

THE "INCARNATION" OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRIST

DAVID COFFEY

Catholic Institute of Sydney, N.S.W., Australia

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN faith understands the high point of God's presence to man in terms of "incarnation," i.e., in the language of the Council of Chalcedon, the assumption of a human nature by God the Son, who had existed from eternity in the divine nature, so that from that time the divine Son existed as the man Jesus of Nazareth. Faith further understands this presence of God as radiating out from the Incarnation and being shared in by all who make the submission of faith through Christ. This is accomplished through the Holy Spirit, who, also existing from eternity, is now sent by Christ to men and women, to unite them to himself and ultimately to the Father. "Through him (Christ) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph 2:18). It is clear that this entry of the eternal Spirit into God's plan of salvation happens through Christ and in dependence on him. We can even call it an "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ, provided that we keep the word in inverted commas, understanding it only by analogy to the incarnation of the divine Son in the human being of Jesus. This "incarnation" as experienced by some New Testament communities, particularly the Pauline ones, moved them to identify the Holy Spirit of old precisely as the Spirit of Christ, in that He caused Christ to become present among them. As J. D. G. Dunn writes, "The character of the Spirit has taken its 'shape' from the impress of Jesus' own relationship with God."¹ These words encapsulate for us the challenge of our topic.

In this article I aim to explore the nature of this "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit. To do this I take the point of departure from my book *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit*,² explaining the various theses which constitute this point of departure, but not attempting to establish them over again. At the same time I shall take advantage of the opportunity to update a number of things said in the book. It must be stated at the outset that this theology belongs firmly to the Catholic tradition. Other Christians, I hope, will be able to identify with it, but only to the extent that they can distance themselves from that Calvinist and Barthian position which totally denies to man and woman any natural capacity for God. However much one would want to affirm our radical sinfulness and our incapacity

¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975) 320.

² David Coffey, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Faith and Culture, 1979).

to do of ourselves anything that would advance us in the way of salvation, one must still reject, as a conclusion flowing from the philosophy of nominalism rather than divine revelation, this basic principle of Calvinist and Barthian thought. We proceed, rather, on the Thomistic basis that the human person is the one being in all creation who is *capax Dei*, capable of God, a principle which, in regard to the Incarnation, began life in the form of the *enhypostasia* of Leontius of Byzantium, consolidated itself in the ensuing history of theology through several reformulations, and perhaps attained its zenith of development in the transcendental Christology of Karl Rahner. It will be clear that to him this article owes a great deal. His rethinking of theology has opened the way to important gains in both Christology and pneumatology.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF RAHNER

Let me now state in his own words Rahner's basic Christological insight. It rests upon his philosophical and theological anthropology: philosophical anthropology because he understands human nature in terms of transcendence; and theological anthropology because he sees the term of this transcendence, which is realized perfectly only in the case of Jesus, as hypostatic union with the divine Son. We draw attention to the fact that he uses the scholastic expression *potentia obedientialis*, obediential or supernatural potency, in order to make the point that this transcendence is actualized only under the power of God's grace. We are not speaking, therefore, of a natural, that is to say a purely natural, potency of the human person, and Pelagianism is altogether excluded. Rahner writes: "What does it mean to say that human nature has the possibility of being assumed by the person of the Word of God? Correctly understood, it means that this *potentia* is not one potentiality along with other possibilities in the constituent elements of human nature; it is objectively identical with the essence of man."³ Thus he is able to say: "The incarnation of God is therefore the unique, *supreme*, case of the total actualization of human reality, which consists of the fact that man *is* in so far as he gives up himself."⁴ Succinctly, this means that Rahner understands the human being as obediential potency for hypostatic union with the Son of God, and Jesus Christ as the only man in whom this fulness of being human has been actualized.

Two comments are called for at this stage. First, the divinity of Christ is not something different from his humanity; it *is* the humanity, i.e., human nature at the peak of its possibility, which is the achievement of God's grace, to which the human efforts of Jesus are subordinated. Thus

³ Karl Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theological Investigations* 4 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) 110.

