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THE TEACHING ON THE INCARNATION
in the
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
and
ITS PLACE
in the
BIBLICAL REVELATION

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THE TEACHING ON THE INCARNATION
in the
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
and
ITS PLACE IN THE BIBLICAL REVELATION

By

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A THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem Stated
2. The Procedure Set Forth
3. The Justification of the Study Given

INTRODUCTION

1. The problem stated

The chief problem confronting every religious thinker is contained in the idea of divine revelation. This serves as a focus for resolving the complex theology and philosophy growing out of man's experiences with God in history. For Christians it becomes more particularised around the existence of a body of sacred literature; for Christianity is the religion of a unique collection of unique writings. And the central interest of this text-book of Faith is in the Supreme Medium of God's exposition of Himself. So then, the core of Christian considerations is

"God's revelation of Himself in Christ as the Redeemer of men from sin and condemnation as recorded in the Bible...the distinctive and essential fact of Christianity and the centre of all distinctively Christian doctrine!" 1

This is the circle of the system in which it is the purpose of the present study to operate. Now, specifically, the problem has to do with only one of the sixty-six compositions comprising the Bible, viz. Ephesians. The question to be solved is, therefore: What is taught in Ephesians about God's becoming man; and what can be conceived to be the complementing role these lessons play in the drama of Biblical revelation? Thus the problem is twofold: first, to discover in Ephesians what Paul regards as fundamental in the fact of the Incarnation; and second, to determine in

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1. Samuel Harris: The Self Revelation of God, p. 444

what light it may be considered that these fundamentals stand as an integral unit of the totality of the Biblical revelation of God in human flesh. When the completion of this thought process is reached we ought to be able to answer such questions as the following: What is the purpose of the Biblical revelation? What part does the Incarnation assume in the revelation? In what chief sense is the Bible to be viewed as a unit? How does Ephesians contribute to the completing of the Biblical revelation as seen from the standpoint of the fact of God's having lived in man? All these ideas are to each other as threads of a tapestry are to each other.

Since the basic ground for this study lies in the last question of the above series it is well to make the issue of that question more pointed, in order to observe, in this initial stage, just what should be the positions of the mental field pieces to be used. To understand what is involved in the term completing is to have this issue clarified. Is it used in the sense of adding a missing part to an otherwise imperfect whole? Can it be so used? Or is it employed with the intention of expressing completion in the sense of expanding that which is already perfect? Again, can it be so used?

2. The procedure

The problem having now been set down in three different ways, let it be stated that it is the purpose to come to the conclusions by means of, first, setting forth the field for

further clarification. This is to be done in the first two chapters in which the essential ideas of the Biblical revelation and the doctrine of the Incarnation are given. With these serving as the basic ground for the thesis, chapter three is to follow with a specific consideration for the truth related to the Incarnation as it is stated in the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians. Here, this study, although Paul never intended it to be so used, simply for the sake of delimitation and intensification, will treat the letter only as there is an explication or implication of the fact of God's becoming man in the Person of Jesus. Having laid the ground and treated its relation to this Epistle, the conclusion will follow. It will be observed that the study is put forth in the form of a syllogism. The first two chapters will provide the major premise; the third chapter, the minor premise, and the conclusion will offer the result. The positions held by such great scholars as James Orr and Benjamin Warfield is to be represented, for the most part, in the first two chapters. Chapter three is to be the fruit of first-hand contact with the book of Ephesians itself, compared with interpretations of recognized Biblical exegetes. It is hoped that the conclusions reached will be the result of an apparent method.

3. The justification

The fact that this study finds its broader relation in the idea of Divine revelation does not require any justification; for the relationship exists unavoidably. But it

should ^{not} be avoided because even if it were possible ^{because} to understand something of God's revelation of Himself is to come to know God Himself. "And this is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God."¹

To confine the study to the idea of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ's Person is the starting place for beginning to understand the entire scope of Christian faith and its complex synthesis with history. Although it is a rather artificial separation of the unity of the life of Christ, for His Person and His work are inseparable except in some academic sense; yet it is essential here to focus the study on the one aspect of His life, namely His Person. It must be observed that the fact back of the Incarnation has been suggested by other terms and approaches. For example, the belief in the "two natures" of Jesus is another way of expressing the same thing. Paul speaks of the fact with the phrase "God...in Christ."² And so in the discussion which follows it is the fact of God's being "made flesh" which is our pivot, even if other methods of saying it are employed.

Why center this study in the Incarnation instead of in the Atonement, especially if it is to be confined to a study of the Epistle to the Ephesians in which the doctrine of the Incarnation is not primary at all? To answer this question it must first be said that, although this entire study is

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1. John 17:3
2. II Cor. 5:19

done in the light of the Incarnation, it will involve also a viewing of the purpose, the power and the place of Christ from the standpoint of this fundamental event. And the event is fundamental. It is with the fact of Jesus that every Christian thinker must deal primarily. "The doctrine of the ^{is} Incarnation is the hinge on which the Christian system turns ⁿ ...No Incarnation, no Christianity in any distinctive sense." ¹

An incontestable evidence of the axial importance of this doctrine is seen in the vast amount of literature which is constantly being produced dealing with this incident. This viewpoint is taken for the study, further, because basic to every other idea related to Jesus is the fact of His being God in human flesh. There could be no such thing as an atonement for man's sins by a sacrifice of life which was demonstrable to man without there being that life. And that life had to be God's. Therefore with no Incarnation there is no Atonement. And beyond this is the fact that the attitude of self-giving which made valuable the Sacrifice finds its root in the even greater gift of God's Son. Since the Atonement required the gift of Jesus' own self and the Incarnation required the gift of God's own self, it is seen therefore, how the latter is greater and more fundamental. Jesus spoke the truth that must be kept in mind here that He was in a secondary place to the Father. Of course, in actuality the Incarnation and the Atonement should not be

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1. B.B. Warfield: Christology and Criticism, p. 259.

viewed as thus separate at all; but in theory this separation is of value for showing that the former is the best beginning base. That is why it is taken. So not only will a knowledge of God, ^{be gained} but also of "Jesus Christ whom (he) hast sent"¹.

But if a book of the Bible is related to the whole Biblical revelation upon the axle of the doctrine of the Incarnation, then why select Ephesians? In the first place Paul does not teach in Ephesians, directly, anything about the fact of God in Christ at all. This is exactly one reason why Ephesians is studied here. It is the underlying belief, that which Paul assumes, which becomes the interest in this study. For if a book which is unsystematised and inexplicit on the doctrine of the Incarnation, furnishes men with a revelation of this fundamental fact, how much larger is the revelation of the truth in the books or passages where such is the main purpose! A case in point is the Gospel of John. And the thesis of this work can now be stated: The Epistle to the Ephesians contains sufficient revelation of the fact of the Incarnation of God, in itself, to create a response in man, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit — an essential element for perfecting the union of revelation and response — which when consummated results in achieving the purpose of God's sending His "only begotten Son", namely man's union with God or salvation. And the implication, which goes beyond the scope of the present study, arising from this thesis is

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1. John 17:3

that the Biblical revelation is more than adequate for achieving the purpose of God as regards fallen man.

Another reason for centering the present study in Ephesians is the fact that this Epistle has long been under the fire of higher critics and has not by some been accepted as Pauline or even worthy of being in the canon. Now, if this letter can be shown to possess the finger which points in the same direction as the totality of the Biblical revelation, then this fact may be used as another of many illustrations to infer that the questions of the historical critics, while possessing scientific value when they are scientific, are, at the same time, to be subordinated to the higher purpose of revelation.

The writer recognizes with Garvie¹ that simply to assume the trustworthiness of Scriptures as a basis for constructing "the ecclesiastical dogma of Christ's Person", or any other doctrine, is not acceptable. If possible there must be a serious attempt to attest the historicity of the literary basis of a theological opinion. In this study of Ephesians there is no attempt to evade the critical problems related. It is admitted that certain problems do exist, such as those regarding its authorship, whether it is from Paul or is the product of "after-authorship"²; its date, whether it was written at the end of Paul's life or during the second century; its destination, whether it was a circular letter or whether it was directed locally to the

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1. Alfred E. Garvie: Ritschlian Theology, pp. 267, 268.

