DOES THE CHURCH PROLONG THE INCARNATION?

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I

THERE is a conception of the Church which, I think, had its origin in Roman circles (it is certainly most at home in Catholicism) and which presents it as the extension or the prolongation of the Incantation. It is a fascinating idea, and it has been put in a fascinating way by Canon Rawlinson in Foundations. But the first expression of it, so far as I know, is to be found in Moehler's Symbolism (p. 260, E.T. original, p. 382), where he says: 'The visible Church, as I view it, is the Son of God always appearing among men in human form, always renewing Himself. It is His perpetual incarnation. The faithful arc in Scripture called the body of Christ.' The use which Moehler makes of the idea is to commit us to the infallibility of the Church. I do not wonder. The extension of the Incarnation applied to matter makes transubstantiation, makes the most real thing on earth—the elements of the Sacrament; the same logic applied to truth should be carried on to produce the most true thing as dogma; and it was inevitable that the prolongation of the Incarnation into society should end in the indefectibility, first of the Church, and then of the Pope. The divine and the human are in the Church united as they were in Christ, so the human vicar is as inerrable and as saving as the divine Lord. 'If the divine element—the living

Christ—constitute what is infallible and eternally inerrable in the Church, the human is infallible and inerrable in the same way.' 'So indeed that Christ Himself is for us an authority only in so far as the Church is an authority.' I confess this seems to me the proper and necessary use to make of the truth, if a truth it be. Only, the feeling will intrude that such a truth would never have been discovered, or rather the real truth would never have got this form, but for the need to find a theological base for the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Church's infallibility, and finally the Pope's. The Church was not created by that doctrine, but that doctrine grew out of the Church.

The whole conception seems part of an exaggerated, or even an exclusive, use of one New Testament metaphor describing the Church as Christ's body, to the neglect of other metaphors which carry other suggestions. Even if we take the metaphor of the body, Moehler's argument seems to require the assumption that the physical body of Christ was an organism exempt from the possibility of fatal disease. We should have to believe that, apart from the calamity of the Cross, Christ could never have died a natural death; He could not have died in His bed of a sickness in which the body rebelled against its vital unity. Again, what was it in the actual body of Christ that corresponded to the existence, not only in the Church but at the head of it, of bad men, of very bad men, of, perhaps, the worst men the world has ever seen? What, in the Incarnation which is extended into the Church, corresponded to the presence, and the presence in such numbers and power, of such men, who are not confined to that Roman Church which has given them the greatest opportunity?

But I will not pursue that line for the moment. I will rather ask whether the notion I discuss is not more speculative than ethical, more theosophic than theological, more attractive to poetic imagination than to New Testament revelation, moral thought, or critical judgement; it is

certainly not identical with the old idea of Christ as the head of the Church. But has it not the positive defect of abolishing any real difference between the increate and the create? The Church is the creature of Christ; but is the creature an extension of the Creator? Is the world but a projection of God? The Church was created by the gospel; did any gospel create Christ? Again, does the view not destroy the vital difference between Redeemer and redeemed? The Church is composed of the redeemed'; are they but a prolongation of the Redeemer? Is their best conduct a prolongation of redemption or a product of it? Can we say that the Church, even collectively taken, that the Church of the Spirit is more redeemer than redeemed? Does this view not erase the difference between the holy and the unholy—the bottomless gulf which makes the grace that crosses it in forgiveness the greatest miracle in the world? Is the piety of the Church the prolongation of Christ's holiness, which was a holiness in its own right, and not in virtue of another's atoning and redeeming grace? The Church is the object of grace; if it prolongs the incarnate Christ, was He too an object of grace? Was He not its one subject, its one giver? Or did He Himself depend on some redemption, like any Parsifal? The Church lives on a mediator; who was the mediator between God and the Christ continuous with that Church for which a mediator is indispensable?

There are a good many similar questions that could be asked. The whole idea applied to the Church is quite parallel to the naive notion of immanence, whereby the Creator is said to be continued into His creation, and the distinction is erased between God and man on the one hand and nature and man on the other. It is akin to the bold attempt and failure to save Catholicism by a Hegelianism which, as usual, works out into some kind of Pantheism injurious to moral personality, and therefore to real union with God. The result is the usual one—the erasure of difference rather than its valuation, and especially the erasure

of the great moral difference made by the appearance of personality in creation or of sin in man.

