

## *c. 16 The Redemption of Man*

The determination of man towards his supreme purpose and destiny, the determination of man by the Incarnation of God, was not, we have stressed, a decree of the Divine Wisdom consequent merely upon sin. Rather it is the fulfilment for man of one Law, one creative economy, one process from the beginning of time. Nevertheless sin, the principle of antithesis to good and to God, to the very synthesis which is the possession of God in intuitive vision, has so added to that mission a relation of forgiveness and reacceptance, that we can never separate Christ in historical fact from the Redemption which He wrought.

### **Redeemer as well as Saviour**

There is no one word which adequately expresses the mission of Christ in its entirety. In many respects the word 'redemption' is the least satisfactory, for while it stresses the relation of Christ to fallen man, it can easily take on narrow, and even unworthy meanings, if it is not counterbalanced by other expressions which put the mission of Jesus Christ in a fuller perspective. When theologians are writing specifically of the redemption of man by Christ they do not find the word 'redemption' alone sufficient, even in its own proper context, and prefer to speak of the '*satisfaction and redemption*' wrought by Christ towards mankind. For our purposes, the word which most comprehensively embraces the total content of the mission of Christ, is the word 'Salvation', because it includes a redemption, but does not refer exclusively to a saving from catastrophe alone, but connotes a making safe, secure, and whole in every meaning of those words. It is also the significance expressed by the very name of Jesus Christ, which means literally the "Saviour King".

We regard the mission of Christ, in as much as it was historically a redemption, as the confirmation, given back in an act of divine forgiveness, of the original destiny of man. Sin did not change the nature of man, nor man's end, nor the decree of the Incarnation, for that is the fulfilment of the Law of Finality on which matter is based. Sin merely cancelled the terms of that complete relationship between the Divine and the created spirit which subsists, in the creature, in the state of original sanctity and original integrity.

When God pardons man in Himself, in the Word to be Incarnate, there is a giving back of the original dispensation of man, but now conditioned as both a forgiveness and a redemption. We must examine with some care what this reconfirmation of the original destiny of man entails, for it entails much more than the non-Christian reader would normally read into the connotation even of the word 'redemption'. The fabric and the plan of the whole universe, and of all material creation including man rests upon, is subject to Christ as to its final term, fulfilment, and purpose. The subjection is in a relation to the Divine Word which is completely gratuitous, without exigencies of any kind, but yet instinct with the unsearchable wisdom, intelligence, and counsel of the Mind of God. Yet this 'gift' of being, and of perfection of being, is not one thing with the gift which is the redemption of Christ.

The fact of sin, extrinsic to the divine order, negative in the divine order, adds *another* and a *different* charity to the gifts of God. The giving back to fallen men of man's original destiny *adds* to the Incarnation, and to that Redemption from which it is now completely inseparable in thought, and in fact, a further title of gratuity, the tremendous content of which few among Christians bring home to themselves. The further relation to God of charity which rests upon the reacceptance of a nature now positively unworthy even within an order of charity of an end never commensurate with its nature in any case, adds a new relation to the act of creation itself, at least in so far as it affects the existence of men upon this earth.

### **Incarnation not determined by sin but conditioned by it**

We have said in earlier chapters that the mission of Christ was a necessity for man, so that man might "realise in his substance the divine ordinance of God in man's regard", and that at a certain time in the world's history, men would need, in the supernatural order of their lives, a manifestation of God, man's supreme determinant, directive, and fulfilling object of desire, which could be given only by God Himself. The implications of this view of Christ must now be very accurately weighed. It is possible to weigh the implications of this teaching concerning Christ only now, after we have studied the nature of sin and the repercussions of sin upon the relations which exist between God and the created, and between the created nature and God.

When we teach that the Incarnation of God was a necessity for mankind of the individual, and of the social orders, we mean what we say, but we require the reader to understand precisely what we say, and not to skip as unnecessary subtlety what is of the utmost importance to a correct understanding of Christ. We do not say that Christ was, and is, for man, as an instrument of a divine purpose, this would make Christ subordinate to man, and to the necessities of man, and this is impossible, for Christ is God. Neither do we say, as did many of the more orthodox Protestant theologians before Protestantism ceased to have any clear-cut theology at all, that Christ was freely and willingly an instrument of a divine purpose after the fall of man; that He was given, in a general sense they never define precisely, as a 'victim', or 'immolation' for human nature after the fall.

### **The Incarnation is not for a penal substitution atonement**

Christology of this type, and it has its followers in a mitigated sense among Catholic theologians too, still makes Christ subservient to men and to their spiritual necessities. Such a ruling concept of Christ, the concept of 'victim-hood' as the supreme note of the Mission of Christ, need not transgress the limits of Christian orthodoxy, but it always infers a mean conception of Christ, and it lends itself most easily, especially when it runs riot in the old 'evangelical' theologians of Protestantism to gross anthropomorphic errors, errors in which the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, is figured as an angry and severe Judge demanding the damnation of all men existent, and yet to be, and accepting with pleasure the hideous sufferings of the Second Person of the Trinity in His human nature as the "vicarious" punishment justly due to the entire human race.

This is doubtless, in plain language devoid of euphemisms, the concept of the redemption which many non-Catholic readers, especially Nonconformists, will discover that they hold, or were taught to believe as children. As we have personally heard a street-preacher shout through a loud-speaker, "insure yourselves against the wrath of the Father, in the blood of His Son".

This ghastly theology of the Incarnation, which, filled with the commercial spirit which infuses so much post-reformation spiritual thought, makes the Son of God an open insurance policy against hell fire, a policy upon which any man may draw by signing the

signature of "belief on Jesus", is utterly, and totally unorthodox. There are many who do not believe so gross a doctrine of Christ, but who approximate to it all too closely. It remains, whatever view theologians who think the Incarnation is consequent only upon sin may hold, that any teaching which intrinsically subordinates the Incarnation to man, whether fallen or un-fallen, is genuinely heretical.

We consider it to be true to add also, that any system of theology which makes the Incarnation decreed only consequently upon the fall of man, does in fact subordinate God to man intrinsically, and while the qualification that such a decree is the freely given mercy of God to men rules out any question of heresy, it does in fact make Christ, as God made man, relative merely to that sin which was an extrinsic accident of the creative plan of God, and such a subjection of the Incarnation to sin and the consequences of sin is a very unworthy valuation of Christ, and one which contains an unnecessary and undesirable element of subjection of God to human needs.

**In the Divine Plan the intention of the Incarnation precedes the foreknowledge of sin**

When we said that Christ was a necessity in the order of human life, and human ends, we did not mean that Christ was *subject* to human necessities, we meant that man was made in the image of God, for God, and that because man was made for God, he was made for Christ, and therefore his very nature witnesses the wisdom of God's ordinance in its substance and in the necessities of that created substance. We have meant, and we mean, that the nature of man looks to Christ as the promise of its imperfect fashioning, "expecting the blessed hope, and the advent of the Lord". (Office for Advent) The composite nature of man is made with only one personal finality in God. This one finalism of human nature embraced, and always embraces, both the elements of his being in the unity of his one person,; matter was not made to be a drag upon the spirit of man, as, without Christ, it must always have been. As one personality man was ordered to the fruition of his Creator. Only God is the end, and because God is the end, only God is the sufficient means to the end, and Christ is God as the sufficient means to Himself for mankind.

