Christianity and Cosmology

DAVID W. HAY

THE aim of this article is to bring out some much-neglected New Testament teaching, to assert that the Gospel contains truths of a cosmological character, and to indicate that these truths are indispensable for understanding the new union with God that man has in Christ. The basis for these theses will be the contrast between the New Testament and Old Testament cosmologies. For there is not one cosmology in the Bible. There are at least two. The Gospel is the announcement of a New Cosmos.

1. Old Testament Cosmology

Since the Old Testament picture of the "physical universe" is a familiar one, only its broad outlines need be referred to. The picture was both sublime and quaint. It represented the earth as a shallow disc, edged with mountains and resting on a vast ocean called "the waters under the earth." Over it rose the firmament like a great inverted crystal bowl across which the heavenly bodies described their courses. Above the earth was another ocean, "the waters above the earth," which poured through "windows" in the firmament in the form of rain. Still higher were the heavens and heaven of heavens in several ranges, in which dwelt supernatural beings. The topmost heaven was the dwelling of God. This scheme is often described as a multiple-storied structure, like an apartment building. God lived in the pent-house, and man lived on the earth beneath. But he was destined to go below to a dark basement called Sheol, where the departed did not so much live as prolong a ghostly death. Many points of interesting detail may be omitted, such as the belief that the sun was not the cause of the day but only a lamp that lit it and a clock that marked its hours.

It is very important to realise that this scheme represented a scale of values. The phrase *physical universe* used a few lines above is a wrong expression, because to the ancient world generally the universe was not *physical* in our sense of the word. It was composed of four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, in an ascending scale. The elements were more divine or more spiritual, or less divine and less spiritual, according to their situation in space. Water had a double value, and hence baptismal water has a double symbolism. As referring to the spiritual waters above the firmament, baptism conveys the cleansing of the Holy Spirit who is *poured* upon us (Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 10:2). As referring to the waters under the earth, it represents the death and destruction into which we are buried with Christ to rise again (Rom. 6:2). Each of the elements had an inherent tendency to seek

its own region. Fire belonged to the bright heavens. That was where the sun, moon, and the stars were, and where the lightning came from. Therefore the flames of a fire on the earth always flickered upward, striving towards their own place. A stone loosed from the hand would immediately fall to the ground, because it belonged to the ground. The middle region was the place of air, where the winds were caused by the breath of spirits whose faces are drawn on ancient maps. Man's breath or "spirit" came from *above* him, animating his dust and giving him participation in "higher" things. Baptismal water, acting *opere operato* (because it was not just "physical"), could regenerate him with a new spiritual life. But man's place was on the earth. It was impious for him to attempt to leave it, unless God made a special exception, as tradition said he did for Elijah, who was carried to heaven in a vehicle with the appropriate motive power, a chariot of fire. The sin of the builders of the Tower of Babel was that they in too literal a sense "got above themselves": "Go to," they said, "let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven."

St. Paul gives us a passage in which he very clearly enunciates the doctrine of differing values among creaturely things. The subject is so important that his words must be quoted here. We may take the liberty of substituting the word *value* for the word *glory*, for the Greek *doxa* stands for the Hebrew *kabhodh* in its sense of *weight* or *honour*.

> All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the value of the celestial is one, and the value of the terrestrial is another. There is one value of the sun, and another value of the moon, and another value of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in value. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory (honour) . . . There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:39ff.).

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (v. 50) because they belong to the earth and have no right to the heavenly regions.

The cosmological scale expresses differences in *being* and *value*. God was not regarded as insubstantial, but he was more glorious in his "substance" (though this term is not used) than light itself, for he dwelt in the light which no man can approach unto (1 Tim. 6:16). We tend to lose the meaning of many such expressions because we treat them as metaphors and forget the cosmological realism out of which they come. Yahweh was originally thought of as a sky God, a God of thunder and lightning, a God of the mountainous country of Sinai. No one was to climb or even touch that mountain save his privileged servant Moses, whose face afterwards shone with the light of the Presence. The idea of God's transcendent brightness was not lost but only extended when the Hebrews saw that all heaven and earth—and especially heaven—are full of his glory. He might, indeed, display his glory anywhere. The Psalmist says adoringly that God is so inescapable that even if he were to go down to Sheol he would find that