It is a part of a general tendency in present culture to press the mystic or the monistic at the cost of the moral; to acquire the cachet of a cream-laid theology which cherishes a lucid intolerance of paradox, crisis, and tragedy at the cost of moral experience, moral passion, and moral cruciality; to cultivate sequacity of process, or flow of thought, at the cost of that paradox of action which is the dramatic core of the Christian Cross; to develop the culture of a Logos at the cost of the ethic of the Kingdom, and the graceful at the price of the thorough and real; to pursue the studious psychology of religion, or its theosophy, without tasting the deepest tragedy of the moral soul, where, on the Cross, theology springs. That tragedy is the evangelical crisis and its experience, which the mystic, cultured, and sacramental religion of the via media tends to displace, but which, in its classic cases, calls forth a moral psychology of fundamental depth and reality, where neither our modem thinking nor our refined piety is yet at home. It invites a psychology of sin and regeneration not yet attempted for want of data and of experients who could handle them. Here, in the psychology of the evangelical experience, the great Reformers were deeply at home, partly owing to the legacy they had in the long penitential praxis of the old Church. And here the true and final idea of religion as miraculous contact with the last reality of action is to be found.* It is no distinctly Christian idea of religion which develops (as the phrase we examine does) in a Neo-Platon i si way the notion of suffusion rather than response, of deification rather than regeneration, of forgetfulness of the world's sin rather than repentance, the mere submersion of the soul's tragedy of guilt, or its resolution (with Schleiermacher) into a piety of absorption in Christ's consciousness. I put it like that because if the

* Might I refer to my article on 'The Reality of God ' in the *Hibbert Journal* of July, 1918?

Church's experience but prolongs Christ's, that is how it must be put. Truly there was more crisis and tragedy in the moral soul of Christ over the sin of the world than academic religion owns; but it was not the crisis of personal repentance nor the resolved tragedy of personal guilt. The calm, sane, wise Jesus passes away with mere liberalism, with the Jesus of the cloistered student and the delightful sodality; a Jesus comes who is brusque, often, when we expected a gracious mood, and rent, between His seasons of superhuman peace, with anger and conflict to the verge of despair; but it was part of the passion that bore the Church's guilty experience. That could never have been done by one whom that experience prolonged. The view I venture to examine is one of thoughtful disciples rather than passionate apostles, of clean youth, whose yesterdays look backward on them with a smile, rather than of veterans scarcely saved. It is too foreign to the apostolic idea of faith as the great moral act translating the world's wickedness into sanctity; and it is too kin to the movement of a well-set-up mind which is but devout, or of a conscience which has more curiosity about sin than conviction of it. The idea I discuss is part of the general inadequacy in our treatment of sin, grace, and the new creation—a defect largely due to the fallacy of baptismal regeneration, taking subliminal effects for moral change, or to a culture which takes graciousness for grace, and lacks moral realism.

The mention of baptismal regeneration reminds me that the notion covered by our phrase is parallel also to views of the *unto mystica* which do injustice to the moral nature of the new birth. They lose the true inwardness of it, either in metaphysic or in emotion, and some seem to look down on sanctification by faith as on a lower grade. Such erroneous views are left their scope by the removal from regeneration of all moral crisis through notions of it fostered by magical conceptions of what takes place in becoming a Christian. And they are sustained by the theological

method which begins with the Incarnation (on the authority of a Church) and descends on the propitiation, instead of beginning with an Atonement (which comes within the range of our moral experience) and ascending to the Incarnation on those moral lines which are the highways of the Christian realm, of the Kingdom of God.

