

our local preachers to evidence their solidarity with the whole company. But the most fruitful organization for this purpose has been one formed by the local preachers themselves outside the regular ecclesiastical government of the Church. The Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Society was formed to provide small pensions for deserving men who found themselves in very narrow circumstances in their old age. Its formation helped to decide the legislation giving status to local preachers on their removal from one circuit to another. Permanence of status was obviously necessary to any effective pension scheme. Then the Mutual Aid took in all the Methodist Churches of Great Britain, and so afforded a useful example of Methodist Union. Its annual meetings have drawn together large bodies of local preachers from all parts of the country, who take advantage of them to give and receive spiritual encouragement and hold counsel together about the work. Its presidency is an office which men of distinction in the political and commercial world are proud to accept. To gather funds, it has organized a "Local Preachers' Sunday," when throughout a whole district all the pulpits are occupied by local preachers, and collections are taken for the support of the Pension Fund. The local preachers are growing to feel the strength of their corporate unity and to take a legitimate pride in their comradeship. It is not easy to estimate the greatness of the contribution they have made to the religious and social life of England. Certainly they have kept religion alive in thousands of English villages, and have brought the inhabitants of many lonely places into living touch with what was best in the Christian social life of the larger centers. They have done much to withstand those tendencies to sacerdotalism which have their source quite as much in the sloth of the laity as they have in the ambitions of the clergy. They have maintained Christianity as the religion of the plain man in days when there has been a tendency to hand it over to experts. They have done much to reënforce English political life with Christian ideals and honesty of administration, and they have been a valuable protection to public liberty, especially in the more thinly populated areas of the country. They have helped to weave the Methodist people into a brotherhood of loving friends, and their fidelity to evangelistic truth has been of incalculable service to our country and our Church.

London, England.

## REGENERATION, CREATION, AND MIRACLE.

*Second Article.*

BY PRINCIPAL P. T. FORSYTH, D.D.

### I

THERE are considerations that aid us when we are afraid of being committed, on the lines of a modern and liberal theology, to something pantheistic. If God be held to put himself into his creation in the immanent way we must now welcome, do we not set up an identity between him and it which leads to some kind of Monism, tends to erase moral distinctions, and makes goodness but nature on its top floor?

And at the outset here we must of course say that any conception of the case, which erases the unique quality and sanctity of moral ideas, destroys creative power; since it destroys a God acting freely, acting from the moral necessity in his holy Person to establish itself in holiness everywhere, and to cover existence with its response.

But, further, we may say that such a simple identity would result only if we treated creation as the last stage of the self-completion of God. If we thought of him as arriving at perfection only in his world, and there at last drawing the deep, infinite breath of self-realization, and heaving the sigh of eternal repose, because he had now found himself fully in his own work—then, indeed, the danger would be great. But such a God would be no holy God; who is forever all he is, whose holiness is the moral aspect of his self-sufficient Being with his life in himself and no darkness nor impotence in him at all.

Creation is not the perfecting of God by the last stage of an evolving and tentative process. Its light is not a new thing to him. Its joy is not his fresh delight at the discovery of himself. The world did not reveal God to himself as a growing genius acquires in successful production a faith in himself or the mastery of his soul. For then another world would be to us no faith, but only a hope—a hope that, when God had pondered the anomalies of this world, his maturer power might produce with the old materials another no longer the work of his prentice hand. But, whatever we mean by another world, we do not

mean that—another experiment with completer success, another approximation more worthy of his instinct of what it was in him to do, or his sense of what should be done.

No religion were possible toward a God who was but a growing God, coming to himself, through the stages of an ascending success, in a series of masterpieces each more masterly than the last. Who could say when such a God might end, or when the creating arm might falter or decay? Faith would not be possible in a God who might end anywhere, even in an ethic that reversed all his past, as many artists have outgrown the moral restraints and principles of their early manner.