2. Heinrich Ewald: Revelation; Its Nature and Record, pp. 328, 329.

church ἐν Ἐφέσῳ or to Laodicea; its contents, whether they are consistent with the Apostolic teaching on Christology and apocalyptic ideas or not. A great deal has been written and conjectured about this epistle's authenticity; so much that the writer is happy that, so far as the present study is concerned, it is not required to master it all and present it here. The fact is that some leading scholars accept the work in total;¹ others make a good case for it,² even though many able scholars reject it.³ Ernest Findlay Scott says,

"The question of the authenticity of Ephesians must be regarded as an open one, but the weight of evidence is decidedly in favor of Paul's authorship...He may have repeated the same ideas (as in Col.) ...The difference in style is by no means as great as some critics have made out...The thought is in every respect the thought of Paul...The natural assumption is surely that an Epistle so like the work of Paul at his very best was written by no other man than Paul himself."⁴

hence, there is justification in making use of this epistle, even if it is of questionable authenticity. It is not directly in the province of this study. The question is open and sufficient evidence stands to justify its genuineness and to permit this use of it without there being a charge made that this work closes its eyes to these facts.

Perhaps it is not necessary to say more about why this study is on a phase of the theology of Paul than simply to point out that it is Paul who takes the most prominent place in the literature of the New Testament. And since one

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1.e.g., F. Godet: Intro. to the N.T., pp. 478-490

2.e.g., B.W. Bacon: An Intro. to the N. T., pp. 113-121.

3. For extensive list cf. Chas. B. Williams: The Evolution of the N.T. Christology, p. 24 footnote 112.

4. Ernest Findlay Scott: Literature of the N.T., p. 180.

of the purposes in this presentation is to touch the whole problem in as representative a way as possible, this field of "Paulinism" in which great studies have been made is selected. Thus by the time this work is completed a small piece of work which has relations to three of the largest questions of Christian theology, viz. Revelation, Incarnation, and Paulinism will have been done. It is hoped by the writer of this thesis that an initial study of this problem in Ephesians will simply be the beginning of a developing process opening out into a fuller research, a wider comprehension, a clearer vision with a firmer conviction, and an achieving of the maximum of benefit and service to God, fellows, and self. And so in the ultimate this work is part of the great task of world evangelization, for the screen on which the light of the Incarnation falls is the salvation of mankind. Oh that all might possess the Infinite! And all can! For infinity is neither wholly extensive nor intensive. If eternity is infinitely extensible it is also infinitely compressible. Just so, Jesus is the most complex problem of human thought at the same time that He is the simplest fact of human understanding, so that even the fool is included in the great plan of the Omniscient. Or, to state the idea in figures, Christ, the Axis of the Universe is pure Divine love.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IDEA OF THE BIBLICAL REVELATION

- I. Revelation defined.
- II. Revelation distinguished from its record.
- III. Relation of revelation and inspiration.
- IV. The elemental characteristics of revelation.
 - A. Supernatural in foundation.
 - B. Human in construction.
 - C. Redemptive in purpose.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IDEA OF THE BIBLICAL REVELATION

I. Revelation defined

The term revelation as used by the Greek of the New Testament is ἀποκάλυψις; which derives from the preposition ἀπὸ, meaning against, or opposing combined with the verb καλύπτω, meaning to cover, to hide, veil i.e. to hinder the knowledge of a thing. Hence, ἀποκάλυψις has the sense of a laying bare, or uncovering that which is hidden from view.¹ The word is frequently used to apply to a purely physical action. "Revelation in its primary meaning is the immediate presentation of an object in consciousness."² In its spiritual usage it has application to the laying bare of truth. Theologians use it in the stricter relation to God's manifestation of Himself to man's intellectual and spiritual receptacle. This manifestation travels along several diverse avenues. It may be directly brought to man's consciousness. Indirectly it may follow the courses provided in the phenomena of nature, the rational character of man,³ and the action of God in history.

Although there is no treatment given here of the doctrine of the "Eternal Word" or Λόγος, it is interesting, by way of illustration, to note that the term WORD employed in the

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1. cf. Joseph Hen. Thayer's: Gk-Eng. Lexicon of N.T. ad. loc.
2. Samuel Harris: The Self Revelation of God, p. 49
3. cf. Ibid. p. 55.

Scriptures to refer to Jesus Christ, specifically designates Him as Revealer of God. A word is a symbol for an idea. It is a device of uncovering thoughts. It pulls back the dark curtain of ignorance and reveals ideas, facts, information or truth. Thus a word is an excellent illustration of what is involved in the idea of revelation.

James Orr defines revelation as "unveiling". He speaks of divine revelation as "God's unveiling of truth regarding Himself in some manner and to some degree to the intelligence and heart of man."¹

II. Revelation distinguished from its record

The revelation and its record are two different things. In the individual who has had some direct intuition of God there is the resultant memory of the experience, or the mental record. The memory and the experience are not identical. Even so must the Scriptures be seen as a result of that which is "prior to all that is sacred"². Harris in illustrating that "the Bible is not the revelation itself but the record of it; it is essential to its preservation", quotes John Wallis who said, "The Scriptures in themselves are a lantern rather than a light."³ It is Fisher's thesis that, "It was not the Scriptures that made the religion, but the religion that made the Scriptures."⁴ He writes at some length to show the difference between the record and the

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1. James Orr: Revelation and Inspiration, p. 26
2. Heinrich Ewald: Revelation Its Nature and Record, p.303.
3. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 457.
4. Geo. Park Fisher: The Nature and Method of Rev., p. 10.

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revelation.

This is an important distinction to keep in mind; but "we have now found," says James Orr, "that the line between revelation and its record is becoming very thin."² He points out that,

"in another true sense, the record, in the fullness of its contents, is itself for us the revelation. There are parts of the revelation — some of the prophetic discourses, e.g. or the Epistles — which never existed in any but written form. But the record as a whole is the revelation — God's complete word — for us."³

It is due to this fact that the phrase Biblical revelation has come to be used. The revelation which grows out of the initial experience is the foundation for the record. The record preserves and keeps on exhibition the former truth and thus becomes in itself an independent revelation to those who read it. This record, having opened up the way for a new and personal experience with God, serves as a foundation for further revelation, its recording, and its use as additional truth upon which to build. And so the process continues. The result is that ~~the~~ Text-book of Christian faith is produced by the historical process of selection and compilation of composite units of revealed truth. Thus, the Biblical revelation stands as an adequate, dynamic, integrated unit; rather than a statically complete system.

The conception that the revelation is one thing and the record of it is another helps "to make us independent of

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1. George Park Fisher: op. cit. pp. 11-14
2. Orr. op. Cit., p. 157
3. Ibid, pp. 158,159.

questions concerning the dates of books"¹ and of any question of higher criticism. "A book is not necessary to the being of a revelation. It may be necessary to its well-being".²

Samuel Harris says:

"If the Bible is a collection of propositions given directly by God, then one error throws suspicion on all. But if the revelation is made in God's historical action in Israel preparatory to Christ's coming and then in Christ Himself, then a single error of fact does not invalidate the history as a whole; as the recent discovery that Pocahontas did not interpose between Captain Smith and the club of the savage does not disprove³ the history of Virginia nor of these persons themselves."

Therefore the Biblical revelation has irrelative legs on which it is supported because of the unique character of the revelation. The written record also, because it is the conveyance of this revelation, will brook any attack. "God's word is an anvil which has worn out many a hammer"; said Beza.⁴

III. The relation of revelation and inspiration

When the Scriptures are viewed in this larger light it seems rather unnecessary to frantically propogate apologies for any particular dogma of inspiration. It is certain that the Bible is the product of inspired experience; and it is also certain that it is the product of human experience. This combination of the inspiration of men results necessarily in an effect which may be both permanent and temporary. Doctors Warfield and Hodges are quoted by James Orr as saying

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1. Bruce, A.B.: The Chief End of Revelation, p. 53.
2. Ibid p. 55
3. Ibid p. 461
4. Harris Op. Cit., p. 441.

