

# SANCTIFYING GRACE AND OUR UNION WITH THE HOLY TRINITY

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The mystery of sanctifying grace and of our union with the Holy Trinity is one of the most appealing subjects of study in present-day speculative theology. It is also admittedly one of the most difficult to express in a satisfactory manner; proof of this is the very number and diversity of attempts at such expression during the last decade or more.<sup>1</sup> Recently Malachi J. Donnelly took up the problem and proposed "a solution according to de la Taille."<sup>2</sup> If it is true that de la Taille's formula for grace, as created actuation by the Uncreated Act, is the least defective of all expressions ventured so far,<sup>3</sup> then Fr. Donnelly's move stands a good chance of being a step in the right direction. With him we believe that de la Taille's new concept of grace and the supernatural does provide a key to further understanding of the mystery of God's inhabitation through grace. But we cannot escape an impression of unsatisfactoriness which the study of his proposed solution leaves behind. Our main objection to his attempt is leveled against the idea of sanctifying grace, in its created reality, as some sort of miniature trinity in us. Does not this idea suggest, at least in its remote implication, a notion, however minimizing, of some sort of threefold efficient causality involving each of the three divine Persons? For, although Fr. Donnelly says that "from the one and indivisible, created and finite communication of divine life to the soul will there arise three relations, one to each divine Person who, by quasi-formal

<sup>1</sup> Cf., among others, P. Galtier, S.J., *Le saint Esprit en nous d'après les Pères grecs* (Rome, 1946); *L'Habitation en nous des trois personnes* (2nd ed.; Rome, 1950); L. Chambat, *Présence et union: Les missions des personnes de la sainte trinité selon saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 1945); R. Morency, S.J., *L'Union de grâce selon saint Thomas* (Montreal, 1950); S. I. Dockx, O.P., *Fils de Dieu par grâce* (Paris, 1948); H. Schauf, *Die Einwohnung des heiligen Geistes* (Freiburg, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Malachi J. Donnelly, S.J., "The Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit: A Solution according to de la Taille," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*, VIII (1947), 445-70.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. Philips, "La grâce des justes de l'Ancien Testament: Fondements scripturaires; Etude théologique," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses*, XXIV (1948), 45: "... l'expression ... la moins déficiente de toutes celles que nous connaissons."

causality, communicates the divine life to the soul,"<sup>4</sup> yet further on he seems to postulate a threefold foundation of these three relations. Is this really necessary? Or is that threefold foundation possible without a threefold causality? Without entering into a detailed discussion of Fr. Donnelly's study, we propose to repeat and complete his attempt, taking for granted the main ideas he has exposed already. We intend therefore to examine how de la Taille's idea of grace, created actuation by Uncreated Act, proves helpful for an exposition of the non-appropriation or *proprium* theory of the inhabitation of the Holy Trinity.

The mystery of God-in-us through grace implies two problems which it is imperative to disjoin clearly at the outset. (1) Wherein consists the special presence of the Trinity in us which is proper to grace and specifically different from God's presence in us or in other things such as is implied in every created reality?<sup>5</sup> Or, viewed from our side, what is our union with, or relation to, God which is characteristic of the supernatural life of grace? (2) In what manner can it be said that through grace the three Persons of the Trinity are present in us *formaliter* and not only *materialiter*, i.e., as three distinct Persons and not only as One-in-Three; or that they are present *qua tres*, not only *qui tres*? Or, considering our union with the Trinity from our side, how can we conceive our distinct relations to each of the three divine Persons?<sup>6</sup> The two questions are distinct and separable. Even a theological

<sup>4</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 466.

<sup>5</sup> Fr. Donnelly noted this question in a previous article, "The Theory of R. P. Maurice de la Taille, S.J., on the Hypostatic Union," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*, II (1941), 510-26: "... a presence of God by quasi-formal causality, or a presence by union between Himself as Uncreated Act and the created nature as potency, will alone fulfil the definition of the supernatural" (p. 521).

<sup>6</sup> The question is insinuated by Fr. Donnelly when he says that habitual grace gives the soul "a relationship, not only of efficient causality to the Trinity, but *formally* and *in se* a relation of *union* to the Three Persons of the Trinity" ("The Theory of R. P. Maurice de la Taille," p. 525). For Père de la Taille, cf. "Actuation créée par Acte incréé," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XVIII (1928), 253-68; "Entretien amical d'Eudoxe et de Palamède sur la grâce d'union," *Revue apologétique*, XLVIII (1929), 5-26, 129-45; "Théories mystiques à propos d'un livre récent [i.e., C. Butler, *Western Mysticism*, 2nd ed., London, 1927]," *Recherches de science religieuse*, XVIII (1928), 297-325, where he says: "L'union est quelque chose de créé; c'est la grâce habituelle. Le terme de l'union, c'est la Trinité, incréé. L'*habitation* de la Trinité, la *présence* ou *communication* de la Trinité, ne se confond pas avec la Trinité, dont elle n'a ni l'éternité ni l'immutabilité; mais elle se confond en revanche avec la grâce sanctifiante, notre union habituelle à la Grâce incréée" (pp. 304-5).

position which evades the second by saying that there are no distinct relations between us and each of the three Persons except by way of appropriation,<sup>7</sup> has still to give a solution to the first question: it must explain the manner of the new presence of God in us which is proper to the supernatural. De la Taille's theory does, we believe, answer both questions, but in different ways, i.e., according to two distinct, but inseparable, aspects of his formula. The emphasis on "actuation" explains the special presence; the stress on "Uncreated Act" gives the clue to proper distinct relations to each of the three Persons. We must explain in detail this summary statement.

#### CREATED ACTUATION BY UNCREATED ACT

Every supernatural reality—supernatural in the strict sense of the word—is constituted by a new dependence on, or relation to, God, Pure Act, which de la Taille has expressed in the formula, "created actuation by the Uncreated Act."<sup>8</sup> For our present purpose, this phrase points chiefly to two ideas. The first idea is that God, Uncreated Act, communicates Himself to the spiritual creature (the spirit alone can be "supernaturalized") and unites Himself to it as its quasi-form without any intermediary, thus "divinizing" the creature. This quasi-information by the Pure Act is not information, because evidently the Uncreated Act can in no way derive any perfection from actuating the creature (as a form does when informing its matter). It is actuation, because He unites Himself with the creature immediately, as an act is united to the potency which it perfects without any mediating link. The second idea implied is that this actuation, being really distinct from the Act itself (since the Uncreated Act exists even when not actuating the creature), is a "created" reality, i.e., a

