends upon an act: for grace, faith, redemption, and revelation are all active, not passive. Therefore one should always keep in mind the fact that whatever Forsyth has to say about the Atonement will be in terms of moral and personal action, and will not be framed in respect to attitudes, but to relationships between man and God.

It is necessary to distinguish between various terms, all of which combine to make a complete theory, but none of which is sufficient by itself. We must, therefore, differentiate between reconciliation, Atonement, Redemption, and Revelation; but although we must carefully analyse the meaning of each, we must bear in mind their constant interrelationship. Atonement and Reconciliation, for example, together indicate the nature of Christ's work:

"If His death was more than a martyrdom...it was atonement. In such a racial crisis we cannot dally with intermediate shades of possibility. We do not say that it was Reconciliation only. It was Atonement. For when a relation like that of God and men is altered, it is altered on both sides. And, besides, there can be no ultimate reconciliation of a race to a holy God without Atonement."  

Nor can we separate Reconciliation from Redemption:

"It is unfortunate that so many who preach reconciliation lose sight of redemption, while the preachers of redemption are apt to lose the note of reconciliation."  

1 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 67.  
Likewise Redemption is complementary to Revelation:

"Redemption is a part of Revelation. Revelation is not Revelation till it is effectual, i.e., till it come home as such. A revelation merely displayed is none."¹

Finally, Forsyth sees Atonement as an aspect of Redemption:

"Atonement is a constituent of Redemption. The thing we are to be redeemed from is not chiefly ignorance or pain, but guilt. The thing to which revelation has first to address itself is guilt. The love of God can only be revealed to sinful man as in primary relation not to lovelessness but to guilt. It can only appear as atoning love in some form of judgment."²

He states that 'Reconciliation' is a peculiarly Pauline word, while 'Atonement' is used more generally and appears in the Old Testament as well. 'Reconciliation' is a more inclusive word, but does not render the use of the other unnecessary.

"By Reconciliation Paul meant the total result of Christ's life-work in the fundamental, permanent, final changing of the relation between man and God, altering it from a relation of hostility to one of confidence and peace."³

"Atonement means the covering of sin by something which God himself had provided, and therefore the covering of sin by God Himself. It is of course not the blinding of Himself to it, but something very different.... It was the covering of sin by something which makes it lose the power of deranging the covenant relation between God and man and founds the new Humanity."⁴

The covering of sin is an idea which appears in other writings of Forsyth, and is central to his theory of Atonement. It is best developed in his final chapter of The Cruciality of the Cross ("What is meant by the Blood of Christ?") in which he discusses the continuity between the sacrificial elements of the Old Testament and the New Testament interpretation of Jesus' death. It is important to realise, he states, that in the Old Testament "the sacrifice is the result of God's grace and not its cause. It is given

1 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 80.
2 - Ibid, pp. 80-81.
3 - The Work of Christ, p. 54.
4 - Ibid, p. 55.
by God before it is given to Him. Forsyth's viewpoint is concisely worded in his answers to a questionnaire circulated by Sanday prior to the Oxford Conference on Priesthood and Sacrifice in 1899:

"Sacrifice in the Old Testament was first something shared by man with God as a meal, next something surrendered by man to God, and lastly this gift as symbolic of the surrender of the self in righteousness. It was in nature more collective than individual, and replaced the individual in the community of grace, when by his sin he had fallen from it. For the high-handed and defiant sin, sacrifice did not avail, and there remained only judgment. Old Testament sacrifice lay not in the alienation of a thing, but in the submission of self. It did not procure grace, but fulfilled the provision of grace.

"The features pass into the New Testament, and Christ's sacrifice is essentially one of will in obedience. It is corporate in nature. It combined by the judgment on sin and the offering for it. So he dealt finally with all sin and absorbed all sacrifice."

"If we look to the continua of the Old and New Testaments, I think the most important of all is this, that the typical relation of man to God is obedience, especially in its inward and spiritual form of faith. Sacrifice in both the Old and New Testaments is in its nature personal - it refers to the attitude of the heart and will towards God. Another continuum is this, that the primary relation of sacrifice in both cases is to sin, not service. Moreover, in both it is the fruit of grace and not its root."

In order that the right relationship between man and God may be restored, man's sin must be "covered" - a term which is ambiguous but hard to replace. It is this aspect of the Atonement which is carried over from the Old Testament to the New. Atonement is not an end, but a means without which the true goal (Reconciliation) could not be attained. The difference, yet inter-relationship, between the two terms is this:

"First, Christ's work is sometimes described as reconciliation. And second, reconciliation rests upon atonement as its ground. For God simply to have told or shown the evil world how much He

1 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 89.
2 - Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, pp. 11-12. See also The Work of Christ, p. 90.
3 - Priesthood and Sacrifice, pp. 92-93.
loved it would have been a most ineffectual thing. Something had to be done - judging or saving. Revelation alone is inadequate. Reconciliation must rest on atonement.  

Between Reconciliation and Atonement there must always remain this complementary relationship. Most of the errors of the past have been due to an emphasis upon one aspect of Christ's work at the expense of the other. It is in order to avoid the mistakes of the older orthodoxy, on the one hand, and the new liberalism, on the other, that Forsyth links Reconciliation and Atonement in this manner. Once again we see the importance of his theology for present needs, combining as it does the best elements of both positions. Forsyth warns against dropping either idea from the general theory of Atonement.

"First, take care that the direct fact of reconciliation is not hidden up by the indispensable means - namely, atonement.... The second caution is this. Beware of reading atonement out of reconciliation altogether." 

If he seems to place the greater stress upon the necessity for atonement - i.e., upon the judgment and holiness of God - it is in order to counteract the growing tendency of his generation to ignore the atoning aspect of Christ's work almost completely. Liberalism, which was gaining in popularity, had lost the rigorous quality of the more traditional theology, and had thereby tended to sentimentalise the whole of religion. Against this form of liberalism Forsyth waged unceasing war in such words as these:

"I say....that the reconciliation has no meaning apart from guilt which must stir the anger of a holy God and produce separation from Him. That is, the reconciliation rests upon a justification, an atonement." 

Reconciliation conceived without Atonement is subjective, he declares. It might suffice for individuals in their private relations with God, but not
for mankind as a race. It is atonement which gives reconciliation its
objectivity.

"My plea is that with no atonement, no solidary judgment of sin, you
reduce reconciliation not only to sentiment but to a piecemeal series
of individual repentances and conversions, leaving it a problem
whether the race as a whole will be saved at last. For the universal­
ity of Christianity...you must have that foregone finality which the
New Testament offers in the atonement."^1

Just as there can be no reconciliation without an atonement, so
any reconciliation which takes no account of man's side of the issue is
illusory. Reconciliation implies a complete alteration on man's side as
well as God's. It is not merely a matter of God's holiness being confessed,
but also of man's sin being forgiven. Reconciliation, therefore, is assoc­
iated with Redemption as well as with Atonement.

"What is our redemption is....also our reconciliation. If the
atoning thing is holiness (which it is), and not suffering (which
it is not), then Christ atoned by an act which created a new holiness
in us and not a new suffering."^2

This redemption is the Revelation, for it is the act whereby God reveals
Himself to man. Thus, Reconciliation, Atonement, Redemption, and Revela­
tion taken together form a complete picture of the work of Christ; while an
undue emphasis upon one aspect at the expense of the others produces a dis­
torted theory and leads to excesses which have been characteristics of
theology in the past.

The reconciling work of Christ is described concisely by Forsyth
in this dialectical fashion:

"In reconciliation the ground for God's wrath or God's judgment was
put away. Guilt rests on God's charging up sin; reconciliation
rests upon God's non-imputation of sin; God's non-imputation of sin

---
rests upon Christ being made sin for us."¹

Although the use of terms appears unfortunate here, the ideas expressed are important. We begin with sin, which, because it offends the holiness of God, is charged against us in the form of guilt. The problem of reconciliation lies in the manner in which this sin may be "covered," or atoned. The solution is to be found in the representative sacrifice of Christ, who, in the Cross, both satisfied the holy law of the Father and redeemed mankind, thereby effectively altering the relationship of man to God from that of opposition to communion.

In order to understand the nature of Forsyth's contribution to the doctrine of Atonement, we must contrast the various points of view which were current during his lifetime. During his youth Congregationalism was still largely influenced by the old ideas of Atonement, and it carried over the mistakes characteristic of former periods in the history of the Church:

"There have been ages in the Church when the attention has been so exclusively centred upon atonement that reconciliation was lost sight of. You found theologians flying at each other's throats in the interest of particular theories of atonement. That is to say, atonement had obscured reconciliation. In the same way, after the Reformation period, they dwelt upon justification until they lost sight of sanctification altogether."²

The chief difficulty with older forms of the doctrine of Atonement lies in their juridical nature. Viewed only from God's side, and based for the most part on mediaeval forms of thought, they fail to answer the problem of how Christ's death could effect a change in man. As a young man, Forsyth was impressed mainly by this negative aspect of orthodox thought, an error which led him into the perhaps ill-advised attack upon the substitutionary theory in his pastorate at Shipley.³ Later, however, he was able to see

¹ - Ibid, p. 82.
² - Ibid, p. 58.
³ - See pp. 28 ff., above.
that there is a truth in orthodoxy which liberalism had sacrificed at
great cost:

"The old theories of Atonement had it for their leading interest to
secure the righteousness of God before that of man - as the only
condition, indeed, of man's righteousness at all, or of any divine
value for it. This is the nobler side of the error which we are
now striving to undo - the separation of justification from sancti-
fication in theological thought, and the demoralisation both of
theology and religion in consequence. Man could only be set right
with God (which is his true and final righteousness) by something
which first did justice to God; whereas till quite lately modern
theories have gone to the other extreme in protest.... But it is
still true - seek first His righteousness and all human goodness
shall be added."¹

Forsyth indicates the difference between his point of view and that of
the older theology in this way:

"I should....express the difference between the old view and the
new by saying that one emphasises substitutionary expiation and
the other emphasises solidary reparation, consisting of due
acknowledgement of God's holiness, and the honouring of that and
not of His honour."²

In his treatment of the positions of Hegel and Ritschl Forsyth
deals at length with the most significant reactions against orthodox
theology. This is of particular interest to us because of the influence
which both these men (and especially Ritschl) exerted upon Forsyth in his
formative years. Looking back upon their contribution to Christian thought,
Forsyth sees that each erred in placing too great an emphasis upon reconcil-
iation at the expense of atonement.

"While they preached the doctrine of reconciliation in different
senses, they both united to obscure the idea of atonement or ex-
piation. Now we are to beware of emptying the reconciliation
idea of the idea of the atonement, whether we do it philosophically
with Hegel or theologically with Ritschl."³

¹ - The Principle of Authority, p. 418.
³ - Ibid, p. 66.
Hegel's interest had been in the primacy of the idea, which made of reconciliation a process rather than an act. But a process, states Forsyth, is immoral, whereas an act presupposes moral personality. Process operates irrespectively of responsibility and freedom; moral action requires personal will. With philosophical theology of the Hegelian type we are left at last only with the possibility of a "resigned adjustment" - quite the opposite position to that of Christianity.

"(It) often ends... in turning real reconciliation into something quite different. It becomes turned into the mere forced adjustment of man to his fate... But reconciliation becomes debased when it turns to mere resignation."\(^1\)

Opposed though Ritschl was to Hegelianism, he too made the mistake of neglecting the importance of atonement. Forsyth says of him that he believed "that only man needed to be reconciled, that God did not need any reconciliation."\(^2\) Contradicting this opinion, Forsyth states, "Reconciliation has no moral meaning as between finite and infinite."\(^3\)

If forced to make a choice between the old view and the new, Forsyth would adopt the former; but he does not believe that such a choice must be made. To avoid this dilemma he goes back to the Pauline teaching, indicating that there have been three periods in history when Paul's truth has been rediscovered. Each time a new aspect of truth has been revealed, and always at a time when Paul had been more or less forgotten by the Church at large. He speaks of the rediscoveries of Augustine, Luther, and the modern age, as follows:

"Augustine's rediscovery was this, justification by grace alone; Luther's side of the rediscovery was justification by faith alone - faith in the Cross, that is to say, faith in grace. What is our modern point of emphasis? Justification by holiness and for it alone. That is to say... reconciliation is something that comes from the whole holy God, and it covers the whole of life, and it

1 - Ibid, p. 72.
2 - Ibid, p. 75.
3 - Ibid.
is not exhausted by the idea of atonement only or redemption only. It is the new-created race being brought to permanent, vital, life-deep communion with the holy God."\(^1\)

While at first sight it may appear that Forsyth has merely substituted one term for another without thereby adding anything to the original conception, a more careful analysis of his language will reveal a difference between his view and the older ones. Without repudiating the orthodox position in its entirety, he blends it with the truth which liberalism offers - a truth as important in an adequate theory of Atonement as that which must be preserved in the older theories: namely, that no theory of Atonement is complete if man be left unreconciled to God. The concept of holiness embraces both these views; the holiness of God is guaranteed, while at the same time man is made holy in order to atone.

There are five features which a theory of Atonement must include, if Forsyth be correct. The reconciling work of Christ, he maintains, covers these aspects: 1. It is between person and person. 2. Therefore, it affects both sides. 3. It rests on atonement. 4. It is the reconciliation of the world as one whole. 5. It is final in its nature and effect.\(^2\) Although each of these has been mentioned in passing, a fuller treatment is necessary to an understanding of Forsyth's thought.

The first statement is designed to prevent three possible errors. First, we may think only in terms of the personality of God, and may, therefore, become involved in theories which think of the Atonement as settling a strife of attributes within the nature of God Himself.\(^3\) By considering Christ's work as the reconciliation of persons, we escape the danger of

---

1 - Ibid, pp. 80-81.  
2 - Ibid, pp. 65 ff.  
3 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 40.
leaving man out of the picture completely. Secondly, we may think only in philosophical terms, thereby speaking of the reconciliation of finite and infinite, temporal and eternal, etc. Forsyth insists that such reasoning is fallacious. There can be no reconciliation between a person and a principle, or between a person and a process, because persons and processes are different orders of reality. The third error— that of Ritschl—is to think of reconciliation in terms of man alone. In such a case it becomes as meaningless as the first. To counteract these tendencies Forsyth declares that reconciliation is personal. It must be a moral reconciliation or none, and it is rooted in the conscience of God and man alike. He illustrates this simply enough.

"When two friends fall out and are reconciled, it does not simply mean that one adjusts himself to the other. That is a very one-sided arrangement. There must be a mutuality." So too, in the restoration of communion between man and God there must be mutuality. This is most clearly expressed in one of his later works, wherein he writes:

"The ultimate, the fundamental, judgment is an adjustment between persons—God's and man's. It is not between a soul and a law. It is a judgment of our faith and its personal relation to the true Christian."

Reconciliation between persons has nothing to do with a process, an adjustment, a resignation to the inevitable by one side alone, or the swallowing up of one by the other.

"But moral, spiritual reconciliation, where we have personal beings to deal with, is more than fusion; more than absorption; it is communion."

"The gospel of Christ...speaks of a God to whom we are to be reconcile in a mutual act which He begins; and not of an order or process with

1 - The Work of Christ, pp. 67, ff.
2 - Ibid, p. 73.
3 - The Justification of God, p. 180.
which we are to be adjusted by our lonely act, or to which we are to
be resigned."

Remembering that Reconciliation depends upon Atonement, and that unless
sin is atoned we cannot be reconciled to God; and recalling that although
man must atone for his sin, he cannot adequately confess the holiness of
God: we are left in a serious dilemma if we insist that reconciliation
must be between person and person. Here, indeed, is one of the impossible
imperatives which we meet so often in dialectical theology; and yet we feel
that what is maintained is both necessary and true. Forsyth meets this
particular problem by combining in the nature of Christ both the personality of God and of man, thereby fulfilling in a striking manner the require­ments of the case. This subject will be considered more thoroughly in the
following chapter, but since it is inextricably connected with the problem
of atonement (Forsyth contends that the work of Christ cannot be separated
from His person), brief mention of it must be made at this point. In the
personal act of the Cross (this wording is deliberate: to Forsyth the Cross
must always be primarily an act and not a declaration) Christ combines the
functions of both parties: "So the act of Christ had this twofold aspect.
On the one hand it was God offering, and on the other hand it was man con­fessing." Reconciliation, which is effected only by the death of Christ,
is thereby solved on the only level adequate to the needs of God and man:
the personal. In Christ, where the human merges with the divine, recon­ciliation between persons is at last made possible; and here alone in
history does it occur.

Such reconciliation, being personal, must affect both sides. On
man's side it declares sin to be guilt, and thus forces a crisis upon him: a crisis which comes with the Cross, not before it. It is when man's sin is judged that he is faced with the necessity of decision.

"Reconciliation....has no meaning apart from a sense of guilt, which is involved in our justification."1

Justification there cannot be until man becomes aware of his sin, and until he recognises the holiness of God. To comprehend God's holiness is to become dreadfully aware of one's own guilt. Reconciliation, while settling the relationship between God and man, raises guilt to man's consciousness for the first time, and therefore makes him the more acutely aware of God's grace on the one hand, and his own inadequacy on the other. This is the crisis with which man is confronted by the act of reconciliation. On God's side, reconciliation means the adequate, active confession of His holiness:

"The real ground of our forgiveness is not our confession of sin, and not even Christ's confession of our sin, but His agonised confession of God's holiness, and its absorbing effect upon us."2

We must be cautious in speaking of the reconciliation of God to man: it is more correct to think in terms of man's reconciliation to God, as Forsyth indicates in various passages.

"If you say bluntly that Christ reconciled God, it is more false than true.... If we talk about Christ reconciling God in the way some do, we suggest that there was some third party coming between us and God, and reconciling God on the one hand and us on the other... God can never be regarded as the object of some third party's intervention in reconciling. If it were so, what would happen? There would be no grace."3

But, on the other hand,

"If we say that the one object was not the reconciliation of God, but the reconciliation of man to God, then it looks as if the work of Christ became only the grand heliograph from divine heights, the chief word in what I might call a language of signs...."4

---

1 - Ibid, p. 81.
3 - Ibid, pp. 87-89.
4 - Ibid, p. 100.
If reconciliation means action on God as well as upon man, there is only one way in which it can be expressed, and that is through the self-reconciliation of God - a theme which will be discussed below. That it must affect both sides is readily apparent if we think in terms of personality.

Forsyth deals extensively with the inadequacy of any theory of Reconciliation which takes no consideration of Atonement. Man can be reconciled only if he know that God's holy love has been satisfied, and such satisfaction as God requires is in the nature of an atonement.

"By atonement...is meant that action of Christ's death which has a prime regard to God's holiness, has it for its first charge, and finds man's reconciliation impossible except as that holiness is divinely satisfied."1

Reconciliation is fundamentally between God and the race, and secondarily between God and the individual. Here, one may interject, is a weakness in the theology of Forsyth which many have been quick to indicate; for he stresses racial salvation to such an extent that the individual seems somehow to have been omitted from his considerations. It is difficult to see, however, how he might have maintained his theory of Christ as creator of the new Humanity without exposing himself to such a weakness as this. Nevertheless, his argument that nothing short of a universal salvation is satisfactory to man's conscience, to say nothing of God's, is a strong one; and we do not consider a salvation of that nature to be possible through the sum of individual aggregates. Our faith is sure only if we can believe redemption to have been complete; otherwise we are beset with fears.

Forsyth justifies his position with such arguments as these:

"(The) first bearing of Christ's work was upon the race as a totality. The first thing reconciliation does is to change man's corporate

---

1 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. viii.
relation to God. Then when it is taken home individually it changes our present attitude.  

"What Christ presented to God for His complete joy and satisfaction was a perfect racial obedience. It was not the perfect obedience of a saintly unit of the race. It was a racial holiness.... He presented before God a race He created for holiness."  

In a careful distinction between collective and individual salvation, Forsyth states that  

"Salvation is personal, but it is not individual.... It is personal in its appropriation but collective in its nature.... Individualism is fatal to faith.... There is no such thing as an absolute individual."  

That which saves the world saves the individual member in it; but we cannot work in the other direction. Having within himself a past he did not create, and being influenced by all the other members of society, the individual is no less a person for being a member of that collective group.  

"Hence, to save us, to reconcile us, involves the whole race we belong to....Before God that race is an organic unity.... Hence, as the race before God is one, a personal God is able to do for the race some one thing which at the same time is good for every person in it."  

"The first charge upon Christ and His Cross was the reconciliation of the race, and of its individuals by implication."  

"Individuals could not be reconciled to a holy God until He thus reconciled the world. Not until sin had been brought to do its very worst, and had in that culminating act been foiled, judged, and overcome; not till then could individuals receive the reconciliation.... God there, in a racial holiness amid racial curse, set's up a racial salvation, which our souls enter upon by faith."  

The reconciliation of mankind as a race occurs through the Cross, and only there. Just as the race has been universally tainted by sin, so it is universally judged and redeemed in the death of Christ.  

"A judgment.... borne by God in man, in such a racial, nay cosmic,
experience as the cross of Christ...is the creation of a new conscience, and of the new ethic of the race. When Christ died, all died.... The judgment involved is one that fell on Christ once for all. It is not a judgment in individual men, but in man in Christ."

A hint of the possible elaboration of this view is given in one brief remark which, if developed, might have done much to remove Forsyth's obscurity on this point. "Christ, as it were," he writes, "put us into the eternal Church; the Holy Spirit teaches us how to behave properly in the Church." Another possible answer to the problem is to be found in his doctrine of election, which though universal, places the responsibility of acceptance upon each individual soul. It is a problem not unlike the paradox of the Kingdom, which is both with us and not yet here. The value of such a remark as that respecting the role of the Holy Spirit is that it sharpens the crisis with which each of us is faced despite the fact of Redemption already accomplished in principle. Forsyth is fond of remarking that the Church should not attempt to gain members by preaching sin to the unconverted; for it is only when people have become Christians that they realise the dreadful nature of their sin. It is the Cross which brings the crisis: first to the race, then to every member of it. Not until all men have accepted God's grace will salvation be complete in fact as well as principle; yet seen in the perspective of eternity, the power of evil utterly to corrupt God's world has been broken. We as individuals are still left, however, with the choice between Christ and Satan.

The fifth point which Forsyth stresses in regard to the reconciling work of Christ is its finality. It must be complete, in principle if not effect.

1 - The Cruciality of the Cross, pp. 29-30.
2 - The Work of Christ, p. 87.
"The last judgment is past. It took place on Christ's Cross. What we talk about as the last judgment is simply the working out of Christ's Cross in detail. The final judgment, the crucial judgment for the race took place in principle on the Cross of Christ. Sin has been judged finally there."

"The finished reconciliation, the setting up of the New Covenant by Christ, meant that human guilt was once for all robbed of its power to prevent the consummation of the Kingdom of God."

In a passage which is not characteristic (for it stresses the Resurrection, and is one of the few concrete statements which he makes upon the subject), Forsyth phrases this sentiment in a slightly different manner:

"God has, by the resurrection of Christ, regenerated us into a living hope; He has not simply given us a living hope that we may one day be regenerate... Any living hope we have is the action of Christ's resurrection in us."

This reconciliation, it must be declared, is not a declaration on the part of God to man, but an act; for only an act can save. "God does in Christ the one thing needful for the holy redemption of the race into the Kingdom!"

"It is an act of His own being.... He not only perfectly understands our case and our problem, but He has morally, actively, finally solved it."

"The power of the Atonement is that it is sacrifice relevant to sin, God's own sacrifice to His own holiness, God's own endurance of His own judgment, and His destruction of His last enemy."

This leads us to the greatest mystery of the Christian faith: one which words alone cannot adequately express. It is possible to become so involved in the handling of logical terms that one loses the sense of tragedy which pervades the Cross: the tragedy of the Holy Father who atones sin and redeems mankind only through the death of Christ. At best our language on this subject will be paradoxical; but at least it must not be allowed to

2 - Ibid, p. 78.
3 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 57.
4 - Ibid, p. 169.
5 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 33.
6 - Missions in State and Church, pp. 100-01.
obscure the faith which initiates it. In following the difficult and often obscure thought of Forsyth on the subject of God's self-reconciliation, we must keep in mind the inexplicable mystery which the author is trying somehow to convey to his readers, which leads him to say, in a manner which reminds one of Barth, "For our deserts God gave us - Christ."1 Because man could not atone, God Himself atoned. This He could do only through Christ, who, by His suffering obedience, confessed both the holiness of the Father and the sinfulness of man. Atonement depended upon the recognition of guilt and full confession by the guilty. In becoming man and yet remaining God, Christ was able to take the penalty of sin upon Himself, thereby making judgment by the Father possible. This is the self-reconciliation of God.

"Atonement for us is as impossible by us as it is necessary to holiness.... The sacrifice flows from grace and does not produce grace.... It is persistently overlooked that it is an act of grace and not of debt on God's part to accept even the satisfaction and atonement of Christ for human forgiveness."2

"And who but God could adequately confess the holiness of God? And who but the sinless could confess the sin of man? Who else but the holy could realise what it meant as sin?"3

Stated Briefly, Forsyth's theory of God's reconciling work is this: man's sin had somehow to be adequately atoned, which meant that God's holiness be confessed. This, the sinner was unable to do. Therefore, God, through the action of Christ, performed the twofold function of atonement and redemption, thereby reconciling man to Himself. This was possible only because in Christ are combined the personalities of God and man alike. Thus when Christ bore the judgment of the Father, it was mankind bearing that universal judgment; and when He confessed the Father's holiness, it

2 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, pp. 82-83.
3 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 99.
was God as man confessing. Through Christ man praised and glorified the
judgment of God upon sin. It is this which constitutes the justification
of God. In this manner alone was an adequate atonement possible.

"God's reconciliation rested upon this, that on His Eternal Son,
who knew no sin in His experience... sin's judgment fell.... God
did not judge Him, but judged sin upon His head.... It was sin
that had to be judged, more even than the sinner, in a world sal-
vation; and God made Christ sin in this sense, that God as it were
took Him in the place of sin, rather than the sinner, and judged
the sin upon Him; and in putting Him there He really put Himself
there in our place (Christ being what He was); so that the divine
judgment of sin was real and effectual. That is, it fell where
it was perfectly understood, owned, and praised, and had the
sanctifying effect of judgment, the effect of giving holiness at
last its own."

There is in this a curious note which we find also in The Justification of
God: that God's judgment must be confessed not only as necessary, but also
as right and good. The Father's judgment must have the assent - and the
praise - of man. Such an idea appears at first to be odd and whimsical,
and yet there is something important here which should be noted: once again
it demonstrates the importance of man in Forsyth's theology, and shows that
man is no mere plaything of the Creator.

It was not the suffering of Christ, nor the bearing of a penalty
by Him, which atoned: rather, it was His obedience:

"Christ's sorrow and death were a sacrifice offered by God to His
own holiness.... It was not even the death that saved, but the
living act of obedience in it. It was Christ's recognition of it
as a divine necessity, which was God Himself meeting the law of
His nature and satisfying in man His own holiness."

It is here, in God's self-reconciliation, that we find an objective atone-
ment. Any atonement made by man is subjective; only God can make an ob-
jective atonement.

"The real meaning of an objective atonement is that God Himself
made the complete sacrifice. The real objectivity of the atone-

1 - The Work of Christ, pp. 82-83.
2 - Faith and Criticism, p. 142.
ment is not that it was made to God, but by God.... Any atone-
ment made by man would be subjective, however much it might be made
for man by his brother, or by a representative of entire humanity."

To think in terms of the self-reconciliation of God is to imply
that the Father must in some way have shared the suffering of Christ. This
is what gives the Cross its most tragic quality, leading Forsyth to write:
"In the death of Jesus it was God that died." The term, 'death', applied
to God has a meaning different from that which it has when applied to man,
however, and must be interpreted figuratively in order to avoid obvious
difficulties. So too, in the case of suffering, Forsyth writes in the man-
ner of Fairbairn,

"The father did not suffer as the Son (that were too Sabellian),
but He suffered with the Son.... It cost the Father at least as
much as the Son.... Our redemption drew upon the whole Godhead.
Father and Spirit were not spectators only of the Son's agony,
nor only recipients of His sacrifice. They were involved in it." Forsyth speaks of the attraction which the Cross had even for God - an at-
traction which He felt because He saw in it the opportunity of destroying
the power of sin once and for all in that one mighty act. Such figurative
language may be warranted by the nature of the mystery, but it does little
to clarify one's understanding of the Atonement. The tragedy of redemption
is better expressed as follows:

"The collision of the Holy with the wickedness of man is more grave
than the conflict of the Almighty with crude matter, or even crude
mind. Redemption is a far more tragic thing than evolution and
its struggles.... The opposition of chaos, void and formless, was
passive, but the opposition of the creature is active. It is a
family quarrel, and they are the worst."

