

world, a kingdom of heaven which is remote and separated from the normal world of the Christian. The Spirit simply perfects his charity which is thus able to pervade his whole life, his mind, his will, his very action among his fellows, his prayer. For that reason **THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT** will follow the present issue on the Holy Spirit with a double number devoted to the Love of God (in the August-September number of this year).

It may be seen then that the true and full reception of the Holy Spirit avoids the danger of a passive quietism as well as of an esoteric other-worldliness which despises the outward forms of religion. The Spirit drives man more and more into the work of the liturgy and of the mystical body under the authority of the bishops and the Pope. He, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, re-introduces the Christian to the life of law and rubric in such a way that these outward forms cease to be the mechanical actions of an organisation, a machine that mimics life; they become quickened, enlivened by the Spirit of Love.



THE CLOUD ON THE TABERNACLE

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Let me remind you of this. Our fathers were hidden all of them under the cloud, and found a path all of them through the sea; all alike in the cloud and in the sea, were baptised into Moses's fellowship.—I Cor. 10, 1-2.

OF all the events of the Old Testament there is none which is of an importance comparable to the Exodus. It was the mighty Act of God, in the light of which the whole history of Israel was given its meaning. By this act Israel had been delivered from bondage and formed into a people, it had been given a Law and made the subject of a Covenant; it had been guided through the desert and brought into the Promised Land. This was the pattern in which the Prophets saw the history of Israel. They looked back on it as the 'time of her espousals', when Israel had

been 'holy to the Lord'. (Jer. 2, 2.) As time went on it was regarded more and more as the Golden Age, the period when God had been manifested to his people and they had walked in his light. But at the same time it was seen also as the ideal of the future. As the Golden Age receded and Israel was overwhelmed with calamities, the Prophets began to look forward to another Exodus, to another deliverance from bondage, to a new Law and a new Covenant, to a return to the Land. Hence it was in the light of this ideal that the evangelists saw the life of Christ. Not only St Matthew's and St John's gospel, but also St Mark's, as Dr Farrer has recently shown, depict the life of Christ as a new Exodus. The baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, the giving of the Law on the Mountain, are all stages in the new Exodus. In St John's gospel Jesus manifests himself successively as the Bread from Heaven, the Water from the Rock, the Light which overshadows his people. He is slain at the hour when the Paschal Lamb is killed that he may redeem his people by his Blood and accomplish the final Exodus from this world to the Father.

But as the Exodus of Israel from Egypt was the type of the true Exodus which was accomplished by Christ, so it is the type of that Exodus through which every Christian must pass. 'It is we who were foreshadowed in these events', as St Paul says (1 Cor. 10, 6). We have all to pass through the Red Sea; we have all to be tempted in the desert, to receive the Law and enter into the Covenant, to be prepared for our entry into the Promised Land. Now the means by which we thus participate in the mystery of the Exodus are the Sacraments of the Church. For the Sacraments are nothing but a system of sacred signs by which the mystery of our Redemption which was foreshadowed in the Exodus is enacted in us. That the passage through the Red Sea represents baptism and the manna and the water from the Rock the Eucharist is clear enough, but it is possible to go further than this and to see in the events of the Exodus the symbol of our whole life as Christians. This can be seen most clearly if we consider that rather mysterious element, of which St Paul speaks, the cloud. 'We were all baptised in the cloud and the sea.' What does this mean? What is this cloud? It

has a long history in the Old and the New Testaments and we shall perhaps come nearer to understanding its significance if we consider this history in some detail.

