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“REDEEMER” AND “REDEMPTION”¹

There is no one of the titles of Christ which is more precious to Christian hearts than “Redeemer.” There are others, it is true, which are more often on the lips of Christians. The acknowledgment of our submission to Christ as our Lord, the recognition of what we owe to Him as our Saviour,—these things, naturally, are most frequently expressed in the names we call Him by. “Redeemer,” however, is a title of more intimate revelation than either “Lord” or “Saviour.” It gives expression not merely to our sense that we have received salvation from Him, but also to our appreciation of what it cost Him to procure this salvation for us. It is the name specifically of the Christ of the cross. Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that He paid a mighty price for it.

It is a name, therefore, which is charged with deep emotion, and is to be found particularly in the language of devotion. Christian song is vocal with it. How it appears in Christian song, we may see at once from old William Dunbar’s invocation, “My King, my Lord, and my Redeemer sweet.” Or even from Shakespeare’s description of a lost loved-one as “The precious image of our dear Redeemer.” Or from Christina Rossetti’s,

“Up Thy Hill of Sorrows
Thou all alone,
Jesus, man’s Redeemer,
Climbing to a Throne.”

¹ Opening Address, delivered in Miller Chapel, Princeton Theological Seminary, September 17, 1915. Some references and explanatory notes have been added.

Mysticism in Christianity. By the Rev. W. K. FLEMING, M.A., B.D., of the College of Allhallows, Barking, E.C. London: Robert Scott; New York and Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1913. 8vo; pp. x, 282. Bibliographies and Indices.

Mysticism and Modern Life. By JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM, Professor of Christian Theology in Pacific Theological Seminary; Author of "Christ and the Eternal Order", "Personality and the Christian Ideal", etc. New York and Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press [1915]. 12mo; pp. 256. Index.

These two books illustrate a movement of recent thought which both of them are eager that we should recognize as in progress. This is a movement towards a reawakened interest in Mysticism, and even toward a reversion to it as a satisfying religious point of view. Such a movement was for religious men inevitable in the prevalent decay of confidence in the Christian revelation. For Mysticism is religion, and supplies a refuge for men of religious mind who find it no longer possible for them to rest on "external authority"—as George Tyrrell both expounded and illustrated for us. Once turn away from revelation and little choice remains to you but the choice between Mysticism and Rationalism. There is not so much choice between these things, it is true, as enthusiasts on either side are apt to imagine. The difference between them is very much a matter of temperament, or perhaps we may even say of temperature. The Mystic blows hot, the Rationalist cold. Warm up a Rationalist and you inevitably get a Mystic; chill down a Mystic and you find yourself with a Rationalist on your hands. The history of thought illustrates repeatedly the easy passage from one to the other. Each centers himself in himself, and the human self is not so big that it makes any large difference where within yourself you take your center. Nevertheless just because Mysticism blows hot, its "eccentricity" is the more attractive to men of lively religious feeling. But it is just as scornful as Rationalism of the supernatural, of "external revelation", of historical foundations for religion. Face to face with the supernatural revelations recorded in the Christian Scriptures, it reduces them to "mystical phenomena", and assimilates them to the experiences of a Plotinus, or of a Sadi. Face to face with the historical foundations of Christianity, it treats them as symbols of transactions which take place within the souls of men. It is of the very essence of Mysticism to find God within the circle of the individual's experience. So soon as any other "way" of coming into "contact" with God is proposed than by sinking into ourselves, Mysticism is radically deserted. And because not the perception of God but God Himself is found in the human soul, and by implication in every human soul, God is ultimately confounded with the human soul: at his deepest depths man is God. No doubt, being a religion and not merely a philosophy, "unification" is presented by Mysticism as an achievement rather than as a postulate. And no doubt we may learnedly distinguish between Pantheism and Panentheism, between Pantheism and Negativism. All such efforts to escape from the coils of the serpent, how-

ever, are futile. Mysticism, in its fundamental basis of underlying conception, is just Pantheising Antisupernaturalism. And such it has shown itself—in greater or less purity of manifestation—in its entire historical development.