"Nor should we ever allow it to be believed that the truth of Christianity depends upon any doctrine of inspiration whatever. Revelation came in large part before the record of it, and the Christian Church before the New Testament Scriptures. Inspiration can have no meaning if Christianity is not true, but Christianity would be true and divine, and being so, would stand, even if God had not pleased to give us, in addition to his revelation of saving truth, an infallible record of that revelation absolutely errorless by means of inspiration". 1

It is revelation, therefore, which is the important conception. The idea of inspiration has its place; but it must always be considered as secondary. It is not unique but serves as a medium for the production of that which is unique.

IV. The elemental characteristics of revelation

A. The fact back of the inventing of the term revelation was the making known of the thereunto unknown. In this is involved the initiative of the unknown. For it is absurd to conceive of man's beginning the process toward knowledge of that which is wholly unknown or unimagined. He must always build upon some already existing structure. Through the progress of successive knowledge layers man may discover in a certain generation something which was wholly unknown or unimagined by preceding generations; but his arrival at the new truth is always the result of having built upon the previously known. Revelation, however, is, in its beginning, a bringing forth new truth "out of the blue."

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1. Orr, Op. Cit., footnote i on p. 198

Not only in its beginning is revelation above the natural phenomena; but also in its highest historical climax it is so. For the Incarnation of God in Jesus is the greatest enigma for natural science that there is. And more, it seems to be true that the personalising of the revelation depends, too, upon the Supernatural. Hence, revelation is supernatural in its origin, its climax, and its development. The Biblical revelation, therefore, since it embodies this supernatural revelation, takes a place "apart from and above all other sacred books."¹ This fundamental characteristic of the revelation, which Brunner calls "the self-movement of God"² is of the greatest significance for the understanding of the doctrine of the Incarnation. For it is this with which Christian faith must begin, viz. that "the self-movement of God" is the action which brings to man the truth attested by the highest possible testimony in the experience of Jesus, that God is Eternal Self-giving, Self-communicating, Divine Love.

B. It is extremely interesting that while it must be considered that revelation is a deed with independent foundations, so that it is uniquely based on Supernatural power in origin, progress and climax, it is also essential to keep in mind that this action is the Eternal brought into time. And since this is true the deed of independent foundations is a process

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1. James Orr: The Faith of A Modern Christian. p.5.

2. Emil Brunner: The Mediator, p. 285.

of dependent constructions. In other words, as long as it is necessary that man be on the receiving end of the line, it is necessary also that the revelation be capable of adjustment to the basic qualities of man's time existence. Without man there can be no such thing as revelation, for its very nature demands the Initiator of the content, the content, and the recipient of the content. Harris says "Revelation must find in man some soil in which it can inhere and take root."¹ The basic qualities of man's time existence are matter, mind and continuity. These are the tangible, the personal, and the historical. The revelation has made its adjustment to the tangible by the fact that it has taken a Biblical form. But the book container of this great deed points up to the greatest event of all history, the Incarnation of God, or the fact of The Intangible's becoming The Tangible. The deed not only easily but essentially makes its adjustment to the personal quality of man's time life. This is obvious when we realise that there is really no such thing as man in the aggregate but only masses of individual personal minds. It is always with the personal unit that revelation makes its completing connection.² And because this is true it is true that adjustment is made to history also. For the deed applies itself to the person within his cultural sphere. And thus comes the explanation of "one of the most obvious features of Revelation", namely, "the gradualness of the disclosure of the merci-

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1. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 454.

2. Cf, Alfred E. Garvie: The Ritschlian Theology, p. 268.

ful character of God".¹ It is as Nichols says "God reveals Himself to mankind as a whole by degrees".² The ground of the fact that the revelation is tangible, personal and historical is that "the individual steps forth in each age to make the revelation his own. . . and does the final translating work."³

C. Having seen that revelation is supernatural in its foundation and human in its construction, it remains now to be seen that the purpose of it all is to properly relate the Divine with the human. The complement of God's "descent" in the world is that "in his own strength, man cannot possible move towards God." So the divinely initiated revelation is to assist the helpless to union with the Almighty. The Biblical revelation is centered by this fact. James Orr remarks "in how marked a degree it is a structural unity."⁴ And it is such because of its center. This center applies to contemporary history in which we observe that the end of revelation is not fully reached. "History, like the Odyssey, endures so long as home has not been reached."⁵

Finally, how simple this complex problem becomes! In order that the end of revelation be achieved it is essential for man to know ONE TRUTH! God gives Himself in sufficient measure to embrace within Himself the life of man, thus making the life "hid with Christ in God."

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1. Fisher, Op. Cit., p. 59.
2. Harry Pierce Nichols: The Temporary and Permanent in The New Testament Revelation, p. 17.
3. Ibid, p. 14.
4. Orr; Revelation and Inspiration, p. 14.
5. Brunner, Op. Cit., p. 306.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IDEA OF THE INCARNATION

I. Its Essential Nature Considered

- A. The term defined
- B. The ground of the Incarnation explained
- C. The manner of the Incarnation evaluated
- D. The "Two Natures" set forth as basic
- E. The agreement of the Scriptures and
Orthodoxy declared
- F. Summary

II. Its importance to the Universe Considered

- A. What the Incarnation means to God
- B. What the Incarnation means to time
and matter
- C. What the Incarnation means to humanity
- D. Summary

CHAPTER TWO

THE IDEA OF THE INCARNATION

I. Its Essential Nature Considered

A. Incarnation is derived from the preposition in and the noun carnis, meaning flesh. It thus gives a picture of that which is without flesh becoming embodied. The word implies action, the action of making the immaterial into material substance. Theologians use the term for the opinion that in Christ Divinity was united with humanity.¹ Use is made of this word in various relationships. For this consideration only the theological relation is used. Marcus Dods says, "The doctrine of the Incarnation, so far as can be understood by man, is sufficiently simple, and might be stated in a few sentences."² Truly it is simple! But it is also highly complex, when seen from its ground, its implications, and its results. When defined it is simply that God became a dweller in the person of a man. When explained it becomes so involved that what follows in this chapter can serve as a mere ink-mark in a library that is capable of filling the world.

B. As to what is the ground of the Incarnation it seems that it depends upon one's viewpoint. Westcott states that he considers that the ground is not "the fall but rather...the creation when God made man in His own image."³ He writes,

"The first Gospel is not the word of consolation; The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; but the word of the Divine counsel: Let us make man in our

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1. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth edition, ad. loc.

2. Marcus Dods: On the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, p.1.

3. Brooke Foss Westcott: Christus Consummator, p. 104.

image, after our likeness, followed by the word of its initial accomplishment, 'So God created man in His own image: in the image of God created He him'...God's image was given to him (for the purpose) that he might gain God's likeness...The fitness and necessity of the Incarnation exist therefore from the moment when man was made." 1

Brunner, on the other hand, states that

"The Incarnation of the Son of God is determined by sin. ...It is sin which determines the nature of the divine movement, giving it the character both of an invitation to "return" and of a gracious "descent". 2

He would, therefore, take the viewpoint of the fall of man.

The contradiction which Westcott assumes to exist between thinking of the ground of the Incarnation as the fall and thinking of it as the creation is not so great as it may seem. For, both of these point to the common and essential ground, which is freedom and failure of man. Westcott sees the ground as the creation of a free moral agent. Brunner sees the ground as the failure of a free moral agent. Both must agree that the ground is both freedom and failure. If either one existed without the other the Incarnation would not be a necessity but a farce. In point of time, Westcott has the better position. In point of basic cause, both are half right. In point of eternity, the ground of all things, including the Incarnation, is the plan of a Sovereign God.