The intention of God so to give Himself as the fruition of the created spiritual nature, precedes creation, and motivates creation. Christ is God, the ultimate satisfying end,

manifest also as the only means to that end; through Him then, were made all things that were made, and through Him was made man; man made for Him, not Him for man. It is truer by far to say that man is created for Christ, than to say that Christ is given for men, though this second proposition is also true and sacred, but only because it is contained in the first. *Christ, we say, was not decreed consequent upon any human action, least of all upon the wicked action of man's rebellion against God, but men only exist at all because of Christ.*

If God had not willed to give Himself to us as Christ, He would not have created the mixed nature of flesh and spirit at all. The final end, the last purpose, and the last perfection of any nature, conditions the inception of that nature. It is the perfection of the end given to human nature in sublime and perfect harmony of order, which requires, in the wisdom of the works of self-standing Intellect, that the nature of man shall be consummated in the plenitude of the perfectibility of that nature. Therefore, God made man, Christ Jesus, can alone be the perfection of the Divine means for an end which is measured only by the Perfection which is God. In this God is not made in any way subservient to man, but human nature is made subject to the Wisdom of the Supreme Intellect which shapes in one decree our beginnings and our end.

### **Man's need of Redemption subsequent to plan of Salvation**

The advent of sin does not change this intrinsic relation of flesh and blood to the Being of God. The advent of sin merely makes men wholly unworthy in a positive sense, culpable in the nature, even if not in the person, of an existence and an end which rests upon the grace of God in the very state of original holiness. Even within the order of a creation in which no imagined natural exigencies upon the Divine have any part, fallen man can, and does, incur that positive unworthiness which consists in not realising in his nature even the integrity of its created gift, for now it is no longer, through sin, so subject to God that it realises in its substance the ordinance of God. The pardon of man's unworthiness before God, does not change the essential ordering of man to God through Christ which preceded sin and which preceded creation itself, but it does return to man in the manner of a redemption from sin and its consequences, an original destiny which is annulled by sin when it was never more than the favour of God at all times.

This is indeed a new and tremendous gift of God to man. The gift of Christ to man which is the redemption of mankind, is equal to, and as tremendous as, the act of creation itself, for both are alike non-necessary in God, and for us, in respect of our fallen nature, the alternative could only be the annihilation of our order of creation. God could not have allowed men to be born the sons of Adam only to incur eternal rejection. God could not, under the natural law which is the decree of his own wisdom, have created the immortal soul, pure in his own image, only to damn it for an offence of which it was not the author; but God could have annihilated the human race.

We talk in very human terms, for the knowledge and will of God is not consequent upon created events, but precedes them. However anthropomorphic this mode of speech may be, the fact conveyed is clear enough. It is that while the decree of the Incarnation precedes all material creation, and is confirmed anew after the Fall, it remains that we owe our existence and our end today to that pardon of God which lies in the redemption of Christ. Through this redemption we can truly say that we are created twice, for the forgiveness of Christ stands between man and man's annihilation, and if there is no intelligent life elsewhere in the created universe, it stands between all material creations and the annihilation of matter.

**Incarnation now includes Redemption but is itself predestined apart from it**

Never therefore can we separate from Christ the act of His redemption of mankind; we stand by it, and without it we would not be. We belong to Christ upon a twofold title; first because He made us for Himself, and secondly because He redeemed us in Himself. The word "necessity" becomes intelligible in the context of the Incarnation, when it is remembered that our nature is substantially ordered to an end in the Divine Nature, and in none other. It is this finality of the intelligent creature which has shaped the material cosmos, its mighty law of relativity in substance and in purpose, the nature of man, and the laws and operations of rational nature. These things did not decree Christ, He decreed them in the fiat of the Incarnation:

“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers, by the prophets, but in these last days, has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the *heir of all things*, by whom also He created the world. He reflects the glory of God, and bears the very stamp of His nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When He had made purification for sin he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”. (Heb 1:1-3)

We must remember that all the striking phrases spoken of Christ in this magnificent epistle, are spoken of *Christ*, of God made man, not the Word of God in the essence of the Godhead only; and of *Christ*, must they be interpreted, for unto Christ is this whole wonderful epistle an apologia. If the world was made by the Word of God, who is appointed *heir of all things*, as an heir He was to come into His own at the appointed time. This kingship of Christ is not therefore dependent intrinsically upon the event of sin. Christ is heir to His own, and sin is not His own. If Christ upholds all things by the word of His power, His Incarnation is only the fuller manifestation to men of the “word” by which all things subsist, and Christ is intrinsic to the universe, and all things are for Him, and in Him. Neither is it said of Jesus Christ, a few verses further on in the same chapter: “Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of your Kingdom.” (Heb 1: 8)

Not because human sin in any way conditioned the Incarnation of Christ. For the sceptre of Christ’s justice could only be fully relative to man’s original justice, and in *Christ* would man’s justice have been filled out by God’s justice. Sin alone has contradicted and diminished on earth the sceptre of justice which is the ruling power of Christ. Sin has *never added* anything to the sceptre of Christ, but only subtracted, and still does subtract. What glories are in Christ because of sin are *His own* victories over the power of evil. Sin gives nothing to Christ, least of all the glory of his Kingship as God made man. Nor again, because of the Fall is it written:

“Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, His purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time.”(Eph 1: 3-5)

On the contrary, the inspired writer clearly declares our predestination in and for Christ, and because of Christ; a predestination which precedes the decree of creation itself. The Incarnation is related to the filling out of the spirit of man with “heavenly blessings”, which was decreed relative to the state of innocence, for God “chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

### **Redemption in the context of the salvific purpose of the Incarnation**

When we meditate upon the divine intention in creation we mean especially of matter and the union of matter and spirit in the mixed nature of man, predestined in Jesus Christ, the heir of the ages, the Redemption takes on an ever more striking lustre. We call to mind that everything was relative to, and built upon, the Incarnation of God in Christ, “through whom all things exist”, and that the Fall, the always possible frustration of Divine Grace by man’s disgrace, negatives the good pleasure of the Word in his works at one blow.