I bear in mind the plea that in the Incarnation, no less than in the Atonement, we are dealing with an act and not a mere process. But, as I say, it is not an act parallel to anything in our experience. And it does not in itself come home to experience. It certainly does not do so as the Atonement does, and the justification which rests on Atonement. It does not appeal to the moral experience, and it often lends itself to aspects of religion which are less ethical than aesthetical—whether it be the aesthetic of contemplative thought or of mystic feeling. We call the Incarnation an act in the most real sense only on the strength of the atoning act which was its last purpose and its crucial consummation —at once the condition and the channel of the new creation and the new life. The only act that gives Incarnation a real meaning for us is the act in which Christ became sin for us. That alone gives moral sense to His becoming flesh for us. But if we are to call either an act, the prolongation is really a reverberation There is a polarity more than an extension. Christ's act is met by ours which it stirs. This is a polarity that does not fit the idea of prolongation, except as the echo prolongs the note—and that is but a *ricochette*. The faith that makes the Church is a response and not a continuation—even if the response be created by the Incarnate. Prolongation suggests process rather than action.

A whole brood of errors rises from a view of Incarnation which is more substantial than moral, and more concerned with natures than with powers, or with thought than experience. They cluster round the view which ma^es the Incarnation rather than the Atonement the creative base of Christian society and ethic, and which leads people to think that

sacramental virtue is chiefly something that is subconsciously infused instead of morally inspired in the way of personal contact or communion. The idea I examine in this essay is impossible if we recognize that the only real access to the Incarnation, and the key to the moral quality of its self-emptying, is by the way and the experience of a moral Atonement. 'A religion is moulded by its idea of *salvation*' and not of incarnation. India is full of the idea of incarnation, from which the Christian idea differs at root only by its atoning, i.e. its moral quality. Christ is God because He did and does what God alone could do. The avenue to His divine dignity is through His redeeming value. Only the holy God against whom we have sinned can forgive or atone. Only the Atoner reveals the essential nature of the holy. Christ by His Atonement forgives us into eternal life. It was what He came to do. So far as God's revealed account of Himself goes, that was the reason for His Incarnation. Christ meets the Holy One for us sinners not with His cryptic rank in heaven but with a historic holiness equal to His own. God's will was done on earth as in heaven. That is the real nature of the Incarnation and its work. Its nature is revealed in its moral action. It is not the case of a spiritual process returning on itself but of the reciprocal moral action distinctive of personality between Holy Father and Holy Son. The holy, heavenly Father finds Himself perfectly answered and delighted in the holy human Son, and in His Son's practical confession of Him from the last moral depth of human history, from amid conditions where He was made sin for us far more than He was made flesh. That is what we find offered to us in evangelical Christianity. That is the true nature of satisfaction, which is a personal relation and not a juristic pact. And it is something whose nature we can experience, though far outreaching experience. It puts the Incarnation on a basis experient and not just unintelligible, and one finally moral and therefore social. It makes it possible to commend the doctrine to the ordinary

conscience. We cannot take the Incarnation simply as the greatest and most spiritual of nature miracles on the final authority of a Book or a Church. How can the Church be sure that its belief in the Incarnation is no illusion? How but in the certainty of the last moral experience, the communion of the last reality, the experience of a God in Christ that remade the *conscience* by a creative act. For the conscience is the great organ of reality.

The action of the Atonement as the real nature of God's presence in man moralizes religion. And that is the greatest need of the hour—greater than the altruizing of it, greater than the psychologizing of it, greater than the socializing of it. And to that extent it makes the Incarnation for the Church a real power instead of a theological theme resting on the verdict of the early centuries, with their Christologies so detached either from a Soteriology or even a historic Christ. It makes it an active power instead of an heirloom of the Church. What we know' about early Councils, their frequent atmosphere and their style of metaphysic, makes some nearer, more ethical, and more scriptural authority necessary to-day. The Incarnation is an evangelical act. It took place in the form of moral atonement. It is the redeeming fact only as it makes that possible; and that not as its postulate but as its condition. It did not take place that creation might be continued and completed, but that reconciliation should come by an atoning God, that God's holy name should be glorified by its confession of itself from amid the creature's sin. Whether an Incarnation would have taken place without sin and the need to atone is a question on which we know nothing. It cannot be answered except in a speculative way which is little relevant to living and evangelical faith. So far as we do know, the Incarnation was not the completion of creation so much as its retrieval, its redemption. And often where most is said about the Incarnation, the Redemption does not come by its own, and mere reverence is apt to take the place of righteous-