G. Because the coming of the Infinite God into the Personality of a finite, though perfect man, creates a great mystery, the manner of its accomplishment has become a matter

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1. Westcott: Christus Consummator, p. 104.

2. Brunner, Op. Cit. p. 291.

of contention within the Church. The Bible attributes it to the miracle of the Virgin Birth accomplished through Mary. The Church has accepted the Scriptural account, as a general rule, throughout its history. But the manner of its being done, is not to be brought into focus as the real point at issue at all. The great miracle is the fact of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Its manner does not matter, as far as this immediate discussion is concerned. Although the writer of this thesis believes that more problems are created by not accepting the Biblical account as to the manner of its accomplishment, than are left unsolved by accepting it, he sees that the problem is a secondary one. Brunner does not believe that "a parthenogenic birth is impossible" but he does not for himself accept the orthodox dogma. Yet, he states very well the fact that the main problem is the Incarnation.¹

To see this fact is to see an illustration of what the present thesis contends. The whole purpose of the Biblical revelation can be achieved by a personal realization of the main truth, that God's love is expressed in His Incarnate Son. In other words, what difference does it make, as far as this point is concerned, whether one believes in the Virgin Birth or not, so long as he believes and personalises the fact of the Incarnation? For salvation it makes no difference. For intellectual harmony it makes plenty. For it must be kept in mind that often, perhaps generally, the

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1. Cf. Brunner, Op. Cit. pp. 325, 326

purpose of denying the Virgin Birth is to eliminate all trace of the supernatural. And the supernatural cannot be eliminated from the fact of the Incarnation itself, so why attempt to avoid it by denial of the best explanation of the manner of the Incarnation?

D. The doctrine of the Incarnation is simply the doctrine of the "Two Natures" of Christ. As Warfield says, "the doctrine of the Two Natures is only another way of stating the doctrine of the Incarnation"¹. To dispose of the traditional idea of the Two Natures is to dispose of the whole doctrine of the Incarnation. Inherent in the fact of God's becoming man is the union of God and man in One Person. It is not significant that Jesus was a great teacher or a high ethical example unless He at the same time is truly what He and His apostles claimed Him to be, namely "The Word of God made flesh" (John), "God in Christ" (Paul). His importance is not in what He taught except that he considered as the result of the fact that He was what He was.² James Orr touches off this point that a belief in the union of the Two Natures is basic to a "true doctrine of the Incarnation" when he says that among the truths essential to it are 1) "Christ in the root of His personality is Divine", 2) "By voluntary act the Son of God 'emptied' Himself -- 'became flesh' (John 1:14) took upon Him a true human nature", 3) "In this superhuman Person, in consequence, perfect humanity is united with full divinity".³ The doctrine of the Incarnation crashes to a

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1. Warfield, Op. Cit. p.259

2. Holmes Rolston: A Conservative Looks to Barth and Brunner, pp.104,105

3. James Orr: The Faith of a Modern Christian, p. 93.

bottomless pit without the foundation of the union of the Divine and human natures.

E. Briggs writes, "The Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is one of the cardinal facts and doctrines of the Christian religion".¹ The phrase, "as conceived of as being the union of the Divine nature with the human", might properly be added before the verb "is". This is true because the Scriptures are a unit in pointing out this great event. And the Church has always accepted this as its primary belief. "

"The constancy with which the church has confessed the doctrine of the Two Natures finds its explanation in the fact that this doctrine is intrenched in the teaching of the New Testament".²

To those who assert that this belief began with the fathers at Chalcedon, Warfield says,

"It was not to the fourth-century fathers alone, however, that the doctrine of the Two Natures was 'given'. There never was a time when it was not the universal presupposition of the whole attitude, intellectual and devotional alike, of Christians to their Lord."³

Further, he shows not only the fact but the reason for the essential agreement of the New Testament Scriptures and the early Church on the doctrine, saying,

"The Chalcedon Christology, indeed, in its complete development is only a very perfect synthesis of the biblical data. It takes its starting-point from the New Testament as a whole, thoroughly trusted in all its declarations, and seeks to find a comprehensive

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1. Ehas. Augustus Briggs: The Incarnation of the Lord, p. 63.

2. Warfield, Op. Cit., p. 263.

3. Ibid., pp. 261, 262.

4. Ibid., pp. 263, 264.

statement of the scriptural doctrine of the Person of Christ, which will do full justice to all the elements of its representation. The eminent success which it achieves in this difficult undertaking is due to the circumstance that it is not the product of a single mind working under a 'scientific' impulse, that is to say, with purely theoretical intent, but of the mind, or rather the heart, of the church at large searching for an adequate formulation of its vital faith, that is to say, of a large body of earnest men distributed through a long stretch of time, and living under very varied conditions, each passionately asserting, and seeking to have justice accorded to, elements of the Biblical representation which particularly 'found' him.

It is not folly, it is fact, to say that the Scriptures, in themselves agreeing to announce the Incarnate God, are the Church's authority for its historical and traditional belief in the Jesus Who combines in His Person perfect Deity and perfect humanity.

F. Summary

The Incarnation as taught by the Church is the doctrine that God came to man in the Person of the genuine man Jesus. Its ground is ultimately the purpose of a Sovereign God; but, in its relation to time, it is found in the freedom and failure of man. It is an essential fact no matter how it is accomplished. The stream of Orthodoxy and the emphasis of the Scriptures agree in asserting the dogma to be a purposeful union of God and man in Christ.

II. Its Importance to the Universe Considered

In order to bring out clearly what the Incarnation means to the universe it is necessary to extract from the whole of unified mass relations one interest at a time.

It is true, of course, that to the inanimate and the arithmetical the importance exists because of their relation to Infinite and finite personality. The Incarnation has no significance to matter and time unless there exists related, value measuring personalities. Nor is there significance present with God outside of His relation to man. The contrary is also true. The importance to both is due to the fact that it is important to the other. Therefore the Incarnation has an integrated universal significance.

A. God's becoming Jesus has meaning for God first, in the fact that Jesus "So embodies and incarnates God the He can say: He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"¹ In other words, God becomes the "God who reveals Himself in the Incarnation"². Jesus is³ ⁴

"the window through which we look into the world of God; he is the place at which we find the living God; he is the eternally contemporary Word of God present and alive today, the reality of God in a godless world."

The primary meaning of the Incarnation for God is that by its means knowledge-of-God data in perfection is made available to human consciousness.

For God to so make Himself known required that spirit should become matter. "The Word became flesh". This could not be done without a self-giving. God is in Himself Eternal Spirit.⁵ When He became man it was essential that He "empty"⁶ Himself. He had to surrender something of His own nature

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1. Orr, Revelation and Inspiration, p. 136, 137

2. Underline is mine.

3. Brunner, Op. Cit., p. 299.

4. Holmes Rolston, Op. Cit., p. 104.

5. John 4:24

6. Philipians 2:5-8.

in order to accomplish this unique purpose. The spirit had to surrender to the flesh. It is of interest to note here, in digression, that during the earthly life of Jesus, His flesh had to surrender to His spirit.¹ And yet he was truly flesh.

It is probably true that, while self-revelation is the primary meaning of the Incarnation to God and self-surrender the secondary meaning, the ultimate meaning for Him is the actualising of the greatest of His eternal purposes. He thus brought into reality the idea which stood uppermost in his thoughts regarding man. It seems certain that one of His essential attributes is love² as expressed by a longing for understanding fellowship. He created man to this end. He created Himself in Christ as a means of restoring man, who had lost this fellowship, into His communion.

B. As regards time it is a well known fact that Jesus Christ marks the date center of modern historical thought. He was so important that all history now is conceived to revolve around Him as the spokes around the hub. "In Him we have history's final cause and final crown"³. Christ is the cause, the center and the crown of history. It is the fact of the Incarnation that makes this to be true. For history

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1. This is especially true at times such as the temptation, all nights of prayer, experience at well at Sychar. (John4:5)
2. I John 4:8, 16.
- 3.P.T. Forsyth: The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 149.

being concerned with man and matter, requires a material, tangible standard of interpretation. "Christ certainly was the final and complete revelation of God in every material sense"¹. Thus, the Incarnation brings into existence a measurable relation between the purpose of God and the events of man's time existence, and this relation erects the standard for the evaluation of things of time.