<sup>7</sup> Cf. William R. O'Connor, "A New Concept of Grace and the Supernatural," *Ecclesiastical Review*, XCVIII (1938), 401-13. Cf. p. 408: "What more is needed to explain the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just? If by grace there is an immediate and permanent, though accidental, union of the soul with the uncreated Act of Life (the Blessed Trinity, but the Holy Spirit by appropriation), and if the actuation means the giving of the Act to the subject and the possession of the Act by the subject, what more need be said?" Fr. O'Connor admits the formula, therefore, as an answer to the first question, but apparently not to the second.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. de la Taille, "Actuation créée," cited above, footnote 6; also W. O'Connor, *art. cit.* Fr. Donnelly's criticism of Fr. O'Connor's understanding of de la Taille (*THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*, II [1941], 514), and Fr. O'Connor's reply (*ibid.*, III [1942], 403-12), need not detain us here.

positive reality whose presence involves an objective change in the creature thus actuated. As such, this created actuation is somehow "produced," not by a divine efficient causality separate from the actuating or quasi-informing causality, but in this very actuating, as the disposition of the creature's potency to the Act. Because this actuation is something real, distinct from the Uncreated Act, it is an effect common to the whole Trinity, just as every divine *opus ad extra*.<sup>9</sup> The created actuation is not a medium standing between the Uncreated Act and the soul which He actuates.<sup>10</sup> It is the real foundation which gives reality to the relation of immediate union of the creature with God. And because actuation here is prior to efficiency—the latter being necessary only in so far as the "passion" in the creature is a "created" reality—this foundation of our relation to God is in a way consequent on, rather than antecedent to, the relation.<sup>11</sup>

In the supernatural reality of sanctifying grace, therefore, we have a created actuation of the essence of the soul by the Uncreated Act. The state of grace, therefore, presents two aspects, distinct but inseparable from each other. The first aspect is that of union or relation or *esse ad*, which as such does not designate an *esse in* nor any quality or *esse absolutum*, but only an *esse relativum*, i.e., immediate union of the essence of the soul with the essence of God. Union consists in unity of distinct realities which are and remain distinct in their union. One of these, in the present case, is God, Pure Act, who is changeless and imperfectible. Our supernatural union with God, therefore, is in

<sup>9</sup> Though the causality of the Uncreated Act by virtue of which the created actuation comes into being is not efficient causality *simpliciter*, separable from the (active) actuation, but is only a distinct aspect of that actuating or quasi-formal causality, yet, because the created actuation is a reality (accidental only, i.e., a *quo* and not a *quod*), absolute and not merely relative, an *esse in* and not only an *esse ad*, it is caused to be by a divine operation *ad extra*. The actuation is, therefore, in a real manner *ad extra*, or productive of some reality outside or distinct from God. The causative principle of the created actuation is, therefore, the *unum esse absolutum* in God, i.e., the divine essence or nature.

<sup>10</sup> It would be so, were it produced in the way every natural reality is produced, by efficient causality properly so called.

<sup>11</sup> It may be correct to speak here, as Fr. O'Connor does (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, III [1942], 403 ff.), of reciprocal causality between the efficient and the quasi-informing aspects of the actuation. This should not be understood, however, in the sense that a divine efficiency separate from the actuation precedes the actuation itself. There are not two separate divine causalities here; there is but one: quasi-information.

God a *relatio merae rationis*, a relation of mere reason.<sup>12</sup> If it is to be real at all, then it must mean an objective reality in the soul. The soul is really united or related to the Uncreated Act because the foundation of that relation is real in the soul, namely, the created actuation which is identically created sanctifying grace. That is why a second aspect besides that of union is necessarily inherent in the state of grace, namely, the aspect of "production" of created grace.<sup>13</sup> The created actuation makes the immediate union of the soul with God real in such manner that the supernatural relation to God is real from the soul to God, though it is only a relation of reason from God to the soul.

#### SPECIAL PRESENCE OF GOD

How does this actuation by the Uncreated Act explain the presence of God that is proper and exclusive to the state of grace? But first we must ask: What do we mean by saying, "presence of God," and "special presence"? By presence of God in a creature we express the union of the creature with God, connoting also that God is personal. Our idea of presence, as a direct concept, expresses local vicinity or union in space. This direct concept, when applied to God, must of course be purified of its imperfect element, inasmuch as God is not in space *per modum locati*, or as contained in a place. God's presence in things, therefore, expresses the relation of union of things to Him, a relation that is real in them and unreal or of mere reason in Him.<sup>14</sup> The natural presence of God in creatures, i.e., the relation of creatures to God or their dependence on Him based on and expressing their creaturehood, is one which refers them to God as to their efficient cause and their exemplary and final cause. God is in them inasmuch as He creates them, gives them being and life in different grades. He is where He acts; and since His act is His essence, He is in them, not only by

<sup>12</sup> This means simply that God actuates the soul and is not changed, nor does He gain anything, in consequence of the actuation.

<sup>13</sup> Note, however, that the aspect of union is equally inseparable from that of the production of created grace. In a way, union is more essential. De la Taille, we shall indicate below, insists that it is properly this unitive aspect of grace, and not its being a divine effect, which causes it to be supernatural.

<sup>14</sup> Obviously this does not mean that God does not really create, or that He is not really the *causa essendi* of creatures and as such really present in them, but that creating does not involve change or newness in God.

His operation, but also by His essence. According to the different degrees of being in which creatures share, God's presence in them is also graduated and is more or less intense. Evidently, not because He Himself or His relation to them varies in any way (He is changeless, and His relation to them is merely of reason), but because the intensity of being in creatures differs according to their respective perfection, and their being exactly measures the reality and degree of their dependence on, and union with, God. In that sense God is more present in spiritual or rational creatures than in animals, and more in living beings than in lifeless ones.

But the special presence of God which the supernatural reality entails is different from His natural presence in creatures not only in degree, or in the way of the differences in God's presence arising from the different degrees of being just mentioned. Here it is a difference of kind. The supernatural presence of God in the just soul is not found in natural realities in any manner, even only incipient. Nature is not a beginning of grace.<sup>15</sup> God's supernatural presence in us evidently does not mean a newness in God, for here again, as already pointed out, the relation of God to the just soul is, on His side, one of mere reason. It means a newness in the soul only. The soul is really united to God in a new way. This new way of union is in no manner anticipated in the natural reality of the soul or of any creature. And it cannot be so anticipated. It would not do—even if that were conceivable—just to add to the natural perfection of the soul another and higher degree of "created being" which would bring with it a new presence of God in the soul. A new presence of this sort would involve, if compared with God's natural presence, a difference in degree only, not one in kind. It would be only a more intense natural presence of God, not a special, supernatural presence.

#### INSUFFICIENT EXPLANATIONS OF THIS SPECIAL PRESENCE

How are we to conceive this special presence of God through grace, the speciality of which consists precisely in this, that it cannot be had, even by way of initial preparation, in any natural perfection however high? Different explanations have been and are being pro-

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Sum. theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 3, ad 2m: "caritas et natura non pertinent ad idem genus."

posed which, after Fr. Donnelly,<sup>16</sup> we must briefly recall. A brief critical remark will hint at their insufficiency.