ness or humility of worship. The Incarnation was not a larger annexe prolonging creation; it was a new creation on another plane and higher principle, the moral principle of holiness (which was yet provided for in the first). It transcended creation not in degree but in kind. It was not an extension in any such sense as just consummating creation —though it did that (and the idea is an engaging one, in limits, as I say). The Word made flesh was not simply the pure and luminous emergence of the divine immanence in creation. It was not the pure climax of the reason of God. It was more than the precipitation of a Logos. And it was not the top flight of human spirituality. It was the reality of which the first creation was not the first stage only but the symbol and promise. What it really was we do not reach till we realize1 it morally—not just as the Word made flesh but as the Holy made sin for us, till we enjoy 4 the benefits of His death,' till we hear the new creating word in our moral soul, the word in which we are born again by a greater act, and a greater crisis, and a greater miracle than creation was. To remake a free humanity from rebellion and wreck was a greater strain on omnipotence than to make a cosmos from a chaos morally inert. The true omnipotence is moral, and is most chiefly shown in having mercy and forgiving.

The reborn soul, the regenerate Church, is therefore no more an extension of Christ than the appearance of moral freedom in the evolutionary scale was but a prolongation of God's, whose product it yet was. Indeed the idea in the phrase seems to betray an inadequate grasp of the real differentia, the new departure, the moral cruciality, involved in personal freedom. It reveals in its idealism a certain inexpertness in moral thinking, and especially in moral pathology. It suggests a greater familiarity with speculative than with moral philosophy, as if Hegel had been reached without any schooling in Kant, and as if the back-to-Kant movement had never existed. Its habit of thought savours more of idealist processes, or cultured pieties, than of the

moral soul of history or its tragedy of guilt. Outwardly it seems more historical, inwardly it is not. It does not realise the true differentia of history from nature, of action from process, of redemption from development. It does not indicate the soul's reaction to God's action in kind, nor God's reaction to the soul's sin in judgement as well as mercy, nor God's *holy* grace with man's *moral* faith as its one answer.

The application of this engaging habit of mind to the Church, I said, overworks the metaphor of body in relation to soul. The body works by processes, it does not act. If the Church is Christ's body it just accepts the processes of His soul within it, it does not reciprocate them in their ow n moral kind, it does not initiate response as personality doc s; nor could Christ's body misunderstand, resist, or foil Him as even the Church can do, has done, and does. The figure does not do justice to the group personality of the corporate Church. It does not leave place for its spontaneity in meeting its Saviour's action *eodem genere*. The body of Christ had a relation to His soul which is not parallel to that of the Church; for the Church is a collective personality, composed of persons with far more initiative than cells, and it was, and is, created by a great and standing personal act. If the Church prolong the Incarnation there is no room for a due mutuality, a real reciprocity. When Christ said 'I in you as the Father in Me.' He could not possibly mean that the Son was the extension of the Father. Nor could He mean that the repentance He should create in the Church was just the prolongation of His sinless confession of its sin before God, though it was the fruit of that confession and so, by anticipation, part of the total offering He brought to God. It is true that Paul said 'I live, and yet no longer I but Christ liveth in me.' That is the expression of a very great religious experience. But it could never mean that Paul's own personality was erased, that Christ just displaced it. It could not mean that the apostle's soul was reduced to a mere receptacle for Christ. Nor could it mean that he just

prolonged Christ. How could a personality like Christ's live in anything less than another personality, greatened and made more personal, more active, to receive Him? The more reception there is the more personality is in the receiver. It is no mere passivity of ours that receives a Christ freely crucified. The receptivity for such a thing is more responsive.

