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THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

VOLUME I

GOD, CHRIST, MARY AND GRACE

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not merely an appropriated one. Furthermore, this question is significant not only for a closer understanding of the nature of justifying and sanctifying grace, by providing what is in the last resort the only means of deciding whether 'uncreated grace' is merely something subsequent upon created grace, or whether it must be recognized as an independent element in the total concept of sanctifying grace. The question is significant also for the problem of the connexion between the Trinity as immanent and as economic, the entitative Trinity and the Trinity of Revelation; if man really has a special relationship to each of the three divine Persons,¹ the opposition between the entitative Trinity and the Trinity of Revelation is resolved at its very root: God *stands in relation* (*verhält sich*) to the justified man as Father, Word, Spirit, and *is* this too, in and for himself.

We may note finally that in the official prayers of the liturgy, it is the Father to whom we pray through the Son, and this Father is simply called *Deus*.² We have seen that this is also the usage of the New Testament. The kerygmatic significance of our enquiry was briefly touched upon earlier in this study.

¹ Because grace in its full sense cannot be reduced to the concept of an effect of God's efficient causality, an effect which is worked by the three divine Persons in common. See below, pp. 319-46.

² de Régnon, I, pp. 495-9.

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CURRENT PROBLEMS IN CHRISTOLOGY

ONCE theologians and the ordinary magisterium of the Church have begun to pay attention to a reality and a truth revealed by God, the final result is always a precisely formulated statement. This is natural and inevitable. In no other way is it possible to mark the boundary of error and the misunderstanding of divine truth in such a way that this boundary will be observed in the day-to-day practice of religion. Yet while this formula is an end, an acquisition and a victory, which allows us to enjoy clarity and security as well as ease in instruction, if this victory is to be a true one the end must also be a beginning. It follows from the nature of human knowledge of truth and from the nature of divine truth itself, that any individual truth, above all one of God's truths, is beginning and emergence, not conclusion and end. In the last resort any individual human perception of truth only has meaning as beginning and promise of the knowledge of God. But whether the latter is conceived of as *visio beatifica* or otherwise, it can only be genuine, only make blessed, in the knowledge of his incomprehensibility: at that point, then, in which comprehension and the determining limits of what is known are jointly transcended in the Incomprehensible and the Unlimited. Because every truth of the God who reveals himself is given as an incitement and a way to the closest immediacy of communion with him, it is all the more an opening into the immeasurable, a beginning of the illimitable. The clearest formulations, the most sanctified formulas, the classic condensations of the centuries-long work of the Church in prayer, reflection and struggle concerning God's mysteries: all these derive their life from the fact that they are not end but beginning, not goal but means, truths which open the way to the—ever greater—Truth. The fact that every formula transcends itself (not because it is false, but precisely because it is true) is not due just to the transcendence of the mind which apprehends it and, in apprehending it, is always off beyond it after the greater fullness of Reality and Truth itself. Nor is

this self-transcendence due merely to the divine grace of faith, which always transforms the perception of a truth in propositional form into a movement of the mind towards the apprehension of God's ontological truth in itself. This transcendence is at work precisely in the movement of the formula itself, in that it is itself surpassed with a view to another. This certainly does not mean that the first formula has to be given up or abolished in favour of another, as though it were antiquated or another could take its place. On the contrary: it preserves its significance, it remains precisely living, by being expounded. This is so true and so obvious, that whole books can and must be written about the principle of identity, that is to say, the simplest, clearest, most necessary and undeniable formula of all, because it cannot really be said with much confidence that someone who monotonously keeps on repeating it—dressed up with a few 'clarificatory' phrases—has in fact understood it. Anyone who takes seriously the 'historicity' of human truth (in which God's truth too has become incarnate in Revelation) must see that neither the abandonment of a formula nor its preservation in a petrified form does justice to human understanding. For history is precisely *not* an atomized beginning-ever-*anew*; it is rather (the more spiritual it is) a becoming-*new* which preserves the old, and preserves it all the more *as* old, the more spiritual this history is. But this preservation, which recognizes the true uniqueness of something which has taken place once for all, is only historical preservation when—the history goes on, and the movement of reflexion departs from the formula which has been reached in order to discover it (just this old formula itself) again.