The Scholastic theories of the past are well known. First, there is St. Thomas' explanation, according to which God is in the just soul through grace "sicut cognitum in cognoscente et amatum in amante."<sup>17</sup> The idea has been understood in several ways. Let us simply point out that the knowledge and love St. Thomas has in mind cannot be only actual knowledge and love, since God's presence through grace is habitual and persists when the just elicit no cognitive or affective acts. It ought, therefore, to be a habitual or "principal" knowledge and love, i.e., the reality of the habitual principles of knowledge and love. St. Thomas, however, does not make quite explicit the manner in which these principles determine or constitute a *special* presence of God.

Another solution is the so-called "friendship theory" of Suarez.<sup>18</sup> Love unites the lover to the beloved. God loves the just soul in a special manner, and by virtue of that love is united to her. What does this mean? The result of God's special love for the just soul is evidently not in God but in the soul. What else is it except created grace? God's love for the just soul produces grace in the soul. Does it entail anything more, in particular, any other presence of God than that postulated by His efficiency of that created grace? Perhaps it does; but why? It seems that the friendship theory does not prove this special presence, but only asserts it.

The third explanation is given by Lessius.<sup>19</sup> According to him grace is a bond of union between the soul and God. Habitual grace, he says, is "a link with the Holy Ghost," "a bond uniting the divine Spirit to us in a singular manner." The idea, again, may be correct. But why is grace, of its nature, a link with God? Why does it entail this special union with, and presence of, God? The fact is asserted; no reason is given for it.

Vasquez' dynamic theory<sup>20</sup> goes no further; rather the contrary. In his

<sup>16</sup> "The Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit," p. 452.

<sup>17</sup> *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 43, a. 3; *In I Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *De trinitate*, XII, 5; *De gratia*, VII, 11.

<sup>19</sup> *De summo bono*, II, 1; *De perfectionibus et moribus divinis*, XII, 11: "[gratia] est vinculum Spiritus divini"; "est vinculum unians nobis singulari modo Spiritum divinum."

<sup>20</sup> *Commentarium in Iam partem sancti Thomae*, I, q. 8, a. 3; disp. 30, a. 3.

view God is present in the just soul because He effects in it created grace. This may be correct but it does not explain the speciality of God's supernatural presence. This recourse to God's efficient causality can indeed account for a more intense divine presence, for a higher degree of intensity than that of His natural presence, but not for a presence different in kind from the natural one.

One interpretation of St. Thomas' idea of presence by knowledge, formerly proposed by John of St. Thomas, more recently repeated by Fr. Gardeil, is that of God's presence as object of an experimental knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Of this as well we must ask whether its patrons mean actual or habitual knowledge. If the latter is intended—and apparently it should be if it is to explain God's presence by habitual grace—then how and why does it involve a special presence? This special presence is postulated. Is it proved or explained?

Fr. Donnelly mentions the twofold formal-causality doctrine of Cornelius a Lapide,<sup>22</sup> according to whom the just are sons of God, not only *accidentaliter*, because of the gift of sanctifying grace, but also *substantialiter*, because the divine nature is communicated to them. A Lapide may be right in a way, but he fails to explain this substantial communication of the divine nature to the soul. That communication may, no doubt, be a special divine presence which is not found in any natural reality; but why is it so? On what ground does he affirm it? On what pattern of divine causality is this self-communication of God built?

Besides these theories of a remote past generally repeated in manuals, we must mention two other positions of our own day. The first is that of Fr. Galtier, who explains God's special presence through grace according to efficient causality combined with exemplary causality.<sup>23</sup> He insists that God's production of grace in the soul constitutes a special presence because of the special manner of this efficiency, which in this case works by way of conjunction with the soul of the divine

<sup>21</sup> Ioannes a sancto Thoma, *Cursus theologicus*, IV, dist. 17; A. Gardeil, *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique* (Paris, 1927).

<sup>22</sup> *Comment. in s. scripturam: In II Pet.*, 1: 4 f.: "iusti sunt consortes divinae naturae non tantum accidentaliter per gratiam sanctificantem, sed et substantialiter per ipsam naturam divinam ipsis communicatam . . . ; nec enim gratia adoptans a Spiritu sancto nec Spiritus sancti adoptio a gratia divelli potest." Cf. *In epist. divi Pauli*: Rom. 8:15.

<sup>23</sup> P. Galtier, *De SS trinitate in se et in nobis* (Paris, 1933), p. 318 ff.; cf. esp. p. 320.



Persons and their consequent assimilating action. But, is this more than a gratuitous assertion? The special way of efficiency postulated by grace does not flow from efficiency as such, but from some other source. By saying that there is a special union with the divine Persons and a special assimilating action of theirs, the fact of the special presence is undoubtedly asserted; but is it proved or explained?

A similar criticism must be made of Fr. Dockx's recent attempt in his beautiful book, *Fils de Dieu par grâce* (Paris, 1948). God is present in the just souls, he says, because of charity. He is in them as the immanent term of the act of love of charity.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps this is true. But, some may object, what of the permanent presence of God in the just during the time that they make no acts of charity? And secondly, Fr. Dockx agrees to say that, if the immanent term of charity is God in Himself and not some affective or intentional substitute for Him as is the case in every other act of love of some other object (the beloved is in the lover not in its objective reality but according to its affective expression or impression in the lover), then the reason of this special presence is not that charity is love, but that it is love of a peculiar kind. If that is so, then is this explanation of the speciality of God's presence more than an *idem per idem*?

These brief critical notes should suffice to point out the insufficiency of the theories which intend to explain God's special presence through grace. Unless they be completed by some other explicative principle which lays the basis for what they affirm, they do not seem to go beyond an unproved assertion of God's special presence in the just.

#### DE LA TAILLE'S PRINCIPLE: ACTUATION BY UNCREATED ACT

It is precisely at this point that the idea of created actuation by the Uncreated Act completes the previous theories. How? It will complete them if it expresses a presence of God in the soul which is in no way found in any natural reality. And that is exactly what it does. First, created actuation by Uncreated Act does of its nature designate a presence of God in the soul He actuates. Perhaps there is no need to insist on this point. From what was said above, it is apparent that quasi-information of the soul by God is identically presence of God in the soul as its quasi-form or Act actuating or quasi-informing it.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

For though the actuation, considered passively, is really distinct from the Uncreated Act and on that score is a created reality, yet it is evident that this actuation cannot actually exist except as dependent on the Uncreated Act. The Uncreated Act evidently can exist without actuating the soul; but the actuation of the soul is inseparable from the Uncreated Act itself. For God, the Uncreated Act, to be present in the just soul by way of grace is identically the same as to actuate the soul by Himself.<sup>25</sup> Actuation necessarily means presence of the Act that actuates.<sup>26</sup>