Although the event of the life of Christ has to be seen in the light of time, yet the Incarnation has far more than a time significance. Brunner says, "The real event of Christ...cannot be perceived as an historical event at all."² It has to be seen in the light of eternity as well, as of time. It is "the point of intersection of history and eternity"³.

It is therefore seen that the Incarnation has made meaning for time through its relating it with eternity. And time has to be measured not in regard to length but rather in regard to depth. The deep moment is of more significance than the long one. The thirty-three years of one life is far more pertinent in influence than the score on scores of another. Now, if the Incarnation has made this difference in the value of time itself, then it logically follows that it must also make a difference in the value of all things temporal, all things material and human. And, it

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1. P.T. Forsyth:Op. Cit. p. 149.
2. Brunner, Op. Cit., p. 308.
3. Ibid p. 290.

may be summarized that not only is it true that "only through Christianity has the world become conscious of the problem of history",¹ but also that it is due to the central event of the Christian religion that the world has been made capable of properly evaluating every time thing.

Time and matter seem to be rather vitally related. It has been seen that since time is affected by the Incarnation all things temporal are also. Not only did God come into His-created time scheme but also into His-created physical existence. This has immediate significance to the human body, which is physical. The Incarnate One demonstrated His superiority over the demands of the flesh. In flesh He lived without sin. In flesh He commanded disease of flesh to abandon its habitation. He revealed the Power which sanctifies the human body and makes the house of man's spirit pure and spiritually, as well as physically useful. In the Gospels He is credited with the ability to control, at least to some degree, the world of pure matter and force. A case in point is His rebuking of the Galilean storm. And now it is important to indicate the truth that with all these supernatural expressions of power there is the element of love associated. Had He not exhibited this power it would be

"Strange, that one should come to deliver men from the bondage of nature which was crushing them, and yet Himself have been subject to its heaviest laws." 2

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1. Brunner, Op. Cit., p.303

2. R.C.Trench:Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord, p.73

He had a spiritual end in view and when it could be more ably brought to its fulfillment by an over-riding of natural laws, He made matter to flex to the will of His spiritual intention. The Incarnation, then, means for matter that a Master of hard reality and immovable mountains makes them soft and transient before his irresistible will to achieve His ultimate purposes.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body".²

It is here legitimate to change from a discussion in the past tense to the eternal present. For Christianity "is history in the past, life-giving energy in the present, promise for the future".³ Man is the aim of God's purpose in the Incarnation, He is essentially matter. Therefore matter must bend to the end of purposeful Divine love.

C. Percy Clough Ainsworth in his sermon "Star Counting and Heart Healing"¹ says,

"In our fragmentary thinking we draw dividing lines across the undivided, and fail to see that the limited and the illimitable are not two things but one."

Thus it has been done in this treatment of the importance of the Incarnation to the universe; and necessarily so.

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1. Ozora S. Davis: Principles of Preaching, p. 172.
2. Romans 8:22,23.
3. Harris, Op. Cit., p. 445.

But, outside the realm of the academic, in the world as it is the importance to all is the importance to each. God, time and matter, and man are essential sharers in the great purpose of God in His Man, Jesus.

Observing that the Incarnation is a purposeful deed of God, it is complementary to see that man is the chief recipient of its effects. All other categories that find significance in the great deed do so because of their relation to humanity. God created man with the purpose of maintaining filial relations with him. But man willfully severed the connections with his Creator and the Creator devised the plan of self-giving in its supreme demonstration in order to restore the fellowship, which man, too, intensely desires but is unable to accomplish in his own power. And so, "The fundamental fact of Christianity is the uniting of God to man in the person of Jesus Christ."¹

"Whatever we may think of the Incarnation in its wider relations to the plan of the world and the ends of creation as a whole, it remains the fact that in Scripture it is always brought into immediate connection with sin, and the purpose of God in Redemption".²

The focal end of the Incarnation therefore is man and his reconciliation to God.³ For this cause He was manifested to take away sin and to "destroy the works of the devil"⁴

God had Himself provided in creation the bonds which

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1. Fisher: The Nature and Method of Revelation, p. 80.
2. James Orr: The Christian View of God and the World, p. 287.
3. James Orr: Faith of a Modern Christian, p. 93.
4. I John 3:8.

brought man into His fellowship. Man broke them. God then Himself in the Incarnation provided again the bond, the medium, the priest Who served to relate the estranged. This relation which results from the fact of the Incarnation is made actual only when the recipient receives the knowledge of the truth. Hence, for man, the Incarnation is the core of knowledge. It is the revelation of the truth of greatest importance to him. It is the single essential datum which man ^{must} possess in order to make effective the purpose of God in reconciliation. To know anything else is to know subordinate truth, and to know only this is to know the truth that makes man free. ¹ This simple truth involves God's gift of Himself in "purposive love" given hands by the "suffering, struggling, self-sacrificing love with which Jesus was inspired". ² It includes the "descent" of God into human limitation, a limitation not only of time and place, but an existential limitation. For "a human personality could not either exhaustively or exclusively express the Divine; it could do so distinctively". ⁴ Thus, the identification of God with human flesh and person meant a bearing of our infirmities and being made "partaker" with us in frailty; and yet uniquely bringing us to God and God to us. He is both empirical and transcendental.

"As empirical the person is a unit; as transcendental he belongs to a whole, and thinks in terms of the universal. As empirical he is a creature of time and space, comes of a given race, is born at a given time in a

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1. John 8:32
2. D.M. Ross: The Faith of St. Paul, p. 182
3. Brunner's term.
4. Burnett H. Streeter: Adventure, p. 133.

given place to a given family, inherits a given past, is fashioned by a given present, and is a factor of a given future; but as transcendental, his affinities are all with the eternal, and all his work is for it."¹

The single essential datum involves the provision of a body for sacrifice as a substitute for the penalty of sin charged to all men. Therefore, not only does it mean that "Jesus in becoming man entered into all the conditions of a true human life, growth and development included"², but also that he entered life deliberately to suffer death. He becomes, then, the Sympathizer and the Sacrifice. And finally, this truth provides the key for uniting all mankind in one fellowship in common servitude and worship. Fairbairn has touched this point thus,

"Jesus is the only oriental that the Occident has admired with an admiration that has become worship. He is the only name the West has carried into the East which the East has received and praised and loved with sincerety and without qualification".³

The single essential datum that man must know in order to accept salvation comprehends much in necessity and implication. The four here given are basic and suggestive. It is a fact based on Infinite love, expressed in flesh, culminating in atoning sacrifice, uniting all mankind. About this there have been extensive treatises; but its simplicity is in the fact that to know the Living Person is to apprehend, whether comprehending or not, all the provisions of the Eternal purpose.

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1.A.M.Fairbairn: The Philosophy of the Christian Religion,p.308

2. James Orr: Revelation and Inspiration, p. 150.

3.Fairbairn: Op. Cit., p. 369.

For the present thesis the foregoing paragraph is extremely important. The single essential datum is the core of Divine and Biblical revelation. When a man has it revealed to him salvation is completed with the mere casting of the will into the overwhelming fact that God "so loved that He gave His only begotten Son". And, to tie all that precedes this point together, it may be said that in humanity, indeed in a single human being, all of Divine and Biblical revelation in essence may be riveted into an inseparable unit with the core of the Incarnation.