This holds good of the Chalcedonian formulation of the mystery of Jesus too. For this formula is—a formula.

Thus we have not only the right but the duty to look at it as end *and* as beginning. We shall never stop trying to release ourselves from it, not so as to abandon it but to understand it, understand it with mind and heart, so that through it we might draw near to the ineffable, unapproachable, nameless God, whose will it was that we should find him in Jesus Christ and through Christ seek him. We shall never cease to return to this formula, because whenever it is necessary to say briefly what it is that we encounter in the ineffable truth which is our salvation, we shall always have recourse to the modest, sober clarity of the Chalcedonian formula. But we shall only really have recourse to it (and this is not at all the same thing as simply repeating

it), if it is not only our end but also our beginning. We must say something here about this incompleteness which the formula does not resolve but in fact preserves.

Anyone who speaks of incompleteness in a matter like this must be prepared to be dismissed with contempt. This sort of language is hardly 'scientific'. It has to try to get a hearing without the help of the apparatus of learning; inevitably it sounds a little vague, rather like the cheap political programme which promises the emergence of a New Age, although the new Government is probably going to be just as bad as the old. It cannot by itself put into practice what it demands, and that is what is most questionable about it. For if someone says that this matter or that must be considered or investigated, or should be freshly analysed and treated of more comprehensively and profoundly, and yet this does not come about immediately in reality, he speaks like a man who proposes a route by which he himself has never travelled. It may very well be that many of his wishes and conjectures do not touch upon the essential, that the really decisive point will be overlooked. Nevertheless preliminary reflexions of this conjectural and tentative kind are unavoidable, and can only be despised or rejected in principle by someone who thinks that as far as Christology proper is concerned we have already reached the end. But if we are always at the beginning, then the first step is always the uneasy feeling of a need to ask whether it might not be possible to give this or that matter closer attention and find a better solution.

The object which this anxious seeking for the question (it is nothing more) has in view is not of course simply the whole plenitude of the 'objective Spirit'¹ of Revelation and theology in their long history. If we had clearly before us the plenitude of what was once perceived in faith and meditated upon in theology throughout its entire history, we should already in great part have found the question we are looking for and its answer too. For it is the bitter grief of theology and its blessed task too, always to have to seek (because it does not clearly have present to it at the time) what, in a true sense—in its historical memory—it has always known. The history of theology is by no means just the history of the progress of doctrine, but also a history of forgetting. That is the only reason why historical theology and history of doctrine have a real, irreplaceable and necessary task within

¹ In the Hegelian sense.—Tr.

dogmatic theology itself. What was once given in history and is ever made present anew does not primarily form a set of premises from which we can draw new conclusions which have never been thought of before. It is the object which, while it is always retained, must ever be acquired anew, by us, that is, we who are just such as no one else can ever be in all history. So that when in considerable uncertainty, we set about asking—and the question itself has to be found first—what it is that we must bring back to mind so as to be able to make our own what we believe, the starting-point of this attempt to ask questions cannot be the whole of Revelation and its history in theology. It is the *answer* which lies there. The starting-point can only be the generally accepted position in theology today (meaning here Christology), as it is found in modern textbooks, in the conception which everybody would agree is the ordinary one, in what appears really clearly in our ordinary theological consciousness today. Any attempt to describe this starting-point is inevitably going to give the impression of being ill-informed, of generalizing unjustly and of distorting current theology. For this 'current theology' cannot easily be detached from its entire past; because along with the average it always offers—thank God—something deeper and closer to the sources of life; because when it is attacked and defends itself, it can always surpass itself and relate what it holds to the past and the future. And so it is impossible to avoid the danger of seeming to caricature current Christology when one attempts to describe what it finds clear and what would have to become still clearer to it in the future. Just because in theology everything is connected with everything else, it is always going to be the case that anyone who is sensitive to the reproach of not having examined this or that question sufficiently or given it a satisfactory answer, can impatiently, but with a good conscience, hold that he has always really been aware of the question in point, and 'basically' even discussed it and analysed it sufficiently. One can only ask such a theologian why he has only discussed so briefly and casually what clearly deserves precise and detailed treatment, and whether he has not forgotten in other places what he—so he claims—regards as 'obvious', and whether this does not show that after all what everybody knows and what has long since been cleared up doesn't perhaps count for much. One has only to consider how few really living and passionate controversies there are in Catholic Christology today which engage the existential concern of the faithful (is there a single one?). Unless