⁴ *Ibid.*

we have arrived, using philosophical language, back at the point reached by the New Testament with its use of the functional language of salvation history. That is to say, the New Testament did not conceive the divinity of Christ as something different from his humanity: what it had to say about his divinity was a statement about his humanity, expressed in the language of salvation history, not philosophy. When philosophical language entered the scene with the translation of the gospel message into the categories of Greek thought, a wedge was driven between the humanity and the divinity of Christ, the classical expression of which was the Chalcedonian dogma. This problem began to be solved only with the introduction of the *enhypostasia*, which set the two natures of Christ in relationship. Surely, now that also philosophically it can be said that whatever is predicated of Christ's divinity is a statement about his humanity, we have come full circle. That is why I observed earlier that with Rahner's Christology the *enhypostasia* may well have attained the full potential of its development.

The second comment is meant to give comfort to those who fear that Rahner's Christology may have compromised the divine transcendence. It is this: to say that the divinity of Christ is his humanity is not to say that the divine person of the Son comes to perfect or adequate expression in the human nature of Christ. It is only to say that he comes to the most perfect expression of which humanity is capable, which is different from, and less than, the expression which he has in his divine nature in the eternal Trinity. In other words, the divine person is not given *absolutely* perfect expression in the human nature of Christ, but only the perfection of expression *relative* to the capacity of human nature. To say that he was given absolutely perfect expression in the human nature would be to imply that in him there was no difference between the human nature and the divine nature, which would be Monophysitism. What we are saying here is no more than a restatement of part of the dogma of Chalcedon, i.e., "the difference of the natures is by no means removed because of the union."⁶ But we are not hereby back with a divided Christ. The *enhypostasia* requires us to say that the mystery of the Incarnation has to do not with the existence of the divine person in the divine nature, but solely with his existence in the human nature of Christ.

This Christology raises anew the question of the communication of the divine to the human nature of Christ, the *communicatio idiomatum*, the communication of idioms, or interchange of attributes from the divine to the human and vice versa in Christ on the basis of the unity of person. Although this question was originally put at the relatively superficial level of terminology, underlying it was the question of reality or event.

⁶ DS 302.

Rahner helps us see that the *communicatio* in its deepest sense is identical with the Incarnation itself. For if divine being or subsistence can be received in a human way such that human being truly becomes divine being, the Incarnation becomes the most radical possible instance of the communication of the divine to the human, and as such the basis of any other communication that might take place in Christ. We can go on to say that *whatever* is communicated from God to man in the Incarnation is bestowed in a divine way but received in a human way. And further, to the question, What is communicated in addition to the divine subsistence? we can reply: In principle, whatever is demanded by the integrity of the human nature. Of course, over and above this, God can communicate whatever He wills, provided it is compatible with human nature, but the sole acceptable evidence for an event of this kind will be the Gospels, after they have been submitted to historical criticism. (Such evidence will sometimes be available also for what has been established on the basis of the integrity of the humanity of Christ.)

FROM CHRISTOLOGY TO PNEUMATOLOGY AND TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

Rahner's Christology made it possible for me to understand the divinization of the humanity of Christ (I trust I can now say that without fear of misunderstanding) as the work of the Holy Spirit, whom both Scripture and the Fathers present as the sanctifier and divinizer, not only in regard to ordinary people but also, and principally, in regard to Christ. I refer mainly, but not exclusively, to the theme of the anointing of Jesus by the Father with the Holy Spirit. The acquisition of this insight had been impeded throughout the history of theology by the domination of the belief that the divinity of Christ was ontologically different from his humanity. With this obstacle out of the way, access was given to important new theological knowledge. In particular, it was now possible to see that the Incarnation was the work of the Holy Spirit, Spirit of Sonship. In the one act of nature and grace the humanity of Christ was created by the triune God and so radically sanctified by the Holy Spirit, sent thereto by the Father, that it became one in person with the eternal Son, and so Son of God in humanity. Notice that here we have an ascending Christology which assigns a very different role to the Holy Spirit than does the traditional descending Christology of, say, St. Thomas. He saw the Incarnation simply as the assumption of a human nature by the Son, sent thereto by the Father, with the Holy Spirit entering the scene only subsequently, as principle of the habitual grace of Christ.⁶