Is this presence of God in the soul through grace new and special in the sense that it does not and cannot belong to or flow from any natural reality? Only in that case, as was said above, do we really put our finger on the speciality of our union with God through grace. This, again, is rather obvious to one who reflects on the very notion of immediate actuation by the Uncreated Act. This actuation is such that it is in no way implied in any of the natural relations of dependence of the creature as such on God the Creator, or in any of the corresponding relations of union of God with the creature. The order of creation is coextensive with the efficient and final and exemplary causality of God. Through these God gives to creatures, not Himself, the Uncreated Act, but their own created form or act or perfection, whether substantial or accidental, which constitutes each creature in its proper, specific, and individual reality. Nothing else than this natural form is required for any creature to be what it is. With that form it receives the finite perfections which belong to its specific essence and its concrete individuality. But these perfections, which evidently cannot exist except

<sup>25</sup> It may be objected: Does not the created actuation itself constitute a created "act" or perfection which as such mediates between the soul and God, just as for His natural presence in creatures? It would be so if the created actuation were produced by efficient causality separate from the actuation. But, as already explained, it originates from actuation or quasi-information, and because of this it does not impair the immediacy of our supernatural union with God. It is only the disposition to that union.

<sup>26</sup> Is the active actuation, or the actuation considered from God's side, really distinct from the Uncreated Act? The answer depends on what the question means. It cannot be that the actuation would signify some reality in God which would not be there but for the actuation. In that sense the active actuation is not really distinct from the Act. But the Act is not the active actuation in the sense that God can exist without actuating and that He undergoes no change by actuating or not actuating. The reality or newness signified by this actuation is in the creature alone.

as actually depending on God, do not postulate any presence of God other than as their efficient cause. Efficient causality as such does not mean union but distinction and even, where possible, separation. It does not imply that the efficient cause communicates itself to its effect in its own objective, proper reality and not only in a participating similitude of itself. The effect may and per se does bear a resemblance to its cause, but resemblance says only relation to an exemplar. The dependence of the effect on its efficient cause may be permanent; it is so when the cause is not only *causa fiendi* but *causa essendi*, which God is to creatures. But all this can be real without in any way postulating that the cause give itself to its effect as the latter's quasi-form.<sup>27</sup> And so God's presence in the just soul, resulting from or given in the soul's actuation by the Uncreated Act, is so special to supernatural reality that it is altogether absent, both formally and inceptively, from natural reality as such. It is a newness totally special to the order of grace, both in fact and by right. It can never be found in the order of nature.

#### COMPLEMENT TO OTHER EXPLANATIONS<sup>28</sup>

We can see now in what manner the idea of actuation by Uncreated Act is apt to complete the above-mentioned explanations of God's presence through grace. Charity, Dockx says, involves the permanent presence of the Uncreated Term of divine love. Why? Because charity is a love that springs from, or is built on, an actuation by the Uncreated Act. The love of charity is of such a nature that it cannot arise in a soul unless God actuates or quasi-informs that soul by Himself. Then only is a creature capable of loving God in Himself when by the virtue of charity it receives from God the power to do so, i.e., when it possesses in its own created way the Uncreated Act.

The special manner of causality in which God produces grace in the soul implies, Galtier asserts, that grace be produced by way of union with the divine Persons and of their assimilating action. Why is this so?

<sup>27</sup> Natural being as such is not divine, except in a metaphorical manner of speaking (contrary to Rousselot's idea in *L'Intellectualisme de saint Thomas*). Only God, not a created reality, divinizes.

<sup>28</sup> These very summary notes merely hint at the way in which de la Taille's formula is apt to complete different attempts at explaining the special divine presence. They do not present completely the opinions which they try to complete. A longer development, however, is impossible here.

Not because the production of grace is an efficient causality (this, as such, does not require that kind of presence of God), but because grace results from quasi-information or actuation of the soul by God Himself. For this reason, and for this reason only, grace means the special presence of God.

A Lapide's formula also becomes consistent when supplemented by de la Taille's idea. Created grace is inseparable from the actual communication of the divine nature, because it is nothing else than the created actuation of the soul by the Uncreated Act; as such it cannot exist except in the presence of the divine quasi-form of the soul.

Similarly, the habitual knowledge and love of God proper to the order of grace (the explanation of God's special presence through grace given by St. Thomas and his commentators) requires for the actual capability of knowing and loving God in Himself (a knowledge and love of which God alone is naturally capable) the actual communication to the soul of the divine nature such as is had by immediate actuation of the soul by the Uncreated Act.

Vasquez' theory remains utterly insufficient to explain the special presence unless the production of created grace be related not only to God's efficient causality in general, but to the particular way of producing a created reality that is involved in the actuation in which God gives Himself to the creature.

Actuation by Uncreated Act immediately explains Lessius' correct idea that grace is a bond of union with God. It reveals the reality of created grace as something incapable of existence except in the actual union of the soul with God as with its quasi-form or actuating Act.

Finally, the friendship theory of Suarez can explain God's special presence in the soul He loves in a special way when it is shown that God's love enables the just soul to return His love, and that this power of the creature to love God in Himself postulates precisely that God communicate to it His own power to love, that is, Himself; in other words, that God, Uncreated Act, gives Himself to the soul by actuating it.

This will suffice to show that de la Taille's formula of the supernatural is apt, and that perhaps it alone is apt, to explain, as far as can be explained, God's special presence in the sanctified soul.

## SPECIAL RELATIONS TO EACH OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS

Does the de la Taille formula also help to show the possibility and the reality of distinct and special relations of the just soul to each of the three divine Persons? It is our contention that it does help visualize, as it were, these distinct relations in a way which fully respects all traditional data of trinitarian theology and allows us to call these relations distinct and special in the proper sense and not only by appropriation. That the just are related or united to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or that the three divine Persons inhabit their souls, we take from the revealed doctrine given us in Scripture and tradition. The question is whether the three Persons are present in the just each in His own manner, or only *aequo iure* and *modo identico*. Or, to recall a simile of de Regnon, do the three divine Persons come to our souls as three princes each in His own state carriage or all together in one royal coach?<sup>29</sup>

If we remember what was said about the idea of presence, and particularly the presence of God in us, then we can see the meaning of the statement: the just have a special relation to each of the three divine Persons who inhabit them. That meaning comes down to this. Through grace the just souls are united (while remaining distinct from them) to the Father as such, and to the Son as such, and to the Holy Ghost as such. Union as such is relation (*esse ad*) and not a form, quality, or perfection (*esse in*). The way in which God is present through grace is by actuating the soul, i.e., by uniting Himself to the soul as its quasi-form.<sup>30</sup> The divine quasi-form of the soul is such (the mystery of the Holy Trinity states) that it is one in nature and three in Persons; or, as theology explains, it is one according to its *esse absolutum* and three according to its *esse relativum*.<sup>31</sup> For that reason the created actuation which is produced in the very union of the soul with the

<sup>29</sup> Th. de Regnon, *Etudes de théologie positive sur la sainte trinité*, IV, 546.