God was there before him (Ps. 139:8), and Isaiah in a sublime passage speaks of God as dwelling in the high and holy place and yet also with him that is of a humble spirit (57:15). But the highest heaven is thought of more especially as God's *throne* because it is above man and all things, the place of rule and authority from which he could govern the earth as his footstool (Isa. 66:1). If we desire to understand the Old Testament, we must not too quickly abstract the "theological concept" from its "cosmological vesture." For our own theology we shall in some degree have to turn this language into symbol, but in Scripture it is intended realistically.

Man's being and value are in this scheme very different from God's. It is a bad error to imagine, as some have imagined, that the Christian faith puts man at the centre of things. A centre belongs to a circle. It is the point around which the circumference goes. It is the focus, and the rest is periphery. In the Old Testament picture, there is no centre. There is a top and a bottom—and man is at the bottom. When modern astronomy began to reveal to us the immense size of the physical universe and to speak in terms of millions of galaxies of stars among which our galaxy is only a small unit, there were some who felt that this discovery was a blow to the Christian religion. How could we continue to believe in a religion that put man at the centre of things when we had to agree now that in reality he is far out on the edge? In fact, however, the astronomical discoveries were more in tune with the Old Testament. God set his own glory above the heavens, not man's (Ps. 8:1)—until he sent his Christ, who changed the whole picture. But to say that is to anticipate. Meanwhile it is necessary to note that the Psalmist whose words have just been quoted is surprised, when he considers the heavens, that God is mindful at all of such a lowly being as man (vv. 3f.). To an Isaiah, the inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers in the sight of him who sitteth upon the circle of the earth (40:22). Knowing profoundly the "infinite qualitative difference between God and man," the men of the Old Testament themselves fastened upon astronomical terms as a measure of the difference. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16). On the earth man has dominion, but not above it. Let him keep his place. He is not the "centre" of things.

Even to say this is to allow man too much, for man's dominion over earthly things is regarded in the Old Testament as only temporary. He was destined to go even lower, according to earlier Hebrew thought. Sheol, or the Pit, being under the surface of the earth, was cut off from the light of the heavens, that is, from life and God. When man's breath left him, it went back to the God who gave it. His breath was not a *soul* in the sense of an individual spirit. It was that animating air from above that resumed its own region when a man died. His body returned to the ground, where it belonged, but a wraith or ghost of him persisted in the darkness below.

> Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? . . . Shall thy wonders be known in the land of forgetfulness? (Ps. 88:10, 12)

In the Psalmist's mouth these are rhetorical questions expressing the inconceivability of anything but a negative answer. For him the grave was the dark end of life, save as a man might continue in his posterity. Both man's being and man's value are expressed in these terms.

2. New Testament Cosmology

The New Testament announces a radical change in this cosmological structure bringing to man the gift of a new being and a new value. However we may desire to demythologize the Gospel, we shall grievously fail to understand it unless we first take seriously and realistically its spatial and physico-spiritual statements.

Against the Old Testament cosmological background, the New Testament says something immeasurably great about God.

> He came down to earth from heaven
> Who is Lord and God of all,
> And His shelter was a stable,
> And His cradle was a stall.

Before the Incarnation, space was the measure of God's transcendence. It is now the measure of his humility, of his love, and of his power to come infinitely near. Expressed in terms of being, the Incarnation means a permanent union in Christ between God and man that obliterates the old distance between heaven and earth, although it does not obliterate the distinction between Creator and creature. Newman hymns the Wisest Love that brought it about that

> . . . a higher gift than grace
> Should flesh and blood refine,
> God's presence and His very self,
> And essence all-divine.

