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meet the doubts and difficulties which so frequently assail us. We are not likely to place them on one side and to ignore them, but we must feel bound to subject them to the searching light which the advancement of knowledge has placed within our reach. Rightly so. But let us not forget that we are members of a Church which believes in and proclaims the supernatural Presence of her Lord in her midst, and that He has promised to give *Himself* to those who seek Him, in order that He may

guide them into all truth. And let us be willing at least to *make trial* of the act of faith, coming to Him that we may cast our burdens upon Him, and receive for ourselves out of His fullness.

Not alone the Hebrew poet, but ten thousand others in all ages, will assure us that we shall not be disappointed; for these all have sought God in His sanctuary, and have set to their seal that He is true.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Burney, *The Gospel in the Old Testament*, 207.

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## The Holy Spirit in the Individual.

BY THE REVEREND A. H. MCNEILE, D.D., DUBLIN.

MANY Christians can state from living experience what the Holy Spirit has done in their hearts. And this kind of knowledge of Him is such that nothing can equal it in value. No article in a periodical is needed to teach it to them. But it suggests problems which are worth discussing. If (as all will admit) His activity was seen in the inspiration of good-minded Israelites, the prophets for instance, and if (as most will admit) it is seen in good-minded pagans to-day who are serving God, as they believe Him to be, to the best of their lights, what do we mean when we say that the Holy Spirit *came*, as a new experience at Pentecost? Again, if it were asked of those who have steadily advanced in holiness of life, Is it the Holy Spirit that has done this, or the indwelling Christ? many would find an answer difficult.

A preface is needed dealing with the work of the Holy Spirit in the evolution of the individual. God's eternal purpose, as St. Paul calls it, was to produce creatures akin to Himself who would perfectly love Him. But love must be voluntary; it must be free, or it is not love. Therefore, for the fulfilment of His purpose, He had to create conditions out of which man could *win* freedom. To create him free would have been to force him to be free, which is a contradiction in terms. Man must win freedom freely, which means that he can refuse to be free if he chooses. But he can win it only because God, for the fulfilment of His purpose, puts Himself, His Spirit, into the world, as a carver throws himself into the block of marble of which he purposes to make a statue. The carver's idea or purpose is, in himself, complete, but in the statue it is, so to speak, imprisoned, and wants to emerge

and win its true self as the statue progresses from the block. To put it more technically, the Spirit of God is purely immanent in inanimate matter, and becomes less and less so as the process goes on. In life, and then in mind, His work is seen at a continuously higher level; and the process culminated in man. This growing freedom is such that man, and no lower life, has reached the power of voluntarily placing himself in union with God. That is the work of man's free will, but it is equally the work of the Divine Spirit emerging from immanence. When *all* men are *wholly* in union with God, His eternal purpose will be accomplished.

Now look at man's religion. At the first emergence of mind at the human level of self-consciousness, man's power of voluntary union with God was very small indeed. From a stage, probably, even lower than animism he slowly rose, through fetichism and totemism, to polydæmonism and Nature-worship. And then in the Semitic branch of the human family a special line of advance was seen. They conceived, first, the idea of monolatry; and then that of pure monotheism. Led by the inspired teachers whom we call the prophets, Israel became convinced that only one God in heaven or earth was possible or conceivable. The comparative study of religions is the thrilling continuation of the study of biology. The immanent Spirit was coming more and more into freedom as man drew nearer and nearer into voluntary union with God. It is impossible to say, very often, in biology why particular lines of descent strike out new features, except that it is according to God's method of furthering the general advance. And the only explanation of the great moral and spiritual

superiority of Israel over other nations is the same. Revelation, a message from outside, was imparted through the indwelling Spirit. As God (in Himself far removed from any limitations, as the artist's mind is independent of the block in which his thought is taking shape) is voluntarily 'imprisoned' in immanence within the sphere of space and time, so Revelation necessarily takes the form of Discovery. The former is from the point of view of man as distinct from God; the latter from the point of view of man as indwelt by God. Races other than Israel, in their spiritual evolution, as species often do in biological evolution, underwent variations which failed to reach so high a point.

It is thus possible to recognize the Holy Spirit's work in all religions, but acting on different levels of spiritual attainment, as He does at different levels of life.

But when we have arrived in our survey at the Hebrew prophets, we are still infinitely below the perfect union with God, the perfect freedom and transcendence of His Spirit and of ours, which is His final purpose. The advance to full stature for which man is destined was rendered quite impossible by the presence of sin. When, in his evolution, he had attained to a certain level, sin became possible, and it entered like a poison pervading the system. The power to sin belonged to a certain stage of growth, when man emerged from the beast; but the power to reach the uttermost stage of maturity was thereby annulled. God would have been disappointed of His hope, His purpose would have been frustrated had He not performed an action which was outside the process. Man's freedom from the bonds of space and time, from division within himself, from the down-dragging force of the natural man which is in opposition to freedom—this can never be more than partial along the lines of the immanent Spirit's work in evolution. But the transcendent God took manhood, in the person of one Man, into perfect union with Himself. That is to say, one Man, at a bound, stood at the goal of the process; He was perfectly free. And so mankind, as a living whole, was not at a helpless standstill as he had been before; he now possessed a potentiality, which universal sin had previously barred, of becoming perfectly free, as he was ideally already in the perfect Man. But since man still lives in time and space, this must be reached by process; the object of Christianity, which is the final object of God, is the actualizing for each individual of the freedom of Christ. We are to reach in very fact the ideal of standing fast in the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free.