We begin to perceive why the redemption of Christ is equivalent to a second creation, which alone stands between us and our annihilation. This is the gift of Christ, personal, free, infinite in mercy. We are conceived sons of wrath, but redeemed into the order of co-heirs with Christ. This is the redemption which is truly something other than the original gift of creation to men in the predestination of Christ before all ages. For this cause is it recorded:

“For it was fitting that He, for Whom and by Whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. For He Who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers ... since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature.”(Heb 2: 10-14)

The Redemption therefore confirms the decree of the Incarnation in a new state, when the order of creation was ruptured by the sinful will of man. The essential mission and predestination of Christ which existed before sin, which much more rightfully and gloriously would have been manifested if men had never rebelled from the sceptre of justice by which their nature is ruled, is not caused by sin, but in the free pardon of God is certainly

conditioned intrinsically in a new modality of redemption because of sin. This new modality represents a new relationship between God and fallen human nature, a relationship of pardon and re-acceptance which is equivalent to a second creating, so that in Baptism we are most truly “born again, of water and the Holy Spirit.” (Jn 3: 5)

**Christ would always have been Saviour in the fullest sense**

If men had never fallen, Christ would still have been truly a saviour from sin, besides the Bread of Life, but in a preservative, and not in a liberative sense. There would always have been the possibility of a fall. There would always have been the need for man to increase in spiritual stature, to grow in knowledge of God, in wisdom, and in the fruition of love which more and more defends a man against the defection of sin. Man would always have needed of God the positive nourishment which is the increase of inward grace and which is of itself, like robust health in the body, a defence against the languor of disease. This positive need has not disappeared because of sin, and the weakness sin has induced into human nature, although redeemed. Far from it, this positive need, now both in one a nourishment and a medicine, has become more terribly urgent because of sin and the lies and errors born of sin. This need for the Bread of Heaven has never been more terribly urgent since the Incarnation than it is today. There is nowhere today where a man can go to find rest for his soul, save only in Christ, and to the Love and Wisdom which shines out of the face of God made man.

Christ was born to be King: if man had never fallen, He would have come into his own, and with joy they would have known Him, and received Him. If men had never ceased to “know my Father”, then, as He says Himself, they “would have known me also,” for He and the Father are One. It is in this sense that He addresses the Jews:

“If God were your Father you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God. I came not of my own accord, but He sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word ... because I tell you the truth you do not believe me ... If I glorify myself my glory is nothing: It is my Father Who glorifies me ... I know Him and I keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ... Truly, truly I say to you: before Abraham was I AM.”(Jn 8: 42-59)

### **The impact on the Incarnation by sin**

It was human sin which frustrated the fullness of His kingship over all mankind, though sin was not able to do away with it altogether; and it was proclaimed in His title even upon the Cross. He did not come to die, He came knowing full well that He would die, and all the martyrs since have died in his image and likeness. When the good Who was God came into contact with malice and wickedness, that same power of evil cried out against Him: "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate said to them: 'Shall I crucify your King'? The chief priests answered: 'We have no king, but Caesar'". (Jn.19: 15)

The substance of the salvation wrought by Christ lies in the fact that God reconfirmed His work to men in spite of sin, continued it through to the bitter end despite all that sin could do, and forgave the crudity and ignorance of men which led Him not to the throne over the minds and hearts of men that belonged to Him, but to the throne of the Cross. Even upon that Cross He would cry out: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34)

In spite of the effects of human sin, in part culpable from malice, and in part inculpable from ignorance, He would continue the salvific mission which belonged to Him, and would have belonged to Him in any state of mankind. He would always have been the Light of the world, the Good Shepherd, the true Bread which gives life to men. That mission of Christ, which apart from sin, would have built up this earth into a paradise of wisdom and of love, that mission remained after sin, and still remains, even though He is set eternally for a sign which shall be contradicted, and He must first redeem and heal before He can sanctify us in the good. He must heal and purify all the time He hallows, for while we strive sincerely for the best we know, our ingrained selfishness of soul and body leads us astray in many things.

### **The Good Shepherd**

It is perhaps in the parable of the Good Shepherd that we can see most vividly exactly how sin has affected the Incarnation as a divine economy, and has conditioned it to the mode of a liberating redemption from sin. In this simile we see better than in most others how his faithfulness which begins with the pardon of the first of our race:

“Jesus therefore said to them again: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All those who came before me are thieves, and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them. I am the door, if any man enters by me he shall be made saved; and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and who is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf catches and scatters the sheep. For this reason the Father loves me; because I lay down my life for the sheep. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received from my Father’”.(Jn 10: 7-18)

We remark how, in this parable, Christ makes Himself the one and the only Shepherd of His sheep; the one and only Lord of mankind. This He is by the decree of His Incarnation before creation was. As many as have usurped his position and authority are thieves and robbers. It is only He who can give life, and give pastures more abundantly. It is sin, and only sin, in malicious men, which is the wolf which catches and scatters the sheep. Before this wolf the hireling flees, for he is but a hireling, and he has no care for the sheep. In spite of the presence of the wolf, which is the sinful state of mankind and every evil power which works among men, Christ comes steadfastly to save and to defend his sheep, for He is the good shepherd, and He has a care for His own, notwithstanding the wolf.

The Good Shepherd will not desert His flock as the hireling deserted, but He will resist the wolf, and will resist it to the death. Christ was not the Good Shepherd before the incursion of sin: He is the Good Shepherd *who lays down his life* because of sin. The Good Shepherd did not make the wolf which scatters the sheep, and neither did He come down to His fold only because the wolf was at large, the sheep were His to pasture at all times. Men, prompted by the devil have made the wolf, and the Good Shepherd has interposed His own flesh between His flock and the wolf. Therefore does the Father love Him, for He lays down his life for his sheep; He gives it willingly, though originally it was not nor could be, the office of the Divine Shepherd to die for the sheep. Because of the wolf He must fight for his sheep, and He has power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again.

### **He will crush the serpent's head**

Not obscurely we think, from the very time of the Fall, we have a clear indication, similar to that contained in the parable of the Good Shepherd, that sin did not motivate the decree of the Incarnation, but rather conditioned the manner of our salvation by God in Christ after the second birth which is the redemptive reacceptance itself. When Satan, the powerful being of intellect and will who is the Prince of the fallen spirits, and the arch-mover of evil in creation, is cursed by God for the part he played in the fall of man, the text of Genesis, always interpreted by the Church as a reference to Christ, tells us that the mind of God is that: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; He shall crush your head, and you shall squirm under his heel". (Gen3: 15 rendered more in conformity with the Hebrew).

It is not said, "I will raise up a seed to the woman, and will put warfare between her seed and your seed". No, the seed of the woman, Christ, for whom the very womb of woman came into being at all, is *presumed* and taken for granted. But now, because of sin, there is war on earth until the end of time between Christ and Satan, good and evil, and in this annunciation of the redemption to man, there is foreshadowed the warfare, which nailed Christ to the Cross, and which was triumphantly concluded in so far as respects the humanity of Christ in His own Person, when He rose from the tomb.

### **The Kingship of Christ**

Most movingly, and in the most touching scene of all, Christ Himself, hauled before Pilate for his lying mockery of a trial, tells him, and in him us also, the nature of his kingship, and the revolt against it by sin and by sinners:

"Pilate therefore went into the praetorium again, and called Jesus, and said to Him : 'Are you the King of the Jews?'