This is what Mysticism, with a capital M, is. Spell it with a lower-case m, and we may possibly broaden it out into only another name for natural religion. As it is religion, it is of course when so understood admirable. As it remains natural religion, it is equally of course, for fallen men, inadequate. Its relation to Christianity is that of natural religion to the religion of revelation. It goes without saying that it finds "for itself in Christianity a field of the richest and most fruitful soil." This is saying too little. We must say that only in Christianity can it attain its true development and complement. For Christianity is not an unnatural religion disputing the field of religion with natural religion. It is natural religion reinforced by supernatural republication and sanctions, and completed by the addition of what is needed for a religion for men in the unnatural condition induced by sin. It takes up natural religion into itself and gives it the power to come to its rights while it enlarges it by adding to it the supernatural religion needed for sinful man. But it goes equally without saying that mysticism, understood as natural religion, is not, in some of its less complete developments, confined to the soil of Christianity. Just because it is natural religion it is present wherever human nature is present and functions religiously; and we do not need Schleiermacher to teach us that there is no human self-consciousness which is destitute of the God-consciousness. Of course, then, "it has been at the root of any and every religion worthy of the name, in its original and indefectible 'feeling after God, if haply it may find Him'". Wherever man exists he is "in contact" with God; and wherever men are "in contact" with God they may "know" Him if only they will attend to Him "in contact" with whom they are. We may even use the word "know" in its full sense. We see no reason to dispute Plotinus' dictum that God to be known must be "seen" or "felt". If God be a mere hypothesis, however fully that hypothesis is verified, He can scarcely be said to be "known". That He is we may be sure; but to know that God is, is not yet to "know" God. We may acquire after a while good reason to believe that Mars, say, is inhabited: that would not warrant us in saying that we "know" the beings whose bare existence we have found reason to believe in. God is known only by those who being "in contact" with Him have looked upon Him with that eye of the soul to which He is visible. If this be mysticism, we are all mystics: not merely Augustine with his doctrine of the intelligible world and the *sensus internus* by which it is perceived, but Calvin also with his doctrine of the *sensus deitatis* which is the *semen religionis*. But it certainly is not Mysticism in any historical sense of that term.

The fault of books like those now before us is that they confound Mysticism (which is Pantheising Antisupernaturalism) with mysti-

cism (conceived as conscious living, moving and having our being in God) and then interpret Christianity in terms of the resultant confused idea. The effect is to desupernaturalize and dehistoricalize Christianity, and to reduce it to a merely natural religion, or rather to substitute merely natural religion for it. Christ is ranged with other masters; and the Christianity which He died to give to the world is explained as already in the possession of men before and quite apart from Him; as lying always, in fact, at the disposal of men in the depths of every man's own heart. This is the fundamental point of view which lies beneath and gives their ground-color to both of the books now before us, though it manifests itself in the discussions of each, of course, in a degree and manner of its own. Mr. Fleming's book is historical in form. Its task is to present a succinct account of the manifestations of Mystical thought and of the Mystical attitude in the historical development of Christianity. His mind is on Mysticism with a capital M, and he represents its presence in the Christian life and thinking of the ages as the saving salt by virtue of which Christianity has been made, and maintained, as a religion. Mr. Buckham's book has more the form of a discussion of principles. Some of the chapters which constitute it were written originally for separate publication and the unity of the volume suffers somewhat from this fact. But a sufficient internal unity is given to the whole by the common purpose, pervading all parts alike, to assimilate Mysticism and Christianity to one another. This assimilation is effected by first interpreting Mysticism in terms of Christianity—the stages of "the Mystic Way" for example are expounded in a fashion which may enable the Christian to "receive it" but scarcely the Mystic to recognize it as his own—and then interpreting Christianity in terms of Mysticism. What comes out as a result is something which is neither Mysticism nor Christianity, but a good deal more the former than the latter. Anti-doctrinal zeal is a fundamental trait of both books; their misprision of evangelical teaching and practice is marked; their hatred of Calvinism and all its works intense, though not very intelligible, or indeed even intelligent. Observe this list of names brought together by Mr. Buckham as not very commendable for the theology they represent: "Arius, Pelagius, Abelard, Dominic, Socinus, Calvin, the Westminster Divines, Priestly"!