It remains to be indicated how Forsyth deals with such terms as
expiation, penalty, substitution, satisfaction, and representation. Ex-

---
1 - The Work of Christ, pp. 92-93.
2 - Ibid, p. 132.
3 - Missions in State and Church, op. cit., p. 29.
4 - The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, pp. 58-60.
5 - The Justification of God, p. 68.
piation is used synonymously with Atonement in one instance;\(^1\) in another case he states that it "is the condition of reconciliation."\(^2\) Of course, it is God who expiates.\(^3\)

"That final witness of holiness to holiness amid sin's last wreck, penalty, and agony - that is expiation as the Father made it in the Son, not changing His feeling, but by crisis, by judgment, eternally changing His relations with the world."\(^4\)

Expiation is also closely associated with the idea of satisfaction, a term which he holds to be essential in the theory of Atonement.

"(The) expiatory idea of Christianity which is concerned with the notion of satisfaction, is quite necessary to do justice to the conception of God as love, and to the closeness of His identification with us. It is not an outgrown notion, a relic of moral immaturity, like the patristic idea of Christ cheating Satan by His death, or even the Anselmian satisfaction of God's honour. I have sought to construe the satisfaction to a holy God as consisting only in a counterpart and equal holiness rendered under the conditions of sin and judgment."\(^5\)

The meaning of satisfaction becomes more clear in these quotations:

"(The) first principle of the Christian redemption is the holy recognition of God's wounded holiness, its holy satisfaction in Christ's holy obedience amid the last conditions of human wickedness."\(^6\)

"By satisfaction is meant no equivalency of penalty, but the adequacy of practical recognition. The idea is qualitative and not quantitative."\(^7\)

The link between satisfaction and atonement is as close as that between atonement and expiation. "What is the Atonement but the satisfaction of the conscience - God's and man's - the adjustment, the pacification, of conscience, and especially God's?"\(^8\) Sacrifice is also allied with satisfaction, being, apparently, the means whereby God's conscience is satis-

---

1 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 76.
3 - Faith and Criticism, p. 141.
4 - The Holy Father, p. 31.
5 - Positive Preaching, p. 368.
7 - The Principle of Authority, p. 460. Note.
8 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 57.
fied,1 (It must be remembered in this connection that sacrifice is initiated by God, not by man). However, it is more correct to speak in terms of representative sacrifice, for the sacrifice in itself has no value to God. Forsyth states that

"...reconciliation is effected by the representative sacrifice of Christ crucified; by Christ crucified as the representative of God on the one hand and of Humanity, or the Church, on the other."2

Such a sacrifice is connected with the judgment of God; therefore it must be termed penal, for "although Christ was not punished by God, He bore God's penalty upon sin."3

"Every remission imperils the sanctity of law unless he who remits suffers something in the penalty foregone; and much atoning suffering is essential to the revelation of love which is to remain great, high, and holy.... (If) the Cross be penal we have not only to admit that it is so, but to urge it; for it is of the essence of its value for the soul, and the real secret of the Church's action on the world."4

Sacrifice is not an end in itself, but judgment is.

"(It) is final in its nature, because it is the actual vindication of holiness and the establishment of righteousness, and beyond holiness and its victory we cannot go."5

Finally, recalling Forsyth's attack upon the Substitutionary theory in his early ministry, it is interesting to find him in support of a variation of the doctrine as early as 1899, when he remarks,

"Atonement is substitutionary, else it is none.... We may replace the word substitution by representation or identification, but the thing remains. Christ not only represents God to man but man to God.... Representation apart from substitution implies a foregone consent and election by the represented, which is not Christ's relation to humanity at all. Let us only be careful that we do not so construe the idea as to treat the sufferings of Christ as in real parity with ours.... The principle of vicarious Atonement is bound

1 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, pp. 86-87.
3 - Mid, p. 146.
4 - The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought, p. 88.
5 - Missions in State and Church, pp. 69-70.
up with the very idea of Revelation, of love emerging from guilt. There is an atoning substitution and a penal; but a penitential there is not."\(^1\)

The framework of Forsyth's theory of Atonement is summarised in *The Work of Christ*, wherein he discusses the points on which most of his contemporaries are in agreement. By stating these briefly, we may draw together the diffuse ideas presented in the preceding pages:

1. "Reconciliation is not a result of a change in God from wrath to love. It flows from the changeless will of a loving God."\(^2\)
2. It rests on the person of Christ, and is effected by His life and His death on the Cross - through His obedience to the Father's holy love.\(^3\)
3. The highest point in the work of Christ is reached in the Cross, by which all his ministry is to be interpreted.\(^4\)
4. The reconciliation is final in principle.\(^5\)

Forsyth's theory of the Atonement is especially important in an analysis of his theology because in his view the Cross is the central fact of Christianity. (When he published his address to the Second International Congregational Council in Boston, he entitled it, "The Cross the Final Seat of Authority"\(^6\)). Often he stresses the importance of the Cross to the neglect of other aspects of theology; as, for example, when he declares, "It is the Cross which carries the Gospel, not the Gospel the Cross."\(^7\) Furthermore, he believes that the Resurrection can be understood only in the light of the Cross.

"The living God who dies has destroyed my guilt, and brought me God. That is not the action of the resurrection but of the Cross. ....Without the primary theology of the Cross the resurrection of

---

4 - Ibid, p. 181.
5 - Ibid, p. 182.
7 - *The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace*, pp. 82-83.
Christ would have no more value than a reanimation.\textsuperscript{1}

Despite such overstatements as these, there is much to be gained from a study of his remarks about the centrality of the Cross, particularly in this age of sorrow and despair. "The whole world is re-constituted in the Cross as its last moral principle, its key, and its destiny," he writes in one place;\textsuperscript{2} while in another he states, "We are judged in the end by our relation to the Cross..."\textsuperscript{3} Why is the Cross central in theology? because there alone are sin and holiness brought together in complete and final opposition:

"If the real is the holy, its treatment of sin is the locus for our contact with reality, and our footing for all eternal things. And that locus is the Cross of Christ in history and experience, as the crisis of existence both human and divine."\textsuperscript{4}

The Cross is eternal. "It is no temporary expedient, no historic accident.... The Cross is God working in Christ."\textsuperscript{5} This it is which effects the reconciliation of man to God; by which man is redeemed; through which God is revealed. Forsyth speaks of the "three-fold unity of the Cross - the holy love and grace of God, and the saving judgment on sin, and the new Humanity."\textsuperscript{6} Thus in the Cross Forsyth sees revealed grace, judgment, and redemption, blended in one great act in history. The danger of such an emphasis is that the Cross may well obscure Christ Himself, the agent of salvation and reconciliation; for it was not the Cross which effected reconciliation, but Christ, who died on the Cross. Furthermore, insufficient stress is laid upon the earthly ministry of Jesus, and on the power which he demonstrated in his teaching and healing. We constantly feel

\textsuperscript{1} - Positive Preaching, p. 277.
\textsuperscript{2} - The Justification of God, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{3} - The Work of Christ, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{4} - The Principle of Authority, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{5} - Missions in State and Church, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{6} - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 57.
that Forsyth, despite his emphasis upon personality, is glorifying the method of Atonement (the Cross) rather than the one who has made forgiveness possible (Jesus Christ). We fear that the implications of such thinking as this can only be such as to declare that it was the Cross which made Christ the Saviour, rather than that because Christ was Saviour the Cross was necessary and inevitable.

Yet it must be remembered that generally Forsyth speaks of the Cross of Christ, not of the Cross alone; and therefore we must be cautious in our criticism of him. Certainly his understanding of the Atonement is not to be separated from his Christological thought. Accordingly, it will be necessary to study his views on the person and work of Christ in order to illuminate that which has already been set forth: for Atonement is impossible without a Christ, and we could not adopt this theory of the Atonement without discussing the role of Christ in God's self-reconciliation.
CHAPTER SIX

"THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST"
Atonement requires the act of a living person, as we have seen. No principle, process, or idea is sufficient to atone; neither God nor man can thus be satisfied. Accordingly, any thorough Atonement theory presupposes the existence of Christ, Who must play the leading role in atonement and redemption. The question is not whether there is such a Christ, for there are few today who restrict their arguments to this particular point, but rather what the nature of His person may be, and what exactly was achieved by Him through His life and death. It is no longer characteristic to argue the historicity of Jesus; the present debate is centred upon His personality compared with ours. It is Christ's relationship to the Father which concerns us most; was it unique and inimitable, or may we someday achieve the same heights by following His example? Other problems are of secondary importance.

"We are...driven, by the real existence of an Eternal Father and our experience of His grace, to demand the existence of an equally real Son - both being equally personal and divine. The question, then, is what is the relation between the Godhead of the Eternal Son and the man Jesus Christ, and how did it come to pass.... Christian faith insists on the reality of the incarnation as a fact if we take in all its seriousness the experience that we have in Christ a gracious and holy God truly with us; but the mode of its process is an open question, on which it cannot be hoped, and hardly wished, that all the Church should think alike." ¹

¹ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 282-83.
Christology is not based upon historical facts alone, although the historicity of Jesus is an important element in it. The evaluation of Christ's person is a religious problem, states Forsyth, for which reason it is subject ultimately to the tests appropriate to the data of religion. How we consider the nature of Christ will be determined by our faith as well as our knowledge. While a theological training is essential if one is to avoid making the mistakes of the past, an evangelical faith is of great importance to a comprehension of the person of Christ and the significance of His work.

"The key to the person of Christ is to be found not in an intellectual conviction, philosophic or theologic, nor in a romantic piety, part mystical, part wise, but in a positive religious experience of Him and a crucial decision behind which we cannot go in the quest for life's reality." 1

The life-changing experience of redemption carries its own guarantee of validity, and bears the only final knowledge of Jesus Christ. Forsyth follows the Reformers, and particularly Melancthon, in holding that only those who have known such forgiveness can speak with authority of Christ's work, for only they know of what it consists. "We cannot judge about the whole Christ till we feel judged by Christ, the judge of all; and His chief evidence is Himself." 2 This statement becomes clearer in its meaning when expanded by the following:

"Faith is man's greatest moral act, as Grace is God's.... Such faith is what makes Christianity; and its experience is the acceptance of all theology. Thus, religion, salvation, gives the law to theology, and not theology to salvation. This is especially the case with Christology.... (The) principle from which we must set out to understand the person of Christ is the soteriological principle. Any metaphysic must follow that and not precede it; it must be a metaphysic of history and not of being, of soul and not of substance, of ethic and not of thought - and especially of the Christian ethic condensed in

1 - Faith and Criticism, p. 161.
2 - Missions In State and Church, p. 306.
faith as the new life. All Christology must rest on a moral salvation, spiritually and personally realised."1

With this in mind, let us examine the method by which Forsyth relates the work and person of Christ to his theory of the Atonement. Christ, he states, is the mediator between God and man, and as such performs the action necessary to atonement and redemption. God's action upon man is direct yet indirect. It is by no third party: God redeems man and reconciles Himself.

"God in Christ deals with men directly but mediatorialy. He is the Mediator and not the medium, not the agent.... Christ is the offended holiness itself exercising forgiveness and salvation; and doing so in such a way as to set up, not recognition, not belief, not welcome even, but communion.... To be in Christ is to be in God."2

Christ's work in resolving the opposition between God and man is to act upon man as God and upon God as man: as God to judge man's sin; and as man to confess and glorify the holiness of God in so judging and condemning sin. Without such a conception of Christ the whole theory of Atonement is inconceivable. Although it is true that any description and analysis of the person of Christ will be incomplete, we must somehow attempt to interpret the mystery of the Incarnation; for upon the theologian falls the task of showing how the paradoxical assertions of Christianity are each essential to the truth of our religion.

If Christ be Mediator, He is also the Revelation of God:

"Christ exhibited God, He did not expound Him. He was His witness, not His apologist. He acted on God and for God.... In Him God gave Himself, He did not explain Himself. He was the revelation; He did not elaborate it."3

1 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 332. Here Forsyth shows the Influence of Martin Bähr.
2 - Ibid, pp. 253-54.
3 - The Holy Father, pp. 58-59.
"Revelation," Forsyth states, "is not through Christ, but in Christ.... Revelation is Christ."¹ If this be true, direct communion with God the Father is an impossibility for us. We must approach God through His Son; only thus may we share in His mercy.

"We come.... to our communion with God not along with Christ, and in like fashion with Christ, but through Christ, and in him. We do not believe with him, or by his help, but in him.... The possession of God is sure for every age and soul only in Jesus Christ as its living ground, and not merely by Christ as its historic medium... All other union is partial.... The superhistoric personality of Jesus was the only human personality to whom God could fully reveal Himself as the Holy and absolute Father. Therefore that personality... is our only way to the final certainty of such a Father."²

The authority for such an opinion is scriptural. Forsyth frequently mentions the importance of Jesus's words in Mt. 11:27: '....no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.' Even prayer to the Father is impossible except through Christ, declares Forsyth; and sometimes it is impossible not to pray to Christ Himself, and in so doing to feel that one has prayed to God.³

This view of Christ implies a uniqueness such that Forsyth can state, "The Redeemer of all men is a new category."⁴ The unique quality of His person consists in that which differentiates His relationship to God from our own.

"Of no man can it be said that his relation to God constitutes the whole personality. But in the case of Jesus the whole relation to the Father, namely sonship, did constitute that personality."⁵

On the other hand, there is a difference between the Son and Father which springs from the humanity of Jesus:

¹ - Faith and Criticism, pp. 96-99.
² - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 56-57.
³ - Faith and Criticism, pp. 118-19.
⁴ - Missions in State and Church, p. 34.
⁵ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 285.
"There was that in the earthly personality of Christ which in the heavenly could not be. For instance, in the earthly personality there was growth; in the heavenly there could be none.... (The) growth of a divine personality in Eternity is a much more impossible thing than the co-existence of three."¹

A careful distinction must be maintained, therefore, not only between Christ and man, but also between Christ and the Holy Father. To forget the difference between the Mediator and the Father is to lose the significance of Christ's person, and to render impossible any explanation of His role in God's plan. The only way in which to justify such a distinction as this, which splits the Godhead into discrete units, is by thinking qualitatively and not quantitatively. By considering the problem in terms of personality rather than mass we avoid the confusion which otherwise should be inevitable.

Although maintaining that the Son is distinct in personality from the Father, Forsyth emphasises the fact that God is in Christ, and that when Christ acts it is God acting in Him:

"Christ is God forgiving. He does not help us to God, He brings God. In Him God comes. He is not the agent of God but the Son of God, He is God the Son."²

Our salvation is not through Christ, but in Him, and thus in God. It is not even through His work of reconciliation and redemption: it lies rather in His person, not in anything He does. To think in terms of forgiveness through Christ, declares Forsyth, is to fall into the error of subjectivism. That alone is objective which is of God: therefore it is only as we are re-created in the person of God that we escape subjectivism.

Although Christ combines humanity and divinity within His person, His saving work proceeds from the divine side of His nature. "When Christ

¹ - Ibid. p. 284.
² - Positive Preaching, p. 353. Cp. The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 244; The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 17.
³ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 87.
did what He did, it was not human nature doing it, it was God doing it."\(^1\) Forsyth's primary emphasis is upon the difference between Christ and man, chiefly because of his desire to offset the influence of modern liberalism, with its undue stress upon the humanity of Jesus. "The liberal theology finds Christ's centre of gravity in what He has in common with us; a positive theology in that wherein He differs."\(^2\) "The religious problem for him and us was not the same."\(^3\) "We believe in the Father because of Christ; why he believed in the Father he has not told us."\(^4\) In our case, we slowly and laboriously develop a sense of unity with God as our faith grows stronger. This faith comes chiefly through the revelation of Christ. In his case, however, the situation is entirely different; His faith and obedience can be said to stem from an original sense of unity with the Father.\(^5\) Accordingly, we must attain the status of communion largely through a faith generated by Christ. The end of our pilgrimage falls far short of the beginning of His. In our case obedience and faith are means to an end; in His, they are by-products of His unity with the Father. Furthermore, "His obedience was a different thing from ours. But then it was effective for salvation, and ours is not."\(^6\) Jesus lived in a world which in principle has already been condemned to death. This is another difference which must be noted; for if we are alive today it is because of Him and not through our own vitality:

"His solitude was that of the Life amidst the dead world. The more He was the life the more power He had to feel death.... Every soul was dead compared with Him.... Morally, spiritually, He was the only soul truly alive."\(^7\)

---

2 - Positive Preaching, p. 237.
3 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 133.
4 - Ibid, p. 40.
6 - Ibid, p. 125.
7 - The Taste of Death, pp. 27-28.
Had Jesus acted only from the side of man and but represented the highest
development in man, as many modern thinkers believe He did, He could never
have achieved the task for which He was sent. "Christ always stood with
God over against man." 

"...Christ does not stand as the crowning, stimulating, releasing
instance of the best that is immanent in man. He is not the divine
virtuoso.... He is not the sublime divine companion, full of end­
less cheer, because he has been through it all before us, and has
come out on the other side. He is not the herald of God's forgive­
ness for sins that but hamper our development.... He is the Redeem­
er of our total personality from its radical recalcitrance to God's
will...." 

It is not the humanity of Christ which makes redemption possible, for no
man can confess the holiness of God as did Christ on the Cross. Therefore it is the difference between Christ and ourselves which is important.
The similarity must not be ignored, but if a choice of emphasis becomes
necessary, it is Christ's divinity which is primary. Insofar as we are
identified with Him, it is through His act of grace whereby He identifies
Himself with us and takes our sin upon Himself. Primarily it is God reach­
ing down to man and lifting him up, rather than man raising himself by his
own efforts to the side of God.

Forsyth cites three traditional doctrines of Christ's person which
are current today: The Socinian, Arian, and Athanasian. Although these terms
seem to many people to belong to the ancient history of the Church, the views
which they embody persist in Christian thinking to this day. In fact, For­
syth predicts that

"It is the conflict of Arianism and Athanasianism, under modern
conditions, ideas, and methods, which must engage the concern of Christian people for at least the next generation."

Both the Socinian and Arian doctrines are correct within the limits of a more comprehensive theory; but neither in itself is sufficient to explain the complex personality of Christ. It would be unfair to state that Forsyth is contemptuous of these two views, despite the irony with which he sometimes treats them. He realises that each of them expresses a part of the truth about Christ, and that this truth must be guarded. His chief objection to Socinianism and Arianism lies not in the manner in which they express the mystery of Christ's person, but in the fact that they ignore the more satisfactory view which has superseded them.

Socinianism contends that in Christ we have the greatest of heroes and the most prophetic of religious geniuses, but nothing more.

"Father and Son confront each other. The idea is harmony or congruity rather than condignity; and the conception of Christ involved is no more than prophetic.... The Socinian position has attractions for the lay stage or type of mind, which is religious, and rational, and nothing more. But it abolishes certain finite difficulties only to create infinite. It places Christ as it places all the prophets whose series he crowns, among the men to whom God but spake, and who could not but obey that word." 2

There is no argument against the truths of this position except that they are insufficient to explain the divinity of Christ. It is because the Socinian stops here that conflict arises. The modern equivalent of this ancient doctrine is expressed by Forsyth in these terms:

"I cannot regard as other than Socinian the idea that in Christ we have the greatest of created personalities completely filled with the spirit of God. For the centre of gravity must always be where the personality is; and in this case it is in the created humanity alone." 3

1 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 76.
2 - Ibid, pp. 76-77.
3 - Ibid, p. 78.
Arianism takes a more advanced position than this. It does not deny the divinity of Christ, but it distinguishes between the natures of God and Christ. Perhaps its greatest danger lies in the fact that superficially it appears similar to the more orthodox theory of Athanasius. To the modern lay mind, in fact, the whole battle between Arius and Athanasius appears to have been a waste of time and a needless bit of persecution by the successful party.

"The second or Arian stage is represented by those who see in Christ not merely the perfect prophet, but a personality unique in his superhuman nature, and not merely in his function and the way he discharged it.... They own that Christ has not only a special function but a unique position. He stands with God facing man much more than with man facing God. He is a secondary God.... Yet he is not of one nature with God. He is a creation - an intermediary creation. He is not of humanity, neither is he of deity."¹

Once again, the position is a correct one as a preliminary analysis of Christ's place in the divine scheme, but:

"It is one thing to see but an Arian Christ while the theology of the gospel was in the making.... It is another thing to stand arrested there and denounce the Athanasian Christ now that the providence of the Spirit has revealed, in the tremendous experience of the historic Church, a gospel which is possible on that profound base alone."²

"If in the first, or Socinian, stage Christ appeared as God's perfect prophet, in this second, or Arian, stage he appears as God's plenipotent.... We want in Christ God's real presence.

"In the first stage Christ is the man; in the second he is the superman. We still must ascend to the supernal man, the Lord from heaven.³

Forsyth considers that the Church is forced into the Athanasian view simply because there alone do we find a satisfactory explanation of our experience of redemption. Unless we can believe that in Christ God forgives, our view

¹ - Ibid, pp. 78-79.
² - Ibid, p. 82.
³ - Ibid, p. 83.
of Christ will ultimately prove unsatisfactory; for if He be less than God our conscience cannot be cleared by His work. Furthermore, "Christ is too great for any smaller answer."

"Christ, the source of the race's new creation, is as divine and as truly creator as the God of the world's beginning.... For the great work needed was to re-create, which is what mere liberalism and its humanism denies. The great task was not to reinforce but to re-create, and to set us on Eternal rock. But if the Saviour was but an emissary of God and not very God, we are not on rock, even if we are on sand. There is then no absolute certainty of salvation for the race.... For the Christian faith is much more than the sense of a spiritual God: it is the trust of an absolute God."2

To think of Christ as a plenipotentiary is to restrict God's freedom to a point at which He must accept or reject the work of another agent. The first charge upon theology, Forsyth declares, is "regard for the freedom of God."3 That which limits God's grace is contrary to the deepest and surest faith of the Christian believer. Christ must, therefore, be thought of as more than a representative or agent of God:

"The only real representative or plenipotentiary of a God whose grace is free and all his own must be God. He must be of God not merely from God."4

Accordingly, the Athanasian doctrine is the only satisfactory one for modern theology. The issue does not affect the individual in the sense that it does the Church; for the individual may have a sturdy faith in spite of a weak theological foundation, while the Church cannot. Forsyth is certain that the future of the Church depends upon whether it abandons the comprehensiveness of Athanasian theology for the Socinian or Arian - no matter how attractive they may appear to modern thinkers. The conflict which rages

1 - Ibid, p. 84.
2 - Ibid, pp. 85-86.
3 - Ibid, p. 87.
4 - Ibid.
even yet has been described by Forsyth as the most critical for the Church since that of the second century.

Related to this discussion, and arising out of it, it is the problem which Forsyth ingeniously poses by the title, "The Preaching of Jesus and the Gospel of Christ." How much of the Gospel is to be found in the teachings of Jesus? Do we need more than the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables: are these not sufficient in themselves to give us the whole of the Gospel in its simplest and most striking form? Have we not been the victims of Paulinism, and become so involved in complicated theology that we have lost the truth of Jesus' message? Today we realise that these and related questions are not as relevant as one might have supposed; but in Forsyth's time, when the negative criticism of the Tübingen School was at its peak, there was a growing belief that the epistles misrepresent the fundamental teaching of Jesus. Forsyth rejects such a view categorically. He contends that Jesus cannot be termed a preacher in the same sense in which His followers have been preachers, for "Christ did not preach the Gospel in the sense of the word that has become almost slang. He became a Gospel to preach."¹

"Whatever He may have thought it expedient to preach about Himself, He has left us, by the very way He preached other things, nothing but Himself to preach."²

As a preacher, Jesus failed miserably in His task: he did not clarify his message sufficiently for the people to understand Him, and His ministry so little succeeded in transforming Israel that the Cross was necessitated to redeem His work:

"The difficulty we have to face, if Christ was mainly a teacher, or even but a personal influence, is this - that, like prophetism altogether, He was a failure with those who came under Him at first hand. His personal influence through His doctrine averted neither His unpopularity, His desertion, nor His Cross. It did not prevent

² - Ibid, April, 1915, p. 333.
the people it was turned on from disowning Him, nor the disciples from leaving Him, nor the authorities from killing Him. Indeed it provoked all three. How then are we to expect another effect from it, taken alone, upon the world of posterity?"¹

In Forsyth's opinion the completion of Christ's work came not at the close of His ministry, nor even on the Cross, but in the interpretation of the Gospel by the apostles. Inasmuch as Paul could write that it was Christ in him who was speaking, Forsyth believes that the elaboration of the meaning of His life and death and resurrection is as much the work of Christ as the actual performance of the deeds themselves. In support of this view he employs a modified version of the Hegelian dialectic, positing as thesis, "the fact incarnate;" as antithesis, "the fact interpreted;" and as synthesis, "the fact enthroned."² Christ is the fact; but the fact must be interpreted and explained, and this is the word. "The total revelation needs the inspiration as well as the manifestation, the thought no less than the thing...."³ Apostolic inspiration consists of the peculiar ability of the apostles to comprehend the meaning of Christ's work in the light of Old Testament ideas, and to see in Him the fulfilment of older prophesies. Such inspiration which conditions our preaching of the Gospel is a part of Christ's work. To stop at the teachings of Jesus is to miss the greatest aspects of His redemptive mission.

"The material revelation and consummation in Christ is not complete without a formal consummation in its interpretation. The finished work of Christ was not finished till it was got home,... He made the victory real, but he had yet to make it actual."⁴

"So let us aim at some clearness when we say that Christianity is Christ. The essence of Christianity is not in the bare fact, but in the fact and its interpretation. It is not in a mere historic Jesus, evidentially irresistible, but in a Christ evangelically irresistible...."⁵

² - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 159-60.
³ - Ibid.
⁴ - Ibid, p. 149.
⁵ - Ibid, p. 168.
"If Christ preach to us it is not as He preached to His contemporaries; it is in His Spirit."¹ The value of this interpretation is apparent: if Forsyth can argue that the centrality of the Cross is due not to individual and subjective opinion, but to the inspiration of Christ Himself through His Spirit, the whole of his theology rests on an authority which it might otherwise lack. Such an authority is claimed to be objective, coming as it does from God. Furthermore, it will be seen that the Church's charter is complementary to the inspiration of the New Testament, and that the latter, on this view, stems from the same source rather than from the fallible Church. Thus the authority of the Church and of Scripture is established at one stroke. One may suspect the neatness of this interpretation, and feel that the formula is too Hegelian to be true to the facts; but it is a challenging conception worth consideration.

Forsyth is strongly opposed to any interpretation of the Gospel which stops short of the Cross. It ignores the processes of time, he declares, and gives an incomplete presentation of the Christian message. It falls far short of the New Testament teaching taken as a unit.

"Preaching up to the Cross is one thing, and some are but at that disciple stage. Preaching down from it is another, and that is the work of an apostle. The Saviour belongs to neither category. He is not the preacher but the thing preached, the Gospel itself."

To preach only what Jesus preached is not to preach Christ. We cannot know the person of Christ sufficiently from the little we find in the Synoptics, for He did not reveal Himself with any completeness in His own lifetime. Furthermore, this was not the first concern of the evangelists, so that the picture which they have left is only partial. The Church was not founded

upon Jesus' precepts, nor could it long endure with these alone. "The Gospel that made the Church was less what was said by Jesus than what was said about Him, and about the Gospel He did." Although we may speak of the Gospel as identical with Christ, we must mean by this the whole Christ and not merely the self-limited Jesus who dwelt among men.

"He did not in His life preach the whole Gospel.... Nor did He in any way before His death utter, or give effect to, His whole self. There was more in that mighty person than anything short of His redeeming death could realise, or anything less than His Resurrection express, or anything lower than His Holy Spirit reveal."2

If we are not to depend upon His teaching as the basis of our faith, may we infer that Jesus was unaware of the nature of His mission and of His unique relationship to the Father? Assuredly not, for the Scriptural record indicates the fact that Christ was conscious of Himself as the Son of God. He always stood on the side of God against man, declares Forsyth. The text of Mt. 11: 27, as well as Paul and John, gives proof of this self-consciousness. Nevertheless, it is not upon this that we depend ultimately for our faith:

"Christ's self-consciousness of his own divine nature must...be very powerful for our theological conviction. The value of the apostolic inspiration...cannot be less for the same purpose. But it is the new creation in the cross that translates the belief into spiritual life, and indeed makes that life, by making Christ the element of our own spiritual consciousness."3

Because He was truly human He shared in the limitations of his people's knowledge. His mission began with His own nation, and only gradually developed into a universal ministry. In fact, states, Forsyth, it was the failure of His mission to Israel which ultimately forced Him to the universal judgment of the Cross.

1 - Ibid.
2 - Ibid, July, 1915, p. 67. See also The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 36.
3 - Ibid, p. 239.
He was limited in knowledge and in power, it is true; but only because He chose to be. In consenting to be born He accepted the restrictions of humanity. Yet there was in His self-consciousness that which was necessary to the redemption of the race, and it is thus that we must consider Him. Forsyth phrases the paradox in this way: "He did not see, but He knew, that He could do nothing of such worth for the kingdom as to succumb and die." Furthermore,

"Christ did know that His relation to the Father was unique, and that His person and cross were more deeply involved in His Gospel than some of His words express.... Further, it seems clear that Jesus had in view a great and near crisis of redemption in whatever form...."

