

A CASE FOR LOGOCENTRIC THEOLOGY¹

SEELY BEGGIANI

Catholic University of America

THE QUESTION of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the rest of humanity has been always the subject of rich speculation in theology.² The issue has become more prominent due to the recent stress given to Christian anthropology. However, something of a dilemma seems to appear when this relationship of Christ to man is examined closely. On the one hand, it is stated that Christ is like us in all things except sin. Christ experienced human joys and sufferings and the whole gamut of human living. On the other hand, in view of the Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Second and Third Constantinople, stress has been placed on the divine person of Christ and the fact that He is incapable of sinning. This view necessarily sets Christ apart from the rest of men.

This dilemma is nothing new; in fact, it is the original and basic Christological problem, and was the underlying issue at the Christological councils. We shall review briefly, a little later, the concern of the Antiochene School that Christ's complete humanity be recognized, since it was the basis for man's total redemption. We shall also see that the Alexandrine School tended not to stress the humanity of Christ, and centered its study on the Logos of God who became present on earth in human form. While Chalcedon seemed to resolve the dilemma, and

¹ The choice of the term "Logocentric" rather than Patricentric or theocentric will become clear as the article goes on. We will adopt the view that the Logos is the perfect self-expression of the Father and that man is the highest creaturely self-expression of the Logos. Our stress on Logos is not intended to diminish the role of the Holy Spirit, who is the energizing force of love in the Trinity and in the redemption of the world.

² For a few introductory works in Christology, see B. Lonergan, *De Verbo incarnato* (Rome, 1961); B. M. Xiberta, *Tractatus de Verbo incarnato*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1954); Karl Adam, *Christ of Faith* (New York, 1957); *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, 3 vols. (Würzburg, 1951-54); articles on Christology and related subjects in Karl Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie*, 8 vols. (Eng. tr., *Theological Investigations*, 6 vols.); R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior* (St. Louis, 1950); O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (Philadelphia, 1949); *id.*, *Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 1959); D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ* (New York, 1948); A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* (New York, 1965); P. Smulders, *The Fathers on Christology* (De Pere, Wis., 1968); M. de la Taille, *The Hypostatic Union: Created Actuation by Uncreated Act* (West Baden Springs, Ind., 1952); *Concilium* 11 (N.J., 1966); M. Schmaus, *Katholische Dogmatik* 2 (6th ed.; Munich, 1963); H. M. Diepen, *La théologie de l'Emmanuel* (Bruges, 1960); P. Galtier, *L'Unité du Christ: Etre, personne, conscience* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1939); P. Parente, *L'Io di Cristo* (2nd ed.; Brescia, 1955); B. Lonergan, *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica* (4th ed.; Rome, 1964); E. Gutwenger, *Bewusstsein und Wissen Christi* (Innsbruck, 1960); F. Malmberg, *Über den Gottmenschen* (Basel, 1960); J. F. Bonnefoy, *Christ and the Cosmos* (Paterson, N.J., 1965).

while Third Constantinople sought to reaffirm the complete human nature in Christ, Catholic theology in succeeding centuries for many reasons seemed to stress the divine in Christ and viewed the human nature as a conjoined instrument. Such an emphasis fitted into the context of the Christology and soteriology of the times.

The stress on the primacy of the human subject and the anthropology of recent years have revived questions concerning the human nature of Christ, His knowledge and consciousness. There is a desire to see how closely Christ can be identified with the rest of men. Serious problems also arise in explaining justification and sanctification in human beings. The usual explanation is that the human Christ was sanctified by the hypostatic union and that subsequent created graces are received because of that union. The rest of men are not sanctified directly by union with the divine Logos, but rather because of their solidarity with the human nature of Christ. What happened to Christ should have a direct effect on men, because He is a distant but signally important relative.

One possible hypothesis is that the overstress on man's relationship to the physical Christ developed alongside the overstress, down through the years, on the relationship of each individual to the physical Adam. We can try to draw a parallel between the view basing the universality of redemption on the fact that all men form a collective person in Christ and that God redeems them because of their relationship to the human nature of Christ, and the view that bases the universality of original sin on the fact that all men form a collective person with Adam and that God made a juridical pact with Adam. We can speculate whether recent writings moving away from this view regarding original sin would justify our re-evaluating the similar view regarding man and Christ.³

³ Some of the recent theories on original sin can be outlined as follows. Recent studies have raised the question whether Genesis can say anything in a historical sense regarding Adam or the physical transmission of original sin. (See A. M. Dubarle, *The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin* [New York, 1964]; H. Haag, *Biblische Schöpfungslehre und kirchliche Erbsündenlehre* [Stuttgart, 1966]; H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning* [New York, 1964]; K. Rahner, *Hominisation* [New York, 1965]; K. Rahner, "Ätiologie" *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 1 [2nd ed., 1957] 1011-12.) The crucial passage of Rom 5:12 cannot be cited as supporting inherited sin, but rather describes how each man's personal sins ratify the sin of Adam. (See S. Lyonnet, *Saint Paul: Épître aux Romains* [Paris, 1957]; *id.*, "Le péché originel et l'exégèse de Rom 5, 12-14," *Recherches de science religieuse* 44 [1956] 63-84; *id.*, "Le sens de eph hō en Rom 5, 12 et l'exégèse des Pères grecs," *Biblica* 36 [1955] 63-84; O. Kuss, *Römerbrief* 1 [Regensburg, 1957] 225 ff.; E. Gutwenger, "Die Erbsünde und das Konzil von Trient," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 89 [1967] 437-38.) Nor has the Church's magisterium been concerned primarily with the manner of transmission. The Council of Orange wanted to deal with Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism and stressed man's absolute need for Christ and grace, if each man is to attain salvation. Original sin is introduced to underscore this need, and the manner of transmission

The theology of the past was properly concerned with the universality of Christ's redemption and took for granted the universality of sin. We are more concerned with the manner in which the universality of sin took place, with an eye to drawing a parallel with the manner of the universality of redemption. We do not dismiss entirely the idea of corporate personality⁴ and human solidarity. There is no doubt that we have the same human nature with sinful Adam and the same concupiscence, and that they influence our behavior. In reality, Schoonenberg's recent thesis on original sin is based on human solidarity. However, we do question the idea of a juridical pact made by God with Adam which would account for the universality of original sin based on physical

was not discussed. (See John B. Endres, "The Council of Trent and Original Sin," *Catholic Theol. Society of America Proceedings* 22 [New York, 1968] 74 ff.; Patrick Burke, "Man without Christ: An Approach to Hereditary Sin," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 29 [1968] 16-17; James L. Connor, "Original Sin: Contemporary Approaches," *ibid.* 29 [1968] 223-24.) The Council of Trent was concerned primarily with showing that man is truly justified by baptism and that this was more than "injustice" no longer being imputed. In declaring that sin is transmitted by propagation rather than imitation, the Council was borrowing directly from the Council of Orange. The manner of transmission or the historicity of the Fall was not the concern of the Council fathers. (See A. Vanneste, "Le décret du Concile de Trent sur le péché originel," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 87 [1965] 688-726; 88 [1966] 581-602; Burke, *art. cit.*, pp. 16-17; Connor, *art. cit.*, pp. 224-25.) St. Thomas developed the idea that all men constitute a collective person with Adam, and later theologians developed the juridical idea that God has made a pact with Adam through which the latter is responsible for the salvation of his descendants. (See P. Schoonenberg, *Man and Sin* [Notre Dame, 1965] p. 156.)

However, in recent years the acceptance of an evolutionary view of the world has raised the issue as to whether primitive man was not already subject to disorder and death from the moment he appeared on earth, and whether only one pair of first parents evolved. Also, the stress on the individual and self-responsibility has raised the question as to whether man should suffer for the sin of his ancestor because of a decision of God. P. Schoonenberg sees the basis of original sin in every man "being situated." Man possesses a situated freedom; every human choice is conditioned by past decisions and the decisions of those around us. (See Schoonenberg, *Man and Sin*.) Z. Alszeghy and M. Flick speak of man's inability to enter freely into a dialogue with God as one's Father until revelation occurs. (See their "Il peccato originale in prospettive personalistica," *Gregorianum* 46 [1965] 705-32.) In a later article they speak of original sin as a negative aspect of the evolutionary process. (See "Il peccato originale in prospettive evolutionistica," *Gregorianum* 47 [1966] 201-25.) A. Hulsbosch and P. Smulders also seek to explain original sin within an evolutionary context. (See A. Hulsbosch, *God's Creation and Evolution* [New York, 1965]; P. Smulders, *La vision de Teilhard de Chardin* [Bruges, 1964].)

All of these recent opinions have weaknesses and are open to criticism, but their collective thrust is that the universality of original sin is viewed from a different perspective which would not raise the question of a physical generation from Adam or of a juridical pact between him and God.

⁴ In fact, the idea of corporate personality is still presented in recent writings. See J. de Fraigne, *Adam and the Family of Man* (Staten Island, 1965); Alszeghy and Flick, *art. cit.*

solidarity. In the same way, there is no doubt that our solidarity with the human nature of Christ is a significant factor in our redemption. It is in the context of human nature that Christ teaches us of the Father and shows us by the example of His human life how we are to achieve fulfilment. But the question is whether the actual link of justification and sanctification is our union with the human Christ, or rather our union with the divine Logos Himself.

Our purpose is to present a different approach regarding the nature of man's salvation and deification. It is our thesis that the sanctification of each individual man should be caused in the same way as the sanctification of the human nature of Christ. The reasoning is as follows. The basis for the sanctification of the human nature of Christ is the hypostatic union. In regard to the rest of men, some traditional and recent teachings (as we shall see) speak of man's sanctification as due directly and immediately to the indwelling of the Trinity. We theorize that the two ideas, hypostatic union and indwelling, are two stages of the same reality. The conclusion is that all men have the same potential for total union with the divine Logos. The indwelling of the Trinity represents various stages along the way. Hypostatic union represents the culmination and climax. We shall speculate further by borrowing the idea of "existential" (as used by Heidegger and Rahner) and claim that all men have an innate but supernatural congeniality for sanctification, which has for its ultimate term and measure not just a very intense experience of the indwelling but the possibility of hypostatic union. In other words, within this philosophical context (i.e., of Heidegger and Rahner) we are proposing that some form of the structure of the hypostatic union of the Logos should exist within every human. Having said this, we do not claim that in historical fact anyone other than Christ has fulfilled the potential of hypostatic union, but the possibility is there. (It would seem that the uniqueness of Christ has a broader meaning than the structure of the hypostatic union, as we shall see.)

We might add that the debate between the ancient schools of Antioch and Alexandria saw Antioch speaking of indwelling in explaining the union in Christ, and Alexandria overstressing personal unity. Antioch thought in terms of indwelling because it was interested in showing that the human nature of Christ was the model for the salvation of the rest of men.