It is interesting to observe what Mr. Buckham makes of Christianity in his determination to give it a common denominator with Mysticism. In one passage, he formally expounds "the essence of Christianity." We do not quarrel with him that, in his anti-dogmatic zeal, he seeks primarily the essence of Christianity as spiritual experience. What we quarrel with him for is the particular spiritual experience which he segregates as constituting the specific essence of Christianity. This he phrases as "a filial communion and coöperation with God, so deep and real as to transform life." Obviously, there is nothing specifically Christian in this. "This spirit came through Jesus", he says. But

then he adds immediately: "Not that it is absolutely new with Jesus." He adds again, indeed: "But it was so intense and fructifying as to exercise an almost"—this "almost" is intensely revealing—"creative influence upon those who came to share it with and through Him." But this does not remove the fatal fact that nothing exclusively Christian is discovered in "the essence of Christianity." Christianity may bring what it brings with a special poignancy of appeal; but it is a matter of degree not of kind after all. So Pelagius said that men could be saved apart from Christianity as truly as by Christianity, only they could be saved more easily under Christianity: just as a boat would convey you from Carthage to Italy by sail more easily to yourself than if you had to row it across—but you could row it across all right if you had to. Christianity is a good religion; no doubt the best religion; but you can do very well without it.

But, now, how did Mr. Buckham arrive at this remarkable "essence" for Christianity? By historical induction, it seems. "It is only as we grasp that which is common in Christian experience, in the first century and in our own, and in all that intervene, that we understand the essence of Christianity", he tells us. And then he tells us, that proceeding after this fashion he finds the essence of Christianity what we have seen. Did anybody ever reason with more delightful circularity? We presume that the spiritual experience of those alone who possess the essence of Christianity is truly Christian experience; and we presume equally that the essence of Christianity is the spiritual experience of those only who are truly Christians. We may know who are truly Christians by observing who have truly Christian experience; and we may know what truly Christian experience is by observing what is the experience of those who are truly Christians. Or, shall we say rather that the spiritual experience common to all who *call* themselves Christians is "the essence of Christianity"? If only a single man from the time of Christ until today who has called himself a Christian and has not been truly a Christian be included in this induction, the conclusion is vitiated. We should get not what is common to all Christians, but what is common to Christians and non-Christians. This is what has happened to Mr. Buckham. He gives us not the essence of Christianity, which is a specific religion, but the essence (from his point of sight) of religion. And that is the reason why after saying that this "filial communion and coöperation with God", to be Christian, must be "so deep and real as to transform life", he immediately, bethinking himself of the other religions with which Christianity is confounded in his thought, qualifies this and says of it that it is only "an *almost* creative influence".

We have noted that Rationalism does not lie any too far away from Mysticism. Mystics sometimes betray a tendency to Rationalistic turns of thought. Mr. Buckham does not altogether escape. Does God send trouble? is a question which seems quite to bowl over his attempt to interpret the universe in terms of God. In reporting the attitude of the Mystic towards "the disasters and ills" of life he interjects a

remark on his own account to the effect that these disasters and ills of life "are acts of nature rather than of God, or His only as belonging to a world that is His". What wretched dualism have we here? Mr. Buckham seeks to salve his defection by intimating that Mysticism at least does not go so far astray here as Evangelicalism—that *bête noire* both of himself and Mr. Fleming. "Evangelicalism", he tells us, "went too far" in the direction of attributing the dark and the storm to the sending of God and interpreting "the lightning javelins of fate" as "hurled by His hand". The Mystic has not urged, he affirms, that disasters are direct acts of God, and especially not that they have been sent with punitive intent: he has only endeavored to utilize trouble when it comes for his own purification and perfection. All this is obviously not only unevangelical, but irreligious, if we can make a distinction here. He who does not see the hand of God in all that befalls him is a Rationalist more extreme than even such an extreme Rationalist as Wilhelm Herrmann. He has not only torn God out of his heart (where the Mystic finds Him), but even out of the universe (where the mere Theist must see Him).

