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H. A. HODGES: THE PATTERN OF ATONEMENT IN ITS CONTEXT

by

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A Thesis submitted in
fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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PREFACE

I have tried in this study to gain a new perspective on The Pattern of Atonement by gathering together and examining as much of Hodges' work as possible. The bibliography is virtually complete, as far as I can discover, and I have had access to most of Hodges' writings, including an unpublished typescript. I did not have access, however, to the typescript of his Gifford lectures. The work I have done on Hodges is, I believe, original; and one reason for studying him is the neglect of his work as a whole in contemporary English theological discussion, as contrasted with, for example, the praise of The Pattern of Atonement by F.M.Young.

However, I should like to make it clear that I am not trying to write a comparative and critical account of Hodges in relation to the discussion as it might be conducted by a modern systematic theologian, nor am I trying to provide a philosophical analysis of problematical concepts such as "Christ mysticism". I have not covered every aspect of Hodges' thought in depth, especially his philosophical writings; rather my aim is to see what can be learnt from a professional philosopher about this particular area of theology, and to appreciate his work in and for itself, without falling into the danger of being wholly uncritical and adulatory.

I should like to acknowledge gratefully the assistance of those who have helped me in my work, especially my supervisor Dr. Ann Loades, and also Dr. J.W.Rogerson, of the Theology Department at Durham University. My thanks are also due to Mrs. Vera Hodges, and to the Archives Department of Reading University Library, for their help in compiling the bibliography.

PART ONEChapter One

Herbert Arthur Hodges, born 1905, was professor of Philosophy at the University of Reading from 1934-1969. He was educated at the King Edward School in Sheffield, and in 1923 went on to Balliol College Oxford, where he gained a first in Mods and Greats. Following a lectureship at New College in 1927, he moved to Reading as lecturer in Philosophy in 1928, and remained there until his death in July 1976. Professor Hodges, a distinguished Anglican layman as well as philosopher, was the author of some sixty books, booklets and articles, on a wide variety of subjects. He also lectured extensively, and took part in a number of radio broadcasts. The Pattern of Atonement^I appeared midway through his writing career, in 1955.

The book arose directly out of a series of lectures which Hodges was invited to give at the Schola Cancellarii in Lincoln in 1953; but any study of his work reveals that the Atonement and the themes to which he relates it, were already becoming important concerns prior to this. It is worth asking, before we begin to discuss the book in detail, why it was that a professor of Philosophy should turn his attention to the doctrine of the Atonement, and why, having done so, he approached it in the particular way that he did? In order to discover the answers to these questions, and also to see the context out of which The Pattern of Atonement arose, we will now turn to a study of Hodges' ideas and beliefs

in general, and of his professed aims and motives in his writings. Hodges himself felt that it was necessary to examine a man's life in order to judge his words, for, as he once said, "it's only by knowing who it is who speaks that you really understand the meaning of what he's saying."²

Hodges was a committed Anglican for much of his life, and his reasons for adhering to the Anglican Church are important ones because they throw light on one of the governing factors in his life and work, that is, the search for fullness.

Hodges had been brought up in the United Methodist Church, but, he remarks, the faith he had then bore little resemblance to that Church's teaching, and did not survive for long when he went to Oxford. But in 1928 he was received into the Church of England. He joined it, he says, "in consequence of a conversion, but it was not a conversion to Anglicanism. It was a conversion to Catholicism."³ For while Hodges was sure that Catholicism was the truth, he did not believe that the Papacy was a necessary part of it; he therefore turned "to that Church which seemed to offer me all the things which I could see to be necessary, while leaving me the greatest freedom to inquire more widely into all aspects of the Faith." In Anglicanism he found "the fullness of the sacramental life, and the Catholic tradition of spiritual teaching and discipline... opportunity to explore the fullness of the Catholic Faith in a community which has a real sense of continuity and fellowship with the undivided Church." He also felt that to be an Anglican was to "identify oneself with a life which will be one long

fight for clarity and integrity of mind"⁴; and we shall see later how Hodges saw his own work as a fight for clarity.

The search for fullness led Hodges to become an Anglican, but it also led him to be concerned about the shortcomings which marred that fullness, in particular, the lack of a proper ascetic theology. There is some writing on ascetic theology within the Anglican tradition, to which we shall be referring later on; but Methodism had much to teach Anglicans, Hodges felt, and found in it "a root from which native Anglican ascetic theology might have grown."⁵ "It is time", he wrote in A Rapture of Praise⁶, "for us to take possession of this neglected part of our Anglican inheritance." For Methodism is a part of the Anglican inheritance, and the Wesleys themselves intended it to be a movement within the Anglican Church. But the Methodists went into schism, and "the Church of England disowned them and their teaching, and so threw away the chance to build up a fresh body of spiritual teaching on the double foundations of Scripture and experience."⁷ We shall be discussing the content of this teaching in the next chapter, but we may notice here one reason why Hodges felt the Methodist teaching to be so important. It could fill a gap in Anglican teaching, and "it would help to resolve some of the tensions within the Anglican Church, and bring it nearer to that unity of experience which is the prerequisite of unity in doctrine and practice."⁸

As has been said, Hodges became an Anglican because Anglicanism seemed to him to represent the fullness of the

Christian Faith. This fullness he at the time called Catholicism, but later he observes, "I have since learned that another name for it is Orthodoxy!" It is perhaps the same idea of fullness which attracted Hodges to Orthodoxy, where he found the same faith and life as in Anglicanism, but "more richly and more assuredly."⁹ The relations between the Eastern Orthodox and Western Churches were of particular interest to Hodges, as were the relations between the Western Churches themselves, and this interest is reflected in his writings.¹⁰ Orthodoxy seemed to Hodges to have a fuller understanding of the Christian faith and life partly because of its "insistence on the unity of what among us in the West have tended to become separate: theological learning and the spiritual life."¹¹ The Churches of the West have much to learn from that of the East, and indeed, "the whole western tradition needs to be re-examined and reassessed, in order that the Orthodoxy which is latent in it may be sifted out and separated from what is sectional and false."¹² In this reassessment, the Anglican Church will have an important role to play, for it is a truly "catholic" Church. The claim to be catholic is justified, Hodges feels, because in the Church of England is "the will to be catholic, the will not to become identified with any special form of doctrine over and above that of the whole undivided Church, and not to let the Papal autocracy be replaced by an oligarchy of Biblical theologians and preachers of the Word." Because of this, the Church of England should be a "dialectical" Church in the sense indicated by Hodges as follows:

The longing to press forward and apprehend the fullness of the Faith is strong in many Anglicans, and it usually drives them towards Anglo-Catholicism - for fullness, of course, is just what Catholicism promises. But Western Catholicism...is liable to a kind of rigidity, an authoritarianism and an exclusiveness which prevent it from altogether fulfilling its promise...Protestantism too has its own kind of rigidity and exclusiveness, more vicious and more impoverishing than the Catholic kind. One seeks to escape from both into an atmosphere of freedom, flexibility and openness of mind. These are the liberal virtues, and surely, one thinks, where these are truth must be. One is not so sure of it when one sees what becomes of these qualities when divorced from the authority of Bible and tradition. Between these three points the mind of the Church of England moves, and never finds a stable synthesis. But the meaning of the Church of England is to strive and pray for that synthesis; and if it were found, what would it be but western Orthodoxy at last made visible? 13

With this striving Hodges identifies himself, and much of his work is an attempt to bring out the Orthodoxy, or fullness, of the Faith.

This concern with fullness may also be found in Hodges' book on the Atonement, where he considers the doctrine in its widest sense, relating it to the fall and redemption not only of the individual soul, but of the whole world. Again, he tries to understand the Atonement as it affects the whole of a man's Christian life, rather than just the forgiveness of his sins. As we shall see later, Hodges regarded this type of approach as one which a philosopher ought to have towards his work.

1. London: S.C.M., 1955, hereafter referred to as Pattern.
For details of all Hodges' writings, see Bibliography.
2. "Clearing the Ground", Typescript of Broadcast Discussion with Vernon Mallinson, B.B.C. Home Service, 1949, 6th Discussion, p.13.
3. They Became Anglicans ed. Dewi Morgan, London: Mowbray, 1960, p.65.
4. Ibid. p.66, p.70.
5. "A Neglected Page in Anglican Theology", Theology, XLVIII, May 1945, p.105. On the same subject, see "Methodism, A Lost Anglican Doctrine of the Spiritual Life", Sobornost Series 3: No.12, Winter 1952, pp.445-455; reprinted with some alterations as "The Doctrine of Perfection in Charles Wesley's Hymns", in CR: Quarterly Review of the Community of the Resurrection, No.237, 1962, pp.5-10. In these articles Hodges recommends the Methodist doctrine of the spiritual life to Anglicans. Also on Methodism, but not specifically making this point, see "Holiness, Righteousness, Perfection", Sobornost Series 4: No.5, Summer 1961, pp.229-241; "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox II" in We Belong to One Another ed. A.M.Allchin, London: Epworth Press 1965; A Rapture of Praise with A.M.Allchin, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966.
6. Hodges, op.cit., p.10.
7. "A Lost Anglican Doctrine", p.554.
8. "The Doctrine of Perfection", p.5.
9. "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox", p.39.

- IO. See "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox", already cited; Anglicanism and Orthodoxy, London: S.C.M., 1957. Also see Hodges' introduction to Scupoli's book Unseen Warfare, London: Faber, 1952; and his review of Lossky's The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church in Sobornost Series 3: No.24, Spring 1959, pp.648-650. Hodges was a prominent member of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, which is concerned with the relations between Eastern and Western Churches.
- II. "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox", p.40.
- I2. Anglicanism and Orthodoxy, p.52. Although a discussion of Hodges' themes in this book is outside the scope of this work, it is worth drawing attention to E.L.Mascall's treatment and criticism of the book in The Recovery of Unity, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1958, pp.54-64. Mascall feels that Hodges' claim that the West must learn from the East is a little over-simplified. While the spirit of Orthodoxy may be a full expression of the Faith, the Eastern Orthodox Church today is not necessarily a perfect expression of it. Although Hodges does not specifically say that it is, Mascall may well be right in saying that Anglicanism and Orthodoxy gives that impression.
- I3. Ibid., p.56-57.

Chapter Two

Although it is possible to understand why Hodges adhered to Anglicanism, it is more difficult to discover what drew him to Christianity in the first place. He does give some indications, but it is best not to speculate in the absence of any real evidence. However, in a number of places Hodges does give his picture of what the Christian life is, or should be, about. It is important to understand this, because it forms part of the background to his writing on the Atonement, as will be made clear later. Hodges was deeply interested in the road of the mind towards God, and this interest is reflected in his writings on the Christian life. As he himself writes: "All my life through I have been involved in intellectual pursuits, and specifically in philosophy...And all my life through I have been seeking union with God. So it was natural that I should become aware of the part which the mind plays in the approach to God, and of what happens to the mind as it plays it."^I

The first stage of the approach to God must start with the experience of Him. Hodges himself had a belief in God from an early age, although it was not until he was a young man that this matured into a proper Christian commitment, and he passed through a stage of agnosticism at Oxford. Nevertheless some such realisation of the reality of God as he had was, he felt, a necessary pre-requisite for belief in God, or as he put it, "the experiential foundation of God-belief is a peculiar kind of imaginative awareness which

I call the God-vision." By this phrase, Hodges means "a sense of all-pervading power and activity in the things and processes of the world."² This does not necessarily have to be identifiable as a specifically Christian experience. Hodges as a boy "saw" God in the countryside and industry around Sheffield, and he writes that while this was not a Christian experience, it was yet "no pagan power that I saw in the clouded streams and loud peaks of Derbyshire, in the city of fire and steel...It was the God of the 104th Psalm, and the sight of him swallowed up all lesser powers as the sunlight swallows up the stars."³

In a similar way, there must be some sort of experience of Christ before a man can have faith in him:

As there is a God-vision, so too there is a Christ-vision, an intuitive realisation of the truth which comes before the intellectual formulation of it. I suppose one may grow quietly into it, as one may grow into the God-vision. But certainly it may also come as a flash of light, dazzling the mind for a time before settling down into a steady illumination. And it may show Christ in a variety of aspects to different people...But one feature I believe is always present: in one way or another Christ is always seen as God entering into the temporal world and winning a victory there.⁴

Hodges' description of the way the Christ-vision comes to men would seem to correspond to what is described in Protestant circles as "conversion", if it is realised that this is not conversion from unbelief to belief (although in point of time it may coincide with this), but rather it is a conversion from a shallower to a deeper relationship with Christ. Hodges recognises the importance of conversion, while decrying the over-emphasis or mistaken interpretation of the experience

so often found.⁵ The Christian life, and the place of the conversion experience in it, Hodges feels, would be better understood by Protestants, and also by Anglicans, if more attention was paid to the Catholic teaching on the spiritual life. As we have already noticed, Hodges found the Wesleys' teaching particularly helpful at this point.

There must be an awareness of God and of Christ before a man may come to faith, but from a different perspective, the believer has to discipline himself and work out his own way towards the ultimate goal of union with God. This is the theme which is found so often in Catholic writers, and for Hodges it represents part of the fullness of the faith which should characterise the Anglican Church. As has been indicated, there is a strand in Anglicanism which concerns itself with ascetic theology and with mysticism, as for instance, the books of Kenneth Kirk and Evelyn Underhill. Of more importance for an understanding of Hodges would seem to be F.P.Harton's book The Elements of the Spiritual Life, which he once recommended as containing all that it was necessary to know about being a Christian.⁶ However, it is not possible to tell whether Hodges used Harton alone as a guidebook, because Harton's teaching itself reflects the mainstream of Catholic teaching on the subject. Two aspects of this teaching which concern Hodges need to be considered. One is the division of the Christian life into the three ways, and the other is the teaching on contemplation.

The three ways commonly distinguished in Catholic ascetic

II

theology are the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. Hodges finds these divisions helpful, because they correspond to experience. Nevertheless it should be borne in mind that while a believer may have experience of all three stages, "in actual life, in the history of any one person, the stages are likely to overlap a good deal...The application of theory to life must always be flexible, and wait upon the complexity of the facts."⁷

The goal of the Christian life is union with God, and for this to be possible there must be a complete transformation of ourselves:

Such a transformation is not achieved in a moment. There can indeed be moments in the Christian's life when something decisive and lasting is done; but these are only incidents in a continuing process. None of them is the finished work. The Christian's existence on earth is never one of assured possession, but of effortful progression. The goal remains beyond.⁸

The first stage of this effortful progression is the purgative way, where the believer has the "firm resolve to judge and reform (himself) in the light of God's law."⁹ This involves frequent discouragement, because the believer is fighting in his own strength, and often meets with failure. Moral discipline is required to eradicate sinful habits; and alongside this must come discipline of the imagination and the intellect. This involves filling the imagination with thoughts of Christ, and working seriously to understand the Christian Faith. It may seem at this time that little progress is being made, although below the surface something is happening. Elsewhere, Hodges puts it like this:

When we first begin to try to live the Christian life our efforts are awkward and uncoordinated, and for a long time they make little visible impression on the mass of evil in us. This is the period of frustration. The effect, however, is cumulative, and shows itself at last in the shifting of the balance of the personality. A life which had been centred on itself and its own desires and efforts (not necessarily bad ones) comes instead to be centred on its relation to Christ, a relation of trust and loyalty - i.e. 'faith'.¹⁰

Such a change represents the passing from the purgative to the illuminative way.

It is at this point that Hodges would place the conversion experience as it occurred to the Wesleys and others like them. Seen in this way, conversion will not be mistakenly regarded as the end-point of a man's spiritual development, when in truth it is more nearly a beginning. But however the change comes about, the believer now has a deeper relationship with Christ, who is known as the source of the spiritual life, and He provides the energy to overcome sin. At first on the illuminative way, prayer is more simple, and the mind turns naturally and easily towards God; but later the soul may seem to be passing through a dark night, purged of delight in prayer. This, says Hodges, is so that she may learn that "the core of religion is not 'religious experience' but simply a quiet naked adherence to God for His own sake."¹¹

The third stage, the unitive way, is more difficult to describe, but two things, says Hodges, are certain. One is that "the illuminative way is not the end of the road... in the end a time will come when the old personality, centred on self, has finally been broken up, and the soul...is now

fully committed to God, and ruled by love of Him...She lives in habitual recollection, in habitual adherence to His will."¹² The second is that prayer reaches the highest point of simplicity when it becomes contemplation.

We shall be discussing contemplation more fully shortly, but first it should be noted that it is here that Hodges believes Wesley had a great contribution to make. For he notices that there is, albeit undesigned and unconscious, a

parallelism between Wesley's theology of the spiritual life as a whole and the old catholic doctrine of the three-fold way. The early stage where the pilgrim has the faith of a servant but not yet that of a son is certainly the purgative way. The symptoms of the period following conversion agree with those of the illuminative way, chequered by elements of the dark night. The state of the perfect is clearly the unitive way.¹³

Catholic theology may teach much about the spiritual life, but does not recognise the conversion experience, whereas Wesley's doctrine of conversion is his single greatest merit, writes Hodges: "Taken in its context it is not merely a true understanding of Reformation teaching...but an integration of it with Catholic tradition, where it fills an unrecognised gap."¹⁴ This issue will be seen to have important consequences for the doctrine of the Atonement when we turn to Hodges' treatment of it.

Another point of interest arising from Hodges' discussion of the three ways is his belief that the Church too must enter upon the dark night of the soul. As he writes in "Holiness, Righteousness, Perfection", there must be "a purgation, a stripping, a breaking of idols in order that the true ikon may appear,

a dark night of the intellect overtaking the Church. For the Church has its dark night no less than the individual soul, and is now entering into a deep phase of it. And for the Church, as for the individual soul, the word on entering into the night is 'Wait and pray'.¹⁵ Similarly he writes elsewhere, "The corporate intellect and imagination of Christendom, embodied in the traditional theological habits and formulae, is being subjected to a purgation." When we see the troubles which envelop the Church, we should not be discouraged, or try to take refuge in the past, but we must recognise the hand of God in it all, and "go boldly through the valley of the shadow, because God is with us."¹⁶ Hodges desired the effective witness of a reformed Church in the world, but he had no illusions about the road which would have to be trodden before this could become a reality.

We now turn to a discussion of contemplation. As we have already seen, Hodges was especially interested in the part which the mind plays in the road to God. It was this which he took for his theme in Typescript, for it was here that he felt he had some sort of contribution to make. As the believer grows nearer to God, he will learn to contemplate, and Hodges describes how this may be done:

We have to take ourselves in hand gradually, and teach ourselves first of all to keep our central object - God, or whatever it is - constantly in mind, stopping to think of it in the midst of other things, making it as far as possible our constant concern. And we have to think around about it, look at it from different points of view, bring it into relation with our desires and aspirations and our everyday concerns. If we keep on doing this, in time we shall become more and more interested

in that one central thing, more and more thinking, feeling, acting in the light of it, until our whole personality is unified by this one prevailing passion. This is the only way of spiritual growth.¹⁷

To do this requires discipline of the will as its foundation, since the way is not an easy one; for in contemplation of God, the believer comes up against one of the deepest problems of the Christian life. We realise that God is "far beyond our experience and our intellectual range...in unapproachable light", and yet, "we need to look. He haunts us...we are drawn to seek closer intimacy with him."¹⁸ This theme is of course one of the chief concerns of St. Anselm's Proslogion.¹⁹ Hodges summarises the problem thus:

God, as the supreme ideal and synthesis of all ideals, is supremely admirable and supremely attractive. We are drawn to contemplate, to imitate, to worship Him. Being higher than all height, He is supremely humbling, and draws us to His service...But at the same time we know that God is beyond us, and His will is beyond our conceiving. Can we even contemplate Him truly, without weaving our own fantasies which will become idols and get between Him and us?²⁰

There are ways of seeing God indirectly - through the God-vision, for example, or in religious art, and anything may serve as a means of "disclosure" of God to us, as Ian Ramsey indicates. But what is sought here is some way of seeing God directly. If, as Irenaeus says, "the life of man is the vision of God",²¹ then we must find some way of achieving that vision.

In order to contemplate God, one may concentrate on a particular concept about God, perhaps using some visible image or symbol, but this will not be adequate:

we shall realise that no concept can express all that we mean when we think of God, and the object of our

contemplation will darken into a mystery. Then in the course of time the image or mantra will be felt to be a distraction, and it will fade out of our consciousness, leaving only the sightless seeing of the Invisible. Though in a sense this vision is a blank, it is not the blank of nothingness, but of a fullness which exceeds all our power of comprehension.²²

It is at this point, says Hodges, that the theme of Typescript, "the mind's pilgrimage from the initial imaginative God-vision to the dark contemplation of God", converges with the "account of how prayer matures from its first beginnings to the dark contemplation of the mystic. Dark contemplation is the point at which the two lines of movement converge."²³ For long habituation in thinking about God brings us to the point where we realise that we can never know the whole truth about Him, nor express in words all that we do mean. Thus darkness falls upon the mind. Prayer is usually in the form of discourse, but it too enters the dark cloud of contemplation when we can converse with God only by "inarticularly meaning all that we cannot say and think."²⁴ Certainly it is possible to mean something we are unable finally to express in a prayer, and if the subject of our attention is God, our thoughts may not be able to encompass all we might have hoped to grasp in our contemplation of Him.

It is a step forward, says Hodges, when we realise that we fail to see God not because a cloud blocks the view, but because of the nature of God Himself. We see "a pool of blank darkness, and know intuitively that that is God." A further step comes when we "turn our mind towards God and find ourselves neither enveloped in the cloud nor facing

an Invisible Fullness, but facing a blank, as if nobody and nothing were there."²⁵ Further than this comes the step when the self itself fades from our consciousness. Here, in "pushing ahead to the non-vision of the Non-Object we come to the end of a line of exploration, but we have not reached the goal of the mind's quest." The divine purpose for man lies in a fully human life for him, and that "can mean nothing less than individual selfhood, personal consciousness, intellectual activity...and a rich life of sensory experience. The doctrine of resurrection promises us all this, though in a very different form and environment from what we now experience."²⁶ So the real contemplative life to which the Christian looks forward is that which will come after death. Something like the kind of God-consciousness which will be normal then, says Hodges, is "available intermittently to some of us even here."²⁷

In some ways what Hodges says here is unusual - what, for example, does he mean by the "non-vision of the Non-Object"? Yet it is possible to make some sense of this sort of language, by reminding ourselves that God cannot be thought to be an object in the same way as we think and then speak of perceptible objects, nor can He be seen in the same way. We are not primarily concerned at this point with analysing exactly what Hodges means here, but with its possible relevance to our understanding of The Pattern of Atonement. Firstly it has relevance because Hodges feels that the corruption of man's nature is one of the problems resulting from the fall, and this means that the intellect loses its proper good,

which is the contemplation of God. Therefore a part of man's redemption must involve the restoration of the intellect, for "Man is made for the contemplation of Him in whose image he is made";²⁸ the intellect is restored to its rightful position when it is directed towards God in loving contemplation. Secondly, Hodges believes that contemplation plays an important role in spiritual growth. Yet if it is such an important part of the Christian life, why is the language Hodges uses in talking of contemplation so unusual in non-Catholic circles? This would be regarded as a defect by Hodges, but it is possible that the sort of experience he is describing is not unknown even where it is not recognised, or taken as far as Hodges suggests it can be taken. For although the idea of mystical contemplation might seem more appropriate in talking of mystics as such, Hodges is not speaking of a life devoted to unremitting contemplation, but of the value of such experiences as we do have, that is:

a life penetrated throughout by the influence of those contemplative moments which are ours.

The fact that in actual life contemplation has affective and volitional accompaniments which make it not only a quasi-cognitive state, but a form of prayer, of course strengthens and enriches its influence upon the whole life. It plays a significant part in the progress of the soul towards integration in itself and union with God.²⁹

The whole picture of ascetic theology is "not complete or properly balanced unless this is included."³⁰ Kirk gives a similar picture of the place and value of mystical experience in the Christian life:

So far then from being rare, the mystical experience

is at once the commonest and the greatest of human accidents...In every...contact with whatever is true and honourable and just and pure and lovely and of good report the true Christian tradition allows, and indeed constrains, us to recognise the first traces of the vision of God. What Christianity offers...is the same vision in ever-increasing plenitude; vouchsafed in such measure as will avail against the worst temptations, the deepest sorrow, the most ingrained self-seeking, and will give constant and daily increase of strength, encouragement and illumination.³¹

Thirdly, Hodges draws a parallel between art and contemplation, and although he does not say so explicitly, this may point to another possible value in contemplation. The parallel is not exact, in that the artist deals specifically with images, while the religious contemplative seeks to pass beyond the images he has used; yet both find their meaning in the stare of contemplation. In particular, we may notice that one feature of the work of the artist to which Hodges draws our attention is the "persistent drive towards clear apprehension and vivid realisation of things."³² For as we shall see, Hodges saw his work as a philosopher to be a struggle for clarity, and saw himself as an opener of blind eyes. Here we find him saying the same thing of the artist, for

if opening blind eyes is one of the works of Messiah, the artist has potentially a place in the work of redemption, whether he knows it or not. All this...just by virtue of being an artist at all. He redeems our sensuous nature by opening our eyes and ears to the glory of colour and sound. He chastens and purges our imagination by forcing us to look honestly at the world around us, to see human character, human actions and relationships, as they are.³³

The artist forces us to look clearly at other people and at the world around us, and he is like the philosopher, in that both exemplify the same "struggle for clear vision and precision

of statement."³⁴

So does contemplation as such help us to have clearer vision? Does the striving to see and understand God more clearly lead to a mind that is more open towards our fellow men? At least the man who has trained himself to think habitually about God, will see God in His creatures and in His world; and again, as we shall see, the believer should be open to seeing God in, and hearing God speak through, his fellow men. The discipline of contemplation, despite its relative unpopularity in this country at least, has an important part to play in the Christian life, and we shall find references to it in Hodges' book on the Atonement which will confirm this.

Alongside the growth in contemplation goes the life of prayer. A.M.Allchin in an Obituary on Hodges speaks of Hodges' interest in prayer and worship,³⁵ but in Hodges' writings there is little emphasis on this. The life of prayer receives little emphasis perhaps because Hodges' first priority was to remind people of the meaning of "contemplation", and it is with this that he is primarily concerned. However, as one would expect, we can learn that for Hodges, the non-Christian world could be brought to God in prayer. This he perhaps learnt from Gilbert Shaw, a close friend of Hodges, of whom he wrote:

Those whom he in some measure taught to pray were always reminded that we are to approach God with the world... 'on our heart'. Prayer is not withdrawal from the world and its troubles into a warm quiet place with God; it is the bringing of those troubles into God's

presence, where the otherwise hopeless agony of human life may become redemptive suffering.³⁶

This idea emerges in a number of other places, for example in Death and Life Have Contended³⁷ where Hodges writes:

there is a temptation to...make prayer an escape, a passage into a quiet haven away from the stress of the world. This is...the wrong way. What we have to do with evil is to bring it into the Church, into the Sacraments, into our prayers, into the heart of God... it is a share in his suffering who faced it all at full blast, though it was none of his.

This sort of suffering is especially the calling of those who are intellectuals, and it is appropriate to close by quoting Hodges' description of their task, for it is in many senses his own, and also leads us on to a discussion of Hodges' work as a Christian philosopher:

He must be radical and yet impartial in criticism, insisting that no one has all the truth, and thus he will displease all impatient people, including his own impatient self. But his real work is done invisibly, in the imagination and the intellect, where he must labour to penetrate to the heart of the conflicting doctrines, to the spiritual attitudes underlying them, to experience in himself the intolerable tension of their mutual antagonism, and in the exercise of Christ's royal priesthood, with which as a member of Christ he is clothed, to present the suffering world to the Father. This is the peculiar liturgy or service of all who live the life of the mind. It is their peculiar share of the Passion of Christ. It is theirs to see and endure not so much the broken body, the torn flesh of the world, but its twisted and distracted mind, and uniting its suffering and their own with the suffering of Christ, to pray prevailingly.³⁸

- I. Unpublished Typescript, p.5. This is the typescript of the book Hodges finished a few days before his death, as yet unpublished, but kindly loaned to me by his widow Vera Hodges. Hodges had intended calling it Thoughts of a Sceptical Believer, but as there is some doubt whether it will be published under this title, I refer to it here as Typescript.
2. Ibid., p.18.
3. Ibid., p.19.
4. Ibid., p.29. It should be noted that Hodges does not use the term "religious experience", because this phrase is easily misused or misunderstood; rather he uses his own terms, and defines them.
5. We shall be discussing this further in our analysis of Chapter Four of Pattern.
6. London: S.P.C.K., 1932. I am indebted for this piece of information to The Revd. R.P.McDermott.
7. The Way of Integration, London: Epworth Press, 1951, p.28.
8. Typescript, p.4.
9. Way of Integration, p.29.
10. "A Neglected Page", p.106.
11. Way of Integration, p.33-34.
12. Ibid., p.34.
13. "A Neglected Page", p.110; cf. p.106.
14. Ibid., p.110.
15. "Holiness, Righteousness, Perfection", p.240.
16. "The Integration of Heathenism and Unbelief into the Life of the

- Christian Church", Sobornost, Series 29, June 1944, p.9.
17. "What is Religion?", The Listener, April 22nd, 1943, p.483.
18. Typescript, p.62 and p.63.
19. Hodges attaches great significance to this book, and makes frequent mention of it. In one place he speaks of "Anselm, whose Proslogion is, or ought to be, the guide-book of the intellectual Christian." "Christian Obedience in the University", The Student World, XLI, 1947-48, p.143.
20. Christianity and the Modern World View, London: S.C.M., 1949, p.58-59. Hereafter Modern World View.
21. Quoted in K.E.Kirk, The Vision of God, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, p.1.
22. Typescript, p.64. cf. "What is to Become of Philosophical Theology?" in Contemporary British Philosophy, ed. H.D. Lewis, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956, p.229, where Hodges notes that the conception of God is "the conception of something essentially mysterious and incommensurable with all objects of our experience...Yet it is just this mysterious character which makes God really God".
23. Typescript, p.64.
24. Ibid., p.66.
25. Ibid., p.67.
26. Ibid., p.69.
27. Ibid., p.70.
28. Pattern, p.18.
29. Typescript, p.69.