We might summarize our reasoning as follows. If the sanctification of the human nature of Christ is grounded in the hypostatic union, and if the sanctification of every other human being is to approach the ideal of Christ, albeit less in degree, then it would seem that the causality of sanctification should be analogous, if not identical. The divine Logos

is to the human nature of Christ as the divine Logos is to each individual human. (*Not*, the divine Logos is to the human Christ as the God-man is to each individual human.) The question can be asked whether analogy does apply to our thesis and what kind of analogy.⁵ As we have men-

⁵ A brief review of analogy might be helpful. Some recent works on analogy are H. Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World: An Investigation of Its Background and Interpretation of Its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala, 1952); George Klubertanz, *St. Thomas on Analogy* (Chicago, 1960); E. Gilson, "Cajétan et l'existence," *Tijdschrift voor filosofie* 15 (1953) 267-87; Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in Aristotelian "Metaphysics"* (Toronto, 1952); Robert Henle, *Saint Thomas and Platonism* (The Hague, 1956); *id.*, "Saint Thomas' Methodology on the Treatment of 'Positiones' with Particular Reference to 'Positiones Platonicae,'" *Gregorianum* 36 (1955) 391-409; Cajetan, *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*, tr. E. Buchenski and H. Koren (Pittsburgh, 1959); M. P. Slattery, "Concerning Two Recent Studies in Analogy," *New Scholasticism* 31 (1957) 237-46; H. T. Schwartz, "Analogy in St. Thomas and Cajetan," *ibid.* 28 (1954) 127-44; G. P. Klubertanz, "The Problem of the Analogy of Being," *Review of Metaphysics* 10 (1956-57) 553-79; W. Esdaille Byles, "The Analogy of Being," *New Scholasticism* 16 (1942) 331-64; J. Habbel, *Die Analogie zwischen Gott und Welt nach Thomas von Aquin* (Regensburg, 1928); S. Ramirez, "En torno a un famoso texto de Santo Tomás sobre la analogía," *Sapientia* 8 (1953) 166-92.

Writers distinguish various forms of analogy. Analogy of attribution is that type in which the analogon (or perfection) is principally found in one analogate called the primary analogate and only secondarily (by relation) in other or secondary analogates. If the content is intrinsically proper to the secondary analogate, we speak of intrinsic attribution. The analogy of proportion is that analogy in which one analogate is directly related to another. Analogy of proportionality is that analogy in which there is no direct relationship between analogates themselves; there is instead a relationship within each of the analogates, and these relationships are similar, though all the relata, four in number, are different. (See Klubertanz, *St. Thomas on Analogy*, p. 7.) There has been some dispute as to how Thomas viewed analogy. Cajetan, in commenting on the *In 1 Sent.* 19, claimed that for Thomas analogy of attribution is always intrinsic, i.e., only the primary analogate realizes the perfection formally, and the others have it only by extrinsic denomination. Therefore, only analogy of proportionality is of real use in philosophy and theology. (See Cajetan, *op. cit.*, pp. 15 ff.) The implications of such a view are quite drastic, for we would be unable to have a categorical analysis of beings according to their principles. We would be limited to finite reality, and the meaning of "is" would be limited to things we have experienced. (See Klubertanz, "The Problem of the Analogy of Being," pp. 561-62.) Suarez, in his *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disagrees with Cajetan and claims that he gave too great a prominence to analogy of proportionality, which according to Suarez is always to some degree figurative and metaphorical. He declares that Thomas taught analogy of both intrinsic and extrinsic attribution. It is only by formulating the analogy of intrinsic attribution that we can speak of God and creatures. However, in intrinsic attribution the form from which the analogous concept is taken exists in all the analogates as an intrinsic perfection common to all. Therefore, some have claimed that the analogous concept in Suarez is really univocal. (See Lyttkens, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-38.) Lyttkens and others claim that analogy in Thomas is based on a likeness of effect to cause. For example, the analogous perfection is predicated of God essentially and of the secondary analogate by participation. (See Lyttkens, *op. cit.*, pp. 245 ff.) It would seem that the analogy of proportionality alone could express the transcendence of God but not His immanence. There would be no necessary causal link between God and

tioned, in the development of our theory we will speak of Christ and man possessing the same "existential" for the hypostatic union. Looked at from this point of view, there is identity and not analogy. However, we also say that Christ represents the awareness of and fulfilment of this "existential," while the rest of men fulfil it only to some degree, if at all. In this case, it would seem that analogy of intrinsic attribution would apply with Christ as the primary analogate.

To attempt to place Christ the Mediator above man so that He seems as some kind of physical channel between God and man is to cut Him off effectively from the rest of men. If this is the case, to imitate Christ in any realistic fashion is impossible. Therefore, we are advocating that we be placed alongside of Christ. We are not saying that Christ is only man, but rather that all men are somehow united to the divine Logos in a manner similar to Christ's union. In our hypothesis, the role of Christ would be to be that event where God's nearness was most intimate in man and where man reached his culmination and complete realization. Rahner, in speaking of the Incarnation, says:

... Where God's self-communication and man's self-transcendence reach their absolute and irreversible culmination, i.e., where God is simply and irrevocably "there" in time and space and consequently where man's self-transcendence also attains a similarly complete self-giving to God, we have what in Christian terms is called the Incarnation.⁶

Christ would not be so much a physical link between God and man as the visible witness and proclamation that God's nearness could be experienced and responded to by all men. In other words, Christ is the "first fruits" in the usual sense of the term. Christ is the effective model for the rest of us, and human solidarity provides the frame of reference for God's direct action on each individual. It might be recalled that the Scholastics freely speculated that the divine Logos could have become incarnate with all men, if He so chose.⁷

creatures. In summary, there seem to remain many unsolved problems concerning analogy and its use in theology. However, the authors we have cited have all intended to show that we can speak properly of the attributes present in God and in creatures. The problems arise regarding the structure by which analogy is to be expressed.

⁶ K. Rahner, "Incarnation," in *Sacramentum mundi* 3 (New York, 1968-70) 177-78.

⁷ It is interesting that Thomas seems rather weak in answering the question "Whether the Son of God Ought to Have Assumed Human Nature in All Individuals?" (*Sum. theol.* 3, q. 4, a. 5). He says that it would be unfitting that this should happen, for then all human supposites would be taken away. It would be derogatory to the Son, for He is called the First-born of all creatures, and if the thesis were true, all would be equal in dignity. It is fitting that the divine supposite take one nature, so that both sides would be equal. To the objection that love urges us to give of ourselves as much as we can, Thomas replies that love is shown by Christ's suffering for all men in His human nature.

The procedure to be followed in this article will be to begin with a brief presentation of Christian anthropology as developed by Karl Rahner in his theology of symbol and in his explanations of uncreated grace and the "supernatural existential." This will provide the proper context wherein we can raise the question of the relationship of the divine Logos with the human race. We will try to show that Christian anthropology gives certain positive indications in the direction of our hypothesis. We will briefly review what the Fathers and the Christological councils understood by hypostatic union, person, and nature, so that we can determine whether anything in our thesis would necessarily contradict the teaching of tradition. We will try to face the question of what place "human person" would have in our hypothesis and how we would reconcile the sinlessness of Christ with the sinfulness of the rest of men. Finally, while we will rely heavily on Rahner's theology, we do not claim that he holds or would ever hold our hypothesis. In fact, he clearly states on many occasions that the hypostatic union was unique in Christ and did not occur with other men.⁸ Rather, we are considering Rahner as a point of departure, in much the same way as Rahner sometimes deals with St. Thomas. Furthermore, our thesis is not dependent on the validity of Rahner's teachings, and the issues we have raised would still demand answers if Rahner were not referred to at all.

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Theology of Symbol

It would seem that Rahner's Christology has as its underlying explanation his theology of symbol.⁹ For Rahner, beings must necessarily express themselves to be dynamic and achieve fulness. It is primarily by being-present-to-itself in knowledge that a being fully realizes itself. Symbol is the primal representation in which one reality renders another present primarily for itself and only secondarily for others. This implies that multiplicity is not necessarily a sign of finitude but is the condition for richness of being. Multiplicity in unity is the ultimate condition of being. Being discloses itself into a plurality in order to find itself precisely there. Therefore, a rational being through experience and reflection attempts to form an image or expression of self. In knowing itself it fully possesses itself and only then is able to give of itself completely. This perfect self-image is *the* symbol of the knowing being which is given to and known by others. The original paradigm of this explanation of reality is the Trinity itself. The Father is the unoriginated personal

⁸ K. Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theological Investigations* 4 (Baltimore, 1966) 110, 112, 116.

⁹ K. Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," *ibid.*, pp. 221-52.

principle who forms a perfect self-expression, namely, the Word or Logos, and in accepting Self gives of Himself with full energy as the Spirit. The Logos is the "inward symbol which remains distinct from what is symbolized, which is constituted by what is symbolized, where what is symbolized expresses itself and possesses itself."¹⁰ While the Trinity cannot be proven or anticipated by reason, its revelation should be readily accepted.

Next, God the Father chooses to go outside of His divinity. (The motive or purpose for such a decision is beyond the scope of this article.) If such an exteriorization is to take place, it must necessarily be a kenosis—God must necessarily become less than God. However, if creation is to be the manifestation of God, then it must be an exteriorization of His own self-expression, it must be a creaturely embodiment of the Logos Himself. It is clear that only the Logos should become incarnate, otherwise creation would probably obscure God rather than express Him. Also, if this self-expression of God is to be responded to, if it is to carry on a dialogue in knowledge and love, it must be joined to a nature possessing intellect and will. It must incarnate itself in man. Only a spiritual-personal being possesses the "obediential potency" for the reception of such a self-communication. Rahner states: "the human personal subject is the addressee who is, of his very nature, demanded by the divine self-communication, which creates him as the condition of its own possibility."¹¹ (We cannot comment on the divine Logos joining Himself to an angel, since revelation and salvation-history seem to give angels only a peripheral role.) Rahner says the following about the Incarnation:

The Father is by definition the unoriginated who is essentially invisible and who shows and reveals himself only by uttering his Word to the world. And the Word, by definition, is both immanently and in the economy of salvation the revelation of the Father, so that a revelation of the Father without the Logos and his incarnation would be the same as a wordless utterance.¹²

In the approach we are presenting, the Incarnation is first, at least in intention, and is the highest act of creation. All other creatures are reflections in varying degrees of the Incarnation itself. Also, following the pattern of "theology of symbol," we would say that the Logos is the most accurate interior symbol of the Father, and the human nature of Christ is the most accurate exterior symbol of the Logos and therefore of the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 236

¹¹ K. Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York, 1970) pp. 89-94.

¹² K. Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise 'De Trinitate,'" *Theological Investigations* 4, 91.