The doctrine of the eternal Trinity—or the immanent Trinity as we

⁶ Cf. *ST* 3, q. 7, a. 13c.

shall call it following Rahner—developed over a period of about 300 years as a framework to give needed support to the basic data of Christian experience once these were translated from functional into ontological categories. Hence we reasonably expect new theological discoveries to harmonize with this background of the immanent Trinity, and when they do we can regard this as final confirmation of their correctness. Unfortunately, the theology of the Incarnation which we have just summarily presented, with its central role for the Holy Spirit, does not harmonize with the doctrine of the immanent Trinity as normally expressed. In this doctrine, in its Western form, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Thomistic account of the Incarnation, in which the Son “adorns” His own humanity with the fullness of the Holy Spirit proceeding from Him,⁷ clearly harmonizes with this doctrine, but equally clearly my account, in which the Holy Spirit is sent directly by the Father and *brings about* the existence of the Son in humanity, does not. Have we anything to say to this problem?

The solution lies in recognizing that tradition offers not just one but two models of the immanent Trinity, though the second is far less well known than the first; and contemporary methodology allows us to see that these are based ultimately on different but complementary aspects of the mystery of Christ, so that they should be regarded not as exclusive but as complementary. Both were known to St. Thomas, who himself treated them in this way, observing that the first had to do with the processions themselves and the second with the *manner* of the processions.⁸ The first we might call the outgoing or centrifugal model of the Trinity, in that it shows us the other two persons radiating out from the Father, their source, and extending this movement into the world in execution of the Father’s plan of salvation. The second is inward-moving or centripetal, binding the Son to the Father in love, and showing that God is sufficient unto Himself, or that, in St. Thomas’ words, with the procession of the Holy Spirit “the circle [of the Godhead] is closed”,⁹ so that, if man is to come into contact with God, the freedom of God in His saving plan is emphasized and the movement which takes place is seen to be ultimately one of assimilation of man to God. God reaches out to man only to draw him back into His own life.

The first of these models derives in principle from Jesus’ conviction of

⁷ This is how the matter is expressed in Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici corporis Christi*, where the Thomistic influence is obvious: “. . . primo incarnationis momento, Aeterni Patris Filius humanam naturam sibi substantialiter unitam Sancti Spiritus plenitudine ornavit, ut aptum divinitatis instrumentum esset in cruento Redemptionis opere . . .” (AAS 35 [1943] 206–7).

⁸ Cf. *In 1 Sent.* d. 10, q. 1, a. 2s.

⁹ *De pot.* q. 9, a. 9c.

being one with the Father (in the functional sense) and of being sent by Him (consciousness of pre-existence not being implied here), though historically it developed quite differently, under the impulse of speculation about the nature of spiritual generation, and assumed definitive form in the psychological model of St. Augustine, in which the Son proceeded by knowledge and the Holy Spirit by love. The second model was simply a variant of this, and so cannot be said to have been established directly from the life of Jesus, which contemporary methodology would require if it is to be accepted without reservation. The biblical and patristic theology of the anointing of Jesus by the Father with the Holy Spirit goes part of the way to doing this, but until this model can be shown to be grounded in Jesus' total dedication to the will of the Father, his love of the Father, experienced as response to the Father's unique love for him, the task will remain essentially incomplete. In this article my main work will be to investigate the nature of this love of Jesus for the Father as the key to the theology of the "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit, but in doing so we shall at the same time be proposing the ultimate ground of this second Trinitarian model.