His words have been criticized as containing a wrong idea of grace. In Scripture grace always means God's personal presence, but the hymn seems to say that before the Incarnation grace was only an influence, and perhaps impersonal at that. Yet whatever may have been Newman's private thoughts upon grace, and although it is unfortunate that he should speak as if the Incarnation were something other than a gift of grace (rather than the acme of grace), his words do nevertheless mark the fact that beforehand there was not grace after this mode. The hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the God-man gives God himself, so to speak, a history; changes his relation to his creation; alters the internal structure of the cosmos; gives man by promise a new being, already fulfilled in Christ; and carries with it ultimately the "spiritualization" or "glorification" of the whole creation. It is wrong, because very inadequate, to describe Christianity as "a theistic religion." What we have here is not theism. It is an initial theistic picture transformed by a new union of the Creator with his

creation and the consequent transformation of the creation. The cosmology of the New Testament is so new that it has to say new things about the Creator as well as about the cosmos. Of course the Church has never made the error of saying that God himself became a new kind of God. It has had to conceive him as being triune from the beginning. So conceiving him it has been able to speak of God's assumption of human nature in the Person of the Son as a new and permanent act of the Godhead.

Viewing the matter in this light, and against the picture of man and the world held by the Hebrews and all the ancients, we can enter more fully into the thrill and the joy of the first proclamation of the Gospel. It announced stupendous things—nothing less than the "divinization" of man. The word should not trouble us, if we see it against the ancient cosmic scale. It does not mean that man became God. It means that he was lifted from his earthly nature into a heavenly nature, acquiring an unwontedly godlike being and union. Some of the features of this change need examination.

What had happened in the Incarnation became clear only in the Resurrection and, more particularly, in the Ascension. Christ *in his manhood* ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High. This was no place for man, as we have seen. An Eastern prayer speaks of the surprise of the angels at seeing a Man appearing in heaven. What happened to Christ will happen to his whole Church, for he is the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29. Cp. Col. 1:15, 18; 1 Cor. 15:23; etc.). This means that in Christ man will have a new dominion. Hitherto he has had dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8:6ff.). Now he will share God's throne, and judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3. Cp. 1 Cor. 3:21ff.; 1 Pet. 1:12). At first he was made "a little lower than the angels," but now in Christ he stands above them (Hebr. 1:4–14). It is true that "we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour," and the victory of Jesus is the earnest of his brothers' (Heb. 2:5ff.). In Christ, man has a new image of God upon him, far transcending the old image. He is now God's Son.[1] We have seen that the Psalmist said, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (115:16). Now we have to say, "All this, and heaven too!" James Moffatt gives a very appealing rendering of Philippians 3:20 when he makes Paul say, "We are a colony of heaven," as if heaven were the Church's home country and it were here colonizing the earth for heaven, adapting it to heaven's ways. The idea is not in itself wrong, because the New Testament necessarily thinks of the City of God as coming down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21:10). Here too we are shown heaven no longer remaining in heaven but transforming earth. But St. Paul is thinking in the reverse direction. "Our conversation, our citizenship (*politeuma*) is in heaven." In Christ man is already exalted to heaven. Paul goes on: ". . . from whence

1. For a treatment of the differences between the Old Testament and new Testament notions of the image, see David Cairns: *The Image of God in Man*, Chapters I and II.

also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." We shall attend in a moment to this reference to the body. Meantime it enforces the point that Christ will come from the place to which the Christian already really belongs.

The article in the creed that says, "He descended into hell," is expounded in Reformed theology as meaning that Christ bore on our behalf all the pains of Hell. This interpretation is a good example of coming too quickly to the symbolical or "spiritual" meaning and missing the primary cosmological reference. If it is a cardinal doctrine of the New Testament, as we have been arguing, that man has ceased to be earth-bound, we must not ignore the steps by which the new "spiritual" state is reached. It is reached, according to the New Testament, by God's fashioning a new creation. It is not to be expected that the New Testament would remain silent about Sheol. The gates of Hell, said Jesus, would not prevail against his Church (Matt. 16:19). The risen Christ is the firstfruits of all that sleep in him (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). For the believer, Hades is abolished. To die is to go at once to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). When belief in a life after death arrived in Judaism, it came in the form of the resurrection of the body. In the New Testament it comes not only as resurrection but, further, as ascension and glorification. Resurrection alone is too earth-bound without the transformation of glorification.[2] But to the ancient mind these things could not be unless God did something about Sheol. Before asking what difficulties the idea might cause us with our modern notions, we should not be surprised at the appearance in the New Testament of the belief that Christ displayed his power there (1 Pet. 3:19ff.; 4:6). Here we see the radicalness of his change of the old cosmic scheme.