Father. God's self-expression *ad extra* is constituted by His self-expression *ad intra*.¹³ Rahner says:

The humanity is the self-disclosure of the Logos itself so that when God, expressing himself, exteriorizes himself, that very being appears which we call the humanity of the Logos. Thus anthropology itself is finally based on something more than the doctrine of the possibilities open to the infinite Creator—who would not however really betray *himself* when he created. Its ultimate source is the doctrine about God himself, insofar as it depicts that which "appears" when in his self-exteriorization he goes out of himself into that which is other than he.¹⁴

De Letter interprets Rahner as saying that the power of self-communication is the root of God's power to create, and creation is the constitution of the context needed for the self-expression of God.¹⁵

The implications of theology of symbol also help to give proper value to the human nature of Christ, which is not a mere garment worn by the Logos, nor a puppet to be manipulated by God.¹⁶ If that were the case, then the Logos would be showing us through the Incarnation marvelous and superhuman features such as the preternatural gifts, "but the human as such would not show us the Logos as such."¹⁷ Rather the human nature of Christ is "that which comes about when the Logos expresses himself in the region of the non-divine."¹⁸

On the other hand, as indicated above, the foundations of anthropology are in the exteriorization of the Logos. Every human being is made from the same mold as the human Christ. Every other human being is the potential visible symbol of the divine Logos. In fact, Rahner concludes that "man is possible because the exteriorization of the Logos is possible."¹⁹

The primary role of the God-man is to establish God's intimacy in human history and to declare the actual ultimate union of God with one human, and the real possibility of various degrees of union with God by every other individual human. The longing for transcendence found in the human spirit is clarified and made explicit, and the realization of

¹³ P. De Letter, "The Theology of God's Self-Gift," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 24 (1963) 419-22. De Letter tries to compare the continuity between God's self-expression *ad intra* and *ad extra* to what Lonergan says of the mission of the Logos *ad extra* (see *ibid.*, pp. 420-21, n. 63).

¹⁴ Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," p. 239.

¹⁵ De Letter, *art. cit.*, pp. 419-20.

¹⁶ See K. Rahner, "Jesus Christus," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 5 (2nd ed.) 956.

¹⁷ Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁸ Rahner, "Remarks on . . . 'De Trinitate,'" p. 92.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

absolute transcendence through union by at least one human (Christ) is affirmed. The Incarnation, therefore, reveals the meaning of creation, its implications and challenge for all men, and its consummation. A kerygma based on this understanding of the Incarnation would announce the divine pledge and tangible witness that the perfection of creation is possible for each individual human being.

Before proceeding, we should offer some evaluation of Rahner's theology of symbol itself. Some writers, as Dom Trethowan, have criticized it severely as implying a mutability in God.²⁰ Rahner's response is that one who is immutable in himself can himself be mutable in another. Other writers (and sometimes Rahner himself) see in the explanation of the Trinity and the Incarnation intimations of Hegelian dialectic. However, Rahner insists on the freedom of God to create or not to create, and declares that we could not postulate a Trinity unless it had been revealed. The primacy of the Incarnation in the order of intention of creation cannot be proven. The debate has gone on since the time of Scotus and St. Thomas. We can deal only with reasons of fittingness. Finally, and most important, we cannot prove that the theology of symbol is the most accurate structure and description for the Trinity and the Incarnation. All we can do is consider it as a "model" and examine it according to how it corresponds to and explains the givens of revelation and dogma, while pointing out its weaknesses or where it might seem to contradict revelation. It is our contention that Rahner's theology of symbol is an apt vehicle of interpretation of revelation, with no insurmountable weaknesses.

Indwelling as Cause of Sanctification

Once the Incarnation is considered, we should turn to the causality of man's sanctification and see how this relates to our thesis. Traditionally, created grace is stressed as the basis of sanctification, and is given priority of order in regard to the indwelling of the Trinity in the individual. Although based on sound tradition, such a stress on created grace can raise certain problems. We speak of sanctification as the true self-communication of God, but to inject a created mediation (sanctifying grace) would seem to prohibit a real *self*-communication. Also, if sanctification consists primarily in created grace, which is the result of God's efficient causality, there is a problem as to whether we are still in a strictly divine order. Revelation seems to indicate a threefold communication of God in sanctification. In fact, the Eastern Orthodox view has always stressed the non-created character of sanctification, and has seen grace as man's deification. For them, there is no created "superstructure" and so, if God crea-

²⁰ Iltyd Trethowan, "A Changing God," *Downside Review* 84 (1966) 247-61.

ted the world for deification, grace must of necessity be God Himself. Man is truly united to God Himself and not to an intermediate "super-structure."²¹

It would seem that some of these considerations prompted M. de la Taille to develop his theory of "created actuation."²² For him, the supernatural is the self-gift of God to His spiritual creatures; the created gifts of grace are secondary and dispositions for uncreated grace.²³ He believed that God can communicate Himself to man's obediential potency not as a form but as an actuation. Actuation does not imply change in the agent, in contrast to causing a new form, which does. We are not dealing with a generation of act from potency, but with a union or self-donation. The causality is formal rather than efficient. On the level of creation, every actuation is an information and is dependent on its potency. However, an Uncreated Act does not depend on the potency and can give itself without being received by or supported by potency. Nevertheless, it changes the potency for the better. The Uncreated Act is unchanged but the potency has now been actuated with a new disposition. Creative actuation is the passive change or gain that results in the creature from God's self-gift and is the real foundation of the creature's union with God. God produces the actuation by efficient causality, while also being the formal cause of union. Therefore, the "light of glory" is the disposition or created actuation resulting from the union of the Uncreated Act (the Trinity) and the human soul; sanctifying grace is the infused disposition of the soul's essence for uncreated grace; the grace of union is the actuation and disposition for the hypostatic union—de la Taille at times refers to a secondary created *esse* in the human nature of Christ. He adds that, however great the difference is between the Creator and the created actuation, nothing more resembles the Uncreated Act than its created communication.²⁴

De la Taille's thesis has provoked strong criticism. Thomas Mullaney²⁵ states that since there was no pre-existence of the humanity of Christ, it could not have experienced a *passio* which seems to be implied in ac-

²¹ A. Schmemmann, "The Orthodox Tradition," in *The Convergence of Traditions*, ed. Elmer O'Brien, S.J. (New York, 1967) pp. 33 ff.

²² M. de la Taille, *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act*, tr. C. Vollert (West Baden Springs, Ind., 1952); *id.*, "Created Actuation by the Uncreated Act: Difficulties and Answers," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 18 (1957) 60-92; Thomas Mullaney, "The Incarnation: De la Taille vs. Thomistic Tradition," *Thomist* 17 (1954) 1-42; John Hyde, S.J., "Grace: A Bibliographic Note," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 32 (1965) 257-61; M. J. Donnelly, "The Inhabitation of the Trinity: A Solution according to de la Taille," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 8 (1947) 445-70.

²³ De Letter, "Created Actuation . . .," p. 61.

²⁴ De la Taille, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 ff.

²⁵ Mullaney, *art. cit.*, pp. 12 ff.

tuation. Secondly, since change in created actuation is a becoming, it must be in the order of efficient causality. Thirdly, to speak of the human nature of Christ in regard to the hypostatic union, and the human soul in regard to grace and glory, as material causes for the actuation implies the collapse of the natural and the supernatural order. Fourthly, de la Taille gives the indwelling of the Trinity a priority of order over created grace. Fifthly, a created actuation is a combination of God and not-God and therefore a contradiction. De Letter²⁶ answers Mullaney by pointing out that de la Taille always sought to safeguard the discontinuity between the natural and the supernatural. Also, de la Taille distinguishes in God's activity between His efficient causality and His self-communication, which partakes of formal causality, and therefore does not confuse the two. There is sufficient tradition in the Church for holding a priority of order for the indwelling vis-à-vis created grace. On the other hand, Tonneau²⁷ points out that the underlying notions of causality and relation in de la Taille are unsatisfactory. B. Lonergan²⁸ declares that the analogy to potency and act is taken too far. There is no reception, no limitation by potency, no correspondence of potency and act to each other.

In our view, de la Taille's basic insight was in stressing God's direct self-communication rather than the created mediation of grace. His problems arose when he tried to give place to man's created actuation, which he felt had to take place, otherwise there is no change at all in man. But there must be a change when God comes to man. Perhaps another possible solution, as we shall see, might be that God is united with man from the beginning, and the change that takes place in salvation is the awareness and the response by man in time to the divine reality that was present to him all the time.

While he was not familiar with de la Taille's work, K. Rahner developed a similar thesis regarding uncreated grace and quasi-formal causality.²⁹ In other words, Rahner will claim that the indwelling of the Trinity (or uncreated grace) operates in the individual by quasi-formal causality.

²⁶ De Letter, "Created Actuation . . .," pp. 75 ff.

²⁷ Tonneau, in *Bulletin thomiste* 11 (1960-62) 179-92.

²⁸ B. Lonergan, *De constitutione Christi* (Rome, 1956) pp. 63 ff.

²⁹ K. Rahner, "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," *Theological Investigations* 1 (Baltimore, 1961) 319-46; J. Trütsch, SS. *Trinitatis inhabitatio apud theologos recentiores* (Trent, 1949); P. Galtier, *L'Habitation en nous des trois personnes* (Rome, 1950); P. De Letter, "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union With the Holy Trinity," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 13 (1952) 33-58; M. J. Donnelly, "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union with the Trinity: A Reply," *ibid.*, pp. 190-204; F. Bourassa, "Adoptive Sonship: Our Union with the Divine Persons," *ibid.*, pp. 309-35; P. De Letter, "Current Theology: Sanctifying Grace and the Divine Indwelling," *ibid.* 14 (1953) 242-72; F. Bourassa, "Présence de Dieu et union aux divines personnes," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 6 (1954) 3-23; E. L. Mascall, "Grace and Nature in East and West," *Church Quarterly Review* 164 (1963) 332-47.