It is with the second model of the Trinity that my theology of the Incarnation harmonizes, and we should therefore say something more about it at this point. Its substance can be stated quite simply: the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son. Notice that it is not said that the Holy Spirit is the result or term of this mutual love; He is the love itself. In St. Thomas' words, he is an *operatio subsistens*,¹⁰ a subsistent operation, and in this respect is to be contrasted with the Son, who is the subsistent *term* of an immanent operation in the Trinity. The relevance of this remark for the later course of this article will become clear as we go on. This theology is first found in St. Augustine, was first given scholastic expression by the 12th-century Parisian theologian Richard of St. Victor, and has enjoyed a continuing history in theology down to the present day, which history is conveniently summarized by John Cowburn in his book *Love and the Person*.¹¹ Cowburn calls it the "mutual-love theory." In my book I call it the "bestowal model" of the Trinity, in distinction to the "procession model," my name for the first model. I call it the bestowal model because according to it the Holy Spirit, as mutual love of the Father and the Son, is the love which the Father bestows on the Son and the answering love which the Son bestows on the Father. I say "answering" love because among the persons of the

¹⁰ Cf. *In 1 Sent.* d. 32, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4. This, of course, is the early view of St. Thomas consistent with his understanding of love as opposed to knowledge, which he had changed by the time he came to the *Summa theologiae*. For a critique of his later view, see my book *Grace* 13-15.

¹¹ Cf. John Cowburn, *Love and the Person* (London: Chapman, 1967) 258-72.

Trinity there exists an order, not of time but, as St. Thomas says, of origin or nature, and in this order the Father precedes the Son. Therefore the Father's love for the Son will precede, and indeed evoke, the Son's love for the Father.

We now move on to show how my theology of the Incarnation harmonizes with the bestowal model of the Trinity. I emphasize that this is *all* we are doing here. The theology is not *established* in this way. Methodologically, it must be established independently, from Scripture and the Fathers, as I did in my book. But once established, it can be shown to harmonize with a legitimate model of the Trinity, though the procedure yields a bonus, in that our established knowledge receives thereby a new illumination.

Within the Trinity the Father's love, which is the Holy Spirit, rests upon the Son as its proper object. When in execution of the divine plan of salvation this love is directed beyond the Godhead into the world, to bring about the Incarnation, the central component of this plan, it will exhibit, in the most radical possible form, the following two characteristics of personal love. It will be *creative* and it will be *unitive*, with the former characteristic subordinated to the latter, as is the case in all love. Its creativeness is seen in the creation of the humanity of Christ, which as a work *ad extra* is the work of all three divine persons, and its radicalness is evident in the fact that we have here creation in the strict sense. In its unitiveness it draws the humanity of Christ into the unsurpassable union of love with the Father which belongs only to the Son in the immanent Trinity, and here the radicalness is seen in the fact that the result is not a mere union of persons but *unity of person* with the Son. And as an act of assimilation, i.e., ultimately an inner-Trinitarian act, it is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, or better, of the Father acting *by* the Spirit. There is no inconsistency here, for the outgoing aspect of the divine act is subordinated to its assimilative aspect. If the entire Trinity acts, this is only that ultimately the Father might act by His Spirit. Divine *power* is subordinated to divine *love*, or, put in another way, the true nature of divine power is revealed in its finality, which is love.

THE ARGUMENT

The Basic Knowledge of Christ

To inquire into the "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit, it will be necessary to consider first the question of Jesus' self-consciousness and knowledge. With much contemporary theology on this subject, we shall basically follow Rahner,¹² with two important modifications. His position is that

¹² Cf. Karl Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," *Theological Investigations* 5 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) 193-215.

as a human being Jesus must have known who he was, but, again like any human being, he knew this with a subjective knowledge, which he gradually objectified in the course of his life with the aid of the concepts available to him in his religious and cultural environment, which naturally imposed certain limitations on him. In other words, Jesus must have been subjectively conscious of his divinity, and this consciousness came to a certain culturally conditioned expression in his thoughts and words, but it was not an expression that faith would use today with its advantage of nearly two millennia of human experience and development. This position is adopted on the basis of two principles, the first philosophical and having to do with the integrity of Jesus' humanity, the second historical and biblical and finding its evidence in the Gospel text after historical criticism. The first is a priori, the second a posteriori. They are the same as the principles we have just seen to govern the *communicatio*, and indeed it is an instance of the *communicatio* that we have here, i.e., the communication of divine knowledge to the human mind of Jesus.