His consciousness of God was not the same as ours, for though we attain our knowledge of God through the Son, Jesus gained His knowledge from His own consciousness. In our case consciousness is a result; in His, a cause. If we judge by the testimony of the New Testament, Jesus was not only the Gospel, but declared Himself to be. There is a sense of finality in His words which indicates clearly the fact that He considered Himself to be unique.

"Throughout all, the impressive thing about Christ's vast self-consciousness is his sense of finality.... Christ's sense of finality we must recognise; which is his faith, however implicit, in his own Godhead. We must acknowledge his sense of his own finality in the last moral issue of the world, the supreme human issue, the issue between God and man, life and death. He knew he was decisive in that issue. And who could be final or decisive there but God?"

Whatever else may be said about the limitations of Jesus's knowledge, the testimony of the New Testament shows that He was equal to His task. "He was conscious of himself as Redeemer." Despite His reticence on the sub-

---

1 - The Taste of Death, pp. 50-51.
3 - Faith and Criticism, p. 112.
4 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 102.
5 - Ibid, p. 92-93.
6 - Ibid, p. 88.
ject, we get the impression from the New Testament that he thought of Himself in messianic terms; and the early Church never doubted His divinity.

"He did not lecture about his person.... But if he was not theologically express about his Godhead was he not conscious of it? Surely he was at least subconscious. It was fundamental to his manner of life, and work.... If his deity be not express always in the preaching of his lips, it is essential in the gospel of his person and cross. If it is not unmistakable in everything he said it is inevitable in the thing he did.... He knew himself to be among men for certain universal purposes, to be final king, judge, and redeemer.... He knows himself to be the final judge, and there is no appeal, and no revision of his sentence."¹

"The son... knows the Father with the same knowledge as the Father has of himself."² This is the theme which Forsyth frequently repeats in his attempt to counteract the humanism of the "New Theology." Fundamentally, the difference between the traditional and modern views of the person of Christ hinges upon their interpretation of His divinity. If Jesus represents the highest development in man, there is no place for the sharp contrast between God and man which Forsyth considers fundamental to theology. But if Forsyth is to find support for his theory, he must be able to show that Christ was in some respect conscious of His difference from other men. Otherwise, the argument that the divinity of Christ is a conception added by Paul and the evangelists cannot be met. If Jesus was completely unaware of His divinity, it does little good to argue the matter further. For this reason, Christ's knowledge of His divinity, no matter how partial, is a vital aspect in Forsyth's Christology. Despite its importance, however, it is not upon this that we must base our faith in God. Faith is created by Christ in His reconciling work; it is only as we know our lives to be changed that we really believe in Him as the Son of God. Thus Forsyth depends upon the principle characteristic of Reformation theology.

¹ - Ibid, pp. 89-90.
"The Gospel is as narrow as Christ, and Christ is as narrow as the Cross."¹ This overstatement presents in striking fashion the heart of Forsyth's Christological thought. The person of Christ, declares Forsyth, is to be comprehended not by His teaching, nor by what little we know of His own self-consciousness, but by what He did for the redemption of the race.

"The true key to Christ's person is in His work.... It lies in His personal action, and in our experience of saving benefits from Him."² Recalling the emphasis which Forsyth has placed upon action in his theology, we may understand why the work of Christ should play so important a role in his thinking. If it be true that "sin is action, and action is its cure,"³ no mere declaration by Jesus will be sufficient to the needs of God or man: a relationship can be altered by deeds alone. It is, therefore, the work of Christ that gives us the key to an understanding of His person, as well as the power in our message to the world.

"The stamp of universality in Christ's religion....lies not chiefly in His teaching.... It lies in His work more than in His word. He was a man of action more than of speech.... Christianity spread, not as a religion of truth, but of power, help, healing, resurrection, redemption...."⁴ Forsyth is even willing to state that "the person of Christ can only be understood by His work."⁵

In the thought of Jesus there seems to have been an identification of His person and work such as Forsyth suggests.⁶ In Christ God reveals Himself to man, not in a declaratory sense, but through the action of the Cross. To separate Christ's person from His function is to be unfaithful

¹ - Missions in State and Church, p. 42.
² - Positive Preaching, p. 353.
³ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 190.
⁴ - Missions in State and Church, pp. 10-11.
⁵ - Faith and Criticism, p. 139.
⁶ - Ibid, p. 120.
to the teaching of the New Testament. There is nothing accidental about the Cross; it is an inevitable and necessary part of Christ's existence. Although the manner of Jesus's death is not important, the nature of it is; for He had to die by the hand of man if sin were to be confessed at its worst and be judged by God and atoned.

"The Cross was not simply a fate awaiting Christ in the future; it pervaded subliminally His holy Person. He was born for the Cross. It was His genius, His destiny. It was quite inevitable that, in a world like this, One holy as Jesus...should come to the Cross. The Cross which consummated and crowned Christ came in the fullness of time. The time was not full during Christ's life for preaching an atonement that life could never make."\(^1\)

On the other hand, we must not limit our view of Christ's work to the Cross alone. Although there is a tendency on Forsyth's part to do this, occasionally he reveals a wider view which must be noted in all fairness to him. The view most characteristic of Forsyth is that which stresses the ineliminable continuity of Christ's work, extending from His preexistent state to the present moment of time. Thus in His earthly existence the Cross represents the highest point in a manifestation of grace which was being worked out and exhibited throughout the lifespan of Jesus:

"The great confession was made not alone in the precise hour of Christ's death, although it was consummated there. It had to be made in life and act, and not in mere feeling or statement; and for this purpose death must be organically one with the whole life. One cannot sever the death of Christ from the life of Christ. When you think of the self-emptying which brought Christ to earth, His whole life was a living death."\(^2\)

Why, then, should so much emphasis be placed upon the death of Christ? The answer to this query lies in the conviction that here, in one final deed, lies the final resolution of man's alienation from God. With this conclusive act the relationship is altered and man is restored to

---

communion with the Holy Father. Everything in the life of Jesus leads up to this point, when, in an historic moment in the history of the world, God reveals His holy love through the redemption of mankind. Thereafter, all must be judged in the light of this crucial action on the part of God. The Cross reveals because it redeems. The Cross yields the clue to the person of Christ, and it is this clue which we must follow in order to understand Him.

"When we press the death of Christ as the organic goal of His life we are resisting the fallacy which starts with the life and teaching to interpret the death, instead of beginning with the Cross, as the New Testament does, and viewing everything from it. This error leads us to treat the cross as a fate and not a work - as the unhappy fate of Christ the prophet instead of the glorious function of Christ the Priest...."[1]

"You do not understand Christ until you understand His cross," remarks Forsyth.2 "It was the Cross that catholicised Christ and eternalised Him."[3] The meaning of the second statement is obscure unless we think of the Cross as the eternal principle of grace. Conceived in this manner it loses all accidental characteristics, and is seen to be implicit in God's purpose. We might paraphrase the statement and say that it was God's inevitable grace which determined the universality of Christ's mission and revealed to man Christ's eternal nature. More readily acceptable is the remark that "it was in the Cross that Christ conquered."[4] He is to be interpreted in the light of this victory, states Forsyth, for this alone reveals the mystery of His personality.

"The death of Christ was a function, and not merely a commission, of the supreme power, grace and glory. It was an act of God, and not merely God's agent. God did not send the Son, He came as the Son. What reconciled the world was God in Christ."[5]

It is in His death that Christ comes closest to mankind; it is here that He

3 - Missions in State and Church, p. 10.
5 - The Taste of Death, p. 47.
tastes the death which had afflicted the race. He identifies Himself with the dead, dies with them and for them, and in so doing reveals how truly He is man as well as God.

"Christ must die to come really near mankind. The greatest power on life acts from the realm of the dead."1 Yet His relationship to death does not resemble ours: for He but "tastes" death, while man has dwelt in death's realm.2 This distinction, which appears rather fine, represents the paradoxical nature of Christ's victory over death by means of death. Forsyth meets the problem by framing it in terms of kenosis, which in the case of the Eternal would correspond to a dying, and plerosis, whereby the temporal is gradually transcended through reconquest.

The meaning of the death of Christ is to be found in this aspect of victory. It is because in dying He acted in complete obedience to the Father's will that He overcame death. His obedience made possible the victory; since the locus of His perfect obedience is the Cross,3 it is there that we find the most complete revelation of His person. His is far more than a martyr's death, for it not only testifies to God's love; it brings God. Furthermore, it represents far more than a victory over death:

"We are all afraid of death, and rise to the man who delivers us from it. But we are not afraid of that worse thing than death from which Christ came to deliver us. Christ's death was not a case of heroism simply, it was a case of redemption. It acted upon dull and dead hearts."4

The death of Christ effected man's redemption, it is true; but Forsyth warns us that this must not be over-emphasised. Primarily, it was an offer-

---

1 - Missions in State and Church, p. 10.
2 - The Taste of Death, p. 34.
3 - Forsyth; This Life and the Next, p. 123.
4 - The Work of Christ, pp. 15-16.
ing to God, and only because it justified the Father's holiness and satisfied Him did it suffice for man's salvation. Christ's death represents God's forgiveness; but we should do well to see in it the representative sacrifice of Jesus to God.¹ In the Cross Christ becomes the Great High Priest, fulfilling the mission of Israel, and performing, in the name of man, the only worthy and final confession of God's holy love. We preach the death of Christ primarily for this reason.

"The Cross is the great sermon in history, Christ's supremely and mostly silent kerusma, because though addressed to men, it was far more offered to God. Christ in His death preached to men only because He was wholly offered to God."²

Forsyth claims that the work of Christ cannot be explained without the aid of some theory of His pre-existence. Nothing less takes account of the magnitude of His task, nor does it suffice to explain His divinity. Therefore, although there is little respecting pre-existence in the Scriptures, Forsyth feels compelled to postulate the existence of Christ before the foundation of the world. In one of his rare biographical passaged he reveals that he was forced into such a view because of the inadequacy of any theory of Christology which began and ended with Jesus' human death.³ He contends that the apostles adopted this article of faith for the same reason, and that this accounts for the fact that the Church has maintained the view throughout its history.

"The greatest thought and passion of the Church, its experience, and not its philosophy or its theology alone, has been driven to postulate behind all the acts of Christ's will on the earth, behind all his pity and power, an act of his (not merely of his God and ours), eternal in the heavens, an act which held all these earthly acts within it."⁴

"The more the Church felt the reality of his influence on it, the more it acted with him upon present history, the more it found through him

---

¹ - Missions in State and Church, p. 20.
³ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 269-71.
Forsyth suggests two reasons for the necessity of Christ’s pre-existence. One is based upon the relationship between Son and Father, which, Forsyth contends, could not have arisen at a point in time. The other is related to the unchangeable nature of God: if at one moment in history Christ performed the reconciling work, a change in the nature of God would be necessitated unless there were in that act an eternal aspect thus then becoming actualised. God’s nature must be unchangeable, for His holiness guarantees this; nothing which happened within time could be allowed to alter the very character of the Eternal. Respecting the first of these arguments, Forsyth states:

"Such a relation as we believe our Saviour now bears to the Father could not have arisen at a point of time. It could not have been created by his earthly life. The power to exercise God’s prerogative of forgiveness, judgment, and redemption could never have been acquired by the moral excellence or religious achievement of any created being, however endowed by the spirit of God."

Were it otherwise, the humanity of Christ would have made possible His selection by God as His Son. It would have been His goodness, or the advanced development of His human soul, which made possible the newly created relationship to the Father. Ultimately this would involve an adoptionist theory of the person of Christ. Forsyth’s argument against such a theory is consistent with the main line of his theology: he does not attempt to counter it on logical grounds but on ethical and experimental. He reasons that Paul could not have been inspired by less than this belief in a pre-existent Christ, nor could the Church have been kept alive

2 - Ibid, p. 269.
by faith in an act whose foundations did not rest in the eternal love of God.

"The Cross was the reflection (or say rather the historic pole) of an act within Godhead. The historic victory was the index and correlate of a choice and a conquest in Godhead itself. Nothing less will carry the fulness of faith, the swelling soul, and the Church's organ voice of liturgy in every land and age. If our thought does not allow that belief we must reduce the pitch of faith to something plain, laic, and songless, and, in making it more homely, make it less holy, less absolute, less adoring."1

The argument from the standpoint of God's unchangeable nature is less lyrical and more logical in its approach. The notion of the pre-existence of Christ and of His work (in principle though not in effect) preserves the unity of God's nature which otherwise is threatened. Just as we cannot think of the nature of God in terms of attributes at war with one another, so we must not conceive of love, wrath, mercy, and judgment as discrete aspects of His personality. God's nature is holy love; therefore, both judgment and grace only represent this love in its response to man's particular state. Love will be expressed as judgment where sin abounds; yet because God is love, His judgment is accompanied by grace. Christ has revealed grace to be God's eternal response to man's condition. The God who creates is the God who saves. If, however, forgiveness were reduced to mere temporality, eternal grace would be an impossibility. In such a case the sovereignty of God would be at stake.

"What God felt and did was not through some relation to us that came into being with Christ's earthly life, but it was through something that underlay it. For had it come into being then, to see and judge the world in Christ would have been a step so new as to affect the unchangeableness of God. Grace would have begun, and so been finite. But it was a step which lay in the nature of Godhead forever, in the eternal, personal, holy, and obedient relation of the Son to the Father, and in the act of renunciation outside the walls of the world."2

There is a further reason why this conception of pre-existence is necessary: "The soul's saviour could be no less a power than the soul's creator."¹ The act of redemption requires a power at least as great as does that of creation, and were that power less than God it could not have succeeded in its task. Our faith demands the forgiveness of God, not of some agent chosen by God because of his moral worth. Likewise, the personality of Christ is too great to have been given complete expression in a temporal existence. Jesus revealed far less about Himself than do most men; not until His death did men begin to comprehend who it was that had dwelt among them. "The greater the personality the more impossible it is to give it full expression in life," writes Forsyth.² For these reasons he argues that an adequate treatment of Christology requires some statement of Christ's pre-existence.

"Christ's earthly humiliation had to have its foundation laid in Heaven, and to be viewed but as a working out of a renunciation before the world was. The awful volume and power of the will-warfare in which He here redeemed the world, and turned for Eternity the history of the race, was but the exercise in historic conditions of an eternal resolve taken in heavenly places. He could never be the king of the eternal future if he was not also king from the eternal past. No human being was capable of such will.... There was a Calvary above which was the mother of it all,... His obedience as man was but the detail of the supreme obedience which made him man."³

Pre-existence, it will be seen, implies a kenosis as well.

"If to live is Christ, to die is more Christ."⁴ The pre-existence of Christ and His temporal action on earth are aspects of His eternal personality. He remains the Living Lord for us as for our predecessors in the faith. The Mediator continues His work through Eternity: He continues to

¹ - Ibid, p. 211.
² - Ibid, p. 280.
⁴ - This Life and the Next, op. cit.
to live in us, and we in Him. As the Son of God He remains the eternal sacrifice to the Father by which men are saved. His is a perpetual, continuous work.

"(Christ) speaks of His service of man as perpetual in heaven, But it is still sacrificial. He is active in heaven with God, in a priesthood of self-oblation, which is service, blessing, and intercession. He works on men by working for them still, in love, pity, help, sacrifice, and the moving Cross."

In fulfilling the Law Christ becomes the law by which we live; not as a guide or example, but as the law of faith and obedience. "By his act of holiness in a universal crisis He honoured for us that holy law which our worst sin could never unseat.... He even becomes for us that self-satisfying law." Forensic language such as this is misleading, yet it indicates to a certain extent the nature of Christ's work in us. Perhaps 'principle' would be a better term than 'law', though even this is inferior to such an expression as 'way'. The historicity of Jesus is of vital importance to Christian faith, for it is that which protects Christianity from all forms of philosophic idealism. We cannot restrict ourselves to the historical facts alone, however, without losing the magnitude of our faith. Christ's work extends beyond history: "His work, consummated on the Cross, is yet larger than a deliverance at a historic point," writes Forsyth. It is as the creator of the new Humanity that Christ's eternal life is best expressed:

"The final thing, the Absolute, in Christianity, is the experience not simply of contact with Christ, not simply of a revelation given, nor even of a deliverance wrought, but of a new creation effected in Christ. The Son is as creative as the Father."

---

1 - Missions in State and Church, p. 21.
2 - The Principle of Authority, p. 460.
3 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 280.
4 - Ibid, pp. 252-53.
The whole of God's purpose for man is Christ: therefore it is not as a means to delivering the Kingdom that Christ has appeared, but rather as the very Kingdom itself. As members of Christ we become members of the Kingdom and we enter into communion with the Father. As we die with Christ we are reborn by His great creative act, by which we are restored to right relations with God. While the Cross has effected the universal salvation of man in principle, it must still be actualised in the individual case, as each man seizes for himself the unmerited grace of God's election. Such a Christ, in whom is created the new Humanity (a Mauritian concept), must be a living, eternal Son, not merely a mighty figure of history.

"God has one purpose for the world, not several.... It is narrowed down out of vagueness in the person of Christ, the most condensed, definite and impressive Figure of history. It is limited into practical, effective power there.... And to that purpose God has one path; it is also Jesus Christ. He has one life for mankind, one truth; it is Jesus Christ."1

It is in the Church that man enters into the life of Christ. It is here that the work of Christ is being actualised, though slowly indeed, in history. As such the Church is an extension of the Kingdom. Forsyth even uses the terms, 'new Humanity' and 'Church,' synonymously in one instance. We see, then, that Christology is not only closely associated with Atonement in Forsyth's mind, but with Ecclesiology as well. It is for this reason that his writings cannot be departmentalised according to topics, for the inter-relationship of Christ, the Cross, and the Church is too close for him to attempt a separation.

Perhaps the foremost problem in Christological thought concerns the manner in which Christ combines divinity and humanity in one personality. Forsyth rejects the two-nature theory on the grounds that it re-

1 - Missions in State and Church, p. 213.
fers exclusively to principles rather than to personality, and that it takes no account of the ethical question. Commenting on this outworn theory, Forsyth states:

"The formula of the union of two natures in one person is essentially a metaphysical formula, and the formula of a Hellenistic metaphysic, and it is more or less archaic for the modern mind. The term 'nature' is a purely metaphysical term, and one which characterises a scholastic metaphysic of being rather than a modern metaphysic of ethic.... Even if we do speak at all now of two natures in one person the accent has moved from the term nature to the term person.... It is impossible to keep Trinity from Tritheism if we interpret personality by the categories of being and substance, instead of interpreting being by the categories of personality. A personality is much more than intelligent of conscious substance, however refined. In this sense personality has not a nature."

In place of the scholastic style Forsyth adopts the Kitschlian "moral and experimental method in theology." Such a method, which owes much to Kant, conceives personality in terms of will rather than of constitution. The personality is active, free, and responsible. It is characterised by the possibility of choice, while a nature is not. Forsyth is of the opinion that we must abandon any theory in which there is no place for action and freedom, and must attempt to discover some means of stating the position which does justice to the living personality of Christ.

He believes, with Kahler, that the solution of the Christological problem is to be found in the direction of a modal interpretation; that Christ combined in His person two "vertical" movements: that of God toward man, and of man toward God. Insofar as He was God He bent down toward man; insofar as He was man, He lifted Himself obediently in prayer toward God. Such an interpretation is of interest chiefly for the manner in which it combines Kenosis and Plerosis.

1 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 229-30.
If Forsyth is to support the theory of the pre-existence of Christ, it follows that some complementary theory of Kenosis, or self-emptying, is necessary. The two are so interdependent, in fact, that it is difficult to separate them in Forsyth's thought. He accepts a modified form of the Kenosis doctrine on the grounds that only in such a way are we able to explain even partially how Christ could remain divine despite the limitations of His human frame. In spite of its deficiencies, and notwithstanding the fact that there is little reference to it in the New Testament, he believes that such a doctrine is necessary to our faith, which is too cramped without it.

In what sense is it possible for God to limit His omnipotence and omniscience? How may God be both all-wise and limited in His knowledge? These are the questions with which a kenotic theory is faced, and which it attempts to answer with the least amount of inconsistency. Forsyth adduces the possibility of God's reduction of His power by converting it from actuality to potentiality.

"Let us cease speaking of a nature as if it were an entity; of two natures as two independent entities; and let us think and speak of two modes of being, like quantitative and qualitative, or physical and moral. Instead of speaking of certain attributes as renounced may we not speak of a new mode of their being?...."¹

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

"The attributes of God....are not destroyed when they are reduced to a potentiality. They are only concentrated. The self-reduction, or self-retraction, of God might be a better phrase than the self-emptying."³

Without the possibility of self-reduction on the part of God we could not

² - Ibid, p. 308.
³ - Ibid.
even consider the possibility of the evolutionary growth in nature. "Evolution is a mode of the self-limiting power innate in a personal infinite."¹ All finitude is a limitation of the infinite; time must be possible within the timeless; otherwise the infinite is conditioned and limited by the finite. Some sort of self-limitation must be posited of God even within the limits of nature. Kenosis does not mean the laying down of attributes such as omniscience, however:

"An attribute cannot be laid down, for it is only the Being himself in a certain angle and relation. But there are accidental relations, relations, for instance, contingent on human freedom, which determine the form in which the attribute exists. They determine its mode of being, according to the particular position in which the subject finds himself. Thus omniscience and the rest are not so much attributes as functions of attributes, or their modifications. Omnipotence means not that God should be able to do anything and everything that fancy may suggest; but that, in working his will of love, God is, from his own free resource, equal to all it involves, and is really determined by nothing outside himself. Omnipresence, as absolute independence of space, means that God is not hampered by space, but can enter spatial relations without being tied by them, can exist in limits without being unfree, or ceasing to be God."²

In reducing His knowledge to that of a particular era in human history, God does not cease to be omniscient; for His absolute knowledge remains as potentiality. Were it impossible for God so to reduce His power, He would be restricted and no longer omnipotent, and an unbridgeable gap would separate Him from His world. Immanence would become impossible, and even in theory the idea of a God-man would be inconceivable.³ The omnipotence of God means that He is able more than any finite creature to reduce and limit Himself. The possibility of limitation expands the notion of omnipotence, declares Forsyth.⁴

¹ - Ibid.
² - Ibid, p. 309.
³ - Ibid, p. 311.
⁴ - It is unfortunate that D. M. Baillie in his God was in Christ, pp. 94-98, makes no reference to Forsyth, for Baillie never meets the argument for Kenosis as presented by Forsyth - a contribution which Lawton holds to be one of the most original and valuable on the subject.
Christ's self-limitation is interpreted by Forsyth in terms of obedience. It is to be comprehended only in moral terms. It was the obedience of Christ to His Father's will which characterised the kenosis; this applies not only to His human life but also to His pre-existent choice. His whole life was one of obedience to the Father, and that fulfilment of God's will stems from freedom rather than command. The kenosis refers in a very real sense to God, yet the distinction between Father and Son must not be imperilled; it was the Son who chose to obey the Father, not because He had to, but because of His holy love. Forsyth illustrates this in a passage which is both brilliant and ambiguous:

"Unlike us, he chose the oblivion of birth and the humiliation of life. He consented not only to die but to be born. His life here, like His death which point it, was the result of his free will. It was all one death for him. It was all one obedience. And it was free.... What he gave up was fulness, power, and immunity of a heavenly life."

This statement strikingly indicates the greatness of Christ's sacrifice. Forsyth stresses the volitional nature of Christ's kenosis, for it is this which is the key to a positive theology. "Christ never merely accepted His fate; He willed it. He went to death as a king. It was the supreme exercise of His royal self-disposal." Kenosis does not imply weakness in Christ, nor does it reduce Him to the level of humanity. Though man, He remains the Son of God. "Christ's emptying of Himself is...one of the powers of His Godhead, and not a denial of it. He could not have emptied Himself but for His Godhead."

"(This) limitation in Christ was the result, the expression of His absolute power.... It was His self-limitation, an effect of His self-emptying.... By His own eternal self-determined will He became lower than the angels. He exerted power over both the natural

1 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 271-72.
2 - The Cruciality of the Cross, p. 38.
3 - The Taste of Death, p. 96.
and the moral world. For He overrode natural law, and broke the entail and Nemesis of guilt. His very obedience to nature was a voluntary and masterly obedience. And His 'becoming sin' for us was a voluntary act, a moral achievement of a kind possible only to Godhead. He parted with a physical omnipotence but never with a moral, never with the omnipotence of love, which is the Christian meaning of the Cross.1

Only because He was different from man did He have this power of self-restriction:

"As God, the Son in his freedom would have a kenotic power of self-determination which belongs to deity. His divine energy and mobility would have a power even to pass into a successive and developing state of being, wherein the consciousness of perfect fulness and changelessness should retire, and became but subliminal or rare."2

In the light of the kenotic theory, Forsyth's claim that the full Christ can never be discovered in His earthly ministry becomes more clear; for if Jesus were limited in knowledge He could never present the whole of the Gospel through His teachings.

Most difficult to conceive is the sinlessness of Christ: how could He be human and yet without sin? Forsyth answers this question by making a distinction between temptation and sin:

"Because Christ was truly man he could be truly tempted; because he was true God he could not truly sin; but he was not less true man for that. Among all his potentialities that of sin was not there; because potentiality is only actuality powerfully condensed; and had potential sin been there its actuality would have been but a matter of time and trial. But temptation was potential; and it became actual in due course. He could be tempted because he loved; he could not sin because he loved so deeply, widely, infinitely, holily, because it was God he loved - God more than man. Thus the only temptation with real power for him was a temptation to good - to inferior forms of good."3

Forsyth comes close to liberalism in this hypothesis, save that he ascribes

1 - Positive Preaching, p. 222.
2 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 300.
3 - Ibid, pp. 302-03.
to Christ the type of sinlessness which liberalism would contend is characteristic of all mankind. There is no attempt on the part of Forsyth to defend his view from an attack by those who would argue that such a Christ could not be truly man, since he was protected from the very defect which marks the difference between man and God.

One of the most valuable aspects of the kenotic theory is its inclusiveness: not only is Christ associated with the moral realm, but with the physical as well. His kenosis is both spiritual and physical. Thus, the danger of an abstract mysticism is avoided and the unity of nature and spirit is guaranteed. The kenotic theory is inadequate by itself, however; for although it indicates how Christ may have entered temporal existence, it does not show how He grew in power and stature and finally overcame the world.

"We have no call to-day to prove the real manhood of Jesus. For that is universally owned; and it is all that many can own... (What) is denied to-day is not a superior revelation in Christ but the absolute finality of that revelation.... Now for such a purpose a Christ merely kenotic is inadequate.... We must keep in view, and keep uppermost the more positive process, the effective, ascending, and mastering process which went alongside of the renunciation in Christ, nay, was interwoven with it, as its ruling coefficient."1

In addition to kenosis, therefore, we must visualise a process of self-fulfillment, or plerosis. It is only when these two theories are combined that a satisfactory doctrine of the person of Christ is possible; for it is only thus that we are able to comprehend how God could reduce Himself to the status of humanity and yet maintain His power of self-reconciliation.

"Christ worked out our salvation by working out His own, for His

1 - Ibid, pp. 327-29.
was the soul of humanity." It is Christ's identification with man which
the doctrine of plerosis so important to Forsyth's study of Christology.
The self-fulfilment of Christ becomes our own fulfilment as we are members
of the new Humanity. Not only Christ, but man in Christ, is being lifted
up towards God. Yet, His growth and ours are not identical, for though
His was a normal human development like our own He was regaining that which
He had voluntarily cast off, while we pursue a goal we have never seen or
known. He grew in God; we grow towards God.

"The sinlessness of Christ was a sinless growth. A perfect life
must be a perfect evolution. God's will for life is growth, and
Christ completely met it.... It was in the Father's will that the
evolutionary method first lay. Character can only arise by moral
process, and the perfectness of moral process can only mean that
it was normal all along the line....

"Not even God could create a character full blown. It is
producible by the soul's moral conflict alone. And the great, the
crowning act of a divine character must be all of a piece with the
process which raised the character.... His complete salvation of
the world from sin was effected by the completeness of His own
personal conquest of it, His own victory over it in an actual pas-
son of experience, and His own entire harmony with the will of
God through the deepening history of His spirit's career....