He points out that he is not attempting something new, but rather wishes to draw certain implications from the writings of Scripture, the Fathers, and the Scholastics. He claims that St. Paul viewed man's inner sanctification as due primarily to the communication of the personal Spirit of God. Every created grace is a manifestation of the possession of uncreated grace.³⁰ The Fathers, especially the Greek Fathers, viewed grace as following rather than antecedent to the presence of the Trinity in man.³¹ Some indication of a more prominent role for uncreated grace can be seen in Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure (*2 Sent.*, d. 26, a. 1, q. 1 corp.), and St. Thomas, who speaks of created grace as a *dispositio* for uncreated grace (*1 Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 2; also *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 3, ad 2). However, of more importance to Rahner's thesis are St. Thomas' considerations of the *lumen gloriae*, as a *dispositio* for the reception of the formal causality of God's intelligible Being upon it (See *C. gent.* 3, 53). This *dispositio* has the character of formal cause in regard to the human spirit. Franzelin³² sees the communication of God in the manner of formal causality and cites, as examples of this, the hypostatic union, the beatific vision, and the grace of justification. Rahner cites, in support of his using the beatific vision as a point of departure for explaining the relation of the indwelling to men, the statements of Popes Leo XIII (*Divinum illud munus*, ASS 29 [1896] 653) and Pius XII (*Mystici corporis*, AAS 25 [1943] 231 ff.) that grace is the formal beginning and ontological prerequisite of the beatific vision. He points out that in St. Thomas God's own essence takes the place of the created species in the beatific vision. Rahner states:

Such a new "relationship" of God to the creature, which cannot be brought under the category of efficient causality but only of formal causality, is on the one hand a concept which transcribes a strictly supernatural mystery; and on the other hand its possibility must not be put in doubt in virtue of purely rational considerations.³³

Therefore, Rahner claims that the indwelling is the direct source of man's sanctification and that it has a priority of order over created grace. Rahner uses the term "quasi-formal" causality in regard to the action of God in

³⁰ P. Gaechter, "Zum Pneumabegriff des hl. Paulus," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 53 (1929) 345-408.

³¹ See P. Galtier, *De SS. Trinitate in se et in nobis* (Paris, 1933); Petavius, *De Trinitate* 8, 4-6; T. de Regnon, *Etudes sur la trinité* 4, 27, 4, nos. 7-8, pp. 553-58; J. C. Martinez-Gomez, "Relación entre la inhabitación del Espíritu santo y los dones creados de la justificación," *Estudios eclesiásticos* 14 (1935) 22-50; M. J. Scheeben, *Mysteries of Christianity* (St. Louis, 1946).

³² Franzelin, *De Deo uno* (Rome, 1883) pp. 340-42.

³³ Rahner, "Some Implications . . ." p. 329. For a critique of this position, see William Hill, "Uncreated Grace: A Critique of Karl Rahner," *Thomist* 27 (1963) 333-56.

the beatific vision and the indwelling, and explains that by "quasi" he means to show that God preserves His absolute transcendence, inviolateness, and freedom. However, he hastens to add that "quasi" is not intended to rob formal causality of its meaning. He says that "it is the *quasi* which must be prefixed to every application to God of a category in itself terrestrial. . . . It provides an emphatic reminder of the analogical nature of our concepts in the matter of a relationship to the world known only through revelation. . . ." ³⁴

It would seem to us that the idea of God sanctifying man through formal causality would be a logical consequence from the theology of symbol outlined above, for the thing symbolized is related to that which expresses it by formal causality. In such a view, the Trinity itself accounts for man now existing and operating on a supernatural level, and created grace serves as a dispositive cause, ³⁵ just as the *lumen gloriae* does in the beatific vision. The immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity. Such an explanation would tend to support our thesis, since it would seem that the nature of the union of the Logos and the human nature of Christ is also one of formal causality. If the difference between the hypostatic union and man's sanctification is not based on the difference between formal and efficient causality, then we must look deeper into the nature of the hypostatic union itself to find the distinction.

The idea of quasi-formal causality has been criticized. The most obvious objection is that there is no analogy in nature to this concept. On the other hand, is the term "quasi" used only to avoid having to admit that the believer is God? It would seem that Rahner is convinced that the use of efficient causality in explaining the relationship of God to man is inadequate. His view is that the data of revelation are more easily interpreted by the idea of formal causality. As we have mentioned above, the term "quasi" is an attempt to show that we have gone as far as our present categories will take us in speaking about God. It is preferable to put the mystery in the act of divinization itself, rather than place a created mediation between God and man.

Relationship of Indwelling to Hypostatic Union

There are similarities that make the sanctification of the human Christ by the hypostatic union and the sanctification of the individual by the indwelling analogous. Rahner states:

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 330-31.

³⁵ Such a teaching does not contradict Trent's teaching that sanctifying grace is the "unique formal cause," since, viewed from our level as creature, it is formal cause. It is only in relation to the Trinity that it is a disposition. Furthermore, Trent was concerned primarily with the imputation theory of the Reformers, Seripando, and others. It did not attempt to explain how created and uncreated grace are related to each other.

"Communication of (in respect of) the proper hypostasis" can in fact mean two things. It can either mean: communication of (according to) the particular hypostasis in such a way that it exercises its hypostatic function in respect of that to which the communication is made. Or "communication of (according to) the hypostasis" can mean that a true ontological communication of the hypostasis takes place, but to the end and only to the end that it can become in virtue of this quasi-formal causality the object of immediate knowledge and love. In the first sense we have such a communication only in the case of Christ, by reason of the relationship of the divine Word to the human nature assumed by him. We should have an instance of the second kind of communication in the "uncreated grace" of the justified man.³⁶

Earlier in the same article Rahner speaks of the Incarnation, and of the individual experiencing the beatific vision, both as being in the realm of formal causality. In the Incarnation God is the ontological principle of the subsistence of the finite nature, and in the beatific vision He is the ontological principle of finite knowledge.³⁷

Man's Supernatural Existential

Thus far we have been considering the sanctification of man beginning with God and creation and studying the implications for the Incarnation and for the rest of men. A complete presentation will be had by beginning now with man and working upward toward God. One of Rahner's principal contributions to the theology of grace has been his development of the "supernatural existential."³⁸ Following Maréchal's thought, Rahner is convinced of the reality of intentional being. Therefore, God's decree

³⁶ Rahner, "Some Implications . . .," p. 345.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 329-30.

³⁸ A predecessor of Rahner in this theory was E. Brisbois, "Le désir de voir Dieu et la métaphysique du vouloir selon St. Thomas," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 58 (1936) 103-5. For some of the basic writings on the subject see K. Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* 1, 297-317; H. Urs von Balthasar, *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie* (Cologne, 1951) esp. pp. 278-335; L. Malevez, "La gratuité du surnaturel," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 57 (1953) 561-86, 673-89; J. P. Kenny, "Reflections on Human Nature and the Supernatural," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 14 (1953) 280-87; R. J. Pendergast, "The Supernatural Existential, Human Generation, and Original Sin," *Downside Review* 82 (1964) 1-24; H. de Lubac, "Le mystère du surnaturel," *Recherches de science religieuse* 36 (1949) 80-121; J. Alfaro, "Persona y gracia," *Gregorianum* 41 (1960) 5-29; Richard Bruch, "Das Verhältnis von Natur und Gnade nach der Auffassung der neueren Theologie," *Theologie und Glaube* 46 (1956) 81-102; E. Gutwenger, "Natur and Übernatur," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 85 (1953) 82-97; Gutwenger and Balthasar, "Der Begriff der Natur in der Theologie," *ibid.*, pp. 452-64; J. Auer, "Das Werk Karl Rahners," *Theologische Revue* 60 (1964) 145-56; E. Schillebeeckx, "L'Instinct de la foi selon s. Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 48 (1964) 377-408; Thomas Motherway, "Supernatural Existential," *Chicago Studies* 4 (1965) 84 ff.; Eugene Te Selle, "The Problem of Nature and Grace," *Journal of Religion* 45 (1965) 238-49.

elevating man to the supernatural order must have as its effect the production of a corresponding reality in man.³⁹ On the other hand, there is what is called the extrinsicist approach to nature and grace, which views them as two separate layers and implies that the supernatural has resulted from a juridical decree of God's will. This traditional view, which developed as a reaction to the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian threats, sought to preserve at all costs the gratuity of God's grace and man's utter need for salvation. Indeed, within its world view, the two-layer division of nature and grace offered an adequate explanation. However, Rahner and others wonder whether viewing salvation as a juridical decree on God's part with no corresponding congeniality in man is not a form of nominalism or voluntarism. While these accusations may seem a little too strong, what is meant is that we generally view reality as corresponding to the mind of God, and that His will carries out His divine plan. However, in regard to grace, the extrinsicist view seems to be saying that God, after the decision to create, arbitrarily decides whether or not there will be a supernatural destiny and then adds it on to human nature. The traditional view also has some difficulty explaining the *poena damni*. What is the loss that man suffers in hell, if not the loss of the beatific vision? The traditional explanation is that the soul after death realizes more intensely its natural desire to see God and this is the *poena damni* it suffers. Another difficulty is in trying to give an adequate explanation of original sin. If man in original sin is on a natural level, then what is the loss that he is suffering, since he is not even oriented in any way to a destiny other than the natural?

The view of Rahner and others is based on the fact that the level of pure nature, at least from God's view, never really existed. This would seem to be in agreement with the traditional viewpoint. Man's supernatural destiny was simultaneous with God's decision to create. (This is not to deny that man could have been created only as a pure nature. But *de facto* he was not. And the role of theology is to explain man as he is. We might add that the theology of symbol developed above develops a priori what we are now trying to show a posteriori, that man's destiny was always supernatural.) And so, if man's supernatural end was part of the intention of creation, "then man (and the world) is by that very fact always and everywhere inwardly other in structure than he would have been if he did not have this end, and hence other as well before he has reached this end partially (the grace which justifies) or wholly (the beatific vision)."⁴⁰ In other words, man's concrete nature (not his pure na-

³⁹ Gerald McCool, "The Philosophy of the Human Person in Karl Rahner's Theology," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 22 (1961) 537-62.

⁴⁰ K. Rahner, "Concerning . . . Nature and Grace," pp. 302-3.

ture, which never existed) has a basic orientation to divinity, not because it is due to man, but because it has been freely decided for man from the moment of creation. Since supernatural elevation is not an afterthought to creation, we can imply more in the structure of man than a mere obediential potency which is present just in case God should decide to elevate man. As Rahner put it:

Man should be *able* to receive the Love which is God himself; he must have a congeniality for it. He must be able to accept it (and hence grace, the beatific vision) as one who has room and scope, understanding and desire for it. Thus he must have a real "potency" for it. He must have it *always*. He is indeed someone always addressed and claimed by this Love. For, as he now in fact is, he is created for it; he is thought and called into being so that Love might bestow itself. To this extent this "potency" is what is inmost and most authentic in him, the center and root of what he is absolutely.⁴¹

Representing the Eastern Orthodox position is Vladimir Lossky, who states:

The Eastern tradition knows nothing of "pure nature" to which grace is added as a supernatural gift. For it, there is no natural or "normal state," since grace is implied in the act of creation itself. . . . "Pure nature," for Eastern theology, would thus be a philosophical fiction corresponding neither to the original state of creation, nor to its present condition which is "against nature," nor to the state of deification which belongs to the age to come. . . . There is no "natural beatitude" for the creation, which can have no other end than deification.⁴²

As we have indicated, if the human nature of Christ is the term of the exteriorization of the Logos, then the human Christ must have an already existing correlative potential for responding to the offer of speech and love of the divine Logos. And so, if man is an exact replica of the human Christ, he too should have this correlative potential for responding.