"The experience of the mystics as a whole", writes Mr. Buckham, "offers a striking exemplification of the saying of Christ as to the life of the Kingdom consisting in a *renewed childhood*." What saying of Christ is this? Mr. Buckham seems conscious that there is something wrong here; for he immediately adds, "Not that such a life has the weaknesses and limitations of childhood, but, rather, its vision, its faith, its confiding communion." Has childhood—infancy would be the truer term—"vision, and faith, and confiding communion"? The mistake here is not to be condoned merely because it has become so common. The kingdom of heaven is not an infantile estate in which the immature alone may be at home; nor is it a children's paradise. Men are not to renew their childhood in it, but to put away childish things. We rise not sink into manhood, and the kingdom of heaven consists not in reduced men but in enlarged men,—built up into the fulness of the stature of manhood in Christ. What our Lord said was not that life in the kingdom consists in a renewed childhood, but that no man can enter the kingdom save as an infant enters the world, naked and bare of all claim on his own behalf, utterly dependent on God for all and receiving all from His mere grace. It is to that state that we are to turn, humbling ourselves, if we are to enter the kingdom. To receive the kingdom as a gratuity from God is a very different thing, however, from using it as a *crèche*.

We may of course speak of a "mystical aspect of Christianity", and we may even speak of "the doctrine or rather the experience of the Holy Ghost", as "the real truth of mysticism". The term "Christ-mysticism" may have a good meaning. But in the ambiguity of the word "mysticism" all such modes of speech may also be gravely misleading. If it be true as R. C. Moberly said it was true, that "had only all Christians understood, and lived up to their belief" in the Holy Ghost, "they would all have been mystics", it is certainly not true, what he imme-

diately adds, "or, in other words, there would have been no 'mysticism'". All Christians not only might have been, or may be, but actually are "mystics" in the sense of the former clause: communion with God is of the very essence of Christianity: Paul tells us in so many words, that "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His". No man is a Christian who has not the experience of the indwelling Christ. But "Mysticism" is still with us and is another matter. This is a Pantheising anti-supernaturalistic religiousness which must not be permitted to come to us in the sheeps-clothing of "essential Christianity" on the ground that it is only another name for "spiritual inwardness." It is most decidedly something very different from that.

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Christian Freedom. The Baird Lectures for 1913. By WILLIAM MALCOLM MACGREGOR, D.D., St. Andrew's United Free Church, Edinburgh. New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1914. 12mo; pp. xii, 428. Indices.

In inviting Dr. W. M. Macgregor to deliver the Baird Lectures for 1914 the Trustees of the foundation called to that function for the first time in its history one not a minister of the Church of Scotland. The distinguished preacher whom they selected brought to the service asked of him an alert mind stored with rich culture. His exegesis is heedful and exact; his translations of the New Testament text are characterized by a delicate nicety which almost amounts to preciosity. The gleanings of wide and varied reading are poured out lavishly, in text and note, on the page. The delightful directness of the style and freshness of the presentation keep the reader ever in mind that he is in the hands of a gifted and practiced speaker. The preacher's habits of thought and speech are not wholly left behind. There is some over-elaboration. Paragraphs,—even lectures—have a tendency towards what seems occasionally undue extension. Even repetition is not always shunned: the frank avowal of its occasional presence made in the preface disarms criticism, but leaves the reader nevertheless in some surprise when he meets in the later pages of the volume illustrative extract after extract from the author's reading which he had already had the pleasure of perusing on earlier pages.

Dr. Macgregor takes the Epistle to the Galatians for his subject and conceives his topic, derived from it, to be "the priesthood of all believers". Written by a man whom he describes as "almost fiercely individualistic", the Epistle to the Galatians is to him "for all time the declaration of the profound significance of an individual experience of Christ". This is to him the same as to say that we have in our hands in the Epistle to the Galatians a Mystical document. For he finds the distinctive part of Mysticism in the assertion of the possibility of "a direct apprehension of spiritual realities", and its essential discovery, "that God can be apprehended not by logical reasoning but directly by the soul." Such an unhistorical and unreasonable identification of Mysticism and spiritual religion, like a thoughtlessly