We begin with the philosophical principle. Rahner writes:

According to the previously stated axiom of thomistic metaphysics of knowledge (that 'being and self-awareness are elements of the one reality which condition each other immanently'), this highest ontological determination of the created reality of Christ (i.e., God himself in his hypostatic, quasi-formal causality) must of necessity be conscious of itself. For, according to this axiom, what is ontologically higher cannot be lower on the plane of consciousness than what is ontologically lower. Thus, given that this self-consciousness is a property of the human reality, then this ontological self-communication of God is also—and, indeed, specially and primarily—a factor in the self-consciousness of the human subjectivity of Christ. In other words, a purely ontic *Unio hypostatica* is metaphysically impossible to conceive.¹³

Thus he is able to speak of a *visio immediata*, an unmediated vision, a direct presence, of the Logos to Jesus, "a subjective, unique union of the human consciousness of Jesus with the Logos."¹⁴

This brings me to the first modification of Rahner's theology which I wish to make here, for these latter words of his have a somewhat Nestorian ring about them. With Pannenberg, and against Rahner, I see the conscious orientation of Jesus as being to the *Father* rather than to the Son, and we find this observation borne out in the Gospel evidence. The Synoptic Gospels present a Jesus who speaks not about his divine Sonship but about the kingdom and the Fatherhood of God. I therefore agree with Pannenberg that all statements about the divine Sonship of

¹³ Ibid. 206.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Jesus are indirect. He writes: "One cannot properly understand Jesus' Sonship without taking his relation to God the Father as the point of departure. The question of the unity of the man Jesus with the eternal Son of God cannot be put and answered directly."¹⁵

In case it be thought that we thus bring ourselves into inconsistency on the subject of the *enhypostasia*, I must now point out why this is not so. True, the *enhypostasia* has to do with the ontological relationship between the humanity of Christ and the *Logos*, but it must be remembered that this is a relationship precisely of identity or unity, in which Christ is thus set over against the *Father*. It is precisely the ontological relationship of unity with the Son that must be extrapolated from the biblical datum of Jesus' psychological relationship of unity with the Father.

This brings us to the second of our modifications of Rahner's theology. Here I make my own an adjustment by Pannenberg to Rahner's theology of the self-consciousness. Rahner has the self-consciousness as a purely a priori fundamental given, which passes into conscious knowledge a posteriori by means of concepts taken from the religious and cultural environment. Pannenberg asks "whether that fundamental given—in the case of man generally—can ever be conscious without mediation of some sort of 'objective' content of consciousness."¹⁶ In other words, in his view, in order to have consciousness at all, the fundamental given must be not just an a priori but already an inseparable mixture of a priori and a posteriori, of which the conscious knowledge is simply the more precise explicitation. As we shall see, this modification of the basic knowledge of Jesus will have its inevitable effect on his basic love.

The Basic Love of Christ

From Jesus' psychological relationship of unity with the Father it is deduced, in ontological terms, that there is a direct communication of being, of subsistence, from the Father to the humanity of Christ constituting him Son of God in humanity. This is the communion of being and life that obtains between the Father and the Son in the Trinity, except that on the side of the Son it now exists and is experienced in the human nature. This is what Jesus knew with the subjective knowledge of self-consciousness, and what led others later, and probably also himself, indirectly to an explicit knowledge of his divine Sonship. Total and direct orientation to the Father is, however, not just the ultimate being of Jesus and foundation of his knowledge. It also provides the object of his *love*. Indeed, the Gospels are less concerned with telling us who Jesus was and what he knew than with announcing that he uniquely lived in dependence

¹⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* (London: SCM, 1968) 334.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 331.

on God, so much so that he called on God as his Father, that dedication and obedience to God's will marked his life as that of no other, and that love of God was the whole motive force of his life and the inspiration of his ministry.