someone is inclined to regard this fact simply as a mark of superiority, a proof of unrudded orthodoxy and crystal-clear theology, he will listen with patience and good will to the most modest attempt, undertaken with the most inadequate means, to depart from the Chalcedonian formula in order to find the way back to it in truth.

We should also observe the following point. The degree of theoretical precision and existential vitality with which man understands what he hears depends on the degree to which he comprehends it within the total content of his spiritual being. If this were not the case, there would never have been Councils of the Church with their definitions, because a new age would always have been able to live on in the old clarity; or we should have to suppose that the *only* reason for these Councils was the fact that there had been evil heretics who maliciously obscured what in itself had been said with quite sufficient clarity and what in itself would have been quite sufficient for later ages in spite of their unlikeness. If then the ordinary theology current today is to be asked why what it has told us is insufficiently clear, by 'us' is meant we as we must be today; for man's unique standpoint in history is inescapably given him in advance and helps to determine the perspective within which we have to consider God's eternal truths too, if we are really going to let them become a reality of mind, heart and life in our personal existence. This is not to say that it is in general particularly profitable for theology to take as the explicit starting-point of a critical consideration of the average Christology current today, any characteristic features of just that spiritual situation which has been imposed upon us, in so far as they are apprehended *reflexively*. Such a method is seldom successful, if only because these reflexively apprehended characteristics of the time are probably signatures of a time which is on the way out; it is unlikely that we should discover from them postulates big with promise for the Christology of tomorrow. It is preferable simply to look at the facts, that is to say at Christology itself—always providing that one has the courage to ask questions, to be dissatisfied, to think with the mind and heart one actually has, and not with the mind and heart one is supposed to have. One can then be confident that after all something will perhaps emerge which we ought to be thinking today. For it is quite meaningless to want to be modern on purpose. The only thing one can do in this situation is not to suppose that it is necessary to deny who one is (out of anxiety or distrust or falsely understood orthodoxy), but rather allow oneself

honestly to have one's say, and really build on the fact that God can give his grace to this age of ours too, as he once gave it to sinners.

Let us then begin by going to the heart of the matter. This is primarily Biblical theology. There is no question here of practising Biblical theology in its own right; our intention is much more modest. We propose to show by means of a kind of transcendental hermeneutics¹ starting from dogma that the Church's Christological dogma never claims to be an adequate condensation of Biblical teaching, and so that there does remain from the viewpoint of dogma a place for further Christological Biblical theology. It is only in this sense that we shall speak of Biblical theology in what follows. It should be the source of dogmatic theology and so also of Christology. Without it, according to *Humani Generis*², dogmatic theology becomes sterile. And here we are already faced with a serious problem. How are we to pursue Biblical theology for Christological purposes, both generally speaking and in dogmatic theology in particular? Is it rash or unjust to say that among Catholic writers, the professional exegetes in this field do not practise Biblical theology, and that the dogmatic theologians know or make use of only those parts of the Scriptures which they require in order to prove Christological theses which have been laid down in advance in a canon already become traditional? Or, in case the first suggestion seems too hard, what noteworthy influence has modern Biblical theology had (so far as it is practised) upon the structure and content of the traditional scholastic theology?³ Of course the theses of this scholastic theology are true and important, so far as they are of dogma. Of course these theses are the concise, condensed expression of the fundamental testimonies in Scripture concerning Jesus Christ, an expression achieved by the immense labour of an irreversible spiritual and cultural history under the guidance of the Spirit of God in the Church. But is it true that the Chalcedonian dogma, and what little else has been acquired for the theology of the schools in the history of dogma, is a condensation and summary of *everything*, without

¹ An expression reminiscent of Kant, Dilthey, Heidegger.—Tr.