30. Ibid., p.5.
31. Kirk, op.cit., p.464-465.
32. "Art and Religion", Church Quarterly Review, CXLVI, July-Sept. 1948, p.133.
33. Ibid., p.135.
34. Ibid., p.134.
35. Sobornost, Series 7, No.4, 1977, p.307. Hodges' interest in worship is reflected in his writings on hymns and hymn-writers.
36. "Obituary: The Revd. Gilbert Shaw", Sobornost, Series 5, No.6, Winter-Spring 1968, p.452-453.
37. London: S.C.M., 1964, p.88.
38. The Christian in the Modern University, London: S.C.M., 1946, p.24. Hereafter Modern University.

Chapter Three

It is important to understand how Hodges saw his own aims. We have already seen that the search for fullness was an important influence, which is reflected in his work; but more influential is Hodges' desire for clarity. He believed one of the chief aims of the philosopher should be the clarification of various issues, and it was as a philosopher, with this aim in view, that he approached his work. This is certainly the case with his book on the Atonement, which he himself describes as a "philosopher's analysis, taking for its object ideas and standpoints rather than books and writers, and aiming at clarity for the sake of proportion."¹ In order to give a more precise meaning to the phrase "philosopher's analysis" as Hodges understood it, we turn to a study of what he believed the work of a philosopher should involve, and how he applied this in practice to his own work.

There are several places where Hodges describes the work of the philosopher. One of the clearest occurs in an article entitled "What's the Point of Philosophy?",² and it is worth quoting at length because it illustrates Hodges' own approach. He writes that people expect a philosopher to be

a man with a broad view of life, who can see an issue clearly and state it precisely, who can form a balanced judgement on it without being misled by prejudice or propaganda...philosophers as you meet them - fall short of this ideal...but it is our ideal and it is the aim we set before ourselves. All our work is a discipline, a training for this...(philosophers) are people of a reflective cast of mind, who like to understand themselves and others, to see what makes them think and act as they

do - they have also been struck by the variety of opinions on so many important issues...And we are not content merely to take a side in the great controversies. We are anxious to understand both sides and to get to the root of the matter, to see what is really at stake, and only when we have done this will we venture to reach a decision...There is an inexhaustible delight in tracking down beliefs and principles to their roots, in getting your mind clear when it has been confused, in getting inside other people's minds and understanding how they come to see things so differently...at the same time (you are) learning a good deal about your own mind - about your own motives and ways of thinking, your own strength and weakness. And so philosophy is one way of carrying out the old Greek motto: know yourself.

It would be possible to parallel this description from elsewhere in Hodges' writings, but it is not necessary. What is more useful in that it expands the idea expressed in the last part of the above paragraph, is the following quotation from another of Hodges' articles:

The precondition of sound work in philosophy will then be that one should be able and ready to make a deep self-analysis, to discover what is one's fundamental attitude to life and the world, and what assumptions this attitude involves, and then...to take these assumptions upon oneself with clear consciousness and full deliberation, and try to reduce all the details of one's thinking to conformity with them. Everyone must necessarily be himself, though with elements of inconsistency... The philosopher will be the man who chooses to be himself, and goes about it with all the consistency of which he is capable.³

We can also gather some information about Hodges' view of the philosopher's task from his major publications in philosophy. In terms of length at least, these were his two books on Dilthey's philosophy,⁴ and his Riddell Memorial Lecture, Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes⁵. Although those works of Hodges which are specifically on philosophy are outside the scope of the present study, it is necessary

to make some reference to them in view of their importance for Hodges himself. One question which should be looked at, however briefly, is the question as to how far Hodges was influenced by Dilthey. Without entering too deeply into such a discussion, we can focus our attention in two directions. In the first direction, we can learn something from Hodges' recommendation to follow Dilthey, and in the other direction we find that there are a number of places in Hodges' other works where he mentions Dilthey, or uses language similar to that of Dilthey to make a variety of points. With regard to the first direction, we can see that Hodges is concerned, in more than one of his writings, about the "scattered fragments which today represent the human studies in schools and universities." He recommends that we should follow Dilthey in trying to see "human studies" as a unity, all bearing on one another, a "body of knowledge and training within which various types of mind could choose their peculiar fields of study...(while)... constantly under the controlling influence of the whole." Although the situation was different from today's in many respects, Hodges felt at the time that it was a "matter of urgency that more of those who control the education of the young should follow in the path pointed out by Dilthey."⁶

Turning now to our second direction of attention, we can find several traces of Dilthey in Hodges' work, and from these traces can produce three helpful instances which help us to appreciate Hodges' philosophical approach to various issues. First of all, we can find some correspondence between

Hodges' article "Art and Religion", and Dilthey's evaluation of the arts, which relates to Hodges' concern for the state of education which we have just mentioned. Hodges says of Dilthey that the arts were to him "the indispensable foundation of sound work in the human studies", and that they could "train the capacity for understanding, create symbols and enrich language, give us a deep insight into the workings of the mind, show us how to analyse human situations".⁷ This may be compared with what Hodges himself says about the work of the artist.⁸ Furthermore, we should pay particular attention to the fact that Hodges himself often speaks of "standpoints", since we shall be considering the significance of seeing Christianity as a standpoint in a later chapter. For the moment, we may note that Dilthey devoted much space to examining standpoints, which he called Weltanschauungen. In Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes, Hodges describes what he means by a standpoint, and compares his own use of the word with Dilthey's. A standpoint, he writes, is "a set of principles or presuppositions, together with the type of question to which they give rise and the way of looking at things which results from them". In a note he comments:

A standpoint as here defined has much in common with a Weltanschauung as defined by Dilthey. The differences are two. A Weltanschauung is always a standpoint from which one regards the whole of experience, whereas standpoints in my sense can refer to a narrower field than that. Also, a Weltanschauung always includes valuational and preceptive elements, whereas a standpoint in my sense may, but need not, include such elements.⁹

Finally we find that Hodges mentions a conception of Dilthey's

to the effect that the philosopher must "make a serious effort of imagination to secure a living vision of the structure of the human mind...he will then carry this vision into every branch of his enquiries, which will find in it their principle of unity."¹⁰ This tells us something about Hodges' desire to understand the minds of other people, in order to do his work properly. There are these points of contact, then, between Hodges and Dilthey, which are well worth noticing for the sake of understanding Hodges' work. We might take as Hodges' own summary of what he had learned from his study of Dilthey his remark that "the art of the philosopher lies in finding a point of view which can be thought through without inconsistency, and lived out without disaster."¹¹

To go on from this summary statement is to be aware that Hodges was only too alert to the need for a philosophy to be capable of being lived out, because he had experienced occasions when life seemed meaningless, and he doubted the reality of everything. The cause of this was "critical questioning pushed to the limit with no counterbalancing forces", which resulted in a "weakening and even occultation of the sense of reality."¹² Although a "God-seer" from boyhood, Hodges had also, he writes, "a strong streak of defensiveness which, when I reached the age of reason, showed itself in sceptical questioning."¹³ This scepticism led to the loss of a sense of reality, what he called an "existential void, an abyss of nihilism." He had this experience first at the age of fifteen, and then twice more in the next twelve years; and escaped

out of it only through a moment of insight which restored his world to him. A consistent and thorough-going scepticism was not possible to live by, because, as Hodges wrote later, "we cannot begin to reason until we have accepted some facts and principles, which will be the basis for our reasoning",¹⁴ and without such bases as anchors for our reasoning, it is easy to lose touch with reality. Some assumptions must be made. Nevertheless, scepticism can be a useful and important tool for the philosopher, and this was so for Hodges - a point which emerges from Allchin's comment on him, that his mind was marked "not only by a great lucidity, but also by a great scepticism. It was his job as a philosopher to doubt everything. He did it very thoroughly."¹⁵ But this was not done in the same way as it had been when he had experienced his crises of negation.

It is also of interest to note that for Hodges it was the problems associated with philosophical thinking which concerned him more than the antitheses some find between "science" and "religion", for example. What real conflict there is, he wrote, is "not between the teachings of science and those of Christianity, but between the spirit and temper of our scientific age and the Christian outlook on life."¹⁶ In fact, Hodges felt that science and religion should be able to work together, since in "the determination to be rid of illusion, and the stern intellectual and emotional discipline employed to that end, Christianity and science are very much alike. They ought to be able to understand one another and

work together on a common task."¹⁷ Hodges leaves aside discussion of the problems related to these two, and concerns himself rather with the challenge to Christianity implicit in rival world views, as we shall see later.

The problem for Hodges, therefore, was to integrate the two sides of his work as a philosopher and as a Christian. This was a very important consideration, as he says:

I myself was once asked whether I did or did not try to find a common ground on which my Christianity and my philosophy could meet. The question was surely absurd...a philosopher cannot let two sides of his intellectual life stay unco-ordinated. He is bound to take seriously the question of the relation between them.¹⁸

Again, Allchin writes that it was not easy "to be a philosopher and a theologian at the same time, particularly in this country and at this moment in history. Hodges could not but be aware of the gulf existing between the two disciplines in most centres of learning, nor was he unconscious of a dialectic within himself."¹⁹ How then did Hodges relate the two? Although he gives no clear indication, the answer may lie partly in the fact that Hodges saw Christianity as an all-inclusive world-view, making a difference to the whole of life. Thus he could not be a philosopher without at the same time being a Christian philosopher; and although this does not explain how he solved all the problems of the relationship between theology and philosophy, at least we can say that he related the two by using his philosophy as a tool for the service of God. Hodges' profession is the means by which he serves God: "I see myself as an opener of blind eyes; or at least

as one committed by his profession to opening blind eyes; that is my share in the works of Messiah."²⁰ So having seen already how Hodges viewed the work of the philosopher, we are now at the place where we can turn to see how he applied this to matters which in his view are of importance to Christians. One area where Christians need to have their eyes opened is in the understanding of their society, and their responsibilities in a predominantly non-Christian country. "It is essential", he writes, "that Christians should think out their position in all matters where they have a responsibility for action";²¹ In other words, Christians should think not only about "religious" concerns, but also about social and political affairs; and this is doubly important in that the witness of the Church is impaired by its neglect of the problems of the society in which it exists. Therefore in the same article, Hodges stresses that

Christians ought now, (corporately) before anything else, to take stock of their position and think out afresh the meaning and implications of their creed. It is from social problems that the most obvious need arises, because ours is a generation especially concerned about problems of society; but it would be impossible to go far into these without coming out into the fields of philosophy and theology, where first principles are discussed. The presentation of the faith to the modern world is hampered by the intellectual vapidness of its adherents, a vapidness which is the result of past overconfidence and sloth. If moral rearmament is to mean anything effective, it must mean for Christians an attempt to recover, in dependence upon God, that intellectual vitality without which moral action must succumb to sentiment and tabu.²²

Christians have a responsibility to think out their position, and try to understand what is being thought, said and done in the community in which they live, partly to be an effective

witness, but also in order to show love to their fellow men.

Love for our fellow men will involve being open to them, listening to them, and trying to understand them. For, says Hodges, "openness, and the attitude towards other people in which it finds expression, is what Christianity means by love."²³ Hodges elsewhere describes what he means by the open-mindedness which is Christian love; and it is interesting to notice how closely this parallels what Hodges said about the work of the philosopher - and it illustrates how it is possible for the Christian to be a philosopher:

Christian openmindedness...was the openness of one person to another, learning to speak and to listen without reserves, to lower your defences, and to listen again without building barriers, in that most Christian form of listening, where to listen is to be transformed by what you hear...Each of God's creatures has as much right to speak as you have, as much right to see, and to say what he sees...there is no human being, however foolish, ignorant or prejudiced, who may not be to me at some moment the vehicle of the Word of God. He may not know it: very often the Word is spoken by men who do not know they are speaking it, but it is spoken... To be open to other men is to be open to God.²⁴

Similarly, Hodges writes elsewhere:

Wherever I see a man, I see one to whom God speaks, and for whose good will God has paid a great price. This gives to every human being an inalienable value, a claim on our reverence and regard. And it is not only that God speaks to men: He can also speak through them. No man is omniscient or infallible, and in God's providence each may learn from any. In each man, therefore, we must see not only a potential²⁵ hearer of the Word but also its potential vehicle.

Christian love, then, will desire to bring men to Christ, but it will also means seeking to understand and also to learn from the other. In The Pattern of Atonement we shall find evidence of this sort of openness. An important characteristic

of the book is the fact that Hodges has tried to be fair to other traditions and other ideas; and turning to his writings in general, we find that he is willing to learn from non-Christian traditions, even ones which are hostile to Christianity, and which have usually been condemned by Christians. Examples of this might be Hodges' writings on Nietzsche and Marx. Hodges takes seriously Nietzsche's contention that "God is dead", believing it to contain an element of truth. But Christians should ask the question, " 'is it true that God is dead or dying, or is it the idols that are getting smashed, so that the real God may be revealed to us?' "²⁶ Marxism interested Hodges, not simply as an historical phenomenon to be dealt with, but as a consistent and coherent world-view which can challenge Christianity because it can command "not merely men's assent but their allegiance."²⁷ Christians can learn from Marxism, perhaps, how they should present their faith.

- I. Pattern, p.II.
2. The Listener, 24th May, 1945, p.577.
3. "A Study of Wilhelm Dilthey's Philosophy", Laudate, XVIII, 1939, Part V, p.35-36.
4. Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Turner & Co., 1944; and The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952.
5. London: O.U.P., 1953.
6. "A Study of Wilhelm Dilthey's Philosophy", Part V, p.45.
And see especially "The Meaning of Synthesis", Synthesis in Education, ed. Dymes, Institute of Sociology, 1945.
7. "A Study of Wilhelm Dilthey's Philosophy", Part III, p.I8I.
8. See above, p.I9.
9. Hodges, op.cit., p.I5.
10. "A Study of Wilhelm Dilthey's Philosophy", Part II, p.86-87.
11. "Phenomenology", Phenomenology, Goodness and Beauty, P.A.S. Suppl. Vol. XI, 1932, p.95.
12. Typescript, p.52.
13. Ibid., p.5I.
14. Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes, p.6I.
15. "Obituary", p.307.
16. "Christianity in an Age of Science", in Real Life is Meeting ed. J.H.Oldham, London: Sheldon Press, 1942, p.48.
17. "Science and Ethics", The Guardian, Jan.Ist, 1943, p.4.
18. Modern World View, p.I2.
19. "Obituary", p.307.
20. Way of Integration, p.8.

21. "The Meaning of Moral Rearmament", Theology, XXXVIII, Jan.-June, 1939, p.331.
22. Ibid., p.331-332.
23. Typescript, p.4.
24. "Christian Obedience in the University", p.141.
25. Modern University, p.14.
26. "Clearing the Ground", Third Discussion, p.4.
27. "The Thought of Karl Marx", Christian Faith and Communist Faith ed. D.M.Mackinnon, London: Macmillan, 1953, p.19.

Chapter Four.

In this introduction, we have tried to examine some of the background to Hodges' ideas, and have looked specifically at the aspects of his thought relevant to his book on the Atonement. We have also seen the aims he had before him in his work - that is, to clarify and to understand, to "get inside the mind" of non-Christians. But we must also look briefly at Hodges' approach to writing theology as a philosopher, his use of language, and methodology - all this by way of prologomena to The Pattern of Atonement.

We must deal first with two related questions. Has religious language any meaning? And how is it possible to know anything about God, whether He exists, and what He is like? Both of these are philosophical questions. Some empiricists might answer "no" to the first question. However, their principles are by no means universally accepted, and Hodges feels that the question to be answered about religious discourse is not whether it can be verified through "sense experience", but "whether religious discourse can be regarded as fulfilling a real purpose in human life, and in particular whether it can be regarded as leading to the discovery of some kind of truth."^I

This question is not easy to answer. The defender of theism raises questions to which he offers theism as the answer. But one may dispute whether such questions are themselves meaningful, or whether the alleged answer is really an answer at all. Hodges, having stated these points, goes on to say

that "on the one hand it is prima facie paradoxical to deny logical meaning to religious discourse, because people can talk to one another and understand one another and argue with one another in that medium." Yet on the other hand, "to some people religious utterances really do seem to convey little or nothing."² Believers themselves may find it hard to understand religious language in some cases, for the language used in religious activities is "in constant need of interpretation and commentary, even for the faithful to whom it should be familiar... If the philosopher lets himself go on this material he will not find himself at a loss for distinctions to draw, abstractions to make, or antinomies to wrestle with."³ Again, says Hodges, "those whose logical and linguistic ideal is clarity and distinctness are not at home with religious language."⁴ Yet Hodges himself is both a philosopher, and one whose ideal is clarity and distinctness, so how does he manage to accept religious language, and sometimes use it without explaining how he finds it to be meaningful, as for example in The Pattern of Atonement?

The answer to this will begin to emerge when we realise that the problem about the meaning and relevance of religious language is dependent upon what is taken to be the nature of God Himself. Thus we find ourselves led on to the second question before we can answer the first satisfactorily. For God is inaccessible to sense-perception, and has no physical body; and so, says Hodges,

since we have...no perceptual acquaintance with persons

otherwise than as physical organisms possessed of intelligence, and we have therefore no empirical knowledge of how conscious, intellectual acts and processes could take place otherwise than as events in the history of such an organism, it follows that there is an inherent obscurity in anything that we may say by way of ascribing personal characteristics to God.⁵

How can we, then, talk about God? One way used to talk about Him is by means of analogy, but even this is not satisfactory, because it involves contrasting the infinite with the finite, and "unless we have some notion of what the infinite as contrasted with the finite actually is, this doctrine is an indirect way of saying that theological statements are unintelligible because of indefiniteness."⁶ All we can say is that God is different from anything that we do know and can describe. Again, some people have thought that it was possible to present Christianity as a quasi-scientific hypothesis, but God cannot be "proved" in this way, for not only the content but also the manner of religious belief is different from belief in a scientific hypothesis. In the first place, the "facts and experiences to which theist or Christian apologists appeal are not comparable with real scientific observations or experiments"; and in the second place, "whether we like it or not, religious belief is treated by those who hold it as an ontological insight." Hodges means by this that "religious belief is not based on an accumulation of instances, but on a way of conceiving the structure of all that is; and it is held not as a theory which further evidence might modify, but as a fundamental and immutable truth."⁷

If this is true, and because of the nature of God

we must expect religious language to be difficult, can any defence be made for its use? Hodges replies that we should not expect theological discourse to be meaningful in terms of an empiricist logic, and anyone who would take theology seriously must replace the empiricist logic with one more favourable to theology, one which believes that the proper study of mankind does include the "metaphysical questions with which we have seen that theology is bound up." This leads into wider fields of study, for

the issue between the metaphysical and the empiricist thought-paradigm is not merely an issue between two ways of thinking; the different thought-paradigms are connected with different views of the proper aims and conduct of life in general, and the adoption of one thought-paradigm as against the other is therefore also implicitly a preference for the life-pattern which naturally goes with it. And when we come to balancing rival life-patterns against one another we are surely not far from ethical (or should I say existential?) questions.⁸

We are here speaking of standpoints, and we shall be returning to a consideration of that subject in the final section; what is clear in the answer to our question is that while Hodges recognised the confusion evident in much religious language, he also felt that it was a meaningful form of discourse. For if one accepts, for whatever reason, the Christian world-view, then one accepts the possibility that the metaphysical mode of thought and speech can make sense. Hodges accepted the Christian view of things, and therefore seems to have acknowledged the truth in Christian teaching and tradition. This fact clearly emerges in his writings, perhaps particularly in his book on the Atonement.

It is curious at first sight to find in The Pattern of Atonement what some might regard as an almost naive acceptance of Scripture and tradition. Hodges speaks of Christ as actually performing miracles, as triumphing over very real powers of evil, as really rising from the dead. Yet much biblical commentary "demythologises" miracles and satanic powers, and the resurrection also, to a lesser or greater extent. Even more surprising might be Hodges' use of the story of Adam and Eve, as if it were accredited history, rather than a section of Genesis abandoned as unhistorical by all but fundamentalists. Our question here is why, in view of the current debate on these issues, Hodges uses such language without comment.

The answer to this question seems to be two-fold. Hodges says in The Pattern of Atonement that he is trying to describe Christ's work "as Scripture and experience present it to us".⁹ The first part of the answer, then, is that Scripture is an authority, to be accepted because it is if not alone central, at least of considerable importance to the Christian Faith. Hodges, as a Christian, feels bound to accept its teaching; although he is not a fundamentalist, nor does he consider Scripture of such prime importance that it alone is authoritative on every issue. We may gain some insight into the way Hodges regards the Bible by paying attention to what he writes about angels in "Angels and Human Knowledge". There he states that he will not defend the Christian belief in the existence of the angelic world, but that his paper is "written by a Christian for Christians, and it moves entirely within the context of

the Faith. It does not discuss whether there are angels. It assumes that there are, because they and their activities are part of the Faith."¹⁰ In the same way, the traditions contained in Scripture are part of the Faith; and although it may not be possible to argue forcibly that those who do not accept a Christian standpoint should accept its tenets, taken as a whole, the Christian world-view is consistent. We may also remember that Hodges' book on the Atonement is intended primarily for those who have some familiarity with the Christian Faith, or who are themselves Christians.

The second part of our answer is that Hodges draws on experience; and by this in turn we may understand two things. Experience may refer to our own personal experience of what makes sense of the way we see the world; or it may refer to the accumulated wisdom and tradition of the Christian Church through the centuries. On the one hand, therefore, we can bear in mind that as a philosopher accustomed to questioning everything, Hodges would be unlikely to accept the beliefs of Christianity without examining them for himself. An indication of this sort of attitude might be Hodges' comment that he takes the first eleven chapters of Genesis as presenting a Christian view not simply on the Bible's authority, but also because, he says, "I look at the world and find it so."¹¹

As we noted on the other hand, experience may also mean tradition, and Hodges uses references from the Fathers to support his argument, as well as more recent religious teachers such as Wesley. Thus he discusses justification with reference

variously to Reformation theologians, Anglican documents, and Catholic statements on the subject. These may all illumine the problems for us, and must be taken into account for a full picture of the Atonement to be given. As one who claimed to be a Catholic Anglican, Hodges attached himself to the tradition of doctrine stretching back through Church history, which Anglicans value.

It is with reference to these two standards of Scripture and experience that Hodges expounds the doctrine of the Atonement. It is perhaps worth while at this stage to make comment on how he uses Scripture and experience interpreted as tradition. His use of the tradition is necessarily somewhat eclectic, with so much to draw on. Hodges examines the Atonement in particular with regard to the controversies surrounding the subject, and its related theme of justification, at the time of the Reformation. He therefore quotes several times from the documents of that era; but it is not possible to tell whether Hodges has only studied the documents which he quotes, or whether he was familiar with more of the material to which he refers. In other words, we may well ask whether Hodges was in a position to give a fair appraisal of the ideas of the time, and hence ask how far his assessment was reliable? It is easier to discover how he used Scripture. First of all, we have already said that Hodges was no fundamentalist, and he accepts that there are errors and obscurities in the Bible. But, he asks, might not this be deliberate, with the Holy Spirit choosing to speak through this medium, so that

"the literary character of the Bible is of a piece with the humble circumstances of the incarnate Lord."¹² But for Hodges' purposes, the literary questions as to who wrote what, and in what original form, are side issues. For it is as a whole that the Bible has been used in Christendom, and has been taken as giving authoritative teaching. Therefore Hodges tries to see if theories of the Atonement do justice to the biblical material taken as a whole. But having said that, we will find several places in The Pattern of Atonement where we might judge that Hodges does not seem to reflect faithfully the witness of the Bible as a whole. We might also notice his emphasis on St. Paul's teaching as the correct treatment of the Atonement, together possibly with that of "St. John" and perhaps the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but a comparative neglect of the rest of the New Testament. However, there are reasons why this might be so. Most teaching on the Atonement in the West has concentrated on St. Paul, at least in relation to the justification aspect of atonement. Hodges, therefore, if he wishes to combat the errors he believes he finds there, must give a right assessment of St. Paul's treatment. Again, St. Paul's name stands before about a quarter of the New Testament, and he is obviously important in any study of New Testament doctrine. But we will understand Hodges' methods, aims and ideas better when we have studied them in more detail in our analysis of his book on the Atonement. This done, we may consider whether Hodges has fulfilled his aims, or achieved anything of lasting importance in writing the book.

- I. "What is to Become of Philosophical Theology?", p.218.
2. Ibid., p.219.
3. Ibid., p.221.
4. Ibid., p.225.
5. Ibid., p.223.
6. Ibid., p.224.
7. Ibid., p.228-229.
8. Ibid., p.232-233.
9. p.II
- IO. In The Angels of Light and the Powers of Darkness ed.
E.L.Mascall, London: Faith Press, 1954, p.I-2.
- II. "Clearing the Ground", Third Discussion, p.9.
- I2. "Art and Religion", p.I44.

PART TWOChapter Five

Hodges begins the first chapter of his book with a discussion of the meaning of the word "atonement". Originally, he says, the word meant to bring together in friendship two people (or more) who had not previously been friendly. Although etymologically the word does not necessarily imply that the two were once friendly but had become estranged, in actual speech the word has that implication. We may notice that Hodges likes to analyse the way important theological words are used in everyday language, and does this with terms like "justification" and "perfection".^I But it is difficult to check how theological terms such as these are used in "actual speech" when they are no longer part of our everyday language, and such is the case with "atonement". This is unfortunate, because Hodges will go on to say that it is failure to observe which aspects of the situation between man and man apply also to that between man and God, which has led to unbalanced theories of the Atonement. But we cannot be sure of the way it was applied between man and man, and we will return to this problem in a later chapter. However, Hodges explains that for reconciliation to take place an atoning action must occur to take the sting out of the offence. This may also apply theologically, in other words, to the reconciliation between God and man.

When used theologically, the term "atonement" can be "used either as a name for the fact of reconciliation, or,

more narrowly, as a name for that particular act on the part of the reconciler which makes the reconciliation possible by 'atoning for' the offence."² Christ has done something to reconcile God and man, and precisely what this "something" is, is the problem of the Atonement. But Hodges feels that we must consider the Atonement not just in relation to this problem, but in relation to the whole work of Christ, which is "a bridging of gulfs, a removal of estrangements, a restoration of unity." This, as we shall see, is Hodges' own approach. There have, in the past, been numerous attempts at descriptions and explanations of the Atonement, but these have been in the narrower sense of one "particular act" mentioned above in most cases, and everywhere "one moves in an atmosphere of the driest theological speculation, whose relation to the actual Christian life is apt to appear tenuous."³ Again, he says that there seems to have been a "soteriological ice-age" of many centuries duration, and refers to "the tyranny of the theories, their endless inconclusive debate with one another, and the blind revulsion against them all which is so natural a feeling".⁴ This situation, he says, has worsened steadily since the end of the patristic period; and after the Reformation, when the Atonement was a central issue, one particular theory emerged as the norm in Western Christendom - this was the idea of substitutionary, or penal substitutionary, Atonement, which Hodges is quick to criticise. It will be useful to bear in mind that Hodges does not distinguish clearly between the two, and it might have been beneficial to his

argument had he done so. He groups together under the heading "substitutionary" or "vicarious" atonement all the theories which contain this idea in one form or another. Yet when he is criticising them, he seems to have in mind a particular theory, and a rather crude one at that, of penal substitution. This will become evident later on. It may well be that any theory which speaks of Christ doing instead of us what we ourselves cannot do, is open to the same criticisms as are the more "crude" versions - criticisms to which we will return. But Hodges does not investigate this point; and it is perhaps unnecessarily condemnatory of some substitutionary theories which are by no means as repellent as Hodges claims some others to be. We will try to follow Hodges in using his terminology, but bearing in mind the qualifications we have mentioned. Penal substitutionary atonement has been particularly strongly held in the Protestant world, and even where it has been rejected, it has all too often been replaced by an "embarrassed silence".

Many attempts have been made to fill the gap brought about when such a substitutionary theory is rejected, but none of these has been entirely satisfactory, and it would seem unlikely that one will ever be accepted by the Church as a whole. Nor is Hodges trying to write a definitive version of the doctrine. What he is trying to do is to clarify the issues involved, and to show how a discussion of the Atonement in its wider sense (as a bridging of gulfs, removal of estrangements, and restoration of unity) will help us to gain a fuller appreciation

of what the doctrine really means. He does refer to some of the other theories in the course of the book, but the surest way to truth, he believes, is not to study yet again the history of the doctrine of the Atonement, but the ideas involved in it. Therefore, he writes:

I shall take for my subject the whole work of Christ as peace-maker and restorer; I shall try to describe that work as Scripture and experience present it to us; and when I analyse, it will be a philosopher's analysis, taking for its object ideas and standpoints rather than books and writers, and aiming at clarity for the sake of proportion.⁵

This then, is Hodges' starting-point, and we have already discussed some of the attitudes which lie behind this approach.