The love of which we speak is not something which Jesus might have had in common with other men, differing from this only by degree. It is something unique unto himself; for it is the correlate of his subjective consciousness and coplanar with it, a necessary consequence of the hypostatic union, demanded by the integrity of the human nature. Along with consciousness, it constitutes at the most basic level, where the ontological and the psychological "condition each other immanently," the *psychological dimension of the hypostatic union itself*. As such, it is no more free than the love to which it corresponds in the immanent Trinity. It is pure gift of the Father and grace, prior to all exercise of freedom, ground of the unique freedom of Christ. Further, it is not categorial but transcendental, and hence is neither a habit nor an act. Therefore it cannot be identified with supernatural charity, though it will be the ground also of this in Jesus.

Thus far we have been using the philosophical principle governing the *communicatio*. We now turn to the biblical principle. We note first of all that even for those who are "in Christ," the "sons (and daughters) in the Son," the union, ontological and psychological, that they have with the Father is the work of the Holy Spirit. (See, e.g., Rom 8:14-16 and Gal 4:6-7 and 2:19-20.) At every level the work of uniting men and women with the Father is that of the Holy Spirit. Further, this is an immediate union, in the sense that no thing or person, even Christ himself, stands between the individual human person and the Father. The Holy Spirit is therefore the bond rather than the medium between us and the Father. The all-important mediation of Christ consists in the fact that as a result of the redemption wrought by his death the Spirit who accomplishes this work in us is sent by him (from the Father) and conforms us to him. True, the action of Christ here is sacramental, but this does not mean that the relationship which he sets up between us and the Father is only indirect. We have received, ultimately from the Father, a bestowal of the Holy Spirit which makes us sons and daughters of the Father and draws from us a response of love for the Father. The innate unitiveness of the Father's love, which is the Holy Spirit, is actualized fully only in our response, which is a human love enabled, elicited, and sustained by the Holy Spirit active within us.

If this is true of the "sons in the Son," how much more so of the divine Son himself! As his Sonship is unique, so must his response, the love which he returns to the Father, be unique. Neither of these rests upon

his co-operation with the Father's grace, as with us, but each is a founding datum of his human existence. Certainly, his response to the Father must be a *human* reality. This much we can say from our knowledge of the *communicatio*; for whatever he receives, and then returns to the Father, must be received and returned in a human way. The question is: Is this the Holy Spirit Himself or, as with us, a human love enabled by the Holy Spirit? The question is not answered automatically in favor of the second alternative by the appeal we have just made to the *communicatio*; for if the divine Sonship can be received in a human way while remaining itself, so too can the Holy Spirit be received and returned in a human way while remaining *Himself*, i.e., by the divine Son in humanity. This is to say that there is a sense in which the Holy Spirit can be said to become "incarnate" in Christ. If we were to choose the second alternative above, we should be saying in effect that there is nothing unique about Jesus' divine Sonship, that the only difference between him and us is one of degree, which is contrary to the New Testament's teaching about him. Again, our answer must be one that does justice to the biblical datum of the unique unitiveness of Jesus' love for the Father as response to the Father's love for him, which is the phenomenon on which the whole of the Christian religion, by its confession of the divine Sonship of Jesus, is based. We can only conclude that the love which Jesus returns to the Father is the Holy Spirit Himself.

The "Incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ

This love of Jesus for the Father, which is the Holy Spirit, is not to be identified with any act of his or series of acts or even the habit of love. It is clear that none of these could be identified with the Holy Spirit, as each of them is finite, whereas the Holy Spirit is infinite. They, like wisdom and grace, were capable of increase with the passing of time (see Lk 2:52). It is to be identified rather with that love of Jesus for the Father which we have described as basic, necessary, subjective, immediate, and transcendental, and which is a consequence of the hypostatic union itself. It is infinite but, given that even the actualization of the infinite divine Sonship in humanity is not just possible but verified in the case of Jesus, it is not beyond the *obediential* potency of human nature.