D. Summary.

The Incarnation is of tremendous significance to the entire universe. For its Creator it is the actualising of His profoundest thought and deepest will. For the mass of material existence and its temporal yardstick the coming of God is the ultimate standard for interpreting and controlling it. For man the great deed provides for him the single essential datum, which being personal is more than a fact, that directs, assures and vitalises his moving. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me". And lastly, in this personal deed, revelation has its focus and significance. "Certainly it is because Jesus is God that we have our Gospel for the world".¹

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1. Charles Gore: The Incarnation of the Son of God, p.132.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FACT OF THE INCARNATION IN EPHESIANS

- I. Preliminary considerations.
 - A. The relation of this chapter to the thesis.
 - B. The Incarnation in the plan of Ephesians.
- II. The Incarnation revealed by Paul in Ephesians.
 - A. Jesus actually lived.
 - B. Jesus lived an exalted life.
 - C. Jesus died a uniquely significant death.
 - D. Jesus was raised from the dead.
 - E. Jesus eternally lives in a state of pre-eminence.
 - F. Summary: Jesus is God.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FACT OF THE INCARNATION IN EPHESIANS

I. Preliminary Considerations.

A. The relation of the present chapter to this thesis is that of the relation of the minor premise to the syllogism. It is the study which provides the specific data that give character to the source in its relation to the larger generality. Thus, this is the inductive ground stuff for maintaining the thesis. Particularly, then, the purpose of chapter three is to show what Paul reveals as his belief regarding the Incarnation within the limits of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It will be seen that Ephesians contains the essence of the doctrine of the Incarnation in its entirety. Already it is seen that the revelation of the single essential datum is in itself adequate knowledge to make actual the Divine purpose to bring salvation to mankind. Hence, if it is proved that Ephesians contains the revelation of the single essential datum, the thesis will have been brought to its proper conclusion.

B. The focus of the Epistle to the Ephesians is upon the ideas related to the characteristic term "mystery".¹
The "incorporation of the Gentiles in the body of Christ".²

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1. The term occurs in Ephesians 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19.
2. Brooke F. Westcott: Epistle to the Ephesians, p. lxiv.

constitutes only a part, although a large part, of the emphasis of the book on the larger purpose of the Church, which is, to serve "as God's means by which, in Christ, He may restore all men to union with Himself".¹ At the outset of the letter the doctrinal foundation of the teaching is suggested.² In 1:3 God is considered as fundamental and His Son, "Our Lord Jesus Christ" takes a parallel position. The epistle is not a theological dissertation upon the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is a practical treatise regarding the place of the Church; but it is founded on Paul's thought, the outgrowth of his personal experiences with Jesus Christ and many of Christ's other followers. It is, therefore, the fact of the Incarnation which underlies as a foundation, the superstructure of Paul's Ephesian letter. The practical theology of Ephesians would be utterly impossible without the fact of the "coming of God".³ And this is evident within the epistle. If you should extract the earthly life, the death, the resurrection and the exaltation from the book, then every title of Jesus would fade away too, and the house would be without joists, studs and rafters. This is perfectly self-evident and undebatable. Although every expression used by Paul here regarding the Incarnation is subordinate in aim to another, more primary idea, and always serves to imply or assume the fact of God-in-flesh,

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1. Charles Smith Lewis: International Bible Encyclopaedia, article on Epistle to the Ephesians.
2. Lewis, Op. Cit., Ad. Loc.
3. Brunner's phrase.

it is exactly this secondary idea which is employed as the framework for the primary. The very fact that there are no single outstanding Christological passages in Ephesians, such as scintillate in Colossians and Philippians, makes this study more valuable. For, if in this epistle the great truth is always kept subordinate, with only a slight attention here and there, and yet it still stands out clearly to the reader, how much more commanding is it in the passages of books where the writer's brightest spot lights are played upon it! But it is not intended here to compare the teaching of Ephesians with that of any other parts of the New Testament at all. For what follows will show that the teaching of Paul in Ephesians about the Incarnation is complete in itself--so far as supplying revelation with the essential truth is concerned--and independent of everything but the fact itself and its reality to Paul.

II. The Incarnation Revealed by Paul in Ephesians.

Through the inductive process of "raw contact"¹ with the epistle itself the writer has arrived at an outline of the elements of the incarnate life of Christ which is comprehensive. This discovery is coincident with Enslin's statement that "Perhaps it is not misleading to call it (Ephesians) a comprehensive outline of the Christian Gospel."² This is

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1. W.W.White's expression (Biblical Seminary tradition).
2. Morton Scott Enslin: Christian Beginnings, p. 294.

worth noting, even though Williams says "Observe that II Thessalonians, Ephesians, Philemon and the pastorals would add scarcely anything to the Christology of Paul as found in the undisputed epistles"¹. The point of significance is not whether a certain book "adds" anything or not; but rather, does it have the truth within it? Paul's thought is a unity anyway and not a picturesque progress of development from one idea to another. Mackintosh touches the point significantly in saying. "The chronological charts of St. Paul's advance in Christian knowledge, which have pleased no one but their authors, may be laid aside."² No doubt Paul did make progress in his thought as time and experience incubated his fundamental ideas. But even that development is a unity centering in his own relation to Christ. It was not a systematic doctrinal form of thought but a "theology held in solution."³ And besides, since different situations call for different emphases, who is to determine how much Paul may have already conceived which he never had occasion to write, even at the time of his earliest letters? This attempt to discard that which does not "add" anything to a preconceived system does violence to Paul's thought. The same reasoning might, if all the facts were known, call the

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1. Williams, Op. Cit., footnote 113, p. 24.
2. H.R. Mackintosh: The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 50.
3. William Sanday: Christology and Personality, p. 6.

most authentic of Paul's writings into question. The fact that Ephesians contains a full outline of the incarnate life and existence is of great significance.

A. Ephesians is written as though the author assumed it to be a fact that "the Lord Jesus Christ" about Whom he writes actually lived as an historical Jesus. It is also taken for granted that those to whom the letter was addressed knew of the actual life of Jesus. Paul's conception of Christ "never became, so far as we know, the subject of controversy in the primitive Church",¹ much less, of course, would there be a possibility of Paul's inventing such a person and getting by without a flare-up. The Christ of Ephesians is the Christ of a consistent Paul. He is consistent with himself and with the views of his Biblical contemporaries. Although there is some question about the date of Ephesians, some of his other letters were undoubtedly written before "the literature which tells the story of his (Jesus') life".² And these in agreement with Ephesians plainly speak of the factual Jesus and there was no debate about it among those who read. But rather, there grew up a large body of contemporary and later authentic corroborative literature. No one has denied or can deny, intelligently that Paul taught about a Person Who really lived. Some

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1. Mackintosh, Op. Cit., p. 74.

2. Fairbairn, Op. Cit., p. 439.

have suggested that his writings show a comparative lack of factual information about the historical Jesus and thus they attempt to build a case that Paulinism, resting mostly on Paul's mystical experience, is different from the system growing out of the bare facts of the Gospels. They disparage Paul and insist that truth demands that we get "back to Jesus". But when it is considered that Paul's writings contain considerable ¹ from the events of Jesus' life; that his purposes demanded the emphasising of the great incidents, ² namely the death and resurrection; and that "a complete portrait of Jesus and a full outline of His career. . . are a universal possession of Christians", ³ even at the time of Paul; it is "foolish to talk as some do of Paul as ignorant of the facts of Christ's earthly history". ⁴ Paul and his readers, being contemporaries of Jesus, simply took for granted the fact of His earthly life. It is therefore seen that the early apostolic Church was in agreement regarding the fact of Jesus and its interpretation. Indeed, it is the epistles of Paul which "in point of date. . . , but also in point of revelation. . . present to us the most direct and determining evidence of the conception of Jesus preva-

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1. Cf, Sweet, Op. Cit., pp. 68-73. On page 72 he says "There are all told more than 50 references to the life of Jesus in the attested writings of Paul".
2. Cf, Warfield: Christology and Criticism, p. 150; also Cf, Orr: Faith of a Modern Christian, pp. 145-147.
3. Warfield, Op. Cit., p. 152.
4. Orr, Op. Cit., p. 152.

lent¹ in those beginning days.