For Hodges, therefore, Christ is the peace-maker and restorer, bringing peace and restoration to mankind:

The story of how man fell into mortal danger, and how he was delivered from this danger by Christ, is a vast and noble epic foreshadowed in many myths, dwarfing and at the same time illuminating the whole history of recorded time...The whole mundane creation, made by God for God and temporarily alienated from its maker, is drawn back into union with Him.⁶

But having said that, Hodges gives a warning about misinterpreting this sort of language. It uses imagery, and indispensable though imagery may be for an attempt at a full expression of the truth, imagery can give rise to what may turn out to be a caricature of the real nature of God. Hodges is thinking here particularly of the way in which the problem of offence and reconciliation in human life are assumed to apply to the relationship between God and some of his creatures. For Hodges, we can find out the truth about our reconciliation with God, not by starting with the struggle to understand an analogy

taken from human life, (although Hodges would admit that in some senses we can only talk about God analogically, as we have already seen.) but by tackling the problem of the estrangement between God and man: "To understand the process of man's salvation... we must understand from what evil state or condition man needed to be saved."

The traditional answer to this is that man is in a state of fallenness or sin, and Hodges mentions the different New Testament words for sin - hamartia, parabasis, paraptoma, anomia, adikia, asebeia. All these give some indication of the nature of sin as a going wrong, and a failing in duty. But these relate to one aspect only of our fall and salvation; so in order to treat the Atonement in its wider sense, Hodges seeks fresh light on the nature of sin by considering the "conception of sin as disease and salvation as healing, which runs through the Old and New Testaments alike."⁷ Thus the healing miracles by Jesus are not simply acts of mercy, but the "works of Messiah" which display how He will heal the soul and the spirit also. We may learn from this that sin is a fever, a paralysis, leprosy, blindness and so on, or even demonic possession. Although the Bible itself does not explicitly make this connection between all the different types of disease and the nature of sin, it does teach that sin debilitates in this manner, and that the Messiah brings release to all in captivity, whether to bodily sickness or to sin. Hodges also mentions the idea of sin as darkness, captivity, and death; he then goes on to draw out what is implicit in these

various images under five headings, which together constitute the "five-fold problem of salvation".

I: The Breach of Personal Relationships.

"Man was made for fellowship with God."⁸ This is a truth echoed in Christian history through the ages, going back, so the Bible tells us, to the very creation of man. It is the biblical story which Hodges uses to illustrate the point: Adam and Eve are an "archetype of man living in the Presence."⁹ It is assumed that man is responsible, or answerable to God, and indeed, the "very humanity of man lies in his ability thus to receive and respond to the Word. His fall is simply his refusal to respond." As we have seen, the fact that each man is a potential hearer, and a potential vehicle, of the Word of God, and the fact that God has paid a price for each man's goodwill, means we should respect and reverence all men. The Christian doctrine of man made in the image of God also leads on to this conclusion.¹⁰ Men are all created by God, and are potentially able to respond to him; but the fact remains that not all do, and man estranged from God, turns out to be man estranged also from himself".¹¹ This story is told graphically in Genesis, where man becomes estranged first from God, then from his wife, then from nature, and then from his fellow-men and relations; and as the story progresses, so discord and hatred spread, and are still with us. Hodges makes this point elsewhere, when he says that if man "gets out of harmony with the all-pervading Presence he will get out of harmony also with himself, and will begin to tear

himself in pieces. That man is now tearing himself in pieces is a fact which everyone can see."¹² It is not that men are incapable of finding any truth or doing anything righteous, says Hodges, but that "every truth breeds fresh error and every just institution is twisted to unjust uses. God has so made the world that, when we try to live without respect to His laws, this is what happens. It is a natural necessity and it is also the judgement of God." This point will be seen to have important implications later on. Alongside these problems, our relationship with God is perverted, so that He now appears to us as a judge. Thus, "the Word still speaks, but now it speaks in judgement and in condemnation."¹³ Although man has laboured to heal this breach, he is unable to do so. For we cannot restore communion with Him on our own terms or by our own contrivances.

2: The Corruption of Man's Nature.

For man to be responsible to God, he must be intelligent, able to understand what God's Word is saying to him. He must also be able to understand the laws of nature if he is to rule over it.¹⁴ The laws of nature are an expression of the divine wisdom, and Christian tradition has found in man's intelligence and in his apprehension of those laws, the divine image of God. The true end of man is to know God, as Hodges explains:

Man is capable of knowing God and incapable of true happiness without knowing Him. Man is made for the contemplation of Him in whose image he is made; all his thoughts, all his perceptions and all his actions should work together to feed that contemplation or

should flow from it as acts of love and worship. So living in the vision and love of God, man will become conformed to what he knows and loves, and his whole being will become a 'reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice' to God.¹⁵

We have already seen that contemplation was a very important part of the Christian life to Hodges, and here he outlines the road of the mind towards God, beginning with seeing Him in the world of nature, and rising to the vision of "the Blessed Trinity, before whom the intellect falls blinded, but in whom the will finds its perfect rest."

But man's nature has been corrupted, and "if man was created to know the truth and to enjoy the real, his falling away must consist in believing a lie and embracing fantasies. Such is indeed the nature of the fall."¹⁶ The fall began when one of the angelic princes committed himself to "that lie which is the source of all other lies: 'I am (or I can be) independent like God.'"¹⁷ Hodges reiterates this point in "Christian Obedience in the University",¹⁸ where he claims that this was the sin of liberalism, to say that man is like God. We have already mentioned that Hodges accepted the existence of angelic powers as a part of the Faith, and believed that they could and do influence the lives of men for good and evil. Whether one does in fact accept the existence of such powers or not, the idea that the fall consists in a lie which changes the centre of the field of thought from God to oneself, is a meaningful one. Similarly, whether one accepts a historical fall of an individual man or angel, the idea that there has been a fall of some kind, that is, that man has lost his

original ability to live in harmony, is an intelligible one. There may be those, Christians as well as non-Christians (one thinks of Teilhard de Chardin) who maintains that man is progressing and improving all the time; but the traditional Christian view which is adopted by Hodges, is that the deterioration started by the fall, is not to be overcome by man himself unaided. The result of the fall as it spread to man, is that "everything is...twisted out of due proportion and perspective. The intellect loses the good for which it was made, and wearies itself in vain attempts to find a satisfaction which always eludes it...the fallen will, like the fallen intellect, is afflicted with perpetual hunger and restlessness." Thus it is, concludes Hodges, that self-frustration is "the law of all action that is divorced from the love of God." Man is aware that he lives "as the ruin of what he should have been",¹⁹ and seeks a cure for his ruin in the pursuit of wealth, power and knowledge, moral progress, philosophical wisdom, or religion; yet none of these gives him the peace they promise. It would not be true to say that every individual man is dissatisfied with his state, nor that men never find peace from sources other than Christianity; but it is possible to make a case for saying that mankind in general is confused and restless, and can find no finally adequate solution to its problems. This, at least, Hodges believes; and this belief is reflected in many of his writings. In one article, he speaks of the pessimism about the human condition found in all ages where the wise bring their accusations against life. There is

"a continuous and impressive stream of tradition which says that life is futile and meaningless, that the good in it is superficial and the evil profound."²⁰

We also find a similar theme echoed in Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes, where Hodges is speaking of the dependence of the intellect on the will, and the effect of our basic attitudes on our thinking. The introduction of the will into the theory of knowledge of which Hodges writes, shows how "human life is a tangled web of action and interaction, woven by the diverse wills of men."²¹ Christianity, Hodges continues,

goes on to say that man as we know him is a fallen creature, alienated from his true condition, and no longer able to perform unaided those functions for which he was created. His will is perverted and his intellect is darkened. In view of this there can be from the Christian point of view no surprise at the endless diversity of attitudes and standpoints which men in fact take up. This confusion, and the mutual unintelligibility and indifference which prevail so widely between types of people, are what we should expect in a world which was fallen as Christianity says it is...The salvation of man as a thinking being can come only by the intervention of God to recreate the intellect of man.²²

We must admit, he concludes, that:

whether the Christian claims be true or not, they are at any rate singularly to the point. The Christian conception of sin accounts very well, in its own terms, for the intractable situation in which we find ourselves, and the Christian doctrine of restoration is, whether true or not, an admirably conceived solution of our problem.²³

I have quoted at length here not only because of the obvious relevance to The Pattern of Atonement, but also because it reflects Hodges' view that Christianity should be seen as a whole, and we should ask whether taken as a whole it makes sense of life, rather than demonstrating (in all probability

successfully) that certain beliefs in Christianity will not fit in with another world-view. We shall be discussing the importance of this outlook in a later chapter. Man, then, is in a predicament; and Hodges finishes his description of this with a reference to Anselm's realisation that he "was made in God's image in order that he might know and love God; and God's image must be renewed in him if he is to know and love God as he desires to do."²⁴ This renewal only God can bring about.

3: Frustration of Function.

Man was originally placed in the world to glorify God and that the world might glorify God through him. This might also be learnt from the Genesis story, where man is to tend the garden for God, and has power over God's works so that they may glorify God through him. In a word, says Hodges, "man is nature's priest." But because of man's darkened mind, twisted will, and his alienation from God, he cannot perform this function. Instead he "offers false worship...false sacrifices to false gods, a misunderstood world misapplied to the fulfilment of misguided purposes."²⁵ So for nature to glorify God as it should, its priest must be restored to it, but once again he cannot restore himself.²⁶

4: Captivity to Satan.

The fall began with an angelic prince, and now, says Hodges, the hosts of evil "who are our leaders and teachers in sin, are also our tyrants in the sinful world which we inhabit." We are their chosen victims, and lay ourselves open to them: "a man's unbridled fancies and unchastened

desires can lay him open to victorious temptation and sometimes to worse - and what is true of individual men is true also of societies and civilisations."²⁷ A fantasy or false purpose may let hostile powers into the mind; and it is in this sense that the pagan gods can be called evil spirits, for though nothing in themselves, they can be an open door for evil powers. Where paganism is dead, says Hodges, the demonic power is manifested in intellectual, social or political movements. Man is in captivity to Satan, and cannot set himself free.

On the subject of these evil powers, Hodges warns in "Angels and Human Knowledge" of two opposite errors into which it is possible to fall.²⁸ The first is to accept any event uncritically as the work of an angelic agency. An event can be the result of many different "causes", and it requires experience, reflection, and the power of discrimination to discern the signs of angelic influence.²⁹ A wrong diagnosis here could have serious consequences.³⁰ But on the other hand, there are cases where there is an angelic agency at work, and the angels can, of course, be either evil or good. The current modern interest in the supernatural generally centres around the demonic powers,³¹ and even within the Church it is forgotten that the Bible refers to "good" angels, that is, angels in the service of God, and that these are supposed to influence us in co-operation with grace. In some areas of the Church, we also find a disbelief in the evil powers,³² which gives rise to two questions. Firstly, is it legitimate for the Church to jettison aspects of her Faith - such as

belief in demonic powers - even where misuse and misunderstanding can lead to tragic results? Secondly, where people fall into the "error" of disbelief in angelic agency, does this hinder the work of Christ in releasing us from the captivity to Satan of which Hodges speaks; and similarly prevent us from realising any of the benefits which the influence of "good" angels might bring? Hodges accepts the existence of both kinds of influence as a part of the Christian Faith, as we have already had occasion to notice.³³ Evil powers, then, are no mere fantasy; Satan has man in captivity, and whether we accept or fight or even do not recognise our condition, we cannot set ourselves free.

5: Psychological Resistances.

Hodges mentioned earlier the parallel between sin and disease, and here takes up that idea by looking at sin in the light of our knowledge of mental sickness. For sin has much in common with neurosis. The symptoms of the neurotic patient make him genuinely unable to take the road to health - he resists diagnosis, or offers his own false diagnosis, and cannot be treated until his resistance is broken down. Similarly, the sinner is "full of false theories about the cause of his disabilities and unhappinesses; he too offers strong resistance to the true account of his condition." Behind the resistance of the sinner, whatever form it may take, lies fear - fear of self-knowledge, because this involves knowledge of God, and "we cannot face the knowledge of God unless we are prepared to renounce everything in us which stands against Him, and

that may be almost the whole of our existing selves." In one sense, the knowledge of God is our only true joy, but "to the sinner as sinner eternal life appears not as life at all, but as death, and he defends himself by every means against the threat of it."³⁴

Hodges explains the part fear plays in our resistance to God more fully in Typescript. He refers there to his intellectual crises, which, as we have seen, robbed him of the sense of reality. It was the idea of love, as openness to reality, which he says helped him to overcome them. Hodges describes the inner conflict he experienced then in terms of two warring dragons, one of love, one of fear. Fear, he writes, is in itself a healthy instinct, it has " a defensive function, keeping at arms length those things which seem to threaten the life of the self." But if it becomes predominant, destructiveness sets in and "nothing is left but a nothingness."³⁵ "All fears are part of a refusal to be committed", Hodges continues. "That refusal is often right and necessary...But to make refusal to be committed the ruling principle of life is to undermine life itself, for the self which holds all reality at a distance will finally cease to be a self at all."³⁶ Our fear and the resistance to any form of commitment which it engenders are therefore very serious. Somehow they must be overcome, and it is obvious, says Hodges, that "these defences cannot be torn down by the very person who is obstinately or desperately erecting them...Some other person must inject into us thoughts and motives by which the resistances may be undermined."³⁷

Yet there are ways in which some of our fears may be relieved, and we may be helped towards a better knowledge of ourselves apart from the work of Christ in us. (Although it would be possible to say, as Hodges would do, that where this is done it is the work of Christ, because He is the source of all truth and light.) Such help can be given by a psychoanalyst. Hodges speaks of this in several places, and it is interesting to note that he compares the work of the psychoanalyst with that of the philosopher. Both have the same function, for philosophy, like psycho-analysis, "punctures conceit and brings inner conflicts into view".³⁸ But they carry out this work with regard to different aspects of our life, so that "philosophers are to the intellect what psychoanalysts are to the emotional and appetitive life."³⁹ It is worth studying this line of thought in more detail, because it shows another way in which philosophy can be said to be doing the work of Messiah, as can psycho-analysis, in clearing away false ideas and fears which may hinder the road to God. Hodges describes this work in "Philosophy"⁴⁰ We will quote part of this while bearing in mind the parallel between sin and neurosis, and the parallels between the cures for both:

The business of the psycho-analyst is to analyse and break up and destroy false sentiments, and unworkable attitudes. His patients usually resist analysis...but if they were content to be told they would gain in clarity of mind and renewed rigour.(sic) What the psycho-analyst does in breaking up false sentiments I believe the philosopher has to do in breaking up false beliefs and principles... But...analysis can easily expose your errors, can show that your adjustment to life has been a wrong one, but it cannot give you the right one. You have to do that yourself, and if you have not the will or if you have

not the energy or courage to face facts and to bring about a healthy adjustment, all this work is wasted on you, you will pass from one neurosis to another.

A true knowledge of our state of sin is necessary before we can be freed from it, and a true self-knowledge will lead on to knowledge of God. However, says Hodges, unlike the neurotic patient who can bring about his own healthy adjustment to life, the sinner can only be healed by being given a completely new life. By definition, this is not something he can "achieve" for himself. Nevertheless, philosophy in questioning our beliefs and attitudes can help in bringing the sinner to God for healing. So even though philosophy may seem to be an anti-Christian force in the modern world, "yet to us it is a Cyrus, an unconscious deliverer, because it cuts the roots of metaphysical theology, and so makes it possible for the Christian mind to understand itself more clearly."⁴¹

The present situation of man was thus analysed by Hodges under the five headings we have just considered; but there are problems particular to the present century which seemed to him to aggravate the difficulties. One of these problems is that "non-Christian forces are more mature to-day than in past centuries." Whereas in the past the rival religions to Christianity were "the archaic cults and mythologies, which are now dead and half forgotten", now we "have also to reckon with the great World-Faiths which enshrine so much real spirituality and so much earnestness in the quest of God, which has not gone unrewarded."⁴² But perhaps the central problem is the attitude to religion in general in the modern world, where,

as we saw earlier, some regard any talk of God as without meaning. "Christianity" writes Hodges, "is now regarded very widely, not as a contention to be faced and met, but as a phenomenon to be accounted for".⁴³ Perhaps the same thought underlies Harton's comment that "a far commoner expression of the world's reaction against Christ is to be found in indifference. People do not bother to crucify Christ, they just ignore Him".⁴⁴

The clearest way to view the situation, Hodges feels, is to see three different stages in the history of ideas. The first is the mediaeval period, where Christianity was a dominant influence. Christianity did not shape that society, but it did give to it a new depth and height of consciousness. Philosophy and science were largely centred on God. The second stage was the Renaissance and the Age of Reason, where the prevailing spirit was one of free experiment and exploration in every area. God still had a place, but a diminished one, for man was seen as the master of nature, knowledge seen as power. There was a reaction in the Christian world to this, firstly in the Reformation, and then in a "series of rearguard actions by Protestantism", but still the "march of humanism and science goes on".⁴⁵ Out of this changing state of affairs emerges the modern crisis, from which Hodges singles out three aspects. Firstly, the hierarchical order of being has been lost to view. Mediaeval man was aware of a "vertical line" relating him to God, and of a "horizontal line" relating him to the world around him.⁴⁶ Today, man is scarcely aware of

of this vertical line at all. Secondly, the habit of scientific thinking has "set a premium on the abstract calculating intelligence, and led to a partial atrophy of that side of the mind by which human situations are understood and human values recognised." 47 Thirdly, philosophy lacks unity and direction, and there are tendencies in it which cast doubt upon the possibility of objective truth for man. The result is general scepticism and indifference.

In the face of this aggravation, Christianity has still survived, but it is faced with a dilemma. Either it can try to adapt itself to modern ways of thinking and principles, but at the cost of losing some elements of the Faith; or it can remain faithful to its traditions, and preach as it has always done, but at the risk of seeming unintelligible to people today. Whether Hodges believed there was any way out of this impasse is a question which will occur later on.

In conclusion, we may notice as relevant to the first chapter of The Pattern of Atonement Hodges' contention, put forward especially in "What Difference Does Christianity Make?" that man cannot seem to do good without doing evil as well. He illustrates this by four observations: 1) Prosperity comes to the wicked, and distress to the righteous, because of their wickedness or their righteousness. 2) We are seldom able to make a choice between right and wrong. Rather, the issue seems to be between right and right or wrong and wrong. 3) Sometimes one has to ask oneself whether one should refuse to act with people who want the same thing, but for the wrong

reasons. 4) One can misjudge the moral effects of one's actions, so that they lead to evil. Any or all of these problems may face one who seeks to live a moral life. Can Christianity, Hodges goes on to ask, make a difference to life lived in the face of them? The answer is that it can:

Christianity deals with the problem by facing it squarely, forcing men to look it full in the face. At the very centre of its sacred story and its worship it sets the most horrible event conceivable, and it proclaims that succour has been brought to us in and through the evil thing itself; for God has entered into the situation, and radically changed its meaning."⁴⁸

It is with this answer that Hodges is concerned in his book on the Atonement, and he finds in the answer a five-fold solution to his five-fold presentation of man's troubles.

- I. In "Holiness, Righteousness and Perfection", p.231 and p.235.
2. Pattern, p.9-10.
3. Ibid., p.10.
4. Ibid., p.11.
5. Ibid., p.11.
6. Ibid., p.12.
7. Ibid., p.13.
8. Ibid., p.14.
9. Ibid., p.15.
10. We shall be looking in a later chapter at the relation between man and the world from a Christian point of view, with regard both to the doctrine of creation and to the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ.
11. Ibid., p.16.
12. Modern University, p.13, although not all would attribute this to the same cause as Hodges does.
13. Pattern, p.17.
14. So says Hodges, but this will only be true if we are talking about the "basic" laws of nature, rather than the technical ones of modern physics, for example. Man may need to know what will happen when he plants a seed, or steps off a cliff, but does he need to understand why it happens? Nevertheless, his rule over nature might be more effective, the more he understands about the principles on which it operates.
15. Ibid., p.18-19.

16. Ibid., p.19. cf. Anselm's Proslogion.
17. Ibid., p.20.
18. "Christian Obedience in the University", p.139.
19. Pattern, p.20.
20. "What Difference Does Christianity Make?", Christian News-Letter, Suppl.27, 1940, p.260-261.
21. Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes, p.66.
22. Ibid., p.67.
23. Ibid., p.68.
24. Pattern, p.21. Hodges is referring to Anselm's Proslogion, Chapter I, ed. M.J.Charlesworth, Oxford: Clarendon, 1965.
25. Pattern, p.22.
26. On the relation between man and nature see Man and Nature, ed. Hugh Montefiore, London: Collins, 1975, especially pages 27-34.
27. Pattern, p.22.
28. On the theme of angelic powers, see G.Bonner, The Warfare of Christ, London: Faith Press, 1962.
29. This is spelt out clearly by Gilbert Shaw in The Angels of Light and the Powers of Darkness, pp.76-79.
30. A recent case in point is that of the Yorkshire man who murdered his wife after being "exorcised".
31. Witness the success of films like The Exorcist and The Omen.
32. The reaction of some leading Churchmen to the case mentioned in note 30, in denying the validity of exorcism at any time, implies a disbelief in evil powers, for example.

- Perhaps one reason for disbelief in the Devil is the traditional imagery associated with him. Harton comments: "Mediaeval symbolism may fail to appeal to many minds in this prosaic age, but that is no reason for regarding the symbolism as valueless and for disbelieving in the reality symbolised. The Devil is a reality, and a very formidable one - no invention...but the ancient enemy of God and of His Church." op.cit., p.II4.
33. Although we might notice the following criticism of Hodges' acceptance of angels, and his description of the way they behave. The reader of "Angels and Human Knowledge", writes Helen Oppenheimer, "will be made unhappy, even aghast, by a blunt statement like the following: "Spirits are able to discern spirits by a kind of direct non-sensory perception. The Angels...presumably have this power in the highest degree." It may seem easier to swallow this assumption like a pill than to query its acceptability." Incarnation and Immanence, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973, p.I2I note.
34. Pattern, p.24.
35. Typescript, p.53.
36. Ibid., p.54.
37. Pattern, p.24.
38. "A Study of Wilhelm Dilthey's Philosophy", Part V, p.36.
39. Modern World View, p.I4.
40. The Individual in Contemporary Society, Report of the 21st Annual Conference of the British Institute of Adult

Education, 1947, p.34-35.

41. "The Integration of Heathenism and Unbelief", p.8.
42. Ibid., p.7.
43. "The Crisis in Philosophy" in Reformation Old and New, ed. F.W.Camfield, London: Lutterworth, 1947, p.192.
44. Harton, op.cit., p.III.
45. "Our Culture: Its Thought", in Our Culture, ed. V.A.Demant, London: S.P.C.K., 1947, p.28.
46. On this subject, see M.-D.Chenu, Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century, trans. J.Taylor & L.K.Little, Chicago: U.P., 1968, p.21, p.23.
47. "Our Culture: Its Thought", p.30.
48. "What Difference Does Christianity Make?", p.262.

Chapter Six

Hodges begins his second chapter by summing up the conclusion reached in the last, that is, that "the position is desperate. Man no longer occupies his proper place or performs his proper function. He is no longer truly himself. It is a comprehensive calamity in which we are all involved and from which we cannot escape." The world in which we now live is "a self-perpetuating evil, a world system of evil persisting from generation to generation."¹ Because of the persistence and proliferation of evil there can be no way out of the situation except by a total transformation of the individual, and an accompanying world-view which sees things differently, (because the world-system has been made to be different.) This point is important because Hodges sees Christianity as a complete framework which cannot be assimilated to any other. Thus, "Christianity is a more far-reaching system of ideas than non-Christians or indeed many Christians realise...it makes a difference to our conception of everything, and not merely of certain things...the adoption of Christianity represents a total change of mind, intellectual as well as moral."² It is because it offers such a complete transformation, that it is able to solve man's problems, for these have many facets, and our deliverance must involve "deliverance from the world, an escape from captivity and death, a return to life and freedom."³ This is how the New Testament presents it, says Hodges, and such a deliverance can only come from God Himself. The first distinctive point of the Christian gospel is that

it comes through God as man: "God has not saved us by an act of power from a distance. He dwelt among us, became our brother and we are therefore His, and what was then done can never be undone. Human nature is seated on the throne of heaven."

But what was God's purpose in coming among us? Partly, says Hodges, that He might be fully understood; partly to draw the world to Himself, to win us by showing us His beauty. But more than this, "He comes among us to do the work of man as man for man, to restore human nature in His own person and give us back that nature at once restored and glorified." It is true that "by" the mere fact of living among us, God has sanctified our race. By wearing a human body He has declared once for all the sanctity of matter",⁴ but this is not the full gospel, however important a part of it. We shall be discussing the meaning and implications of God having sanctified our race a little later on. The doctrine of the Incarnation implies several important points of which Christians should take note,⁵ but it is not simply by the fact of being incarnate that God is able to meet man's need and deliver him. This is clear from any reading of the New Testament, for, says Hodges, "the Apostles did not preach a religion of the Incarnation. They preached the Resurrection...a new life, a risen life was what they preached. We are baptised into Christ not as incarnate, but as dead and risen."⁶ The Resurrection, then, is central, but there can be no Resurrection unless there has first been a death: "Without the Resurrection Christ's death

would be fruitless, but without the death His exaltation would lose its meaning. In the death, therefore, the Christian mind has come more and more to see the heart of the mystery." Hodges will go on to ask how the death on the Cross becomes so decisive, and what it really means at its heart.

Before discussing this, however, Hodges makes an interesting remark about the nature of the Christian story, one which can very easily be paralleled in others of his writings. It is worth studying this, because not only does it illustrate Hodges' desire to view Christianity as a whole, even though some parts of it might seem unpalatable today; but he is also indicating how the Church might more effectively bear witness to the Gospel story. He writes:

It is a striking paradox, a conception worthy of a God, that God should not merely live as man but die, and not merely die but be executed, and this by the wisest and noblest religious authority then existing in the world, which yet was not wise enough to know the time of its visitation. This is the decisive judgement, not merely on mankind, but on the Church. And here is another element of the Christian paradox - that the same act by which judgement is brought to a point should also have been the act which brought salvation.⁷

This story of "how man fell into mortal danger, and how he was delivered by Christ, is a vast and noble epic."⁸ Or again, Hodges speaks of this as "an epic story of great dramatic power, whether we regard it from our own point of view or make God its centre."⁹ In another book, Hodges refers to the "strong dramatic appeal" of Christ's mortal combat with evil, and the "dramatic quality about the whole of God's action in relation to the created world."¹⁰ Yet this story

cannot be believed unless it is seen from the Godward

end, as absolute power victorious in apparent defeat. Seen from the standpoint of empirical knowledge and worldly experience, it is a fantasy so exaggerated that it is hard even to grasp. But seen as the act of a God in whom we already believe, it is wholly worthy of him, and so carries conviction. If God is what we believe him to be, he might be expected to display the kind of power and wisdom which we see in the Christ of the Creed.¹¹

If this is the case, then it should affect the presentation of her Faith by the Church, and we shall be taking up this point again later.

Christ's death on the Cross, it was said, is "the decisive and truly crucial act on which the Atonement hangs", but how is it decisive, why was it necessary and what did it achieve? "The long history of theories of the Atonement springs from these questions", writes Hodges. "The problem of the Atonement is a real and recurring problem, and at its heart is the question: why a cross?" Hodges begins to consider this question himself by looking at the idea that "the virtue of His crucifixion lay precisely in the pain of it", for we know that crucifixion involves intense pain and suffering. But if this idea is accepted, a further question arises: "Christ has delivered us from death and suffering...by His own death and suffering; but in what way, by what kind of legal or moral or spiritual exchange, can His endurance of what He never deserved save me from having to endure what I have deserved?"¹² The emphasis in this sentence would seem to be on His endurance, that is, His suffering, for the general problem here set out, how can Christ's work be effective for men so many centuries later, is one with which all theories of the Atonement must come to terms. If Hodges does intend

that emphasis his reply is adequate. There is no satisfactory answer to the question, he says, and there need not be, because the "assumption on which it rests, viz. that the saving factor in the death of Christ is what He suffered, considered precisely as suffering, as pain, is unproven and untrue." For, he continues, the "merit of His death...lies not in the pain, but in the unswerving obedience, of which the willing acceptance of that pain was merely the crowning proof. The obedience of the second Adam cancels the disobedience of the first, and is the beginning of our salvation as that was the beginning of our loss." So it "is after all by His life among us that we are saved...that life as obedience, from which the death is inseparable".^{I3} However, this idea may be slightly misleading, for Hodges concentrates on the mystical union of Christ and the believer as the central point of the doctrine of the Atonement. Christ's life may be characterised as obedience, but it is the fact that we are identified with Christ's life, death, and resurrection which constitutes our salvation. McIntyre brings out this point clearly: "Accordingly, when we think of Christ offering God the satisfaction and obedience which the Creator requires of His creatures, then we think of ourselves as included within that obedience...The obedience is already ours in so far as Christ offered it once for all on Calvary, as the culmination of a total life of obedience."^{I4} In Hodges' own words, "The believer is in Christ and Christ in him...Only so can the alienation of man from God be overcome and man return to the divine unity. In Christ's obedience,

in His sonship, in His life and virtue and power, man becomes again what he should be and takes again the place which should be his."¹⁵ But how can Christ's work, seen in this way, bring us deliverance in relation to each of the five areas Hodges outlined in Chapter One of his book? It is to this question that Hodges now addressed himself.