In Jesus there was a progressive actualization of the divine Sonship. This does not mean that God underwent change in Himself. It means rather that the humanity of Christ had a normal history of development from conception and birth through to death. In this growing maturity it became an ever more apt medium for the actualization of the divine Sonship. As Rahner has put it, God changed, not, however, in Himself

but in "His other," the humanity of Christ to which He was hypostatically united.¹⁷ Hence, while there never was a time when Jesus was not Son of God, the divine Sonship was *fully* realized in him only in his death. The agent of the change was Jesus himself, in his human freedom, which came to expression in his love of God. We speak now not of his transcendental love but of his categorial love, built up throughout his life by repeated acts. This meant that the divine Sonship incarnate in him acquired not an abstract expression which would be identical in whatever time and place the Incarnation might by God's design occur, but the very concrete character of the unrepeatable human personality of Jesus of Nazareth. This is surely what scholars must have in mind when they speak of the "scandal" of the Incarnation.

Parallel to the progressive actualization of the divine Sonship, there was a progressive actualization of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' transcendental love of the Father. To show this, we refer to our earlier conclusion that "the fundamental given (of Jesus' self-consciousness) must be not just an a priori but already an inseparable mixture of a priori and a posteriori, of which the conscious knowledge is simply the more precise explicitation." Hence, as love follows knowledge, with the dawn of consciousness in Jesus the Holy Spirit, as his transcendental love of the Father, began to assume the characteristics of his very personal and individual love of God, and this process continued throughout his life, coming to its completion in his death. To the death of Jesus must here be acknowledged the full importance attached to it by Scripture. There can be no greater human love than a love unto death. Hence in the death of Jesus the progressive "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in his transcendental love of the Father attains the limit that is possible in this life.

But further, when Jesus died he was admitted to what is called theologically "the beatific vision." In his case this can only mean that the direct presence of the Father which he experienced throughout life was now, by the grace of the Father, apprehended with full intellectual clarity. This has two important consequences for Jesus' love of the Father. In the first place, it means that the Holy Spirit, as Jesus' transcendental love of the Father, becomes fully "incarnated" in his human love, since his love must follow the new intellectual presentation of its object. Secondly, there is no further place for elicited acts of love of the Father on Jesus' part, since his whole being is now concentrated in a single act of love which would render such acts superfluous even if they were not ruled out already on anthropological grounds. Here, then, we have the perfect "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ. It is the incarnation of divine love in human love. And the "scandal" of the

¹⁷ Cf. Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation" 113-15.

Incarnation is complete; for the Son of God stands fully incarnate in Christ, i.e., has penetrated his humanity totally, i.e., in the very perfection of its act. That is to say, the Son of God has penetrated the human being of Christ not just as it was at the first moment of its existence, but in its highest activity, which orders and subsumes all other activities, viz., his love of God, and this in its consummation.

But in the beatific vision of the Father, and also in the consequent love, are included, secondarily, all creatures, but especially the blessed and those on earth who will respond with faith to their encounter with Jesus as the Christ. Knowing them with the same knowledge with which he knows the Father, Jesus will love them with the same love, which is the Holy Spirit. We have from the pen of Rahner an essay in which he explains the profound unity which exists between love of God and love of neighbor even in this life.¹⁸ In the case of Jesus, and after his death, this twofold love is simply the Holy Spirit, incarnate in his human love. Hence the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church by Christ, begun at Pentecost and continued over the centuries through the Church's ministry of word and sacrament, is nothing other than Jesus' love for his brethren, an essential dimension of his love of the Father.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Thus two things which we know from Scripture are explained. First, there is the Christological character of the Holy Spirit, which is the principal object of this article, and what Dunn referred to when he remarked that the Spirit had taken His "shape" from the impress of Jesus' own relationship with God. The Spirit touches us first as the fraternal love of Christ, and in its unitive character unites us with him, so that with Paul we can say "Christ lives in me" (see Gal 2:20). This is because Christ meets us first in his word of love, which is the "good news" preached by his Church. Just as any loving word is the sacrament (sign and communication) of the love which inspires it, so the gospel is the sacrament of Christ's love for us, which is the Holy Spirit. And for the first preachers of the gospel, the apostles, the meeting with Christ was a resurrection "appearance" rooted in their memories of the earthly Jesus and, in the case of Paul, in his secondhand knowledge of him.¹⁹ In each case the interiorized "word" served as the sacrament of Christ's love, the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is also, and indeed primarily, the Father's love for Christ His Son, and so the word is also, and ultimately, the sacrament of *this* love. Thus, becoming Christ's brothers

¹⁸ Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbour and the Love of God," *Theological Investigations* 6 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969) 231-49.