We might also ask how the view of the Church as Christ's body is related to the view of the Host as His body, and how the passage is made from the prolongation of the incarnation on the altar to its prolongation in the Church as a whole★ The fact that the Church is fed by the converted bread hardly seems to suffice for this passage, considering the wickedness that has survived in the Church centuries of such nutriment. And the feeding of the Church is the feeding of what is already a new creation—by what? Baptism? One might also ask how Moehler adjusts to this idea his position towards the end of his book that the visible Church preceded the invisible. It looks like saying that the body of Christ preceded His soul. But, apart from that, the idea of body is overdriven. The other and loftier metaphor of the bride is really more worthy, though in the New Testament more rare, for reasons not very obscure. It does provide for Christ a *vis-à-vis* in personal and moral kind. It makes response possible, and a moral reciprocity which is more than sacramental receptivity of the Catholic kind. The parties kindle to a mutual flame. The metaphor of the body does not do justice to the Church as the collective and solidary Christian man. 'Till we all (i.e. collectively) come to the full grown man.' One may wonder that the Church has not in her art or literature made use of the legend of King Cophctua and the beggar maid. He took her from the dust with her consent. And as with the Church and its Lord, there may have been episodes in the joint life of these two when he needed all his kingliness to deal with certain atavisms of hers, or survivals of her first days. Perhaps.

apart from the frequency of the metaphor of body in the New Testament, the Church may well have felt that the ruling relation of soul to body, and the lack of moral independence on the body's part, lent itself best to the theory of monarchical rule by an episcopate headed by a Pope. And for that reason it may find the theory of the prolongation of the Incarnation more useful than that of the dispensation of a Holy Spirit. For in the latter there is better met the idea of moral polarity and of evangelical response in repentance and conversion. That better suits the freedom of personality, or the moral worth of the soul, or the priesthood of all believers, or the solidarity of social vocation than either Baptismal Regeneration or the extension of the Incarnation. I will just add that it is quite impossible for any instructed faith, for anything but a crude idealism, to say in the same breath that it sits at the feet of the highest of high Anglicans, and that it [looks to do the better service thereby to the Protestantism which is their role to deplore, their habit to despise, and their mission to destroy. A vague, voluble, and amateur idealism now becomes one of the chief rivals of a Christianity where idealism was once an ally. But I must pursue the matter in a second article.

P. T. Forsyth.

DOES THE CHURCH PROLONG THE INCARNATION?

II

I HAVE spoken of the isolation and the overdriving of the image of the body for the Church to the neglect of figures like a house, or a temple, or a bride. Even more might be said about the neglect of the figure which is so prominent when the Church is called an ecclesia, a citizenship, or a people, or a nation of Christ—a spiritual and universal nation. This neglect is but part of our larger neglect, not to say defiance, of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness as the ruling thought of Christ in everything. He did not come to give us a new vision or idea of God, except in so far as that was involved in securing the kingship of God. To be sure, the relation of the Church to the Kingdom is still a matter of some dispute—whether the Church is identical with the Kingdom or the unique and essential means to it as an end. We might combine them by saying that it is the Kingdom in its nonage, the Kingdom in the making, the Kingdom inchoate, the one society on earth that has the Kingdom and nothing but the Kingdom for its principle and end. The first stages are means to the great destiny as the end. But in any case the Kingdom, the nation, is not the prolongation of the King, even if, like Alfred, lie might be said to have made it.

If we treat the Church as the extension of the incarnation of the Son, what becomes of the Church as the habitation of the Spirit? Are we moving towards a ditheism by the entire identification of the exalted Son and the Spirit?* The living thing in the Church has always been taken to be the Holy Spirit, It will hardly be said that the Son provides

* I am not raising this very difficult question so much as suggesting the way in which the idea I am discussing breaks up the orthodox Trinitarianism of those who hold it.