It appears first long before the Exodus in the life of Noah. 'This is the sign of the Covenant which I give between me and you and to every living soul that is with you, for perpetual generations. I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be the sign of a covenant between me and between the earth.' (Gen. 9, 12-13.) This is the first covenant between God and man and the sign of it is the rainbow. What is the meaning of this? Let us remember that the story of the flood is another of the great mysteries of the Old Testament in which the mystery of our faith is pre-figured. We know that it was regarded in the New Testament as a prefiguration of the mystery of baptism (1 Peter 3, 21). The waters of the flood signified the waters of baptism, the Ark was a type of the Church. What then was the bow in the clouds? The rainbow is clearly a symbol of light; it is the light shining through the darkness. As such it is a symbol of faith. The divine light cannot be seen by us on earth; it can only be made known to us under a sign: and the cloud is the sign under which the divine light is manifested. But we can go further than this: the bow in the clouds is a sign that amid all the storms and conflicts of this world, the divine presence is always there, so that the powers of evil cannot overwhelm the world. It is the sign of the light in heaven which corresponds with the sign of the waters on earth. So it is that in the baptism of Christ as he comes up out of the waters of the Jordan the sign of the dove appears in the heavens, revealing the presence of the Holy Spirit. This may help us to understand the significance of the cloud at the Exodus of which St Paul speaks. 'Our fathers were hidden all of them under the cloud, and found a path all of them through the sea.' Clearly the Red Sea is the sign of the waters of baptism and the cloud is the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now this cloud, we are told, accompanied the Israelites throughout their journey. 'The Lord went before them to shew the way in a pillar of cloud by day and by night in a pillar of fire: that he might be the guide of their journey

at both times. There never failed the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night before the people' (Ex. 13, 12-22). What can this mean but that the Holy Spirit was to accompany the people all through their journey in their desert until they entered into the Promised Land?

The journey of the Israelites through the desert has always been seen as typical of the journey of the Christian through the trials and temptations of this present world towards the Kingdom of Heaven. Origen in his commentary on the book of Numbers takes the forty-two 'stations' of the Israelites in the desert as so many stages in the Christian life leading towards perfection. St Gregory of Nyssa follows Origen but in his hands the doctrine receives a most interesting development. The stages of Christian perfection are related to the sacraments of the Church. The history of the Exodus is seen as typical of the three 'ways' of the spiritual life and at the same time is brought into relation with the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. The first stage is represented by the burning bush. This represents the mystery of 'illumination' or *Photismos*, which is the Greek name for the mystery of Baptism. Baptism is in this view essentially a deliverance from the powers of darkness and an illumination in the knowledge of God. Egypt stands for 'idolatry', that is for the worship of the material world. In the burning bush Moses is brought face to face with God, the absolute Being. 'God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. He said, thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS hath sent me to you.' In the light of this revelation the power of idolatry is destroyed, the illusion of this world is dispelled, and the Israelites are led through Baptism out of Egypt and begin their journey to the Promised Land. It is then that the cloud appears. For St Gregory the cloud is a symbol of the presence of God, which is both darkness and light. It is darkness because God, the absolute Being, is above all images and all concepts, he can only be known in what St John of the Cross was later to call the 'night of Faith'. But at the same time it is light, because the divine presence is manifested to us through the light of faith and leads us on our way. This journey through the desert under a cloud

is therefore a symbol of contemplation or the 'illuminative way' of the spiritual life.

But it is also a symbol of Confirmation. For to St Gregory Confirmation is the sacrament which not only strengthens us by the presence of the Holy Spirit to endure the conflicts and temptations of life, but also illumines the mind so that it becomes aware of this presence of the Holy Spirit beneath all the external circumstances of life. The great illusion of this world is that by which the material world is mistaken for the ultimate reality. Faith is the illumination of mind which dispels this illusion and makes us aware of God as the absolute Being. Contemplation, corresponding with the sacrament of Confirmation, is that further illumination which enables us to become aware of this presence of God, the absolute reality, beneath all the appearances of the visible world. The cloud is thus the symbol of that whole sacramental order by which the divine mystery makes itself known to us under sensible signs. The journey through the desert is typical of that sacramental order under which we live, where God makes his presence known to us by means of sacramental signs. As we advance in faith and contemplation, the outward sign becomes more and more a true appearance in and by which the divine reality is revealed. For St Gregory the final stage in this pilgrimage is reached when Moses goes up to the Mount Sinai and meets God in the darkness at the summit. As contemplation passes into union, all signs, both sensible and intelligible, give way, and God is known in the darkness communicating himself as love. We can see from this how closely the doctrine of St Gregory follows the lines which were afterwards traced by St John of the Cross, so that the mystery of the cloud in the wilderness is the true source of the classical conception of the contemplative life as a passage through the dark night of the soul and the spirit leading to union with God in love.