I: Renewal of Fellowship.

Hodges reintroduces the problem he raised earlier in the book: "We have offended against God and continually do offend and in consequence of this we are excluded from His fellowship. Our deliverance from this state must therefore itself include two elements: a negative one, the cancelling of the offence, and a positive one, the restoration of fellowship."¹⁶ Hodges turns first to a consideration of the "negative aspect", with reference to biblical terminology, which indicates that "this cancellation is an act of free grace on the part of God." The Bible does not often connect forgiveness of sins, or remission, with the person or death of Christ, says Hodges: "The conditions usually laid down...are repentance (with its co-implicates, confession and restoration) and readiness to forgive." But, he goes on, we "cannot fulfil the condition so long as we remain what we are. We can do it only as we are transformed into the likeness of Christ, we living in Him and He in us; and so it is that in the end there is no remission of sins except through Him."¹⁷ This point Hodges regards as indication of the uniqueness of Christianity. For, he says elsewhere, "No other of the great religions offers this atoning sacrifice

of an incarnate God. All the rest appear to think that the condition of sincere repentance and amendment is enough"; Christianity's view, on the other hand, would appear to be that

this condition would indeed be sufficient if it could be fulfilled, but that it is not in fallen human nature really to fulfil it. It might be if sin were merely a kind of error...or a passing infection...But Christianity... sees sin as a corruption so deeply ingrained in us that we have not the resources to overcome it. There is no health in us.¹⁸

It is because of the corruption of man's nature that a drastic remedy is required. In the next section Hodges refers to Athanasius' remark on this subject, that if there were nothing between us and God but an occasional act of sin, we might reasonably expect to be forgiven and restored to favour on our repentance alone.¹⁹ But because our corruption is so deeply ingrained, we need not only the cancellation of our offence, but also a restoration of the unity between ourselves and God, and a renewal of our own lives. So there is also a positive side to our redemption. St. Paul's term "justification" bears a wider meaning than just the forgiveness of sins, Hodges will argue in a later chapter;²⁰ and the New Testament also tells us that we as Christians are reconciled to God, can approach Him freely, and are at peace with others, because of Christ's work. We receive from the Father more than we deserve, because

He is pleased to see in us not the sinful creatures that we are in ourselves, but members of the mystical body of His Son...The disastrous legacy of the Tree of Knowledge is cancelled in him by virtue of the Tree of Victory, and in union with the second Adam he re-enters

that Eden from which, with the first Adam, he had been expelled.²¹

Our situation had been one of alienation. God has made possible the healing of our broken relationships not only by offering free forgiveness of the sins which had caused the breach, but also by restoring the unity between Himself and us by seeing us "in Christ", sinless and obedient. Henceforth He appears to man once more as Father, and not as Judge.

2:Restoration of Human Nature.

We have already drawn attention to Hodge's reference to Athanasius, about the serious nature of our condition. He follows this by saying "we have" lost the image of God and the grace which should go with it. To be restored, we must be given back what we have lost, and that means nothing less than that He who first created us must now 'recreate' us and bring us back from corruption to incorruption."²² This recreation is a complex process, with a variety of aspects which Hodges considers in the course of the chapter.

Firstly, the corruption of our nature may be regarded as a sickness or a death - and the restoration as a healing, or a gift of new life. New life may be seen either as a new birth or as a resurrection from the death of sin. Hodges links this with the phrase of St. Ignatius describing the Holy Communion as the "medicine which makes immortal."²³ This idea can be traced through the history of Eucharistic devotion, says Hodges.

Secondly, "the core of man's nature lies in his will",

and therefore a special place must be given to the restoration of the will. This, Hodges writes, has three aspects:

It has a negative aspect, the purging of the will, the stripping away of sinful impulses and habits. It has a positive aspect, the gift of righteousness, the imparting to the soul of the different virtues one by one, and at last the union of them all in the perfect virtue of love. And thirdly, beyond even this, there is that steadfast adherence and dedication of the will to God which constitutes holiness.²⁴

It will be obvious that this is the concern of ascetic theology, as we have seen earlier. The restoration of the will has been neglected in some strands of Christian theology, where it has concentrated on the negative aspect of our salvation. The neglect of ascetic theology is closely related to concentration on the negative emphasis it seems, and Hodges desires to see both ascetic theology and the restoration of the will given a proper place in the thinking and life of the Church as a whole.

In the third place, there must be a restoration of the intellect. Hodges was, as we have seen, especially concerned with this, and we have already discussed his view of the part that the mind plays in the road to God. He does not write much here on the subject, except to indicate the importance of knowing God and understanding His ways. He once again refers to Anselm in this context, and his prayer to God to " 'renew' and 'restore' his fallen nature, in order that he may understand what he already, by God's grace, knows and believes."

Fourthly under this heading, "human nature...is not merely made sound, it is made incorruptible." This theme is a constant

one in Greek theology, as is the "deification...which is the end of the spiritual road." (We have seen Hodges' interest in Orthodox doctrines which reflect this.) There is Scriptural warrant for this in II Peter I:4, he writes, even though "in recent centuries the Western Church, for intelligible reasons, has often fought shy of the use of these words"²⁵ Hodges himself believed that the goal of the Christian life was union with God, but we have already discussed this characteristic of his belief, and need not do so again here. However we approach the meaning of "recreation", "nothing of all this can take place otherwise than through the work of Christ in us. In His Person the image of God is restored to humanity." So that "however one" may analyse in detail the work of Christ for us and in us, one must always at last sum it up and draw it together in the simple formula: 'He in us and we in Him.'²⁶

3: Restoration of Function.

Man's function, we saw earlier, is to be the priest of nature; and here as elsewhere Christ does perfectly what we fail to do, so that in Him we are restored to our rightful position:

All humanity and all creation, summed up in Him, is in a manner offered there, and in His continuing High-priestly work in heaven. He, perfect man, does perfectly what man was created to do as the priest of all creation. But we, His members, who share His nature, share also His sacrificial function, and are one with Him both in offering and in being offered.²⁷

The New Testament speaks of the Christian people both as those who are offered, and those who offer. Firstly we, or our worship and service, are described as a sacrifice. Hodges

also notices that St. Paul speaks of his ministry in bringing the nations to God as a liturgy, offering up the Gentiles to God.²⁸ Secondly, God's people in the Old Testament were a people who offered, a priestly people. In the New Testament, this concept is applied to Christians as the whole body of the faithful. Today, priesthood is a conception applied to particular individuals who exercise a certain distinct function within the Church. Despite this, we do still have some idea of the people of God as those who offer: "the liturgies themselves have not ceased to contain the affirmation that the eucharistic sacrifice is offered by the whole body of the faithful who are present at it." Similarly, writes Hodges, "all the faithful, whenever they pray as Christians, in Christ and therefore in the Church, are in their degree performing a priestly act." Christians may also be spoken of as Christ's Temple, or living stones of that Temple which is His Body, "erected and consecrated by the Holy Ghost for the offering of spiritual sacrifices, for the worshipping of the Father in spirit and in truth".²⁹

The above represents Hodges' treatment of the restoration of man's proper function in the world; but it must be pointed out that Hodges does not address himself to the problem which he proposed under this section in the first chapter. There, the emphasis was on man as nature's priest, offering nature to God "on the altar of man's worship."³⁰ But all we have here is a brief mention of the fact that all creation is summed up in Christ. Why, then, does Hodges neglect this aspect of man's restoration? One answer to this might be that at

the time Hodges was writing this book (1955 and the years before) there was perhaps not as much concern with the issues of ecology, and man's use of natural resources and so on, and Hodges did not feel it necessary to take up such points. Nevertheless, he had raised them himself, and it must be regarded as an omission that he fails to re-introduce the subject, however briefly. We shall therefore be investigating Hodges' views on this subject - that is, the proper place and function of man in the world - at the end of this chapter.

4:Our Deliverance from Satan.

We saw in Chapter One that Hodges believed man to be under a real bondage to Satan, unable to resist. This bondage is made more complete because of the "internal weakness which is original sin".³¹ It is original sin, it seems, which makes man's position so helpless - it means that all men have a corrupted nature whether they act in a moral way or not, and it means that no action which does not completely and radically change the core of man's nature can alleviate the trouble in any way. So with our captivity to Satan, as with our other problems, it is only as we are incorporated into Christ, and identified with His victory over sin and Satan, that we can find deliverance. For

Successful resistance could be offered only by someone free from the internal weakness which is original sin, someone who can say as Christ did say, 'the Prince of this world is coming but he had no foothold in me', and who can therefore meet the full force of temptation without yielding...In Christ...there now exists what never existed before, a human nature fully tested and yet virtuous and intact. Into this human nature we are incorporated, and our incorporation into the victor

is our liberation from the vanquished.³²

This is the substance of Hodges' view as to how we are released from our captivity, and it represents a biblical and traditional view.³³

Mankind fell into Satan's power originally by yielding to his suggestions, and indeed suggestion is "his only weapon against us, but it suffices to hold us in slavery, since there is always something in us which welcomes and yields to it."³⁴ In "Angels and Human Knowledge", Hodges describes more fully the action of angelic powers on the imagination.³⁵ It is by putting evil thoughts and suggestions into our minds that the evil powers lead us astray, so our disciplining of the mind and the will should help us to resist these attacks. Christ liberates us from Satan, although not from the power of temptation, although He gives us power to overcome this. But, Hodges reminds us, "liberation in this context does not mean independence",³⁶ for there can be no real independence for created spirits, only the willing service of God. Christ Himself lived a life of obedience, and it is in His service that we in turn find our freedom.

Hodges then goes on to consider the biblical images connected with our release from Satan, such as Christ's victory over Satan, our deliverance from "Egypt", a redemption, or a ransom. This latter conception has given rise to some misinterpretation. Hodges has in mind here the various theories concerning the price the Son of God paid for our ransom, to whom this was paid, and so on. But this image is not to

be taken so literally, he argues, for "our salvation" has nothing in common with the paying of a ransom except this, that we are delivered from slavery at a great personal cost to the deliverer. It would have been well if the analogy had never been pressed beyond this point."³⁷

It may be that Hodges' conclusion, quoted above, is correct, and that he is right to condemn as he does implicitly such theories as make the idea of a ransom a central theme. There have doubtless been many instances of far-fetched and misconceived theories; but there is also a strand in Scripture which reflects the ransom, or redemption theme, and Hodges might have drawn more attention to this. For example, a key passage in the New Testament on this subject is Mark:10:45,³⁸ "the Son of Man...came...to give His life as a ransom for many." Hodges does refer to this in Chapter Three, but dismisses it with the comment that "as we have seen, the image of the ransom is not to be pressed very far".³⁹ The conclusion may be just, the criticism is of the fact that Hodges cannot in fact demonstrate that the image of a ransom ought not to be pressed. He does make the point that there is no parallel between a ransom paid for a prisoner of war, or a victim of kidnapping and the Christian's captivity to Satan, which may be true; but does this cover all that is meant by the term? Hodges could have discussed this a little more fully, although perhaps in a small book this was not possible. The point seems to be that whereas for Hodges, Christ-mysticism is the dominant integrative interpretation of the Atonement,

he perhaps fails to appreciate that for other Christians of a different theological "temper", the interpretation of atonement by means of "ransom" was dominant, and he fails to understand them as no doubt they would fail to sympathise with and understand him. Pannenberg reaches a similar conclusion to Hodges, when he comments that "the idea of ransom had in primitive Christianity only symbolic meaning as a designation of the vicarious character of Jesus' death."⁴⁰

5: The Breaking Down of Resistances.

Lastly, Christ must break down our resistance to Himself:

Christ appears as an ambassador from the Father, bringing a message of conciliation. He invites us, He draws us, He charms us...And here His relation to us is in a manner more external than we have hitherto found it, for His appeal is made in the first instance to our eyes and ears and minds, through what He says and does and undergoes.

Hodges admits that we could not respond properly to this appeal but for the secret work of grace in us, but nevertheless, we "are moving more on the psychological than on the mystical level here."

Hodges then turns to the Bible to illustrate the idea of God "drawing us". The Incarnate Lord attracts us by His beauty, a beauty manifested in "the mighty acts of His birth, life, passion and resurrection."⁴¹ Different aspects of this appeal to different people, but it is on the manger and the Cross that "Christian devotion feeds and Christian evangelism is based." It is Christ's "power to break down indifference and ill will and bring us to the point where we are willing to let Him have His way with us" which so impressed Abelard,

writes Hodges. But this is not the whole gospel story, and it is false if it is presented as such. Abelard, Hodges believes, took a "disproportionate interest in this side of the matter", and therefore gives a false presentation; for the drawing power of Christ is "not the healing, it is only the winning of the patient's consent to be healed."⁴²

We have now seen how Hodges believes Christ's life, death and resurrection are the answer to the five-fold problem that he outlines in the first chapter. We shall see more clearly how this works out in the life of the believer in later chapters; but a question which arises here is whether Christ's coming has in any way made a difference to the world, and what the Christian's relationship with the world should be. For while it may be apparent that the believer is given a new status before God, and enabled to live a new life in Christ, it is not always clear what difference this makes to his external relationship to the world, nor whether the world may be viewed differently by virtue of Christ's life, death and resurrection. We may examine these issues most easily by looking at the four doctrines in Christianity which throw light on the question, namely, the doctrines of creation, incarnation, and the death and resurrection of Christ.

One point must be made before considering these, that is, that there does not seem to be any dramatic change in the world as a result of Christ's coming. It might be argued that mankind has progressed considerably since the first

century A.D. Though this is true in terms of scientific advance, it is disputable whether man is any better morally. P.B. Medawar argues that mankind is still in its infancy, and that "we are still beginners, and for that reason may hope to improve". Mankind for him has made progression, and will continue to do so.⁴³ Hodges holds the opposite view that fallen man is on a downward path, as we saw in Chapter Five. It might also be argued that Christianity has made a difference for the good in the history of the world, but some could feasibly suggest that Christianity has been responsible for much that is bad - murder (with the burning of heretics), trying to hold back the progress of science (by condemning Galileo, for example) and so on. All that may be affirmed is that through Christ, God has provided man with the opportunity of salvation. What then is the relation of Christianity and its adherents to the world?

The Christian doctrine of creation offers some guidance as to the role of man in the world. That he should be nature's priest we have already seen. Hodges expresses this role of man in the world as follows:

the world derives all its being from God, and God is its sustainer in being and the key to its meaning...the finite was not created in vain...The world is there for us to know, to enjoy, to exploit and control, though always with the memory of whose world it is. Industry and the creation of wealth and comfort, forms of social life, arts and sciences and philosophies, all these are included in God's purpose for our life here...There is no reason why we should give up the positive enjoyment of the world or active participation in its affairs. What the foolish pursue for false aims of self-indulgence, greed and pride can sometimes...be widely pursued in search of abiding values.⁴⁴

The same idea emerges in a Welsh poet Hodges quotes in a review:

God has not forbidden us to love the world
And to love man and all his works;
To love them with all the naked senses,
Every shape and colour, every voice and every speech.⁴⁵

Yet Hodges could not but be aware of the strand of Christian tradition which represents "a tendency to renounce the world and live with as little involvement in it as possible."

In support of this view a number of points may be made, but says Hodges,

the real heart of the case against it is that it is deceptive, always making promises that are never really fulfilled. And that in turn is not really a point about the world but about ourselves; for in itself of course the world makes no promises...It is we who deface the world for ourselves by constant misinterpretation and misvaluation.⁴⁶

This is why it should be possible to live in and enjoy the world; but equally it can be said that

the passion and death of Christ are surely a decisive adverse judgement on humanity and its aspirations and pretensions. The cross of Christ is the strongest motive in support of the world rejecting stream in Christianity. How can we live on terms with the world which rejected him, the world with which he refused to compromise?⁴⁷

This motivation for rejecting the world is a justifiable one, but there are some who withdraw from the world because of the problems it causes. Such people try

withdrawal into another world, a plane of life and action on which the tragic problems do not arise. This is the hope of the pietist, the sectarian, the purist, who tries to avoid guilt by avoiding responsibility, and is therefore driven in varying degrees to sever himself from society or even to abstain from active life, cultivating an inner life in himself.

But, Hodges goes on, "it is impossible thus to avoid responsibility."⁴⁸

Hodges is right to condemn this attitude, but the conflict between the two opposite strands in Christianity, the "other-worldly" and the "this-worldly" approaches, as Kirk calls them, is a constant one in Christian history. Kirk points out that both aspects are necessary, after discussing the arguments on both sides. "Renunciation, detachment, self-denial must have their permanent place in every Christian life", he writes, "however much at the same time we set ourselves to live in the joyous fellowship of human society". Other-worldliness should not be confused with self-discipline, says Kirk. Rather, what it must do is to "stand alongside humanism, as a permanent witness to an aspect of the doctrine of God which separates Christianity for all time from naturalism and pantheism."⁴⁹

Hodges' own view, then, is that "man was placed in the world to learn about the world, to learn to exploit all its possibilities, to rule the world, exercising this sovereignty in turn for the glory and worship of God."⁵⁰ But a vital point of the Christian story claims that man is fallen, and so too is the world he lives in - this meant that man was subjected to the problems Hodges describes in the first chapter. But now that Christ has come, is the situation any different?

In part, the difference is only made for those who believe in Christ, who "has lifted humanity, in His own Person, on to a different plane of existence, and our humanity is exalted with His in so far as we become members incorporate in His mystical body."⁵¹ But there is another aspect to this, for by "wearing a human body He has declared once and for all the

sanctity of matter and put an end to the dreams of the Platonist and the Manichee."⁵² On a similar theme, Hodges writes:

in His Person (i.e. Christ's) God has taken upon Himself human nature and now wears it for ever...in this human nature He has undergone suffering and death, and risen again, glorified and arrayed in new powers, in order to impart to mankind something of the life of God. God has done this; and no man must treat human nature, whether in his own person or in that of others, with less respect than God Himself has shown and shows to it. If there is a specifically Christian social philosophy, this is its foundation. There can be no other.⁵³

The Incarnation should give Christians a new respect for their fellow men, and indeed for their own physical bodies and life in the material world as well. Christians have been too apt to neglect this aspect:"they have often suffered from a weakness which has not been confined to them...of dreaming too much about so-called 'moral' or 'spiritual' ideals and taking too little account of the material conditions in which these ideals have to be put into practice."⁵⁴ But anything based solely on the Incarnation cannot tell the whole story.

Christianity puts at the centre of its story the death and resurrection of Christ. The death might, as we have seen, be taken to support the idea of renouncing the world; but does it make any other difference? J.K.Mozley suggests that it does:

Did His sufferings and death leave the facts of suffering and death exactly as they were before He passed through them? Without any hesitation we answer 'No'. The fact that He suffered and died does not turn suffering and death, considered in themselves from evil to good; nor does it quit them of their reference to sin. But it does alter the nature of that reference...For humanity death has become other than it was since Christ died, for the race, that is, regarded as a unity...death as a fact is not what it was before Christ died...Death

is transmuted for sinners because the Son of God died. If He had left life's tragic end untouched no difference that we can see would have been made to death in its relation to men.⁵⁵

This may be true, but the death of Christ is followed by His resurrection, and will alter the light in which we regard His death. The resurrection may also give us some insight into the way we see the final destiny of man. Thus Hodges writes:

The risen Christ is clearly in a different relation to space and time from what we are, or what he was himself before he died and rose...and if we ourselves are ultimately destined to rise to a life in his likeness, the changed humanity in which we shall then appear must require a changed cosmic order to accomodate it.

The world as we know it will pass away, but we can know little about what will take its place, for the Christian Scriptures leave more questions unanswered than answered on this issue, says Hodges. All we do know is that "it is to be a world in which we, a transfigured humanity, can live in the light of God." Our attitude towards this world, as Christians, is that "this world, dignified by the incarnation and condemned by the passion, is by the resurrection not rehabilitated but superseded."⁵⁶

There are ways then, in which the coming of Christ has made a difference to the way His followers are to view the world in which they live; but the change in the world itself seems to be a future hope rather than a present reality.⁵⁷

- I. Pattern, p.25.
2. Modern World View, p.21.
3. Pattern, p.25.
4. Ibid., p.26.
5. On this subject, see E.W.Kemp's description of the way Kirk linked the Incarnation and the Atonement, in The Life and Letters of Kenneth Escott Kirk, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1959, pp.68-71.
6. Pattern, p.26.
7. Ibid., p.27.
8. Ibid., p.12.
9. Typescript, p.30.
10. Death and Life Have Contended, p.68.
11. Typescript, p.31.
12. Pattern, p.28.
13. Ibid., p.29.
14. On the Love of God, London: Collins, 1962, p.210.
15. Pattern, p.30.
16. Ibid., p.30.
17. Ibid., p.31.
18. Death and Life Have Contended, p.66.
19. Athanasius says: "If, indeed, it had only been a trespass, and not a consequent corruption, repentance would be well enough." "On the Incarnation of the Word of God", trans. T.H.Bindley, London: Religious Tract Society, 1903, Section VII, p.54. See the rest of this section for an elaboration of this view.

20. On the meaning of forgiveness, see "Forgiveness", Aurel Kolnai, in P.A.S. LXXIX, New Series (1973-74) 91-106. Also see R.J. O'Shaughnessy's article on forgiveness in Philosophy, Oct. 1967, Vol.XLII, 336-352.
21. Pattern, p.33.
22. Ibid., p.33. Cf. Oliver Quick in The Gospel of the New World, London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1944, imagining St. Paul saying: "Forgiveness loses its full redemptive effect and issue, unless it implies communion with and in the manhood of him who dies and rose again not only that we might be forgiven but also that we might be created anew and set in a new relationship to God." (p.53)
23. See "Letters of Ignatius: Ephesians", in The Library of Christian Classics, I: Early Christian Fathers, London: S.C.M., 1953, Section 20, p.93.
24. Pattern, p.34.
25. Ibid., p.35.
26. Ibid., p.35-36.
27. Ibid., p.36.
28. For a fuller discussion of this theme, see T.F.Torrance, Royal Priesthood, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No.3, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1955, p.16-17.
29. Pattern, p.37.
30. Ibid., p.22.
31. Ibid., p.37.
32. Ibid., p.37-38. Hodges' reference is to John 14:30.
33. The theme of the Atonement as Christ's victory over

- evil is analysed by G.E.H.Aulen in Christus Victor, trans. A.G.Herbert, London, 1931.
34. Pattern, p.37.
35. Satan is, of course, a fallen angel; but we should beware, believes Hodges, of falling into the trap of assuming that there is only one devil. Our captivity to Satan is also a captivity to evil powers, and therefore what is said about them may also be applied to Satan himself.
36. Pattern, p.38.
37. Ibid., p.39.
38. The ransom theme is found particularly in the Old Testament with regard to the redemption of Israel, cf. for example, Isaiah 43:3. There are also New Testament references to our redemption, for example Romans 3:24, Colossians 1:14.
39. Pattern, p.46.
40. Jesus God and Man, London: S.C.M., 1964, p.275.
41. Pattern, p.39.
42. Ibid., p.40. Also on this, see F.W.Dillistone "The Image of Perfect Integration", pp.310-352 of The Christian the Understanding of Atonement, London: Nisbet, 1968.
43. The Hope of Progress, London: Methuen, 1972, p.127. See especially his chapter "On 'The Effecting of all Things Possible'", pp.110-127 of the above book.
44. Typescript, p.57.
45. "Gwenallt", Sobornost, Series 6, No.I, Summer 1970, p.32.
46. Typescript, p.57.
47. Ibid., p.58-59.

48. Modern World View, p.68-69.
49. Kirk, op.cit., p.47I.
50. "Clearing the Ground", Third Discussion, p.7. On the relation between God, man and the world, cf. "A Declaration of Faith", Section VII, "God requires obedience from human life and blesses it", pp38-45 of Christian Confidence, ed. R.Tomes, S.P.C.K. Theological Collections I4, London: S.P.C.K., 1970. Cf. also W.A.Whitehouse, Order, Goodness, Glory, London: O.U.P., 1960, pp.7I-78.
51. Modern World View, p.73.
52. Pattern, p.26. Cf. T. de Chardin, Hymn of the Universe, London: Collins, 1965.
53. "Social Standards in a Mixed Society", Christian News-Letter, Suppl.43, (1940) 1st page (not numbered).
54. "How Far Will Science Take Us?", The Listener, Dec.3rd 1942, p.722.
55. The Doctrine of the Atonement, London: Duckworth, 1915, p.216.
56. Typescript, p.59.
57. A related question might be whether the fact that one is redeemed and restored by Christ does in fact make a difference to the individual life in any objective sense? For example, Christ has won a victory over Satan, but does the Christian find any lessening of temptation, or freedom in any real degree from him? We shall be referring again to this problem in a later chapter.

Chapter Seven

Frances M. Young in her book Sacrifice and the Death of Christ,¹ refers to The Pattern of Atonement as a "brilliant critique of the traditional theory of satisfaction and substitution". The part of the book to which this judgement is most applicable is the third chapter "Expiation, Satisfaction, Substitution", and it is to this chapter which we now turn. Whether Frances Young is right in her appraisal of Hodges' work remains to be seen.

Hodges begins by saying that the first two chapters of his book contained "a true account of the salvation of man as the Church has conceived it, preached it and celebrated it."² But, he adds, he has not included the terms and phrases in which both Protestant and Catholic have been accustomed to conceive the doctrine of the Atonement. The ruling conceptions for them tend to be guilt, anger, punishment or penalty, expiation, propitiation and satisfaction, together with ideas of law and justice, and sacrifice. "Taken singly", Hodges remarks, "all these ideas can be found in the Bible...What is not so clear is the merit of a theory which singles out these things from the rest of the biblical material, interprets and combines them in a certain way, and treats the result as a true and full account of the Atonement."³ Therefore Hodges' aim in this chapter is to "show that the theory in question is not a legitimate child of the biblical revelation, but arises from the imputation to God of attitudes and modes of behaviour on which the Bible stands in judgement." We have already drawn attention to the

fact that Hodges has not clearly explained what he means by "substitutionary Atonement", which is the "theory in question" here; but he does seem to have in mind a form of penal substitution even though his criticisms may be applied to any theory which hinges on the idea that Christ has done something instead of us. For a clearer analysis to be made, we must accept the theory which Hodges has set up, the contents of which will emerge during the course of his argument. Nevertheless, the question as to whether he has made himself clear in this chapter will re-occur when we try to evaluate the success of this book.

One criticism Hodges makes of such a theory is that it does not do justice to all the relevant biblical material, nor indeed to the Scriptural picture of God. A second criticism is that "this whole cycle of ideas relates to the first of our original five points - the estrangement between man and God."⁴ But Hodges is looking for the Atonement to be seen in its wider context, as it meets all man's needs in his fallen state. In order to criticise this theory, Hodges begins by discussing how estrangements arise according to this view.

We may voice one reservation at this point. It is dangerous in some ways to try to work back from a theory to the ideas underlying it, because we may easily misinterpret the meaning of that theory. Hodges may be right in his analysis of the ideas which lie behind substitutionary Atonement, but he may have misunderstood the intentions and meaning of the theorists. One of the more noticable and commendable features

of Hodges' work in general is that he makes an attempt to understand why people think as they do, even while he may disagree with them. But one question he does not seem to tackle is why men are so misguided as to suggest such mistaken theories of the Atonement; whether they may not have been misguided, but we have misread them? Hodges does seem to condemn in the strongest possible terms without seeking to understand. For example, he refers to this type of theory as an "abominable travesty of the Atonement", an example of the Faith being depraved "by being interpreted in terms of human follies and the unregenerate passions of the soul."⁵ Again, Hodges writes of those who teach such theories as being "themselves psychologically unbalanced."⁶ Nor are these examples unparalleled. What is in question is not whether Hodges is right or not to condemn these theorists, but whether he is being true to his own aims and standards as an impartial and analytical philosopher in speaking of these people with what seems to be an uncharacteristic streak of intolerance. It is tempting to suggest that in view of Hodges' bias against any form of penal substitution, that he may be presenting the theory in its worst possible light in the way he analyses the ideas behind it. Whether this is so or not, we must deal with the theory as Hodges presents it to us, bearing in mind what has been said above, and also pointing out that some might not agree with Hodges' view of the way estrangements in general arise.

It is presupposed, says Hodges, that the offender is under obligation to the offended person; estrangement occurs

because the offender does not either obey a law or legitimate command, or show the respect which is due. The situation has four elements: 1) A law has been broken or a legitimate command disobeyed. 2) Guilt is incurred - that is, an interior state of ill-will, of which the offence is merely the outward manifestation. 3) An affront has been administered to the offended person, whose honour has suffered either in his own esteem or the eyes of others, or both. ("Honour" may seem to be an odd term to use, but Hodges is dealing with the background to a particular theory which goes back to times when it was more usual to speak about one's "honour" than it is today.) 4) Thus the offended person becomes estranged from the offender - he does not necessarily feel real ill-will towards him, but it may imply anger or resentment, and it "certainly implies the refusal of those small friendly offices which are normal between people who are on good terms with one another."⁷

Healing of the estrangement involves expiation - the purging of the offence; and propitiation - the conciliation of the offended person. This can be brought about if: 1) The broken law or flouted command is vindicated: "The offender must fail, and be seen to fail, to get off scot free." This is achieved by imposing a penalty on him. 2) Guilt, as ill-will, must also be punished. The purpose of punishment is to "destroy or injure or banish the guilty person, or if not the person, then at least the guilt that is in him...(punishments) are felt to be demanded not so much by the act which constitutes the offence as by the guilty mind from which it springs,

and at their heart is the notion of beating down the evil will, destroying it or rendering it impotent." 3) Reparation must be made. Reparation is a "salve for wounded honour", and can also be called "satisfaction" or "making amends". These three points are aspects of expiation, but 4) there must also be propitiation; the "offended person must cease to be estranged and cease to hold the offender at a distance."⁸ This can be achieved by the same act as the expiation, or by a direct appeal to the offended person's good will.