For religion the world as a whole is an expression of what God forever is, and it is not a phase of his becoming. It is the result of Divine Will, not of eternal process. He is not the mere possibility of what in the world becomes actual. He is not the infinite germ or preformation of a reality to be deployed in the world. He is the ever holy, the morally self-sufficient and self-complete. The world is his work and not his growth, his offspring and not his completion. He is the ground of the world, or its cause, but not its process. To call him the world-process is no more true than to call him (at the lower extreme) the artificer of the world. He did not emerge and come to himself with the world. The world came there to express the fullness of his power, and not to make good the poverty of his condition. It reveals him to us, not to himself. The world is not his self-achievement but his self-expression. Especially is this so with the world of persons, who reflect God but do not form the field of his self-realization. However we interpret the immanence of God, it must always be so as to give the more effect to his perfect transcendence. Let it also be remembered that a deistic God, insulated from the world, could not transcend it (which implies some relation to it). He would simply be irrelevant to it, and therefore no God for it. So that deism readily develops either to atheism or agnosticism.

## II

If the world is the end of God and the completion so far of his self-realization, we cannot escape some form of pantheism; which again cannot escape moral *débâcle* at last, because then creation does not proceed from a free moral necessity, but from

a nature process. But, if God be the living end of the world (as he was its beginning); if he is the latent teleology of the world, its immanent purpose, rather than its immanent presence and pressure; if he is the subject over it rather than the substance in it, then we have a true Theism, with the immanence of God's transcendence and the ethic of the holy at the root of all creation.

All this if we have a God for whose Love creation is a moral necessity.

But also such moral necessity ends in creation and its freedom. If the pressure of nature, rising to the structure and evolution of society, forces us upon the moral issue (as it does), so much the more are we driven, as we rise in the quality of this moral issue, upon the creative element in it. Here lies the supreme dignity of the moral world—in its creativity. The holy Love cannot but create. And if, on the other hand, our experience, individual as well as social, convince us that the chief feature of the race is a need, and that it is a moral need, then the more experience deepens by actual contact with that need, so much the more shall we discover that moral necessity to be Redemption. If, then, the moral necessity of holy Love issues in creation by its very nature, and if, empirically, the same Love's moral necessity ends in Redemption, it is not violent to identify Redemption and the new creation, and to view the one as the nature of the other. "Thy Creator is thy Redeemer." Sin being what it is in intent—the destruction of the holy—nothing less than a Creator could be a Redeemer. And it really calls for more; for he has to make the holy not only out of a non-holy chaos, but out of an anti-holy crisis. This new creation in our Redemption is the only creation we can experience. It is for us the supreme creation; and it gives us the key to what all creation is.

The drift of the argument is this: Religion exists by a right of its own. It is deduced from no other experience of life, and it holds its place from none. It is in the context of life, but not under its control. It is not a utility in life, nor is it the bloom on its face. In neither case were it holy. But as holy it is the key of life, and not a consequence from it. It is the supreme thing in life, therefore it is our starting-point for the measure and

meaning of life. As the key of life, it is the key of thought, which is but one aspect and exercise of life. It is no product of thought nor its licensee. Therefore the supreme religious idea of the new birth, the new creation, is the key to the first creation where thought starts, and where much thought is pent. The new creation is *the* creation, and the key to what all creation is. The second creation is the inner destiny of the first, not its result. Hence the first both is and is not continuous in it. Man is born to be reborn, to come to himself in a new self. The experience of the new creation does not mean the appearance of personality where there was none before. It is rather what we might call the puberty of the old than its replacement by a new. Everything changes that it may be more truly the same. The new personality is not created out of nothing, nor does it mean a new rational or psychological constitution given to human nature. It is an ethical experience and an ethical reality. It means not only new impulse to our will, but still more, a new complexion and a new perspective in it, and its world, a new hope with a controlling interest, and most of all a new sense of self in its loss to the Divine Self, a new sense of freedom and soul-possession—when, indeed, we think at all of a self that we only find by losing it and taking no thought. We never knew before what the soul was, nor, therefore, what the world was to which the soul gives effect. The new creation, as creation *par excellence*, reveals all creation to be a moral act of God in respect of another moral being. The Creator's *vis à vis* is not a cosmos, but a conscience with a cosmos for its arena. The cosmos is but the prolegomenon of the true creation. It groans, being burdened. It travails. And its unfreedom has its meaning only in its destiny, which is to evolve freedom by a perpetual creation. The true creation in which creation comes to itself is the appearance of that freedom and that personality, that soul, that conscience. It is all the time the *nisus* of nature, and the first charge upon it. But all the same it is a gift to it by another creation.