The theme of man's "divinization" is a standing one in the New Testament. Our Lord said that there is no marriage in heaven (Matt. 22:30). In Christ there is a new creation. Old things have passed away; and all things—not men's minds only—have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). If our earthly house is dissolved, we have an eternal one in the heavens, for which we long (vv. 1ff.). Christians are to meet Christ in the air, on their way to heaven as he comes towards them (1 Thess. 4:17). Eschatologically speaking, Christians have already ascended (Ephes. 1:3; 2:6); therefore they are to set their affection on things above (Col. 3:1ff.). The whole theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the contrast between the earthiness of the old revelation and the heavenliness of the new (12:25). It is an error to imagine that its ideas derive from Platonism. They come from the new cosmology.[3]

2. There are in Jewish apocalyptic important pointers to the New Testament teaching. See S. B. Frost, "Visions of the End" in the *Canadian Journal of Theology*, July 1959 (Vol. V, No. 3), p. 160.

3. Cairns (*op. cit.*, p. 42) goes so far as to say that 2 Pet. 1:4 is the only text that clearly supports the idea of divinization. J. L. M. Haire takes a similar line in opposing Thornton and Mascall in his essay "On behalf of Chalcedon" [T. H. L. Parker (ed.): *Essays in Christology for Karl Barth*, pp. 104–109].

All that has been said sets a new *value* on man, expressed in terms of the value-scale of the old cosmology. We must now add that the new creation gives man a new *being*, corresponding to his new value and expressed also in terms of the old scale of being. We have already quoted St. Paul's saying about the changing of "our vile body." He is not here falling into Manichaeism. The Revised Standard Version correctly translates his expression "our lowly body" (*sōma tēs tapeinōseōs*). Man's body is at present earthy. If he is to inherit heaven he must be given a body appropriate to the heavenly regions, like the one which Christ already has (Phil. 3:21). The earthly body is not bad because it is lowly. But it is not heavenly. Whether we die before Christ comes or not, "we shall all be changed," living and dead alike (1 Cor. 15:51f.). We need to be redeemed from the body (Rom. 7:24; 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:2, 8; Gal. 4:3). There is in the New Testament, that is to say, a doctrine of redemption that is not a doctrine of redemption from sin alone. Much as this idea may be resisted, it is inescapable if we are willing to give the New Testament cosmology the place it deserves. St. Paul is very explicit in his teaching upon a change in man's being or nature which is not simply a change from sinfulness to sanctity but a rise to a higher nature. The *locus classicus* is 1 Corinthians 15. We can offer here only a few reminders of what he says.

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural: and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (vv. 44–50).

Corruption does not here mean in the first place sinfulness, any more than it does later: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (v. 53). Corruptibility is the change and decay that in all around we see. But it has no place in the heavenly order, and therefore the Gospel offers man a great hope.

It is not hard to see the connection between this kind of corruptibility and the corruption of sin. St. Paul teaches that God has made two creations, first the natural one and then the spiritual one. The natural one was good, but changeable.

For the creature was made subject to vanity (*mataiotēs*), not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (*phthora*) into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:20f.).