Rahner uses the term "supernatural existential" to describe this aspect of man. The term "existential" is borrowed from M. Heidegger and refers to an ontological structure of being which is determined by existing itself. Heidegger distinguishes between the interconnection of the structures which constitute existence and which he calls existentiality, and one's self-understanding which is called "existentiell."⁴³ "Existential" refers to *Dasein's* general structures anterior to personal decision and personal self-understanding, and so man might not be aware of his "existentials" and might never become aware of them. "Existentiell" could refer

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

⁴² Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge, Eng., 1968) p. 1.

⁴³ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York, 1962) pp. 32-33.

to those possibilities for decision of which man is aware. Both Heidegger and Rahner are speaking about man as he is, dynamically existing and always incomplete, heading towards the future. Neither is speaking about how these "existentials" came to be or how they are related to each other. They are taking man as he is. Rahner is saying that man has a "supernatural existential," that is, supernatural possibilities which are to be found in the structure of man but of which he is originally unaware. These possibilities await man's becoming aware of them and deciding for them. A Christian first becomes aware of his "supernatural existential" by the preaching of the Word and its being lived by other Christians. However, he can only decide for his supernatural possibilities if he is assisted by additional grace supporting his will. Again, we wish to point out that to say that supernatural possibilities are to be found within man's structure is not to make them part of "pure human nature" but of "concrete human nature." To say that these possibilities are to be found in man in the present economy of salvation is not to take away from their gratuitousness, any more than the teaching on Christ's universal will to save all men and its implied requirement of offering grace to every man takes away from its gratuitousness.

Also, speaking of man concretely, Rahner seems to be saying that what he is doing is taking the traditional idea of prevenient grace and making it a continuous rather than an intermittent offer. He describes it in this way:

There is nothing further in principle to prevent us from thinking of this offer as less "intermittent"; rather we may conceive of the situation in such a way that free, unexacted grace, which elevates and makes possible supernatural salutary acts, is *always* given. Thus the *proximate* possibility of a salutary act is not constituted by an elevating grace offered precisely at a "now" (but not "then") but by other terrestrial circumstances (subject of course to God's supernatural providence), which precisely now makes the salutary act for man into a possibility capable of immediate actualization while at another time they exclude just this possibility. In any case the conception of the unexactedness of grace by no means includes the idea that grace should be offered only now and then in a sporadic way.⁴⁴

Rahner's teaching on "supernatural existential" has been severely criticized. E. Schillebeeckx and others object that both Rahner and H. Urs von Balthasar end with a medium which only shifts the problem of supernatural and natural. Instead of a problem between nature and grace, it is now a problem between nature and a medium—a medium

⁴⁴ K. Rahner, "The Theological Concept of Concupiscentia," *Theological Investigations* 1, 377.

which is neither nature nor grace.⁴⁵ Gutwenger adds that if nature is open to the supernatural existential, why is it not open to grace without a buffer.⁴⁶ Schillebeeckx also believes that it is erroneous to speak of both the just and sinners as being in the supernatural order. For him, it is sanctifying grace itself which determines whether we are in the supernatural order or not, depending on whether we accept grace or refuse it. We are either assumed into divine friendship or are in a real situation of sinfulness. There is no distinction in God between a projection and its being put into effect. Schillebeeckx rejects a reality in man which would be neither grace nor nature, and yet awaiting (at least by logical priority) grace itself. The gift of God is the decree of salvation and renders man able to accept the alliance with God.⁴⁷ Thomas Motherway states that the natural desire of the soul for God is adequate basis for an ordination to grace. Man has the ability to know God from pure nature. He claims that Rahner goes too far in saying that we cannot be sure that anything can be attributed to pure nature.⁴⁸

Some answers can be made to these criticisms. First, Rahner continually concedes that the supernatural is gratuitous and unexacted. It would seem that he wishes to consider man as one concrete reality with natural and supernatural qualifications. As we have mentioned, the philosophical term "existential" does not address itself to how these structures in man came into being or how they are related to each other. We can only speculate where one should draw the line, in man's daily inclinations and activities, between what is natural and what is supernatural. Furthermore, the level of pure nature never really existed. Also, Scholastic theology tells us that there are no indifferent acts in considering man's moral behavior—man is continually deciding moral issues. The Church's teaching on God's universal salvific will and Vatican II's reaffirmation of this teaching can be cited as implying that man is always in a situation of actual graces. To say, as Schillebeeckx seems to imply, that man ascends and descends from the supernatural order depending on whether or not he is in the state of grace is quite valid for a static world view, but this should not really clash with those who are describing man in his concrete existential situations. In fact, it would seem that Rahner is shifting the issue from whether man is offered the structure of the supernatural order or not, to saying that the structure is always there but man's awareness (which is the only way this structure can become operable) may or may not take place. It is only revelation or actual grace that can stimulate this

⁴⁵ E. Schillebeeckx, *art. cit.*, p. 397. See also R. Bruch, *art. cit.*, p. 102.

⁴⁶ E. Gutwenger, "Der Begriff der Natur . . .," p. 462.

⁴⁷ Schillebeeckx, *art. cit.*, p. 399.

⁴⁸ Motherway, *art. cit.*, pp. 96-103.

awareness, and it is only after revelation has occurred that man can begin to distinguish between what is "unexacted" and what is "natural."

Man's Openness to Absolute Transcendence

Rahner's philosophical views naturally complement his theology. Man is spirit in the world. Knowing is not a going out of the knower to the object, not some contact with the object outside the knower, but a being-present-to-himself of the knower, which constitutes his subjectivity. Abstraction is the liberation of the species from the phantasm and is the act of universalizing the species so as to be found possibly in an infinite number of individuating subjects. But in order to grasp and universalize a potential object of knowledge, man must have an absolute horizon against which to contrast the potential object of knowledge, as limited and capable of repetition in an infinite number of singulars. Since this is a horizon of knowledge, it is preapprehended. Rahner reasons, especially by analyzing the implications of judgment, that man's preapprehension of an absolute horizon is in reality a preapprehension of Absolute Being.⁴⁹ In every judgment a universal *esse* is simultaneously grasped in a preapprehension. Rahner states: "the affirmation of actual finitude of an existent requires, as condition for its possibility, the affirmation of the existence of an *esse absolutum* . . ."⁵⁰ Therefore, man as spirit is open to absolute transcendence. God is the unexpected but real "Whither" of this openness to absolute transcendence, which is never objectified but preapprehended. When speaking of sanctification, it can be stated that the justified man will gradually become aware that this "Whither" corresponding to man's preapprehension is in reality the triune God. Rahner says:

Our whole spiritual life is lived in the realm of the salvific will of God, of his prevenient grace, of his call as it becomes efficacious: all of which is an element within the region of our consciousness, though one which remains anonymous as long as it is not interpreted from without by the message of faith. Even when he does not "know" it and does not believe it, that is, even when he cannot make it an individual object of knowledge by merely inward reflection, man always lives consciously in the presence of the triune God of eternal life.⁵¹

Beginning with man as possessing a "supernatural existential" and as spirit open to absolute transcendence, we come by way of ascending to the Incarnation. In this approach the hypostatic union is seen as the most radical (although gratuitous) actualization and culmination of what is

⁴⁹ K. Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (New York, 1968) pp. 117 ff.

⁵⁰ K. Rahner, *Hearers of the Word* (New York, 1969) p. 64.

⁵¹ K. Rahner, "Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* 4, 180-81.

implied in the nature of finite spirit as such. It is the fulfillment of created self-transcendence.⁵² Furthermore, it is in the Incarnation that we find there is concrete validity and clarity in the Absolute towards which we have reached out obscurely, that there is an "objective correlative of that empty and hollow, dark and despairingly self-consuming infinity which we are ourselves: the infinity of dissatisfied finiteness."⁵³ To be a man is to transcend oneself unto the eternal mystery of God until God has come totally near in His grace. Christ is the unique peak of Godmanhood.

In this first part we have tried to draw the major lines of a Christian anthropology. We followed both a descending and an ascending order. We began with God the Father expressing Himself and then going completely beyond His divinity in the Incarnation of the Logos. Each human being was seen as a potential term of the kenosis of God. The sanctification of man through the indwelling was seen as a type of formal causality. Turning to man, we claimed that because of his supernatural destiny he was already living in a supernatural context, and that this "supernatural existential" was something real and therefore its causal origins would have to be established, as we shall see later. Philosophically, man's spirit also searches for absolute transcendence. It is no accident, therefore, that the Incarnation is the realization of man, showing the divine Logos to be the correlative of both man's supernatural existential and of his search for absolute transcendence.

We can conclude this section, which has in reality dealt with both a descending and an ascending approach to the Incarnation, by again citing Rahner:

It follows at once that the hypostatic union is not a mystery beside the mystery of the absolute proximity of God as holy mystery: it is the mystery itself in an insurpassable form. It is the absolute ontological and existential self-surrender to the holy mystery which God is.⁵⁴

APPLICATIONS

It is now our purpose to show how the theological synthesis developed above would lead to our hypothesis, namely, that some potential for hypostatic union with the divine Logos exists in each individual human

⁵² See K. Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," *Theological Investigations* 5 (Baltimore, 1966) 206; Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," *ibid.* 4, 69; Rahner, "Nature and Grace," *ibid.* 4, 186; Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," *ibid.* 4, 110.

⁵³ K. Rahner, "The Eternal Significance of the Humanity of Jesus for our Relationship with God," *Theological Investigations* 3 (Baltimore, 1967) 43-44.

⁵⁴ Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," p. 69.

being. We will then, by reviewing the Fathers and the Christological councils, try to indicate a few approaches to the problem of accounting for "human person" in such a union.

The indications favoring our hypothesis are as follows. First, we have mentioned that man is possible because the exteriorization of the Logos is possible. In fact, Rahner often mentions that any human could have become the God-man. However, it would seem as a logical consequence of the theology of symbol that either Christ should have been the only human created or that each human being should be given the opportunity of being an adequate and true symbol of the divine Logos. Otherwise the theology of symbol as a possible explanation of the Trinity and Incarnation should be abandoned. By this we mean that the whole thrust of theology of symbol is to show that man, especially Christ, is the external self-expression of the Logos, and that God created because He wished to communicate Himself. Christ and men both, by what they are as such, that is, by their very humanity, are the expression and communication of God. Also, we have said that a spiritual-personal being is needed to respond in intellect and will to the dialogue of knowledge and love instituted by the divine. Following the paradigm of Rahner's theology of symbol, it would seem that Christ was first in intention in creation and that the hypostatic union was the very link between God and creation. Furthermore, there must be a link of formal causality between the symbol and that which is symbolized, between the self-expression and the self, or it is no longer a symbol. Man is either linked to the Logos in a way similar to Christ or he is no symbol at all. We cannot say that he is a symbol in having exactly the same humanity as Christ, but he is not a symbol because we declare there is no formal causality regarding man and the Logos. We are then dealing with a philosophical contradiction, and the theology of symbol must be considered only superficially or not at all. If we accept the theology of symbol and that human beings are truly symbols of the divine Logos, there must be a causal connection along the lines of formal causality. (If man is a symbol, he can by his sins render his symbol role defective and thereby obscure that which he symbolizes.) We are claiming that theology of symbol presupposes a union of formal causality which we call hypostatic union in Christ, and anyone who shares in Christ's humanity, which is the very symbol of the Logos, must also have a union of formal causality.