<sup>30</sup> Must we insist on the importance of this *quasi* in the expression "quasi-form"? Evidently God cannot be the form of any creature; that would involve pantheism. He can be the Act or quasi-form that actuates or quasi-informs the creature, without being Himself affected by this actuation.

<sup>31</sup> God's *esse*, identical with His essence, is one in its absolute aspect, i.e., as essence or nature, and threefold in its relative aspect, i.e., as Persons. The *esse absolutum* and the *esse relativum* are identical *secundum rem*, but are virtually distinct.

Uncreated Act, and which is, in so far as it is a reality distinct from the Uncreated Act, a created quality in the soul, an *esse absolutum* with its *esse in*, not an *esse ad* but the real foundation of an *esse ad*, is the image or imprint of the divine *esse absolutum* which is one. It does not seem correct or necessary, therefore, to say, as Fr. Donnelly did, that created grace is a kind of miniature trinity in us.<sup>32</sup> For created grace as a positive quality in us—produced in us by the Act that actuates us—reflects only the one divine nature,<sup>33</sup> not the trinity of the Persons who are three distinct Ones only *secundum esse relativum*. The one divine nature, not the three Persons as such, is the principle of productive action. Yet, through grace the just are united with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost in the way created persons can be united with the three distinct divine Persons whose nature is one and the same. What does that mean? From the one created *esse absolutum* of created grace springs, as it were, a threefold *esse ad*: threefold not in its created foundation of these relations but in its Uncreated Terminators, the three divine Persons. Union as such, we said, is a relation or *esse ad*, not a quality or perfection or *esse in*. The foundation of a relation, or the quality that makes for its *esse in*, gives reality to the relations but is, at least virtually, distinct from the relation itself or the *esse ad*.<sup>34</sup> One created reality, created grace, relates the person of the just soul to the three divine Persons. How can that be? Here it is that de la Taille's formula shows the way.

### THREE DISTINCT RELATIONS IN ONE ACTUATION

Were the special relations of the just soul to each of the three divine Persons the resultant of God's efficient causality alone and not of actuation by the Uncreated Act, then obviously there would be no question of special relations. For in that supposition three special relations to each of the three would require a special efficient causality of each of the three which would produce the particular created reality,

<sup>32</sup> Cf. "The Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit," p. 466.

<sup>33</sup> The production of created grace, as we have pointed out (cf. note 9), is not separate from the actuation itself. It is the productive or *ad extra* aspect of the actuation of the soul by the Uncreated Act.

<sup>34</sup> Every relation is virtually distinct from its foundation. The relation as such can be either real or of mere reason, according as its foundation is a reality or a consideration of the mind.

foundation of the special relation to Himself. But such efficient causality, proper to each of the three Persons, is not possible. The common doctrine that every divine operation *ad extra* is common to the three Persons entails that there cannot be any divine effect produced in creatures through efficient causality which would flow from one of the Persons only. Because of this, the presence of the Trinity by virtue of efficient causality only cannot be a presence of the three Persons as three.<sup>35</sup> And so it is no wonder that, when the sanctification of our souls is reduced to efficient causality only, as is apparently done not so rarely, the special relations to the three Persons cannot be held except by way of appropriation.<sup>36</sup>

But in our union with God through grace, there is something else than God's efficient causality. The created foundation of our supernatural relation to the Trinity does not result from mere efficient causality but originates by way of quasi-information or actuation by the Uncreated Act. In this case, the production of the created actuation as a created reality, which is common to the three Persons, is an altogether secondary element in the divine work of our sanctification: it is necessary only because without it the self-communication of the Uncreated Act cannot be real. What is properly specific to sanctification, conceived as actuation of the soul by God Himself, is possession by the soul, in a real though accidental and participative manner,<sup>37</sup> of the divine nature, *consortium divinae naturae*. Accordingly, in the state of grace the soul is united, without any intermediary,<sup>38</sup> to the Uncreated Act who is one as nature or *secundum esse absolutum*, and triune as Persons or *secundum esse relativum*. Because of the immediacy of this union between the sanctified soul and the divine essence, we have in God's sanctifying action something that is absent from divine

<sup>35</sup> Could the Trinity cause by one common action, by way of efficiency, three different foundations of distinct relations to the three Persons respectively? It does not seem so. What is caused by the three as one, can only be the foundation of a relation to the three as one, not as three. A foundation of relation to the three as three, if produced by efficient causality, would suppose an efficiency of the three as three: each of the three would have to effect the foundation of His particular relation, or have a distinct and separate efficiency. But this is not possible.

<sup>36</sup> This is the tacit assumption, e.g., of Fr. Galtier's *L'Habitation*, p. 213 f.

<sup>37</sup> Not substantially or hypostatically, as in the Incarnation.

<sup>38</sup> The created actuation, as already pointed out, does not stand between the soul and the Uncreated Act; it only makes the immediate union objectively real.

efficient causality. In efficient causality there is not this immediacy. The act which results from efficiency is not the Uncreated Act, but a finite perfection which God gives to the creature, He Himself, as it were, remaining outside the creature. But the soul actuated by God Himself shares in the divine nature and becomes an adopted son of God who cannot but be related immediately to the real God who is three in Persons.<sup>39</sup> It is not created grace as a created effect of God's which reveals the trinity of the Persons. As created effect, it only reveals the one divine nature.<sup>40</sup> Were it nothing else than a created effect of God, grace would not unite us to the three Persons as such. But grace is actuation by the Uncreated Act. The Trinity is revealed in the Uncreated Act who immediately or by Himself actuates or quasi-informs the soul, i.e., unites Himself to the soul without any created medium. God cannot thus give Himself except as He really is, i.e., as existing in three Persons. And so the real distinction of our special relations to each of the three divine Persons does not originate in any threefoldness in created grace, foundation of our supernatural union with God: it results from the real distinction of the divine Persons within one divine nature to which and to whom we are, through grace, immediately united.<sup>41</sup>

It does not seem possible that a spiritual creature which of necessity is a person<sup>42</sup> should be united without intermediary to the triune God and not be united or related to the three divine Persons as distinct

<sup>39</sup> Why is there a relation to the three Persons, and not to one as in the Incarnation? In the Incarnation the Word alone terminates the relation of the humanity of Christ to a divine Person, because (as the mystery implies) the divine Person of the Word takes the place, as it were, of a human person. The actuation of the humanity of Christ by the Uncreated Act, as far as actuation goes, is the fact of the divine *esse* or Act. How the relation of the humanity to the divine Act can terminate in one Person only, is apparently the very core of the mystery. But when a creature has its own created personality, as is the case with us, and is actuated by the Uncreated Act, the created person, immediately united to God, "faces," as it were, the three divine Persons.