Creation is thus, in the light of the new creation, a moral act of God, whose holiness does not isolate him, but surrounds him with persons destined to reflect and share it. The new creation, therefore, with that reality in which morality is so much deeper than rationality, makes the growth of persons to such holiness

the fundamental reality and purpose of the universe. It lays the course for all development, and shows all the evolution of the race as creative of this moral goal, issuing from this moral source, and proceeding by this moral way of an immanent righteousness, whose genius and destiny are to subdue all things to itself.

### III

We can, thus, perhaps soften the difficulty felt by some who are not clear about the relation between the "old man" and the "new" in respect of personal identity. It seems to them out of place to speak about a new birth where the matrix is not another person but the same, or where we pass but from one form of conscious existence to another, and do not come into being for the first time. And (if they do not learn to speculate about transmigration) they tend to minimize the greatness and the cruciality of the change that takes place—as it is the fashion also to do as to the crisis in death. They urge that the old personality is not extinguished and replaced by another; and they dwell on the action of memory, the persistence of idiosyncrasy, the permanence of responsibility, the prolongation into the new state of all the old psychical processes of the race, not to say some of the mannerisms of the individual. Can you call that a birth which is so continuous? Or, if you do assert any moral continuity in the new birth with the past life, what fatal objection is there to treating every birth as the sequel of some previous life of the same individual, however forgotten?

The first thing to be pointed out here is that the essential feature in the idea of birth is not continuity, but dependence, obligation. I will only allude here to the fact that we have in the Bible no reflection or theory as to the nature of creation old or new. We have the naïf power of the mighty fact. This is so, whether we think of the way the new word of Christ was related to the Old Testament, or the way the new community of the Church rose from the wreck of the old community of Israel. Regeneration is more of a religious than even a psychological term, and the ruling idea in it is our absolute indebtedness to God for the infinite change. It is entirely his gift. Any act of ours is but taking home the gift in the way appropriate to it. That subjective side of the matter is represented by conversion,

of which regeneration is but the Godward side. They are not two things, but one, given and taken. Questions about the psychological continuity of the individual are secondary, and may wait for more insight into the regenerate experience. The twice-born may well discuss them, and indeed they are the only people with due data for such a discussion. But they are not considerations constitutive for the fact. The gift is taken, it is ours, before we can examine its behavior in the context, or the crucible, of our psychic nature. It is in the light thus shed by an absolutely new departure and a fresh beginning that we read the past. It is in the power of the new life that we find the constituent idea of life, and of whatever begins it, either for time or for eternity. The religious principle of all history, at least the Christian principle, is that it is from eternity that it has its destiny, and therefore its meaning; that it is the invasion by eternity which gives us any standard to measure progress, or to command the life which birth but begins.

But three things further may be said in this connection.

1. The change takes place in the will, and not in the constitution of the individual. However we construe the Fall, if we leave it any real meaning at all, it did not directly affect the constitution of human nature; which remains capable of very great and godlike things in the way of spiritual, rational, affectional, imaginative, and civil life. It is full of heroisms in various kinds. What was directly affected was the harmony of man's will and God's, the personal communion, love, and trust. What was lost was communion, and the power to recover it. It is a case of total impotence of relation, and not total corruption of nature—however, that latter might come to be the *dénouement* when the moral perdition had run its full course. For the moral canker kills the finest gifts at last. What Christianity denies is a power of self-recuperation native to humanity in relation to God and to that communion with him which is at once man's loss and his destiny. Therefore, when God reclaims us in a regeneration, it is by a re-creation of the will, and not of what might be called the paradigm, constitution, or machinery of human nature.