We have followed Hodges' analysis here without offering criticism of it. One difficulty here is that he is not setting out his own view of how estrangements arise, but how he believes a particular theory views them. The point at issue is whether they should have applied this view of estrangements between man and man to the situation between man and God. We are not dealing with the rights and wrongs of the theorists' ideas about estrangements, but with the theory to which Hodges suggests these ideas gave rise. Much could be said in criticism of the theorists' presentation of estrangements, and the elements which go to make up their healing; but that is not our concern here.

Hodges goes on to outline the situation as it is thought to apply to the relations between God and man:

Some elements in this analysis undoubtedly apply as between God and man, and theories of the Atonement have too easily assumed that they all apply. On that assumption our relation to God as sinners is this: we must pay a penalty appropriate and adequate to our wrongdoings...we must make satisfaction adequate to the affront which we administer to God's honour, and by these means or by direct appeal to His mercy we must propitiate Him.

But this is an impossible situation for us; and therefore this theory tries to solve the problem of man's dilemma by saying that Christ "saves us by doing for us what we could never do for ourselves.. He pays the penalty for our offences and so vindicates the law of God and His justice in enforcing it; He bears the punishment for our guilt; He makes satisfaction to the offended Father, whom by these means He propitiates." More will be said of this later. Hodges mentions in relation to this the "conception of Christ's death as the payment of a debt."⁹ This debt can be regarded either as a debt of worship and obedience to their creator which man cannot pay, but which Christ can discharge for him; or as the penalty of sin, which Christ pays for him. This penalty is presumably death, whether we regard this as an arbitrary one or the natural consequences of our sin is immaterial at this point. But we may point out what Hodges does not, that is, that man can in fact pay the penalty of sin, for he can suffer the "spiritual death" which appears to be the penalty of sin. (The penalty could be physical death, but in that case all men suffer it, regardless of their beliefs.)¹⁰ But we need not go further into this here, for Hodges mentions it only as another example of the idea that Christ does something "for us".

It cannot be denied that the New Testament speaks in many places of the fact that the death of Christ was "for man", or "for sin", or phrases related to these ideas. But what is the meaning of the word "for" in such contexts? Is there any substitutionary meaning involved? The English translation

"for" may cover the Greek "hyper" or "anti", meaning either "on behalf of" or "instead of" respectively. Hodges remarks that there is very little of the latter meaning in the New Testament. The most striking passage which makes use of this latter concept, says Hodges, is Mark 10:45, which he has already mentioned, "in which the Son of Man Himself declares that He has come 'to give His life as a ransom in place of many'." But, Hodges goes on, "since, as we have already seen, the image of ransom is not to be pressed very far, the idea of a substitution in this passage need not be taken too seriously either. Thus the chief scriptural support of the substitution theory turns out to be weak."¹¹ I have already drawn attention to the weakness of this argument, a weakness increased because Hodges does not consider any of the other verses usually said to substantiate the theory.¹² It may be that Hodges could dismiss any other places where a substitutionary doctrine is postulated as having been misinterpreted by theorists, but they should perhaps have been mentioned. J.S.Whalen, speaking of what he considers to be the two main "proof texts" for substitutionary Atonement, Galatians 3:13, and 2 Corinthians 5:21, comes to a similar conclusion to Hodges' : "The New Testament as a whole gives little or no supporting evidence for the contention that these two isolated Pauline passages justify an explicitly vicarious or substitutionary interpretation of the Cross."¹³ In the last analysis, however, a theory of substitution does not stand or fall through the interpretation of one small Greek word, or one particular verse in the Bible.

What must count is the testimony of the New Testament as a whole. (This was Whale's touchstone in the statement quoted above.) Hodges believes, and is justified in so doing, that the New Testament as a whole supports the idea that the central point of the Atonement is not that Christ dies instead of us, but that we die in Him. This does seem to be one of the key points in Pauline theology. There may be other elements and ways of expressing Christ's work for man, but these should not be made into the only way of seeing that work. Yet those who hold the theory in question are equally sure that they are presenting the clear teaching of the Bible. For example, one leading evangelical writer, who as an evangelical will support the theory of substitutionary Atonement, tells us that we should "accept the direct statement of Christ and His apostles, that He bore our sins, understanding the phrase in its biblical meaning that He underwent the penalty of our sins for us."¹⁴

Nevertheless, there is some truth in the concept of substitution, and it is to Hodges' credit that he tries to see what value there is in it, for it has been widely accepted in one form or another by many people. Hodges makes this point:

in the history of Christian devotion, and still more in the history of soteriology, the idea of substitution has played an important part...it is so widespread and so persistent, and (may we add?) it awakens such echoes in the soul that it can hardly be without a core of vital truth, however hard it may be to formulate it satisfactorily.¹⁵

Here, we may notice, Hodges is being faithful to his intention

stated at the beginning of the book that he would study the Atonement as Scripture and experience present it to us. Where Scripture is not clear, both our own experience and the experience of Christians through the ages lead us to one aspect of the truth. Hodges returns to this point towards the end of the chapter, where he tries to indicate what the core of vital truth is.

Closely linked to this type of theory is the idea of Christ's death as a sacrifice - "the offering of Christ by Christ as a sacrifice for the sin of man." This sacrifice is a propitiatory one, a satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. The death of the victim has this atoning power, and it "does not follow from this, but it has often been believed, that the victim dies as a substitute for us", in which case this idea becomes "merely one more variety of the vicarious atonement theory." Sacrifice plays a large part in the religion of the Old Testament, and is sometimes misunderstood by Christians seeking to interpret Christ's death in terms of a sacrifice. But, says Hodges, despite such inaccuracies "this kind of language speaks to the soul, and any adequate account of the Atonement must be able to do justice to it."¹⁶

Hodges now turns to criticism of the type of theory he has been discussing in this chapter. Firstly he draws attention to some difficulties about it. In the first place

It is a feature of all these vicarious theories that the relation which they postulate between Christ and those whom He saves is a somewhat external one, quasi-legal or even quasi-commercial in character, and far removed from that mystical union between Christ and the believer

on which our previous account of salvation was based. These theories give in fact no explanation of how the second, third, and fourth of our original five points could be dealt with. They concentrate attention wholly on the first point, and we shall shortly see that they give no adequate account even of that.¹⁷

The two criticisms implicit here are valid ones. A vicarious theory all too easily leaves the relation between Christ and the believer on an external level, and it is sometimes difficult to relate the fact that Christ has done all that is necessary instead of me, with the fact that it is still necessary for me to repent, and to strive to follow and obey God's commands. The problem as to how Christ's work can become effective for men is one with which all Atonement theories have to come to terms; this type of theory only accentuates the difficulty, because man is, as it were, left at a distance from God. That this will also mean that there can be no progression in the Christian life, is brought out clearly in the following passage by Oliver Quick:

It seems that for those...who content themselves with a juridical theory of the Atonement, the work of the Atonement stops short, as it were, at the beginning of the Christian life; it accords the believer the forgiveness which cleans the sheet and gives him a fresh start, but it does not place him through union with his risen Lord already within the world to come, so that he may make the life of that world progressively manifest in all his earthly living...the Christian's life in this world is reduced to a series of fresh starts in which the original forgiveness is renewed but there seems to be hardly room for positive progress at all, since the true heavenly life is deferred altogether beyond the grave.¹⁸

The second implicit criticism is that these theories concentrate on only one of the five points which Hodges uses to describe man's troubles. Forgiveness of sins is provided

for, and the removal of guilt and so on; but it does not explain how we are restored to a new life. This has to be taught as a separate doctrine, and we can imagine that this would be wrong in Hodges' eyes, because it is making unnecessary divisions in the Christian life.

Hodges then goes on to ask why, if there are so many inadequacies in this type of theory, it has such a hold on the Christian mind. One factor Hodges suspects of contributing to this is the "spread of a peculiar form of Christo-centric devotion"; by this meaning the "fashion of imaginative and emotional meditation on the humanity of Christ, with special concentration on the circumstances of His passion."¹⁹ Meditation of this kind can stimulate the imitation of Christ, and the desire for a more intimate union with Him - this is apparent in Catholic devotional writers. But:

I may concentrate, not so much on the beauty and majesty of what Christ has done, as on the fact that He has done it for me. The result of this is likely to be... a deep sense of security and assurance, then an outburst of gratitude, thanksgiving and praise, and finally a strong desire to preach Christ to other people. This is a characteristically 'evangelical' pattern of response.²⁰

These two patterns can co-exist in the same soul, and neither is any better than the other; but the latter has been more widely spread, especially in Protestant circles, and it does leave the "relation between Christ and the believer on a more transactional level, and can the more easily go with substitutionary views of the nature of the transaction", and we have observed Hodges' criticism of this mode of thought.

A final difficulty Hodges notes is that "it is consonant

with the substitutionary type of theory that those who hold it should become involved in the question, how the Passion of Christ can be a just equivalent for the penalties from which it saves us." Obviously many different answers can be made to this question. Hodges mentions the idea that Christ by doing more than His duty acquires "spare righteousness" which can be credited to those who need it. It may then be said that "since the slightest sin is an offence against infinite righteousness, it may be held to be an infinite offence and to demand an infinite penalty. Christ's spare righteousness must therefore be one of infinite worth if it is to do the work for which it is required." Hodges comments : "if the phrase 'infinite worth' has any meaning in this connection, we can hardly fail to ascribe infinite worth to the merits of Christ; but the way which we have just travelled to reach this obvious conception seems curiously indirect and artificial."²¹

But the phrases "infinite righteousness", "infinite offence" and "infinite penalty" are also strange concepts, the meaning of which are not clear. "Infinite" is in any case a difficult word to attach positive meaning to, a point which Hodges himself makes elsewhere: "Superhuman wisdom or goodness we can in a manner understand...But infinite wisdom and infinite goodness - what are these?"²² Even more difficult is trying to apply the word not to a quality, but to words which are so closely related to "events", that is, the giving of offence, and the imposing of a penalty. But we need not comment further on this, as the question from which it arises is a mistaken

one, as Hodges goes on to show.

To return to The Pattern of Atonement, Hodges gives a detailed criticism of the theory he has been discussing.

I.) The penalties which human law imposes are "not the natural consequences of our actions, but artificial consequences imposed for reasons of social policy...God is not a human legislator, He is the lawgiver of the universe, and the 'penalties' which He annexes to human actions are precisely their natural consequences." In human law, or in human beings' dealings with one another, one person's fine may be paid by another, and also "it is not inconceivable that an offended person might be appeased by a sufficiently impressive satisfaction offered on behalf of the offender by someone else."²³ But, says Hodges, God's dealings with man are on a different level from this. However, the distinction which he makes is a little too rigid - Christians traditionally believe that human law is in some sense from God, and those who implement it have God's authority to do so.²⁴ In one sense, therefore, God does deal with us on this level. Where Hodges' point holds good is when we are considering sin. Here the offence is very serious, since it affects the relationship between God and man. The "law" may act so as to restore what has been damaged by an offence from a human standpoint, but it cannot restore man's relationship with God. We should perhaps also note that satisfaction would only be accepted on a human level, from someone other than the offender, if the offence was not of a serious nature. This then becomes another criticism

of the theory Hodges is discussing, if we say that even on a human level, we recognise that it is improper for one person to make a satisfaction for the offence of another. It would be replied that what is improper for men may be right for God, but this leaves us with no real analogy for understanding the work of Christ.

Hodges points out that "the natural consequences of our actions cannot be finally averted by anything that anyone else does for us...(they)...can be averted only if our diseased will returns to health, and this return is nothing if it is not our own act." It is disputable whether the natural consequences of an action can never be averted by another - the natural consequence of jumping off a high building is death, but a fireman's blanket may avert that, to take a simple example - but where the action is sin, and the consequences a "spiritual death", then it is clear what Hodges is saying. We are back to Athanasius here.²⁵ A corrupt nature is our problem, so God can neither simply pronounce us forgiven, nor allow His Son to suffer death if His justice demands that there be one. For in either case, the act remains external to us, and cannot give us that new nature we so desperately need.

2) The aim of punishment, Hodges has said, is to destroy the evil involved in an offence. Human justice tries to do this by imprisoning, or even executing, the offender, but recognises that a better way is the positive one of converting the evil into good. As for God, Hodges says, He

does not will the destruction or even the eternal banishment

of the sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live. God's way of 'destroying' His enemies is to convert them into friends, and if He 'punishes' the sinner by way of pain or loss it is always in the hope (so long as there remains a hope) that he may be thus converted. For no-one does the punishment settle down into irremediable suffering and eternal loss, unless by his own will he becomes eternally fixed in the rejection of God.

All of this may be true, but it does not really constitute a criticism of penal substitution. For one of the central points of such a theory is that God so little desires the death of a sinner that He did not spare His own Son, in order to redeem mankind. God's purpose is not to destroy His enemies. What seems to lie at the heart of Hodges' criticism, although he does not perhaps bring it out clearly enough, is whether there should be a need for punishment at all. For if the "ideal" of punishment is that it should be reformatory, then it can obviously make no sense to "punish" someone other than the offender, and therefore to speak of Christ bearing our punishment for us. Nevertheless, it might be argued that not all the evil in us can be turned to good, and that there must be a destruction of the "old self", a concept of which St. Paul makes frequent use. This, Hodges will argue, is what happens to our "old selves" in Christ on the Cross, as part of the re-making process, and it is this which substitutionary theories misinterpret as Christ suffering instead of us.

3) Since both Bible and Church "declare that the death of Christ is a propitiatory sacrifice and a satisfaction rendered to the Father...there is a sense in which the Father requires to be satisfied and propitiated". Hodges correctly dismisses the

supposition that "the Father is wholly lacking in good will towards us, or would be if it were not that the Son in His kindness contrives to change Him"; for after all, it is "the Father who sends the Son to be the Saviour of the world." We must therefore assume that "the Father, though fundamentally benevolent towards us, is prevented from fully displaying His will by some obstacle which the death of Christ removes...this obstacle must lie within the Father Himself."²⁶ It is usually said to lie in His justice and wrath, but these divine attributes can be misunderstood as meaning an inflexible will to exact penalties, and a desire to destroy or banish the wicked. Hodges therefore turns to an examination of the real meaning of these terms.

Firstly, the word "justice" has a connotation of severity and rigorism not found in our word "righteousness", the Hebrew çedaqa, or the Greek dikaioyne.²⁷ We should think of God's "justice", then, as His righteousness, which in relation to us is "His infinite readiness to restore to us the righteousness which we have lost." (We might note here that "infinite" has some meaning in this context!) The Old Testament, Hodges says, connects God's righteousness with our salvation, and thus we may readily admit that "He often finds it necessary to smite us in order to save us."²⁸ It may be true that some conceive God's justice as an "inflexible will to exact penalties",²⁹ and portray these penalties as somewhat arbitrarily imposed. But it would also be possible to conceive God exacting penalties because His justice demanded that this should be so, that is, that the penalties of sin - death, separation from God -

follow as natural consequences from God's holiness and justice. But whether this is so or not, we are left with the criticism that no-one else can bear these penalties for us, and this would seem to be the insurmountable difficulty against which a substitutionary theory of the Atonement comes to grief.

Secondly, God's anger, or wrath, has been the subject of debate among theologians, because of a reluctance among some to attribute such an emotion to God. C.H.Dodd comments on this on pp.47-50 of his commentary on Romans,³⁰ where he describes the idea of the Wrath of God as archaic, and suggests that it is inconsistent to attribute the "irrational passion of anger" to God. Dodd prefers to re-define wrath as "an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe", but is this too impersonal a way of viewing it? Dodd does speak of a "moral universe", but this does not necessarily call for the existence of God at all, and does not suggest the same relationship between God and man that is implied by the possibility of God being angry with men.³¹ It is true that, as Hodges writes, "anger in man is only too often offended dignity... self-regarding, a manifestation of wounded pride...human anger is so often destructive and takes the form of a desire to hurt the offender";³² and we would not wish to attribute this sort of anger to God. But He does have a "sense of dignity", and seeks to manifest His glory. As it is clear that God "finds His glory in the beatitude of His creatures", continues Hodges, therefore "they cannot offend against Him by any act which is not at the same time a serious offence against themselves."

III

Thus God's anger is wholly altruistic, like that of the "nurse or doctor with the patient who obstinately persists in doing what is worst for himself".³³ We should not, therefore, oppose God's justice and anger to His love and mercy, for they are all His attributes, and the first pair is a particular manifestation of the second. Hodges' conclusion here is right, that we should not "divide" God in this way, but is he right to say that God's anger is wholly altruistic? It is possible to argue that every sin, every wrong act, does in some way damage the offender, even where this is not obvious. Similarly, one might suggest that the sin of refusing to worship God, or to give Him the honour due to His Name, is also an offence against oneself. But Hodges aims to follow Bible and tradition in his exposition, and it must be said that there is a strand in the Bible (and in the Church's tradition also) which speaks of God being angry, and acting for His own sake, rather than to help His creatures. That God should, as it were, maintain His dignity, is perhaps to our benefit, but this is not stated by the writers specifically. A good example of this strand is Ezekiel 36:22-32; it does not speak of God's anger in particular, but refers to Him acting to vindicate His Name alone. We find God's anger displayed for seemingly non-altruistic purposes in 2 Samuel 6:6-7. It is of course possible to dismiss these episodes as primitive misconceptions of the nature of God, but they may suggest that Hodges' view of the matter is not as straightforward as he presents it to be.³⁴

The conclusion Hodges draws from this standä, however:

if God shows His justice and seeks His glory in the beatitude of His creatures, it follows that His chastisements will not achieve their end nor His loving wrath be appeased, that (in short) He will not be propitiated, until the beatitude of His creatures is ensured; and nothing can ensure it, short of their own full repentance and their restoration to the state and status from which they have fallen.³⁵

The sinner himself understands this, realising that he deserves all that can befall him, and is repentant before the goodness of God, who "works not indulgently, to let him off his deserts, but transformingly, to make him cease to be a sinner." He may therefore welcome the disciplines which God inflicts on him, and be "drawn to take a hand in the process by inflicting disciplinary rigours upon himself." Although no penance can ever really be adequate, the desire for it, writes Hodges, "represents a native tendency in mankind."³⁶

Hodges then comes to what is the central point in his argument, one which he has mentioned earlier, but here spells out clearly:

We cannot be saved without full repentance, and even an imperfect repentance brings with it at least the desire to do worthy penance. But the sickness from which we suffer is that of a diseased will, and so we cannot perform this full repentance nor the penance which should go with it. Yet on the other hand, as we have seen, no one, not even Christ can do these things for us, if by 'for' us is meant 'instead of' us. To this problem there is only one solution. Since we cannot do it alone and He cannot do it instead of us, it must be both together who do it, He in us and we in Him... We find our salvation after all in our mystical union with Christ.

In saying this, says Hodges, we have "stepped out of that whole region of substitutions, contracts and external relationships".³⁷ Substitutionary Atonement does have some contribution to make to our understanding of this doctrine, and Hodges examines

what this is later. First he endeavours to answer the question as to how the idea of our union with Christ makes possible the solution of a previously insoluble problem.

How, he asks, is Christ's death a sacrifice for sin? It is so because it cancels sin, not simply the consequences of it, but also its guilt and power; for the Christ who died at Jerusalem is also Christ present in our souls by His Spirit:

purging, transforming, refashioning us in His own likeness, so that in His obedience we return to obedience and in His worship we worship the Father. His sacrifice, when we are thus drawn into it and made partakers in it, expiates our offence by destroying in us the root from which it sprang, so that we are no longer the rebellious beings that we were, but a new creation in Christ. It propitiates the Father by bringing us before Him as His true children, accepted in the Beloved.³⁸

This paragraph, taken together with the one quoted above, represents Hodges' view of the doctrine of the Atonement, and it must be admitted that it is an impressive picture, giving a balanced and biblical answer to man's needs. Hodges' view of the Atonement is not exclusive to him, for parallels can be found in both older and more recent writers. McIntyre reflects a similar view,³⁹ and goes on to make the interesting point that "the Christian Church has been constantly ready to use the language of identification to speak of the resurrection... but has been so unwilling to employ this same language to the same degree in reference to the death of Christ. Yet the two - death and resurrection - go together."⁴⁰ The New Testament speaks of our identification with Christ in both. Also in connection with the notion of Christ's obedience bringing us salvation, we may note M.Jarrett-Kerr's statement that

"the best way of picturing Christ's operation as Redeemer is by concentrating upon His willing obedience."⁴¹ One may still ask, however, whether Hodges' answer in fact takes into account all the different aspects under which the Bible considers the doctrine?

Hodges' version is a biblical account, and has as its main source the writings of St. Paul.⁴² This is an interesting point, as one might expect mysticism to be emphasised more by a "Johannine" theologian.⁴³ Hodges might have shown us that he had paid attention to a diversity of such elements in the New Testament.

Hodges rightly goes on to consider how we should modify the theory of substitutionary Atonement in the light of what has been said about the mystical union of Christ and the believer. The theory as such stands or falls on account of an erroneous view of God's dealings with men, but we can discover what truth lies behind the concepts and phrases it uses. Firstly, we must understand that "the things which Christ is said by this doctrine to do on our behalf are things which we also do in Him." In practical terms, this means we can accept that Christ has died for us, but must interpret this as meaning, "on behalf of". Hodges remarks that we may say that Christ has paid the price of sin, meaning by such a statement that He

accepted the consequences of sin, that He did and underwent what was necessary as a result of it. The toil and pain are the 'price of sin' in the sense that they are what has to be undergone when sin has been yielded to. Again, since the toil and pain are

are the necessary consequences of sin, they can also be referred to as its 'penalty'...so Christ in undergoing the consequences of sin can also be said to 'pay the penalty' of it.⁴⁴

But, Hodges warns, this is open to misconstruction, for

Strictly speaking, Christ undergoes that which is in fact the penalty of sin: but He does not undergo it...instead of us, but for us and with us...Christ underwent death, which is the penalty of our sin, not in order that we might not die but in order that we might die aright. Our death without Him would be punishment and sheer destruction; with Him and in Him it is saving penance and redemptive sacrifice.⁴⁵

I have already made some comment on this idea. We may also draw attention to Pannenberg's comment: "Jesus' death has vicarious significance for all humanity. Not in such a way that men no longer have to die, but in such a way that their death is taken into the community of Jesus' dying so that they have a hope beyond death, the hope of the coming resurrection to the life that has already appeared in him."⁴⁶

Penance suggests penitence, Hodges continues, and goes on to discuss what this means. It is a biblical thought, he says, that Christ on the Cross "condemned" sin once for all; and this He did in at least two senses. In the first place, the "process of events which brought Him to the Cross shows the nature of sin in all its loathsomeness with a clarity not to be surpassed"; and secondly, during His life on earth, Christ

met the full impact of sin in its attractiveness as

well as in its terror, and unwaveringly rejected it. His acceptance of the Cross seals that rejection once for all; sin after this can neither attract nor terrorise any more and in so far as we are in Him, His rejection of sin becomes also ours. This is our true penitence, which...is in us only as His gift.

Hodges refers to Moberly's theory of Christ as the only perfect penitent, pointing out its psychological impossibility, for "repentance is something which Christ cannot possibly perform in our stead."⁴⁷ If this is the case, then is there nothing to justify the substitutionary language which has had so much support in the history of the Church? Hodges believes that there is, and it is to his credit that he does investigate the possibility.

There are two areas where the theory under discussion in this chapter reflects an important aspect of the truth. In the first place, it emphasises that "in the whole process of our redemption it is He who takes the initiative and retains it throughout...On Christ alone the full weight of evil broke, He alone bore the full burden, He alone won a victory which was self-wrought and all decisive." This is an integral part of the theory of substitutionary Atonement, for it represents a reaction against the real or apparent teaching of Catholicism in the middle ages that man may work his way into God's favour by accumulating merit. The Reformers were eager to state that the salvation of man was all God's doing, and although this concept is done justice to by other theories of the Atonement, it was very clearly shown by a theory which said that God had allowed the penalty for sin to fall on Christ instead of us.

In the second place, there is a true substitution which the theories mishandle and misconceive, writes Hodges, and which is proclaimed by Bible and Church. It is that:

to be in Christ is to be a new creature, different from that which one was before and different from what one could ever be in oneself. It is this new creature, this new self, not the old and sinful one, which finds acceptance before God...we are acceptable because He sees us not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ. 'Not I, but Christ in me'. 'Not in myself, but in Christ'.⁴⁸

One question which arises from this second comment is whether God sees us as righteous (although in fact we are not) because of our faith, or whether because we are "in Christ" we actually become righteous? This is the question of imputed or imparted righteousness, and it is one which Hodges examines later on. Again, we might ask whether God's seeing us only in so far as we are in Christ, is a denial of the independent individuality of our human personalities? But it would seem reasonable to suggest that Hodges, in accordance with the implicit teaching of Scripture, would say that it is only as we are set free from sin, and our relations with God are right, that we are able to be fully human.⁴⁹ God does not override our personality, but renews it and frees us to be fully ourselves.

Hodges closes this chapter by referring to the eucharist. The image of the blood of Christ is often used in Christian devotion, and "to receive the blood in any of these ways, to be smeared or sprinkled with it or to drink it or however else it may applied, is to become identified with a life which is not one's own and to draw safety and fresh vigour from that identification."⁵⁰ This truth is enshrined in the eucharist,

and Hodges remarks that where the eucharist is given its proper place, the effect of unbalanced theories of the Atonement "has always been offset by the presence of a richer and truer theology embodied in the liturgy." This has happened in the Catholic world, but where the eucharist has been neglected, or a minimising doctrine of it has prevailed, (and this has happened in the Protestant world as a backlash against mistaken Catholic practices connected with eucharistic devotion) the doctrine of the Atonement has also "taken on a meagre and ill-proportioned and often misleading form." This may well be true, and we shall be discussing Hodges' understanding of the sacraments and of the aspects of the Catholic teaching which can enlighten our thinking on the Atonement, in another chapter. But the clearest statement of our relationship with God regarding the Atonement occurs in a eucharistic hymn, and not by accident, says Hodges:

Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
And only look on us as found in Him.⁵¹

- I. London: S.P.C.K., 1975, p.89.
2. Pattern, p.42.
3. Ibid., p.42-43.
4. Ibid., p.43.
5. "Art and Religion", p.I45.
6. "Clearing the Ground", Fourth Discussion, p.II.
7. Pattern, p.43-44.
8. Ibid., p.44.
9. Ibid., p.45.
10. Mozley comments on this in a note: "Dr.White puts the difficulty very fairly, 'If physical death be the penalty of sin, then Christ's death does not in fact save us from this penalty. But did Christ then suffer eternal death, commonly called damnation, in order to save us from that penalty? Obviously not. So it is not clear... in what sense Christ did in fact endure the penalty due to mankind.'" op.cit., p.210 note.
11. Pattern, p.46.
12. I Peter 2:24, for example, and the two texts mentioned below in the text. The question may be asked, why is this verse in Mark taken as the main example of substitutionary Atonement, as Hodges says it is? Perhaps the answer lies in the background to the theory, and the frame of mind in which proponents of it approached the biblical text; but the answer to this question is probably complex, and can only be raised here.
13. Victor and Victim, Cambridge: C.U.P., 1960, p.72.

14. John Stott in Basic Christianity, London: I.V.F., 1958, p.97.
15. Pattern, p.46.
16. Ibid., p.47.
17. Ibid., p.48.
18. The Gospel of the New World, London: Nisbet & Co., 1944, p.87-88.
19. Prestige discusses this form of devotion in "Eros: or Devotion to the Sacred Humanity: An Epilogue", Chapter 8 of Fathers and Heretics, London: S.P.C.K., 1940.
20. Pattern, p.48.
21. Ibid., p.49.
22. "What is to Become of Philosophical Theology?" p.227.
23. Pattern, p.50.
24. Cf. Romans 13:1-7. Also see W.A.Whitehouse, "The State and Divine Law", in Reformation Old and New.
25. See above, p.75.
26. Pattern, p.51.
27. Cf. Karl Barth in Dogmatics in Outline, London: S.C.M., 1966, p.135: "In the Biblical world of thought the judge is not primarily the one who rewards some and punishes others; he is the man who creates order and restores what has been destroyed."
28. Pattern, p.52..
29. Ibid., p.51.
30. Moffatt Commentary, London: Collins, 1959, 1st published 1932.
31. For further analysis of the subject, on the same lines

as Dodd, see A.T.Hanson, The Wrath of the Lamb, London: S.P.C.K., 1957.