"The work of redemption was the work which made Christ Christ.
....It was the continuous, expanding, and complete conquest over sin
in a universal soul. And it was performed under the moral conditions
of a human conscience, and of that spiritual evolution which, being
a law of God's own being, was Christ's native law.... The cross is
the clearest expression of the law of moral growth, the principle
of normal human nature, the secret of a man's making by a Creator
too faithful to leave His work half done, or human nature at the
stage of the natural man."2

The idea of plerosis helps us to understand how Christ was able to fulfil
the conditions of human ignorance and temptation, yet transcend them in
the final victory of the Cross. It buttresses Forsyth's opinion that the

1 - Religion in Recent Art, pp. 196-97.
2 - Ibid, pp. 197-98, Note.
person of Christ is to be interpreted by His work, since it is at the Cross that Jesus finally achieves the highest development of His life. It makes room for modern theories of evolution, yet lifts them to the higher plane of morality, since growth in man as well as Jesus is ultimately a moral growth. Whereas some theologians would prefer to ignore the growth of Christ, Forsyth emphasises it:

"We should take more seriously the growth of Jesus.... Is it too much....to say that as he did the deeper will he knew the deeper doctrine, his grasp of sonship also grew? The growing form of his obedience must have had for its concomitant a growth in the power of reading the meaning of his experiences; yea, a growth not only of his consciousness but of his personality, (his subjective personality, not his objective relation to God) a growth in which his deepening will met his deepening faith?"¹

The perfection of His personality came with His death; it was then that He realised Himself as Lord and Saviour, not before. "It was not till he died that he possessed his whole soul, came to his own, entered on all he really was....and could teach about himself things impossible before."² Once again Forsyth stresses the importance of Christ's eternal life; for His work was not restricted to the earthly existence, but extended into the Apostolic period, when, through His inspiration of the Apostles He explained the significance of His life and death for the salvation of mankind:

"Only in the completion of the Cross did Christ become the object of Gospel preaching, because only there was he perfected as final redeemer."³

According to Forsyth, the key to an understanding of Christ's growth lies in the reconquest of that which was already His own but which He had by free choice forsaken through His incarnation. We should expect, then, that His consciousness of divinity gradually developed during His ministry; nor is there reason to suppose that as a child He was more

¹ The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 121.
² Ibid, pp. 121-22.
³ Ibid, p. 122.
omniscient than His contemporaries. Forsyth prefers the term, 'redintegration,' to any other as descriptive of this growth.

"(The) history of Christ's growth....is a history of moral redintegration, the history of his recovery, by gradual moral conquest, of the mode of being from which, by a tremendous moral act, he came. It is reconquest..... He won by duty that which was his own by right."1

"He became what he was, and not merely what it was in him possibly to be. He reconquered by moral conflict, under the conditions of human rebellion, a province, even within himself, which was always his by right. The diminuendo of the Kenosis went on parallel with the crescendo of a vaster Plerosis."2

The Kenosis represents the negative aspect of Forsyth's Christology; the Plerosis, the positive. Neither can be explained fully without the other, nor can either dispense with the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence. It may be questioned whether this theory gives a satisfactory explanation of the mystery, since it leaves little room for the possibility of failure on the part of Christ. If He were pre-existent and sinless, was it not inevitable that victory should be His? Forsyth counters this suggestion with the statement that although the holiness of Christ assured His moral conquest of sin, there was within His own human consciousness no such certainty. He was required to risk utter failure in the dereliction of the Cross, when the hand of the Father was withheld. There lay the ultimate crisis of His work, and there He died alone, in complete faith and obedience to the Father. This argument raises the work of Christ above the level of an automatic operation, in which Christ was but playing a role as an actor takes a part; and it gives temptation a very real and harrowing place in His life.

It is through the combination of Plerosis and Kenosis in the

1 - Ibid, p. 308; also, pp. 287-88.
2 - Ibid, p. 311.
person of Christ that Forsyth makes his most original contribution to Christological thought. He likens these two conceptions to movements between man and God: perhaps moral activity can best describe them. The Kenosis represents God's movement toward man, while Plerosis manifests man's movement toward God. These are in the "perpendicular" plane rather than the "horizontal;" that is, they are qualitative in character, and correspond with those aspects of existence with which depth psychology is now concerned. Because Christ empties Himself, He has within His personality the movement of God toward man; and because He grows and develops, there is also in His personality man's movement toward God. With this formula Forsyth suggests a novel method of explaining, without the two-nature theory, how Christ can be both God and man. Once again, a realisation of Forsyth's starting-point is essential to a comprehension of the positive contribution of his theory. Because we can know Christ only through His redeeming action upon us, we may speculate about His person only in the moral category, and never in the metaphysical. Thus a definition of Christ's person must be in terms of movement and action; for it is action alone which alters man's relationship with God.

"Starting, then, from the canon that the Incarnate is immediately known to us only as the Saviour, it might save us much confusion if we were less concerned to speak or think of the two natures within the life of Christ, as we have long ceased to think of two persons....Neither does justice to the interests of salvation. As that interest is the interest of personal communion, and not of human deification, it might be better to describe the union of God in man as the mutual involution of two personal movements raised to the whole scale of the human soul and the divine."

These two movements - man's word to God and God's word to man - represent man's natural progress on the one hand, and God's intrusion into history on the other. The theory seems to make room for both the liberal and

1 - Ibid, p. 333.
orthodox approaches. The "vertical" action differs from the "horizontal" in this way:

"Life and progress, especially on the religious plane, show that at least a twofold movement goes to make up the spirituality in human history, two movements whose opposite directions produce much friction. And I do not allude by that to the twofold process within history, wherein degeneration is at constant war with development.... That might all go on what I would call the horizontal plane of movement - the onward movement and the backward. But I allude rather to the vertical action....in which man is constantly seeking unto a God and God is constantly passing into man.... Man's word to God is interlocked with God's word to man."  

These movements must be interpreted religiously. Of course the language is but figurative, and only partially describes the idea which Forsyth has in mind. Continuing with his theory, Forsyth writes:

"These two movements are both at work in the growth of the God-led historic soul as prayer and answer, as evolution and inspiration. Religiously....they are the two movements that make the world, if we interpret it from its spiritual height. And they give us the categories in which God and man meet. They meet in action rather than in being; and the unity of being is just such as is required for mutual action and communion. God and man meet in humanity, not as two entities or natures which coexist, but as two movements in mutual interplay, mutual struggle, and reciprocal communion. On the one hand we have an initiative, creative, productive action.... on the part of eternal and absolute God; on the other we have the seeking, receptive, appropriative action of groping, erring, growing man."  

Confusing and incomplete as such an interpretation is, it has the advantage of meeting many of the requirements of liberalism without sacrificing the truths of orthodoxy. In attacking the problem from the moral point of view, it adopts the modern attitude; but it does not ignore the difference between Christ and man.

"Unless the Saviour be commensurate with mankind it is but a partial relief. But if he be commensurate with man he is other than the greatest man. And if he be not the deepest in very God it is no redemption."  

---

1 - Ibid, pp. 334-35.
2 - Ibid, pp. 335-36; also, p. 339.
3 - Missions in State and Church, p. 35.
The difference between God and man is so enormous, and man's revolt so serious, that it seems impossible that communion could be restored. Yet the relationship is altered in the person of Christ: in Him both God and man meet. Forsyth's theory is weak here, however, for he fails to indicate in what way the rebellious nature of man is included within the person of Christ. In fact, there is ambiguity even within The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, for though Forsyth speaks of man's movement as prayer, evolution, seeking, and the like in one place,\(^1\) he phrases it in more violent terms in another passage:

"God and man seem to exclude each other; and the difference certainly is very deep. But to realise the difference is only the more to realise the greatness of Christ as the Godman.... To express this greatness we need not two truths lying in a third, but two great powers at least, two personal movements, and these in surmounted collision within a person. We need man and God, and we need them in Godman and in a cross."\(^2\)

Forsyth is not clear as to just what man's movement really is, for which reason its combination with God's movement in the God-man does not appear convincing. Furthermore, the descriptive method itself has little to commend it over the two-nature theory, since it seems as abstract and impersonal as the other. There is a way in which Forsyth's theory might be clarified, however: if we think of the death of Christ as combining the death of God and man (in different senses, of course), we may interpret the Resurrection as the victory of man as well as God. For if Christ combines divinity and humanity in a personal, and presumably inseparable, unity, His rebirth must imply the rebirth of humanity. In this way the new Humanity of which Forsyth so often speaks carries a significance which is imperfectly developed, though suggested, in his theology. The

---

\(^1\) See p. 212, above.
\(^2\) The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 71-72.
undue emphasis upon the Cross at the expense of the Resurrection robs Forsyth's theology of much potential force.

"Man is indeed incomparable with God, but incompatible he is not. And in Christ the compatibility becomes full communion."¹ God reveals His purpose for the world in Christ, and makes possible the restoration of communion through this revelation. Christ does not bring the Kingdom, but is that Kingdom. The Revelation becomes, therefore, the central fact of history, by which all is to be interpreted and judged:

"The centre and goal of things is where the soul of God and the soul of man completely meet, not in mere rapture but in action. But in this region facts cease to be things and become persons and events. And if this centre is a fact and not a mere ideal, it is a historic and personal fact. It is Christ."²

In terms of time, Forsyth describes Christ as "the meeting point of changeless eternity, and changing history. In Him the eternal emerges at a fleeting point."³ Phrased in terms of the Atonement, the combination of the two movements in the one person is as follows:

"As man Christ offers obedience to God on the scale of the race, and atones for man, and is the ground for forgiveness; as God He acts creatively and royally in man, forgiving and creating life, and faith, and love. The two sides of the New Covenant are in a moral relation. The Atonement which founded it is the greatest moral act known, or possible, in the world."⁴

In another passage Forsyth identifies God's movement as redemption, and man's as religion.⁵ He does not explain why there should be conflict between two such movements as these.

It remains to be indicated how Forsyth explains the divinity and humanity of Christ from a practical rather than a theoretical point of

---

¹ - Ibid, p. 353.
² - The Justification of God, p. 52.
³ - Positive Preaching, pp. 206-07.
⁴ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 198.
⁵ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 343-44.
view. For example, how can the sinless Christ effectively confess our sin? The answer is necessarily incomplete but challenging. It is, Forsyth declares, for two reasons: because though sinless He is truly human; and because He creates a new humanity of which we become members in principle if not in fact.

"Christ could make no due confession of holiness for us in judgment if He were outside Humanity.... To be of final value the doning judgment must also be within the conscience of the guilty.... Repentance is certainly a condition of forgiveness. But Christ could not repent. How then could He perfectly meet the conditions of salvation? The answer is that our repentance was latent in that holiness of His which alone could and must create it, as the effect is really part of the cause.... In presenting Himself He offers implicitly and prophetically the new Humanity His holy work creates."¹

In the person of Christ humanity is represented by "man's movement to God, or man's action on God, either in the way of aspiration and prayer, or in the way of acquiring from God moral personality."² Thus the development of Jesus is the development of man; but not according to the former pattern. Now man is completed, and in the process he transcends the possibilities of natural man. Such development is impossible outside Christ, for it is He who creates the second humanity by overcoming the old. The manhood of Christ, according to Forsyth,

"Consists in the moral reality of his experience, his conflict, and his growth. It means his true ethical personality growing in an actual historic situation. It means that he counted in the public of his age.... His manhood was in his perfectly active receptivity ...... And his identity with Humanity lies not in prolonging, as it were, to the sky the rarest matter of the race, but in his own voluntary act of self-identification with it."³

The second mode, or movement, within the nature of Christ is that of God toward man.⁴ We can verify this only through the experience of forgiveness which is so transforming and overpowering that we believe it to be

² - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 340.
⁴ - Ibid, pp. 342-43.
objective fact. That God is in Christ is religious knowledge, and must not be treated otherwise. Our faith tells us that it is in Christ that we discover the movement of God towards us, as He communicates Himself to us and restores us to communion with Himself once more.

Such a theory demands a racial fate, for it is obvious that the personality of Christ cannot include all men as discrete individuals; nor can the new Humanity which He creates be other than a solidary unit. Forsyth reasons that unless the change be universal there is no guarantee for the individual:

"It is only the atoning reconciliation of a whole world that guarantees the final perfecting of that world by its creator.... (The) gospel deals with men as a whole.... Christ is the Saviour of the world, who was also the agent of its creation.... The Object of our faith... is what our fathers used to call a federal Person, a federal Saviour, in a federal act. All Humanity is in Him and in His act."¹

"Christ, as the Eternal Son of Holy God, can offer Him a holiness which creates and includes that of the race, and does not simply prophesy it.... (The) race could duly confess its sin and repent only if there arose in it One who by a perfect and impenitent holiness in Himself, and by His organic unity with us, could create such holiness in the sinful as should make the new life one long repentance transcended by faith and thankful joy.... Our repentance and our sanctity are of saving value before God only as produced by the creative holiness of Christ. Christ creates our holiness because of His own sanctification of Himself....and His complete victory over evil power in a life-experience of moral conflict."²

There is one way in which the new Humanity may be interpreted so as not to appear purely metaphysical: and that is to think of it in terms of the Church. If Forsyth be correct in his opinion that mankind is forgiven in principle but must still, because of human freedom and its concomitant responsibility, work out that salvation on the plane of individual personality, there is a place for the Church which no other institution can occupy. The Church

then becomes the body of Christ in a real sense; it is the new Humanity of which Forsyth speaks, and it is through it that the individual may find his way to the personal appropriation of God's grace. Thus it becomes clear that Christology is linked with Ecclesiology, and that a doctrine of the person of Christ requires a complementary doctrine of the Church, without which it will be incomplete and unsatisfactory.
We have noted the fact that Forsyth identifies the new Humanity with the Church.¹ Since the new Humanity is Christ's own creation, the Church must have a very important function in the ongoing work of Christ and the Spirit. We may expect to find the completion of Forsyth's Christological theory in his doctrine of the Church therefore. Indeed, it could not be otherwise in the thought of a theologian so intent upon showing how Christ's work was completed, not upon the Cross, but in the Apostolic period. Christ has effected reconciliation for the race as a whole; the task he leaves the Church is the actualising of this deed in the case of individual souls.

Any theory of the Church must take account of the disparity between that principle which motivates the Church and the actual conditions of divisiveness and failure within the churches. Forsyth does not ignore this fact, though seldom does he make a clearcut distinction between principle and practice. We find no such differentiation in his writings, for example, between Church Spiritual and Church Corporate. Although he

¹ - The Work of Christ, p. 146.
marks the difference between the ideal and the actual, he does not dis­parage the latter. This is because he conceives the Church to be the
divine institution which alone can actualise the universal victory of
Christ in the world of imperfect men. It is the Church which must carry
and proclaim the Gospel: such a task will necessarily be slow and hesita­ting. Forsyth does not condemn the institution for its imperfection.

"What makes the Church is not Christ as its founder but Christ as
its tenant as its life, as its power, the Christ living in the
faith of its members in general, and of its ministers in particu­lar. But it is a Christ that only partially comes to His own in the
Church's actual experience. The faith within the Church has to
speak to its half-faith, its bewildered faith, its struggling, or
even its decaying faith."1

Where the Church has failed - and this is especially true of the present -
it has done so because of its loss of the evangelical message which gives
it life.

"The world has gone forward in its religion, but the Church has
gone back in its faith.... Religion is secondary, but positive
faith is primary.... The spread of religion has cost us the
depth of it."2

"The chief problem of the Church is not in the world but in itself.
And there it turns on its Gospel more than on what is called its
spirit. It is devitalised because it is de-evangelised by ortho­
dox and heterodox alike."3

Forsyth often reiterates his belief that the Church has become so concern­
ed with social issues that it has lost the very interest which founded it.
A Church without the Gospel is merely a social organisation competing with
other groups better equipped to serve the secular needs and interests of
men.

1 - Positive Preaching, pp. 93-94.
2 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp. 23-24. Cp. Lewis, C.S.:
    Miracles, 1948, Ch. XI.
3 - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 76.
Forsyth's contribution to modern Church doctrine does not rest upon negative criticism, however; it is his positive, creative thought which is most important to consider in an analysis of his theology. He has much to say about the misdirected activities of the Established Church and Roman Catholicism, but these comments, sharp as they are, can be understood only in the light of his constructive theories. For though he is a confirmed Free Churchman, he considers Nonconformity to be a valid principle only within the context of the Holy Catholic Church, in which all churches find their being.

As in the case of other doctrines, so in his theory of the Church Forsyth emphasises holiness as the underlying theme. The holiness of God is the central principle in the doctrine of Atonement; the holy response of Christ to God is the key to Christology; and the holy work of the Church through the inspiration of the Spirit is that which differentiates it from all other social organisms. Because the Church continues the work of Christ, and because its foundation was laid in the act of the perfectly sinless Son of God, it too must be holy in its nature. Otherwise it could not perform the special task for which it was created.

"The Church is a Holy Church; but it is not so because of its actual sanctity or fraternity; it is so because of its choice by a Holy God, and its redemption by a Holy Christ.... Indeed, it is actually a holier Church to-day than in the first century."1

Exactly what is meant by the last sentence is unclear unless we think of the Church in quantitative terms, as Halliday accuses Forsyth of doing.2 This evolutionary view of the holiness of the Church can only be conceived to mean that as the Church has increased the scope of its mission it has

actualised the reconciling work of Christ and thereby increased in perfection. More important than this consideration is the emphasis of Forsyth upon the belief that it is God, not man, who has created and chosen the Church for its great historic task:

"The great Church is primarily the result of an act of God. It is primarily a divine creation and not a voluntary association. It is not of man nor of the will of man. It was called and created by a divine Act of the Holy, which is continued by the Church in a mystic Gospel of moral action."¹

The Church is universal in its scope and in its membership. It marks the highest point in human history. Unlike all other societies it has been created by a transcendent rather than an immanent power.

"(The) Church is the greatest and finest product of human history; because it is not really a product of human history, but the product of the Holy Spirit within history. It stands for the new creation, the New Humanity, and it has that in trust."²

The doctrine of universal election develops naturally from this point of view. Every man is born for the Church; through the Church every soul must eventually be brought within the Kingdom of God.

"All history exists for the Church, but for a Church of living souls as the distillation of history. The saints shall rule the world, but just as the world is translated into saints. Apart from these souls the Church is an abstraction, and any election of it is out of relation to personal faith. Truly election contemplates a vast totality of souls as the direct object of God's choice and work, but the election...is apprehended by individual faith, sure that the believing soul is thus in the eternal thought of God. There alone have we due ground for realising the unspeakable value of a soul..... It is precious as the Church is holy - as being earmarked by the Holy for holiness, as having an eternal destiny, without whom the Kingdom of God is not perfect. And there is no soul for which this is not the last and most practical question of its being."³

Thus the Church includes all believers in Christ, and its role in the

¹ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 60.
² - The Work of Christ, p. 5.
³ - The Principle of Authority, pp. 400-01.
The destiny of the race is to bring all persons into communion with God. That which Christ has performed for universal man the Church must actualise for the individual soul. The new Humanity, created by Christ, can never become actual until all men have been included in it of their own free will. The Church, therefore, is creative even as Christ is, developing in men the obedient response of faith to God's free gift of grace.

The Church of which Forsyth speaks cannot exist without a charter; its authority must come directly from the Godhead. Unless there be some means of convincing people that the Church has such a charter, no favourable results can be expected to follow from its work. It will become an institution no different from others, with no special claim upon men, and with no lasting, transforming effect upon them. But if the Church has such a charter, it must be moral in its nature. The authority of the Church rests in the moral conscience of the race and of the individual: in other words, it is personal rather than metaphysical.

One of the greatest weaknesses in modern Christian thinking, states Forsyth, is its dependence upon individual impression for religious authority. The Church's authority must be objective; it cannot be based upon the atomistic sensations of individuals, no matter how compelling, for "no amount of subjective religion secures the Church, but the creating word of a positive Gospel."¹ The modern tendency to exalt liberty at the expense of authority is consistent with the development of democracy in the State. The Church, however, is not a democracy but a kingdom, and therefore the principle of liberty is secondary to that of authority.

¹ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 4.
"(To) every true Church the note of authority must be uppermost. To put liberty, which is a secondary matter, before authority, which is primary and fontal even for liberty itself, is to confess a sect and not a Church."1

Because of the organic quality of the Church, and because the Church is central in human history, the principle of authority must be the same throughout the whole of its existence. Modern attempts to disparage or forsake the original beliefs of the Church are, therefore, highly dangerous and contrary to its charter. This much, at least, we must maintain:

"A substantive belief in the historical Christianity of the New Testament, centring in the Godhead of Christ, is part of the Church's constitution, and not merely of its theology or polity. No church, no majority in a Church, has the moral right to abjure that. It renounces the Holy Spirit of its creation and ceases to be a Church in the act...."2

The authority of the Church does not rest upon the Bible taken as an infallible text, nor does it depend upon a literal acceptance of the historical statements of the New Testament Church. The authority of the Church rests solely upon that which established it and constituted the New Testament: the Gospel of Redemption.

Nor is the charter of the Church to be found in any of Jesus' teachings, nor in any particular form of Church government. Rather is it to be found in that for which He lived and died:

"The Charter of the Church is not in any saying of Jesus.... It is not a documentary charter at all.... The Church's Charter is the principle incarnate in the eternal and irreducible personality of Christ, and in Him chiefly as crucified. It is the old Reformation principle of free grace, which is the rediscovered soul of the New Testament and the native accent of the Holy Ghost."3

This principle of authority seems to have been discovered by Forsyth in his personal, individual experience, and is, therefore, a generalisation

---

2 - The Principle of Authority, p. 267.
3 - Forsyth: The Charter of the Church, 1896, p. iv; also, p. vi.
from the particular to the universal. He states:

"I have found my rock, my reality, my eternal life in my historic redemption. And what is moral rock, real existence, and spiritual mastery for me is also the authority and charter of the Church, the living power in all history, the moral foundation of Society, and the moral warrant of an infinite future for the race."  

Such a statement is not unexpected from a theologian who stresses the psychological as against the metaphysical aspect of religion. Forsyth would not be content to rest his case on a psychological explanation of religion, however; there is more to his argument than this. In his own personal encounter with God it is forgiveness, or redemption, which is the keynote to the experience. Forsyth sees in the Church - in its long history as well as in contemporary times - this same redemptive principle: the ability to create new men out of old. Strictly speaking, it is not the Church which redeems, but it exhibits in its members the same condition which Forsyth has discovered in himself. In his judgment, therefore, anyone who has experienced this life-transforming act of forgiveness becomes therewith a member of the new Humanity and accordingly of the Church. He will discover that the authority which creates and perpetuates the Church is this very act of redemption by which he himself has become a member of the new race. The principle of authority is the Gospel. In the following passage Forsyth develops this theme from the standpoint of the historical experience of the Church. It must be remembered that it is not the experience itself which is objective, but the content:

"The authority of the Church is but the weight of its experienced Gospel in a vast plexus and long series of regenerate and corporate souls. And so the true authority of the true Church is a leading condition of thought truly free."  

2 - The Principle of Authority, p. 329.
More specifically, the Church derives its charter from that by which it was created, the redemption of man by Christ in His Cross. Here is the Church's charter, for it is here that the work of Christ reaches its highest point, and here that the crucial act of atonement is performed. The principle of authority rests in action, not idea; the Church must seek its charter in that which has effected a change in man's relation to God.

"The only established Church is the Church inevitably established by the free-will offering of Christ on the Cross as a redemption from curse and a judgment of sin in the flesh."\footnote{1}{Missions in State and Church, p. 80.}

"The Cross is not there just for religious effect. The Church takes her moral bearings there. She discovers God's moral world and authority there. She reconstructs man's conscience from there, from the word, revelation, and nature of the cross..."\footnote{2}{The Holy Father, p. 81.}

In one of his more dogmatic statements Forsyth even remarks that "there is but one object of faith, which is not the Church, and not truth, but the Cross of Christ."\footnote{3}{Rome, Reform and Reaction, p. 68.} The charter of the Church, then, is to be found in that which redeems mankind from sin: in the Cross of Christ, or the act by which Christ reconciles man to God.

It would be a distortion of Forsyth's views to give the impression that he is interested primarily in the relationship of the Church to an act rather than to a person. All action is personal, and therefore this distinction does not arise in his thought. When he speaks of the Cross he generally means the greatest personal act of Christ, for he thinks in terms of personal, moral deeds rather than things. Accordingly, the relationship of the Church to the Atonement is of fundamental significance in Forsyth's theology. The Church is not an end in itself, but a part of God's plan for the world. It is the Kingdom in the making. It is not through our becoming members of the
Church that we are reconciled to God, but through our having been saved that we become members of the Church. This is one of the points of difference between Evangelical and Catholic theology: in the latter, the Church is given a role which evangelical thought reserves for Christ alone. "It is not because we are of the Church that we are of Christ.... We belong to the Church as a consequence of belonging to Christ."¹

"...Christianity is an absolutely personal faith.... (We) are judged and saved eternally not by our relation to the Church, but by our relation to Christ as the Redeemer.... The function of the Church is to introduce Christ and the soul, that He may do for that soul His work for every soul; it takes no responsibility for the soul, which is the prerogative of Christ alone."²

The Church is the Body of Christ, states Forsyth; but there is a sense in which it is better to call her the Bride of Christ, since this conception preserves an important difference between them. He clarifies this difference in a statement at Sanday's Conference on Priesthood and Sacrifice:

"The relation of the Church to Christ is not only as a Body but as a Bride. It is not only His organ but the object of communion by the Spirit flowing entirely from His death-work.... But the Christian Church cannot, even by the Holy Ghost, reproduce the sacrificial act which constituted it.... The Atonement was not really made by Christ's body....but by His loving soul and holy obedient will. Its chief nature was prayer, which is a function not of body but of soul. The Church, therefore, in so far as it is Christ's body, can but carry out what is foregone in Christ's act."³

Nor can the Church in any sense be termed a continuation of Christ in history. The work of Christ and of the Church are not synonymous. Neither Church nor individual exists to imitate Christ.

¹ - The Charter of the Church, p. 45.
² - The Principle of Authority, p. 359.
³ - Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, pp. 32-33.
"There is a way of magnifying the dignity of the Church which, in seeming to glorify Christ in it, yet destroys the true relation with its Lord. Is the Church in history the prolongation of the Incarnation? It is an attractive imagination.... But if the Church is this, can we also call it the Body of Christ? For when Christ became incarnate, His soul took a material body, whereas the Church in which Christ dwells is not a material body, but an organism of spirits.... The Church He created cannot be a continuation of Him the increate.... It is regenerated human nature in which Christ dwells. But that cannot be a continuation of His Incarnation, wherein there was no regeneration. His great spiritual work was not the result of a regeneration, but the source of it, as the Church cannot be.... The Church is not the continuation of Christ, but His creation and His response.¹

Just as the vital fact in Christ's relationship to man is the difference between the two, so in His relationship to the Church the most important element is the discontinuity. To ignore Christ's difference from man is to fall into the error of Protestant liberalism; to commit the second mistake of false identification of Church with Christ is to adopt the viewpoint of Catholicism. While it may appear that in making so sharp a distinction between the work of Christ and the work of the Church Forsyth depreciates the Church, the opposite is true. One of the facts brought out in a discussion of the holiness of God and sinfulness of man was that the extremely pessimistic view taken of natural man merely emphasises his importance if his sin can make so great a difference to God. Thus the difference between Christ and man merely exalts man's place in the divine plan. The same is true of the Church in its relationship to Christ: "It was for a Church that Christ died, and we are saved by our share in that corporate salvation."² So closely does Christ unite the Church with Himself that every man who responds to God's grace becomes a member of the Church:

¹ - The Church and the Sacraments, pp. 81-83.
"(The) same act which sets us in Christ sets us also in the society of Christ.... To be in Christ is in the same act to be in the Church. Anything we do in the way of joining the Church by confession of Faith is only making explicit in the statement what is already implicit in the fact. The act of faith which saves us from self would only have a negative meaning if it did not save us at the same moment into a society which is a centre of service and sympathy."¹

This is what Forsyth would term a "High Church" doctrine; and it is this which he means when he declares that "Congregationalism at least is High Church or nothing."²

The Church is founded on the Word of God: the Gospel of free grace through the forgiveness of sins. But is it activated by the Spirit of God; and only as the Word and the Spirit are conceived together is the doctrine of the Church comprehensive. This point of view is analogous to that which Forsyth has enunciated in his Christology: namely, that not only must Christ consummate the reconciliation of man to God, but that this act must be expressed and interpreted. The interpretation of the work of Christ is the task which the Spirit accomplishes in and through the Church. The Word relates to the fact of redemption, while the Spirit brings it home to the conscience.

"The Word is man's responsive and inspired act of confessing the Gospel as the new creative act of God. It took effect first in the Apostles, and then in the continuous and manifold publication of their message by the Church. And by Spirit is meant not simply God's presence in the world He made, nor even His presence in history by the historic Son and His posthumous effect, but God's presence in the Church in an Eternal Son and a Holy Spirit who not only fills the Word but mediates it to the soul."³

Forsyth maintains that the distinction between these concepts has been of vital consequence in the history of the Church. Both are necessary and complementary in Christian theology, yet it has been customary in the past

¹ - Ibid, pp. 61-62.
³ - Ibid, p. 1, Note.
to emphasise one at the expense of the other. The Word is God's final
declaration; the Spirit makes of Christianity a living religion.

"The new religion of Christianity was not based solely upon the
verdict of the spiritual consciousness but on the interaction of
two sets of facts: first, the life, miracles, teachings, death,
and resurrection of Jesus; and second, the action of the Holy
Spirit upon the living generation. The former was valuable only
as interpreted and appropriated in the latter."1

He associates the Word with the Bible and the Spirit with the Church,
showing that historic Christianity cannot dispense with either if it
would be true to its mission. The Church thus becomes, in his theory,
"The historic medium, but the Spirit is the historic mediator, whose
organ the Church is."2 Without such an organ the Spirit would be unable
to perform His task.