2. The change must be a gift; and, as it affects directly the will (richly conceived, as in the Scripture word, "heart"), it is therefore a gift of power much more than of light, or even pity

—not new machinery, nor new opportunity, but new life. And it is life not as mere vitality, not as a mere driving force, but life with a quality, life as something positive, carrying in it not mere impulse, but content and directive. And especially it directs the current of the personality outward to a saving God instead of inward to a rising self. It reverses the machine. And still more it concentrates it on God, and so makes a spiritual organism of it, whose limits develop to their new function as the parts of a machine could not.

3. The mode of regenerative action is therefore one appropriate to a will in contact with a will. It is the effect of one personality on another, and not of a magician on a substance. It is not transmutation, not spiritual alchemy. It is within the region of consciousness. In that respect the metaphor of birth is misleading. Of our natural birth we have neither memory nor any other function that can tell us of the nature of what takes place; but in the second birth that is not so. We do not indeed take its measure in consciousness. It does not appear what we shall be. But we do realize its nature—the mystic morality of it, its nature as holy. Its center of gravity is not subliminal; that is not its native land. Which would sooner or later make it magical, and would open all the theosophic subtleties that underlie a baptismal regeneration. It is the result of a personal will acting on our own in moral categories, however exalted and refined, rare and unspeakable.

But that means, in the circumstances, a forgiving Will, a justifying Will, who puts us, without desert, in living and loving *rappor*t with his own holy self. It is not the pressure upward in us of a process working in the dark; it is the intercourse of two living and spiritual beings, with all the consciousness of the sinful and the holy. As conversion, it is choice on our part; but under and within our converted choice of God is his holy choice of us. It is his choice of us that we choose, not simply his excellence irrespective of us. All begins there. It is that which moves our choice. We love because he began it. If Pilate could have no power *against* Christ but what was given him from above, still more is it true of any power we have *for* Christ. The very idea of regeneration is that it is not an ever-laborious effort of our will to reach and rejoice in a higher goodness; but that it is an

enthusiasm in which we are carried up as by a rarer kind of natural force, which yet has all the moral world and its conflict with nature overcome in its holy heart.

## IV

The great movement of revelation is in a crisis, and not in a process merely. And what differentiates a moral crisis from a process is the new departure, the new element, which we call creative. The deflecting, releasing, eliciting touch on the past is not its product, but it is a creative act upon it, however minute or delicate. In this region that is not true which is true of art, or even education, that

"Nature is made better by no mean,  
But nature makes that mean."

The core of an ethical revelation especially is a new creation. It is essentially miraculous. The life of the Holy Spirit in the conscience is a standing miracle. Its genius is conversion, and not evolution. Sanctification is a series of conversions. The fact that the Christian revelation is in a crisis, that it is struck from a collision, that it issues from a tragedy, that it rides a sea of trouble, and emerges from a great shock, gives us its real inner nature all along the experient line of the faith which answers it. A creative, miraculous quality is immanent to the true nature of Christian faith, whether it is felt in every experience of it or not. Those fine souls, that grow to all goodness like flowers in the sun, yet grow in a climate, and prolong a tradition, created by stronger souls, who broke with self and the world in some crucial and memorable way. And this feature presides at every new stage of the development of the religious experience. Its nature does not always come to the surface, but, when it does, it is revolutionary. In that experience the supreme and absolute spirit comes home not as the transcendental ground immanent in a process of the world moving on in terms of the natural order; but it breaks in, and breaks open in a collision, will with will, spirit with spirit, which means a crisis, and at bottom a creation. There is not simply a procession, but an invasion. Without this there is no religious life in the proper sense—only a self-withdrawn religiosity. But, with it we have the key to our inner, ultimate, and interpretative relation to the world. We are in im-

mediate relation with God, and find this entry to mean not simply a dawn but a clash between the natural spirituality and the moral. There is an antithesis, rising to an antagonism, not to say antipathy, which only a creative act can resolve into peace. And the crest of the crisis is the special, moral experience made by the impact of such holy revelation on the guilty conscience—it is repentance and redemption. We have here the true nature of miracle. The true inwardness of it is evangelical. It is really explicable by salvation only. The miracle, which underlies miracle, is the new birth. To believe in miracle to any purpose is like writing an epic—we must have lived one. This is the obstinate experience which explains the inextinguishable vitality of the idea of miracle.