<sup>40</sup> As de la Taille points out, to take grace only as a created effect of God is not to take it for what it really is, namely, created *actuation* by Uncreated Act, or supernatural ("Actuation créée," p. 262 f.).

<sup>41</sup> Only then would a threefold foundation be required for distinct relations to the three Persons, if these relations (and their foundation) were to result from efficient causality properly so called (cf. above, note 35). But that is not the case here. The created actuation, foundation of our relations to the three Persons, results from actuation or quasi-information, not from effective causality proper.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. above, note 39.



Persons. Only when the union is not immediate, that is, when it does not result from actuation or quasi-information by the Uncreated Act, but when it is mediate as in efficient causality, can a spiritual creature be united to God as one and not as triune.<sup>43</sup> As said already, divine efficient causality founds all that pertains to the natural order or that results from God's operation *ad extra*. The order of grace or of sanctification is not *simpliciter* an *opus Dei ad extra*, because, and in the sense that, it does not specifically consist in producing a created reality. De la Taille is very explicit in stressing that grace is not supernatural merely because it is an effect of God's, but because it involves a relation of immediate union with Him, a relation which does not result from the nature of an effect as such.<sup>44</sup> That is why Mersch called the order of grace *l'ordre de l'intériorisé*;<sup>45</sup> we could translate him by saying (if the phrase were not too imperfect and paradoxical) that grace and sanctification is an *opus Dei secundum quid ad intra*. This evidently does not and cannot mean that the sanctification of the rational creature, or the union of the just soul with God as three divine Persons, affects God Himself. Here again, it may be well to repeat, the relations of the three divine Persons to the just soul are in God merely relations of reason.<sup>46</sup> It means that sanctification is something else than production of a created effect; it is immediate union with God in Himself, i.e., with the three. The reality of our relations to them—for the relations are real in us—comes from one created grace or created actuation. The distinction of these relations finds its reason and ground in God alone.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> This is the proper relation implied in creaturehood, an antecedent to religion. It is because religion by itself is based on a relation to God as one and not as three that it is not a theological but a moral virtue.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. above, note 40.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Nouvelle revue théologique*, LXV (1938), 826.

<sup>46</sup> Even the relation of the Word Incarnate to the humanity of Christ is one of mere reason on the part of the Word.

<sup>47</sup> Could it be said that, in this explanation, we are led to the concept of one single relation to a threefold Terminator? Evidently not. Why? Because a relation is specified, or made what it specifically is, by what terminates it. If three distinct realities terminate a real relation, then this relation is of necessity threefold: it *is* three distinct relations. We should note that this threefold real relation, based on one real foundation, is a unique case and can find no analogy in natural things, for the simple reason that the Trinity, one nature in three Persons, finds no replica in nature. It is because grace unites us immediately to one who is three Persons, that this one union is three relations.

Still less does the phrase *opus Dei secundum quid ad intra* mean that the creature is absorbed in God so as to lose its own personality. The very notion of union of person to Persons excludes all semblance of pantheistic absorption. Union is not unity. It of necessity involves distinction. The personal character of this union of the soul with God postulates on both sides of the relations personality and incommunicability which dissipates, as radically and totally impossible, any shadow of monism.

Perhaps we have succeeded in showing that de la Taille's formula for grace makes it possible to conceive our relations to the divine Persons as distinct and special for each of them, though there be only one created grace in us. The simple reason of this possibility lies in the immediacy of our union with God in Himself. While natural reality unites us to God as one, through the medium of a created perfection that mirrors the one divine nature, the reality of grace unites us with God as triune without any created intermediary.

#### ACCORD WITH TRADITIONAL TRINITARIAN TEACHING

At this point it should not be difficult to show that this explanation of our special relations to the three divine Persons fully agrees with established trinitarian theology. First, it does not require or introduce into the divinity any multiplicity or any real distinction other than that of the three Persons, which is *secundum esse relativum*. Why? Because the relations from the divine Persons to us are merely of reason, and not real on their part; and because the distinction of our relations to them does not come from a threefold foundation in us<sup>48</sup> but from the real distinction of the three Persons who terminate our relations.

Secondly, our three distinct relations to the Persons do not suppose on their part any efficient causality which would be proper and exclusive to each of them. These three relations arise from one efficiency or production of created grace which is involved in the actuation of our souls by the Uncreated Act. In that sense it holds good that every divine operation *ad extra* is common to the three Persons. But because the created actuation, which is identical with created grace, is not effected by divine efficient causality in the same way as effects of God in the natural order are produced, but arises from immediate

<sup>48</sup> Cf. above, note 47.

actuation of the soul by God Himself, the work of our sanctification is not *simpliciter ad extra*. In the sense explained above, it is also in some respect *ad intra*, i.e., not productive of some finite reality but uniting us immediately with God Himself. Created grace constitutes the reality of this union, in so far as every relation is real on account of its foundation. And because this union is without created intermediary, it of necessity unites directly to the triune God, i.e., this union unfolds into a triple relation because of the three Persons who terminate it.<sup>49</sup>

Is it still right, then, to speak of the special role which each of the divine Persons plays in the work of our sanctification?<sup>50</sup> According to what was just said, if by special role is meant an efficiency which is proper to each of the Persons and not common to the three, then it is not correct to attribute a special role to each of them, because there is only one efficiency which regards the production of sanctifying grace and this is common to the three divine Persons. But the phrase "special role" can have another meaning. It may signify that each of the three Persons terminates the soul's union with the divinity in His own manner, i.e., as He exists in the Trinity, in such wise that our relation to the Father is not the same as our relation to the Son or to the Holy Ghost, because the Father is really distinct from the Son and from the Holy Ghost. This function of terminating our union with them is only a relation and, as such, entails no production of *esse absolutum*. It is, moreover, only a relation of mere reason in them. Yet our union with the Persons is real, because its foundation in us is real.

#### IS THIS STILL APPROPRIATION?

But it may, and must, be asked: Does this manner of conceiving our special relations to each of the three divine Persons say or mean anything more than the appropriation theory? Since the three "do" exactly the same thing, as far as doing means producing a reality, the whole idea of a special relation to each of the three or of a special role (which is only a relation of mere reason in them) of each of the three seems, to put it bluntly, to boil down to a question of mere words. Is there a difference of realities?<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Cf. above, notes 41 and 47.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. de Regnon, *op. cit.*, IV, 538.