the vitality of the Church and the Spirit the practical and intelligent guidance; nor that the Son gives the status and the Spirit the piety; which would throw Son and Spirit into a relation to each other unknown to revelation. Are we prepared to speak of the Spirit as the prolongation of the incarnate Christ? Apart from the question of the Trinity, would such a view not destroy the element of crisis and finality, the 'finished work,' which is associated with the close of Christ's incarnate life in Atonement, and the consummation of His person in the establishment of the Kingdom there? All that death, resurrection, and ascension involve means much more than a personal continuity of Christ as their sequel. These were not simply phases the Incarnate passed through. Even for ourselves death is more than an incident, and its survival more than just going on. There is a crisis, something more than a new stage of career: ''Tis done, the great transaction's done.' A world crisis took place in Christ's death which changed man's moral relations with God. The death of the Incarnate was in the nature of an *actus continuus* which is always functioning in its ow n kind in the Church's life. The theory of a prolonged Incarnation rather than an individualized Atonement is too much like the theory of mere spiritual development. I suppose the advocates of it would not regard the whole *praeparatio evangelica* in Israel, or in other history, just as an extension backwards of the Incarnation. They attach too much special value to Christ's entrance on His historic life for that. The miraculous birth, whatever it does not mean, means that Christ's entry on life here was no ordinary one. It was no person like other people that came, whether He came like other people or not. There was an absolutely new departure, whether physical or not. God was the Father of this man as He was of no other. And His entrance on the world began an Incarnation which if it had suggestions had no reality before. Whatever the Son meant in the creation of the world was reflected on a far higher plane in

His invasion of it to create a new world, and especially a new Humanity. And the Holy Ghost had to do with His coming in some unique and crucial way, as He was raised from the dead by the Spirit of holiness. If Israel was not simply the infancy of the Church the Church is something else than the prolongation of Christ. It answers the functioning of that finished crisis of Atonement which gave the Incarnation its reason to be.

Did the true prolongation of the Incarnation not follow the line of Christ's ascension and exaltation in heaven rather than the line of the historic Church on earth? And if so can we speak of his return to the Father's side as the extension of the Incarnation. As the Incarnation began with Christ's birth, did it not end with His exaltation? Was there a second Incarnation in the Church? Was there a Reincarnation of the glorified into a corporate body as contrasted with the individual body of His earthly days? Is the Holy Spirit as the Church's Life sent by the Son or is He a Reincarnation of the Son? These are hard questions for those who try to join Moehler's idea with the Orthodoxy of the Church. The life of the Church is the Spirit outpoured—the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit outpoured by Christ. It is the Spirit outpoured rather than the Son incarnated. We cannot speak of the Church as the Incarnation of the Spirit. And it is the Spirit outpoured not from the Nativity but from the Cross, and from what the Resurrection and Ascension sealed as having been done there. There was there a crisis and a finality which functions in the Church but is not just prolonged there. The Church's life was an outpoural of the effect of Christ's completed exaltation in moral majesty. His spiritual perfection of victory. His sovereign indwelling not just as the Incarnate but as the Redeemer. If we said the Spirit was the finished work of Christ's incarnate person *totus*, *teres*, *et rotundus* but always functioning anew as the redeeming power, less exception could be taken than to the notion of the extension of the Incarnation. The Spirit's

work in the Church is the new creation as a *process*, rooted in the new creation as an *act*—in *the* act of the Cross, which morally reconstituted the spiritual world. It is the procession of an eternal act. It is the completion pf the Atonement rather than of the Incarnation, the fruit of His soul's travail rather than the continuance of His incarnate state. The functioning of a moral act that could not be done without Incarnation is not the same as the extension of the Incarnation.

If we are to talk of the extension of Christ, I am venturing to say that the Church is the extension of the Atonement, and of the new covenant there, rather than of the Incarnation; though even there the notion of prolongation misreads the idea of continuity, as the Mass does. It is the extension not of the Incarnate but of the work of the Incarnate. I should prefer to speak of it as the reverberation rather than the extension of what was in Christ. Any word that keeps the idea of moral polarity or response would do. It was the *actualizing* of what Christ *realized*.[1] The Church was the actualization of God's redeeming purpose rather than the spinal or caudal part of the Incarnation of its Head. It was the actualization in historic *process* of the real and finished *act* of redemption. Yet it was no mere process in the cosmic sense. Nor was it just the continuation of Christ's volition in heaven to become incarnate on earth. It was the procession of an eternal act in repeated acts and individualized persons (for the Spirit is an individualizing power), it was not the mere process of a movement or the explication of a force, or even the development of a person.* It was the reverberation, the individualizing of an act, and not merely its prolongation, which would interfere with its finality. In God the act is prolonged, if we can speak of the

1 If we are to think with power and precision, and not only believe with traditional passion, wo must use the language of accuracy which the faith that makes more haste than speed treats as pedantry.