Secondly, if the God-man is the exemplar, model, and ultimate ideal for the rest of men, then He should differ from the rest of men only by degree in His union with the Logos. (This is not to deny that in the intimacy of the union a threshold is crossed where the divine person becomes the sole source of the subsistence of the human nature of Christ.)

What we wish to establish here is that the ontological relationship or ground of each supernaturally elevated individual is not with the human nature of Christ but with the divine Logos.

Thirdly, if the main purpose of creation is for God the Father to carry on a dialogue of speech and love through the Logos with the man Christ, and if we are sons of the Father alongside the human Christ, then again our immediate ground of union should be with the Logos. Otherwise, our dialogue would be with the human intellect and will of Christ and not with the Logos and the Spirit of the Father.

Fourthly, just as the beatific vision is explainable by formal causality, and just as Rahner explains the indwelling and therefore the sanctification of man by formal causality, it would seem logical that a formal causality between God and man exist from the beginning and be part of man's structure as he finds himself in the present economy of salvation.

Fifthly, we believe that an analogy can be found for this continual relationship between the Trinity and man with what we have said about the "supernatural existential." We recall that for Rahner the "supernatural existential" is part of man's structure because of God's free decision to give man a supernatural end which centers on the beatific vision. Rahner and others part company with the extrinsicists by saying that the potential for salvation does not come intermittently in man's life, but rather this potential is always and continually there—it is the awareness and realization of this potential that is intermittent. Therefore, faith and baptism do not infuse the potential but are a public articulation and demonstration that the potential for salvation has been discovered and now actualized through the grace of God.

Our position is that a similar approach can be taken in explaining the other aspects of man's salvation. Could we not say that the indwelling of the Trinity is already present in man's structure as an existential or potential, so that sanctification also consists in its discovery and awareness, but here faith and *metanoia* are prerequisite conditions? Could we not say that the beatific vision is already somehow present as an existential or potential awaiting discovery and realization, with death and new life as prerequisite conditions for full realization? Could we not say, therefore, that hypostatic union with the divine Logos is also an "existential" or potential with its own conditions for discovery and realization? Otherwise it would seem that we would be hard pressed to explain how the hypostatic union took place in Christ at all, especially when we view Christ as the climax and culmination of humanity.

If the Logos is understood as present in man from the beginning by quasi-formal causality, as part of man's actual structure, then we believe that an adequate explanation can be offered for man's sanctification. (A

similar thesis can also be developed for the role of the Holy Spirit.) If sanctity be defined as intimacy with God, then an always present action of formal causality provides the basis for that intimacy. (This is not to deny that the Trinity as a whole brings about the actual union of the Logos and the individual by a prior efficient causality, just as it does in the hypostatic union of Christ. Nevertheless, the union itself is of the nature of formal causality.)

Furthermore, it has been an accepted view that the hypostatic union is a possible ideal for man that has been *de facto* attained by Christ. If it is such a possible ideal, then it should be attained the way salvation is attained. But we have followed the view that salvation is a matter of discovery and realization of what is already there. Then the same should be applicable to the attainment of the hypostatic union whether or not it is ever attained by anyone other than Christ.

It may be of interest to cite a few passages from Rahner which, while not supporting our hypothesis directly, indicate the trend of thought that stimulated that hypothesis. Rahner says:

The Hypostatic Union is the highest conceivable—the ontologically highest—actualization of the reality of a creature, in the sense that a higher actualization would be absolutely impossible. It is the absolutely highest manner of being there is apart from God's. The only other form of being which might be comparable with it, is the divine self-communication by uncreated grace in justification and in glory, insofar as both forms of being do not come under the notion of an efficient causality but rather of a quasi-formal causality, since it is not a created reality which is communicated to a creature but the uncreated being of God himself.⁵⁵

The text indicates, at least, that in both the hypostatic union and the justified man formal causality is operative, and that in both cases it is the uncreated being of God Himself that is given. On the other hand, Rahner states:

That there are other men, who are not this self-utterance of God, not another way of being God himself, does not affect the issue. For "what" he is is the same in him (i.e. Christ) and us: we call it human nature. But the unbridgeable difference is that in his case the "what" is uttered as his self-expression, which it is not in our case.⁵⁶

The point could be made that if our nature is exactly the same as the nature of Christ, why should we not be the self-expression of the Logos?

⁵⁵ Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections . . .," p. 205.

⁵⁶ Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theological Investigations* 4, 116.

PROBLEMS: MEANING OF PERSON AND NATURE IN HYPOSTATIC UNION

We cannot speculate on the hypostatic union and its implications for the rest of men without considering the witness of the Fathers and the Christological councils concerning the hypostatic union, person, and nature. We must also try to answer the major objections that could be raised against our hypothesis: (1) If the hypostatic union exists even as an "existential" in all men, then do men possess a "human person"? (2) If they do not possess a human person, should not humans then be sinless? Much of our review will concern the history and meaning of the words *hypostasis*, *prosōpon*, and *physis*. Also, we believe we can show that the Christological debates of the past can give added insights to our thesis.

The Christological controversies generally grew out of the differing viewpoints of the ancient theological schools of Antioch and Alexandria. In Alexandria we can begin with Origen, who saw the Son as the image of the Father, and man as the image on the creaturely level of the Son, carrying on a dialogue with the Son or Logos. Smulders points out that the followers of Origen tended to miss the nuances of their master and believed that the body could serve as an adequate expression of the Logos. The human soul was not a necessary entity in the Incarnation.⁵⁷ Also, in the aftermath of Arius, theologians tended to stress salvation as the work of the Logos, and the humanity of Christ was seen as purely passive. Apollinaris was concerned with the manner of union in Christ and with His substantial holiness. He considered Diodore of Tarsus and Flavian of Antioch as "slaves of Paul of Samosata" for speaking of Christ as being both Son of God and Son of David. For Apollinaris, man is a *hypostasis* by virtue of his *nous* (spirit). His animal soul (*psychē*) and his body are "hypostasized" by and in this *nous*. Therefore, if the Logos took on a human *nous*, there would be two *hypostaseis* in Christ—which is wrong. And so the Logos must have assumed only the animal soul and body, not a human spirit. Jesus Christ is the "one incarnate nature of the divine Logos." The followers of Apollinaris said that the Son of God and the Son of David form one *hypostasis* in Christ, just as body and soul are one *hypostasis* in man.⁵⁸ One *hypostasis* in Christ was taught clearly by Apollinaris, but no one on the orthodox side would take a clear stand for or against it.⁵⁹

Another result of the Arian-Apollinarian interpretation of the union of

⁵⁷ P. Smulders, *The Fathers on Christology* (De Pere, Wis., 1968) pp. 41 ff.

⁵⁸ M. Richard, "L'Introduction du mot 'hypothèse' dans la théologie de l'incarnation," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 2 (1945) 10 ff.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

the Logos and the truncated human nature of Christ was that it threatened the transcendence of the Logos (which Arius would have welcomed). One of the reasons the Antiochene school stressed the fullness of Jesus' humanity was to defend the divinity of the Logos. For example, Diodore of Tarsus said that Apollinaris' formula would attribute human weakness to the Son of God Himself.

For Theodore of Mopsuestia, since the sin of Adam, man was in a state of mutability and corruption. The redemption of man consisted in restoration to the ideal state, and with this would come the "reintegration" of the cosmos. This will be achieved by the state of perfect obedience with God and the fellowship with God such obedience effects. Christ is the New Man who is united with God and who brings about the Second Age where sin is abolished. This will happen for us with the resurrection. Human accord or self-determination is a necessary element in salvation, and therefore the emphasis is on the work of Christ as man. Christ is not only the locus of divine intervention; He is also the locus of man's conquest of sin. For Theodore, there are two natures and two centers of action in Christ. While he speaks of "two sons" in Christ, he says that the divine sonship belongs by nature in the Word, but only by grace in man. He does say that there is a single source of all that Christ is and does, namely, the Logos. To express the union between God and man, Theodore used the term *prosōpon*, which originally meant a mask or a dramatic role and can connote an element of fiction in which various individuals are regarded as one. God and man in Christ each have their own nature and *prosōpon*, but when we look at the composition we say one *prosōpon*. Unity of *prosōpon* is an outward expression of an underlying unity.⁶⁰ Speaking of *hypostasis*, Theodore says that the soul of man differs from animals in that it can have a separate existence and therefore is a *hypostasis*. In Christ there are two *hypostaseis*, since both the divine and the human can have a separate existence. But if we consider Christ as a concrete man, there is only one *hypostasis*, that of union. However, the problem is that Theodore does not explain the relationship of *hypostasis* of union to the *hypostasis* of the Logos.⁶¹

Nestorius clearly declared that the *prosōpon* of union was not identical with the *prosōpon* of the humanity. Cyril of Alexandria reacted by stressing the unity in Christ. To do this, he chose a formula which he believed was used by Athanasius but which really comes from Apol-

⁶⁰R. V. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford, 1963) pp. 191-273. For varying views on Theodore, see F. A. Sullivan, *Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Rome, 1956); P. Galtier, "La vraie christologie de Théodore de Mopsueste," *Recherches de science religieuse* 45 (1957) 164 ff.

⁶¹Richard, *art. cit.*, pp. 23-26.

linaris, and declared that the Son is "one incarnate nature of the God-Word." Cyril used the term *physis*, which means the real nature of a thing, and which is rounded off by *hypostasis*. It has the idea of substance. Therefore, for Cyril, the human nature of Christ was rooted in the substance of the Logos.⁶² The God-man was one *physis*, that is, one something, one living being.⁶³ The Council of Ephesus accepted the interpretations of Cyril.