To read Ephesians and deny that Paul taught about an actual historical human being requires the utmost stupidity. No one would deny it. The Jesus about Whom he speaks had the "flesh"² and "blood"³ of a physical body which died a real death on a "cross"⁴. It is this carnal One Who is called "Beloved"⁵ by His Father and by Paul. Pfleiderer tries to make a point denying the orthodox conception of the Incarnation by saying:

"As Paul understood it, this was not an "incarnation" in the strict doctrinal sense, inasmuch as the Son of God was really the celestial man and head of the human race before his appearance on the earth; he did not need therefore to take upon him a human nature⁶ as orthodoxy teaches, but, according to Paul, he simply exchanged the form of his celestial existence, or his godlike body of light, for the earthly form of existence, or a body of flesh like that of men".⁷

This difference between a "human nature" and the "earthly form of existence, or a body of flesh like that of men" is existent only in the mind of Pfleiderer. Paul did not imagine any such distinction as this. He had less difficulty in imagining the possibility of the union of both the heavenly, pre-existent Christ and the "body of flesh" in one person. Actually human nature is what it is because it is in "a body

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1. Warfield: The Lord of Glory, p. 222.
2. Ephesians 2:15.
3. Ephesians 1:7 and 2:13.
4. Ephesians 2:16.
5. Ephesians 1:6.
6. All the underlining is mine.
7. Otto Pfleiderer: The Influence of the Apostle Paul on The Development of Christianity, p. 47.

of flesh". Pfleiderer does not deny that Paul was teaching about an actual historical human being: but he does harm to Paul in attempting to make him teach that Jesus was anything different from a real man, though more than a man. It must be made clear that the Jesus about Whom Paul writes was conceived by him to have been a genuine human being, bone of bone and flesh of flesh.

What difference does it make? Why spend so much in asserting something that no one denies, namely, that Ephesians assumes the real human life of Jesus? How is it of significance to the point? It is simply this. If the writer of Ephesians believed this, as it is seen he does, then he believed that this Jesus Whom he exalts in thought and word to the supreme place in the universe, was actually a man, and this fact is essential to the conception of the Incarnation. Therefore, the first essential quality of the great deed, the basic characteristic of the event, is a truth contained in Ephesians.

B. In the next place, this life of time was lived on an exalted level. We know this by inference. Paul does not distinctly disconnect the earthly life from the heavenly life of Jesus, but in this epistle thinks of the life as an eternal whole. Its character at any time may reasonably describe its character always. It is necessarily so. Although many of the descriptions of the noble and holy and complete life are directly applied to the ascended

Christ, they fittingly may be ascribed to the earthly life as well and thus harmonize with the picture given by the Gospels. Paul in this letter speaks to describe it with such phrases as:

Source of "grace and peace". 1:2
Source of "every spiritual blessing". 1:3
Observer of lives "holy and without blemish". 1:4
Forgiver of Sins. 1:7
Treasury of "riches of grace". 1:8;2:7;3:8;3:16
Wise and prudent. 1:8
Source of truth. 1:13
Faith in Him results in love. 1:10
Giver of life. 2:1,5
Incentive to "good works". 2:10
Bringer of "hope". 2:11
"He is our peace". 2:14
"Chief corner stone" of "household of God". 2:20
Source of "boldness" and "confidence." 3:12
His indwelling means 3:17-19
 1) To be "rooted and grounded in love,"
 2) To "apprehend" the unknowable depths of love.
The Agent of God's glory. 3:21

The foundation for all high and ethical living is suggested variously in the practical last three chapters. It is plain to be seen that the foregoing things point to the possibility of the life of this One's being extraordinary, to say the least, unique, to say the truth.

The fact that Jesus actually lived was discovered to be a fact assumed under the surface of Ephesians. This fact provides the ground by which it is inferred that here again "under the surface" is an important aspect of the idea of the Incarnation. Jesus lived an exalted, noble life. These descriptions are absolutely consistent with Jesus' own testimony of John 8:46, "Which of you convicteth

me of sin?" It is true again of the reference of Hebrews 4:15, "Yet without sin". It is safely to be stated that the second truth necessary to the Incarnation, Jesus' holy life, is contained in Ephesians.

Does this have importance to the concept of the Incarnation? It does. The unique Person could be known to be such only by means of a unique life. An ordinary life would have given the lie to the testimony that He was unique. To make such a unique Person requires that His perfection be that of morality and goodness. Many have come to perfection in the arts and the sciences, for illustration; but only One has come to moral perfection. Only One could, the Son of Infinity, attain such perfection. It is this very thing which separates Jesus Christ from every other man, putting him in a class by Himself. At the same time it is this which brings Him into unity with every man, identifying Him with all. For He lived perfectly in flesh.

C. It is the purpose of God in "redemption", "forgiveness of sins" and reconciliation of man to God and man to man which gives such great significance, indeed unique significance, to the death of Jesus. In fact it is purpose that gives importance to both the Incarnation and the crucifixion. as Westcott says, "The unity of humanity was gain-

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1. Ephesians 1:7,14; 4:30.
2. Ephesians 1:7.
3. Ephesians 2:16.

ed by the Incarnation, the reconciliation of humanity to God by the Cross." ¹ The fact is openly stated in Ephesians that this death on "the cross" ² and shedding of the "blood" of the One Who "gave Himself" ³ has inseparable connection with the Eternal purpose to bring all men into union with Christ, Who is "the head" ⁴ and thus with each other as a "body fitly framed and knit together." ⁵ Hence, the chief goal of Divine purpose bears necessary relation to the sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus. Again, the third truth integrally joined to the Incarnation is not prominently spot-lighted in Ephesians, being mentioned only a few times. But it is an essential ground of the structure of the book and is plainly a truth contained in Ephesians.

The relation of this truth to the Incarnation may be quite simply stated, although it is profound beyond the possibility of complete comprehension. The crucifixion culminated the process of self-giving exhibited in the Earthly Creature, Who was the perfect representative of the Creator Himself. And the Incarnation provided, with its base, the devotion to see it through and with its tool, the body prepared for sacrifice.

D. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is possibly

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1. Westcott, Op. Cit., p. 38.
2. Ephesians 1:7; 2:13.
3. Ephesians 4:16.
4. Ephesians 5:2, 25.
5. Ephesians 4:15.

referred to three times in Ephesians. The first and undisputable passage is 1:20 where Paul speaks of "the strength of (God's) might" and identifies it with that "which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead". Here it is clearly set forth as a basic truth assumed by Paul to be a fact. And even if it is used as a mere illustration to a practical end, it is present.

The two other passages, about which there are questions, are 2:5,6 and 4:9. On 2:6 it seems that the resurrection is in the background of the idea as a figure to illustrate man's being raised from spiritual death. The immediate contextual background of 2:5,6 is the introductory statement of chapter two "And you did he make alive when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins". It is this statement which furnishes the basis for comparing the raising of man from sin with the resurrection of Jesus, if it is true that such a comparison is made. The verse is

καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς ἁμαρτημασίν
συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ
καὶ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς
ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

The revised version translates it:

"even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The problem finds its center in the two focal verbs, viz,

συνεζωοποίησεν and συνήγειρεν and their relation to the prepositional phrase with Christ. In the

Greek text ¹ "Christ" is used in the dative with the definite article τῷ. In this case it requires to be either a "logical" locative dative ² or an instrumental dative of association. ³ Of the two it is hard to decide which is correct for the designation of this use. But it makes no essential difference which it is. The end result is identical; for in reality the thought back of this use of the dative is that Christ is the instrument Who through the means of His personality in association with the end to be achieved brings the raising up of the morally dead into the sphere of logical relation to Himself. So this use combines the locative of logical sphere with the instrumental of association. The verbs are both aoristic in tense indicating that the action was a fact of indefinite duration. Each verb is compounded with the collective preposition σύν, undeniably emphasising the relation of the action of the verb to Christ. It is the σύν which the translators must blame for their saying "raised us up with him", and "made us to sit with him"; for there is no pronoun for him in the Greek text. Therefore the meaning as shown by the syntax of these words, which themselves point to the fact, is that this action is definitely related to Christ's raised condition. Now the question is: Does this raised condition