Jesus answered: 'Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say this to you about me?'

Pilate replied: 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you up to me, what have you done?'

Jesus answered: 'My kingship is not of this world, if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight that I should not be handed over to the Jews; *but now*, my Kingdom is not from the world.'

Pilate therefore said to Him: 'Are you a King then?'

Jesus answered: 'You say I am a King, for this was I born, and for this came I into the world: to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice'''. (Jn 18: 33-38)

In this passage the most significant line is "*but now*, my Kingdom is not from the world." If there had not been evil upon earth, the kingship of Christ, which is made in heaven because it derives from his Divinity and is the manifestation of that Divinity to the created nature, would have been recognised and acclaimed also on earth. In a sinless order, the Kingdom of Christ would have belonged equally to heaven and to earth, and would have dominated every aspect whatever of human life. All earthly rulers would have acknowledged themselves as delegates only of Christ the King. As God made man, He would have been, while on earth, in every sense the King of kings. His kingdom then, would have been fully of heaven, and of this world.

The advent of sin not only frustrated this complete vindication of Christ's kingship, but the greedy self-interest, corruption, and moral decay so usually associated with political power and political intrigues, would make it impossible for Christ to exercise over men a kingship which perfectly embraced every detail of the lives of men. The same grossness of concept associated now with earthly power, would make it impossible for men to realise in what manner He was King over them. It would make them refuse to accept Him as King on any terms but their own, and so made Him unwilling to allow the title of King to be used of Him in any earthly sense, because of the gross implications such a title would cast upon his mission, and the in-eradicable misunderstandings, and corruptions too, that it would have engendered among His followers.

While Christ was on earth He never accepted the title of King in any sense which would have implied temporal dominion over men and over princes, for His kingdom could never be of that world of power-driven lusts and jealousies which He found in possession of so much of his own inheritance. Therefore He says: "*But now*, my Kingdom is not from the world." By

nature it was the fullest kingship that could be predicted of God made man, but since the Fall, He will not contend with men with the power of the sword and all the lusts which go with earthly dominion: "But now, it is not from the world."

Christ does not deny all title to kingship even though He refuses to allow in it any connotation which would blind men further to those essentials through which his dominion as God subsists. He did not deny that He was a king; on the contrary, he affirms it forcibly: "You say I am a king." He tells Pilate that He was born to be a king, and to be a king He came into the world, so that He might declare to men all the true and the good. This is the mission, and the Kingship of Christ we considered when we studied the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John. A mission it is which belongs uniquely to Christ for the truth belongs only to God, the Absolute Good and Wisdom. Only God can reveal to man the Truth which is Himself, and this revelation constitutes the essential mission of Christ to mankind, and the essence of His Kingship without respect to the state of man, whether in original innocence or under the yoke of Original Sin.

### **Redemption should not be seen as secondary**

If we say that the all-important element in Christ's mission which remains with, or without sin, is the revelation to man of God in Christ, the manifestation of the Light of the world, the infallible truth, the love of the Good Shepherd, some would perhaps rest satisfied, and taking the redemption for granted as a pardon manifested in Christ's endurance even to the Cross, would pursue the essence of man's salvation no farther.

However, we cannot rest satisfied by any means with those marks of Christ's mission demonstrated in this chapter, or even in earlier chapters; the redemption cannot in historic fact be separated from the original destiny of Christ to un-fallen man, but neither is it something secondary to Christ's mission. We can only understand the redemption if we include it within the comprehensive salvation of man in Christ; conversely, we can no longer appreciate our salvation except through and with the redemption, for we are "born again" of Christ's oblation and the Father's forgiveness, and to be born is never an accidental attribute in a man or in the order of his being.

There is in Christ's salvation an element to which *all* the attributes of His work are directly relative, for they are derivations of it, not of themselves the primary factors to which that other element is secondary. This primary relativity of Christ to man, of which all others are either derivatives, or related aspects, is contained in His function to man as the "Bread of Life" and the "True Vine", to which we have already devoted a long consideration. We cannot help referring to those passages of St. John, because they are so significant in the entire economy of the Incarnation in its salvific and redemptive aspects alike.

Every man who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Christ, and recognizes in Him the fulfilment of an imperfect order of knowledge which is made perfect in Christ. This coming to Christ is itself related to His office to men as the Bread of Life, for the food of an intellectual nature is an increase of knowledge, and of the love which is fruition in the object known. It is not enough to teach, the substance of what is taught is God Himself, revealed through His own human words, and this union is the object of all the desires of a spiritual nature, in which man must be conjoined to God. If the teaching of Christ is the manifestation of God in Person, that teaching is truly absorbed within only when it effects an intimate and abiding union within the soul, when through grace, the soul terminates at the object beloved, the real content of the teaching.

This is the principal reason why God is given to man in the flesh, and in this dispensation we can understand the more profoundly why He is given to us under the appearances of bread and of wine in the Sacrament of the Altar. It is the giving of Himself in plenitude as the food of an immortal life which defines the deep essence of the salvation of Christ.

**The same salvific purpose which is operative, after sin, in Redemption**

It is the giving back to man of God as the consummation of our human pilgrimage, and the nourishment which supports us on our way, which is also a cardinal factor of the *redemption* of man from Original Sin and personal sins. It must be so, for when Christ redeems man, He gives back again to men precisely that relation of God to man which is the means to the Beatific Vision; the nourishment of the soul in sanctifying grace, the cause and principle of which increase of spirit, is the Bread of Life. God gives again, in a new act of gracious mercy, his flesh, for the life of the world: "Wiping out the written sentence which was against us;

yes, Christ lifted it clear away, nailing it to the cross". (Col 2:14) Therefore, at the Last Supper, Christ links the institution of the Blessed Eucharist with His passion and His death. It was integral to His mission to be the Life of the world. In reconfirming that mission He also redeemed us from our loss of God.

In the circumstances of sin into which He came, that mission is now worked out through redemption, satisfaction, and the forgiveness of fallen man by God, and hence the supreme manifestation of Himself as the Bread of our life is to be linked for always with the manner in which His mission on earth was accomplished. The consecration of the bread becomes now not merely "my Body", but "my Body which is given for you", and the consecration of the wine not merely "my Blood", but "my Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you", and He ordains that as often as men shall eat his flesh, and drink his blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, they shall perform the sacrificial rite so as not only to transubstantiate the material elements, but also to commemorate for all time the immolation of the Cross. For just as the humanity of Christ is inseparable from His divinity, so also Christ's redemption is one with His salvation.

We have stressed those elements in the mission of Christ which transcend the extrinsic factor of sin among men, elements which remain transcendent and essential in Christ's salvation, and which are not intrinsically conditioned by sin. Yet it can rightly be urged that we have still to show in what consists the very nature of the satisfaction and redemption inseparable after sin, and the rebirth of man in God's forgiveness, from the historic mission of Jesus Christ.