But normally in the Christian life the presence of God is always made known by means of sensible signs. This is signified by the fact that the cloud comes to rest upon the tabernacle. The tabernacle is the place of 'meeting' between God and man. It was made 'according to the pattern which was shown to Moses on the mount'; that is to say it is an

image of the heavenly order. It represents the Church in the state of her pilgrimage here on earth. In it were contained all the symbols of the ancient Law. There it was that Moses went to speak with God, and we are told that 'when he was gone into the tabernacle of the covenant, the pillar of cloud came down and stood at the door, and he spake with Moses. And all the people saw that the pillar of cloud stood at the door of the tabernacle and they stood and worshipped each man at the doors of their tents.' (Ex. 33, 9-10.) Here then we have the Church on earth as the place where the presence of God is seen to rest, from which the Law of God is given and round which the people gather to worship. It represents the whole of that divine economy under which we live, by which God is manifested to us through the sacraments and the law of the Church, and the divine mystery is perceived by means of the external signs by which it is communicated. But we are also told that the sign of the cloud accompanied the tabernacle throughout the journey. 'If at any time the cloud removed from the tabernacle, the children of Israel went forward by their troops: if it hung over they remained in their place. For the cloud of the Lord hung over the tabernacle by day, and a fire by night, in the sight of the children of Israel throughout their journeys.' (Ex. 40, 34-36.)

This introduces us to a further mystery in the history of the cloud. The cloud accompanies the tabernacle throughout its pilgrimage on this earth, but when the Israelites enter the Promised Land, then the Ark of the Covenant is taken up to Jerusalem and placed in the Temple of Solomon, and the cloud now comes to rest on the Temple. So we are told: 'When the priests were come out of the sanctuary, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, and the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house'. (3 Kings 8, 10-11.) Now as the Tabernacle in the wilderness represents the Church in her state of pilgrimage on earth, so the Temple at Jerusalem represents the Church *in patria*; it is a symbol of the new Jerusalem. It is here that the symbolic character of the whole of the Old Testament dispensation becomes clear. The temple at Jerusalem was never to be more than of a pro-

visional character, like everything else under the old covenant. Both the temple and the city were destined to be destroyed and the people were destined to be led away captive into another land. But it was then that Ezechieh saw in vision another temple, which was to replace the old, and the new temple was filled like the old with the cloud of the presence. 'And behold the glory of the God of Israel came in by way of the east and his voice was like the voice of many waters, and the earth shone with his majesty. . . . And the majesty of the Lord went into the temple by way of the gate which looked to the east . . . and behold the house was filled with the glory of the Lord' (Ez. 43, 2-5). We are here at the very centre of this mystery of the cloud of the glory. The divine presence had been revealed to Israel in the desert; it had come to rest on the tabernacle; it had led them into the promised Land. Then it had come to rest on the Temple as the sign of God's perpetual dwelling among his people. But now we see the Temple destroyed, and a new Temple is revealed in vision to one of the Prophets in which the divine glory comes to rest. What is this new temple?