"A bodiless spirit of good will never master the the)well-organised
spirit of the world. The Spirit of God, as it has a historic Word,
must have a historic Church. We have to face a kingdom, and almost
a church, of evil. Some organised and tangible unity is forced on
us as we realise.... the nature of the work we face; as we realise
the nature of that unity we have to encounter.... And what is often
called a 'unity of spirit' can never cope with this collective
Superman to any practical effect."3

The Church must be exalted not only as the historic medium by which is
conveyed to individuals the fact of reconciliation, but also as the active
means by which the Spirit effects that reconciliation. The Church is the
historic, corporate agency by which redemption is effectuated, not only
in those brief years of apostolic inspiration, but in every generation till
the end of time.

What is the relationship of the Church to the Kingdom? Forsyth
states that both were founded by the Gospel and are therefore the same. To

2 - The Principle of Authority, p. 359.
3 - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 114.
think of the Kingdom as primarily an ethical concept is to miss the whole point of Christ's death. Were the Kingdom only this, it would differ from the Church; because it is based on the soul's response of faith to grace, it may be identified with the Church:

"It is certain that Christ founded the Church. He knew He was founding the New Covenant, the Kingdom as a relation. He also founded, though not in just the same way, the Church.... The real foundation of the Church was the founding of the New Covenant - the Gospel. Christ at the end was more engrossed with the founding of that Covenant than of the Church. That again is to say that what founded the Kingdom also founded the Church. Therefore they are the same.

"The Church is not a means to the Kingdom, but the Kingdom in the making. It is the new relation, the kingship, in so far as it has become a distinct society.... Truly the Kingdom's action is wider than the Church, for the kingship of God works outside that.... But in so far as the Kingdom of God is not just a holy relation but a holy society, the Church is the Kingdom. The mystic nature of the Kingdom is conserved in the Church, the moral nature of it conserves the Church itself. Inside the Church it works as holy love, outside it as holy righteousness."\(^1\)

Forsyth speaks of the Kingdom of God as the key to history, while the Church "has the power of that key."\(^2\) It is only through the Church that the Kingdom of God can be realised completely.\(^3\) This means that the Church's primary responsibility is not to man but to God. Considered in this sense the Church, despite its divisions, is holy and catholic; and only as its acts in this universal sense will it be able to face and overcome the worldly powers which threaten it.

"When I speak of the Church," remarks Forsyth, "I mean....the true Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, the Church in all Churches, the community of the faithful."\(^4\) Christ founded the Church, not churches; accordingly it is the one universal Church with which we are concerned

---

1 - The Church and the Sacraments, pp. 94-95.
3 - Ibid, p. 120.
4 - The Charter of the Church, p. 38.
rather than a particular group or sect. When considered in this manner, the Church assumes an importance in theological thought which otherwise it might forfeit. Forsyth nowhere states that outside the Church there is no salvation, but he does contend that all whom Christ has touched become at that moment members of the Church. Thus the Church is essential to God's plan of salvation because it is the society of all who believe in Him. It is in this sense that Christ may be said to have died for the Church.

"God's end in Christ is a Christian community, apart from which and its faith and love there is no effectual sonship.... If we are complete in Christ, we are complete only in a holy and Catholic Church."¹

Without the Church Christianity could not continue to maintain itself in this kind of a world. There is required an objective social structure, not merely a vague, subjective impressionism. Christians are members of a great social organism which sustains them.

"Christianity can only exist in the world as a Church and not as a mere spiritual movement in the midst of society. If the final authority is God in Gospel, the Church shares in the authority as the expert of the Gospel and the soul.... We are members of a great spiritual corporation. We but focus, reflect, and prolong, even in our most vivid experience, the vaster faith of the great Church."²

"You cannot have Christian communion without the Christian community," he declares.³ Mere brotherhood is an insufficient basis for the perpetuation of the faith, while sympathetic faith in the person of Christ will not suffice to maintain the objective relationship between man and God.

Such a universal Church requires an underlying principle of unity

2 - The Principle of Authority, pp. 369-70.
3 - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 4.
which will hold it together despite the divisions into which it has fallen throughout its history. That there is such a unity is apparent to Forsyth in the concept of High Church Nonconformity. That which makes the Church one is that which established it from the beginning: God's free grace.

"The real unity of the Church is of the kind which reflects the inner unity of the Gospel which created the Church."\(^1\) The Church is unified as the fellowship of the redeemed.\(^2\) That which reconciles the individual to God is also that which creates the Church. "Historically the Church was one before it was many."\(^3\) He emphasises the fact that the Apostles did not found discrete churches, but always branches of the one Church; not the Corinthian Church, for example, but the Church in Corinth. Wherever there is a Church, it is a member of the great Church from which it draws its charter. Neither the Catholic nor the Protestant Churches are the Church; they are but manifestations of the Church in its historical attempts to preach the Word of God in specific and contingent circumstances. Forsyth is certain that the Church, like the State, is organic rather than composite. The unity stems from its very principle of authority; it binds all individual members to one another; it impels them in their common task. The church which departs from this principle becomes a sect, for the brotherhood of man has been established by Christ in His New Creation, not by any wilful action of its members. The initiative stems from the Spirit of God.

Accordingly, the idea of individualism is contrary to the basic theory of the Church, for "The Church, not the individual, is the correlate of Christian truth."\(^4\) To equate the Free Church idea with such individualism is to commit a grave theological error against which Forsyth repeatedly

\(^1\) Ibid, p. 47.  
\(^2\) Ibid, p. 60.  
\(^3\) Ibid, p. 62.  
\(^4\) Theology in Church and State, p. xviii.
"We must destroy the idea that the Free Churches rest upon religious individualism, and stand or fall with it.... Nonconformity arose... not in the restlessness of individuals, but as a protest of the Church.... It came from men who believed more in the Church than in the individual.... We are saved, as units, from being units, into a redeemed community, which must constantly take practical effect as a visible society.... Views may be individual, faith cannot be."  

This is the error which has cost Nonconformity its sense of Churchmanship, and has made possible the rise of preachers whose first loyalty is not to the historic Gospel but to the public and the Press. "Individualism destroys the Church idea."  

It is well to keep in mind this criticism of Free Churchism, for it balances the attacks which Forsyth makes upon complementary errors in the Roman and Established Churches. The subjectivism of the individualistic Nonconformist is matched by a Catholic subjectivism no less dangerous: in this latter case, the objective Gospel is replaced by the conception of the Church as the means of grace. Forsyth notes that there is a natural tendency for the extreme liberal to move toward the authoritarianism of Roman Catholicism once his faith has been shaken, just as the Papacy has made gains in those lands where the Church has heretofore been subordinated to the State. True Nonconformity guards against this subjectivism by resting its faith only in the moral authority of the Gospel, never in an individual, a State, or an ecclesiastical organisation.

One of the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic communion is converted by Forsyth into a basic tenet of the Free Church polity when he writes, "The apostolic succession is the evangelical succession."  

In other words, it is not the laying on of hands which transmits the authority of the Church from one man to another: that is a magical conception which is completely

---

1 - The Charter of the Church, pp. 62-63.
2 - Ibid, p. 65.
3 - Missions in State and Church, p. 238; The Church and the Sacraments, p. 139.
erroneous. Such a notion misses the moral note of the Gospel. Succession can be transmitted only by the Spirit of God, and is so communicated in a qualitative, spiritual sense. This is the evangelical note which should motivate the Church. Strictly speaking, however, there is no Apostolic succession: the Apostles occupy a place in the Church which could not be continued from their generation.

"The authority of the Apostles was not transmitted - their personal contact with Christ could not be - except as in St. Paul's sense, and that was not transmission, but a fresh call. The ministry is but the virtual, not the official, successor of the Apostles, i.e. they are such in virtue of the same word of the Gospel, and not of institutional continuity."1

When this view is combined with Forsyth's High Church doctrine an important fact emerges: for just as he has adapted modern views to the orthodox teachings of the Church in respect to Atonement and Christology, here he contrives to reconcile the Catholic and Protestant theories of the Church without sacrificing either. He holds on to the idea of a Holy Catholic Church which is more than a verbal declaration; and he maintains with it the evangelical doctrine of the Free Churches. It is interesting to observe in this connection that Forsyth's ideas of the Church seem to have been more inspirational in Anglican than Free Church circles.2

It is apparent that when Forsyth attacks either Roman Catholicism or the Established Church (and he makes such attacks frequently and vigorously), he does so from a standpoint different from that of most of his Nonconformist colleagues. He speaks not strictly as a Nonconformist, but as a Churchman who is trying to preserve that in both divisions which is essential to the Church. It is not for the sake of Nonconformity that he

1 - Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, p. 43.
2 - E.g., Mozley and Vidler in Britain, and Wedel in America.
wages his battles, no matter how partisan he may sometimes appear, but for
the Holy Catholic Church. In fact, there is no such entity as the Non-
conformist Church: Nonconformity is a "principle re-making Churches."¹
There is nothing in Nonconformity inconsistent with the tradition of the
great Church; there is much, however, which is inconsistent with Cathol-
icism, whether it be Roman or Anglican. One of the differences in prin-
ciple between them is clouded by the fact that in practice a Nonconform-
ist may be more Catholic than Protestant, and vice versa:

"Amidst the Churches, sects and parties of Christendom, there is one
cross division which does not correspond with any of the familiar
lines. It is the mark of a spirit rather than of a doctrine, of a
tendency more than a polity; and it may be described as the division
between those whose chief aim is spiritual safety, and those to whom
it is spiritual certainty... It expresses... the difference between
the Roman and the Protestant spirit in whichever Church it is found."²

Phrased differently: "The Church will be Catholic or Evangelical according
as we dismiss Paul from his primacy among the apostles or keep him there."³

Forsyth states that two great principles of the Church before the Reform-
ation were unity and autonomy. The Protestant and Roman Catholic branches
are closer in their maintenance of these principles than is the Establish-
ed Church, simply because the latter has sacrificed autonomy to the State
in order to preserve the principle of unity. Protestantism has often lost
its unity, but never its autonomy. The Established Church is an anomaly,
in his view, and cannot continue much longer as such (in this respect he
has been proved wrong). Of these principles, autonomy is by far the most
important, for it alone guarantees the Church's spiritual independence, or
"self-government under Christ."⁴ The failure of the Establishment to keep

¹ - The Charter of the Church, p. 16.
² - Faith and Criticism, pp. 97-98.
³ - Rome, Reform and Reaction, p. 77.
⁴ - See, The Charter of the Church, p. 11.
this freedom has been its greatest error.

"(If) the Established Church has preserved the idea of unity it has not kept the idea of continuity. For it is the Nonconformists that have continued, even at the cost of unity, the far more vital principle of the autonomy of faith, the independence of the Church, its responsibility to Christ alone, that self-government of the Church which was, and is, the true principle asserted with a vast consistency always by the Roman Church."1

Forsyth also distinguishes between the Protestant and Catholic attitudes towards the means by which sin is forgiven (whether through the medium of the Church or not),2 and towards the doctrine of grace (wherein arises the issue of sacerdotalism):3

"(For) Catholicism grace is magic, for Evangelicalism it is mercy. The grace of Evangelicalism is Christ, the Gospel, the Word. The faith that answers that is living faith in a living person directly in converse with the soul...."4

In still another passage Forsyth speaks of Catholicism as monopolist, and Evangelicalism as fraternal.

"The monopolist, imperial, or sectarian Catholics, represented by Romanism and Anglicanism....make faith an institutional rather than an intuitional thing. The free or fraternal Catholics... put faith first, and organic unity as only second as an external or derivative thing."5

In all his writings Forsyth is careful not to include all Roman or Anglican Catholics on one side of the line, and all Evangelicals on the other. There is a difference in the spirit of each group, but this may not characterise individuals as it does the group in general. In fact, nineteenth century orthodoxy was Catholic in spirit rather than confessional; while the two contemporary religious movements of Forsyth's time - philosophical liberalism and literary mysticism - are similarly Catholic in attitude.

2 - Rome, pp. 40-41.
3 - Ibid, p. 55.
4 - Ibid, p. 57.
5 - The Charter of the Church, p. 40.
The chief religious force with which Forsyth is in contention is not Roman Catholicism, but the Established Church. The particular issue which has been the cause of strife in the past is the education controversy; but other matters come into consideration, such as the Episcopacy, recognition of Free Church interests, and recognition of Free Church clergy. Perhaps the fact that Forsyth was never recognised by the authorities in Cambridge despite his brilliant record at Aberdeen increased his venom. At any rate, some of his choicest irony is reserved for the Established Church. His opposition to the Establishment can be summed up in three terms: Prince, Prelate, Priest:

"We object to the position of the Prince in the Church. To-day that means the Premier, and ultimately the public... No man, as mere citizen, has a right to place or influence in the Church...."

"We object to the position of the Prelate... Episcopacy is but one of the three great forms of Church government.... The diocesan bishops are not the successors of the Apostles.... The Apostles had no successors. They were unique...."

"We object to the Priest - the word and the thing.... The idea is foreign to the Apostolic doctrine of grace.... The place of the priest is the flat contrary of that direct access, spiritual equality, and godly individuality which belong to the essence and autonomy of New Testament faith."1

Anglicanism, like Romanism, has sacrificed the principle of free grace; therefore the Evangelical churches alone can win the battle of the Gospel against the world.

The true Nonconformist is, therefore, the true Catholic. Even though the Roman Church has preserved great truth, it has sacrificed the most important fact of all: the freedom of the Holy Spirit. The Established

1 - Ibid, pp. 48-57.
Church has delivered its power into the hands of secular authorities; the Roman, into the hands of a professional hierarchy. Nonconformity, despite its mistakes, has not assumed the authority of grace for its own priesthood, nor relinquished it to the State.

In respect to the form of government which a Church may choose, Forsyth sees no Biblical authority for one over the others. Each form has been developed to meet the exigencies of history; none bears a New Testament charter. Even if we could untangle the facts of New Testament churches, we should have no warrant to maintain exactly the same structure which was employed by them.

"The praxis of the Early Church settles little (else the Baptists are right). Its precise views and doctrines are fonal, but not necessarily final. But its revelation, its principle, the ideas embodied in its central fact of Christ and His cross, its spirit and Gospel of Redemption are final...."¹

Forsyth's criticism of the Papacy and Establishment, interesting though they are, appear to be of less importance today than at the time of writing. His theory of the Free Churches, on the other hand, seems relevant even now. "The Free Churches," he writes, "need to cultivate a sense of the great Church, if their freedom is not to lose all its greatness...."² He suggests federation as the most comprehensive plan of union. There must be union of one kind or another, simply because the Church cannot face a united world if it be disunited. The Roman Church has found its unifying principle in the Church itself; Anglicanism "rallies upon the principle of an Establishment;" but what principle can the Nonconformists find as a rallying ground in times like these? They cannot accept the Roman answer, nor the Anglican, but in the reality of grace they can find the one authority which will join them to-

¹ - Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, p. 50.
² - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 7.
gether into one great force with which to withstand the growing secularism of society. By God's grace Forsyth means

"...His pardon and redemption in face of our sin, under such moral conditions as are implied in atonement, however construed.... It is an objective power and historic act of God in Christ, decisive for humanity in time and in eternity, and altering forever the whole relation of the soul to God as it may be rejected or believed."1

It is this which has established the Church; it is this which has been the principle of the Free Churches from the time of the Reformation; it is this which alone can serve as a vital message today. The unity of the Free Churches must rest in their authority, which alone is objective and certain.

The Church is one agent of revelation to the world; the Bible is the other. The Church is the Spirit at work; the Bible is the historic Word declared. According to Forsyth that which founded the Church also gave us the Bible. Our greatest modern need, he writes, is a return to the Bible, where we find the source of revelation. Yet, it is not to an infallible Bible that we shall return; Forsyth does not believe that a literal interpretation of the Bible is either possible or desireable. Just as Jesus was humanly fallible, so is the Bible in many respects, though taken as a whole it is not.

"The Bible is at once a document of man's religion and more inwardly and deeply, a form of God's word, and the chief form that we have now; but, as it wears a human and historic shape, it is not immune from human weakness, limitation, and error. The Bible is the great sacrament of the Word, wherein the elements may perish if only the Word itself endure.... We must take the whole Gospel for our salvation, but we need not take, and cannot take, the whole Bible."2

The Gospel by which the Church is motivated is preserved in the Bible. It is this which gives the Scriptures their unique authority. Forsyth suggests that the true successor to the Apostolate was not the bishopric, nor any minister, but the Bible which carried their message to all generations.

"The real successor to the Apostolate... was not the hierarchy but the canon of Scripture written to prolong their voice and compiled to replace the vanished witness."¹

We cannot abandon the Bible without losing our faith as a Church. Word and Spirit - Bible and Church - are indispensable to Christian faith. No amount of subjective inspiration can supersede them. In the Bible alone is to be found the source of revelation upon which the Church depends for its very existence:

"(There is but) one seat of revelation, which is the Bible; and one principle of revelation, which is the Gospel. We have to go back to the Bible and interpret it by its own inner light of the Gospel, and not by the Church. It is the Bible that interprets the Church, however the Church may expound the Bible."²

By distinguishing between the Bible as the seat of revelation and the Gospel as its principle, Forsyth succeeds in maintaining the central validity of the Scriptures without falling back on the doctrine of infallibility.

The Church must be priestly because it was founded by the Great High Priest. While it is true that it cannot prolong the atoning work of Christ, by its very act of obedience in worship the Church performs a priestly function whereby it represents the whole of mankind. "Obedience may not be the first duty in the State, but it is in the Church. Faith is an obedience before it is anything else."³ A careful distinction is made by Forsyth between the Church as priest and the priesthood of the Church; the one is valid, the other is not:

"The Church which the great High Priest inhabits must be a priestly Church... The confusion is caused when we cease to think that the Church is a priesthood, and begin to think that it has a priesthood."⁴

"The great visible priest on earth is the Church in its various

1 - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 64.
2 - Rome, Reform and Reaction, pp. 68-69.
3 - The Principle of Authority, p. 265.
4 - Rome, Reform and Reaction, p. 183.
sections. The Church is the great intermediary between God and man, because it is in the trust of the one saving Gospel of the Great Mediator. The Church is the priest as the abode and agent on earth of the One Priest, the High Priest. It is priest by itsunction of the Holy Ghost.¹

"New Testament Christianity is a priestly religion or it is nothing.... The greatest function of the Church is to confess, to sacrifice, to intercede for the whole human race in Him."²

Forsyth stresses the fact that the Church is priestly as Christ is; but he disagrees with Moberly's theory that the Church is what Christ is. The priestliness of the Church is derivative, while Christ's is original. To identify the two is to commit the error of "Ecclesiastical pantheism."³

In conformity with his Protestant tradition Forsyth upholds the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. He feels, however, that the authority to speak or act in the name of the Church must come from that body. Individualism must not be carried to the extreme which it has reached in some Nonconformist circles. Some kind of authority is essential if the Church is to maintain the purity of its message. Likewise, liberty in the Church is of secondary importance to authority; only when the latter is assured can liberty be guaranteed. The authority of which Forsyth speaks in this case is, of course, that which stems from the Gospel.

It is to be expected that Forsyth will contend that a priestly ministry is essential to the Church. There are, however, strict limits to the priestly functions of the minister:

"The minister is what the Church is. He is priest only in so far as he represents the essential priestliness inherent in the Church; and the Church is priestly only in so far as it represent the cross and sacrifice of Jesus Christ."⁴

² - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 12.
³ - See, Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, pp. 162-63.
⁴ - Rome, Reform and Reaction, p. 185.
In order to guard against any sacerdotal interpretation of this conception, Forsyth emphasises his belief that the priestly function has not been instituted on any direct commission of Christ, but by the Holy Spirit acting in the Church, and that the minister is priest only as he represents the Church as a whole.¹

Important as this function of the Church may seem, it is not equal to the Church's role as preacher of the Word.² "The one great preacher in history... is the Church."³ "Preaching... is the Church confessing its faith."⁴ Christ did not found an order of preachers; He instituted a Church whose task is the preaching of the Gospel. "What is the Church but the great apostle and preacher on earth?"⁵ All preaching, therefore, differs from other forms of public address, for in this case it is not only the minister who speaks, but the whole Church with him and through him. Nonetheless, there is a distinction between the Church and its ministers which cannot be overlooked. The Church does not appoint its ministry: rather, it puts an official seal of recognition upon an act performed by the Holy Spirit.

"The Church has... selective power in respect to the ministry, but not creative. It did not institute the function of preaching; the irrepressible nature of the Word did that. Nor could it equip a man with the message; the Spirit did that."⁶

If the ministry were in direct succession from the Apostles, we might say that it is an institution developed by the Church; but the ministry is a substitute for that unique group and is thus an institution and creation of the Spirit.

---

¹ - See, Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, p. 30.
² - The statement from The Person and Place of Christ (p. 241 above) is not characteristic of Forsyth's thought as a whole.
³ - Positive Preaching, p. 79.
⁴ - Ibid, p. 108.
⁵ - Missions in State and Church, p. 78.
⁶ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 136.
"It is not the ministry that is the successor of the Apostolate, but the ministry plus the true apostolic legacy of the Bible—the ministry of the Word.... The authority of the ministry is not drawn from the Church.... What does come from the Church is the recognition of an authority it cannot confer, and the provision of opportunity."1

The ministry is not a product of the Church, but a gift to it by the Holy Spirit. If it be asked what check Forsyth offers against the very impressionism against which he warns his readers, the answer will be twofold: 1) the actual moral authority of free grace by which the minister, as well as the Church, must be measured; 2) the Church's theology, founded on the Gospel and invigorated by it. The minister must take account of the dogma of the faith, just as the Church must.

The ministry is to be identified and judged by its effectiveness. It is the function of a minister to be morally creative: if he is continually recreating the souls of people through the moral power of his message, he is performing the task for which he was commissioned by the Spirit. It is in this creative quality of the ministry, both to bring faith to individuals and to churches, that Forsyth sees the hope of future Church unity.2 The minister's preaching, insofar as it is inspired by the Gospel, unifies society and brings coherence where there has been anarchy. The charter of the minister is the New Testament, since this is the prolongation of the Apostolate. Forsyth defines four functions of the ministry: preaching, pastoral work, liturgical work, and social and philanthropic activities.3 The most fundamental of these is preaching, for it is a sacramental act of grace. Pastoral work is really an extension of preaching; it can be considered as a complementary manner in which the Word is carried to the people.

3 - Ibid, pp. 144-47.
In comparison with these two functions, however, liturgical work is priestly and therefore of secondary importance. The difference is fundamental: in preaching, the initiative comes from God; in public prayer, it comes from the people. In the one case the minister is God's representative to the people; in the other, he is representing the Church before God. In the latter instance, therefore, the minister does not convey grace, but faith.

While both functions are essential to the Church, the emphasis must be on the first. In Forsyth's opinion, this marks the difference between sacramentalism and sacerdotalism, and it is for this reason that Protestantism has always placed the greater emphasis upon preaching. The social and philanthropic function of the ministry, while important, has found such stress in modern times that Forsyth sees little need to emphasise it. Suffice it to say that he considers it to be a valid function of the ministry, without which the witness of the Church is incomplete.

What is the timeless message of the Church? It "is not to bid men love, but to bid them believe..."¹ Ours is first a believing, then a worshipping, and finally a working Church.² Only where we have the positive Gospel do we have the true Church:

"There is but one note of the true Church; and it is not subjective but objective, not our mood to God but God's charge to us; not a subjective spirit, like charity, but an objective relation, like faith. It is the note of the Gospel of the grace of God to guilty man in the Redeemer. We have the Church, not where we have the mere temper of Christ, but where we have the Word of His reconciliation, and that Word in actual experience, and authority, and effect by the Holy Spirit."³

The themes which the Church must preach are, in the order of their importance:

¹ - Rome, Reform and Reaction, p. 104.
³ - Faith, Freedom and the Future, p. 213.
the Cross, the Resurrection, the life and teachings of Jesus, His pre-existence, and only afterwards such a doctrine as the Virgin Birth.¹

When he preaches, the minister performs a sacramental act. A sacrament, states Forsyth, is something which accomplishes things; it is in this sense that he refers to preaching as the sacrament of the Word. This is which gives to the ministry its meaning and authority. It is the most distinctive feature of the ministry. Here the difference between the priestly and ministerial functions is most pronounced.

"The preacher's place in the Church is sacramental. It is not sacerdotal, but it is sacramental. He mediates the Word to the Church from faith to faith, from his faith to theirs, from one stage of their common faith to another."²

"The preacher, in reproducing this Gospel word of God, prolongs Christ's sacramental work.... God's living word reproduces itself as a living act. Every true sermon, therefore, is a sacramental act. It is God's Gospel act reproducing itself in detail."³

It is the Church's function to individualise that which has been accomplished already by Christ on the universal scale. Therefore the preaching of the Word must have the same kind of transforming power as did the work of Christ. It must be active, not passive, capable of changing men's relationship to God. The minister is thus creative, even as Christ has been.

"The work of Christ produced a Church in kind, to work out in history His finality in principle, and to complete His creative perfection, as He Himself grew in the perfection which was always His. And this the Church did chiefly by the moral method of preaching the collective Gospel....especially to individuals. The individualising Spirit in the Church details to our souls the double gift complete in Christ - forgiveness and regeneration."⁴

The power in such sacramental preaching lies in no magic but in the psychological, moral realm. It is not a substance or nature which is affected,

¹ - See, Positive Preaching, pp. 128-29.
² - Ibid, p. 80.
³ - Ibid, pp. 82-83.
⁴ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 198.
but personality.

Forsyth speaks of preaching and the sacraments as "the two great expressions of the Gospel in worship." He distinguishes between them in this way:

"The Sacraments are the acted Word - variants of the preached Word. They are signs, but they are more than signs. They are the Word, the Gospel itself, visible, as in preaching the Word is audible. But in either case it is an act. It is Christ in a real presence giving us anew His Redemption."¹

It is clear that Forsyth does not agree with the Zwinglian interpretation of the sacraments as memorial; Christ is present in the act (not in the elements themselves), accomplishing something for the Church. The importance of Baptism and the Eucharist is not subjective. The fact that there may be individuals who have felt no change does not mean that nothing has occurred. Primarily the sacraments are acts of the Church as a whole; they are seals by which Christ reveals and guarantees His presence in the Church.

"In my judgment," Forsyth writes, "sacraments are essentially corporate acts, and they are necessary for the continued existence and power of a corporate body like the Church...."² Accordingly their value, in the first place, is communal rather than individual. In respect to the Lord's Supper this means that

"...while it gets its value from faith, the connection does not depend on the frame of mind of individual communicants.... It is primarily the Act of the Church, not of an individual. And the Church has done all that the Sacrament means to do even if there are several in the wrong frame of mind, so long as it is a living Church of the New Humanity, and observe the occasion in the faith and obedience of the Redeemer. The Lord's Supper is essentially a social and communal act.... Hence we are not to seek its prime value in the special significance it may have for the individual's experience of Christ, as an individual."³

¹ - Ibid, p. 176.
² - Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, pp. 162-63.
³ - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 274.
When he speaks of the sacraments, he refers, of course, to Baptism and the Eucharist. Respecting the former, he regards infant baptism to be a valid and valuable practice, despite the fact that it developed after the Apostolic age. Baptism is a social act of the whole Church, in which all members share. Adult baptism differs from infant baptism in that it marks the conscious acceptance and dedication of a soul to the New Humanity; the child is dedicated by the Church in order that he may better grow up in the faith. Later he will have to make his individual assent; but is it not a good thing, asks Forsyth, that he should be nurtured by the Church from earliest childhood?

Baptism takes place once for the individual; Communion differs in that it is repeated.

"Baptism is the sacrament of the new birth.... But the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of the new life continued, and this is by the repeated act of grace. The life both of the individual and the community must be sustained by constant recurrence to its source. In Baptism the Church gathers all together into one basal act, corresponding to the forgiveness and reconciliation of the world once for all in the Cross as the final creation of the New Humanity; but there is also the daily and particular forgiveness, and....the Church in the other sacrament acts in an exercise frequent and particular."1

The grace which comes through Communion is not material but psychic. It is real power which is communicated to the Church through the elements; not because of the elements themselves but by the nature of the act, which is one of moral renewal. Because we are dealing with moral categories in Communion, the material nature of the elements is of no significance whatever. Christ's body, not His flesh, is presented to us in the act. This distinction is one of fundamental importance in the theology of Forsyth:

here lies the difference between magic and sacramentalism. To eat of Christ's flesh is to indulge in the worship of a mystery cult, but to partake of His body is something entirely different.

"It is of great moment to note that the Apostles and Evangelists do not think primarily...of the exalted Christ providing a heavenly food to eat or a transfigured blood to drink, but they thought of what Jesus did in self-donation on the Cross.... The believer's eye is turned on the Cross and the body there, not on heaven and a celestial body there. They ate of that person in His Act, not in His substance; they ate of the body, not the flesh."1

"Body meant then more than it does now. It meant the whole person in visible form, and not the mere organism...."2 The rite has little significance unless we understand its moral nature. The renewal which comes with Communion, like the rebirth of Baptism, must be a moral one, for it cannot be metaphysical. There is nothing magical about it:

"The action of the soul by the means of grace is in the psychic region, and not in that of either physics or metaphysics. It is not like the action of two chemical substances, nor is it an infusion of divine essence. The action of person on person, the production of one act by another, belongs to the region of psychology yet unexplored."3

The sacraments, like preaching, are means of grace. Forsyth believes that Communion is "The real centre of the Church's common and social life,"4 because it is the most complete act whereby the Church confesses the reconciling work of Christ. Communion is not sacramental; in this sacrament Christ presents His finished sacrifice; it is not we who offer Him up to God. Nor is Baptism in itself regenerative, for the Cross represents the final regeneration of man. Baptism is the seal of that act; its acceptance by the Church for the individual. The key to both sacraments is to be found in the Cross which interprets them; these sacred acts of the Church are gifts of

3 - Ibid, p. 277.
4 - Ibid, p. 260.
God which, in a mysterious way, renew the faith and recreate the souls of its members.