### **The Redemption which is in Christ Jesus**

This redemption is an act in God which reconfirms the order of creation, and if it is equivalent to a second creation of mankind, it is insufficient to make of it simply the pursuit by God Incarnate of His predestined mission, with simply the note of pardon added. Pardon is not redemption and satisfaction. Much more indeed is required to fulfil the traditional content of Christ's redemptive salvation in Catholic and Christian doctrine.

### **An act of the Blessed Trinity**

Here at once we encounter a problem which is intransigent within the limits of this present outline of Christianity. We encounter a difficulty which must, unfortunately, make our chapter upon the redemption the least complete of all. It is not possible to understand completely the nature of the redemption of Christ without a good knowledge of what is meant and implied in the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Christian Church teaches that God is one, in nature, essence, and powers, but that the Divine Being is self-defined in three real and distinct relations unto Himself through one another, which are real relations intrinsic to, and inherent within, the Divine Necessity. These real relations, or "Persons" of the Trinity as they are called, are three; they are not parts of God, nor different names for aspects of the same thing. They are three real, and really distinct, relativities within which God is defined in the Divine Nature in what might be called in human language, his own "self-consciousness".

In the doctrine of the Trinity it is quite as important to know what the Church does *not* mean when she treats of the intimate nature of God's active being unto Himself, as to know what she does mean, and a discussion upon the meaning of the most abstruse of the Christian teachings, because the most intimate to God in Himself, would quite disrupt the unity of a theme which is already severely strained, for this work concerns Christ, from the beginning to the end.

No created intellect can ever, in any state of perfection, fully comprehend the infinite measure of God within the finite measure of a created mind. We therefore omit the doctrine of the Trinity from our synthesis because to treat of it would here confuse the mind of the non-Christian reader, and in that confusion detract from the main purpose of this book, i.e. the proof of God through creation, the spiritual order and its relation to matter, the meaning of Christ, and the Christian Church, in the connected order in which we have tried to present them in an inter-related whole.

While no man can demonstrate the Trinity to be an evident fact from created reasoning, for there is nothing created which admits of the unique prerogatives of God, who is the Cause of causes, and the Reason of reasons, we could show to the non-Christian philosopher an interesting analogy within his own being with the three fold substantial relativity of God unto Himself. It would only be a deficient analogy, but it would probably be unrealized enough, and surprising enough, to reduce him to a thoughtful silence.

Once an intelligent man has conceded that there are more things in heaven, earth, and the consciousness of man, than are dreamt of in a rationalist's philosophy, once he has recognized that he accepts his own existence without being able perfectly to analyse and explain to himself all that he is, and has, he can scarcely refuse to acknowledge graciously that there must be infinitely more within the Being of God which surpasses the experience and the knowledge of men.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to treat of the redemption without continual references which presuppose a familiarity with this doctrine of the Trinity. The redemption of Christ, like every act of God, is an act of the Divine Nature as one, but the Mission of Christ involves most particularly the relation which exists in the Divine Essence between the first and the second "Persons" of the Trinity; between the "Father" and the "Son" to use the terms consecrated by analogy with human relations, and by ancient usage derived from Christ Himself. In no aspect of the Incarnation does this relativity shine out more plainly than in those passages which concern the redemption as an act of satisfaction and reconciliation wrought by Christ in, and through his human nature. It is impossible then, as the barest reading of the Gospels will show, to write of that in which man's redemption consists without reference to the doctrine of the Trinity.

We can do no more than refer him back to the phrase which opens the Gospel of St. John, and with that phrase in mind, give him an indication of the meaning of "Three Persons in One God". An indication which will not be accurate enough to satisfy any theologian, but will have to stand to precise theology in the relation that "popular science" stands to precise science; something very inadequate, but better than nothing at all: "In the beginning was

the Word: and the Word was with God: and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God". (Jn 1: 1-2)

When St. John says "And the Word was *with* God", he refers to God the "Father". We can get just a glimpse of the meaning of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity if we make an approach to the mystery of the Divine Nature from God's knowledge and fruition of Himself. The first term of God "knowing Himself" is the "Father", from whom there proceeds in an act of intellectual generation substantial to the Divine Being, and involving no relation of time, or of any subordination, the content of the Divine Intellect: the "Word", the personal term which is distinct within the Divine Nature as the Wisdom of the Father, the content of the Intellect of God. Through these two distinct personal relatives in which the Divine Being is defined, there proceeds in one relation from these two terms, the third term, or "Person", in which is defined and expressed eternally in the Divine Nature the fruition of God in Himself. This is the Holy Spirit, the personal term of God's own love from Himself. This triune relationship in which God is existent unto Himself, and defined as God in God's own "consciousness", is the necessary activity immanent in God, unto Himself of "being God".

It implies no created subordination whatever, for it is an immanent and existential relationship which defines the Being of God unto Itself. Whatever created analogies exist with this relationship within the Divine Being, and striking analogies do exist in man, are there only because all things imitate the First Case in their substances from afar off. Since the Trinity is metaphysical necessity which defines the Absolute as such, analogies, the more striking as the created thing approximates the more in order to the nature of God, must exist in being which is, only because of the Uncreated Exemplar of all being.

### **Redemption as the reparation by the Son to the Father**

The satisfaction to the Father in which Christ's redemption consists, is understandable only through his human nature. If, by an hypothesis in the circumstances impossible, the Incarnation had never taken place, but men had been forgiven their fallen nature and still permitted to attain the original end of man through some purification of spirit, then this form of redemption would have stood in a simple act of forgiveness. The redemption wrought by Christ, however, is a genuine redemption and satisfaction for the unworthiness

of human nature, because of the dignity, sanctity, place and destiny of Christ in the plan of creation.

We will see that of His own status, God incarnate could be a true satisfaction for the defect of man, that *only* He could be such a principle of reconciliation and satisfaction, and that He willed to be so. Had He not so willed neither the Incarnation would have taken place, nor the race of men, as far as it is possible to conceive, have continued at all. The refusal by Christ of the mercy of our redemption would have annulled the economy of the Incarnation, and the annulment of that economy would have implied, we say, the annulment of the destiny of man and the order in which man exists.

### **Insufficiency of Old Testament types to explain the Redemption**

Christians frequently fail to understand the nature of the satisfaction for sin in Christ, because they interpret His passion and crucifixion too narrowly in the terms of the primitive and sanguinary types and prophecies of the Old Testament in which it is foreshadowed. They attempt to interpret the substance by its necessarily imperfect figure, which is a woeful mistake, and leads to serious misunderstandings. The redemption of Christ cannot be interpreted under the forms and figures of so imperfect a dispensation as the Old Testament. The significance of the death of Christ upon the Cross is not appreciated, except from afar off, from the ritual offering of the “scapegoat”, or the “offering for sin”.