All the more outward miracles are valuable as expressions or harbingers of the indestructible miracle which makes the soul's true life by way of a re-creative revelation. Grace does not prolong nature, but descends on it, acts on it, changes it. It contradicts it rather than continues it when we come to the last issue. Here is the true supernatural—not Nature's extension upward, nor its refinement inward, but its conquest. This is why miracle is Faith's true child. All miracles exist and are cherished in the interest of a spiritual revolution, and to protect it from slipping down into mere evolution. They are outposts of God's creative action rather than his rectoral. They become the symbols, not to say sacraments, of God as not only a moving but a *living* God. The idea of miracle is bound up with that of a living God. It is somewhat sterile to disprove miracles; it is iconoclasm. We must evaluate them, treat them as sheaths, reliquaries, monstrances, as preludes or outposts of the one invasion and creation that our experience really knows—the new birth. And we must prove them less by historical evidence than by their organic connection with the grand regeneration. The best proof of miracle is real regeneration. We should go in at that end; we should view the evidence with that eye. It is a mental climate in which we approach them with the partiality that belongs to true justice, and call them probable to begin with. The regenerate are divinely prejudiced for miracle. To begin here and think down is more fruitful than to start upward from the laws of nature where the mind's youth begins. It is not for miracles as in-

fractions or as mere prodigies that we need contend, but as ancillaries of a supremely miraculous grace, as servants of the king's court, to whom the ordinary traffic gives way. They are entrances, through nature's pores, of the last creative power. Spiritual miracle does not dispense with physical, just as physical miracle does not dispense with natural law. But the lower end of the chain hangs from the higher. As we interpret genius by its *magnum opus*, so we explain the world by miracle rather than by a causal chain. It is not enough to say poetically that we find miracle everywhere in nature, and then transfer the observation in a special way to the sphere of the soul. That makes spiritual miracle too little naïf, too much of an inference. If there is any inference, the soul infers in the other direction. And for it miracle is not only possible, but is bound up with the action of the reality which is its supreme revelation, and the one thing it knows better than it knows itself, the thing which gives the law, *i. e.*, the *nisus* and destiny, to all the prior stages. *Heilesrath ist Schöpfungsplan*. The purpose of salvation gives the scheme of creation. Such at least is the Christian religion when it does not shrink from covering the cosmos. And, as God's salvation is the greatest miracle of which the world is capable, the scheme of creation is fundamentally miraculous with a crust of order and a coat of law. Miracle is the fundamental principle of a world created and redeemed; and it leaps to light at the closest touch of its Creator and Redeemer.

## V

Our business, therefore, is not to refute the current negation of miracle by the scientific intellect. Apologetic grows more sympathetic as it grows more understanding of the world of science. I hope science would be more sympathetic if it knew more of the world of personal faith and its principles in theology. William James made a good departure in this respect. Our business is not to refute but to realize, to show that the *élan vital* in nature comes to itself only in supernature, and the new creation is the old gone to heaven. And it is not as if it only escaped there into a spacious air, and could breathe deep as last. But it comes *home*. It discovers there the spiritual principle which was its own birthplace, its deep life and onward bent. Yet miracle is

not simply a new and higher phase of that first creative power of God which put nature there; it is rather an expression of his new creation—not a thrust forward of nature, but a thrust backward, a retroaction, of grace. It is crude to say that the first creation is followed by the second. It is less crude to say it develops to it. But the ripe thing to say is that the first creation was posited by the second, that nature is not sacrificed to grace, but created by it. The service for which we were made is no sacrifice. A mighty God could never justly have created a free world, had he not done so on lines that really arose in the almighty *Grace*, by which he could more than repair freedom's wreck. The *cosmos* was created in the Redeemer. Creation had from the first Redemption in reserve. And nature's first charter is but leasehold—"occupy till I come."