<sup>51</sup> Galtier, who decidedly rejects special relations to the three Persons, yet speaks of our different moral or personal attitudes towards each of them (*L'Habitation* [ed. 1950], p. 130 ff.). He opposes "rapports ontologiques" to "rapports d'ordre moral et religieux

There is something in this objection. It is true that, according to the explanation given here, our three distinct relations to the three Persons do not postulate or introduce into the one divine nature any threefoldness *secundum esse absolutum* and that they do not put a threefoldness according to the *esse absolutum* in the foundation of these relations in the creature. Our explanation does not mean—any more than the appropriation theory does—to express by special relations to the three Persons different realities as far as the *esse absolutum* goes. In that respect the two explanations coincide. Yet we mean and do express some reality. Even if the *esse ad* of a relation is not an *esse absolutum* nor an *esse in*, still it is not nothing, not a mere fiction nor a mere *esse rationis*. A real relation is a real *respectus* or orientation.<sup>52</sup> That reality the appropriation theory feels shy to express, or rather hides, apparently because it neglects or loses sight of the aspect of union (which is relation) taken formally as union. What is that “reality”? It is this: As far as one can express it in human terms—which always translate concepts that designate objective realities or make “things” even of relations—we are united to the three divine Persons not only *qui tres* but also *qua tres*. The difference expressed in these two phrases (namely, what the second means over and above the first) means exactly what the theory of the special relations, conceived as we have tried to expose it, expresses in explicit terms and what the appropriation theory veils and refuses to unveil. It is easier to suggest and to sense this difference than to put it correctly in plain words. Perhaps it is not possible to describe the difference except by just repeating what we have said already. We are united—in the ontological order and not only by relations of the moral or religious order<sup>53</sup>—to the Father as Father, and to the Son as Son (or, in a way, as our Brother), and to the Holy Ghost as Holy Ghost or as union of love with the Father in the Son; and we are so united, not because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost produce each of them in our souls any created reality which the other two Persons do not produce by one

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qui s'établissent par nos propres actes de foi, d'adoration, de prière, d'amour.” Must not the latter be based on the former?

<sup>52</sup> This is the common interpretation of the Thomistic concept of real relation.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. above, note 51.

operation common to the three, but because in grace God unites us to Himself immediately as He exists in Himself, i.e., in three Persons.

The root of the difference between the two theories can more easily be pointed out. The appropriation theory stops, in its explanation of God's sanctifying work, at the productive aspect of it, and tacitly assimilates it to any other divine efficiency of the natural order, only safeguarding its supernatural character by quickly adding that the production meant in this case is one of a special similarity with God, not to be found in the natural order.<sup>54</sup> Hence, like all production in the natural order, sanctification must be common to the three Persons and can be attributed to any one of them only by appropriation. The *proprium* theory based on de la Taille's idea of the supernatural throws into relief the unitive aspect of the divine sanctifying presence and emphasizes that it is actuation by the Uncreated Act itself, immediate union with God Himself or with God as He is in Himself: three Persons.<sup>55</sup> To explain more fully: the created actuation which is in a way produced in this very union of the Uncreated Act with the soul, is needed only (but needed absolutely) to make this immediate union real; for, without a real foundation in us, our union with God through grace would be a relation of mere reason, i.e., unreal. A real immediate union with three distinct Persons cannot but be three special or distinct relations.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THESE SPECIAL RELATIONS<sup>56</sup>

It may help to visualize our special relations to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost if we try to sketch how the idea presents itself concretely, particularly in our devotional life. This endeavor seems fully justified from what we learn from those who lived the reality of the

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Galtier, *L'Habitation*, p. 218 f.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. E. Mersch, *Théologie du corps mystique*, II, 177: "... le surnaturel se définit par une relation à Dieu tel que la foi seule le montre . . . Dieu qui est Trinité."

<sup>56</sup> We intend to give here only a brief sketch of these special relations. These relations can be proposed in more than one way, according to the starting point one chooses. We can start from any one of the three Persons. The description of these relations is always liable to be more or less unsatisfactory for the very reason that they touch on the highest mystery, that of the Trinity. They are relations to three Persons who are not three *things*, but only *una summa res*. This unity of three Persons who terminate three distinct relations must always be kept in mind when we consider the special relations.

life of grace in an excellent manner; I mean the mystics. In very many cases they conceive and live the spiritual life on a trinitarian pattern.<sup>57</sup> For them the mystery of the Trinity makes a difference. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are really three distinct living Persons and their own relation to each of them is not the same. At the same time, however, they, no less than the simple faithful whose faith is really living, are fully aware, and in a manner better than abstract theology can explain, that these three divine Persons are one God, one supreme majesty.

The point is this. In our life of devotion we live and act on the tacit conviction that our relation to the Father is not the same as our relation to the Son and our relation to the Holy Ghost. We know this by some sort of instinctive intuition—our living faith. We are, through grace, adopted sons of the Father.<sup>58</sup> We never say, and we sense that it should not be said, that we are sons of the Son or sons of the Holy Ghost. Why? There must be some objective ground for this incongruity. If it were by mere appropriation that we attribute our adoptive sonship in a special manner to the Father, although (as the appropriation theory would logically maintain) there is really no objective difference between our ontological relation and attitude towards the Father and that towards the Son or the Holy Ghost, why then could we not equally well call ourselves sons through grace of the Son or of the Holy Ghost? Or would our reluctance to call the Son our Father or the Holy Ghost our Father be due only to the psychological habit we have taken as an effect of the appropriation theory which legitimates (for good reasons) some ways of speaking and (for good reasons also) illegalizes others? If it were, then the truth would be this: We could, strictly speaking, call the Son or the Holy Ghost also by the name of Father, but this does not sound well. Why? Because there is no similarity between the reality expressed in the idea of fatherhood and the particular manner of the Son's or the Holy Ghost's existence within the Trinity. For the Father there exists this similarity, and that is

<sup>57</sup> Cf. J. de Guibert, *Theologia spiritualis*, n. 403, p. 355.

<sup>58</sup> It is true that often perhaps we speak of God as our Father without specifying that we are sons of the First Person, the Father; this latter idea is left confused and only implied. That it is, however, dimly sensed and necessarily implied, seems to be indicated by the reluctance pointed out below in the text.

why we address Him as Father in a true and appropriate way of speaking.<sup>59</sup>

But according to the explanation sketched above we can say more. Unless there be reason to the contrary (and we trust we have shown there is no such reason), we may take seriously the traditional Catholic way of expressing our attitude towards the three Persons. We may call the Father our Father in a sense in which the Son cannot be called our Father, because the Son *is* not our Father, nor is He related to us (or we to Him) in the same manner as the First Person of the Trinity is related to us (and we to Him).<sup>60</sup> This, we repeat, does not mean that, in the line of things effected or produced in us, the Father *does* anything which would not be done by the Son or the Holy Ghost. As far as adopting means *regenerating* by producing an effect in us, adoption is common to the three Persons and we can say—as St. Thomas actually did say, pointing to that aspect of efficiency—that we are sons of the Trinity.<sup>61</sup> When we call the Father our Father in an exclusive sense (considering His distinction from and opposition to the Son and the Holy Ghost), we mean to say that our relation to Him is as to the Person who communicates the divine nature to other Persons by generation. This communication within the Trinity is a notional action, not productive *secundum esse absolutum*. In so far as our sanctification or regeneration is a divine generation which involves a real sharing by us of the divine nature (*consortium divinae naturae*), the Father alone is our Father too.<sup>62</sup> The Son is not our Father, because in the Trinity He is the Person who receives the divine nature from the Father through passive generation; He does not, either within the Trinity or in the work of our sanctification, communicate the divine nature by way of generation. Nor is the Holy Ghost our Father, because

<sup>59</sup> So, e.g., Galtier, *L'Habitation*, p. 130 ff.