Prayer, unlike the sacraments, represents an activity of worship initiated by man. It is a manifestation of faith: obedient response to God's grace. Thus prayer is not sacramental. Forsyth's brief writings on this subject are eloquent, and reveal the poetic style which he could achieve when the subject justified it. In "The Insistency of Prayer," he pictures our wrestling with God whereby we alter His very will through incessant and faithful prayer. He believes that free prayer has a place in public worship, but that we must guard against too easy a misuse of this gift. He recommends the use of notes in prayer as in the sermon. In one passage he refers to prayer as both the heaven and hell of a man:

"Prayer is the nature of our hell as well as our heaven. Our hell is ceaseless, passionate, fruitless, hopeless, gnawing prayer.... It is prayer which we cannot stop, addressed to nothing, and obtaining nothing.... And prayer is our heaven. It goes home to God, and attains there, and rests there."2

Theology, states Forsyth, is not indispensable to the individual, who may have a deep faith without knowledge of the doctrines of the Church. It is, however, a necessity to the Church. The modern attempt to dispense with theology, to ignore the important truths but partially expressed in the creeds, and to depend only on individual impressions, constitutes a threat to the Church more serious than any since the gnosticism of the Second Century. Forsyth makes a threefold distinction of terms within theology: dogma, doctrine, and theology:

"Dogma is final revelation in germinal statement. It is God's act put as truth.... It is primary theology, or the Church's footing..."

1 - Forsyth: The Soul of Prayer, 1916, Ch. VII; also in Greenwell and Forsyth: The Power of Prayer, 1910, pp. 95-149.
2 - The Power of Prayer, pp. 59-70.
Doctrine is truth about dogma, dogma expanded, and it stands on the Church. It is secondary theology, or the Church's grasp - as in the creeds.... Theology is doctrine in the making. It is tertiary theology, or the Church's reach...."1

Without primary theology there could be no Church. A Church cannot exist without belief in something final and objective; it must be more than a mere brotherhood of those who are in sympathy with one another.

"(A) true Church is inseparable from belief in certain doctrines for which men are ready to die - is, indeed, impossible without such beliefs; and decay in the Church idea...is due chiefly to the decay of doctrinal interest and conviction. No theology, no Church."2

"A Church must always have a dogma, implicit or explicit. A cohesive Church must have a coherent creed. But it must be a dogma the Church holds, not one that holds the Church."3

Dogma characterises the Church as a thinking body, for dogma is the science of faith. "It is faith thinking and not only faith thought of."4 Dogma does not correspond to the Gospel, but bears it. Without dogma the Word would not be communicated from one person to another, from the Church to the world, or from one generation of believers to the next.

"Dogma,...something positive and final, is absolutely essential to a Church.... I am speaking,...of the idea of dogma, and not of dogmas in particular....(Something) dogmatic is absolutely essential to a Church; because it must always have some statement of the changeless act of God which created a Church on foundations that cannot be moved."5

"....Church and dogma are as inseparable as Church and Kingdom.... (But) the prime necessity of dogma,...is not for the individual but for the Church.... Dogma belongs to a Church's existence and a world-redemption rather than to individual salvation."6

Forsyth's distinction between the belief of the individual as compared to that of the Church is interesting for three reasons. In the first place, we find here a correspondence with his theory of the sacraments. In the

1 - Theology in Church and State, pp. 12-13.
2 - Ibid., pp. vii-ix.
3 - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 213.
4 - Ibid, p. 216.
5 - Theology in Church and State, pp. 9-10.
6 - Ibid, pp. 4-6.
second place, it suggests a means by which he is able to proclaim a positive theology and yet avoid the greatest dangers of intolerance so characteristic of the more orthodox thinkers. In the third place, by allowing a place for individual opinion within the bounds of Church authority he is able to combine the attitudes of the Free Churchman with the High. For though he emphasizes the importance of a High Church position in respect to the Church as a whole, he remembers always that the Spirit speaks to individual souls, and cannot be bound by, nor contained within, any organism, whether it be spiritual or secular. Perhaps the mature Forsyth recalls that it was not the Church which converted his own point of view from extreme liberalism, but rather a profound inner experience. The experience itself is the action of God's grace; the truth of that experience is the priceless possession of the Church.

Christian doctrine develops in and through the Church, no matter what the power of individual inspiration. Although a person may receive initial grace outside the Church, his faith must inevitably draw him into the fellowship of the redeemed. Thus his own theological attitudes will be corrected by the Church, which bears the truth throughout all generations. The Church, not the individual, must ultimately decide which theological opinions are correct and which incorrect. "Christian theology cannot be adequately developed except in a Church, and by men supremely concerned for a Church."1

The Church's concern for theology is not, however, as a science, but as the truth of the Gospel which it preserves and elaborates. Theology is necessary to the Church simply because every generation requires a rea-

sioned answer to its problems. These problems, moral and intellectual alike, can be met only by a comprehensive development of the implications inherent in the New Testament. Doctrines and theological opinions are contingent; but that which inspires them is not. This, the authority of the Church, is guarded by theology in the best sense of the term.

"The prime interest of the Church...does not concern the free development of a system, nor the criticism of previous systems. It concerns the invasion, the revelation, on which all Christian theology rests - God's pure gift of Himself and His purpose in the heart of all man's version of that account, distinct from it but inseparable. If God has given this account of Himself, it is dogma for the Church. The Church rests upon no opinion but upon a revelation, upon the Holy Ghost."1

If there is to be a union or federation of churches in the future, it must be based upon this one article of faith: "the Gospel of grace and of faith in the salvation which is in Jesus Christ, the Gospel not of personality, but of personality redemptive and redeemed."2 This is the heart of the Gospel and the Church's dogma; without it the Church would split into diverse units and soon disappear from history. The minimum condition for a Church is belief in the historical redemption of mankind by Christ and the necessary response which that entails.

The relationship of Church and State in Forsyth's theology is worth considerable attention in these times when so much which he predicted has transpired. The State has more and more taken responsibility for its citizens, thereby relieving the Church of many of its welfare activities and philanthropic programmes. This is to the advantage of both State and Church, declares Forsyth, especially insofar as it releases the Church from a duty which had come to play too prominent a part in its life and work.

---

Although Forsyth is in favor of Disestablishment, and feels that the time is near at hand when Church and State will be separated in England, he does not mean to imply that they should bear no relationship to one another. The State must not control the Church, but neither must the State be subservient to the Church. Each has a role to perform which must not be abrogated by the other. He thinks of them as partners: the State represents the efforts of man in his struggle for freedom and self-expression, while the Church represents God's gift to man. In the one case the initiative comes from man; in the other, from God.

"(The) saving principle of freedom in the State is the same principle which saves and frees the guilty soul;...churches and nations and all other institutions are alike but the agents, and never the peers, of that mightiest force in action on earth - the Kingdom of God, which is but the social aspect of the Son of God."¹

This statement must be interpreted guardedly, since in it we find an indication of Forsyth's early tendency to think of the Church as a means to the Kingdom. If, however, we consider 'churches' in the local sense, the passage fits into the author's final theory of the Church. The point which he is stressing is, that religion and politics cannot be separated, but that the Establishment represents a wrong relationship which must be altered.

"We do not aim at the dissociation of politics from religion.... We aim at the restoration of politics to religion. We would separate politics from theology, indeed, but not from religion."²

Such a divorce is, in fact, out of the question. "The absolute neutrality of Church and State is morally and spiritually impossible."³ One of the defects of the German Church, so apparent to Forsyth and his contemporaries in the 1914-18 War, is this clear-cut distinction, so pronounced that at the time

1 - The Charter of the Church, p. 92.
2 - Ibid.
3 - Theology in Church and State, p. 200.
of the invasion of Belgium the religious leaders of Germany refused to com-
ment on the action of the Kaiser.

There are, however, fundamental differences between State and
Church, pertaining to the very basis of authority for each. "The Church
rests on the given, the State on the achieved."¹ In this respect the Church
differs from every other organisation in history. It is "the only society
with a fulcrum outside the world; and therefore the only one that can move
the world as a whole."²

"(The Church) is the supreme mandatory of God's will for the race.
It is concerned with a public, universal law, the moral law of
holiness, with man's relation to a holy God.... Its goal is God's
one comprehensive purpose with the world - forgiveness and regenera-
tion. Its task is the supreme goal of the race and its history -
the perfecting of Humanity to the image of God. In this respect
its function is parallel with the State's, though on a far higher
plane. Both are divine agents for human perfection.... The State
does not exist to make men good, the Church does. The State exists
to secure the conditions of goodness, the Church to create the thing
itself, which is a practical and conscious communion with God. The
State is an agent of the Kingdom of God, the Church is the Kingdom
of God in the making. But as both are involved in that service
their total separation and neutrality are impossible."³

The rights of the Church parallel those of the State, which recognises but
does not confer them. Only when churches forget their corporate personality
and thereby become sects do they forfeit the rights which are theirs by
nature rather than constitution:

"Religious liberty....belongs to the Church by its own nature, in
its own right, as a feature of its own personality, in such a way
that if the State do not recognise it, and if it claim to give it,
the State is in collision with the Kingdom of God and its moral
nature."⁴

Nonetheless, there are rights which the State may demand of its
citizens whether or not they be members of the Church. The right of a man

¹ - The Principle of Authority, p. 266.
² - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 7.
³ - Theology in Church and State, pp. 208 ff. This is very like the thought
   of Maurice.
⁴ - Ibid, p. 165.
to exercise his individual freedom in a question involving passive resistance against his State, for example, is gravely questioned by Forsyth.

Such an individual must be very cautious lest he mistake his own subjective conscience for the conscience of the Church.

"(For) the Church (which, and not sporadic or atomic Christians, is here the main concern) the central and creative thing is its Gospel, relating it to Christ, and not Ethic, relating it to man. Its Ethic has a relation to the State, its Gospel has none except through its Ethic. The public and business form of love is righteousness. Thus if anything so grave is to be undertaken by Christian people as resistance to the State which they have a free citizen's power to influence and alter, it can only be justified as in the vital interest as something as great as the Church, and not of the atomic conscience."¹

In case of doubt the individual should support the State, realising that in so doing he identifies himself with a unit larger than his own conscience.

Forsyth's objection to pacifism is based on the opinion that it rests upon a glorification of individual ethic as opposed to public righteousness. He sees in this an attempt of persons to seek the perfection which no amount of striving will secure, since it is an unmerited gift of grace.

The chief danger to the Church lies in its being on too good terms with the world. We are easily blinded to the fact that

"...the great issue of the hour is...between the Church and civilisation. Their essential difference is this. Civilisation at its very best represents the most man can do with the world and with human nature; but the Church, centred upon Christ, His Cross, and His work, represents the best that God can do upon them."²

Although democracy may possibly be the best form for the State - at least up to the present; the Church must always keep in mind the fact that it is by no means a democracy itself. Liberty within the Church is secondary to the authority of the Gospel. The Church as such is necessarily a monarchy with Christ as King. In the Kingdom of God we owe obedience to the Lord

2 - The Work of Christ, p. 25.
who claims our full obedience.

"Between a Church and a democracy is this eternal gulf, that a democracy recognises no authority but what arises from itself, and a Church none but what is imposed on it from without."¹

Democracy is but one of the social systems devised by man. It is a product of civilisation, and must ultimately clash with the Church, which is not. Forsyth believes that the problem confronting his generation is how to contain and control democracy for the service of God's Kingdom. Like Maurice and Brown he predicts that someday there will come a struggle between democracy and the Church, just as there has been a battle in every age between the Church and the reigning political system.

"Democracy... is but another of theocracies which have come to the top in the history of mankind; and it is not the last... And the Church has had to resist every one of them, though it has also, more or less, succumbed to every one. Is it democracy alone that the Church is never to resist in the name of its King?... Does the society of Christ depend for its life and its right on the goodwill of any society of men in the world? Sooner or later a great struggle will come between the Church and the natural democracy; then those Churches which, being supernatural in principle, have yet in practice become dependent on that democracy, will find themselves stripped of that support, torn asunder, and distressed beyond measure."²

That Church which forgets the first principle of its establishment will always fall prey to the social forces of its time. "The main work of the Church is determined by the nature of the Saviour's work in the Cross, and not by human demands."³ Reliance upon this truth alone will protect a Church from its age.

Mention must be made of Forsyth's belief in the missionary function of the Church. The major number of his published sermons after his

---

¹ - The Principle of Authority, p. 286.
² - The Church and the Sacraments, p. 12.
assumption of the Principalship of Hackney College are missionary addresses. He contends that a Church which has lost its interest in missions is a dying Church.\textsuperscript{1} One of the reasons for the weakness of the Church's witness in these times is the loss of interest in the world mission.

The Church has a task different from that of any other society on earth. Its mission is parallel to that of the State, yet transcends it. The Church, as the Kingdom of God in the making, as the New Humanity, as the creation of the Cross, is essential to the fulfilment of God's purpose for man.

"It is through the Church alone that the unity of Humanity can be consummated, because it is possible only through the Gospel. And the preacher of the Gospel in the world is the collective Church."\textsuperscript{2}

The Church is catholic because universal and collective; it is free because God's grace, which created it, is free. The Church is both preacher and priest: sacramental but not sacerdotal. It dispenses the sacraments of creative grace to all who will receive. It actualises in history that which Christ created in principle. On the individual level it enacts the reconciling work which He performed on the scale of the race. Therefore, it has a dignity and a responsibility greater than any man-made organisation, no matter how powerful it may appear to be. Such, in outline, is Forsyth's impressive contribution to Church doctrine.

\textsuperscript{1} Missions in State and Church, p. 250.
\textsuperscript{2} The Work of Christ, pp. 95-96.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION
The unity of Forsyth's thought lies in his method, and it is for this reason that we must have a clear understanding of what he means by the principle of authority. By what right does he characterise his interpretation of theology as correct, especially at a time when he seems to be running against the current? How are we to judge whether he is a man of extraordinary insight or merely a crank? How does he protect himself against the very subjectivism he sees in the theology of his opponents? These questions are vital; if he cannot meet them he has done little to recommend his theology as a whole.

That Forsyth is aware of this is apparent when he writes that "the principle of authority is ultimately the whole religious question.... Society cannot be founded on sympathy alone, but upon right."¹ He tells us that in forcing us back upon the ethical rather than the rational, Kant has rightly returned thought to that which is primary. Religion cannot be restricted to the ethical, it is true; reason is not to be excluded; but in religion the rational does not take the foremost place.² Furthermore, in a

¹ - The Principle of Authority, p. 3.
² - Ibid, p. 5.
rational study of any kind a monistic system is possible and perhaps desirable, but in a moral analysis of man's relationship to the universe directly this is not the case. A religious interpretation reveals immediately that the moral consciousness is dualistic.

"A solution of the world which is determined to be theoretic must above all end in Monism, which is the death of religion; but if it be moral, if it be religious, it must begin with the experienced and certain fact of the divided conscience, a standing state of collision, war, and sin."¹

In the opinion of Forsyth there is a difference between the philosophic and religious approach which is inevitable. The one must be systematic, while the other cannot be. We see here perhaps the most important reason for the lack of system in Forsyth's writings: system would reduce the complexity of subjects whose meaning cannot be simplified without being destroyed. It is interesting in this connection to observe the orderly approach which Forsyth adopts in his philosophic book, The Principle of Authority. Be that as it may, Forsyth is opposed to any interpretation of theology which is monistic. It is for this reason that he opposes the neo-Hegelianism of the "New Theology." The method proper to religious interpretation is that of valuation.² It is based upon Kant's dictum, "There is nothing conceivable in the world, or out of it, which can be called good without qualification except a good Will."³ "The standard of history," writes Forsyth, "is given us in the moral personality."⁴ The valuation method, which Forsyth derives from Ritsehhl (and which shows the lasting influence of the German theologian upon his former student), is primarily a repudiation of metaphysics. Man is properly understood religiously as a moral personality, not as metaphysical substance or nature. Therefore theology can never derive a proper knowledge

¹ - Ibid,
⁴ - The Principle of Authority, p. 226.
from philosophy alone. Philosophy is concerned with man's controversy with nature; religion, with the struggle between man and God. In the former, man is the standard of measurement; in the latter, Christ as Redeemer. "If the one absolutely precious thing in the world is the good will then the Will perfectly good is the source and measure of the world's destiny."¹ This method does not rule out the philosophic; we cannot rest wholly upon inspiration. It does, however, interpret the data of philosophy. Forsyth sometimes calls it the "revelation method," rather than the "valuation method." By this he means that it reveals the purpose in history while other methods cannot. The process is understood by the purpose, he says. "We have the ground of all things in the goal of all things."²

The final test of religious, or any other, authority is the degree to which it may be integrated into ordinary experience. Dreams and hallucinations, while they seem as real as the rest of our experience, cannot be fitted into the pattern of one's existence, and by this we know them to be false. The test which Forsyth applies is the pragmatic one. To this extent we may call him a pragmatist as well as a voluntarist, though either term is too narrow to characterise his thought.

"Truth and reality must be measured by the way in which impression, view, or faith works into the whole fabric of our life, knowledge, or purpose. If we sail through the air on a broomstick at two in the morning, or inherit a legacy of millions at five, we cannot safely work the experience into the day's outlook or the day's conduct.... The test is practice.... (For) reality is in organic connexion with life's whole."³

Religious reality not only fits into daily experience; it integrated, unifies, and completes it. The only religious reality which so coordinates, however.

is, according to Forsyth, holiness: by which God becomes a part of His world as righteous will. Final reality must be personal, not theoretic; and if personal, then moral. Morality demands holiness, and therefore the final reality is the holy, or the perfect.

Forsyth's development of this theme follows these lines: As we attempt to discover that on which we may take our "last stand," we first place our faith in experience. But soon we find, as did Ritceohl in his criticism of Schleiermacher, that experience alone is not enough. It is what we experience that matters, not experience itself. Next we hope to find objective authority in ideas, but again we are disappointed, for "Thought is not an end in itself, and therefore not the nature of reality." Then we identify the real with the moral, but again we are disappointed, for we learn that this produces "stalwarts and stoics rather than saints," and threatens "to reduce religion to an exalted moralism, as before it had been reduced to an intellectualism." We must go a step further, where we conceive the real as the holy. Thus we find the moral to be transcendent. And yet this, too, is insufficient, for it leaves us at an impasse; we become aware of the nature of our sin; we see the shining transcendence of God; but we can see no salvation from our terrifying position in respect to Almighty God. We are thrust back upon Conscience which, "going some way, makes many heroes, going to the end, makes cowards of us all." And so we must go beyond the holy to the redemptive. Here at last we find objective authority in that which forgives, redeems, and renews us.

"And that is the Cross of Christ. If man is the key to the universe, what is the key to man? What is his destiny, and what assures it? The only answer is Revelation, taken as the act of God and not His mere exhibition. It is Redemption, and Redemption by and for the

1 - Ibid, p. 201.
2 - Ibid, p. 203.
3 - Ibid, p. 204.
Holy. It is the revelation which universalised Christianity - the Cross. The Holy Love is there at once the Reality and Redeemer of all existence.... Whatever is the reality of the world must also be the unity of the world."1

In our search for final authority we must examine all the facts. Only in our total experience are all the facts, evangelical as well as philosophical, to be found. Neither science nor philosophy will yield the most important datum of all, however: the evangelical experience of knowing God through being known by Him. That is why we cannot stop at science or philosophy, but must go beyond them to something more comprehensive.

"In a bold word, there is no final footing for the soul in the universe, no eternal overcoming of the world, no Rock of Ages for the race, except through the evangelical experience. The reality of a moral universe for sinful man's central experience is Grace."2

While this reality is carried by experience, it is the content which is important; for experience, like thought, is not an end but a means.

"And the thing which guarantees the reality of the content in experience is this, that in so treating it, in treating it as real, we acquire our souls for life. At bottom, indeed, it is a miracle. There is no denying it.... It is the Gospel that creates the power to believe in the Gospel."3

Revelation, which is the content of the evangelical experience, is creative because redemptive. Ultimately we put our faith in it because we have discovered that our whole life has been changed by our belief in its power.

Forsyth guards against subjectivism in two ways: First, he makes the content rather than individual experience primary. The datum carries the meaning of experience, he warns, and it is objective. This is the more true in the case of religious experience, where the object is absolute, and where alone object is subject as well. That is, we know through being known: we choose because we have been chosen. God, the object of our knowledge, is subject as well.4

1 - Ibid, pp. 205-06.
2 - Ibid, p. 207.
Secondly, Forsyth remarks that this evangelical experience is universal and characteristic of the Church throughout history. Not only do we find ourselves changed, "We find the experience repeated and continuous in a vast multitude of other people." The more important of the two facts is the former, in his opinion, because it is prior, and we can only understand the latter by it.

We are faced with the necessity of choosing this interpretation of the Holy Love of God or with having Him as a curse and a blight upon us. "If God be not our supreme deliverer He is our chief burden," writes Forsyth. What is more, it is only as we feel the creative power of redemption that we know the warfare within the soul to have been accomplished. "To refuse the reality of God in experience is to divide the soul against itself." Philosophical monism is not appropriate to a moral interpretation of the soul, but a unity there can be which is other than monistic. It is the unity of the new Humanity in Christ.

So fond is Forsyth of referring to Conscience that we must clarify his statements on this topic. He distinguishes between the conscience of God, the race, and the individual. He considers conscience in the ordinary sense to be subjective, and does not believe it to be the final judge. It can only condemn, it cannot redeem. What does he mean by conscience? In one place he refers to it as "The Word of God within us." He might be accused of pantheism or panentheism if the individual conscience were to be identified with that of God, but he never links the two in this manner. In

1 - Ibid, p. 27.
2 - Ibid, p. 32.
3 - Ibid.
4 - *The Cruciality of the Cross*, p. 65.
fact, authority does not rest in conscience at all. ¹

"It is one of the fundamental mistakes we make about...Protestantism to say that the authority is the conscience, and the Christian conscience in particular. The authority is nothing in us, but something in history. It is something given us. What is in us only recognizes it... The authority is not the conscience, but it is offered to it. The conscience of God is not latent in our conscience, but revealed to it in history. It is history centred in Christ, it is not conscience, that is the real court of morals. And it is there accordingly that we find the authority for Christian faith and Christian theology, for faith and theology both."²

Scientific authority need not be final provided it be useful. Religious authority must be final or it is valueless. For this reason religion may include scientific thought and method, while the latter cannot comprehend it. Revelation can only be judged by Revelation, declares Forsyth.³ Faith is personal; it includes the whole of man. "The certainty of faith is a portion of our own self-certainty, because the revelation of Christ becomes a portion of our own personal reality. We acquire a self-consciousness of Christ."⁴ It is the Spirit within history and within us which reveals the final authority and makes possible our acceptance of it. "Only the beneficiaries of the cross can effectually discuss the cross," he remarks.⁵

We find our final authority neither in the individual conscience or consciousness, in ideas, in the Church, or in the Bible. It is to be found only in the Gospel of free Grace.

"There is but one thing that corresponds to all the conditions of an authority: that is ethical, revealed, historic, personal, synthetic, and forever marvelous to thought.... It is the creative grace of God toward human sin in Jesus Christ and His Holy Atonement."⁶

¹ - The Principle of Authority, p. 367.
2 - Ibid, p. 454.
3 - Faith and Criticism, pp. 108-09.
4 - Ibid, p. 118.
5 - Ibid, p. 143.
6 - The Principle of Authority, pp. 454-55.
Our authority rests in God's grace as manifested historically in the Cross of Christ, and as proclaimed by the Spirit in and through the Church. We see now how closely linked are Cross, Christ, and the Church in the theology of Forsyth. We can only believe in that which redeems: this is the Cross conceived as act. Yet the Cross is more than act: it is personal; it is the Cross of Christ. It is God through His Son performing that deed. And it is historic also: it must be preached in order to be universalised. Therefore the Church is necessary. The Church, which has its charter in the Gospel, must proclaim this authority to all generations until every knee is bowed in obedient faith before the Lord.

"Life begins as a problem," writes Forsyth, "But when it ends well it ends as a faith..."¹ Our responses to the authority of God's grace can properly be the obedience of faith, and that alone. "Faith is salvation," he tells us.² It is not an attribute or an attitude but the soul in its proper relationship to God. We know not how or whence it comes, but come it does through the creative power of Christ. Like grace, it is active. It is the soul's action due to the redeeming, renewing force of the Gospel.

Forsyth places his authority in the objective content of the evangelical experience. Unlike the experience, which is individual and therefore objective, the content is universal and objective. It must be real because it is effective and characteristic of the Church's history. In this manner Forsyth avoids the subjectivism of Schleiermacher on the one hand, and the idealism of Hegel on the other. Like other Ritschlians he bases his theology not upon a metaphysic, which he specifically repudiates, but upon a

¹ - The Justification of God, pp. 208.
² - The Principle of Authority, p. 48.
knowledge. And like Ritschl he appears to have developed his theory of knowledge in support of his theology. "We believe, and therefore we speak. We believe, and then we think..."¹ Can a profound and sincere Christian say that he does otherwise?

Forsythe is the type of theologian who cannot be ignored: one feels the necessity of forming an opinion about his thought. It is not unusual, therefore, that even today there is argument about Forsythe. Nor is it surprising that as yet there is no common accord about his place in British theology. There are some who compare him with Barth: MacKinnachie has referred to him as "a Barthian before Barth;"² while Escott seems to favour him over the German.³ On the other hand, so eminent a writer as Dr. Gossip has recently reminded readers that

"He did not impress everyone. For, while some hailed him as a veritable and indubitable prophet... others, and among them minds not to be lightly dismissed, were left little affected by him, or even stone cold; irritated by his mannerisms and untouched by his message, and his way of stating it."⁴

Among those who have declared their indebtedness to P. T. Forsyth are Principals Cave, Cox, and Whale; Maurice Watts, Alan Green, W. H. Leembruggen, J. D. Jones, and Professor Souter. His influence extended beyond personal relationships to many young men who knew him only through his books. One, for example, wrote that he had planned a holiday in order to reconsider his whole position in the ministry, for he knew that he had lost his original inspiration. By chance he read Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind and was so moved by it that he no longer felt the need of a change.⁵

¹ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 332.
³ - Escott, op. cit., pp. 28ff.
⁵ - The exact reference has been lost, but this story appeared in a letter to the British Congregationalist shortly after the publication of Positive Preaching.
Dr. Gossip's scepticism notwithstanding, there are many thinkers who insist that Forsyth belongs in the first rank of contemporary theologians. Leembruggen quotes a letter from Karl Barth, in which he writes, "I only heard a little time ago of the books of this man, and I was very much touched to see that these things were written and said at a time in which they were forgotten and outmoded in England and on the Continent." Barth's son, who discovered Forsyth's books while studying in Edinburgh before the recent war, states that "Forsyth is the theologian the practical man needs!.... (The) books of modern philosophers, psychologists, and moralists may be more safely neglected than those of P. T. Forsyth." Mozley remarks in his preface to the second edition of The Church and the Sacraments that "the themes, emphases, moments, most characteristic of his teaching, so far from becoming out of date, have more and more come to their own." Whale expresses the belief that "So far from being out of date, his work anticipates by nearly a quarter of a century the 'realism' of our modern theology (without the extravagances into which it has been led by the excessive logic of Barthianism)."

Most recently Gummer has called attention to Forsyth's wisdom regarding the dangers of the era following the First World War.

"It has taken a second World War to bring to light the significance of what P. T. Forsyth saw clearly as the issues whilst the first.... was still raging. This is in itself evidence enough of his prophetic insight, and spiritual sensitivity.... Yet his work today is known to the few alone." Mozley is credited with the finest critique of Forsyth's theology. He considers Forsyth to be perhaps Britain's "Greatest theologian in the sphere of dogmatics. During the last fifteen years he had come more

3 - P. vii.
4 - Foreword to The Work of Christ, 1938 and 1946 editions, p. iv.
and more to be recognised as occupying a position of almost solitary eminence."¹ Many who admired Forsyth were displeased with his style, however, and it is probably reasonable to state that this has prevented many from reading his works. Warschauer, for example, states:

"We are entirely willing to assume that he has something of real importance to say...., but it would be a charitable act on his part to give at least to such readers as can claim some theological training a chance of easily understanding him, without recourse to guesswork."²

Principal Denney, a friend and admirer of Forsyth, admitted more than once that the latter's style might be made smoother. After commending The Charter of the Church, he adds thoughtfully: "We need to learn from the High Churchmen that literary form is of vital importance, if the public mind is to be deeply affected."³ Likewise in another review we find Denney pleading,

"In spite of thorough interest and sympathy, one never finds Dr. Forsyth quite easy to read.... The more gratefully one acknowledges his obligations to an insight so true and profound, the more he wishes Dr. Forsyth could accommodate himself to the dull, and meet him (if possible) half-way."⁴

"Of all our great writers in theology," remarks another, "the most difficult to comprehend is.... Forsyth. He has no right to be so difficult. A smaller man may not be able to help it.... But Dr. Forsyth's ideas are manifestly clear enough to himself and to us when we catch up with them. The whole trouble is that he has too many ideas at a time. They are always cleverly expressed. But they come into the page tumbling over one another."