## VI

The question is raised by an increasing number of people to-day, what the connection is between the historic Christ and the Christ of experience. *There* stands an individual two thousand years away, and *here* stands the individual of to-day. How can they ever come into the relation expressed in the supreme forms of Christian faith (for we need not trouble about the average form; it must adjust itself to the supreme)? How can I directly experience the historic and distant Christ? How can he be more my life than I am? How can a historic person, as a historic person, and not merely as a posthumous influence, become a constituent of my own soul? How is an *actio in distans* possible wherein he not only affects me but takes possession of me, and creates me anew?

Much depends here on what is meant by the historic Christ. If he is but the spiritual splendor in history, to whom our relation is the æsthetic one of contemplation and impression, then the intimate relation consecrated in the long record of Christian faith is not possible. Or, if we start with the inner light and find the light that lights every man condensed in Christ, as the first created light was at a stage condensed into the sun—then also the classic forms of Christian faith are extravagant, and he is not our Redeemer, our new Creator, but our superlative only.



And we do not really outgrow the æsthetic point of view, which is so attractive to the younger stages of intelligent faith.

The ethical point of view is the true one. It is, indeed, in the ordinary sense of the word, ethical, inadequate to the spiritual life. For that calls for an ethical mysticism, a mysticism of the conscience and its action. But I mean the point of view where we begin not as knowing a passive object, but as known by an active and searched by a holy; where there is a personal, a moral, relation; where we begin with God, with a holy God, and a God whose holiness is not simply immanent in creation, but is its source and destiny; who is there, and who is energy there, not as mere process nor as mere vitality, but as personality; in whom energy rises to be an act, and personality itself rises to spirituality.

The secret, in such inquiries, lies mostly in the form of the question, in the half-conscious presuppositions which rule our expectation from God, and prescribe our form of relation to him, and the manner of our interrogation. We must begin with his movement to us. Our inquiry must make for that point. In religion we must court and construe the relation between God and the soul from what he has revealed himself to be. For Christianity, that took place in history. And it is a revelation of himself not as the absolute *ens*, but as the personal energy and power eternal. But personal energy is action, moral action. His infinite redeeming Fatherhood in Christ's cross gives him to us as the *actus purus*, and not merely the *élan vital*, of all existence. We must therefore cease to treat the relation between his soul and ours as a mere contact of individuals, whether in contemplation or in mystic immersion. We must found, consciously or unconsciously, on a metaphysic of energy and of history instead of substance and thought, of action instead of either contemplation or sympathy alone. That will put a special complexion on the continuity of the Christ in history with the Christ in us. But, even if we ignore the metaphysic (which cannot really be ignored, because it underlies the faith even of believers who scorn it), we start with objective revelation rather than inward experience, with an act and not an impression, with God's self-donation rather than with the subjective frame of our soul, in which, of course, it emerges. We must begin from the eternal act of a World-Redemption, which is the supreme function of the

New Testament Christ. We begin as Christians, and not as people who are cross-examining Christians; and we begin therefore with the creation of the New Humanity by the energy of Christ's whole life and person imparted in the greatest act within human knowledge, in the many-sided act of cross, resurrection, and ascension. Our relation to the cross of Christ is not the relation of a soul to an event, nor even to a personality, but of an act to an act, a soul's act to a world act, faith's act to the act creating it, the cell act to the organic and cosmic.

We fail to connect the Christ without and within, much as we fail to connect our own *ego* with the *ego* of our neighbor. The defect that destroys brotherhood between personalities parted by space, is the same in kind as the defect which destroys the relation between us and a personality like Christ's removed by time. In the case of our neighbor we make the mistake of starting with an atomism, a discontinuity, between individuals. We ignore the fact that the other man's existence is a factor, and not merely a feature, in our own. It is the other man that makes me possible. I discover myself, possess myself, just as I come up against my limit in him. The individual is not a spiritual reality; he finds himself only in a society of individuals. The cohesion of souls is constitutive for the existence of souls—for the individual's life as a soul or person. I and my neighbor are not two atoms, absolutely independent, who mate by contract. That is a notion which is responsible for almost all the failure of Christian ethic. We do not coalesce like two dewdrops, nor do we engage in a covenant. We each partake, for our very existence, in a corporate personality. Only so is life, and especially action, possible. It is love that makes personality. The egos have to be homogeneous before they can coöperate.