¹⁹ Cf. David Coffey, "The Resurrection of Jesus and Catholic Orthodoxy," *Studies in Faith and Culture* (Sydney: Faith and Culture, 1980) 113.

and sisters through the action of his Spirit (see Lk 8:21), men and women are drawn into the ambit of the Father's paternal love, which is also the Holy Spirit, and reborn in the power of this Spirit as His sons and daughters (in the Son), thus becoming directly united with *Him*.

Secondly, we can now understand why the sending of the Spirit on the Church after the death of Jesus presents not just a factual but a necessary sequence, for it depends on his attainment of the beatific vision. "Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn 7:39).

Problems about a possible compromise of the divine transcendence can be solved by reference to our handling of this objection in regard to the actualization of the divine Son in the human nature of Christ. That is to say, in the human love of Christ which is the Holy Spirit the divine love does not come to that absolutely perfect expression which it receives in the immanent Trinity in the love which the Son acting in the divine nature returns to the Father, but only to the perfection that is relative to the capacity of human nature under God's grace. Only thus is a true, if analogous, "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit guaranteed.

The beginning of the "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit which took place in the life of Jesus was the ultimate ground of his human freedom, his perfection of charity, his exemption from concupiscence, and his impeccability. All these are categorial manifestations of his transcendental human openness to God. I cannot here speak of them singly and in detail, and so shall content myself with a word about the most basic of them, his freedom. The openness of Jesus to God was not the purely human reality that it is with us, able to be closed off through sin, but a reality which was at the same time truly human and truly divine, viz., the Holy Spirit as transcendental human love of and commitment to the Father, and therefore not only enabling but guaranteeing from Jesus a perfect human response without forcing it. We do not pretend to have a theological solution to the profound mystery of our relationship with God, viz., that our freedom, far from being annihilated or threatened under His sovereign grace, comes thereby to its perfection. In the case of Jesus, in the absoluteness of his union with God we encounter simply the most acute instance of this mystery. That his openness to the Father was the divine love incarnate in human love does not throw his freedom into question. On the contrary, it guarantees it as the very perfection of human freedom, and through it accounts for the other matters listed above.

In conclusion, we return to the bestowal model of the Trinity. If Jesus is brought into being as the divine Son in humanity through the Father's radical bestowal of love on him, which love is the Holy Spirit, and if the

response of Jesus is a love for the Father which ultimately is a return of this same Spirit, then in the immanent Trinity itself the Holy Spirit exists as the mutual love of the Father and the Son. In other words, the justification which contemporary methodology demands for the bestowal model must come, and in fact does come, from the person of Jesus himself as presented in the Gospels and grasped in the light of Christian reflection. As I noted earlier, the bestowal model existed already, as a variant of the Augustinian psychological model, but its justification is had not from this but directly from the life of Jesus. In thus demonstrating the basis of the bestowal model, I have at the same time shown how the theology of the "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit harmonizes with it, and hence that it is acceptable in the wide corpus of theology. Finally, I have shown how the "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit is rightly seen only against *this* particular background of the immanent Trinity. The sending of the Holy Spirit by Christ is commonly expounded against the background of the procession model, i.e., as the extension into the world of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. While this is fair enough as far as it goes, it could never account for the fact that the Holy Spirit took His "'shape' from the impress of Jesus' own relationship with God," which was one of the most, if not *the* most, important of the early Christian phenomena. For this the Holy Spirit has to be seen as the return of the Father's love by Jesus and his sending of the Spirit upon the Church as the obverse of this love.