Still another remarks of Forsyth, "He never says a thing one way if it can be said four ways."⁶ While admitting that Forsyth's style is troublesome

---

His style was altogether his own. I do not recall anyone who had his gift of expressing the same thought in so many striking ways. Yet undeniably this amazing gift of expression was combined with a real defect in the gift of conveying his precise meaning, even to sympathetic and intelligent readers. These scintillating pages left many a reader dazed by a series of electric flashes which did not succeed in dispelling the obscurity that gathered about the subject.¹

Reviews of Forsyth's works seem agreed, however, that the books are worth the effort of reading. "The best way, the only way, is to read first a little here and then a little there, and see that no page is left unturned at last."² Whatley suggests that "the strain is not after style but after the elusive implications of his thought. This is in itself antithetical in ground and substance, and lives upon antithesis."³ Another believes that the difficulty in reading lies in "the packing of thought... Every sentence has to be read."⁴ There are some who object to Forsyth's choice of titles, as, for example, The Cruciality of the Cross,⁵ and Christ on Parnassus. The latter evokes the criticism that "we frequently wish that Dr. Forsyth would not make use of bizarre forms of expression, which do injustice to the real reverence of his thought."⁶ In reading the criticisms one is left with the impression that none of the objections, stringent though they are, excuse one from the obligation of reading Forsyth's most important works. Of The Church and the Sacraments, for example, C.

² Review of Theology in Church and State, Expository Times, Mar., 1916, pp. 276-77.
⁴ Review of the Person and Place of Jesus Christ, Expository Times, Apr. 1910, p. 320.
⁵ Gossip, op. cit.
Ryder Smith has recently written: "This book is probably the finest account we have of a doctrine of the Church, Ministry, and Sacraments, that is both evangelical and 'high.'"  

Reviews of The Person and Place of Jesus Christ are consistently favourable. Mackintosh is enthusiastic because of Forsyth's open stand "in the face of the most modern radical criticism.... We believe that the principles and methods by which he has been guided are, on the whole, soundly based at once in faith and in reason, and that by means of them we may win for intelligence a real, if partial, command of the ultimate bases of Christianity."  

Mozley compares the book to Dale's Atonement and Moberly's Atonement and Personality, and calls it the greatest "English contribution to the fundamental problems of theology since Dr. Moberly's." While Boutwood disagrees with Forsyth's position, he says, "it is many a long day since anything so strong and stimulating issued from the Nonconformist churches." The Expository Times maintains that no matter how difficult the book may seem, it is one which must be read through to the end.  

The Cruciality of the Cross, though receiving less praise than some of the other works of Forsyth, evokes such favourable comments as this: "It is a title that, like the man himself, is fearfully and wonderfully made.... There is no fear that (it) will be forgotten. There is much vitality in it for an early death, far too much originality for early oblivion."  

The Work of Christ appeals to one reviewer who says that "there is no theologian whose writings in our time have done more to expound Christianity  

5 - April, 1910, p. 320.  
as the religion of redemption than Dr. Forsyth. 1 Writing of Positive Preaching, Denney remarks, "It is not easy reading, but where it is read at all the secrets of many hearts will be revealed.... A banner has been given them to be displayed.... and a new hope for evangelical Christianity rises in their hearts." 2

"We do not hesitate to say," writes Davison of the same book, "that if all the pulpits of to-day sounded forth the message which this volume reaffirms with passionate earnestness, a revolution would be begun in the Church which would soon communicate itself to the world." 3

In Hamilton's opinion Forsyth is a prophet but not a theologian. "It is a pity," remarks Hamilton, "that he wishes to stand before us as a theologian also; for in this latter role he can hardly be called a great success." 4 Forsyth employs neither the apparatus nor the methods of a scholar, he adds. To this Mozley objects that Forsyth "was always a theological prophet, or, better still, a prophetic theologian," and it was "as a theologian, with all the theologian's apparatus and the standards of judgment which the theologian is bound to employ, that he challenged contemporary tendencies." 5

Mozley's argument is based upon the rich store of knowledge which appears so unobtrusively in Forsyth's works. Yet Hamilton is partly justified in his criticism, for nowhere does Forsyth use the apparatus typical of the scholar's work. To argue from this that Forsyth is not a theologian is nonetheless unjustifiable. Too many theologians have felt otherwise to allow such an opinion to stand. Like many other creative thinkers Forsyth left the systematising to others.

5 - Mozley, op. cit., p. 84.
In the opinion of Mozley, one of the most important contributions of Forsyth is his return to Paul while others were primarily concerned with the disciples.¹ Even more vital, however, is the place which the Atonement holds in the theology of Forsyth:

"(He) did not just reassert...any one historic form of the doctrine of the Atonement.... He was no more wedded to the old categories in this respect than any other."²

"No one in modern times," continues Mozley, "has penetrated nearly so far as has Forsyth into the moral reality of the Cross."³ Mozley is willing to admit certain defects in Forsyth's thought, such as the following:

"....Forsyth was over-dominated by polemical necessities - true necessities, but not the only ones. Anti-Pelagian theologians... ... ought always to be on their guard against pressing their case too far in the heat of the battle."⁴

It is respecting Forsyth's opinions on the Church and the Ministry that Mozley disagrees most pointedly. He feels the need of a more complete historical treatment than is to be found in The Church and the Sacraments, and he senses a lack of clarity in Forsyth's attitude towards the Church as the Body of Christ ("What kind of a body?"⁵ asks Mozley). Furthermore the sacramental nature of the ministry can hardly be derived independently of the Church, as Forsyth maintains.

"(If) the ministry has a truly sacramental character, and is the trustee of the Church's Gospel, it is surely difficult to hold that the minister receives no gift from the Church except recognition or licence.... Forsyth was no champion of individualism... ... but for this very reason one desiderates an account of the relation of the Church and the ministry in which a more organic

1 - Ibid, p. 93.
2 - Ibid, p. 94.
3 - Ibid, p. 97.
5 - Ibid, pp. 174-76.
unity is discerned.... It is possible to be profoundly sensible of the value of Forsyth's service to institutional Christianity.... and yet to feel that he allowed his special interests to obscure the need of proportion and completeness. 1

Nevertheless, Mozley believes Forsyth's contribution to be the greatest of this century from a British thinker. "It is great theology," he writes, "the theology of one as scientifically proficient as Ritschl, as spiritually proficient as Dale." 2 While some may consider Forsyth a prophet of gloom, Mozley holds the contrary view: "By no theologian of our age has a deeper-rooted optimism been expressed." 3

A. E. Garvie characterises Forsyth as "a liberal evangelical, the label I attach to myself when necessary." 4 While giving due credit to Forsyth as a pioneer, he believes that there were others preaching the same Gospel at the same time:

"(The) redeeming, reconciling, and atoning grace of Christ and His Cross was still being preached by more men than Forsyth acknowledged; and there were other pioneers of this evangelism in theology who would gladly accord the foremost place to him." 5

For the most part Garvie is in agreement with the opinions of his colleague, but there are three objections which he raises: 1) He believes that there is not sufficient identification of the personal experience of Jesus with the history of the Jewish nation. "The theological interpretation which Forsyth gives needs to be more firmly based upon this national history and personal experience." 6 2) Like Mozley he criticises Forsyth's sometimes one-sided arguments:

"In his aversion to some current modes of theology or religion his appreciation of one truth was expressed in His depreciation of another. To give three instances which most distressed me, he con-

1 - Ibid.
5 - Ibid, p. 346.
trasted the Holiness with the Love of God, the Cross with the
Ministry of Jesus, the Godward with the manward aspect of the
sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross."1

3) He maintains that Forsyth contradicts himself in holding that in the
Cross Christ was acting on God, and yet declaring the theory that
"the Cross is not man's sacrifice to God, but God sacrificing
for man, and that what was effected on the Cross was no change
in God's disposition or purpose, but only His treatment as
righteous of sinners...."2

In Peake's opinion, Forsyth made too great a distinction between
Christ and His Cross.

"I will not say that he dwelt too much on the death of Christ,
but I think he was in danger of concentrating on it too ex-
clusively.... I prefer to speak of the centrality of Christ
rather than of the centrality of the Cross, though I do not
deny that the Cross does stand for the climax of Christ's work,
alone in revelation and redemption."3

Peake also mentions the seeming intolerance with which Forsyth treated some
opponents.

"It was regrettable that he did not suffer the amateur gladly
and took too little pains to conceal his contempt. A more
gracious and sympathetic approach might have opened some hearts
to his message which were closed by resentment at his tone."4

Lest we give the impression that Peake is predominantly critical of Forsyth,
we quote these words: "Yet no misgivings about emphasis or proportion would
blur our sense of the great service Dr. Forsyth rendered to thought and to
religion.... He spoke as one gifted with prophetic utterance who was also
versed in the learning and wisdom of the schools."5

W. F. Halliday is perhaps the most critical of those who have

3 - Peake, op. cit., p. 193.
4 - Ibid.
5 - Ibid.
taken issue with Forsyth. He bases his objections on the philosophical position of the latter, maintaining that he deals with an abstraction when he speaks of the New Humanity.

"It is maintained...that Christ, as the Perfect Man, represents humanity in a realistic sense, as if humanity were more than the sum-total of the individuals who could finally compose it... Now it is one thing to say that Jesus is what every man should be; it is another thing to say that he can represent men before they are like Him.... Here...we have the schema of a human society forced upon ultimate Reality." 1

Reference has been made to MacConnachie's styling of Forsyth as a "Barthian before Barth." Leembruggen, adopting the expression of Mozley, differentiates between Forsyth and Barth by terming the former a "prophetic theologian" and the latter as a "theological prophet." 2 In an essay published in 1934 in response to MacConnachie, Hughes declares, "The resemblances are more superficial than real." 3 He summarises the differences in the following manner: 1) Forsyth's God "is the God of Jesus," while Barth's God is more akin to the Old Testament conception. 4 Because Forsyth is concerned with God as Father, he keeps more closely to the New Testament than does Barth. Thus Forsyth avoids "many of the difficulties of the Barthian view" there is not the gulf between the Holy Father and sinful man which one finds in the theology of Barthianism. 2) Forsyth does not make the sharp distinction between revelation and history which we find in Barth. 5 3) Because of his conception of God the Father, Forsyth has a more penetrating analysis of Sin than has Barth. Sin against the Father is far worse than transgression against a principle or

2 - Leembruggen, op. cit., p. 17.
4 - Ibid, pp. 311 ff.
5 - Ibid, p. 313.
4) In Forsyth there is not "the radical dualism between truth from revelation and truth by man's unaided reason."2

Perhaps the most prophetic appreciation of Forsyth is one published in 1908 by an anonymous reviewer:

"Is he not a modern preacher? He is entirely modern....The difficulty is rather that he is before than behind. And it is extremely likely that the next generation will find him easy and ordinary. If that is so, he is in a sense a prophet, and the prophet is one of the greatest."3

While it cannot yet be said that Forsyth is considered either easy or ordinary, it is true that today he is securing a place in theological thought which he never knew within his own lifetime; and there are many ministers of this generation who find in him the authoritative voice they so sorely need.

In a study of this sort, which is intended to serve as an outline of Forsyth's theology, there is insufficient space for a detailed criticism of those aspects of his thought with which we do not agree. Nevertheless, brief mention of these points of disagreement is in order, and accordingly we shall quickly summarize our criticisms of Forsyth, hoping to indicate where modification and qualification seem necessary.

In the first place, we believe that Garvie is justified in criticizing Forsyth's one-sided interpretation of the holiness of God. While it is admitted that this aspect of God's personality needs to be recalled, especially where liberalism has caused men to forget the wrath of God, there is the attendant danger that the love of God will be thereby forgotten. Forsyth tries to guard against this by identifying love and holiness as complementary facets of God in His relationship to man; and yet he does not seem to take sufficient

---

1 - Ibid. p. 314.
2 - Ibid, pp. 314-15. We are inclined to question Hughes here.
3 - Review of Missions in State and Church, Expository Times, Nov., 1908, p. 86.
account of the sympathetic love which Jesus showed in His ministry. There is much to be said for the humanitarian interests of the liberal theology; to castigate it as thoroughly as does Forsyth is to ignore a great deal which is necessary and valuable.

We feel also that in his desire to make men conscious of the moral nature of Christianity, Forsyth loses sight of the mystical. It is unnecessary to take one at the expense of the other. The childlike wonder of the mystic has a valid place in Christian life and experience, and Forsyth would admit as much. He would not maintain that mysticism reduces life to contemplation, and robs the Christian of his desire to act. Yet in pressing home the primacy of the moral, he has some disparaging things to say about the mystical, and leaves one with the impression that the latter amounts to a secondary kind of Christianity.

Respecting Forsyth's understanding of the Atonement, we believe that he makes too great a distinction between Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. He separates the Cross from its context, despite the fact that he insists upon the unity of Christ's life and work. Because he is preoccupied with the Cross, he relegates Incarnation and Resurrection to an inferior position. Perhaps one should interpret these other mysteries by the Cross; but is it not possible that each may best be understood in its relation to the others?

Forsyth's Christological thought also arouses doubts in our mind. His compelling title, "The Religion of Jesus and the Gospel of Christ," illustrates the careful distinction which he makes throughout his writings between Jesus the man and Christ the Lord. Is such a dichotomy warranted?
One gets the impression from Forsyth that the ministry of Jesus was almost irrelevant to the Gospel. For him the message of the Apostles took precedence over the words of Jesus in the Synoptics. While Forsyth makes a valuable contribution in forcing us to take more seriously than we had the letters of Paul, he forgets that because the New Testament is a unity, the Epistles must also be read in the light of the Gospels.

Closely allied to this is our criticism of his apparent lack of interest in the humanity of Jesus. He seems to forget that Jesus, while the Son of God, was also the Son of man, and that He was revealed to us as a man. Forsyth's weakness here is indicated by the fact that he seldom speaks of Jesus, but almost always of Christ. In his effort to check the growing influence of liberalism, he goes too far, in our opinion, and makes Christ so unlike a human being that He has little in common with those He came to save. This is not helped by referring to the unity of man and God in the personality of Christ as consisting of the mutual involution of two personal movements. We are left unmoved when we find Christ's nature compared with the vortex of a whirlpool. In discarding the metaphysical doctrine of two natures, Forsyth gives us another metaphysical theory of two moral movements. Does this really clarify the matter? In our opinion it does not. We are left with the feeling that Christ is neither personal nor related to us in any way.

There is, furthermore, a contradiction between one aspect of this theory and Forsyth's general opinion about the rebelliousness of man. The customary attitude of Forsyth is that man is in opposition to God, attempting ever to break away from Him, and never seeking after Him. In his theory
of the two personal movements, on the other hand, Forsyth speaks of man as searching for, praying to, God. It might be argued that it is only in Christ that this ideal condition exists, and that He creates this attitude in man. The argument is plausible, but it does not bridge the gap between the rebel and the petitioner. What have the two in common in such a case?

A further question is raised by Forsyth's contention that the world was created to be redeemed. This bypasses the question of evil in the world. Although Forsyth accounts for sin and guilt, he does little to explain the presence of evil. He accepts it, as he does a kingdom of evil. It must be admitted here, however, that when Forsyth comes to such a problem as this which he cannot explain, he does not attempt an involved theory with which to put his readers off. He admits the paradoxical nature of the question without embarrassment.

There are several criticisms of his doctrine of the Church. For example, he weakens the note of crisis with his belief in universal election already consummated. How is it that the Church is urgently required if there has already been, as he states, "final judgment, full salvation?" We agree with Mozley, also, that Forsyth's distinction between the Church and Ministry is improperly defined. In combining the Catholic with the Nonconformist principle, he encounters the difficulty of reconciling two orders of thought which at many points are contradictory. His solution is to separate the Ministry from the Church, unifying the two only by the authority which inspires each. Logically developed, this would lead to four orders of Authority: Apostles, Bible, Church, and Ministry.

We suspect, too, that Forsyth's theory of Apostolic Inspiration
could stand a good deal of modification. By what canon of authority does he make his sharp distinction between the Apostles and their Church? Is his opinion that the authority of the Apostles ended with their death capable of proof?

His conception of the new Humanity in Christ is valuable; yet here, too, one raises a question. At this point Forsyth is almost Hegelian: the idea of racial solidarity and the New Humanity are impersonal and metaphysical, even though inspired by ethical considerations.

We are sometimes confused by what Forsyth means when he speaks of the principle of authority. His thought is often ambiguous here, particularly when he refers indiscriminantly to the Cross, Grace, and the Gospel as the "seat" or "principle" of authority. These terms are robbed of their distinctive meanings through being confused with one another. Furthermore, he employs more than one meaning for the same concept, but fails to distinguish between them. By the Gospel, for example, he may mean the Word; at other times it is the interpretation of the Word; again, it is the Word speaking. It is such confusion as this which causes many readers to despair of understanding him.

Yet another objection we suggest is the indistinct relationship of Christ and the Spirit in Forsyth's theology. There are times when there appears to be a complete identification of the two, as when Forsyth speaks of the inspiration of the Apostles as being the work of the Lord the Spirit. Christ in such a case is seen to be still at work, not through the Spirit, but as the Spirit. Likewise, Forsyth's separation of Word and Spirit (Bible and Church) seems too neat to be convincing.
Finally, regarding the psychology of religion, we are justified in criticising Forsyth for placing too great a faith in the spiritual insight of the "twice-born" as compared with the "once-born." While it is true that in his own case a drastic experience seems to have given him an understanding of Christian truth which had previously been lacking, we cannot generalise on the basis of this individual phenomenon. It is an enticing theory that one who has come through much travail is better equipped to lead others than the man who has gone through life relatively free of doubts; but this ignores the simple fact that God makes Himself known to men in devious ways according to their differences in personality. Each has a part of the truth to pass on to other people. Forsyth is inclined to be too harsh towards the "cheery traveller."

These criticisms do not obscure the fact that Forsyth has a message of great importance to Christians everywhere today. Despite the obscurity of his style, the enigmatic nature of his thought, his easy use of epigrams, and the one-sided manner of his profound utterances, he stands out as one of the great theologians of our time. His is a penetrating insight into the fundamental weakness of modern thought; he sees that what man needs first is authority, not liberty; and he realises that unless the Church recaptures the authoritative note of the Gospel it will fail in its task.

Forsyth's steadfast opposition to the popular religion of his generation renews in us the determination to put loyalty to God above all else. Forsyth has shown that the minister's task is to preach the Gospel, and that failing this he will soon lose the respect of the world. In this Forsyth
has been vindicated: the popular message of liberalism has proved inadequate to the pressing needs of modern man. The realistic theology of Forsyth is better suited to these years of social revolution which he, among others, predicted.

Nor must we forget Forsyth's contribution to Nonconformity and Congregationalism. While an ardent Independent, he saw that Congregationalism is meaningless if it separates itself from the Great Church. To the Free Churches he brought a sense of the Catholic Church which was lacking in far too many cases. With his 'High Church' interpretation of the Sacraments he did much to offset the Zwinglian tendency. In accenting the centrality of preaching, he preserved the basic principle of Congregationalism; and by conceiving preaching as a sacramental act he brought it into a proper relationship with the Universal Church.

In his honest acceptance of the paradoxical nature of Christian truth, Forsyth was far ahead of his time. His dialectical theology, while obscure to them, takes on meaning in an age characterised by the paradoxical. It is to his credit that he never tried to make things easy. He never made things obvious to attract the crowd, nor did he pretend that Christianity is the essence of simplicity. He knew that life is complex and that Revelation is the hardest of all things to comprehend. Accordingly he demanded the best from his listeners and readers.

Most important of all is the fact that his theology is rooted in the Reformers and the Bible. He rests his faith in the timeless mercy of God. Therefore his theology is directed to men at their point of need, and it finds them where they really are: in the midst of pain, suffering,
dread, and sorrow. His is a message for a broken world, for man at his worst. The kerugma which Forsyth takes as the centre of his theology is that which lifts men from despair and redeems and renews them. He knew before most of his contemporaries that men need the Gospel of salvation, and that for this alone Christianity was founded.

Forsyth's theme, the positive Gospel, is well suited to our present requirements. While willing to accept the best of modern scientific knowledge, and demanding that it be used by the Church, Forsyth saw long ago that the truth of Christianity must not be obscured. Whereas others judged the Gospel by science, he reversed the process. He was a mediator between the old faith and the new. Thus he can never be called a reactionary, for that matter a "Neo-Orthodox." There is no label which applies to him. He is modern in the best sense of that term.

It is likely that the present interest in Forsyth will decline, but it is unlikely that he will be forgotten as he was before. Theology has caught up with him now. If there is a tendency on the part of some ministers to accept him too uncritically, there is sufficient truth in his thought for every age. For we feel that here is a man whose theology comes from the very centre of his life: that it bursts out of his heart, so to speak, because it is too great to be contained. His thought is an expression of the struggle through which he has had to come: a battle in which he has been snatched just in time by the hand of God. His theology is true to life because it comes from the heart of an active, vital man who knows the miraculous power of free grace. Though it is theology based upon the sorrow of the Cross, it proclaims the triumph of God in His great self-
justification; and it trumpets forth the good news upon which Forsyth has staked his very life and won. "If life be a comedy to those that think, and a tragedy to those that feel, it is a victory to those who believe."¹

¹ - The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 338.
Sir,—I hope you will allow me the pleasure of making some remarks apropos of your article on "Religious Communion," and if they are critical of your position I am sure you will not, for that reason at least, deny them a place. This is, I think, a very grave subject for the future of Congregationalism - a graver subject for its future as a Church of Christ than is mostly seen. If the Congregational Union is simply a religious organisation for the purpose of realising certain ends defined by "the necessities of nature and practical life" - i.e., by our conceptions of their necessities - to which ends the true nature of the Christian Church is to be at any price accommodated - if it is simply one of the clubs or cliques into which religious life is so apt to fall, then Congregationalism has nothing to offer to those who seek in the Church the symbol and home of humanity, and it confesses itself only one of the sects - a sect, too, which is far inferior to the Episcopal Church in its facilities of organisation for practical work. But if Congregationalism be, as I am sure it is, to many besides myself, the most hopeful of the sects, it is not because of its power of immediate practical work, but because of its freedom and promise of freedom, its power of adapting itself to the requirements of new ages and of contributing most to the Church of the future. People who sneer at expressions like the "divine totality of being," will probably also mock at "the Church of the future." These are Tarentine jeers, which it will take not a little spiritual blood to wash off. He would be a bold man who should say that any sect to-day represents the Church that will exist a century or two hence. I think the truest worshipper of practical ends is he who makes that better, freer, larger Church possible. I sympathise with Congregationalism mainly because it seems wisely advised to contain more than any other sect the promise and potency of a higher form of ecclesiastical life. Congregationalism to me is nothing, except as it promises, not the realisation of ends which we define to ourselves for to-day or tomorrow, but the realisation of a Church which shall include the whole family of God. Are we, who profess to embody the growing religious ideas of the nation, to set ourselves dead against the universal demand for comprehension rising from the best sections of the religious world? We have our own thoughts as to the possibility of comprehension by means of an Established Church. Does that ensure doubts as to the desirability of comprehension itself? Let the Congregational Union once say it does, and I don't think that I speak boldly when I say such a declaration will be the death-blow to them, as a body, with part or lot in the growing national life. It will be a declaration like Sanmola's - "The cause of my party is the cause of God's kingdom." And the response of many will be Romola's - "I do not believe it; God's kingdom is something wider - else, let me stand outside it with the beings I love."

These remarks will show why I think this discussion on the terms of communion a very grave one for the Congregational Union, and one which will seal its fate if met by that spirit of clerical rowdyism which identified
the Leicester meeting with the mediaeval councils, and which Dr. Simon did so much to crush. I am not quite sure, Sir, whether the latent contempt in your article be not an equally disastrous sign of the film that invades the vision of the doomed.

I cannot see that any difficulty need have arisen as to the meaning of the circular, or as to the signification of the expression "Christian communion." I suppose even Dr. Allon would admit such a thing as a distinction (whatever may be the connection) between intellectual belief (whether as to fact or doctrine) and spiritual attitude or temper. Very well; the circular plainly invited to be present those who held that in individual cases it is the second, not the first, that determines the possibility of spiritual communion, just as it is similarity of temper or spirit that determines our social companionships. Any others who were there were in the strict sense, intruders, and spoke only by courtesy - a courtesy which I am sure nobody has reason to regret.

But the chief misunderstanding has arisen about the expression "communion." Dr. Allon, in the meeting, gave the false scent, and almost all subsequent speakers took it at full cry. It is the chief fallacy in your article. Surely everybody who professes to speak with authority on these points should know the usual ecclesiastical acceptance of the expression "terms of communion." Its primary reference is to the communion-cup. The question desired to be agitated, as I take it, is the question of open communion. The exchange of pulpits is a very unimportant, and not always a desirable, thing. It will settle itself as dinner invitations do, when once the larger and more essential question of sympathy is disposed of. The chief function of the Church is worship, not preaching, and it is in the supreme and most universal act of worship that we have first to show our unity - viz., in communion. I am told again and again, and by some of our leading ministers, "I have Unitarians with me; they come to communion; I throw all the responsibility on themselves." But I do not think that is the general practice of Congregational churches, especially in the provinces; and even where it is, it is at variance with the theory held that the fellowship of the cup presupposes theological agreement. If that be the theory, no scrutiny in so important an affair can be too searching in order to discover that agreement in whatever is settled as the theological minimum. Reduce it even to the one article of the Incarnation, and then try to apply it to a young lady of eighteen, who applies for membership, having just left her boarding-school.

Let us only adopt as our theory what we are drifting into in our practice. Let us haul down our false colours and sail under our own. Let us say that Christian communion in the chief article of worship depends upon goodness of life simply, that goodness being expressed in the desire to render this special act of homage and commemoration to the character of Christ, and that desire being unfalsified by any overt acts of notorious evil living. I believe in the Incarnation (not very definitely perhaps, but definitely enough to keep from speaking as your article does about the "incarnated Christ." I understand the "incarnated God"), I believe in the miracles, but I believe even more in truth. If these things are true, if they are essentially true for man's spiritual progress, a wiser spirit is at work than ours to secure their universal belief. We shall never help forward that day by attaching a penalty to their non-acceptance now. It is a penalty to many who cannot believe these things to be excluded from
habitual communion with all who name the name of Christ. To enforce their exclusion is to use persecution, and it is a refinement of irreverence to use the Supper of the universal Lord as a means of punishing those who really love and pay honour to His name. We come to realise the Incarnation by the necessity of explaining Christ's character. It means a profound unfaith in our own methods if we decline to recognise in those who have not got beyond the worship of His character Christian brethren and fellow-contributors to the fulness of Christ and the development of His faith. Let us look to the Christian spirit, and God will look to our theological beliefs. There is but one atmosphere in which true theological beliefs can be generated — it is the Free Spirit. You can never pursue truth with success if a penalty is attached to one of the possible conclusions.

One word more. You speak of Congregational "orthodoxy." Will you say where the standard of that orthodoxy is to be found? Will those who clamoured for definitions at Leicester help us to a definition of that? As it is their own position, there can be no doubt of their ability to do so. Will they point us to a definite statement of the spiritual contents of Congregationalism which is likely to be accepted by the majority of the body? In a trial of orthodoxy to what is the appeal? The truth is, Congregationalism is but an ecclesiastical, not a theological, position at all. It remains to be seen if a Church can exist and endure so devoid of a definite theological nexus as it is. It has been made our boast that we have no formulated creed. That fact may be in the end our ruin, or it may be our glory and success, according as it is used to combat or to help that spirit of comprehension in which the Christianity of the future will live and move.

I am, etc.,

Shipley, Yorks.

P. T. Forsyth, M.A.


SIR — I am emboldened by your kind reception of my last letter to beg you to receive a second and final letter, not, indeed, to prolong a controversy, but, with due humility of thought in a matter so serious, to continue discussion, and supplement some points I could hardly touch. Here, if anywhere, are needful that charity of construction and that gentleness of judgment which are far remote from public meetings and somewhat foreign to the temper of our brawny and aggressive Nonconformity.