These figures merely foreshadow what is fulfilled in Christ, their purpose is to show to the Jews, and to us, the fulfilment of the Mosaic dispensation in Christ. The full meaning of the redemption can be understood only in the full appreciation of the Person of Christ, and the relation of that Divine Person to God and to men. If we wish to comprehend more fully the nature of Christ’s redemption, we will do better to study such passages as the parable of the Good Shepherd, there we will discover what the Master declares concerning Himself. After the event, the meaning of types and figures is seen the better in the work and mission of Christ, his mission certainly must not be judged through them:

“Then he said to them: ‘O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all those things of which the

prophets have spoken, ought not the Christ to suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?’ And beginning with Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things that were concerning Him”. (Lk24:26-28)

An inversion of the true order of reference is responsible for those deviations in theology, especially among extreme forms of Protestantism, in which Christ is made a “pleasing sacrifice” because He is considered to offer vicariously the suffering “due to us”; or alternatively is considered to be “accursed and punished” as a scapegoat “in our stead”. Christ is made, in this pathetic and crudely “Old Testament” theology, to have “taken upon himself the iniquities of us all” as a vicarious criminal in a physical manner, as a result of which the “just anger” of the Father “being appeased in the blood of His Son”. Our own sins are now “covered” and “not imputed”, so that irrespective of any internal change or interior purification of a man’s soul, salvation is handed out by the Father like a dole, on the legal title of a “belief on Jesus”. These deviations from the truth are a macabre misunderstanding of the texts they involve, and they reduce God the Father to a level of meaningless savagery which makes folly of the name of God, and debases the Infinite Wisdom and Love to the mentality of a feuding tribal chieftain.

### **Pain and suffering do not of themselves effect the Redemption**

It ought to be obvious that pain and suffering has not, of itself, any value whatever before God. God can only love, value, and be satisfied with, that which is in the likeness of His own perfection of being. In themselves, pain and suffering are privative factors, they manifest the whole or the partial destruction of some being; they do not beautify, reform, or recreate anything. In fallen man, pain and suffering are necessary and desirable concomitants of self-discipline, purification of soul, and closer union with God, but even in a created nature they have no value in themselves except as a means to an end which either directly or indirectly is an increase of a man’s highest good. Suffering, and purely vindictive punishment, has no value before God, because the destruction or lesion of a nature has no worth at all, but further subtracts from what a thing is.

Suffering has value before God, and value in men, only when it is either accepted as a purgation for faults and sins, and aids the reformation of what is awry, or when it expresses

a love faithful against loss and sorrow; when it continues, prompted by love, to resist evil and persecution through sweat, tears, and death itself. A love which is faithful to death is the greatest love, and shines nobly through suffering and loss. The suffering is a witness of the profundity of the love, a love which God blesses, increases in degree and merit, and confirms against the privation which is pain. Love is the highest expression of being, and Love indeed has value, satisfaction, and redemptive worth before God; for God is Love.

### **The satisfaction of obedient love of the Word Incarnate - mediation**

The satisfaction and reconciliation of Christ was a satisfaction of love: in all that He was as God incarnate, in all that He said, did, and endured for love of man and of the Father. This satisfaction could have no meaning apart from the divinity of Christ, but neither would it have had any content without His humanity.

Christ could be, and is, a reconciliation between God and fallen man, because He is the natural mediator in God's creative plan between the Divine Nature and human nature. We say the 'natural' mediator not simply because Christ is God Incarnate, but because the flesh of Christ is given to man under the Law of Control and Direction, the Law of Finalism in created being, that God may, irrespective of sin, be the adequate means for the determination of man towards the destiny of man, and the only means. A mediator is one who, having a natural affinity between two extremes, stands between them both, and unites them through his own person. Christ does exactly this. In his own divine Person He unites the divine and the created human nature, so that in his person God is the determinant of our nature in its ordering to the Divine Nature.

Christ is so much the mediator between God and man, that all material creation is subjected to Him as God Incarnate in an intrinsic relativity which defines the end and purpose of all matter and all the laws of its being. Christ stands as the supreme expression of the general Law of Finalism in the universe, whether to matter or to matter and mankind. He appears as the divine expression in matter of the Word, the Wisdom of God, through whom all created wisdom derives, towards whom it looks, whom it expects, in whom it terminates and is fulfilled.

Christ is the predestined mediator between God and the entire material universe, for He is the expression, plenary and final, of God's providence over an economy of creation which is one continuum.

"But all this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself in Christ, and has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them. And entrusted to us the word of reconciliation".

(2 Cor5:18-19)

### **One Divine Economy of Salvation and Redemption**

We have said that our human being is intrinsically relative to Christ, not Christ's to us. God is not determined to Christ by the creation, but the creation manifests the determination of the material order to Him, and its very existence anticipates His advent. The perfecting and fulfilling of created being is not a different economy from the actual creation itself. Christ is not a different act of God from the decree of the Incarnation before time, although the decree is ratified again only in Christ's redemptive will towards fallen man. Christ is the plenitude of the act of creation immanent in God, and therein lies the significance of those words of His: "My Father works until now, and I am working." (Jn5:17) That the Jews had some inkling of what He implied, is clear from the fact that: "They sought the more to kill Him, because not only did He break the Sabbath-day, but said too that God was His Father, making Himself equal to God". (Jn 5: 18)

For a similar reason, Christ in his human nature as the Divine Person, is named by St. Paul as: "The first-born of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominations, principalities or powers. All things were created through Him, and for Him, and He is before all things; and in Him all things hold together." (Col 1:14-15)

All things were created in the Intellect of the Word of God; in the image of the Word, after the exemplarity of the Nature which is in the Word of God. Pure spirits, the angels of God, are made immediately in the likeness of the Word as the Only-begotten of the substance of the Father; the content of the Nature of God as known within God. Men, less than pure

spirits in order, made through matter and spirit, are also made as perfectly in the likeness of the Word Incarnate, the exemplar of the human nature. For we were originally made, and now after sin must be reformed, in the substantial likeness of Christ.

Now the decree of creation in the Divine Word is before all creation, before the angels, and before men and matter, and in that eternal prescience, immanent in the Divine Being, the Word Incarnate, Christ, God and man, Creator and creature in one Person, is predestined before time in the will of God which is outside of time. Therefore He is the first-born in His human nature, the first-born of all creatures whatsoever. All things are made in the likeness of the Word; angels in the divine nature of the Word, man in the divine and in the human nature of the Word: all things equally are made by Him, and for Him, and in Him all things consist, or hold together, in their very being.

Angels are not made in the likeness of God Incarnate it is true, but because the human nature in Christ is one Person with the Divine, and exists by the divine Being alone, it can never in thought, fact, or dignity be separated from the existence and person of the Word. Christ therefore, in His human nature, precedes all creation as the first-born; in order of predestination, in place, in dignity, for this is not a man become a god, Christ is the Divine Exemplar expressed in the material as the beginning, means, and fulfilment of a nature, and a created order, in which the spiritual and the material are linked in the unity of one essence.