In like manner, I say, we think to begin by approaching Christ from without, unprejudiced, judiciously, with a life and intelligence independent of him—as no Christian's really can be. We cross a space. And, of course, two millenniums are more than we can leap. And we fail to reach him, because we do not start from the faith and sense that he has reached us. We try to answer a religious question without what creates life-religion—a standing act of revelation.

So we fail to connect the Christ without and within, because

we start from a long discrete process of nature, and not from a universal and indivisible act of grace where duration is lost. We put the inquiries of nature, and expect answers which come only to the questions of grace. We ask in three dimensions what we can have but in a fourth. We begin as men who want to humanize, not to say rationalize, Grace, instead of beginning as Christians who seek by Grace to humanize Humanity. We start without the fundamental relation with Christ, and then ask how it is possible. It does not seem possible, till we have it. On the humanist and merely historic base, it is impossible. We start with a discontinuous individualism, Christ's and ours, with an historic series of such discrete points, and we naturally find no *nexus*. The same principle of procedure reduces society to atoms and anarchy. Whereas we must begin with the *nexus*, the indivisible, we should start either with a metaphysic or a faith of personality and its act. The continuity must be already in our hand there, as an oversoul in whom we live; but as an oversoul not of mere being but of energy, as an inter-soul where the energy is no mere *process* but the *act* of a universal person, not flowing through all things but functioning in them. Monism loses its terror if we cease to think of a substance pervading all, and realize an energy acting in all as only personality can act, and producing agents of a like free and responsible kind. The unity with which we begin is the unity that makes any thought possible, the unity of one person—the unity of one thing that cannot be broken up—personality, corporate personality. It is personality existing in a supreme, absolute, and eternal act, which does not coalesce with other acts or souls independent, but in their existence and action takes effect. We then view the historic Christ as that act *in petto*, the eternal act which gives us our spiritual existence. We view him as that timeless, spaceless, immeasurable act in bulk, so to say, "once for all." While the Spirit is that same eternal and universal act in multitude—the Spirit being notably the individualistic power in Godhead. We view Christ as the Doer, with all his Person, of the one eternal act to which we owe, and from which we draw, a growing spiritual existence, which it, on the other hand, never ceases to posit. All of which is so palpably absurd as to be certainly true. We shall never answer the question how he can become our life so long as we treat him but as

a figure of history, or as the luminous outcrop of a spiritual entity. We must begin by taking him at his own valuation—as, by his life-act, the true universal of the soul. He is the Doer of the one eternal act of all moral existence, and therefore of all existence whatever at root; the historic focus of a God who is eternal energy; whose holiness, therefore, owing to the historic situation in one conscience, is an eternal redemption, only conceivable as between persons; who is the ground of all personality, and of the supreme action of personality—its action on personality; and who, in Christ, takes, in such action, the new creative departure which is distinctive of the holy. Christ does not condense the inner light; but as the Holy One he creates the New Humanity, wherein the soul (which comes to itself only in action) comes to itself by coming to him. By the incessant functioning of that eternal and absolute act, which consummated Christ's whole Person in the cross and resurrection, man is born anew. There is a new creation when any man is in that Christ. And the relation between the historic Christ and the soul is the relation not between the primal diffused light and the sun, but between the personal world-energy of the New Creator and the minor centers of personal energy in which his absolute act takes relative effect. The doctrine of the inner light is not at last compatible with the doctrine of grace, unless indeed (as light is a mode of motion) we go behind the illumination to the energy, to the personal, and crucial, and eternal act of which it is a minor mode.

Hackney College, London.