Theodoret of Cyr, a representative of the school of Antioch who is credited with authoring the Formula of Union, spoke of two *hypostaseis* or natures and one *prosōpon*. However, for Theodoret, *prosōpon* still had much of its original significance of "countenance."⁶⁴ According to Richard, Theodoret eventually came to admit the equivalence of *hypostasis* and *prosōpon* in Christology.⁶⁵

Proclus and Flavian of Constantinople sought a middle way between the monophysitic tendencies of Alexandria and the dualistic Christology of Antioch. Proclus in his *Sermo de dogmate Incarnationis* states that there is only one Son, for the natures are not divided into two *hypostaseis* but the awesome economy of salvation has united two natures in one only *hypostasis* of God the Word made flesh. Flavian read to Eutyches, in September 448, the profession of faith: "We confess that Christ is two natures after the union, in one *hypostasis* and one *prosōpon* ." It was due to the preparation of Proclus and Flavian, making *hypostasis* equivalent with *prosōpon*, that such a formula did not meet with too much opposition at Chalcedon.⁶⁶

In the West the tradition regarding the Incarnation had developed along different lines. The stress was on redemption from sin and therefore the need for a mediator who is a God-man and who performs satisfaction. Tertullian (*Adversus Praxean* 27) says: "We see a twofold condition which is not confounded but conjoined in one Person, God and man. . . ." Augustine (*In Joannem* 14) states: "Let us recognize the twofold substance of Christ. . . . But the one and the other are together not two, but one Christ, lest God be a quaternity, not Trinity. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one in Christ. . . ."⁶⁷ Pope Leo I in his *Tome*, which is the basis for the declaration of Chalcedon, declares: "We acknowledge that Christ is from two natures after the

⁶² Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, pp. 410-11.

⁶³ Smulders, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁶⁴ Grillmeier, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

⁶⁵ Richard, *art. cit.*, p. 263.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 260 ff.

⁶⁷ The exposition of Tertullian and Augustine may have arisen from their philosophical understanding of the relation of soul and body. H. A. Wolfson (*Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 1 [Cambridge, Mass., 1970] 369-72) says the Fathers tried to draw an analogy between the relation of the soul to the body and that of the Logos and the humanity of

Incarnation in one 'hypostasis' and one person confessing one Christ, one Son, one Lord."⁶⁸

However, what did the Fathers at Ephesus and Chalcedon understand by the terms *prosōpon* and *hypostasis*? We have seen that for Apollinarian *hypostasis* was equivalent to "spirit"; for Theodore of Mopsuestia, it referred to a subject capable of separate existence, while *prosōpon* referred to the composition of God and man; for Cyril, *hypostasis* has the meaning of reality, a living being. At Chalcedon *hypostasis* had the meaning of that which exists by itself and in its own consistency. However, Frederick Crowe points out that there was no set meaning for the word "person," and that what Cyril and Ephesus declared was that He who was the eternal Word was the one born of the Virgin Mary. It was an attempt to restate the given of Scripture.⁶⁹ Grillmeier says of Pope Leo that he would have been as hard put to define the word "person" as any of his contemporaries.⁷⁰

It would seem that the development of Christology up to Chalcedon and in the later Christological councils does not tell us too much about the meaning of the terms "person" and "nature." The Fathers wished to say that the person of God was still the person of God after the Incarnation, and that the human Christ was totally joined to the person of God, so that now He exists in God while remaining truly human. It was not within their interest or scope (nor is it necessarily within anyone's scope) to comment on how this grounding in the Logos affected the knowledge, feelings, or behavior of Christ.

A second problem in discussing person and nature is whether the content of the term *hypostasis* as used in the Trinity is the same as what we normally understand by *hypostasis* in speaking of the Incarnation. Rahner insists that the term *hypostasis* when applied to the Trinity cannot be

Christ. For example, Aristotle refers to the soul and body as matter and form, each of which is called a nature. The soul and body are described as two natures, and this may have been the paradigm for speaking of two natures in Christ. The fact that soul and body constitute one person in man might explain why Tertullian would speak of the two natures of Christ as conjoined in one person. Augustine, as cited above, states explicitly that unity of nature and person in Christ is directly analogous to the unity of soul and body in man. The implication we are trying to draw is that some of the Fathers who used the soul-body example were searching to find the right terms to describe the union in Christ, but really did not understand the meaning of the terms as applied to Christ.

⁶⁸ For background on Chalcedon and the whole Christological problem, see *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (3 vols.; Würzburg, 1951-54); R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon* (London, 1953).

⁶⁹ F. E. Crowe, "Christology and Contemporary Philosophy," *Commonweal* 87 (1967) 245.

⁷⁰ Grillmeier, *Christ*, p. 474.

univocal, for each person must be different from the other—they are distinct subsistent relations. Furthermore, usually when we speak of three persons in God, we tend to think of three consciousnesses and three centers of activity. But we know that there exist in God only one power, one will, and one self-presence. Therefore, it cannot be self-awareness that distinguishes divine persons from each other. Each person partakes of the one self-consciousness. And so, when speaking of the three persons of the Trinity, we must empty from the concept “person” what all three have in common, and this includes our usual idea of personality and center of activity and consciousness, which we normally associate with person.⁷¹ Part of our problem is due to the fact that when we commonly speak of person or individual, we include with it the idea of essence. In our experience we do not find a case where what “subsists as distinct” can be thought of as multiplied without a multiplication of natures. Also, when we speak of person in a modern sense, we include the idea of center of activity, subjectivity, and liberty. But we cannot say there are three of these in God. Rather, the one consciousness in God “subsists in a three-fold way” and “the ‘subsistence’ itself is as such not ‘personal,’” if we understand this word in the modern sense.⁷²

Our conclusion is: it is the distinct relations of Father, Son, and Spirit that are given the title “person.” We are saying that God has three distinct subsistences. The distinct subsistence of the Son differs from that of the Father and the Spirit, but all three share the same center of activity of the divinity. Our ideas of personality, center of activity, and consciousness belong to the “nature” of God and also belong to the “nature” of man. Therefore, when we say that the *hypostasis* of the Son is the only *hypostasis* of the Incarnation, we do not preclude that the human nature of Christ possesses personality, a center of activity, and consciousness, just as the same can be said of the divine nature. The human nature subsists in the distinct subsistence we call the Son of God. We might add that it is interesting that we take *hypostasis*, which is the principle of distinguishing in the Trinity, and make it the principle of unity in the Incarnation.

We shall consider briefly how theologians have considered the idea of person and hypostatic union. There is no stress on consciousness or freedom in the early descriptions of person. Boethius speaks of the “individual substance of rational nature,” and Richard of St. Victor describes the “incommunicable existence of a nature.” The usual description of person is: the subsistent, incommunicable subject of an intellectual nature. However, theologians have disputed how person is related to nature and ex-

⁷¹ Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp. 12, 43, 75-76.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 105-7.

istence. The Scotists describe person as the nonassumability of a nature and are criticized for using a negative term. Suarez speaks of it as the final term and complement of existence itself, but is challenged to distinguish subsistence from an accident. Capreolus and Billot see subsistence as referring to one's proper act of existence, which again makes it difficult to distinguish it from being an accident. Cajetan speaks of subsistence as a substantial mode added to nature, terminating it in ultimate incommunicability, and is criticized because his explanation seems to be developed precisely for applying it to the hypostatic union. Maritain follows Cajetan and says that every finite essence must be terminated in such fashion that it cannot be joined to another before it can receive existence. He compares it to the point that terminates a line.⁷³ Again, the important point to keep in mind is that person is a *rational nature* as subsisting, but not the rationality or consciousness itself. Concerning the human nature of Christ, we will speak of a subject that draws its subsistence from another.

Theologians explain the hypostatic union by saying that the human nature of Christ does not have a human subsistence as such, but shares in the subsistence of the person of the Son. The human nature does not have its own proper act of existence or its own substantial mode of subsistence. In a sense, since the divine person substitutes for the human person in Christ, theologians say that the human nature of Christ has all that it would have had from a human person and much more. St. Thomas (*Sum. theol.* 3, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2) declares that it is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself, and therefore it is of greater dignity for the human nature of Christ to exist in the person of the Word.

Certain difficulties are present, as there must be, in any explanation of the hypostatic union. First, since subsistence is an important element, indeed the highest element, in man, it should belong also to Christ. If it is an important factor, we cannot say that the person of God substitutes, any more than we can allow Apollinaris to say that the Logos substitutes for the human spirit. To the reply that it is sufficient to say that man has an integral nature, we can say that only that which is assumed is redeemed, and if the ultimate human substantial mode (i.e., subsistence) was not assumed, it was not redeemed. Secondly, if it is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler, why should not this opportunity be available to all men?

Theologians also discuss the meaning of the human nature of Christ. This is nothing new; in fact, Constantinople III in condemning Mono-

⁷³ J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge* (New York, 1959) p. 431.

thelitism sought to stress the complete human nature of Christ, speaking of two conscious centers of activity and two wills. The act of redemption is and remains an act of the Logos, yet a free human act. In modern times there is even more stress on the idea of personality and center of activity, and yet we are really speaking of the human nature. It is possible, then, to distinguish between "ontological person" and "existential person." "Ontological person" in regard to Christ would mean that the Logos is the bearer, support, and possessor of the human nature of Christ. "Existential person" (which is really an aspect of nature) would refer to center of activity and freedom. We can say there is one "ontological person" and two "existential persons" in Christ. Rahner states: "the 'human nature' of the Logos possesses a genuine, spontaneous, free, spiritual, active center, a human self-consciousness, which as creaturely faces the eternal Word in a genuinely human attitude of adoration, obedience, a most radical sense of creaturehood."¹⁴

We can summarize the work of the Fathers, councils, and theologians as it applies to our thesis as follows. The history of the terms *hypostasis* and *prosōpon* indicates that the Fathers wished primarily to state the scriptural truth that the human and divine are one in Christ. They used the terms at hand and tried to purify and juxtapose these terms so as to express this central truth of two-in-one in Christ. They might have used another set of terms, had they been available. Also, they did not comment on the influence person has on nature, other than to declare that Christ was obedient to the Father and that He was like us in all things except sin. Therefore, in speculating theologically on the meaning of the terms "person" and "nature" in Christ, we must be cautious in applying the etymological or philosophical meaning of these terms to the reality of the Incarnation, just as we must be cautious in developing the meaning of person in the Trinity. In fact, we believe that seeing the meaning of person in the Trinity as "distinct manner of subsisting" without the idea of consciousness or center of activity would allow us to speak of a human center of activity in regard to Christ and to say that this human center of activity subsists in the divine person. This is really nothing new, but a restatement of Constantinople III. From the Fathers and the Christological councils, therefore, we believe there is enough leeway to permit us to say that other humans could have an ontological structure of subsistence in the Logos similar to that of Christ, and not experience necessarily a strong divine influence in their lives. Just as we can speak of the human Christ acting freely while subsisting in the Logos, so we can speculate that the same general structure can be true of the rest of men. In regard to the

¹⁴ K. Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology," *Theological Investigations* 1, 158. See also Rahner, "Incarnation," *Sacramentum mundi* 3, 114-15.

viewpoint of systematic theology, we can say that the idea of person as a principle of independence or incommunicability must not take away from the fact that freedom and center of activity reside in nature. Therefore, the idea of independence is different from the idea of freedom. Independence or incommunicability is applicable only in speaking of the being subsisting in itself and not in another. We say that Christ has as His ontological source the Logos Himself. Our thesis seeks to investigate the possibility that all men have their ontological source in the Logos. We hope that we are not playing with words, which is a danger; for we are borrowing the Scholastic term "ontological" and trying to give it a modern sense. In our thesis an ontological source can be seen as an "existential" (in the Heideggerian sense) which still must be reflected upon and actualized.