32. Pattern, p.52.
33. Ibid., p.53.
34. One point which may be made here is that if God's anger against sin is altruistic, as in many cases it does seem to be, then we have some grounds for encouraging non-Christians not to sin, i.e. to keep God's commandments for their own health, if they refuse to do so out of love for God. On this subject, see Hodges' article "Social Standards in a Mixed Society", and on a wider level, W.A.Whitehouse, "The State and Divine Law".
35. Pattern, p.53.
36. Ibid., p.54.
37. Ibid., p.55.
38. Quoted above, p.73. For an older writer, see Aquinas, quoted by H.Küng in Justification, trans. T.Collins, London: Burns & Oates, 1964, p.167: "The passion of Christ is communicated to every baptised person so that he is healed just as if he himself had suffered and died."
40. McIntyre, op.cit., p.210.
41. The Hope of Glory, London: S.C.M., 1952, p.85.
42. In this context, cf. the discussion on the relationship between Pauline and Johannine modes of thought in T.Preiss, Life in Christ, S.C.M., 1957, "Justification in Johannine Thought", pp.9-31.

43. See, for example, on John 6:50, C.K.Barrett's comments, pp. 56-58, and pp.234-248, in his Commentary on St.John, London: S.P.C.K., 1960.
44. Pattern, p.56.
45. Ibid., p.56-57.
46. Op.cit., p.263.
47. Pattern, p.57.
48. Ibid., p.58.
49. In connection with this, we might note Peter Baelz's comment that "moral atheism" says "If man is to become what he is, (i.e. fully human) there must be no God." The Forgotten Dream, London: Mowbrays, 1975, p.26.
50. Pattern, p.58-59.
51. From the hymn "And Now, O Father, Mindful of the Love", by W.Bright.

Chapter Eight

Hodges turns in his fourth chapter "Justification", to discuss the doctrine of justification which plays such a large part in considerations of the Atonement, "wherever the influence of the Reformation has been felt."^I For the Atonement is the means by which men are justified, and may therefore stand before God. It is St. Paul who preached the doctrine with most emphasis and clarity, but even he does not give it the central place the Reformers gave it.. The phrase "justification by faith" raises two sets of problems, writes Hodges, the one relating to justification, and the other to faith. The latter set he deals with in the next chapter, the former in this.

Hodges begins with what seems to be a popular method with him, that is, examining the meaning of a word in English; but it should be said that whereas this method may conceivably help us to understand the way "justification" is used within the English theological tradition, it will not necessarily cast light on the way St. Paul (or the Reformers) used the term. However, in strict etymology in English, the word "justify" ought to mean to make a man just, writes Hodges. But in fact in ordinary usage, a man is said to be justified in doing something "when his action is itself justified, i.e. when the circumstances are such as to make it the right action. The man can 'justify' himself' by showing this is the case."² In Latin, Greek and Hebrew this family of words is beset with similar ambiguities.

But of what is St. Paul thinking when he speaks of justification? Hodges believes him to be thinking of "man on trial before God his judge, who...judges men according to their works." It is not man who justifies himself by showing, if he can, the rightness of his actions, but it is God who justifies, and in this context, "to justify can only mean 'to pronounce just', and for the judge to pronounce the prisoner just or righteous is in fact to acquit him...The justification of the sinner is his acquittal at God's bar." But a crucial question at this point is whether it means only this, or whether it also carries for St. Paul the additional meaning of being rendered just or righteous? Even if he does not use it in this sense himself, "is it in fact true to say that we are justified in both senses, that we are both acquitted and made righteous?"³ This is an important question for Hodges, for if God does not actually make us righteous, does not actually give us a new nature, but only regards us as though we were just, then He has not really provided a way out of man's predicament, as Hodges has outlined it in the first chapter.

In search of an answer to this vital question, Hodges turns to an examination of the concept of justice itself, and its background in social history. Obviously, although Hodges does not draw attention to this point, he has been able to do no more than touch on this wide subject, and some might dispute the conclusion he comes to, if it is taken as a general truth. But the point Hodges wishes to establish is that God's righteousness must involve more than mere distributive

justice, just as in human societies more is required. He takes Plato's description as being an accurate view, that a man is righteous if "he is and does what is appropriate in his station and in his relations with other people." A king will also be righteous if "he ensures that his subjects all do what is required of them in their own several positions"; and a god will show his righteousness by "maintaining and even creating righteousness among his people: he punishes the wicked, vindicates the oppressed, and makes known his righteous law." Hodges claims that the Bible accepts this view of the relation between God and His people, and there is no reason to criticise this. God makes known His law, and punishes disobedience, but at the same time, He is seen urging His people to live righteously - through the prophets - treating the people with mercy, and providing for their deliverance.⁴ If we consider that man is a sinner because he has fallen under Satan's power, then God will show His righteousness by delivering him from that tyranny. "So interpreted", Hodges continues, "God's 'righteousness' becomes equivalent to His 'salvation', and it is thus that the Bible constantly regards it."⁵

But how does this work out in real life? We realise that we are not righteous, and that God is totally opposed to sin, and we cannot find out from reading the Old Testament "how God can destroy sin without destroying us with it, nor how our relations with Him can be made tolerable when the evil in us has so obviously not yet been rooted out."⁶ This is the problem with

which St. Paul was intensely concerned, and, says Hodges, it is not a specifically Jewish problem, but a Christian one, for "it is a necessary consequence of the seriousness with which the Gospels insist on the divine law of perfection." Hodges then adds an interesting comment on the Sermon on the Mount, saying that it is "not the gospel, it is the Law, with whose oppressive and intolerable perfection only the gospel can enable us to live. The gospel, by contrast, is the news of forgiveness and renewal, a forgiveness which we can never earn and a renewal or return to righteousness which we can never by ourselves achieve." There is some truth in this, for of course the sermon is addressed to those who are Christ's followers, and therefore by implication those who are "believers". But does this mean that the sermon is presenting demands which Christ's followers must live up to - and even in the power of Christ and His Spirit, is this possible? Or is Christ showing us that the new law is as impossible to live with as the old one, and our only hope is to turn from it to the gift of righteousness which God alone can supply? But if it is a picture of the way Christians are to live, then it is a part of the gospel; and if it is not a part of the gospel, as Hodges suggests, then why is this not made more explicit by Jesus or Matthew? Also, some parts of it are undoubtedly applicable - Matthew 6:19-20, 25-33, for example. But leaving aside the vexed question of the true implications of the Sermon on the Mount, we can echo Hodges' appreciation of St. Paul's wisdom on the subject of the Christian's righteousness - the gospel is "from start to finish

a free gift of God to the undeserving". It is only through this free gift that we can become righteous.

Hodges says, therefore, that "the good news is news of forgiveness and also of renewal or return to righteousness", and adds that the "relation between these two aspects of it must be considered carefully, for in this relation lies a great part of the Reformation controversy." Hodges goes on to consider this subject under four headings.

I: Justification as Forgiveness and Acceptance in Christ.

"Forgiveness is the main aspect of justification as it is presented in the argument of Romans", writes Hodges. All men are sinners, and therefore ought to stand condemned; but for those who are in Christ, "the Father sees in him not the sinner that he has been and is, but the member of Christ that he is and is to be."⁷ It is thus that the sinner is justified, says Hodges, and we can only understand it "in the light of that paradox which runs through the whole New Testament doctrine of the Christian life. We are and we are not what we appear to be." This paradox is apparent in the life of the Church too: "The Church is dwelling in the heavenly places at the very same time that its members are fuddled with drink and fornication, for all that is of the earth, though it continues in time, is already dead in the eyes of God, and our real life is hid with Christ in Him."⁸ We find this in the New Testament, as Hodges points out, but the same paradoxical element runs through many of Christianity's themes. Of particular relevance here, we might mention St. Paul's instructions to

to the Christians at Philippi to "work out your own salvation... for God is at work in you."⁹ This is an interesting example because the two halves of the paradox represent a caricature of Protestant and Catholic teaching on justification and righteousness, with Catholicism stressing the first part and Protestantism the second. However much of a caricature, it does represent the way the two sides have thought of each other. The truth is, of course, that St. Paul means both aspects to be held in balance, and we shall be looking at this more fully later on in this chapter. A similar difficulty arises over the idea Hodges has mentioned above, that we are both still sinful, and yet are not sinners. He answers that to "be in Christ does not mean an immediate end of sinning, but it does mean immediate deliverance from the status of a sinner, from guilt and condemnation." But this brings us back to the question asked earlier as to whether there was any actual difference in the life of the believer made by the fact that Christ has conquered sin. We may be freed from the status of a sinner, but how does this help us here and now where we still continue to sin? Perhaps the answer lies in our faith, as Hodges suggests: "We are already in faith and hope what we are to be, and not only do our own faith and hope present us in this light, but God Himself sees us thus." By faith we can consider ourselves to have changed lives, even where this is not obvious. This is one problem faced by Christians, especially new ones, in their lives, which is not always appreciated by the Church; and the lack of evidence

that anything really has happened may be one of the reasons for converts falling away. The Catholic emphasis on discipline in the Christian life at least encourages definite progress to be made, whereas in Protestantism - with the possible exception of Methodism - perhaps the tendency to regard conversion itself as an end to be achieved leaves the convert unsure of the next steps.

One error which should be avoided in this context is that way of thinking about man's status before God "which treats it as something to be settled hereafter, at the Last Day or at the particular judgement after death."¹⁰ In this case the Christian must simply trust to be forgiven; but, remarks Hodges, "the Pauline Christian does not hope to be forgiven, he knows himself forgiven here and now." This is quite true, as it is true that St. Paul speaks in terms of the sinner now justified being welcomed back into the family of God; so that "with peace of mind and healthy confidence he is set free to live, not in his own strength but in the power of the Spirit, that life of obedience and fellowship for which he was created and which is his eternal joy."¹¹ But though it is true that St. Paul does not speak as though we cannot know the verdict on us, he does speak in terms of a future judgement when all will be judged according to their works.¹² There is, then, some evidence that could be read as meaning that judgement and verdict are both in the future. Much has been written on this subject (which ties in with the whole problem of "realised" or "future" eschatology), but perhaps

because writers have tried to prove either one view or the other, no satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at. We would seem here to be in the presence of another paradox, both elements of which must be accepted, even where they cannot be totally reconciled. Hodges does not mention this problem, and indeed we do not find much in his work which refers to the final judgement. But his emphasis on the fact that Christianity makes a difference to us and our status here and now is a right one where Christians have too often tended to speak as if the only benefit of following Christ was the hope of life after death.

Returning to our forgiveness and acceptance in Christ, Hodges points out that this body of doctrine, "though clearly present in the New Testament, had not before the Reformation that central place in theological discussion which the Reformers gave to it." Hodges believes they did this because they were looking for an answer to the problem of "the fear of judgement, the sense of insecurity which results from living under the shadow of an impending doom with no clear assurance of safety."¹³ In one sense such fear is fundamental to the Christian life, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;¹⁴ but it should not be allowed to dominate. The Christianity which the Reformers found current among their contemporaries was one in which God appeared mainly as Creator and Judge, and the moral life was conceived rather in terms of law than of love. Man was seen as needing to work his way to heaven "by fulfilling God's commandments and so accumulating

merit; and the guilt of sin is to be offset or expiated by penitential observances, supported by the intercessions of the saints."¹⁵ This they rightly regarded as a perversion of the Faith, and in contrast to it they preached the doctrine of justification, which to them meant that "God's forgiveness and favour cannot be earned, and that any attempt to earn them is wholly misguided, but that they are to be received, and that everyone can receive them, here and now as a free gift in Christ." This lifts from men's shoulders the burden of an intolerable anxiety."¹⁶

This is a true insight, says Hodges, for it is Pauline, but "it owes its special importance in Reformation teaching to the emotional tension from which the Reformation was born."¹⁷ If this is the case, then two points may follow. Firstly, does this mean that the Protestant Church is preaching a doctrine of the Atonement which relates to the problems of 400 years ago, rather than to man's present problems?¹⁸ Hodges seems to think this is the case. Secondly, are Protestants still judging Catholicism on the evidence of 400 years ago, without taking into account how much Catholics have changed? The Reformation has perhaps blinded Protestants to the fact that there can be other views of the Atonement, and it is interesting in this context to notice that a leading evangelical Protestant referred recently to "the tragedy of the Reformation", in view of the divisions and prejudices which stem from that time.¹⁹

2: Imputed or Imparted Righteousness?

Hodges first of all discusses Luther's phrase simul justus et peccator, which, he says, clearly refers primarily to the Christian's status before God, "reckoned as just by God's merciful verdict in spite of all the unrighteousness that is in him." But is this all it means? Hodges asks: "Is God content, while pronouncing the sinner righteous, to leave him in his actual unrighteousness? Or does He, while accepting him as righteous in Christ, at the same time set about making him really so? Is the righteousness of the Christian a merely imputed righteousness, or is it also an imparted one?"²⁰ Put in this way, and taking into account the rest of the book, Hodges can only make the answer "imparted". "The theory of a merely imputed righteousness goes most easily with a vicarious expiation theory of the kind which I criticised in my last lecture", writes Hodges, in which case the doctrine runs: "I myself am not righteous at all, but Christ's righteousness is accepted instead of mine in payment of the debt which I owe to the Father." In fact, he says, the two have often been so associated. But it may perhaps be mentioned that a vicarious expiation theory does not place the emphasis mainly on Christ's righteousness being accepted in place of ours, but of his death replacing mine. We become acceptable to God because the penalty of our sin has been paid by Christ, and we are then expected to grow in righteousness. There may be some difficulties involved in this, as we have suggested earlier; but although theologically it can be hard to relate a doctrine of substitutionary Atonement with growth in the

Christian life, in practice, Christians are expected to behave righteously, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Having said that, it is noticable that Hodges' formula for the Atonement is much more simple, and explains how it is possible for the sinner both to be considered righteous, and to be empowered to grow in righteousness. Also, if this formula, "Christ in me and I in Him", is the correct one, then "the theory of a merely imputed righteousness at once becomes incredible. How can I be in Christ, who is all righteousness, and not myself be made righteous?" For no righteousness of my own achieving can ever be grounds for God's approval, he continues, and therefore:

The righteousness of God, made mine in hope and increasingly mine in fact through Christ, is mine only as His gift, and in this life I open myself to receive it only imperfectly. There is thus an element of anticipation in everything that is said about the Christian while still in this life; we are now in hope, i.e. in expectation, what we shall be afterwards in actuality. But still the difference...is not a difference between being and not being; it is the difference between the full-grown plant and the quickening seed, between the mature and the inchoate.

This analogy can help us to understand the paradox we considered earlier between our being acquitted now, and yet still subject to sin and temptation; and it is a biblical image - the seed must fall into the ground and die, before it can grow and become mature, and yet in all stages it is the same plant. Thus, says Hodges, acquittal and restoration, "forgiveness and the beginning of the new life go together."²¹

Hodges believes that all this represents biblical doctrine, but is it also, he asks, part of St. Paul's teaching about

the Christian life? Both St.Paul and St.John speak of a changed life, a new birth, a new creation, and so on, and on "the face of it, these tremendous images are meant to convey not only a reconciliation but also a transformation." St.Paul also gives us a wealth of teaching about the imitation of Christ, Christian virtues, and the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, and a "great part, if not the whole, of what he says under these heads amounts to a description of a new and distinctively Christian type of 'righteousness'." ²²

Hodges goes on to inquire into St.Paul's use of the verb "to justify" - can it mean to make righteous as well as to acquit? We must go carefully here, he says, because in "the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians St.Paul is writing controversially, working out an argument which is directed towards a particular point, and does not necessarily say all that is in his mind." This sounds suspiciously like an argument from silence, to which not too much weight should be attached, but we must pay attention to the whole of Hodges' argument on this point before being too critical of it. He suggests that St.Paul is discussing the position of man before God as his judge, and

arguing that if man is to be acquitted in the judgement it must be by free grace, since man cannot earn his acquittal... In this context, to be justified must mean primarily to be reckoned as righteous...(though)...it does not exclude the other possible meaning. After saying that we cannot earn God's favour by making ourselves righteous, St.Paul can perfectly well go on to say...that God makes us righteous when He receives us into His favour. As we have seen, that is the truth of the matter and St.Paul knows it.

Hodges continues the argument by saying that the second meaning

of the word "justification" does begin to come through in Romans, where St. Paul says more than the "overt logic" of his argument requires him to say. To support this contention, Hodges quotes Romans 5:19: "as through the disobedience of the one the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the one the many shall be constituted righteous";²³ and says that the "natural interpretation of this is that the real righteousness of Christ is really communicated to those who are His:" He then suggests that "justification" in Chapter 6 of Romans is equivalent to "newness of life", and that the context shows that "this 'newness of life' means a real repudiation of sin and a real liberation from it, not only from its guilt but from its power"; St. Paul goes on, he says, to describe the fullness of God's unspeakable gift, so that "the word 'justification' grows with the growth of the theme, and ends by meaning nothing less than the risen life itself."²⁴

Is Hodges right in his interpretation here? His argument is, as we have noticed, in part an argument from silence, and this is not a very sure foundation on which to build a theory. In the second place, Hodges has not been able to produce (for obvious reasons) a detailed study of St. Paul's writings.²⁵ The evidence he gives in his book, therefore, is not convincing, because he mentions only a few of St. Paul's ideas, rather than examining his thought as a whole. This is not a criticism of Hodges, because he has not set out to present a detailed study of St. Paul, but it does make it difficult to judge whether

his conclusions are accurate. Perhaps it is fair to say that even though St. Paul is not always necessarily thinking of justification in terms of making righteous as well as acquittal, to say that the word has both implications is not being untrue to the general trend of his thought. This is what Hodges assumes, although he tries to establish that St. Paul gives the word both meanings. But it is an important issue, because it is one of the points at which Protestantism and Catholicism clash. This Hodges examines in the next section.

3: The Verbal Dispute and What Lies Behind It.

On the Protestant side, Hodges writes, we find "a determined attempt to tie down 'justification' to 'acquittal' and to deny that it means anything else".²⁶ But both pre-Reformation writings and the Council of Trent appear to speak in accordance with part, though not the whole, of St. Paul's mind. The Tridentine Decree on Justification gives a true account of justification, he says, and quotes from it: "Justification... is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man...in justification itself, along with the remission of sins, a man has all these things simultaneously infused into him through Jesus Christ, into whom he is grafted, viz. faith, hope and charity." Although the Decree does not stress the remission side of the matter as strongly as St. Paul does, and is thus not a perfectly balanced statement of his thought; it "teaches no error and it denies a serious error, and in sum it is a valuable safeguard of the integrity of the faith." But it does seem to "identify justification in its

more positive sense, as the renewal of life, with sanctification",²⁷ and Hodges feels that though "the distinction between the two terms is not always clearly drawn...something is lost where it is neglected."²⁸ If this is so, then Trent is right in substance, but guilty of confusing its terms.

The Reformers must have known this teaching, for they could not but be aware that it lies in God's purpose not merely to grant us remission of sins, but to bestow upon us the gift of a new life...But whereas Trent gives to this life of grace the double name of justification and sanctification, the Reformers call it sanctification only, and make justification mean only forgiveness. They add that justification and sanctification so understood, though distinct, are never found apart.

Hodges illustrates this from Calvin, saying that parallels can be found in other Reformation writers, and quoting from Wesley's sermon on Justification by Faith. Wesley confines justification to acquittal: "justification...is not the being made actually just and righteous. This is sanctification, which is indeed in some degree the immediate fruit of justification, but nevertheless is a distinct gift of God and of a totally different nature."²⁹ Hodges criticises this narrowing of the term, and the fact that Wesley then has to identify the life of grace with sanctification "as if there were no difference between being righteous and being holy." It may clarify the situation a little if we note that Hodges appears to be discussing three terms - forgiveness of sins, renewal of life, and holiness. The Reformers regard the first as justification, and equate the last two with sanctification; whereas Hodges would call the first two justification, and make sanctification apply only to holiness. Trent confuses the issue by agreeing that

the first two are aspects of justification, but also treating the last two as aspects of sanctification.

But why, asks Hodges, do Protestants limit justification in this way, when it is a "departure from the plain and natural interpretation of St. Paul"? (Although we should remember that Hodges himself stated that the plain interpretation of St. Paul indicated that he was concentrating on only one aspect of the word, that is, the remission of sins.) This limitation is made, he answers, because of the special preoccupations of the Reformers, which were to show on what grounds the Christian is forgiven and accepted by God. They thought that to speak of the Christian as "righteous" in that context was to suggest that:

he is accepted because, having achieved righteousness, he deserves to be accepted; whereas in truth his righteousness while in this life is always inadequate, and in any case is not his own achievement, but the work of the Spirit in him, in and after his initial justification. His righteousness of life and his acceptance before God are not cause and effect, but joint consequences of his incorporation into Christ.³⁰

While these truths are important, they should not have been enforced by distorting the language of the Bible. It was for this reason also that the tradition of ascetic theology was abandoned in the Protestant world, as Hodges points out elsewhere:

Making justification by faith their cardinal doctrine, they made the whole conception of salvation centre upon the forgiveness of sins, and the growth of the Christian soul in righteousness and holiness was cast into the shade. Indeed, it was sometimes considered dangerous to mention it, lest it should bring back the idea of earning salvation by one's own efforts. Thus, in the Protestant world, the ascetic tradition of doctrine

and discipline was deliberately abandoned.³¹

Hodges goes on to say that the arguments which led them to deal in this way with "justification" should also have led them to deal similarly with the word "sanctification"; equating "holy" with "sacred" or "consecrated", and saying that "the Christian's holiness¹ lies not in his spiritual state or character, but in his status as one whom God has made His own."³² This is part of the meaning of the word, but not the whole; and it is to be noted, says Hodges, that in classical Protestantism (as distinct from Pietist or Methodist movements), "the doctrine of personal holiness or sanctification of character, though formally maintained, has been persistently played down."³³ This is, as we have seen, partly related to the suspicion of Catholic practices.

This suspicion by Protestants has a simple cause, writes Hodges, namely:

the fear of anything which may seem to obscure the gratuitous and unmerited character of our redemption...The desire to safeguard this doctrine is the reason why strict Protestants have made such heavy weather about good works, the cultivation of virtues and the like... To (a Catholic) the remission of sins is not a standing problem or a theme for anxious thought; for he knows himself baptised and absolved. He is thinking rather how he may grow in grace, and the answer to that question will naturally include various forms of effort and discipline, together with a certain attitude towards those who have gone ahead of him on the way. But the strict Protestant is thinking all the time about forgiveness and reconciliation, and to him virtues and good works and systems of discipline are grounds on which foolish men vainly try to earn their reconciliation.³⁴

This is an important point to emphasise, because if it is a true representation of Catholic thought, as it seems to be, then Protestants have been guilty of gross misunderstanding

of it, and there should be room for more discussion and agreement between the two sides on this issue.³⁵ We may also take up again here the point made earlier that the Protestant view of justification was difficult to relate to living out the Christian life. The Catholic, knowing he is justified (in the narrow sense), can concentrate on growing in the righteousness which is his in Christ. This is in accordance with the biblical view of the matter. St. Paul, for example, urges Christians to work out their own salvation,³⁶ and gives practical guides for Christian living.³⁷ The Protestant is faced with a dichotomy, for while accepting the ethical guidance of the Bible, he is also committed to the view that nothing he can do of himself is worth anything. The additional problem then arises - how do I know whether my action stems from God, or from my own will. There can be no easy answer to this, for there are no objective criteria on which to judge the worth of a "neutral" action. We find that the Protestant (to take up Hodges' argument again) is "so anxious to insist that forgiveness cannot be earned that he is suspicious of anyone who points out the complementary truth, that when we are forgiven we are meant to work out our salvation, to grow in holiness and righteousness, by the help of sanctifying grace."³⁸

4: Justification in Christian Experience.

Hodges goes on to consider in more detail the problems of justification in Christian experience; for this doctrine was important to the Reformers "not merely because it happened to be true, but because the knowledge of it solved what was

for them the central problem of the spiritual life." Their sense of affinity with St. Paul arises because "he too had found in this doctrine the solution of a similar problem." Although the psychological aspect of this matter was largely neglected between St. Paul's day and the Reformation, it conditioned Protestant thinking on the subject, and therefore needs to be considered. Man knows himself to be guilty and condemned, and:

It is the knowledge of one's guilt, the knowledge that one stands in the wrath of God, which creates the psychological problem... Nothing can solve his problem which does not remove the burden of anxiety by substituting for the angry judge the figure of the merciful father, and when this substitution is made, man's attitude to God is wholly changed.³⁹

We can understand how the Reformers must have reacted to Romans when we realise that "to men who had been taught to try to pile up merit, yet with no hope of ever really having enough, the renewed preaching of the doctrine of God's free grace seemed like a deliverance from Egyptian slavery." This picture of the situation is irremovably lodged in the folk-memory of the Protestant world, says Hodges. It is natural, he continues, that "Protestantism should have tended to foster a particular type of spiritual case-history, whose central feature is the initial state of anxiety, followed by a sudden and decisive release." Luther and both the Wesleys had this experience, and "this sudden experience of illumination and release is the most typical meaning of the word 'conversion' in Protestant terminology."⁴⁰ We have already mentioned conversion in connection with the Wesleys,⁴¹ and here take it up again in more detail.

Much of the confusion which has arisen in connection with conversion is due to the fact that this "mighty experience is always connected with the doctrine of justification",⁴² but no clear distinction is made between the fact, and the consciousness of the fact, of justification. Wesley's error, Hodges points out in a number of places, was "in identifying conversion with regeneration or the new birth."⁴³ If this is done, it

entails the consequence that those who have not had such an experience are not in Christ. And if they are not in Christ, they are not justified, or forgiven, or reconciled; they are not children of God; they are...under the Law, not sharing in the liberty of the Gospel...To cry up conversion so high is to diminish the significance of the Sacraments and in effect to write off all the earlier stages of the spiritual life.

John Wesley did later recant the doctrine that "no-one is forgiven unless he knows he is";⁴⁴ and spoke of his pre-conversion experience faith as being that of a servant not a son.

Nevertheless, conversion is important because "whatever may be the benefits secured to us by the objective work of Christ and through our participation in the Sacraments, we do not profit by them as we should until we become aware of them." What, then, does conversion mean? We have already seen the place at which Hodges would put the experience in the Christian life, and he explains its meaning more fully in the following passage:

if conversion is not to be identified with justification, it is at least the first clear realisation of what justification means. If it is not the actual forgiveness of sins, it is the assurance of forgiveness. If it is not adoption, it is the moment when we wake up to the fact that we are sons of God...that we can live in grace because we live in Christ, righteous in his righteousness and sons in his sonship. It is one thing to hear these things said or preached and yield to them a notional

assent, but it is quite another thing to see them with a realising vision. And that is what conversion means.⁴⁵

We should notice here that "conversion" here "is not the same as what happens when a non-Christian is converted to the Christian Faith, or when a careless Christian is converted to taking his religion seriously. In point of time it may chance to coincide with either of these experiences but in its essence it is something distinct."⁴⁶ It should be clear that our attitude towards conversion will influence our attitude towards preaching the Gospel, and we shall be touching on this subject in Part Three.

In The Pattern of Atonement, we find Hodges referring to the confusion about conversion, and saying that for St. Paul and the other apostolic writers, the confusion could hardly arise, "for the reason that the Apostles were dealing all the time with people who were converted in adult life. To them the acceptance of the faith, the rites of baptism and confirmation, the gift of justification and the consciousness of release coincided roughly in time, and there was no need to distinguish and analyse as later practice compels us to do."⁴⁷ Within the Anglican Church, (as in the Catholic Church, but there the problem is avoided by their denial of the validity of the conversion experience) infants are baptised, and it is held that baptism necessarily justifies them. This means that "every person who has been baptised in infancy remains for a long period justified without knowing it, and needs to be taught to know it...if in adult life he does come to know

it, it is always possible that the knowledge may come as a sudden illumination."⁴⁸ But this is not the moment of justification, and "we must distinguish firmly between justification itself, which is a matter for soteriology, and the consciousness of justification, which is a theme for pastoral and ascetic theology." More needs to be said about the sacraments in this context, and this will be done in the next chapter.

Hodges concludes:

This question would have been more satisfactorily answered if the Protestants, who know most about the experience, had had a proper ascetic theology into which to insert it, or the Catholics, who alone have a proper ascetic theology, could have brought themselves to do something better than to register distaste when the experience is mentioned.⁴⁹

Methodism, as we have seen, was a "root from which native Anglican theology might have grown", and even now Methodism has something to teach the rest of the Protestant world about the Christian life. For while Wesley may be in error over his identification of conversion with regeneration, his doctrine of the spiritual life taken together with the doctrine of conversion, is "not merely a true understanding of Reformation teaching...but an integration of it with Catholic tradition, where it fills an unrecognised gap."⁵⁰ Hodges refers to the argument he put forward in the article from which this quotation is taken in The Pattern of Atonement, that the symptoms of the conversion experience have certain parallels with the earlier stages of the illuminative way. He concludes the chapter by pointing out that "the" proper integration of this volcanic experience into the traditional account of the pattern of

spiritual life could only be a gain to all concerned, and would complete the process of clearing up the present confusion of teaching with regard to justification."⁵¹

- I. Pattern, p.60. On this see G.W.Dugmore, The Mass and the English Reformers, London: Macmillan, 1958; and E.C.Messenger, The Reformation, the Mass and the Priesthood, London: Longmans, 1936-37.
2. Pattern, p.61.
3. Ibid., p.62.
4. Many examples of this could be cited. For the notion of "distributive justice", see Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy; for His redeeming work, the major prophets, especially Deutero-Isaiah, with the message that God wants a new life for His people. In the New Testament the Gospel proclamation is that in Christ God has come to seek and to save the lost.
5. Ibid., p.63.
6. Ibid., p.64. See J.Hick, Evil and the God of Love, London: Macmillan, 1966, pp.207-211, for some comments on "explanations" of the "origin" of sin in the Old Testament. Hodges is perhaps expecting too much of the Old Testament here.
7. Ibid., p.65.
8. Ibid., p.66.
9. Philippians 2:12.
10. Ibid., p.66.
11. Ibid., p.67.
12. 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 2:6-8, for example. Jesus Himself sets forward a similar idea - see Matt.25:31-46. Also see Preiss, op.cit., pp.43-60, "The Mystery of the Son of Man."
13. Pattern, p.67-68.
14. Proverbs 9:10. Although "fear of judgement" implies distance

from God; not the same thing as "the fear of the Lord", which is reverence for Him in a close relationship.