* Christ grew during His incarnation and its humiliation. His personality developed. If the Church but prolong the Incarnation its growth means His grow th still. But can we speak of grow th in His exalted personality achieved and consummated in His finished work?

prolongation of an act eternal and timeless; but in man it was reflected and answered. There was a polar and reciproeal action, on which I have already dwelt.

What founded the Church, and makes its real moral catholicity, is not so much the Incarnation as the Cross (and Resurrection). The Cross, the Atonement, rather than the Incarnation, is the source of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of our redemption. 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified,' as the Cross glorified Him. This proceeding of the Spirit from the atoning and redeeming Cross rather than from the Incarnation behind it is a matter of much moment. It causes and concentrates the great difference in note between the Catholic type of mind and the Reformed, between the mystical and the moral. It throws the accent on the latter, as should be done if Christ's coming was first to establish the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. It presents the true Catholic note as the evangelical rather than the sacramental. The idea we discuss, which I find so attractive aesthetically and so impossible ethically, can land us nowhere but in a high sacramentarianism. It does not stop with the Church. If we are to speak of prolongation, the Mass is the prolongation of the Incarnation for those who treat Incarnation substantially and lay more stress on Christ's being made flesh for us than on His being made sin for us. It is not the Church, which is rather the reflection of the gospel of righteousness, the response to the Redemption and Regeneration. We do not worship Christ because He took our nature but because He took our judgement, and so our throne. The Cross I here regard not as a device to save an elect but as the last moral victory over the world, as the reconstitution of the moral soul of Humanity, as the recovery of the moral universe. But the Incarnation is viewed by the Catholic mind as a miracle working with natures instead of an eternal moral act of spiritual kind, working with guilt by grace. This helps to explain a certain lack of response

to the moral and evangelical note of righteousness which is shown by so many alumni of a Church, and especially a Church of the *via media*, that begins everything with a substantial Incarnation, outside experience, unverifiable by it, and received on that huge *petitio principii*—the authority (not to say infallibility) of the Church, within which the world's moral redemption is found room just when we care to press it. They do not realize that, it is the fontal place of the Cross which makes Christianity a religion of moral redemption. The phrase I am discussing seems to ignore the Church as a Church of those justified by the Cross for a Church of those regenerated by a sacrament. It ignores a Church of the New Creation for a Church of periodic nutrition. The new birth of the conscience counts for less than regular mystic meals.

The tendency indicated by the phrase I handle is not confined to Catholic circles. It dominates the modem type of cultivated piety, with its worship of the living Christ at the cost of the Holy Spirit. This is not surprising, perhaps, at a time when the doctrine of the Spirit is in a process of reconstruction, which is more in arrears, because, from its draft on experience, it is more difficult than that of almost any other doctrine. The religion of devout youth, for instance, is quite Catholic in this respect. Catholicism altogether but prolongs an adolescent stage of the Church. At that stage the soul does tend to feel a vivid Christ prolonged into itself rather than the *Holy* Spirit working in it. But the Church has its stability and its future by its appeal to the mature and not to the young. Its appeal to the young is to become morally mature.

And one reason for this is clear. It is the inferior sense of personality, and therefore of reality, that is vaguely felt to go with the Spirit in comparison with Christ. It is the easier contact with the historic and biographic personality of Jesus as compared with the sanctification of the Spirit in the ripe Christian *mind*. It is the fact that the Spirit has

for so many sunk into a pious subjectivity instead of ruling as a power co-equal with Father and Son in the Christian God. It is forgotten that, in the Church at least, whatever may be the case with Christian circles, the threefold God dwells by the Spirit—a Spirit which must be equally personal with Father and Son else that could not be; a Spirit also which must be personal, to exercise such a power upon personal souls.