<sup>60</sup> Why? Because the Father alone is the Person who communicates the divine nature to His Son and participatively to His adopted sons. This latter refers to the aspect of actuation or union as generation, not to the aspect of production of created grace or regeneration. The latter, as such, is common to the three Persons. The generation implied in our adoption as regeneration may be compared with the notional act of generation in the Trinity; this also, as such, does not produce an effect, but expresses relative being.

<sup>61</sup> *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 23, a. 2c and ad 2m.

<sup>62</sup> The reasoning supposes that the *consortium divinae naturae* involves more than a created assimilation to God: namely, a real communication, by way of actuation, of the Uncreated Act.

He is the Spirit of Love that unites to the Father the adopted sons who are in the Son. He does not communicate the divine nature by way of active generation, nor receive it by way of passive generation: He is neither Father nor Son.

Our relation to the Son is different, we said, from our relation to the Father. In what way? In so far as, by being adopted sons through grace, we also receive in an accidental and participative manner the divine nature, principle of our divine or supernatural life, we are like the first-born Son of the Father who thus is our divine "eldest Brother." This is the more so in the present order of Incarnation and Redemption where our grace is a sharing in the grace of Christ. We cannot be sons of the Father except by sharing in Christ's natural sonship or by being incorporated into Him, becoming one mystical body with Him, *fili in Filio*.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, does not the experience of Catholic spiritual life reveal, in a way, this difference between our attitude to the Father and our attitude to the Son? We pray to the Son in a manner that differs from our approach to the Father. The Father we approach with filial reverence and with confidence tempered with awe. We feel, as it were, more free when addressing the Son who is, in a way, closer to us, because He is more like us; He is, as it were, in the same situation towards the Father as we ourselves are (no doubt, also, because He is one of us, as man). This difference has been explained, in a perfectly Catholic way, by saying that this is so only by appropriation. But is that not a minimizing and, to some extent, fictitious way of speaking? If we can say these things in a theologically correct manner and at the same time understand the words to mean what they actually say, why should we not do so?

Finally, our union with the Holy Ghost also can then be conceived as proper to Him in the way we have said. Here again, our Catholic sense tells us that our devotional life takes a different shape when we pray to the Third Person of the Trinity than when we worship the Father or the Son. We are united to the Holy Ghost as to one who is the bond of love between the Father and Son, and is also, in the participating manner in which we share the divine life in grace, the divine link uniting the adopted sons with the Father and with His first-born Son. Because He is the Spirit of Love who unites us to the Father and

<sup>68</sup> Cf. E. Mersch, "Fili in Filio," *Nouvelle revue théologique*, LXV (1938), 805-30.



to the Son, our union with Him is, in a special way, inhabitation, in the sense that it cannot be thought of except as His presence *in* us. We cannot be united to the Holy Spirit except as to the Spirit of Love who inhabits us, *qua est inhabitans*. This is more than appropriation. It is a *proprium* of the Holy Ghost, not in the sense that the Father and the Son are not present in us, or we not united to them in a special way through grace; the presence of, and our union with, the Father and the Son are undoubtedly real, but the relations which this union and presence express are, on the one hand, fatherhood and sonship, and on the other, mutual brotherhood: both of these, as such, do not formally include indwelling (though in fact, materially as it were, they do). But the special presence of the Holy Ghost with us is formally indwelling, since the Spirit must necessarily be in him whose Spirit He is, and the bond of love must needs be intrinsic to those whom He unites in love. Our special union with the Father who is really present in us is not a union as with a divine indwelling Guest, but as with the Father who regenerates us; and our union with the Son, also really present in us, is a union with our divine first-born Brother in whose unique divine sonship we participate through grace. The Holy Spirit's union with us through grace is not conceivable except as indwelling. In that sense inhabitation is proper to the Holy Ghost and we need not, for this purpose, postulate any special role of His in the sense of productive efficiency.

#### PRACTICAL IMPORT OF SPECIAL RELATIONS

The practical implications of this theory of the special relations are not negligible. Not only does this idea of our union through grace with the Trinity manifest the meaning of the dogma of the Trinity for our supernatural life, by showing in what manner the life of grace is built on a trinitarian pattern; our supernatural life would be different, were the one God not three in Persons. It also shows the foundation of the different attitudes which, in our devotional life, we spontaneously take towards the three divine Persons. No doubt, the theory of appropriation also explains these attitudes in its own way. And perhaps most Christians who live them do not suspect—nor need they do so—that their spiritual life rests either on the appropriation or the *proprium* theory; but when, in the latter explanation, we take our relations

to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost as special and different in the objective reality of their *esse relativum*, and not only in a manner of speaking, then our different devotional attitudes towards each of the three Persons become more real and sincere. We have not to feel then that they hide, or rest on, something fictitious: as though the Father were not really our Father in a special way, any more than the Son or the Holy Ghost, even though we say that He is or behave as though He were. This partial fiction is inevitable, and is explicitly admitted as legitimate, in the appropriation theory. But with that sort of half-sincerity and half-insincerity in the background, and with that kind of feeling of untruthfulness in our behavior towards the Father or the Son or the Holy Ghost, how can our life of conscious union with them, our prayer and self-surrender to them, be thoroughly genuine and simple and total as it should be? That speculative formalism, veiling a partial incorrectness or incompleteness of ideas, must needs reflect on our practical devotion.

If, however, according to the *proprium* theory which we have exposed, we are really sons of the Father and brothers of the Son-Christ, and not only in a manner of speaking, then our conscious union with Father and Son can truthfully take the filial and brotherly character and tonality that suits the reality; just as the concept of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, sketched above, allows our devotion to the divine Guest to be more real and sincere. A devotional life thus more genuine and sincere will naturally be more thorough and deep, and foster greater progress and quicker growth in grace. This practical consequence speaks loudly in favor of the *proprium* theory of our supernatural relations to the Trinity and may well be a sign of its truth. And it is de la Taille's idea of immediate union with the Uncreated Act who actuates souls in grace that affords the possibility of conceiving the *proprium* theory in conformity with traditional theology. The above application of a well-known formula to this particular aspect of the life of grace—an application which de la Taille himself had not essayed—will have been worth the effort if our attempt should help ever so little towards penetrating the secrets of this august mystery.