15. Ibid., p.68.
16. Ibid., p.68-69.
17. Ibid., p.69.
18. On these present difficulties, see the end of Chapter Five.
19. The Revd. David Watson, speaking at the National Evangelical Anglican Congress at Nottingham, 1977. It should be pointed out that very few delegates agreed with this, but it does reflect the beginning of a changing attitude.
20. Ibid., p.69.
21. Ibid., p.70.
22. Ibid., p.71.
23. Ibid., p.72.
24. Ibid., p.73.
25. A glance through a commentary, for example the one by C.E.B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Vol.I, Edinburgh: T.E.T. Clark, 1975, will show how much can be written about the doctrines in Romans, and how many different interpretations there are of different aspects of these doctrines.
26. Pattern, p.73.
27. Ibid., p.74.
28. Ibid., p.34, where Hodges says he treats the terms as distinct.
29. Ibid., p.75.
30. Ibid., p.76.
31. "Methodism, A Lost Anglican Doctrine of the Spiritual Life", p.546.

32. Pattern, p.76.
33. Ibid., p.76-77.
34. Ibid., p.77.
35. For Hodges' concern that the two sides should be united, see Chapter One.
36. Philippians 2:12.
37. Romans 12-15.
38. Ibid., p.77-78. On the subject of grace, and the difficulty of "proving" its influence, see B.Mitchell, "The Grace of God", pp.149-175 of Faith and Logic, ed.B.Mitchell, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958.
39. Pattern, p.78.
40. Ibid., p.80.
41. See above, p.12.
42. Ibid., p.80.
43. "A Neglected Page in Anglican Theology", p.109. See also A Rapture of Praise, "Holiness, Righteousness, Perfection" and "Methodism, A Lost Anglican Doctrine of the Spiritual Life".
44. A Rapture of Praise, p.15.
45. Ibid., p.16.
46. Ibid., p.13.
47. Pattern, p.80.
48. Ibid., p.80-81.
49. Ibid., p.81.
50. "A Neglected Page in Anglican Theology", p.110.
51. Pattern, p.82.

Chapter Nine

Hodges turns in his last chapter to a discussion of "saving faith". Justification is a free gift, he writes, but St. Paul also repeatedly says that it results from faith. The term "faith" is related to salvation, which is in turn related to baptism, and dying and rising. "These four ideas", says Hodges, "God's free grace, faith, baptism, and the raising of the dead, go together in St. Paul's mind. It will be important for the understanding of the nature of faith to consider it in this total context."¹

"Justification by faith" was the most popular of the slogans of the Reformation, writes Hodges, and the point of it lay in its negative implication "not by works". Luther called the doctrine the articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae, and the successors to the Reformers still say that where this doctrine is preached is the true Church and nowhere else. The Church of England is also committed to it; so, asks Hodges, "what is this doctrine of justification by faith alone, for which such claims are made? And, in view of the fact that it is based on St. Paul, why has it become such a subject of controversy?" Catholics declare it to be the "root of Protestant heresy"; how then do they interpret St. Paul's teaching? Or are the Protestants mistaken in their interpretation?

Hodges begins by inquiring what the word "faith" means to the "ordinary man", and concludes, probably rightly, that "he thinks of 'faith' primarily as a kind of 'belief' or 'believing'... If to have faith is to believe, it seems to follow that faith is

belief."² We might perhaps add to this that "faith" is often used to denote belief in something which is uncertain, or which the speaker does not fully understand. Thus a former crook might ask his family to "have faith" that he will go straight; or an air traveller might "have faith" that his aeroplane will be able to fly, even while he cannot understand why it does so. As we shall see, the word is used in this way by some Christians.

The Council of Trent, supported by a long history of Catholic thinking, "defines faith as a supernatural virtue whereby we believe as true what God has revealed, simply because He has revealed it". Faith appears as an "intellectual virtue", Hodges goes on, "distinguished from hope and charity as virtues respectively of the affections and of the will." But how can faith of this sort be a justifying factor? Hodges gives Trent's explanation that it is "the beginning of man's salvation, the ground and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and attain to the fellowship of His children".³ But if this is all it is, then it is impossible to understand why St. Paul singled it out and emphasised it as if it were all the truth.

The Reformers also speak of faith in a manner which distinguishes it clearly from will and action. Hodges quotes Calvin's words: "'Faith is a firm and sure knowledge of God's good will towards us'..."; and the Anglican definition from the second Homily of the Passion: "'Faith, that is to say a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God, whereby we persuade

ourselves that God both hath and will forgive our sins..."
 But to talk of justifying faith in this way, "really amounts to saying that one is saved by acquiring a confident belief that one is so"; and even though no reputable theologian ever really meant this, they do appear to have said it, and their followers did sometimes preach a doctrine of justification by confidence. Trent anathematised this, quite rightly: "If any shall say that justifying faith is nothing but a confidence in God's mercy which remits sins because of Christ, or that it is by this confidence alone that we are justified, let him be anathema!"⁴ But the Protestant definitions are not so much "successful attempts to formulate a heresy", as "unsuccessful attempts to declare a truth."⁵ To find out what the truth really is we should turn to St. Paul. When we do so, we find that in common with other New Testament writers he offers us Abraham as "an archetype of Christian faith"⁶; and it is therefore to Abraham that Hodges turns for light on this problem.

The figure of Abraham is used elsewhere in Hodges' writings, particularly in Christianity and the Modern World View, where Hodges says that "the New Testament insists over and over again that Abraham is the model for Jew and Christian alike, and that the true Christian is the spiritual child of Abraham, i.e. one whose relation to God is the same as Abraham's was."⁷ He adds in the same context, "it does not matter whether the life story of Abraham as set forth in Genesis and interpreted in Romans and Hebrews is literal history or not. The point is that it gives us the standard by which

our attitude to life is to be regulated." This, we might note in passing, gives us another example of Hodges' attitude to Scripture and its place within the Christian tradition.

Hodges refers in The Pattern of Atonement to Matthew 3:9, and John 8:31-59, but as we have just seen, the epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews are also concerned with Abraham. St. Paul's explanation of Abrahamic faith goes back to Genesis 15:6, Abraham "believed the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham was promised a son when he himself was elderly, and his wife was past child-bearing, he is therefore taking God's promises as "true predictions of what God would do, in face of the long delay and apparent impossibility of their fulfilment." But why should simply believing what God says be singled out for special mention, asks Hodges? He answers:

God made a promise which could not be fulfilled without a miracle. Abraham's acceptance of the promise as true was an act of faith in the supernatural, a belief that God could and would act in him and for him above and beyond his own natural strength, a belief therefore in God as saviour and giver of life...It implies...a complete self-commitment to God, a complete openness and responsiveness to God's guidance, a readiness to receive and become whatever God wills him to receive and become. This attitude is the key to the whole character and career of Abraham as the Old Testament describes it.⁸

St. Paul quotes Genesis 15 because it shows Abraham not doing anything except believing. The author of Hebrews stresses the active side of the incident; showing Abraham leaving his country, being prepared to kill his promised son, and confidently obeying God's commands, for his affairs "are in God's hands, not in his own...For Abraham there is nothing but to obey where he can, and for the rest to believe and

trust." Thus, says Hodges, in Hebrews faith is thought of as a spring of action. St. Paul also has this idea - for example, he distinguishes between actions which are, and are not of faith. Thus on "the one hand, faith is no inert belief or emotional state, but a motive which issues in action, and on the other hand it is this motive itself, and nothing else, which justifies the act and the agent."⁹ So what is meant by Abrahamic faith is, for St. Paul, "an unqualified readiness to let God have his way with us, to do what he bids and to receive what he gives in whatever way he gives it."¹⁰ We shall see how adequate a definition of faith this is, when we come to examine the way Hodges sees this kind of self-commitment as justifying. The analogy Hodges uses to describe our relations with God at this point is that of the patient under the doctor:

To some extent the patient will in fact be passive, the doctor will do certain things to him and he will undergo the treatment, but very likely too the doctor will instruct him to do certain things himself, and here in a sense the patient will be active. Yet even here what he does will be done in obedience...The doctor took the whole responsibility for devising and directing the treatment, and so deserves the whole credit for the cure.

The analogy is not complete, in that the doctor can only act on the patient from without, but when "the Christian places himself thus unquestioningly in the hands of Christ, he is also united with Christ".¹¹ Hodges has used a similar analogy in speaking of God's "altruistic anger", and in comparing sin to neurosis, and it is a valid way of speaking when we remember references such as Psalm 103 and Mark 2:17 and the concept of God as the healer

of our infirmities.

Self-commitment of this kind can justify because, says Hodges, to "have faith is to put oneself unconditionally into Christ's hands, and His response to this act of self-surrender is to make us effectively one with Himself." Hodges gives a picture of what happens when the believer is united with Christ, and it is worth quoting in full, because it is a fairly complete representation of Hodges' view of the pattern of the Atonement in the Christian's life:

if I become thus united with Christ and effectively a member of Him, I cease to that extent to be an independent agent. I shall of course continue to do many things, indeed I shall probably be more active and more effective than I was before, but in the last resort they will not be my own actions even though I perform them. It will be not I, but Christ in me, and this I which is also Christ in me is the only I which counts in the sight of God. Everything in me which resists incorporation into Christ stands under condemnation, and in the course of the treatment will be caused to perish, and I myself wish it to perish, though it is Christ who must kill it and not I by myself. The real I is what I am in Christ, and this my true self will grow as the other self dies. And I in Christ stand before the Father clothed in His sonship and glorious in His righteousness, which is imputed to me without reserve, and imparted to me already in some degree, though awaiting the perfect work of grace in order to reach its fullness. Faith, in short, by making me one with Christ, is both the grounds of God's merciful judgement which absolves me here and now, and the power behind my growth in actual righteousness which has so far only begun. It justifies me in both senses of the word.¹²

Most of the points which Hodges makes in this paragraph are ones for which he has argued at other places in the book; all through it we can see the basic idea of "I in Christ, Christ in me", which represents Hodges' view of the Atonement. But while the general substance of the above paragraph is not in question, there are a number of points which require

comment and clarification.

Hodges remarks that as I become united to Christ, I "cease to that extent to be an independent agent", and the initial reaction to this might be to insist on human freedom, over against the vision of mindless and identical believers which such a statement might conjure up. But this criticism, while there may be some truth in it, is ultimately based on a misunderstanding of what Hodges, and Christianity, are really saying. In Chapter Two, Hodges made the point that our liberation does not mean independence, because for created spirits "there is no real independence. The false promise of it is the lure by which we are brought under Satan's tyranny." But the only alternative to this false freedom which is in fact slavery is the willing service of God"; Christ's life was one of unswerving obedience, and "it is in this service that we find our freedom."¹³ This is a biblical idea of course, and reflects one of the paradoxes which so often characterise God's dealings with men. One must die in order to live, lose one's life in order to find it, and in putting oneself under Christ's yoke, become free. Perhaps we may find some corroboration in modern psychology and human studies of the fact that man can have no real independence; he is "conditioned" by his upbringing, his environment, his genes, and is always to a certain extent "predictable." What is the Christian answer to all this? It must lie somewhere along the lines that while we cannot ever be totally independent, we can find freedom in choosing to serve Christ. Again, we might ask whether the idea that "the real I is what I am in

Christ" is a right way of viewing human personality? Is it a denial of the worth of human nature? But we have seen that Hodges believes human nature to have been dignified by the Incarnation, and in Christ our personalities may be really fulfilled. The "old self" which dies is a part of ourselves which we wish to perish; God does not try to change a man's nature against his will. The "real I" which survives is one purged of the sins and shortcomings which I have no desire to keep. Unfortunately, this language tends to be rather confusing, making a somewhat false division in a man's nature; but there is some Scriptural warrant for this, (Romans 7 is an example) and we do find tension in ourselves between, perhaps, our desire to do good, and the evil of our actual deeds. Some religions may have appeal because they offer men a chance to discover their true selves - and perhaps we all have a high estimate of the true self we hope to find. What, we may ask again, is the Christian answer to this desire to "find themselves" in mankind?

Another point which arises is one which has been mentioned earlier - what does it mean to say that my actions are not mine, but the action of Christ in me? We saw that it was a difficulty with which a substitutionary view of the Atonement had to cope, but suggested that for the Christian to say that all he does is "in Christ" was to resolve the difficulty. But what then are we to make of the sinful actions which even the Christian performs at times? This problem is one with which D.M. Baillie deals in God Was in Christ.¹⁴ Baillie calls

this "I but not I" the "paradoxical conviction which lies at the very heart of the Christian life...the unique secret of the Christian character."¹⁵ His writing on this subject may help to illuminate the question we have noted above:

the paradoxical Christian secret, while it transcends the moralistic attitude by ascribing all to God, does not make us morally irresponsible...When I make the wrong choice, I am entirely responsible, and my conscience condemns me. And yet (here is the paradox) when I make the right choice, my conscience does not applaud or congratulate me...Instead of that I say: 'Not I but the grace of God.' Thus while there is a human side to every good action, so that it is genuinely the free choice of a person with a will, yet...the other side of it, the divine side, is logically prior...From the historical and psychological standpoint the good actions of a Christian are purely his own actions. And even from the religious and Christian point of view that aspect is indispensable. Without it the other side would lose its true meaning, and the good man would be simply a perfect marionette, or an automaton...(yet)... Whatever good there is in our lives and actions (and it is but fragmentary) is 'all of God', and it was His before it was ours, was divine grace before it was human achievement, is indeed a matter of God taking up our poor human nature into union with His own divine life, making us more truly personal, yet also more disposed to ascribe it all to Him.¹⁶

If what Baillie says is substantially true, then it goes some of the way towards meeting the criticism that if all our actions are those of Christ, then we lose integrity, as Professor Maclagan says:

When a child enters for a painting competition and his entry must be 'all his own work' we are well aware of the ways in which his parents may and may not help him. If he wins the competition he may say "I could never have done it without them"; he may even say something like St. Paul's "I, but not I"; but the emphasis will be upon the first 'I'. Were it not, he would have lost his integrity. In the same way...the moral life must be "all our own work". Even perfection can be expected of us, but we must achieve it for ourselves...though certainly a man need not be astonished even if...it has never yet been fulfilled or, perhaps he would wish to say,

has been so only once.¹⁷

Although we might wish to question the validity of the analogy here - has the moral life rules like a competition, and what help is allowed us in our moral life? - it is worth noting the emphasis on the "first I" in contrast to Baillie's emphasis on the grace of God. Hodges does give a place to both sides, and we have already mentioned his belief that repentance is worthless unless it is our own act, and presumably our righteousness must in some way be our own act, even while our inability to attain righteousness on our own necessitates our dependence on the power of God.

Another question which might asked here is, if God only looks with favour on those who are in Christ, what of all those who have never heard of Him? It is an old problem, of course, and Hodges' answer seems to be that while it is through Christ that we come to the Father, "Christ" can be met in other forms than in traditional Christianity.¹⁸ Wherever there is truth to be found, Hodges believes, it comes from Christ, who is the Truth: "the Christ of Christian belief is the cosmic Christ, and therefore the Christ beyond Christianity. The revealers of the other faiths are not other Christs...(but) they are voices through which he speaks...We have lessons - his lessons - to learn from them."¹⁹

Returning to the subject of faith, Hodges says that what he has been describing in this chapter is "justifying faith as the New Testament leads us to conceive it", and Protestantism has at its heart this understanding of it.

Luther draws a distinction between believing things about God, and believing in God, says Hodges; and the definitions which Trent criticised are not truly representative of Protestant thought, because they are "abstract formulae adopted with a polemical purpose."²⁰ Modern Protestant writers insist that faith is a personal relationship with Christ, involving trust and self-commitment. Catholic writers suggest that what Protestants call "faith" is faith (in the narrow sense), and hope and love, all in one. But while this suggestion is plausible, St. Paul "never says that love is a ground of justification; faith is so, and love is an inseparable concomitant of justifying faith and a sure test of its presence."²¹ Catholics do know something of faith in the wider sense, but they give it another name, Hodges points out in a footnote. It is difficult to arrive at a precise definition of Pauline "faith"; but we must think of it as a spring of action, and we must also include "what I have variously referred to as 'self-commitment', 'self-surrender', or simply 'responsiveness'" writes Hodges, and "this will always be present where love is, but the essential nature of it and the essential nature of love are not the same."²² But Hodges ceases his exploration of the subject here, because he feels that St. Paul was no formal psychologist, and he does not wish to venture where St. Paul does not. He turns therefore to a discussion of the Sacraments and their relation to saving faith.

The Sacraments were a vital part of the Church's life to Hodges, and we therefore need to examine the subject more

fully than he does here. They are essential, of course, for the "fullness" which Hodges desired for the Church of which he was a member. Thus he writes:

The Sacraments are part of the life of the Church; they are acts of the Church, acts of Christ in and through the Church, and have no power or meaning except in that context. But in their own way they carry on the principle of the Incarnation, of God present and active in and through creaturely things and actions. The Church of England knows that this is what they are, and all seven of the recognised Sacraments are in use in our Church...Anglicans attach themselves to the great tradition of doctrine which comes from the Fathers, and with it also to the great tradition of spiritual life, feeding on the Sacraments, framed in liturgical worship, which comes down from the past ages of the Church.²³

The Sacraments which are considered to be of the greatest importance by Hodges are Baptism and the Eucharist, and these are closely linked with the Atonement; for

In Baptism we are initiated into the death and resurrection of Christ, that we may die to what we are of ourselves and rise to a new life in Him. In the Eucharist we plead His death in the symbols of the broken body and the shed blood, and are fed with the life of Him who was dead and is alive for evermore.²⁴

The importance of the Eucharist in this respect is pointed out also by Mackinnon: "It is by the action of the Eucharist that the life of the individual is, in its daily movement, rooted in and held to the source of its redemption, the action of Calvary and the empty tomb."²⁵ The same idea is reflected by Fr. Victor White: "It is in the Mass that the atoning work of Christ is both made present and applied to us."²⁶

But what purpose do the Sacraments serve, other than to enable us to have the life of Christ in us more intimately? Hodges points out that they are also a means by which God can

communicate with us. In the Incarnation, the infinite and unknowable God revealed Himself to men; and in the Sacraments we have the "Unknowable made visible, nay eaten and drunk, under the sensible signs."²⁷ The Sacraments are symbols to us of a deeper reality than lies on their surface, and Hodges draws out this point elsewhere, when speaking of the public worship of the Church:

at its highest moment, in the Eucharist, it reaches its highest eloquence. That is because the Church is speaking a language of word and action which was taught her by the supreme Artist and Worshipper himself, a language which says all that there is to say, and more²⁸ than the Church herself at any given moment understands.

On the subject of the need for such symbols in our relationship with God, Helen Oppenheimer makes an important point:

The physical rite, the partaking of bread and wine, is not a magical spell nor a kind of psychological pressure, but a material vehicle for the presence of God. His "real presence" indeed. How after all can any personal relationship be effectively carried on without some such material expression? One needs to utter words...to smile or to frown...the handshake or the kiss...Likewise a relationship with God which dispenses with all such signs is hardly conceivable...The less one is aware of special graces the more one needs to make use of appointed means, not as an alternative method of giving oneself good feelings, but as the way almost literally to "keep in touch".²⁹

It is God Himself who is the Author and Initiator of the Sacraments, even if we cannot trace their ancestry back to the express commands of Christ Himself. We are to become members of Christ's mystical body, and it is to "this end (that) He has set up the Church, with teachings and practices deriving from Himself, expressing in word and action the nature of the true life which God intends for us, and with supernatural powers to impart and sustain it."³⁰

But while this may be the ideal, in practice the Church falls short of it. This fact Hodges laments, because as we have already seen, an inadequate view of the sacraments is reflected in an inadequate view of the Atonement. This is especially the case with the Eucharist, as we noted earlier. Returning once more to The Pattern of Atonement, we find Hodges pointing out that "all sacraments bear some relation to our life in Christ, they all in some sense bring Christ effectively to us"; but Christians do not agree as to how they do this, or whether faith is required to make them effective. The Catholic doctrine of the sacraments has the advantage that it treats them as works of God not of men, and in so doing almost preaches salvation through the sacraments. "Baptism sows the seed of new life in the soul, confirmation brings it to maturity, Holy Communion nourishes it, and so on through the whole list of the sacraments."³¹ Their efficacy depends not on us, but "it" springs from Christ's own legislative will, and is inherent in the sacraments themselves by virtue of His will; nor can our dispositions add anything to the inherent power of the sacraments, though they may oppose a barrier... to our reception of the benefit intended, and may hasten or delay the working out of its consequences in our minds and wills." Thus the Catholic finds no problem over the baptism of infants, for whilst they cannot express their union with Christ properly, neither can they raise any barriers.

Protestants ought to appreciate this view of the sacraments, says Hodges, because it emphasises the sovereignty of God;

but because it seems to threaten their inviolable principle of justification by faith alone, they are suspicious of it.

For:

If baptism by the mere virtue of the sacrament washes out the stain of original sin and unites the soul with Christ, that is as much as to say that it imparts justification, and if it does this for infants who are incapable of performing an act of faith, we may well ask how justification can be said to depend on faith.³²

Protestants therefore rewrite their doctrine of the sacraments rather than endanger, or qualify in any way, the doctrine of justification by faith. We find a strong current of Reformation teaching and theology which treats the sacraments as signs or seals. But since, says Hodges, the seal on the document is useless to one unacquainted with the content of it, so "the sacraments, as seals of the divine promises, are of no use to anyone who has not already encountered the promises and understood and embraced them - in short, to anyone who does not approach the sacraments in faith."³³ This view of the matter is taken in the Augsburg confession, a fairly moderate Lutheran confession of faith, mainly the work of Melancthon in 1530;³⁴ and similarly we read in "Mark" 16:16 that "he who believes and is baptised shall be saved." From this we might conclude, Hodges says, that "Baptism...does not of itself initiate the soul's life in Christ, but strengthens it when it has been initiated by faith."³⁵ The Anglican Article 27, too, suggests that "the characteristic operation of baptism is upon those who already have faith and are in a state of grace." But in fact, Hodges suggests, the only properly consistent position which can be taken if

baptism is regarded as a seal, is that of the Baptists, who believe that the only true baptism is believer's baptism.

Why therefore, do some Protestants, regarding baptism in this way, continue to baptise infants? The only justification for this would be to point out that it is "not always necessary for a promise to be intelligible to its beneficiary at the time when it is made." Thus the child, by "being baptised, is not made actually a member of Christ - only faith could make him that - but he has received God's promise, signed with God's seal, that if and when in later life he does believe he shall indeed be a member of Christ, and justified."³⁶ The existence of the promise may in fact help the awakening of faith.

But simple and plausible though this may be, it is not the traditional teaching of the Church - Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican agree that baptism actually regenerates; and from this it seems to follow that justification can be had in the absence of faith. This view still survives in the Reformers, "in defiance of the logic of their own overt principles",³⁷ Hodges writes. Even Calvin writes that the regeneration of infants is "'possible and easy'..." for God. How, asks Hodges, can such an admission be reconciled with the view that faith is universally necessary to justification? He rightly dismisses the "fiction" that the child may be justified by the faith he will someday come to have, or by the faith of the sponsors. But the idea that the prayers, or faith, of the Church can "take the place" of the faith of one who does not believe, is not totally without

foundation. Hodges might have mentioned in this connection St. Paul's conviction that a believing husband or wife could sanctify the unbelieving partner; or that the children of a Christian marriage are somehow holy.³⁸ There is also evidence to suggest that God will accept or deliver others by virtue of the prayers of a believer - Abraham pleading for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, for example.³⁹ While these examples are not equivalent cases to that of personal justification, they do seem to have some bearing on the problem.

Hodges suggests that the only way out of the difficulty is to say that the child receives a "habitus" of faith, that is, "an aptitude to perform acts of faith as soon as his age and his knowledge allow." This is something of a strained argument, he admits, and we must also regard the justification of a child differently from that of a mature adult; for "in a being" which is incapable of reflection and deliberate choice, neither sin nor the forgiveness of sin can be what we usually understand by those terms."⁴⁰

Hodges concludes that both justification and faith, in the Pauline sense, belong to adults, for St. Paul's converts were mostly adults. They heard "the preaching of the Word, they received the gift of faith, they made public profession of their faith, they were baptised and confirmed, in that order of time." It was only several centuries later, when infant baptism became the rule in the Church, that problems arose, and "it became" necessary to analyse and distinguish the respective functions of faith and of the baptismal rite;

only when justification by faith is treated as an absolute and inviolable principle, a touchstone for all other teaching, does the problem become acute."⁴¹ We should realise that the doctrine is not to be treated like this, for it is not a piece of scientific analysis, but a "brilliantly successful" attempt to "lay bare the central nerve of the Old Testament... The heart of the meaning is that our deliverance from the consequences of sin and from sin itself is God's work and not our own".⁴² It is an important point in a man's growth towards spiritual maturity when he "awakens to the significance of the Epistle to the Romans", that is, justification by faith. We might bear in mind the impact of the Epistle on such diverse figures as Augustine, Luther, John Wesley and Barth. But this awakening is only one stage, Hodges points out, not the first stage, "in the normal path of the soul's development under favourable conditions. It is not an absolute and inflexible requirement before a man can become a member of Christ." Therefore, there is more to Christian experience than some Protestant teaching would suggest. With regard to the sacraments, Hodges concludes the book by saying that he feels the Catholic doctrine does more justice to the Reformation teaching than the Reformation teachings do themselves:

God bestows grace where He will; He has declared His will to bestow it in the sacraments...the Reformation principle of the sovereign grace of God is set forth and embodied in Catholic teaching and practice not less truly, and a good deal less abstractly, than in the Reformation doctrines themselves.⁴³

This may be correct, but to some extent, in closing the book here, Hodges has left unanswered some vital questions.

He has not made clear the place justification by faith should have in Protestant theology; nor has he indicated how it might be related to baptism in the Protestant, and indeed Anglican, world. Does baptism regenerate, or does it not? If not, then what is its value; and if it does, what of the child who is baptised, but later goes on to reject God?

It may be true to say that St. Paul was not thinking of children when he wrote about baptism, but Hodges gives no indication of the effect this should have on the practice of infant baptism. While allowance may be made for the fact that Hodges is not writing a treatise on this subject, one is faced with the problems which he himself has raised even if only by implication, and an attempt at some answers to them would have been of value in this chapter. But apart from this criticism, which has also been made on other occasions, that Hodges does not go deeply enough into particular issues, how are we to assess The Pattern of Atonement, Hodges' achievement in writing it, and its relevance to the world today? It is to this set of questions that we turn in the next chapter.

- I. Pattern, p.83.
2. Ibid., p.84-85.
3. Ibid., p.85.
4. Ibid., p.86.
5. Ibid., p.86-87.
6. Ibid., p.87.
7. Modern World View, p.28.
8. Pattern, p.88-89.
9. Ibid., p.89-90.
10. Death and Life Have Contended, p.65-66.
- II. Pattern, p.90-91.
- I2. Ibid., p.91-92.
- I3. Ibid., p.38.
- I4. London: Faber & Faber, 1956.
- I5. Ibid., p.II5.
- I6. Ibid., p.II6-II7.
- I7. Quoted in Incarnation and Immanence, p.I52-I53.
- I8. In this context, note Simone Weil's belief that "Christianity should contain all vocations without exception since it is catholic...(but) so many things are outside it, so many things that I love and do not want to give up, so many things that God loves, otherwise they would not be in existence."nWaiting On God, London: Collins, 1974, p.4I.
- I9. Although, Hodges adds, we must learn with circumspection.
Typescript, p.33.
20. Pattern, p.92.
- 2I. Ibid., p.93.

22. Ibid., p.94.
23. "Methodists, Anglicans and Orthodox", p.35-36.
24. "In a Son", in God and the Universe, London: Mowbray, 1960, p.52-53.
25. Mackinnon, "Prayer, Worship and Life", pp.242-256 in D.M. Mackinnon, ed., Christian Faith and Communist Faith, London: Macmillan, 1953, p.246.
26. Quoted by Jarrett-Kerr, op.cit., p.154.
27. Typescript, p.46.
28. "Art and Religion", p.147. cf. Barth's description of the Church, op.cit., p.144-145.
29. Oppenheimer, op.cit., p.100.
30. Modern World View, p.73.
31. Pattern, p.94-95.
32. Ibid., p.95.
33. Ibid., p.96.
34. See the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. F.L. Cross, London: O.U.P., 1974, for further information about this.
35. Pattern, p.96.
36. Ibid., p.97. However, cf. Calvin, Institutes, New York: Macdonald, (no publ. date) 4: XVI:17-21.
37. Ibid., p.98.
38. I Corinthians 7:14.
39. Genesis 18:22-33.
40. Pattern, p.99.
41. Ibid., p.100.
42. Ibid., p.100-101.
43. Ibid., p.101.