### **Christ is the sufficient Mediator of Redemption**

Christ, through the status in which He stands to the Father and to men, has power to intercede for us, and to require that notwithstanding the fallen condition of our nature, we might be with Him, who exist through Him. For He is the head and *raison d'être* of the body which is mankind. So on the eve of his passion he prays:

“Father, I will that where I am, they also whom you have given me may be with me. That they may see my glory, which you have given me, because you have loved me *before the creation of the world*. Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these men have known that you have sent me. And I have made known your name

to them, and will make it known: that the love wherewith you have loved me, may be in them. And I in them.” (Jn 17:24-26)

This text, in which Christ makes it so abundantly clear that He came into the world not because of sin, but as one loved and predestined before the creation of the world, asks that “his own” for whom He came may be with Him, for He has made known to them the name of the Father, and they have understood, however imperfectly, that “You have sent me”. He asks therefore for the forgiveness of men, He requires it of his own will and status, from the pleasing offering which is his own perfection before, and love of the Father, gathered into the Divinity through his human nature, in which all men stand, and unto which, as the source of life, holiness, salvation and redemption they are relative. This passage echoes the mighty prophecy of his place and status made of old:

“I have set my king on Sion, my holy mountain. Let me announce the decree of the Lord; the Lord said to me: ‘You are my son; this day have I begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall rule them with a rod of iron, and shall break them in pieces, like a potter’s vessel. And now, O kings, understand: be warned, you that judge the earth.” (Ps 2: 6-10)

We are redeemed because Christ willed that where He was, in the glory of the Father which belonged to Him of right, we might also be with Him; who, but for love of us, had not decreed His human nature nor our own. The redemption is a bringing back, a rescuing, of mankind from the loss of man’s end, and from man’s subjection to evil and chaos in sin. Because of sin, man is by nature cast off from God, unworthy intrinsically of the gift of being and the perfection of being, because the mind and will of God is no longer mirrored purely in a free nature which has turned away from God, and which bears within itself the marks of its disastrous folly.

### **Christ suffers evil willingly in the struggle to make satisfaction to the Father**

In God the Father, the redemption of man is an act of forgiveness and reacceptance in reconciliation; in God the Son, this forgiveness is shown as caused by satisfaction of love and justice intrinsic before the Father in the very Person of the Son in and through his human

nature. That Christ asks, and is heard “for the reverence due to Him” (Heb 5: 7), is the equivalent of saying that Christ could have refused to continue the plan of creation as it includes the human order, against the revolt of sin and the effects of sin. We have stated that in the beginning God forgave man in Christ: this means that Christ continues and confirms that office of his upon which all material creation, as relative to the rational creature, is founded, and that He wills to pursue it towards men as the “natural” and wise determination of the wisdom of God, in spite of the consequences of sin in his creation.

This entails the willingness to endure the conflict of light with darkness, good with evil, love with malice and hate. It means that Christ wills not to resist by force the power of evil over his human nature, not to ask “twelve legions of angels” against those who will crucify him, but to be led without resistance as a lamb to the slaughter, for which cause He bears the title of the “Lamb of God”. It belonged to the order and economy of the universe that He should be Incarnate for man’s salvation. It belonged by nature to the same ordering of things that men should receive him of their own free will, and acknowledge him for what he was: “The Prince of the kings of the earth.” (Rev 1: 5) This status belongs to Him through His Divinity as expressed for men in His manhood, and it would have been unnatural, alien to the wisdom of God, and the order of creation had he resisted evil by anything other than the triumph of good against hate which is a victory of love, not of servile coercion.

Christ cannot save any soul through coercion and fear. God is love, and the fruition of the comprehension of God in the Divine Nature is the consummation of the love of the Creator and of the creature. Christ therefore did not resist evil by the sword, or by miracles, but in the love which was faithful to us even to death, a love in the one Person of God the Son which is the infinite satisfaction to the Divine Justice, to the Purity which is the Essence of God, for the injustice, defect of love, and impurity of men.

The satisfaction of love rendered through His human nature, shines out most clearly in the passages of the four Gospels in which the acceptance by Christ’s human will of the bitter course of his mission is declared. The human will of Christ is not at variance with the divine will in his Person, and since the decree of man’s redemption in Christ is free, freely given, and freely offered to the Father, that freedom of the act of Christ from the beginning of our

race, is reflected fully and freely in Christ's human nature, according to the propriety of its own order. He can say "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, your will be done." (Matt26:42) This is a true human freedom of choice; the freedom of Christ to give, or refuse, in the beginning of sin, is followed out and carried through in his human nature when it is actualized in time within the Divine Person.

### **He became obedient unto death**

In the human will of Christ the decree of the redemption of man through the Incarnation shines out as an acceptance, and obedience to the mandate and commandment of the Father accepted as a mission in the Son. Christ is truly a man, though not a created human person, and when He accepts the will of the Father that men should be forgiven and redeemed through the Person and the work of the Incarnate Son, then He accepts and wills to pursue the mission with originally belonged to him, and to pursue it with mercy and pardon, with an unflinching love, a faithfulness and a perfection which endures through all the loneliness, rejection, and blasphemy that the crude and blinded hearts of men will devise against the Light of the world; a light which was, and today still is, so painfully blinding to sin-diseased eyes.

In His humanity Christ makes perfect before God the Father the sanctity of human nature as God intended it. He perfects in himself the supreme glory and justice of human nature, and not of any human nature, but of that manhood to which as its source of being, means of sanctification, and principle of perfection, all human nature is substantially subjected. He witnesses in himself with supreme perfection of love both human and divine, each distinct within its own order, and united in one in the Person of the Word, much as body and soul are united in the one person of a man, the uttermost good, truth and justice.

There is no greater love, either of the Father, or of men, than a love which is faithful even to martyrdom in the doing of the good and the true. And both these loves, for the Father, and for us, were present in the Person of Jesus Christ when He so endured for us, present with the plenitude of their possible perfection in both the divine and in the human natures of Christ.

So perfect a good, so faithful a witness to the truth, so integral a sanctity, which links heaven and earth in one bond in the Person of Christ, which endures, loves, heals, sustains and in the very interior might of its perfect being overcomes evil, this is indeed a perfect reconciliation in Christ between creature and creator. In Him the Father is well-pleased in truth, and to say more of what is beyond all saying defeats our very pen, for the infinity of God's perfect works, and perfect ways overwhelms the created mind, whether to know, or to speak, or to write the title of it.

### **Reconciliation and recapitulation**

If the Father is well-pleased with the perfection of the Son Incarnate, who has overcome evil by the perfect doing of good, then for the sake of that Son will He accept us back into the glory which belongs to the Son. For we were there, part of His predestined glory, before the world was. Through Him we consist and subsist essentially, in Him we love, and are, and have our being. He is the Vine, of whom we are the branches, and of Him we draw the sap of life, who is also, under another title, called the Bread of Life.