Mataiotēs and *phthora* are closely related and are not in the first place connected with sin. The former may also be translated *transitoriness*, and the latter is the *dissolution* into which it issues. That the first creation was

of this nature was not due to its own act (*'ouch hekousa*, "not willingly"). God gave it this nature with the hope of a new one. But because flesh and blood can change, man was capable of falling into sin, and did so. As it is sometimes put, Adam had a "mortable" nature which through sin actually became subject to death. Corruptibility of one kind made *possible* a more tragic corruption of another kind. If sin and death are finally to be overcome and the Fall is not to happen again, man will need to be given a new nature, different from the one that he was given at the first creation. Then he will be "more than conqueror" (Rom. 8:37). Redemption is not just restoration. It is not just victory. It is elevation to a form of existence unknown before.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

It may be suggested that what is offered in this great theme is not so much a new cosmology as a new anthropology. Certainly it is a new anthropology, but it is a cosmological anthropology. We cannot altogether extract the new statements about man from the new statements about the cosmos. For, in the first place, a new statement is made about God's being and his union with man; in the next place, man is given a new relation to God, is "spiritualized" so as to be more like him in being, and also is given a new relation to the earth and what we call "the world of nature." Lastly, the world of nature itself is to be transformed, for it, too, groans and travails as it waits for an adoption in which it will share (Rom. 8:19ff.; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). These are cosmological, not just anthropological statements.

3. Cosmology and our Faith

Although the Hebrew picture is completely outmoded as "scientific" cosmology, we have inherited from it and from the ancient world generally a language that we shall never outgrow. We are not likely to cease speaking of the sun rising and going down, although we know that in actual fact it never rises or sets. Because space belongs to our very natures, we shall always speak in spatial terms. The little word *in*, for example, performs a very ample duty *in* non-spatial relationships. We talk of a man of *high* character or of *low* morals. We talk of the musical scale (ladder), as if pitch really went up and down. Space stands analogically for many relationships and will serve always to bear religious meanings because God is necessarily *above* us. At the Ascension Jesus rose from the earth before the eyes of his wondering disciples, to represent his return to the glory of the Father. How else could we have represented the act of resuming what we call a *higher* state? The cloud that received him out of their sight, was not, according to the commentators, our common, "physical" cloud (Acts 1:9). It is the "spiritual" cloud of the glory of God that descended upon the tabernacle in the wilderness and appeared at the Mount of Transfiguration.

But the matter cannot rest there, as if it were one only of the use of spatial language for essentially non-spatial realities. We spiritualize falsely if we so spiritualize Biblical cosmology as to lose touch with *being*. The ancients were not wrong in seeing some kind of identity between being and value.[4] Even in the state of glory, when man has his heavenly body, some kind of space must be involved, although it is space of a different dimension from the space that we know here, and heaven therefore cannot be located somewhere in our present space. If there is personal, creaturely existence at all, it must have some kind of being and structure. That is to say, Christianity is bound to be cosmological in speaking of the consummated order, just as it has to be cosmological in speaking of the first creation and the history of redemption. But the cosmological relations that it is interested in are not dealt with by astronomical physics. Christianity is not committed to any particular "scientific" cosmology or cosmogony. But as committed to belief in a glorified state it is committed in principle to the cosmological or ontological structures implied in such a state. Again, since that state is the fulfilment, not merely the destruction, of present structures, it believes that these structures participate by analogy in the fulfilled state. Lastly, it declares, eschatologically speaking, that in Christ and the Spirit the old creation already bears the marks of the new. The spatial language that the Christian uses is therefore not a merely metaphorical reference to essentially non-spatial realities. It has sacramental power. The signs really participate in what they refer to. Our Lord's rising from the earth is not an "empty" or "external" symbol of his glorification. The event itself is in this act. They are right who say that we need not so much to "demythologize" the Gospel as to "re-mythologize" it. Perhaps it would be better still to say that we are not here dealing with myth at all—unless modern scientific cosmology is as mythical as ancient! To take cosmology out of Christianity is to abandon Christianity.

There are many implications of this standpoint for modern attitudes in theology and religion. We may conclude by rapidly sketching a few of them.[5]

(a) Christianity cannot be reduced to I-Thou categories. The divine-human encounter theme is in danger of being overplayed. The New Testament has as well a wholesome, strongly objective note, much needed to correct the subjectivity of the other. It announced changes in the cosmos as such, as objective in their character as the Ascension. Men were excited to hear of the dawn of a New Day, not because they had had an "encounter." Of course, the "encounter" theme is important. But it is not adequate. In our struggle away from an individualistic, subjective pietism,

4. "We are now so used to the materialistic way of looking at things, which has been rooted in our literature by the genius of the seventeenth century, that it is with some difficulty that we understand the possibility of another mode of approach to the problems of nature" (A. N. Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World*, p. 53).