PART THREEChapter Ten

We have now analysed in detail Hodges' book on the Atonement, but the question remains as to how adequate a presentation of the subject we have been given. Do we have here the "brilliant critique" of which Frances Young speaks,¹ or yet another contribution to the "endless inconclusive debate" between theories of the Atonement which Hodges himself condemns on pages IO-II of his book? Each individual will view the book from his own personal standpoint, and thus it is difficult to come to any conclusive judgement on it. Nevertheless, it does seem, in view of our analysis, that Hodges has produced a clear examination of his chosen subject, containing a real insight into the problems of the Atonement, and an evaluation of the biblical "solution" to those problems. There have been, as we have noted, several instances where Hodges has not been consistent, or as clear, as he might have been; but his general conclusion, that the heart of the Atonement is to be found in St. Paul's idea of "I in Christ, Christ in me", is a sound one. He is right in his presentation of this idea as one which illuminates the whole doctrine of the Atonement in its widest sense. So has Hodges fulfilled his aims in the writing of The Pattern of Atonement?

We saw earlier that Hodges regarded himself as giving a "philosopher's analysis" of the doctrine, "aiming at clarity for the sake of proportion."² He also explains in the preface that he has "tried to keep in mind what must always be the

true aim of discussion in these matters - to discern the truth while at the same time understanding why the error is so passionately maintained."³ Hodges has achieved both these aims to some extent; but while he has discerned the truth as he conceives it, and indeed as many others conceive it, he has not altogether adequately explained why people hold so strongly to an erroneous view of substitutionary Atonement. This fact has already been drawn attention to in the analysis of Hodges' treatment of the subject in Part Two. But in general, Hodges' treatment of the Atonement is notable for its clarity of thought, both in exposing the errors involved in past theories, and in outlining the thought of St. Paul, and its alternative view. He has also given an excellent resumé of man's position and problems in the world, together with an examination of the way Christ's work on the Cross can meet man's needs in all their different aspects. But if Hodges' work is valuable in these respects, it has certainly not gained much recognition in theological writings on the subject.

A.M. Allchin, in his obituary on Hodges,⁴ speaking of The Pattern of Atonement says that it had "an influence quite out of proportion to (its) modest size"; but one finds it difficult to find traces of this influence. The same applies to others of Hodges' writings. There are references to his books to be found, but not a sufficient quantity to suggest that Hodges has made a really important contribution to the field of theology, either doctrinally, or with more "pastoral"

writings. If this comparative neglect is a verdict on Hodges, then is it a fair one? (We leave aside the philosophical works of Hodges in this assessment, although it is possible that Hodges' work on Dilthey is of importance for those in a more specialised field.) Is it true to say, as Professor D.M.Mackinnon has remarked in conversation, that Hodges never really produced what he had it in him to do, and that therefore, perhaps, his writings are not destined to occupy an important place in the history of Christian literature? Or has Hodges an important contribution to make which we should do well to discover? If we consider Hodges' book on the Atonement in its context, that is, as it fits into the rest of his writings, I believe that there is something we can learn. This relates to the whole problem of the communication of the Christian Faith. The Pattern of Atonement was addressed originally to theological students, rather than with the specific purpose of converting non-Christians; but what is written for Christians will influence their preaching, and is therefore of great importance. Dr.A.M.Ramsey called Hodges' book "an admirable challenge to the preacher to think out what he teaches about the heart of the Gospel",⁶ and if the preacher is clear in what he preaches, then those who hear may be made more ready to respond. We may now turn to a consideration of The Pattern of Atonement in this context, in an attempt to discover whether Hodges has anything to say to the Church today in its struggle to fulfil its Master's command, and preach the gospel to all the world. Our study will be under

four headings.

I: The Church's Preaching.

How does the Church respond to the challenge of preaching the gospel? There are several different ways this has been done in the past, and still is done today. We shall look briefly at three of these ways to which Hodges himself draws attention.

The first of these is to carry on preaching as it has "always been done", firmly resisting the changes in society and culture. As Hodges puts it, such preaching stands boldly "for the reality and sovereignty of God, but in ways which are relevant to a past situation and state of man."⁷ Tied up with this attitude is a refusal to be open-minded about the beliefs of non-Christians, what Hodges calls a technique of firm resistance, "stonewalling as it might be called, meeting every move of his opponent with a steady denial, and a steady reassertion of the principles to which he is himself committed." But, says Hodges, this may fight the enemy to a standstill, "it does not destroy or convert him."⁸ An example of this type of preaching might be found in some forms of evangelical Protestantism, which, says Hodges,

has been concerned to enforce upon the hearer a conviction of his own sinfulness and his helplessness in sin, and to terrify him as to the state in which he is, and then to administer the Gospel of reconciliation...We may doubt whether it was appropriate to all hearers even in the days of its greatest popularity. At any rate it is not appropriate now; for to talk like this is no longer to talk to people where they are.⁹

It is true, of course, that God does not change, and neither

does the way of salvation, and in a sense, therefore, preaching will always be the same. It is also true that "Christianity isn't really interested in man being modern or not, but simply in his being man,"¹⁰ Man's basic need for God will also be the same; but having said that, many things have changed, and are changing, and Christian preaching must speak to men where they are, and in a way that they will understand. Hodges himself was very concerned that Christians should be forward-looking in the communication of their faith, rather than simply rallying "in defence of their ancient certitudes." For "the Christian contribution to the life of a shaken world is different from what so many Christians suppose: not defensiveness, but adventurous exploration, not smothering the awkward questions which modern enquiry has raised, but going deeper into them than has yet been done."¹¹

A second approach is similar to the first in that it seeks to preserve the "ancient certitudes", but it differs in the presentation of the Faith, by portraying it "scientifically". This can be done in a number of ways. One example of this is the "proofs" for the existence of God which were put forward in the past.¹² This method is not as popular now, partly since many of the old "proofs" have been discredited; but traces of this approach survive in some attempts to communicate Christianity.¹³ Closely akin to this is the appeal to experience as "proof" of God's reality. Hodges comments on this:

there is little to be gained by presenting theism as a quasi-scientific hypothesis, to be accepted as true

because it explains certain facts of experience and because it can be verified in action. The attempt has sometimes been made to present theist, or rather, Christian belief in this way, but it cannot stand up to examination. The facts and experiences to which theist or Christian apologists appeal are not comparable with real scientific observations or experiments.¹⁴

This method of presentation is to be rejected, then, partly because it is not possible to "prove" God's existence,¹⁵ but also because, as we shall see shortly, belief or otherwise in God is not wholly a matter of reasoned logic, but depends also on other factors. There is a place for the reasoning out of the Christian Faith, and the showing of it as a logical and coherent system, but this may not "prove" its truth to the disinterested or hostile hearer. However, it can help to communicate Christianity, because the "presentation of the faith to the modern world is hampered by the intellectual vapidness of its adherents",¹⁶ and concentration on the intellectual formulation of the faith would help to redress the balance.

Thirdly, the Church may try to be "modern" in its approach, by reformulating its doctrines in a way that will be acceptable to "modern man". Bishop John Robinson's book Honest to God¹⁷ was an attempt, following in the footsteps of other "liberal" theological writings, to re-state Christianity in a way which would make it more comprehensible to those outside the Church; but it is all too easy to leave out all traditional Christianity altogether, and leave little left to communicate. It is possible, also, that some respect for Christianity is lost when its leaders deny some of the things for which it is supposed to stand. Hodges seems to be speaking of this type

of approach when he writes: "There are those among us, pathetic remnants of the once triumphant liberal hosts, who still misconceive the trend of the time, and think they can march in step with modern thought to a positive and creative end. To these we can wish nothing better than an awakening in time, painful though it must be."¹⁸ As we already noted, Hodges believed that Christianity should be presented as a whole, and there should be no attempt to leave out the more unpopular aspects of it. Nevertheless, the Church should ask itself whether what it preaches is in fact a true reflection of what the Bible teaches. It is partly out of concern for the misunderstandings present in preaching about the doctrine of the Atonement, that Hodges' book on the subject arose.

None of these alternatives are really adequate ways of presenting Christianity, Hodges believes, but is there a more effective way of presenting Christianity? We must return to this question later, but before it can be answered, we must consider some of the problems with which any preaching of the faith has to come to terms.

2: Some Problems to be Faced.

Firstly, the intellectual climate of today faces us with particular problems.¹⁹ This means that the Church must take account of where men are, and face the fact that for many, Christian language and terminology have little if any meaning. Apart from the purely technical language of Christianity which can confuse even Christians themselves, the ideas behind the language of Atonement, for example, do not always make

sense. What does it mean to say Christ saves us from our sins, to those who are conscious of no overwhelming guilt, for example? A particularly interesting book which examines this type of question, is Culture, Class, and Christian Belief,²⁰ by J. Bennington, to which we shall be referring later.

Just as the intellectual climate has changed, so has the image of the Church; once a new and forward-looking movement, the Christian Church lives on "by sheer inertia of habit",²¹ and "her voice in the modern world...sometimes sounds curiously archaic and somnambulistic."²² These phrases, it should be remembered, come from one who is a committed member of the Church. Even those within it must admit that the Church itself, perhaps more by virtue of its image in society than through faults in its original setting up, is one of the major hindrances to the effective proclamation of the Gospel. As Peter Berger remarked, Christ can pass through locked doors, but "a religious establishment in which Christianity is part and parcel of the general value system is a locked door of enormous proportions."²³

Another major hindrance is closely related to this, stemming not so much from the image of the Church as an outmoded institution, as from the image of Christianity presented by her individual members. Hodges has hinted at this point, but it is made more clearly by Harton:

it is not too much to say that the greatest handicap which hinders the work and witness of the Church today is caused by the stunted and undeveloped lives of a multitude of her children and by the lack of vision and hope which makes such a state of things possible... This blindness, this lack of spiritual enterprise, is a very great hindrance, for it prevents the due development

of the Christian community, and proportionately robs it of power and effectiveness.²⁴

Harton may be exaggerating, but it does seem to be the case that Christianity is often judged by the failings of its less committed adherents, rather than by the "successes" of those with deeper convictions. Once again, whatever may be the true "spiritual state" of most of the Church's members, the world judges Christianity on the image which it presents; which is too often of a negative, sterile, and joyless life.²⁵ Moreover, Christians in the past have tended to neglect all but man's spiritual needs; although Christians are becoming more socially aware, even among the ranks of evangelicals, who in the past have concentrated a little too strongly on the state of a man's soul, to the exclusion of his physical needs.²⁶ Christians need to realise that people will not listen to a Gospel which does not do anything to alleviate any present distress.

Gilbert Shaw was referring to this when "he used to say that it would need a generation to turn (the victims of exploitation in the docks) back into normal human beings, before the Christian message could begin to mean anything to them."²⁷ Hodges himself would agree with the need to be actively concerned with social problems,²⁸ even though his own main concern was with problems of the mind.

One more difficulty facing any attempt to preach the Gospel, is the fact that there are so many rival world-views in evidence. Other religions and systems have always been there, but increasing immigration, and the spread of ideas around the world, have meant that Christianity is no longer

seen as the only really consistent religion to follow for people in this country. Hodges was, as we have seen, concerned to present Christianity as a complete world-view; and part of the reason for this was that its main rivals have appeal because they are consistent world-views. Hodges makes this point in an article. When people come to the conclusion that existence is empty and purposeless, he says,

they will welcome any gospel, however fantastic or however monstrous, which promises to put an end to such situations (i.e. that lead to that conclusion), to make life simple again and provide a clue to its meaning. That is the real reason why Communism and Fascism command such fervent allegiance. It is not that people have carefully weighed the truth they contain, but their promise of a clear-cut line of action, which is infallibly right, relieves people of the bewilderment and moral frustration that modern life has brought. They come to men like a divine revelation, and inspire a quasi-religious faith and hope.²⁹

The same point could be made about some of the other world-religions, and the various small cults with eastern origins, which are prevalent today. There may indeed be some genuine disclosure of God in them, but admitting this only makes it harder for Christians to establish that they alone have "the truth".

3: Conversion.

How and why are people converted? This is one question which must be taken into account by all those who try to preach the Gospel, for it will influence the way they preach. The different methods we have looked at, tend to operate on the principle "we must needs love the highest when we see it", that is, if the "truth" is presented clearly enough, men will believe it. In some ways this is true, as Hodges comments:

"Our Christianity is not something which our non-Christian contemporaries have seen and rejected. They have never seen it. We have failed to make it visible to them in the first place."³⁰ Therefore, it might seem, all that needs to be done is to present Christianity clearly. But the causes of belief or non-belief are more complex than that, and Hodges is investigating this when he is discussing standpoints.

In his book Languages, Standpoints and Attitudes, Hodges suggests that the true case against Christianity is not based on a logical argument about its basic tenets, but on the difference between rival standpoints, so that a man who holds to one world-view cannot accept that of the Christian. These are "real and fundamental conflicts...which no amount of dialectical or analytical manipulation can resolve."³¹ The reasons why men have their standpoints depends, Hodges believes, on the will. It is a man's attitudes which determine the course of his thinking in the last analysis: "His standpoint, in short, derives directly from his attitude to experience, and differences of standpoint depend upon and reflect differences in the underlying attitudes."³² That is why it is not really possible to argue with someone who has a different world-view. Thus in relation to Christianity, Hodges writes, "God may exist or he may not; that is an ontological question. But the question, whether the question of God's existence is for me a significant question at all, and what there is in me that makes it so, is a transcendental question, to be answered in the long run by a reference to my basic attitudes."³³

Each standpoint will be logically watertight, and though there may be points of contact between them, when they are seen as wholes they are incompatible. People move from one to another only where a man has "already, perhaps unconsciously, begun to take up a standpoint outside his system."³⁴ How then can we decide between rival sets of principles? What Hodges has said above may seem to open the door to irrationalism, or the choice between systems may appear to be arbitrary. But there may be criteria on which to judge them. Hodges suggests that a standpoint "which is able to make use of, and stimulate purposeful inquiries within, a world of discourse which a rival standpoint can only dismiss as meaningless or at least as mere subjective fantasy, this difference must be recognised as a decisive point in favour of the former standpoint."³⁵ But Hodges himself admits that this test would only be accepted by those who assume that fullness of life is to be sought, and even then it would not bring agreement.³⁶

Related to this discussion, is Hodges' contention that religious belief is an ontological insight, not something which can be proved or disproved:³⁷

Religious belief is not based on an accumulation of instances, but on a way of conceiving the structure of all that is; and it is held not as a theory which further evidence might modify, but as a fundamental and immutable truth...religious belief is treated by those who hold it as an ontological insight. This also explains the tenacity with which they retain it even in face of strong discouragement due to the difficulty of applying it on the empirical level.³⁸

Perhaps it also explains why people do not tend to lose their faith through reasoned argument, but through gradually

drifting away. This point is made by C.S.Lewis:"As a matter of fact", he comments, "if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?"³⁹ If such is the nature of religious belief, then we may well ask how we may ever hope to "convert" someone from disbelief?

First of all it must be acknowledged that there can never be any infallible way of preaching the Gospel so that all may respond. Nor will much be gained by preaching specifically to convert people, in the way that has been done by some Protestant teaching.⁴⁰ All that can be done is to present Christianity in a clear light, and give people an opportunity to respond if for various reasons they are drawn by it. We shall be looking at this shortly. First, we should note the following two remarks, which indicate that something from "outside" must occur before a man will be able to accept Christianity. The first is taken from Bennington's book, and is the statement of a "working-class" youth:"The majority of people I don't think they can really be converted by sort of just sitting down and talking about words...if somebody disagrees with something in which you believe, then it takes a lot more than just words for them to change their mind. They want to see some proof, don't they?"⁴¹ The second remark is from Harton:"The ultimate fact is that there can be no upward striving toward God without the prevenient action of God Himself...Human advance towards God is never self-initiated,

it is always a response."⁴² If this is the case, then it might seem that there can never be any point in trying to communicate Christianity, because it is only God who can convert; but the Church has a duty in this direction, and Hodges gives some indication of the attitude she should take.

4: The Presentation of Christianity.

Hodges believed, as we have seen, that Christianity was a consistent world-view, and should be presented as such. Alongside this method of presentation, should go an attitude of love and openness towards non-Christians, who cannot be expected to listen to us unless we listen to them. Hodges makes both these points in Modern World View: "How do we, who profess full adherence to the Christian Faith and make a serious attempt to practise it, appear in the eyes of those who do not?", he asks. Christians have been taught to pity the non-Christian for his blindness, he says, but 'are we sure that "our failure to agree with our contemporaries is not sometimes due to a failure to understand them, and that there is not in us a blindness comparable with that which we are taught to discern in them? It is a thought which will not let itself be stifled."⁴³ Christians should therefore be aware that the fault often lies with themselves, and should endeavour to be open to the ideas of their non-Christian contemporaries, in order to understand, and be understood by, them. For we have failed to make our Christianity visible to them, as we have seen, although

sometimes a few of them get a glimpse of it from afar,

but find that they cannot understand what they see. Or they understand, or think they do, but yet fail to be interested. One hears of people saying that they see what we mean, but find it irrelevant or a bore.

Our problem is, therefore, in the first instance that of making Christianity visible again, of making people see it as a really possible way of looking at things. Secondly, we have to try to make it intelligible.⁴⁴

This can be done by showing how Christianity is a standpoint which makes sense of the world, which offers an answer to the main problems of life, and guidance in the living of it. It is in this manner that Hodges presents Christian belief in his writings. We have already seen that Hodges regards the Christian story, in its vast sweep from creation to the Cross, and beyond, as an epic story of great dramatic power, and substantial appeal. He is surely right in thinking that it is thus that Christianity will have most effect on its hearers, perhaps because it is not trying to force the listener into an unnatural position (such as being overwhelmed by sin and guilt, when he has no previous feelings of this nature), but leaves him to apply Christianity to his own situation.

It is true that in the New Testament, the call to men is to repent and be baptised as they seek to follow Christ. A mature Christian life can only be entered upon when this is done. But, Hodges believes, there are many different ways of coming to Christ, and he gives one example. This is of a young man who was put off by the "all-too-personalistic conceptions of God involved in the sin and justification approach", but who came into Christianity through seeing Christ as the Great Invisible made visible.⁴⁵ It was only

after this that he learnt about sin and reconciliation, and so on. This may not be a "way in" for everybody, but it illustrates one of the different ways that God may reach through to man. For we must preach to men where they are, and if men are not aware of their sin and guilt, it is no use preaching freedom from sin and guilt:

Our position as Christians in the modern world is not primarily that we, being sinners in a world of sinners, have found a kind God. That is not a message to preach to a world which does not know it is sinful and does not want a kind God. Our position is that we, amid the growing glories of man, have seen what is false in these glories, and that in conscious dependence upon God we call the world to lose and find itself again in Him. Very likely the world will not do it. That too will be no new story. We never had any right to expect that the Gospel when truly preached would be welcomed by all or even by most.⁴⁶

This is one trouble with trying to preach Christianity in a way which is applicable to man today; for the response will not be large. But preaching which centres round sin, guilt and reconciliation may attract a "reasonable" response - witness the popular appeal of "mass crusades" such as Billy Graham rallies. One question-mark against these forms is the short-term nature of many professed conversions. An illustration of this is to be found in Bennington's book. There he contrasts a strongly "evangelistic" coffee bar in London, which could boast numerical success with regard to conversions, with a differently styled project which "made" only one Christian after some years. But the approach of the first encouraged new Christians to become part of a fellowship often very different from their previous background, and three new Christians whom

the author interviewed lost their faith after two years, because of the pressure involved, Bennington believed, in the change from their working-class background to the predominantly middle-class Church fellowship. The convert from the other fellowship, although of a similar background, kept his faith; and this seems to have been partly due to the efforts of the Christians involved to enable him to stay within his culture. These two cases "prove" nothing, but they do indicate a whole problem area which the Church has been slow to tackle. There will always be exceptions, but it seems that in Britain the Church is predominantly middle-class, and that leaves a large percentage of the population outside the Church's sphere of activity. Once again we turn to Bennington, and his quotation from one of those he interviewed with which he closes his book, and it raises a serious question for Christians: "If you're walking a tightrope across a cliff you either get to the other side or you fall off. Say 50% get across, you'll say "Look 50% of them came through" and you think "that's good" but what about all the others that have fallen away?"⁴⁷

The result of our preaching, then, may be minimal, but if it produces life-long Christians then it must be on the right lines. The keynote for Bennington and Hodges, although expressed in rather different ways, is an openness to the ideas and personalities of those who are not Christians, allowing them to come to Christ in their own way, rather than trying to force them into a particular mould. The traditional truths of Christianity must be kept, even where the language is

altered to make it understandable. The Church too often has no real point of contact with the world, so that when we try to explain to non-Christians what we mean and believe, "they do not understand, or else they think they understand and are bored; for we use phrases which to them mean nothing, or convey all the wrong associations, and our ways of thought are not real to them."⁴⁸ How then can we present Christ to people? Bennington's answer is that

the challenge to Christianity is to rediscover the way in which concrete everyday situations can still evoke disclosures about Christ. But such situations will act as disclosures of truth only if we have our eyes opened to see God's presence there; and this involves breaking free from the attitude which bound the Pharisees and which governs so many of our own responses; the need to keep God pinned down, defined, categorised, and placed within a comprehensive framework of ideas. The attitude which somehow restricts Christ's reality to something which has to be proved by historical argument ('the Evidences of the Resurrection', etc.), or which can only be assured on the basis of a private, personal, internal experience.⁴⁹

How does The Pattern of Atonement fit into the ideas we have been discussing in the last few sections? Can we find anything to suggest that Hodges' work is important, and deserving of more recognition? This can be answered in the affirmative; for if Christianity is to be presented as a complete world-view, and we are to be faithful to all of its doctrines, then there is obviously a need for the Atonement to be discussed, and presented in the context of man's situation in the world. Those who are interested in Christianity wish to know what it has to say about their present problems, to judge for themselves, rather than hear only what is relevant

to a particular theory of the Atonement. In this context, Hodges' book is a fair discussion of the issues involved, and clears up some of the misunderstandings which have caused people to turn away from Christianity in the past. But although this is to Hodges' credit, it does not single his book out for special attention. It would also be considered too technical for those with no theological training or knowledge, even though it is far easier to read than many other books on the subject. On the other hand, those with theological knowledge would be aware of Hodges' lack of mastery of developed biblical theology. This is perhaps the most critical point which could be made of Hodges, for full justice to a doctrine does surely require a mastery of the Bible, Church history and the development of the doctrine. Yet Hodges' claims to be giving a "philosopher's analysis", which can avoid taking all these factors into account. The criticism would then be that while a "philosopher's analysis" gives many new insights, it cannot be finally satisfying as a critique of the doctrine of the Atonement.

Where Hodges' book is of more importance is for those whose task it is to preach the Gospel, as Dr. A. M. Ramsey realised. For the preacher might learn from the book to think out again his understanding of the Atonement, to see it in its context, and relate it to the situations in life, in which his hearers will find themselves. The Christian life, with Christ's atoning work viewed in this way, hangs together more coherently than some theories of the Atonement would allow; and Hodges' discussion of justification helps to clear up some of the misunderstandings

between Catholic and Protestant whose rift is such a bad witness to the world. These things assimilated by those who try to communicate the Christian Faith to their fellow men should enable them to teach more clearly.

We might recall at this point Hodges' emphasis on the need for a proper analysis of the human condition. Christian apologetic should take analysis of this sort into account, for it may mean that preaching should be multi-stranded in order to be relevant to the varying and complex situations of man. No over-simplistic criteria of "adequate" doctrine and apologetic will do, where the human condition is so complex. But on the other hand, the causes of belief and non-belief are themselves complex, and there is no guarantee that if the apologetic is "right", it will necessarily be met with approval.

It is important to consider the rest of Hodges' works as they relate to his book on the Atonement. A proper understanding of conversion (from unbelief to belief) could be gleaned from his writings; as could a better understanding of the spiritual life of the Christian. Again, Hodges has tried to understand his fellow men, and the intellectual climate of his age, and where this climate is similar to our own, we have lessons to learn from him. Perhaps the best example of Hodges' thought on the Christian life lived in openness to the world is Modern World View. This short book is a clear presentation of the Christian Faith as a world-view to be contrasted with that of the modern world.

The key idea of The Pattern of Atonement is "I in Christ,

Christ in me", and this concept, explained in detail in the book, is illustrated practically in the rest of Hodges' work. Christians have a new and completely different life in Christ. How is this to be lived out in the world, especially in the face of all the difficulties which we have already noted? The answer to that may be found by seeing how Hodges worked out the Christian Faith in relation to the many different areas he tackled. Hodges' book on the Atonement, considered in its context, has much to teach us not only about the way we live our Christian lives, but also how we may communicate to others our faith and realisation that our lives may be transformed by union with Christ. This realisation Hodges had, and he applied it especially to the intellect, and what it meant for the mind on its road towards union with God. Hodges does have something to teach the Church today; if nothing else, the pattern of the Atonement in our lives, and the way it can be preached to our fellow-men. But also he has shown us, to echo the words of Metropolitan Anthony⁵⁰ "the greatness of the human mind when it is pure and used with a worshipful reverence for God's truth."

1. Young, op.cit.
2. Pattern, p.II. For a discussion of what he thought of as a philosopher's work, see Chapter Three of this study.
3. Pattern, p.7.
4. Allchin, op.cit., p.306.
5. In June 1977.
6. Quoted on the front cover of the S.C.M. edition of Pattern.
7. "Our Culture: Its Thought", p.33. An example of this is found in the criticism of the National Evangelical Anglican Congress for concentrating on the changing world, made by Gerald Bray: "Can an evangelical steeped in Holy Writ really believe that the world is changing in a fundamental sense? Do we not maintain...that change is superficial, that at bottom the need of man and the ways of God remain exactly the same?" Third Way, Vol.I, No.10, 19th May 1977, p.20.
8. "The Crisis in Philosophy", p.194. An example of a determination to be open-minded, and sensitive to the doubts of unbelievers is found in The Forgotten Dream.
9. "Holiness, Righteousness, Perfection", p.237.
10. "Clearing the Ground", Sixth Discussion, p.2.
11. Modern University, p.10-11. An attempt to go into these questions is found in the N.E.A.C. books, especially The Changing World, ed. Bruce Kaye, London: Collins, 1977.
12. See, for example, Anselm - if indeed he is trying to prove God's existence in the Proslogion, which is debatable. Similarly, see Aquinas' Five Ways; or Descartes, Meditations

- III and IV, for classical expressions of the proofs.
13. For example, see C.S.Lewis, Mere Christianity, London: Collins, 1955. (1st publ. 1952) Lewis argues for the existence of God starting from the "Law of Human Nature".
14. "What is to Become of Philosophical Theology?", p.228. See pp.212ff. for discussion on the "proofs" for the existence of God. On the question of the "verification" of religious belief, as it has developed more recently, see A.J.Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, London: Gollancz, 1967, the "Introduction", the "Preface", and Chapter VI. R.B.Braithwaite, "An Empiricist's view of the Nature of Religious Belief", pp.72-92 of B.Mitchell, ed. The Philosophy of Religion, O.U.P., 1971. I.T.Ramsey, "Contemporary Philosophy and the Christian Faith", Religious Studies, I, (1965), pp.47-61.
15. For the relation of this fact to religious language, see Chapter Four of this work.
16. "Moral Rearmament", p.332.
17. Honest to God, London: S.C.M., 1963.
18. "Crisis in Philosophy", p.193.
19. For a discussion of this see the end of Chapter Five.
20. London: Scripture Union, 1973.
21. "Christianity in an Age of Science", p.47.
22. "Our Culture: Its Thought", p.18.
23. Quoted by Bennington, op.cit., p.86.
24. Harton, op.cit., p viii.
25. This fact emerges in a report published recently by the

- General Synod, called A Kind of Believing.
26. Attempts to redress the balance include Bruce Kaye, op.cit. ; David Shepherd, Built as a City, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974. Also see the recently republished Christianity and the Social Order, by W.Temple, London: S.P.C.K., 1976.
 27. "Obituary: The Revd. Gilbert Shaw", p.453.
 28. See "Moral Rearmament", p.33ff.
 29. "What Difference Does Christianity Make?", p.262, cf. D.M.Mackinnon, "Prayer, Worship and Life".
 30. Modern World View, p.17.
 31. Languages Standpoints and Attitudes, p.44.
 32. Ibid., p.49.
 33. Ibid., 53.
 34. Ibid., p.58.
 35. Ibid., p.64.
 36. Basil Mitchell criticises Hodges' view of the way one can pass from one standpoint to another: "If...being rational involves at some point the exercise of judgement of this sort, there would seem to be no reason in principle why world-views or metaphysical systems should not be subject to rational comparison; however much in practice human limitations may impede the process." The Justification of Religious Belief, London: Macmillan 1973, p.89-90. There is perhaps more room for comparison than Hodges allows.
 37. This relates also to "God-vision", as Hodges describes it in Typescript, pp.18ff.

38. "What is to Become of Philosophical Theology?", p.229.
39. Lewis, op.cit., p.122. Also cf. Bennington, op.cit.
40. See above, p 173
41. Bennington, op.cit., p.71.
42. Harton, op.cit., p.6.
43. Modern World View, p.II-12.
44. Ibid., p.17.
45. "Holiness, Righteousness, Perfection", p.238.
46. Ibid., p.240-241.
47. Bennington, op.cit., p.93.
48. "Christianity in an Age of Science", p.48.
49. Bennington, op.cit., p.71. He is commenting on Ian Ramsey's concept of "disclosure", see Religious Language, London: S.C.M.,
50. At Hodges' Memorial Service, and quoted in his Obituary, p.308.

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