If He, who for our created sake was faithful with love, and the offering of himself to men even to death, if He who declared the Father constantly against those whose father was the prince of sin, who is our natural and supernatural head, the principle of our created being, and of its increase, if he should pray:

“Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you,” (Jn17: 25) then it is enough, and He has said sufficient.

### **Repentance and forgiveness**

The world which has not known God will be forgiven, if it will accept that forgiveness with repentant gratitude in the persons of individual men. It is enough that He, the head and purpose of material creation, the life which nourishes every man, should know the Father, and that we should be loved with Him, for His own sake, in that divine recognisance. For Christ loved us indeed, His human flesh witnesses the love of God for fallen man. He loved us in his own flesh, for we are created again, born and re-born of his flesh more fully than a child of its parent's flesh.

He loved His sinful own, because they were His own, more than a mother loves her wayward child. He loved his foolish fallen flock, and not considering their blemishes, went out into the desert seeking the strayed, healing the broken, confronting the wolf alone. Did not the thunder of His promise, His heart's desire, roll over Sion from the prophet's mouth?

“And Sion said, ‘the Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.’ Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yet, even if these forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have graven you upon the palms off my hands; your walls are always before my eyes. Your builders are come: they that destroy you, and lay you waste, shall go out of you. The children of your barrenness shall say in your ears: ‘the place is too narrow for me’. And you shall say in your heart: ‘Who has begotten these? I was barren and brought not forth, was led away and was a captive. I was destitute, and was alone, and these, where were they?’ Thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and will set up my standard to the people and they shall bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters upon their shoulders. And all flesh shall know that I am the Lord, who saves you, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.’”

(Is 49: 14-26)

For we are one with Him, loved and forgiven by Him, flesh of His flesh, and conjoined in this communion with the life of His divinity; we are His brethren, fallen though we be. Therefore He will turn to the Father, the norm, measure, and exemplar of all justice, sanctity, and love, and in his own proper name and right He will require: “That where I am, those also whom You have given me shall be with me.” (Jn 17: 24)

He shall require it, and shall receive it, for He is the heir of all things, as the Father swore to him: “Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for their inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession”. When He asks therefore, who is divinely and humanly, the perfect mirror of the Father, the perfection of the divine and the created nature, He shall receive of His own right and His own merit, for we are “those whom you have given me” (Jn 17:24), and He claims his own, the inheritance He has come to vindicate and in the manner of which vindication has pleased the Father in the Son.

Thus Jesus Christ, having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end. Through that love He sought and obtained our pardon. In His person we are redeemed, the head of the body which is mankind, our exemplar, cause, reason and ground of being, who in His merciful redemption is made the perfect lover of our souls. In Him, the faithful witness of the divine good, the Father is reconciled to created flesh, for He willed that His created brethren should share His glory human and divine, and that His patient mission shall not be in vain.

### **Reconciliation with the Father**

Because of all his merits, human and divine, His intrinsic relativity unto our nature, the Father will not refuse Him, but receives us back with the same glad love as He receives the Son. We are made co-heirs with Christ, "partakers of the divine nature, fleeing the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." (2 Pet1:4,11)

Of His sacred flesh, faithful to death in the struggle of God's goodness with the revolt of sin, we are born back again as sons to the Father in the Son of God, who is also the Son of man. In His perfect and most faithful flesh the faithlessness of the Fall in our flesh is forgiven, for we are joined to Him as the branches to the vine, and He willed that we be again engrafted in Himself. As the stock of the vine gives being and life to the branches, so is His flesh as man predestined before ours, that in His stock we might bear fruit, when He had made in his branches a purgation of sins; and the stock of the vine which is Christ, is conjoined in one root with the Divinity of God, from whence flows the sap of divine grace for the life of a man.

The Father is well pleased in Him, for the merit and perfection of His works and of His will, human and divine, sanctifies our human nature in His own, and makes it pleasing to God the Father. It is required of a man nevertheless, that being redeemed in love, he shall accept in perfect freedom of love the destiny given back to mankind in Christ. A man must return love for love, gratitude for abounding mercy, faithfulness for the unbroken faith of Christ. A man must strive sincerely, using the grace which is in him, to reform himself by increasing

degrees upon the likeness of Christ in whom he is re-born. A faith which is without the fruit of works is a dead faith. The withered branch will not be allowed to remain in the vine, but will be cut off, and be thrown aside as rubbish, fit only for the burning.

### **The work of Redemption**

The redemption wrought by Christ is then not a mere forgiveness, but a work. It is His own personal gift to men, a gift of God other than the original decree of Incarnation and creation; for that decree is valid only through, and because, it is reconfirmed in the redemptive love of the Word of God. Much less is this redemption only a "moral redemption", deriving from the heroism, virtue, and example given to men in Christ. The redemption of Christ is for us a pardon in Him, and a true reconciliation and satisfaction before the Father, a salvation which inheres in all that Christ is, did, and desired, in respect of the will of the Father and in respect of the race of men.

For Christ is the natural head of mankind, the unique mediator between God and men, and what he was, he is, and ever shall remain. Everything else, the suffering joyfully undergone that his mission might be fulfilled among sinners, and through contradiction, the fortitude, example and heroic virtue of Christ as a man, all these are there, and they are part of his redemption, but they are all of them aspects, and facets of one total work of salvation through, and in, and with redemption. This is the salvation and redemption which is interior and substantial, worked in the Person of the Son as He stands between us and the Father.

This theme of the Redemption is so vast, so profound, so intimate, that we fear to confuse by saying more, even though much indeed has not been said. We ask only of a man that he should strive to see in Christ's work as Saviour, those essential relations of God to man which belong to Christ as the fulfilment of the law of entitative finalism for men, as the Wisdom of the world. He must come to see that working of God to men is the fulfilment of the divine intelligent wisdom, which operates through the complex unity of the natural laws of matter, which passes into the law of the spirit of man, which is consummated in Christ as its authoritative Word of wisdom.

Together with all this, which belongs to Christ before matter and time were, before man was, before man spurned the law of his being, and was forgiven in his shame, together with all this, let a man bring home to his soul with awe the mercy and the wisdom of God, how now, since sin, the Salvation of Christ is also a redemption, and as an economy preceded by a forgiveness, is other than the primary and original mission of Christ which was annulled by the very act of the first sin. Sin has not changed the essential plan of God, nor his immutable will, but sin required God's pardon, Christ's pardon, and Christ need not have given that pardon. Sin has conditioned the salvation of Christ, reconfirmed so that it is equivalent to rebirth for men, to the manner of a redemption wrought by pain and suffering, for sin can, and did, and still does, resist the goodness of God, even when that goodness is itself a pardon for men's transgressions.

Yet to as many as receive Him, He gives them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name, for unworthy and ungracious though we are, our flesh and our spirit is linked under one overwhelming law of wisdom to the flesh which in Christ gives the Divinity of God to be the food and life of the sin soiled souls of men.