I am freer to ask your grace in this matter because it is not for myself I venture to plead, but for those very beliefs which we call the essence of Christianity, and for that justice which it is so hard for religious people to recognise. I can subscribe to the Divine Fatherhood and Incarnation with all my heart. It is in the interests of that faith itself that a more generous policy of comprehension seems to me to be both
expedient and true. The Church has never been generous, which may be why it has so feebly a hold over the generous period of life - youth. She has guarded her doctrines as a miser his gold. She has thought more of what she could do for her faith than of what her faith could do for her. She has been jealous, exclusive, watchful. She has never, since her very first years, let herself loose on the wind of her direct inspiration from God. She has been timidly anxious about ourshing error, and criminally careless about meeting those who were consumed with desire for truth. Let us be more generous, less timid, and we shall bear a witness to the truth which will be worth a hundred times more than all our watchful and exclusive care. In a case like this, to be widely generous is to be profoundly just. Let us emulate the wise policy of great Rome, which gave its imperial privilege to all the peoples it touched. It fell, not because it was too generous and too wide, but because it lacked what we have - a central spirit and source of control strong enough to weld together the most heterogeneous masses and leaven the lump.

We have been delivered, by the grace of God and Luther, from the Church. May it not be the work of this, our second and more awful and silent reforma- tion, to deliver us from the weight of a too speculative and over-defined Christianity? Are we not on the threshold of an age when it shall be in fact, as it is to many now only in name, that the centre of the Church is Christ. We have been thrown back on Paul. We have yet, as a Church, to learn to lean simply on Christ. Surely it may be a minimum sufficient for Christian fellowship to be no farther than she was who kissed His feet, and to know no more about the physical Resurrection than they who took the first communion with the Lord when they did not comprehend His death. Apart from being simpler and truer, shall we not gain vastly by letting it be openly known that our Church means all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, all who revere the character as supreme, leaving them free to select (if they must exercise a selection) the facts which they themselves find essential to the character. The facts are of no other use than as they make us realise the character. Christ, not the Bible, is the Word of God. If any may say, "I can dispense with this fact or that fact; I can construct the character as well or better without it," let us not punish him by exclusion for that, so long as he is loyal to the character. We may not see how he finds this fact or that indispensable to the character. Perhaps he is as illogical there as we are elsewhere. Perhaps, like us often, it is his consuming enthusiasm for Christ's character and person that impares his vision of its logical connection with some of the facts. Shall we punish him for his bad logic, instead of embracing him for his Christian heart? That would be one of the natural limitations of our wider fraternity of which we speak. Would it be one of the limitations of grace which makes possible natural impossibilities? It is not bigotry, I do believe, that is at work on the exclusive side, but only limited conceptions of the grace of God and the innate power of truth.

I do not think you are quite fair to Mr. Picton in your last article. It is, in one sense, unfortunate for this movement, after a larger comprehension, that its seniors and leaders are men of pronounced critical views. People are so wedded to the idea of the Church fellowship - meaning fellowship in opinion - that they lump all who sympathise with this movement as committed to Mr. Picton's critical and theological conclusions. It is not so. It is far from being so. Mr. Picton's real power - his Christianity - is a far more beautiful and deeper thing than his particular views, and,
widely as I dissent from these I think that the exclusion of such men from any Church must be a much greater loss and disaster to it, seen from the spiritual world than the worst danger that dawns from their presence on the foresight of those to whom they are a dread. But I venture to think you are not quite fair to Mr. Picton's views when you say he abolishes Christ, and "rejects the documents from which we derive our knowledge of Him." That is one of those loose expressions which are so full of gross injustice and mischief. He does not deny what has been till now the central fact of Christianity - the death on the Cross. He puts his own (possibly inadequate) interpretation on it, as we all do more or less. He does not deny the supernatural. He only says it was not revealed by physical miracles, but by the transcendent spirit and revelation of Christ's soul. I am not defending him. I am pleading for justice where scrupulous and delicate justice is as necessary as it is hard. He exercises the right of every scholar to criticise the Gospels, and to reject certain facts (perhaps hastily) as unhistorical. Our trusted Meyer does the same thing. But how can anyone who has read or listened to Mr. Picton's Leicester speech, and his expressions there of supreme devotion to Jesus Christ, say he banishes Christ and rejects the Gospels? Whatever he destroys, he is left at least with the character of Christ as a historical reality, and with a passionate response to it in his soul, "And no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Would Paul himself have fenced his communion-table against such a man? Such a communicant does not, in your words, "deny all the truths which that sacred service represents to us," unless our range is narrower than Christ's. The arch denier and traitor was not repulsed from the table by Christ. It is time to have done with such indiscriminate and shallow language as that Mr. Picton "rejects Christ." Did Schleiermacher reject Him because he rejected the whole story of his birth and boyhood?

Take, again, the case of Mr. Martineau. If Mr. Picton denies the physical resurrection (which you don't suggest that he considers to be only the inferior side of Christ's spiritual and essential resurrection) Mr. Martineau denies the Incarnation. Yet, because he openly proclaims his denial, he is to be debarred from Christian communion with those very churches whose ministers, many and many of them, have been preaching and praying under impulse received from him, and moulding their sermons on the finished beauty and tender, profound Christianity of his.

We, are, in the long run, ruled more by our ideals than by our defined beliefs. Christ has done more for Christianity as a moral and spiritual ideal than merely as the centre of a system of faith. The power of His name has been more than the power of His creed. All our theology sprang out of a mere personal devotion at first. If we but agree on the basis of His "Name", His character, and in anything be otherwise minded, God will reveal even that unto us. The creed of Christ will develop out of the spirit of Christ. That is my contention. Call all who worship the goodness of Christ members of Christ. It is only so that we shall develop those deeper foundations of Supreme goodness which make it the revelation and very presence of God.

There is nothing so disheartening in the Church at this hour, and nothing which makes it, with its huge claims, so contemptible as its cont-
scepticism and its rooted distrust of the power of truth, even its own truth. There is no scepticism so dreadful as that which honeycombs the still believing world. I notice two features in the utterances from the conservative side in this matter. The appeal is on the part of some to consequences, on the part of others to their feelings, if they must hold religious communion of the large sort desired. Mr. Osborne Morgan must be very familiar with that line of argument, and there are plenty among us to denounce it as applied to dead graveyards, who think it conclusive as applied to the living Church. What one misses is an appeal to the right and truth of the case - that initial right of a redeemed world which alone makes consequences divine, and to which natural obstacles of feeling must yield. One reads Mr. White's letter to the Christian World with a pang. "Punish me, if only you can thwart them." What a commentary ex contr a on St. Paul, who could wish himself accursed from Christ for his sceptical brethren's sake. Times are great; is the Church alone to be small? The power of truth is trusted by the world that can hardly trust anything else. Are the chief practical sceptics of it to be those who call themselves its pillar and ground? If our truths are supremely true, they will not only preserve us, their noisy "guardians," but infect with their proper salvation those among us to whom they are as yet but partially true. We deny our truths that power if we fence away from us those who, being of our spirit, can but half believe them. The Church with us is practically defined rather by the human will in voting, than by the Divine will in calling. We vote into the Church those who we think won't hurt truth, and we vote out those who wish to touch the Christ, the Truth omnipotent to heal. Is not that the saddest scepticism of the invincible armour of light, and of the power of Christ's touch to save?

What is the use of our Liberation crusades if we rob the Church of Christ by our exclusions of any claim to represent the national religions life? The Church of England is strong. Why? Because of her connections with the State? No. But because of her connection with the nation; because she has open doors to all who come to drown their misery in the cup of Christ, and whose need is their right to partake. Cut the Church loose from the State, and you set it free; but sever it from the nation, make it appeal not to the nation in its moral aspirations, but to parties in it of theological, critical, or ecclesiastical views, and you perform an amputation that ends in death. You can't in the very last resort stake the Christianity of a mighty nation, or the communion with Christ's spiritual God, on this or that historical fact, which permit on the part of specialists of so much dispute. If there is one indisputable thing in the world, it is the answer of the human conscience to Christ. It is to the conscience Christ makes His appeal. It is the moral response that Christianity rests on, and that makes a Church. It is in the conscience and soul that we find those fruits of the spirit, those graces that through all varieties of opinion are the seal of Christ. Extreme cases are crucial cases, and the spirit of Christ has more or less departed from Churches of His that cannot judge Mr. Pioton's, or Mr. Martineau's, or Mr. Wilks' opinions, without severing, at the same time, communion with them in the spirit and mind of Christ.

Finally, you speak of the Congregational Union adopting a formulated creed. Are you serious? As well "turn the key to keep out the damp." When all the religious world is groaning under creeds, and when those who have them tend to regard them as white elephants, are we to have the spectacle of the Congregational Union abandoning its old and absolute faith in the
Divine Spirit, to sit down and construct for its abode a temple made with hands, because all around our earthly house of this tabernacle is being dissolved? Is that faith or scepticism? Besides, do consider your good friends the worried trustees of churches, with trust-deeds as long as your arm, and as doctrinal as a college. Your new creed would probably be a short one, and it would be very loose about, e.g., Eternal Torment. How could conscientious trustees belong to a Union which by its very deed of incorporation advised them to ignore the greater part of what they have committed themselves to enforce?

I do not seek to attenuate the spiritual or intellectual contents of Christianity. I am aiming at a Christian minimum for comprehension, not at the Christian maximum of connotation. I have spoken of policy and justice. I have hardly referred to the theological grounds for the course commended, which to many are final. It is within our choice with whom we will work together. Therefore pulpit exchanges are private and secondary affairs. But it is not within our choice with whom we shall pray or commune. That is not the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man - in voting or otherwise - but of God, who utters His will in the desire of all who wish to commune with us.

After all, Time is with us. And to the Christian Time is God.

I am, &c.,

Shipley, Yorks.

P. T. Forsyth.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 - WRITINGS OF P. T. FORSYTH:

BOOKS BY FORSYTH

The Charter of the Church, Six Lectures on the Spiritual Principle of Nonconformity; London; Alexander and Shepheard; 1896; pp. vi, 102.

Christ on Parnassus: Lectures on Art, Ethic, and Theology; London; Hodder and Stoughton, 1911; pp. xii, 297.

The Christian Ethic of War; London; Longmans, Green; 1916; pp. x, 196.


Faith, Freedom, and the Future; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1912; pp. xvi, 349.

The Holy Father and the Living Christ; Little Books on Religion, Edited by W. R. Nicoll; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1897; pp. 147.

Intercessory Services for Aid in Public Worship; Manchester; John Heywood; 1896; pp. 29.


Missions in State and Church; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1908; pp. viii, 344.


Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind; The Lyman Beecher Lecture on Preaching, Yale University, 1907; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1907, pp. xii, 374.
The Principle of Authority in Relation to Certainty, Sanctity, and Society; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1913; pp. x, 475.


Socialism, the Church, and the Poor; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1908; pp. vii, 75.


The Soul of Prayer; London; Kelly; 1916; pp. 104.

Theology in Church and State; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1914; pp. xxvi, 328.

This Life and the Next; The Effect on this Life of Faith in Another; London; Macmillan; 1918; pp. viii, 128. Second Edition, 1946.


COLLABORATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHER VOLUMES

The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought; London; James Clarke; 1900; pp. 376. See pp. 59-68.

Bon Record. Records and Reminiscences of Aberdeen Grammar School; Edited by H. F. M. Simpson; Aberdeen; D. Wylie and Son; 1906; pp. xviii, 313. See "When We were Boys," pp. 259-61.


Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice; edited by W. Sanday; London; Longmans, Green; 1900; pp. xix, 174.

Gibson, J. Munro: The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture; With a forward by P. T. Forsyth, D.D.; London; Thomas Law; 1908; pp. xviii, 246.


Proceedings of the Second International Congregational Council; Boston; Usher; 1900; pp. xxi, 556.


Forsyth, P. T., and Hamilton, J. A.: Pulpit Parables for Young Hearers; Manchester; Brook and Chrystal; 1886; pp. viii, 227.

Record of the Celebration of the Quatercentenary of the University of Aberdeen; Edited by F. J. Anderson; Aberdeen; 1907; pp. 556. See Forsyth’s sermon, pp. 315-25.


PAMPHLETS

"Coleridge’s 'Ancient Mariner.' An Exposition and Sermon from a Modern Text;" Bradford; Wm. Byles and Sons; no date; pp. 19.


"The Courage of Faith," Glasgow; Wm. Asher; 1903; pp. 16.


"Holy Christian Empire;" London; James Clarke; 1902; pp. 46. Published also in the Christian World Pulpit, May, 1902; Missions in State and Church, Chapter X.


"Maid, Arise!" Bradford; T. Bright; 1878; pp. 19.

"Monism;" London Society for the Study of Religions; private printing; 1909.

"The Old Faith and the New;" Leicester, Birmingham, and Leamington; Midland Educational Company; Manchester: Brook and Chrystal; 1891; pp. 28, iv.

"Pfleiderer's View of St. Paul's Doctrine;" London: W. Speaght; no date; pp. 16.

"The Priesthood and Its Theological Assumptions;" Free Church Tracts for the Times; No. 3; London; National Council of Evangelical Free Churches; no date (probably 1899-1900); pp. 16.

"The Pulpit and the Age;" Manchester; Brook and Chrystal; 1885; pp. 16.


"Socialism and Christianity in Some of Their Deeper Aspects;" Manchester; Brook and Chrystal; 1886; pp. 37.

"Revelation Old and New;" Edinburgh; Blackwood; 1911; pp. 16.


CONTRIBUTIONS TO PAMPHLETS


"The Obligations of Doctrinal Subscription;" no date: pp. 273-81. This is an essay which appeared with a group of articles on credal subscription of Independent Churches. However, the original publication cannot be traced. It is to be found bound with other pamphlets in the Library of New College, London.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO JOURNALS

Alma Mater, Aberdeen University, Dec. 18, 1907, pp. 110 ff.

BRITISH CONGREGATIONALIST;

1906

"Church and University," Sept. 26, p. 201. Appears also in Quatercentenary of Aberdeen University.


"Dr. Forsyth on the Education Crisis," Nov. 8, p. 369.

1907


"Address from the Chair," May 16, p. 489.


"Sentiment and Sentimentalism," July, 1907.


"Sociality, Socialism, and the Church," Nov. 28, p. 487; Dec. 5, p. 509; Dec. 12, p. 534; Dec. 19, p. 561. Published in Socialism, the Church and the Poor.
1908


1909


"Miraculous Healing, Then and Now," Mar. 11, p. 194.

"Lay Religion," Apr. 29, p. 337. Published in The Person and Place of Jesus Christ.

"The Person and Place of Jesus Christ," May 6, 20, 27; June 10, 17, 24; July 1. Published as the book of that title.


1910


1911


"The Duty of the Christian Ministry," July 13, p. 27.


1912

"New Year Messages," Jan. 4, p. 3.


1914


"The Effectiveness of the Ministry," Mar. 12, p. 198. Published in The Church and the Sacraments, chapter VII.

"The Church and the Nation," May 14, p. 383.

"Principal Forsyth on 'Church and State,'" July 9, p. 40. Extracts from an article in the Westminster Gazette, July 6.

THE BRITISH WEEKLY:

1896


1897


1899

"A Hymn to Christ," June 1, Vol XXVI, p. 133.

1900


1901


1905


1906

Letter, July 12, Vol 40, p. 344.

1907


1908

"To the Congregational Churches of England and Wales," an open letter from the former Chairmen and the College Principals, Feb. 27, Vol 43, p. 556.

1909


"Theological Reaction," May 13, p. 150.

1910


1911


1912


1913


"The Church and Society - Alien or Allied?" Oct. 9, Vol 55, p. 43.


"Christianity and Nationality," July 9, Vol 56, pp. 385-86.

1915


1916


1917

Letter, Mar. 29, Vol 61, p. 496.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD:

1909

"An Open Letter to a Young Minister on Certain Questions of the Hour," May 27, p. 11.

"The Roman Road of Rationalism," Aug. 26, p. 6; Sept. 2, p. 3.

1917

1918

"The Unborn, the Once Born, and the First Born," Feb. 14, p.? 

CHRISTIAN WORLD PULPIT:

1884


1885


1887


1895


1896


1900


1901


1902

"An Allegory of the Resurrection," May 14, Vol LXI, pp. 312ff. Published as a pamphlet: "Holy Christian Empire," and in Missions in State and Church, Chapter X.

"Judgment," Oct. 1, Vol LXII, pp. 209ff. Published in Missions in State and Church, Chapter II.

1903

1906

1908
"Christ at the Gate," March 20, Vol LXXIII, pp. 177ff.

1910

1913

1916

CONGREGATIONAL MONTHLY:

1888

1892

1893

1900
Aphorism quoted, April, N.S., Vol 1, p. 8.
"Does the Third Beatitude Fit the Englishman?" and "The Moral Peril of the Frontier Life", April, N.S., Vol 1, p. 11.

1905

CONSTRUCTIVE QUARTERLY:


CONTEMPORARY REVIEW:


"Liberty and Its Limits in the Church," Apr., 1912, Vol CI, pp. 502ff. Published in The Principle of Authority, Chapter XIV.


THE ENGLISH INDEPENDENT

Letter, Nov. 1, 1877, pp. 1202ff.

Letter, Nov. 8, 1877, pp. 1230ff.
THE EXAMINER:

"Things New and Old in Heresy," July 12, 1900, p. 399.


"The Church, the State, the Priest, and the Future," July 9, 1903, pp. 27ff; July 16, pp. 55ff.


Letter on Kierkegaard and Denny, Jan., 1904, p. 5.


"A New Year Message to the Churches," Jan. 5, 1905, pp. 7ff.

Letter, Nov. 9, 1905, p. 434.


The Expositor:


"What is Meant by the Blood of Christ," Sept., 1908, 7th Series, Vol VI, pp. 207ff. Published in The Cruciality of the Cross, Chapter IV.


EXPOSITORY TIMES:


HIBBERT JOURNAL:


INDEPENDENT AND NONCONFORMIST:


LONDON QUARTERLY REVIEW:


"The Effectiveness of the Ministry," July, 1914, Vol CXXII, pp. 1ff. Published in The Church and The Sacraments, Chapter VII.


"Does the Church Prolong the Incarnation?" Vol CXXXIII, July, 1920, pp. 1ff; Oct., pp. 204ff.

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN:

"The Truncated Mind," Nov. 4, 1916, p?

METHODIST REVIEW:


THE MODERN CHURCH:


THE RECORD:


THE TIMES:


WESTMINSTER GAZETTE:

"The Church and Society," Sept. 6, 13, 20, 1913.

"The Church and the Nation," May 12, 1914, pp. 1ff.

III.- MATERIAL RELATING TO FORSYTH


Escott, Harry: Peter Taylor Forsyth (1848-1921) Director of Souls; London; Epworth; 1948; pp. xx, 136.


Griffith, Gwilym O.: The Theology of P. T. Forsyth; London; Lutterworth; 1948; , pp. 104.


Hughes: "Dr. Forsyth's View of the Atonement," Congregational Quarterly, Jan., 1940, pp. 30ff.


Peake, A. S.: Recollections and Appreciations; Edited by W. F. Howard; London; Epworth; 1938; pp. 231. See pp. 192ff: "P. T. Forsyth."


JOURNALS


BRITISH CONGREGATIONALIST:

Jan. 16, 1908, p. 51. Forsyth to preach at Mansfield College.

July 9, 1908, p. 33. His Edinburgh address.

Oct. 8, 1914, p. 323. His recent illness.

BRITISH WEEKLY:

Feb. 25, 1887, p. 2. "Church Life in Manchester."

Mar. 8, 1894, p. 322. Accepts call to Cambridge.


Apr. 14, 1898, p. 492. Description of a sermon in Dulwich.


Mar. 21, 1901, p. 582. His acceptance of the call to Hackney College.


Dec. 12, 1901, p. 239. A portrait.

May 22, 1902, p. 136. Forsyth's resolution on the Education Bill.

June 19, 1902, p. 242. "Dr. Forsyth at New College."

Mar. 17, 1904, p. 611. "Principal Forsyth among the Wesleyans."

May 12, 1904, pp. 107ff. Election of Forsyth as Chairman of the Congregational Union; his speech on Chinese labour.

Sept. 8, 1904, p. 511. "Rev. Dr. Forsyth on Christ's Teaching in Economics."

May 18, 1905, p. 147. "Dr. Clifford on Principal Forsyth's Address."

Oct. 12, 1905, p. 3. "Dr. Forsyth's Burden," P. 4: a report of Forsyth's address from the Chair of the Union.


Apr. 19, 1906, p. 31. Interview with Forsyth on Education Bill.

May 10, 1906, p. 104. Forsyth at the Assembly.


Apr. 25, 1907, pp. 57ff. "Principal Forsyth's Impressions of America."


May 12, 1910, p. 132. R. J. Campbell's reference to Forsyth at Assembly.


Nov. 2, 1911, p. 132. "Dr. Forsyth and Mr. Campbell," two letters.

Nov. 9, 1911, p. 170. Three further letters on this topic.

Nov. 16, 1911, p. 196. Five more letters.


Mar. 19, 1914, p. 730. "Dr. Forsyth's Address at Norwich."

Nov. 11, 1915, p. 108. "Dr. Forsyth and Mr. Campbell," a letter.

Nov. 16, 1916, p. 128. "Principal Forsyth at Westminster Chapel."

Nov. 17, 24, Dec. 1, 1921. Tributes to Forsyth.

CHRISTIAN WORLD:

"Death of Principal Forsyth," Nov. 17, 1921, p. 3.

CONGREGATIONAL MONTHLY:

Mar., 1888, Vol I, p. 64. Mention of an address by Forsyth.


July, 1888, Vol I, p. 201. Forsyth address noted.


April, 1901, N.S. Vol I, p. 3. Forsyth accepts call to Hackney College.


THE TIMES:


Mar. 9, 1906, p. 10. At Birmingham.

Nov. 28, 1906, p. 7. At City Temple, on Education Bill.

Apr. 28, 1910, p. 4. At Bloomsbury Chapel.

Mar. 11, 1910, p. 4. At Evangelical Free Church Council.


Mar. 10, 1911, p. 4. At Evangelical Free Church Conference.


May 13, 1914, p. 6. At Memorial Hall, on Church and State.


May 9, 1918, p. 3. At Memorial Hall.


Nov. 16, 1921, p. 13. Description of his funeral.

REVIEWS

The Charter of the Church


Christ on Parnassus

*Expository Times*, Nov, 1911, p. 74.
The Christian Ethic of War

Christian Perfection

The Church and the Sacraments

The Cruciality of the Cross
Expository Times, Nov., 1909, p. 84.

Faith and Criticism

Faith, Freedom, and the Future
Expository Times, June, 1912, pp. 411ff.

The Holy Father and the Living Christ
Expository Times, Apr., 1899, p. 269.

The Justification of God
Expository Times, Jan., 1917, p. 177.

Marriage, Its Ethic and Religion
Expository Times, Nov., 1912, p. 79.

Missions in State and Church
British Weekly, Oct. 15, 1908, p. 50.
Church Quarterly Review, Apr., 1910, p. 208.
Expository Times, Nov., 1908, p. 86.

"The Old Faith and the New"

The Person and Place of Jesus Christ
Expository Times, Apr., 1910, p. 320.

Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind
London Quarterly Review, Jan., 1908, pp. 1ff.

The Principle of Authority
Expository Times, Feb., 1913, p. 213.
Religion in Recent Art
London Quarterly Review, Jan., 1902, p. 201.

Rome, Reform and Reaction
British Weekly, Jan. 11, 1900, p. 306.

The Soul of Prayer

The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace
Expository Times, June, 1901, p. 361.

Theology in Church and State

This Life and the Next
London Quarterly Review, Apr., 1918, p. 121.

The Work of Christ
Expository Times, Nov., 1910, p. 84.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aberdeen, City of: Baptisms in Old Machar, 1848, p. 483.
Baptisms in Old Machar, 1850, p. 521.
Births and Baptisms, 1852, p. 58, no's. 195-97; p. 83, no. 401.
Deaths in the District of St. Nicholas in the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1858, p. 8, entry 17.
Marriages in Old Machar, 1847, p. 589.
Register of Deaths; Deaths in the District of St. Nicholas in the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1880, no. 159.
Register of Deaths; Deaths in the District of St. Machar in the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1898, no. 756.
Post Office Directory, 1847-74.


Brown, J. B.: The Divine Treatment of Sin; London; Jackson, Walfrod, and Hodder; 1864; pp. x, 228.

Brown, J. B.: The Doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood in Relation to the Atonement; London; Ward; 1880; pp. 44.


Bruce, A. B.: The Humiliation of Christ; 5th Edition; Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark; 1900, pp. xvi, 455.

Bruce, W. S.; Editor: Records of the Arts Class 1864-68, University of Aberdeen; Aberdeen; Central Press; 1912; pp. 126.


Butler, Joseph: Sermons I, II, and III. Upon Human Nature, or Man Considered as a Moral Agent; Handbooks for Bible Classes, Edited by Dods and Whyte; Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark; 1888; pp. 123.

Camfield, F. W.: Revelation and the Holy Spirit; With a Foreword by J. MacKennaichie; London; Elliot Stock; 1933; pp. 300.


Campbell, R. J.: A Spiritual Pilgrimage; London; Williams and Norgate; 1916 pp. x, 339.


Cave, Sydney: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ; London; Duckworth; 1925; pp. 259.

Complete and Practical Guide to Her Majesty's Civil Service; by a certified Candidate; London; Blackwood; 1860; pp. 250, 107. 1872, pp. 359.
Congregational Union of England and Wales: Year-Book, 1876-1922.


Dale, A. W. W.: Life of Dr. Dale; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1898; pp. x, 771.


Denney, James: Letters of Principal James Denney to his Family and Friends; Edited by James Moffat; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1922; pp. xvi, 220.

Diack, William: History of the Trades Council and Trade Union Movement in Aberdeen; Aberdeen; Printed for the Trades Council; 1939; pp. xv, 280.


Garvie, A. E.: Memories and Meanings of My Life; London; Allen and Unwin; 1938; pp. 274.

Garvie, A. E.: The Ritschlian Theology, Critical and Constructive; Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark; 1899; pp. xxvii, 400.

Gilfillan, Thomas: "Christian Sabbatism: or Divorce from the Law and Marriage to Christ;" Aberdeen; A. Brown; 1865; pp. 16.
Goodwin, Thomas: Expositions of that Famous Divine, Thomas Goodwin, D. D., on the Part of the Epistle to Ephesians and on the Book of Revelation; London; Simpkin, Marshall; 1842.

Gore, Charles: Dissertations on Subjects Connected with Incarnation; London; John Murray; 1895; pp. xvi, 325.

Gore, Charles, Editor: Lux Mundi; London; John Murray; 1891; pp. xi, 395.


Halliday, W. F.: Reconciliation and Reality; London; Swarthmore; 1919; pp. 234.

Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, clxviii, coll. 672-82, 1862; 4th Series, xciv, coll. 1358-60, 1901.

Hegel: Logic; translated by W. Wallace; Oxford; Clarendon Press; 1874; pp. clxxxiv, 532.


Jones, J. D.: Three Score Years and Ten; London; Hodder and Stoughton; 1940; pp. 327.

Johnston, William: Roll of Graduates of the University of Aberdeen; Aberdeen; University Press; 1906; pp. xvi, 687.

Kafkan, Julius: The Truth of the Christian Religion; translated by Geo. Ferries; Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark; 1894; 2 volumes; pp. x, 357, vi, 445.

Kahler, Martin: Die Wissenschaften der christlichen Lehre; Zweits Auflage; Leipzig; 1895; pp. xiii, 648.


Maclean, Neil N.: Life at a Northern University; Edited, with a biographical memoir, by W. K. Leask; Quatercentenary Edition; Aberdeen; Rosemount Press; 1906; pp. xli, 383.


Maurice, F. D.: The Kingdom of Christ; Everyman's Edition; London; Dent; 2 volumes; pp. 314, 335.

Maurice, F. D.: Social Morality; London; Macmillan; 1893; pp. xv, 414.


Mortifications under the Charge of the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of Aberdeen; Aberdeen; Chalmers; 1848; pp. 279 (The Cargill Bursary, pp. 47ff.).


Mozley, J. K.: Ritschlianism; London; Nisbet; 1909; pp. x, 274.

Ogilvie, J.: The Book of Bursary Competitions, unpublished clippings; King's College Library; Aberdeen; 1913.


Peel, Albert: These Hundred Years; A History of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1831-1931; London; Congregational Union; 1931; pp. 424.

Ross, James: A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland; Glasgow; MacLehose; 1900; pp. xv, 282.

Ross, J. A.: Record of Municipal Affairs in Aberdeen; Aberdeen; D. Wyllie; 1889; pp. viii, 128.

Ritschl, Albrecht: The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation; Translated by H. R. Mackintosh; Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark; 1900; pp. xii, 673.


Simpson, H. F. M. Editor; Bon Record. Records and Reminiscences of Aberdeen Grammar School; Aberdeen; D. Wyllie; 1908; pp. xviii, 313.

Tillich, Paul: The Protestant Era; Translated by J. L. Adams; Chicago; University of Chicago; 1948; pp. xxix, 323.

The Times: The Congregational Union and the Leicester Conference; May 7, 1878, p. 10; May 10, p. 4; May 13, p. 10.


Watt, Theodore: Roll of Graduates of the University of Aberdeen 1901-25, with Supplement 1860-1900; Aberdeen; University Press; 1935; pp. xx, 952.


Wrigley, Francis: The History of the Yorkshire Congregational Union; London; James Clarke; 1923; pp. 144.