² Pius XII, *Litterae Encyclicae 'Humani Generis'* (12 August 1950), AAS XLII (1950), pp. 568–9; Denz 3014.

³ 'Traditional' here refers to the actual practice of recent centuries, especially since the Enlightenment and the (fruitful and perilous) restoration of scholastic theology after the theology of the Enlightenment.

remainder, of which we hear in Scripture about Jesus the Christ and about the Son, or, again, of what we *might* hear if only we were to speak once more of what has still not entered into scholastic theology? Anyone who answers this question in the affirmative would deny that the Scriptures are the *inexhaustible* source of truth about Christ.¹ But is this conviction noticeable as an active force and a holy disquiet in the ordinary practice of Christology today? For example, let us take L. de Grandmison's undoubtedly great work on Christ; after all its minute historical investigations, does it not, looked at *theologically*, simply arrive once again at the scholastic position in Christology? Is this to be explained merely by the fact that it has an apologetic end in view and not an immediately theological one?

Let no one say that nothing more is really possible in this field any longer. Something is possible, because something *must* be possible, if it is a matter of the inexhaustible riches of God's presence with us and if we honestly admit that we often find traditional Christology difficult to understand (we shall return to this point later) and so have questions to put to its source, the Scriptures.

For example, let us take so central an assertion of the Scriptures as the statement that Jesus is the Messias and as such has become Lord in the course of his life, death and resurrection.² Is it agreed that this assertion has simply been made obsolete by the doctrine of meta-physical Sonship, as we recognize it and express it in the Chalcedonian declaration, and that its only real interest for us now is historical, as a first formulation, important merely because Jesus found it useful for the Jews? Is the Christology of the Acts of the Apostles, which begins from below, with the human experience of Jesus³, merely primitive? Or has it something special to say to us which classical Christology does not say with the same clarity? Is there nothing more to say about the historical self-consummation of the Lord after we have said: *meruit glorificationem corporis sui* (and yet this is by no means peculiar to him)? Is Phil 2, for instance, really covered by this? It does indeed follow from the Incarnation of the Word of God through Mary (in the Chalcedonian sense) that he is the 'Mediator'

¹ *Humani Generis*, AAS, p. 568; Denz 3014.

² This is true of the Synoptics and also—though in different words—of St Paul.

³ Ac 2:21–36; 3:12–26; 4:8–12.27; 5:29–32; 7:56; 9:22; 10:34–43; 13:28–41; 17:31; 18:28.

between us and God, *provided*, of course, that the real initiative, in some true sense, of the man Jesus with regard to God is given its *genuine* (anti-monothelitic) meaning, and Christ is not made into a mere 'manifestation' of God himself and ultimately of him alone, such that the 'appearance' has no independent validity at all with respect to the one who appears. Such a 'Mediator' would be one in name alone. A Christology which fundamentally failed to see this would end by becoming a mythology.¹ But the fact that we have to add this proviso, in order to draw out the full sense of the concept of the mediator and thus (?) of the Messias from the theology of the Incarnation as it is currently taught in the schools, shows that the Bible can contribute something to this classical theology. In particular, if the human 'nature' of the doctrine of Two Natures² is seen merely

¹ Thus mythology in this connexion could be defined as follows: The representation of a god's becoming man is mythological, when the 'human' element is merely the clothing, the livery, of which the god makes use in order to draw attention to his presence here with us, while it is not the case that the human element acquires its supreme initiative and control over its own actions by the very fact of being assumed by God. Looked at from this point of view a single basic conception runs through the Christian heresies from Apollinarianism to Monothelitism, sustained by the same basic mythical feeling. The persistence of this idea even in theoretical formulations ought to make us realize that although it may have given up announcing itself in such a theoretical fashion today, the idea probably still lives on in the picture which countless Christians have of the 'Incarnation', whether they give it their faith—or reject it.