The answer is given in St John's gospel. The Word, he says, was made flesh and made his tabernacle (Greek, *eskenosen*) among us, and we beheld his glory. . . . Here at last the mystery is revealed. The new temple is the humanity of Christ, on which the divine glory comes to rest so that it is filled with 'grace and truth'. This is represented symbolically as we have seen at the baptism of Christ when the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove, but it is at the Transfiguration that the full revelation is made. Then we are told, 'Moses and Elias appeared talking with him, and Peter said, It is good for us to be here. . . . Let us make three tabernacles. . . . And as he was speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came from the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son. . . .' (Matt. 17, 3-5.) Now we can see that the whole mystery of the tabernacle in the wilderness is a type of the mystery of the Incarnation. It is Christ whose presence among his people is signified by the overshadowing cloud. It is he who leads his people through the Red Sea and gives them bread from heaven and water

from the rock. It is he who is present in the tabernacle, giving his people the Law and revealing himself under the sacramental signs of his earthly pilgrimage. Finally it is he who is the new temple, in which all the people are gathered to worship God and in which God takes up his eternal dwelling. But yet as the original tabernacle and the original temple had to pass, because they were only a sign of the true life which was to come; so also the tabernacle of Christ's humanity had to be transfigured and to pass into another sphere of being. Thus we are told that at the ascension of Christ, 'while they looked on, he was raised up, and a cloud received him out of their sight' (Acts 1, 9).

This is the last appearance of the cloud and the final phase of the mystery. The cloud, we have said, is the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It represents the mystery of that supernatural life, which we receive at our baptism; which becomes the guide of our life in our pilgrimage through this world, and the light which enables us to see the reality which underlies the appearances of this world. It is manifested to us in the tabernacle of Christ's humanity and makes its dwelling place in his Church. But in the end the human nature of Christ is taken up into the divine presence, it passes beyond the world of appearances. 'He makes use', as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, 'of a greater and more perfect tabernacle, which is not made with hands, which is not of this creation' (Heb. 9, 11). Christ has passed into the order of the new creation, from the world of sign to the world of reality. 'For Jesus is not entered into the sanctuary made with hands, the copy of the true, but into heaven itself' (Heb. 9, 4). And in heaven, we are told in the Apocalypse, there is no temple, 'for the temple is the Lord God almighty, the temple is the Lamb' (Apoc. 21, 22). It is in the light of this final revelation that we now look back on all the events of the Exodus and the mystery of the tabernacle and the temple, and see in them the symbols of the mystery of Christ and the Church. For us, as for St Paul, the veil has been taken away, so that we no longer 'gaze at the features of the old order which was passing away' (2 Cor. 3, 13). We have received that gift of the Spirit, which enables us to see beneath the surface and to receive the full

light of the mystery which is hidden beneath the sign. 'It is given us all alike to catch the glory of the Lord, as in a mirror, with faces unveiled; and so we become transfigured into the same likeness, borrowing glory from that glory, as the Spirit of the Lord enables us' (2 Cor. 3, 18). These symbols of the Old Testament are not dead signs, they are living symbols which gradually disclose their meaning as we meditate upon them, and work a transformation in our souls. We have not merely to think them but to live them: to let them take possession of us like poetry. It is the function of the poet, according to Hölderlin, to 'name the gods'. The symbols of the Old Testament are the 'names' by which God is brought near to us and enters into our lives.



MYSTICISM AND THE SACRAMENTS IN THE EARLY EASTERN CHURCH¹

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RECENT discussion has led to a recognition that christian mysticism differs fundamentally from that of the non-christian religions. It was necessary, first of all, in face of the historical positivists to show where this difference lies. The answers so far proposed indicate at least that this is to be sought in the trinitarian structure of our theism. It is remarkable how little this has been taken into account by the theologians of the last centuries, and how little influence it has had on christian life. In theory the West has never lost sight of the unique nature of christian, i.e. trinitarian, theism, but in practice the christian and non-christian mystic differ less markedly. We do not account for this difference simply by saying that the revelation of the Trinity and the substitution of trinitarian forms for monotheistic characterise christian mysticism, for this would be to beg the question which is precisely how this reference

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