As soon as that potentiality was made available for man, a new level of the Spirit's work was reached. And Pentecost was His first impact upon the Church, the men who were united with Christ in His new freedom. The perfection, the transcendent life, of the Man Christ Jesus, completely attained through death, was, by the heavenly existence into which death was the entry, made available for all men. The heavenly Christ, by passing through death and resurrection, supplied that life to the human race; and the immanent Spirit could now enable any man who willed to make that life his own.

Now we are in a position to sum up the answers to the questions with which we started. How can we say that the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost when He has been at work in all men and all things since the world began? He has been, and still is, at work on different levels. He works in matter as the Energy which unceasingly causes it to exist; in the life of the body, in progressive degrees as life rises higher in the scale; in mind, again on a rising scale till man is reached. Here are three successive levels. But then comes higher work:

All tended to mankind;  
And man produced, all hath an end so far;  
But in completed man begins anew  
A tendency to God.

The work of the same Holy Spirit is seen in the development and purification of religion. The rising scale is as evident as ever. The fullest inspiration of a Hebrew Prophet or Psalmist is higher than that of the greatest exponent of any other religion except Christianity, although in all cases it is the work of 'the same Spirit.' But though the Hebrew John the Baptist was the greatest of those born of women, yet he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he. This does not mean that the poorest beginner in the Christian life is a holier man than John, but that he has more possibilities than John; the best Jew could never develop to the height that the best Christian can reach. Because of the Incarnation of Christ, the Holy Spirit could begin His work at a yet higher—much higher—level, because the end which He could reach was 'a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' From the creation of the atom till the climax of the growth of the new creation the whole is an unceasing process, in which the Spirit of God and the spirit of man alike, in the oneness of co-operation, move towards freedom, that is to say, move from immanence towards transcendence.

And the second question. The highest life of the soul—from whence is it, from Christ or from the

Holy Spirit? It is from both, and must be from both; but their functions are different. The Holy Spirit supplies the Divine motive power, the Divine urge, which co-operates with our will, so that we perpetually deepen in us the Divine life of Christ. Christ is the Truth; the Holy Spirit is the Divine Teacher who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. Christ is the Divine atmosphere in which the Christian lives who has passed from death unto life; the Holy Spirit is his breath, his inspiration. Christ is our food; the Holy Spirit is the Divine activity of life in us which enables us to assimilate it, so that it becomes part of us. St. Paul speaks both of the Communion of the Body, and the Blood, of Christ, and the Communion (Fellowship) of the Holy Spirit; the latter is the power by which we get the former. Christ is 'our life'; 'Christ in you' is 'the hope of glory,' the hope of reaching actually and perfectly the Divine condi-

tion that is potentially ours already; the Holy Spirit is the kinetic energy by which we progress towards it, if we voluntarily 'live in the Spirit,' and 'walk in the Spirit,' and are 'led by the Spirit.' Christ is our Righteousness, our Salvation, our Mediator; His work is done, and we are 'in Him,' sharing (potentially) in all that He has done and in all that He is; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctification, He who, by co-operation with our will, carries on the process of making us actually as individuals what Christ has made us potentially as one whole.

But we must remember that these Divine Persons are a Unity. When we pray, it is not to the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit *as such*. We pray to *God*, that we may be enabled to do this and that, in order, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow more deeply into Christ, and to come unto the Father by Him.

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## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Historical and Supra-Historical Religion.

ONE of the fundamental problems of philosophy is the relation of time to eternity; an urgent question for religion is: has time any reality, even if relative, for the eternal God? If time be but the negation of eternity, and has no reality for God Himself, then human history has no significance and value for God, and man deceives himself if in his religion he assumes that he has a relation to God, which means something, and has some worth for God as well as for himself. Unduly influenced by Greek speculative philosophy, Christian theology in the past often failed to do justice to the Christian revelation and redemption in its Godward aspect. Full justice can be done to it only if human history has significance and value for God, because time has reality.

It is a basic question with which Dr. Dibelius sets himself to deal in this work,<sup>1</sup> *Historical and Supra-Historical Religion in Christianity*, of the contents of which a brief account is here attempted. His first chapter is entitled *Time*. His object

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichtliche und übergeschichtliche Religion im Christentum*, von Martin Dibelius (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925).

being to deal with Christianity in its historical appearance and supra-historical meaning, he first of all discusses the present age as an age of transition, and refers to three movements in Germany, as signs of the times, the *youth-movement*, *expressionism*, and *irrationalism*; but interesting as his account of these is, it must be passed over. The theological situation in this age of transition is described in the words: 'The traditional faith in the "God of history" appears shaken thoroughly, and the historical conditionality of the Christian origins seems to overshadow the eternal. From two sides the question presses, how the historical and the supra-historical life in Christianity, that is, however, in its classical period, are related' (p. 15). The second chapter discusses *Religion*. Its problem is stated in the words: 'With revelation what is above the world breaks into the existence of the world; with the diffusion of the revelation, its witness, original declaration, and propaganda for it, that bit of what is above the world becomes embedded in the world. A world-religion arises first of all by combining both, the *push*, which works into the depth, and the *power* which works in the breadth' (p. 23). The historian must make manifest both what is essential in the primitive Christian possession, and also how even that was conditioned by the world and the age. But as