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1. D. Eberhard Nestle: Novum Testamentum Graece.
2. Cf. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey: A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p. 87.
3. Ibid, p. 90.

of Christ mean exclusively that state which followed His resurrection; and does the being made alive with Christ refer exclusively to His resurrection or to His present state? To the first question it may be said that it is impossible to confine the meaning to the incident of Jesus' resurrection; for that would find the following objections impossible to answer. First, the verb is aorist and as such means that the action is a completed fact. Now for that action of raising to be a completed fact necessitates reference emphatically to the state which was effected by the action. Second, the thought is that "we" are raised with Him and it is absurd to think that the meaning here is that Paul and the others of "we" were morally raised concomitantly with Jesus' physical resurrection. At least Paul was morally changed some time after the ascension of Christ; and, no doubt, most of those to whom he writes were raised—so much later. It can be nothing else but the state following the resurrection, or his condition of exaltation with all that it involves. Findlay says that "raised us up with the Christ" certainly "includes everything; it shows us one with Christ who lives evermore to God." To the second question asked in conjunction with the first just above the same answer applies. Westcott says that

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1. G. G. Findlay: The Epistle to the Ephesians, p. 108.

"The Resurrection of Christ was ideally the quickening of all believers,"¹ thus trying to indicate that the incident itself may ideally be adequate for the quickening of men of faith. But here it is observed that the ideal is not the real, for the living power of the "alive" and "raised" Christ is required to quicken faith, to say nothing of quickening a dead moral sense. Paul certainly implies in this passage the ever-existent necessity of Christ's personal activity in changing men's hearts.

Let this problem be concluded. The question is whether these verbs indicate anything of the resurrection. The answer is that they cannot be confined to the incident of the resurrection but may include it; and certainly refer with the bulk of emphasis to the state following it. If it can be shown that the words refer exclusively to the state of Christ, with all the action of the verbs intended to be confined to the "we" who are affected and none to the action required to raise Christ from the physical death, it can still be shown that the fact of the resurrection is the basic fact for Paul's statement here, regardless of whether it is in the focus of his attention or not. Because the state which Paul describes Christ to possess is that which is by definition based on the supernatural event. The former undisputable passage, 1:20, is a part of the

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1. Westcott; Op. Cit., p. 32.

immediate context of this questionably applicable verse. There the incident is baldly declared. In 2:6 the incident is basically assumed, if not actually asserted.

The last passage, which may imply that Paul believed and, by thus stating, reveals the resurrection of Christ, is in 4:9,10:

"Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things."

The problem here is whether the ascension here mentioned may be considered as including being raised out of the grave. Spence considers that the descent prior to the ascent may have included the going "even into the grave".¹ Findlay also speaks of it as "from the depths of the graves."² Moule states that he believes "the reference to the Grave (to be) both more suitable to the context and more congenial to the phrase."³ Weiss think it to be the "lower regions, which position the earth occupies over against heaven."⁴ There are at least four possibilities. First, that it may mean the grave itself. Second, it may mean the Incarnation. Third, it may refer to Hades. Fourth, it may be a combination of all three or a combination of any two of the three. Westcott prefers a combination for it

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1. H. D. M. Spence: The Pulpit Commentary-Gal. and Eph., p. 195.
2. Findlay, Op. Cit., p. 234.
3. Handley C. G. Moule: Ephesian Studies, Footnote 2, p. 190.
4. Bernhard Weiss: A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. III, p. 442.

is well to see it as Christ's coming into and passing
"through all the scenes of man's life." ¹ At any rate, it
is certainly not out of harmony with a sound interpretation
to say that the "descent" of Christ surely included the
grave, whether it did so exclusively or not. And if it
did include the grave it implies the resurrection from it.

Therefore, the very important truth of the resurrec-
tion of Jesus from the dead may positively be stated to be
contained in Ephesians. It is evident, beyond what has
already been said, that the resurrection is implied in the
passages where Paul speaks of Christ as eternally or un-
endingly existent. ² The resurrection fact relates to the
Incarnation by attesting the everlasting character of the
great event and by setting the tangible seal of God's ap-
proval on His becoming man.

E. Finally, Ephesians' author states and implies that
this Jesus lives eternally in a state of pre-eminence. If
the Jesus who lived in the flesh and was raised to high
exaltation "to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places,
far above all—, ³ in Whom all "things in the heavens and
the things upon the earth" shall be summed up, ⁴ had an
eternal pre-existence according to this epistle, then

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1. Westcott, Op. Cit., p. 61.
2. e.g. 1:10; 2:20-23; 2:13-20; 3:11,12.
3. Ephesians 1:20-23.
4. Ephesians 1:10.

Ephesians contains the culminating factor of importance to the doctrine of the Incarnation. And this He had. Lewis says:

"The eternity of our Lord is distinctly asserted (vs. 4,5) as of one existing before the foundation of the world, in whom everything heavenly as well as earthly is united, summed up (1:10; cf. 2:12; 4:18)."¹

With no beginning of days, an earthly life of temporality seizing eternity, and an unending exaltation, the Jesus of Ephesians is presented to all who read. Thus He is pre-eminent in the matters of infinite, as well as of finite time extension. And being so, He occupies a place of pre-eminence in matter, among men, and, stressedly according to Ephesians, with regard to the Church, His body.²

This concluding culminating truth of Jesus' living eternally in a state of pre-eminence is contained in Ephesians also in a secondary position but fundamental relation. This fact, as regards the Incarnation obviously serves to show its importance eternally and universally.

F. Summary.

Ephesians, with a few passages of secondary emphasis, is supported to its intention. These basic facts, which outline the essential factors of the Gospel, center in the Incarnation and proclaim that Jesus is God. God came to earth in flesh, lived a sinless life in the flesh, died

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1. Lewis, Op. Cit., I.S.B.E. Vol. II, p. 960.
2. Ephesians 1:23.

a uniquely significant death of the flesh, was raised
bodily out of death, and lives pre-eminently above all
things and beings, to the end that all flesh might live
abundantly in Him as the result of His coming.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

- I. The general truths concisely stated.
- II. The specific data summarised in a sentence.
- III. The conclusion declared and its process summarised in a syllogism.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

I. The general truths concisely stated.

The purpose of Divine revelation is fully characteristic of the revelation recorded in the Bible. It is identical with the purpose of the culminating core of revelation, the Incarnation. The totality of revelation focusses upon the salvation of mankind. The Biblical revelation is only one factor of the whole influence which brings man to redemption. It contains the single essential datum for accomplishing this end. This datum is all that man needs to comprehend in order to apprehend eternal life. It is simply that God came and provides for any man who can believe, a full restoration to Divine communion.

II. The specific data summarised in a sentence.

The epistle to the Ephesians contains a comprehensive outline of the single essential datum, thus providing in abundance all that man must know to be saved.

III. The conclusion declared and its process summarised in a syllogism.

Therefore, with regard to the purpose of revelation the facts set forth in Ephesians about the Incarnation, are in themselves a more-than-adequate and independent written revelation. Stated in another way, a man may come to a saving relation to God with no more knowledge of truth

than is contained in the single short letter to the Ephesians. It is in this sense that the conclusion is that Ephesians stands as a complete unit of revelation and serves to complete the Biblical unit by expanding that which is itself also perfect.

THE SYLLOGISM

Major premise: The Biblical revelation of the fact of the Incarnation of God in Jesus is a single truth, when grasped by a person through the aid of the Holy Spirit, that is adequate knowledge for him to respond in such a manner as to achieve the Divine purpose in causing the Incarnation, namely to unite man with God.

Minor premise: The epistle to the Ephesians, although inferior in quantity of ideas to many New Testament books, contains in perfection the single truth.

Conclusion: Therefore, Ephesians is an adequate written revelation all by itself and as such serves to expand the totality of an already complete Biblical revelation.

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