5. We must omit reference even to such an important subject as the bearing of this teaching upon the notion of the Church as the Body of Christ, or upon Millenarian doctrines that are still too earth-bound.

we have not advanced very far if we only arrive at community-subjectivism with its obnoxious "fellowshipping." We need cosmic winds to deliver us from religious self-absorption. The New Testament Gospel says to the modern man that there is meaning in his life and in his history only if he looks beyond both to the destiny of the cosmos.

(b) New Testament ethics are grounded in its New Cosmology. The first creation is good, being God's, but it is not so good as that which is appearing. Therefore the Christian is to sit lightly to all earthly things. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . For after all these things do the Gentiles seek" (Matt. 6:19, 32). Christians must weep, rejoice, buy, hold possessions as those who do not weep, or rejoice, or buy, or hold posessions, using this world as not abusing it, for the present cosmic order is passing out (1 Cor. 7:30f.). Marriage is good, but there is a leaning in the New Testament towards celibacy (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7). Money, no doubt, is also good, but it is hard for a rich man to be saved (Matt. 19:16ff.). The theme can be copiously illustrated from the New Testament that the Christian should be "unworldly," if one may dare to use an unpopular and dangerous term. The recovery, so marked in modern theology and so typical of our age as a whole, of the doctrine that the body is good should not be allowed to obscure the New Testament teaching that it is also lowly and must be kept in its place by discipline and subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). There can be little question of the relevance of this attitude towards our contemporary softness.

(c) From the cosmological standpoint it is impossible to be content with the view that justification by faith is the material principle of the Christian religion. God has not only justified man in Christ. The forgiveness of sins, vitally important though it be, is not the whole of the Gospel. God has made a new creation and given man a new heavenly status. One can only know about it in faith, but knowing it is not knowing that one is justified. To speak in this way may invoke the wrath of some "evangelicals," for evangelicalism has come to mean concentration upon our justification through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "The doctrine of the Atonement came to be regarded as the palladium of Orthodox Protestantism; only the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible can be compared with it in importance from this point of view."[6] But concentration upon the Atonement is not so much evangelical as Western. It as typical of Roman theology as of Protestant. Aulén, who has just been quoted, shows very well, for purposes very different from those of this article, that although at the Reformation many took the crucifix off the altar they did not take it out of their theology. It is characteristic of much Western theology to look askance at the idea of "divinization," as against the Greek Fathers and the Eastern Church, where it is a familiar theme. But in the West it has often been brushed aside by the time-honoured device of fathering it on

6. G. Aulén: *Christus Victor*, p. 149.

Greek philosophy.[7] It is true that we must not diminish "the Cruciality of the Cross." But we do diminish it if we fail to see the Cross as the place where Christ stripped off his flesh in manifesting the new creation (Col. 2: 15).[8] The Greek Fathers did not derive their doctrine of divinization from philosophy but from Biblical cosmology, and if they are to be regarded as having had a "physical" notion of redemption, this was only as it had to be, if they were to be loyal to the New Testament revelation.

By God's appointment in the first creation man is meant to have dominion over the earth. Here all the science and technology of the new space-age find their justification. Let man travel to Mars, for Mars too, theologically speaking, is *earth*! But this dominion is only a symbol of a greater, heavenly dominion. The Christian must take his stand in the heavenlies, above all the conflicts and disturbances of this passing age. Having set his affection on things above, not on things on the earth, he can let the peace of God rule in his heart (Col. 3: 2, 15).

7. The attitude of the Roman Catholic, J. Rivière, is identical at this point with that of Cairns and Haire. See his *Doctrine of the Atonement*, Vol. I, pp. 153, 182, 203, 208, 214, 236. While defending the Biblical sources of the teaching of the Greek Fathers, one must not be taken as claiming that they never strayed into error.

8. C. Anderson Scott: *Christianity According to St. Paul*, p. 34.