Or, in another phase, it is held to be indifferent whether we say Christ lives in us or the Spirit. The Spirit is just another name for Christ. The one is but the other in a different situation. That is quite in Schleiermacher's vein—even in those who know nothing about the founder of modern theology. And it shares in the central defect of that genius, parts of whose great influence is working in the cultivated type of popular religion long after it has been discounted *inter pares.* To such a Sabellian way of viewing the matter the Spirit may come to be little more than the corporate Spirit of the Church, its public opinion on spiritual things, or its collective spiritual experience. Or it may sit very lightly to the idea of a Church altogether. Ritschl invites the charge, if he does not justify it. But our protest against the tritheism to which an orthodox Trinity is apt to descend must not take that line, or go to that extent. Inchoate piety cares little for a Triune God. Yet that is the God distinctive of Christianity. And here engaging youth must be gently and sympathetically withstood. Amateur theologians also with the literary touch should be recalled to a more excellent (not to say competent and modest) way.

The personality of the Spirit, I have said, is an essential condition of a Spirit dealing for a personal God with personal souls. If He is depersonalized, something is lacking to the fulness of faith or the plerophory of belief. Our Trinity begins to break up. And He does seem to be depersonalized if the Church is treated as but the Incarnation extended. The Spirit is the great individualizing power. He dwells

in our personal life (and in the Church viewed as a collective person), but in no such sense as that in which Christ's divine person dwelt in His body, or even in His human nature as a psychological constitution. The Spirit is not just the Son in a certain application. There is a reciprocity. 4 He shall glorify Me, taking of the things that are Mine and showing them unto you.' 'If the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you then He Who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal persons live by His indwelling Spirit in your lives.' It will not be said that the Spirit which dwelt in their several lives was other than the detailed action of the Spirit which made the life and unity of the Church.

We certainly cannot speak of the prolongation of the Incarnation in the Church in any such way as the spinal cord prolongs the brain—as if the historic Christ were but the fountain of a continued incarnation, or as if, like another Adam, He were but the first ancestor of all Christians. That might too easily lead to the false notion that the 'dispensation' of the Spirit came in to make good that defect, as a second creative act, as the true salvation by a new saving power. But there is no other salvation than that of the Cross, which has the key to all that Christ taught and all that the Spirit ever wrought.

There would be a certain attraction in speaking of the Church as the prolongation of Christ's humanity, except that it does not express with force enough the 'new covenant,' the moral crisis which founds on a new principle the New Humanity, and leads its origin from what Christ did. It does not give to society a constitution sufficiently, and passionately, and creatively moral. It does not do justice to the Kingdom of God. We might then also come to think of Christ in the way I have said as if He were but the top joint of the long historic spine, as if the head were (what Oken divined) the top vertebra enlarged to contain the enlargement of the spinal cord as brain. The Incarnation was in the historic

Cross of Christ complete in principle and power and victory. Its historic effect was yet to unfold in the series of history.

Perhaps the divine psychology of the relation between the Son and the Spirit may become clearer as thought becomes clearer about the mystery of the moral action of one human personality on another. And that will grow clearer with the growth of holy love, if the Church preach and create it as the Kingdom must amid all the conflicts and judgements which usher in the new age, otherwise hopeless.

I may add what I have said elsewhere, that there are several aspects, besides the one we discuss, where the Logos theology has impaired the moral effect of the theology of a Holy Spirit, stifled the moral note of the Kingdom as it ruled Christ, and arrested the effect of a gospel of moral redemption and personal reconciliation. What the state of man and his history needed was not a revelation of the divine constitution, nor even of truth about the divine purpose but of the divine action; it was the revelation of God Himself in saving action; it was not manifestation but intervention. The one decisive Revelation was Redemption, it was not about Redemption. You cannot do justice to a religion of redemption by a religion of revelation only, nor of deity prolonged into man. Christ did not become incarnate and redeem; He became incarnate to redeem. His Redemption is both the crown and the key of His Incarnation. He was not fully made flesh till He was made sin, that we might be made righteous in Him. And the Church is not the Incarnation prolonged but the corporate and responsive personality of those in whom the finished moral redemption which was the purpose of the Incarnation functions for ever anew. In like manner the Sacrament is not Christ being offered anew but Christ, with a real presence, offering anew to us what He offered to God once for all.*

P. T. Forsyth.

* May I refer to the closing part of my *Church and Sacraments* (Longmans, 1917.)