In our thesis the ontological relationship between the divine Logos and man is prior to any apprehension. We may have the potential and not know that it is there. As an individual becomes aware of his personhood and as he is instructed by revelation, he decides on the intensity of his surrender to the divine presence aided by the grace of God. This surrender may vary throughout his life. The surrender is potentially total, as it was in Christ, or less than total, and the individual may have some awareness that he is divided from his potentially total union with the divine Logos. For example, someone is potentially a hero, or is developing towards heroism, but has not yet earned the title or total experience of heroism. Also, just as knowledge in Christ might have been gradual, so our knowledge of God begins from nothing but can increase and come close to totality, as in the case of the mystics. We can still point to a uniqueness in Christ by pointing out that He is the only one who has actualized and fulfilled His "supernatural existential" to the utmost, and is therefore actually one with the Logos. Christ in His human intellect and will surrendered Himself completely and totally to the divine Logos, who is the self-expression of the Father. (Whether this surrender took place at the moment of Christ's conception or during His life does not seem to be the primary issue. It would seem sufficient that it did happen. To try to answer what role God had and what role the human freedom of Christ had in achieving this state is as difficult as trying to answer what role God has and what role the individual has in achieving heroic sanctity. Nor are we saying that a separate "He" existed in the human nature of Christ even at the moment of conception. It is just our way of trying to explain the Incarnation from the viewpoint of Christ's human nature possessing a center of activity and freedom.) If Christ is one with the Logos, He is truly the Son of God.

We should elaborate, before continuing, on how we can still say of

Christ and of no one else that "He is God." We have tried to show that the choice of the terms "person" and "nature" does not explain how Christ is God, but rather is used to convey the scriptural and dogmatic assertion that Christ is God. Therefore, it would require more than the ontological link, necessary as it is as a prerequisite, to express fully what the phrase "He is God" means. In fact, these terms, "person" and "nature," are sometimes a little too static in conveying the scriptural witness that Christ's manifestation of divinity, and what it meant to Him and His followers, was quite dynamic and was a lifelong development.⁷⁵ For example, Scripture more freely refers to Jesus as Lord after the resurrection. For the followers of Christ, the assertion "He is God" was not a philosophical statement, but the response to a series of experiences culminating in the resurrection. Our conclusion is that the phrase "He is God" should encompass the whole Christ, His whole life, and our experience of Him, not just the ontological fact that He subsists in the Logos. The implications of this observation for our thesis are that the possibility that one has an "existential" for the hypostatic union is not enough to merit the meaning-filled title "He is God."

A question that Scholastic theology might ask is whether its teaching that the *esse* of the Word is the *esse* of the human nature of Christ would in our thesis mean that the *esse* of the Word is the *esse* of every human. Before answering, we might point out that there has been some dispute even by Scholastics concerning whether there is also a "secondary human *esse*" in Christ.⁷⁶ Cajetan and Billot claimed that there was no created *esse* in Christ. They seemed to find support in St. Thomas (*Sum. theol.* 3, q. 17, a. 2). On the other hand, de la Taille spoke of a secondary human *esse* in Christ as part of his theory on created actuation. Pelster and others have shown that the *De unione Verbi incarnati* of St. Thomas is authentic and a later work, and that it does admit to a twofold existence in Christ. This has caused men like Maritain to change their position and agree with this later interpretation. Maritain states that this secondary *esse* is only received by the human nature and is exercised not by anything human but secondarily by the pre-existing divine person.⁷⁷ In regard to our thesis, we can speak of Christ having the *esse* of the Word and a "secondary human *esse*," since He possesses a state of actual union and perfection.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Raymond Brown, "How Much Did Jesus Know?—A Survey of the Biblical Evidence," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 29 (1967) 315-45.

⁷⁶ See H. Diepen, "La critique du Basilième selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue thomiste* 50 (1950) 82-118, 290-329; Maritain, *op. cit.*, pp. 434 ff.; Thomas E. Clarke, "Some Aspects of Current Christology," in *The Encounter with God*, ed. J. O'Neill (New York, 1962) pp. 37 ff.

⁷⁷ Maritain, *loc. cit.*

Whether we can speak of men who are only on the way to the terminal state of perfection as having a "secondary human *esse*" or even the *esse* of the Word is difficult to determine—part of the difficulty lies in our trying to relate the Scholastic idea of *esse* to the Heideggerian idea of "existential." The explanations and distinctions we made in speaking of divine and human subsistence would seem to apply also in approaching this matter.

Christ's Sinlessness

The second major objection that might be raised regarding our thesis would be: If we were truly united to the divine Logos, even existentially speaking, would we not be as sinless as Christ was? We shall recall briefly the theological positions on Christ's sinlessness. The Fathers were convinced that Christ was free from original sin and that this was due to His hypostatic union. If He is free from original sin, then He should not have concupiscence, and Constantinople II condemned Theodore of Mopsuestia for saying that Christ was burdened with the passion of the soul and the desires of the flesh. Scripture declares Christ's freedom from sin, and the Tenth Anathema of Cyril of Alexandria says that Christ is entirely free from sin. The Eleventh Council of Toledo states that Christ was conceived and died without sin, and this statement is repeated by the Council of Florence. Constantinople II also condemned Theodore for teaching that Christ was impeccable only after the resurrection, and this has been interpreted as implying that Christ was always impeccable.

Some theologians explain the impeccability of Christ by saying that all actions are the ultimate responsibility of the supposite. The nature is a *principium quo* and the supposite is the *principium quod* of all activity. Since there is only a divine supposite, there can be no possibility of sin. On the other hand, the Scotists claim that the hypostatic union does not influence human operations, but impeccability in Christ is due to the beatific vision. Another source of impeccability was the superabundance of grace. In trying to reconcile the impeccability of Christ with His human freedom, theologians explain that liberty of exercise suffices. To be able to choose between good and evil is not essential to liberty. Freedom consists in being able to act or not to act, and to choose among various goods.

The question of impeccability, however, has not been definitively settled. In regard to the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the impeccability of Christ only after the resurrection, we might note that one of the major concerns of Constantinople II was to condemn any Nestorian element in Theodore, and from its viewpoint the oneness in Christ resulted in impeccability. Secondly, does the divine person as *principium quod* really exclude even the possibility of sin? It is interesting that we apply human weaknesses to Christ and His divine person, such as that

He wept or He was afraid. Furthermore, if the human "person" is the principle ultimately responsible for sin, it would seem that Christ would have to assume a human person, since only that which was assumed was redeemed. But we have insisted that Christ did not assume a human person. Regarding the beatific vision as guarantee of impeccability, we are not sure of the manner in which Christ experienced the beatific vision prior to His resurrection, and therefore it would seem difficult to draw a parallel between the impeccability of those who experience the beatific vision after death and the condition of Christ resulting from the beatific vision during His earthly life.

In summary, it would seem that the Fathers were echoing the given of Scripture, namely, that Christ was like us in all things except sin. They were also concerned with clearly stating that Christ was truly united with God. The Fathers also felt that if Christ was to overcome evil, He could not be under its control in any way. Nevertheless, within their historical context they would have no reason to raise the question whether Christ could sin—the fact that Christ did not sin was their primary interest. The explanations of the theologians regarding impeccability were certainly consistent with their world view and context, but this should not mean that the question of impeccability would not develop as our understanding of person and nature develops. In our explanation of person and nature, and especially in placing "center of activity" in nature rather than person, the question of the ontological impossibility of Christ's sinning does not arise. We would tend more to explain impeccability as based on the superabundant grace of God—a view that is quite traditional, but which can be used to explain impeccability in other men. If the hypostatic union is viewed within the framework of an "existential," then impeccability would be tied to the total surrender that takes place with the divine Logos. Applied to the rest of men, impeccability can be seen as the term of one's actions, as it can be with those who achieve heroic sanctity. Sinlessness would be proportionate to the degree of surrender during one's life.

CONCLUSION

We begin our concluding remarks by making clear that it has not been our intention to diminish the role of Christ; we only wish to gain a proper perspective. It was only in Christ that God communicated Himself most completely and perfectly. It is only in Christ that there was complete surrender of human intellect and will to the divine Logos. However, the implications of our hypothesis are that Christ's work of salvation and redemption was primarily one of exemplary causality and only secondarily of efficient causality.

Therefore, we believe that the ultimate implication of a consistent

Christian anthropology is to center on the Logos rather than on Christ. It is in this way that the Greek concept of *theōsis*, divinization of man, becomes more clearly understandable.

Also, man is spirit open to absolute transcendence, and strives for a culmination and fulfilment. Christ is the one in whom "self-transcendence has reached an absolute and unsurpassable climax." Christ was most completely man by surrendering Himself most completely to God. Man understands himself best when he grasps himself as the possible self-expression of God which has become actual in the man Jesus. On the other hand, Christ was the individual in whom God's communication of Himself took place in a unique and unsurpassable manner.⁷⁸

Our concern is to place the salvation of the rest of men on a sound basis. We believe that the source of sanctification of men should lie in their union with the Logos (and the Spirit) rather than in being united to the human nature of Christ. We have questioned why Rahner should say that both the human intellect and will of Christ and our human intellect and will should experience the beatific vision in the same way but that Christ is different from us ontologically. We have wondered whether only the human nature of Christ is the true eternal self-expression of the Logos, while all others possessing the same human nature are not. Nor do we believe, for example, that Rahner has shown convincingly that there is an actual difference between the formal causality involved in the hypostatic union in Christ and the formal causality involved in the indwelling of the Trinity in each individual human.

We have also tried to show that Scripture, the Fathers, and the councils present a very simple message about Christ and do not preclude further explanations of how the human nature of Christ is related to God and of the extent of the influence of the divine on the human nature. Nor do they necessarily preclude explanations which would seek to relate the rest of men to the divine Logos and Spirit.

We believe that if we are in the image of Christ, if we are potentially other Christs, then our relationship to the Logos is similar to the relationship of the human Christ to the Logos. The traditional approach to Christian anthropology seems to end by putting Christ in a different category from the rest of men. It has been the purpose of this article to raise the issue and offer tentative approaches to a solution, with the hope of stimulating discussion. The benefit deriving from our hypothesis is to bring the Logos and Spirit of the Father into more intimate closeness with man than man ever imagined.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ K. Rahner, "Thoughts on the Possibility of Belief Today," *Theological Investigations* 5, 11 and 13.

⁷⁹ This is not a form of pantheism, just as Christ is not a manifestation of pantheism in being joined to the Logos. The clear distinctions of Chalcedon apply here.