² It is not the Council's doctrine of Two Natures that is in view here, but a 'customary' curtailed form of this doctrine. We have not the slightest intention of suggesting that the Council should be blamed for this curtailed form or indeed that it represents the Council's teaching. What we have in mind is that this reduction of the Mediator to a mean term between God and man does exist in the common mind, when *nature* is seen as a mere instrument of the person, and consequently has no significance for a *divine* Person. The actual existence of such a reduction is not disposed of by the fact that it cannot find conceptual expression within orthodox Christianity in the form of obstinate error (and so is not even easy to grasp conceptually), nor by the fact that it is rejected by other doctrines which are maintained explicitly (Redemption as satisfaction). To establish this point is not to deny that the teaching of the Council, when it is taken in its full, historically ascertainable sense, was concerned to use the doctrine of the Two Natures to elucidate Christ's genuine, human role as Mediator. In the period just before Chalcedon, the recognition of a twofold *physis* in Christ certainly made it possible to locate the decisive mediatorial act, as against Apollinarianism, within the reality of this world, in the very human nature of

in the *customary sense* of a pure 'instrument', the possessor of this instrument can no longer be thought of as Mediator. He would simply be Mediator to himself. Any attempt to deal with the question by discussing it in terms of two 'moral subjects' would still only provide a verbal solution, because a 'nature' conceived of in this way could not provide any foundation for a second moral subject—in relation to God, what is more—in that everything pertaining to a subject in this moral subject (=human nature) would be precisely the Logos himself, with respect to whom the Mediator is supposed to mediate. But is it possible today to keep sharply before our minds Jesus' true initiative in his human history with respect to God and before God and consequently its immediate empirical subject (in distinction from the metaphysical Person), by using *only* the word 'nature', and that in sharp distinction from the divine Person? Or is it not true that the Redemption thereby becomes for all practical purposes simply God's act among us, and no longer the act of the Messianic Mediator between us and God? And is it not true that the almost unavoidable consequence of all this is a conception, which undoubtedly dominates the popular mind (without of course reaching the stage of consciously formulated heresy), and which could be put rather as follows: 'When our Lord (=God) walked on earth with his disciples, still humble and unrecognized . . . ?'

Now it may and indeed must of course be said that the doctrine of

Christ. Although there are many who refuse to accept this view, there is a good deal to show that Athanasius located the act of redemption in the Logos as Logos; Apollinarius elevated this into a principle, by deducing the absolute hegemony of the Logos from his concept of *physis*. If nevertheless—in spite of Cyril's *mia-physis* formula—the Two-Natures formula was finally successful, all it was intended to emphasize was the fact that Christ's humanity was a *phōtos*, i.e. an *αὐτοκίνητος*, and so that the intrinsically redemptive act was an act of genuinely human freedom. This formed the basis of a genuine soteriology over against the over-emphasized Logos-sax schema. Clearly it was the Mediator concept which was involved here. Once all this has not only been 'granted' but also clearly and explicitly maintained, it is surely permissible to proceed to a distinction between the *full* sense of the Chalcedonian formula, as this *sensus plenius* emerges according to the evidence of the history of dogma from the mind of the Council, and the perfectly true but curtailed version of the formula, as this can be drawn from the concepts of the formula alone when these are interpreted in conformity with the watered-down version of the schools. What we shall go on to say applies to this latter version alone.

the unconfused and unchanged real human nature implies, as the struggle against monothelism after the rejection of monophysitism shows, that the 'human nature' of the Logos possesses a genuine, spontaneous, free, spiritual, active centre, a human selfconsciousness, which as creaturely faces the eternal Word in a genuinely human attitude of adoration, obedience, a most radical sense of creaturehood. Indeed it is emphatically maintained that this sphere of consciousness proper to a subject, a sphere enclosed in itself in creaturely fashion by reason of the gulf that distinguishes and separates God from the creature, only knows and only could know of its hypostatic union with the Logos in virtue of an objective communication. This communication is said to depend on the *visio beatifica* of this human consciousness, and cannot be a datum of Jesus' human selfconsciousness—if by selfconsciousness is understood the simple being-present-to-itself of an independent entity¹ (in the identity of the act and object of knowledge). Thus by maintaining the genuineness of Christ's humanity, room is left within his life for achievement, and the possibility of a real Mediatorship and thus—if you will—of a real Messiahship is preserved.

Let us first set aside the question whether this account of the matter, which Paul Galtier is trying to urge on theologians today as the unmistakable voice of Tradition, is in itself free from objection. Let us set aside the fact that the opposition which Galtier encountered, and the controversies which have continued since then, show that there still remain obscurities in orthodox theology, although both parties claim the support of the Chalcedonian doctrine. Our first concern *here* is this: is it possible from the basic Chalcedonian doctrine itself actually to evolve the account given us above in reply to the question how far Jesus can be the Mediator between us and God? Although this requirement is not strictly necessary, it seems nevertheless to be justified, because in fact the formula 'One Person and two natures' is the basic formula of Christology. If it is replied that we are quite certainly bound to take into account the fact that other truths, witnessed to in Scripture, must be *added* to this basic formula for a full understanding of the Lord as Mediator, although strictly speaking they are not found in this basic formula and cannot be *derived* from it—then the question with which we began arises *implicit* with even

more urgency. Is it in fact possible to *derive* from the formula 'One Person—two natures in the possession of the one Person' that characteristic relationship to God in the sphere of Jesus' human reality, a relationship apparent in Scripture and indispensable for the understanding of Christ's function as Mediator (for it makes it possible for him to act freely towards and before God)? That is to say, is it possible to recognize this relationship as contained in the formula *implicit*? Or is it in fact open to one to doubt this? It is well known that at the last moment it was decided to make an omission, verbally slight but theologically important, from the text of the Encyclical on Chalcedon: instead of rejecting a doctrine which held that there were two subjects in Christ 'saltem psychologie', the Encyclical rejected the (Nestorian) doctrine of two (ontological) subjects, by omitting the phrase 'saltem psychologie'.¹ One thing at least becomes clear from this little episode in the history of the Encyclical's redaction: that there were and are theologians who cannot see that the doctrine of two natures involves a duality of even a merely psychological and relative kind between an existentially² independent I-centre (*Ichzentrum*) in the man Jesus and the Logos; indeed they believe that anything of the sort is excluded. And there are theologians who hold that something of the kind is a fact which can be demonstrated theologically and historically. But what must be granted is that the concept of *person* is always at least in danger of being understood in such a way that the 'independence' in view here seems to be excluded. It is not merely since the nineteenth century, with Günther's modern concept of *person* and Existentialist philosophy, that this has been the case. The concept of *person* as the ontological principle of a free³ active centre, selfconscious, present to itself and through itself in being, is a concept which, in the sense just indicated, has always played round the edge of the most static and objective concept of *person*.⁴ We cannot prove this here. But if it were not the case, monothelism would

¹ Cf. Pius XII, *Litterae Encyclicae 'Sempiternus Rex'* (8 September 1951), AAS XLIII (1951), p. 638. On the above-mentioned emendation of the text of the Encyclical, cf. P. Galtier, 'La Conscience humaine du Christ', *Gregorianum* XXXII (1951), p. 562, n. 68.

² *Existential*: see Introduction.—Tr.

³ I.e. a freely responsible active centre, which merits even before God and in distinction from him, because before him.

⁴ I.e. substantial unity and distinction involving incommunicability.

have been quite inconceivable; for it was not just a political device for making a concession to monophysitism, but persisted with such vigour that today it is still a widespread 'heresy' among Christians—all verbal orthodoxy notwithstanding. In the customary teaching about sin, untouched by any kind of Existentialism, a distinction is made between *peccatum personale* and *peccatum naturae*; in this terminology too we see that existential¹ ideas about the *person* are simultaneously at play. If these come to the fore, a connexion obtrudes itself upon the mind: where there is a *single* person, there is a *single* freedom, a *single* unique personal active centre, in relation to which any other reality (=nature, natures) can only be in this person the material and the instrument, the recipient of commands and the manifestation of this single, personal centre of freedom. But this is precisely not the case with Jesus. Otherwise he would only be the God who is active among us in human form, and not the true man who can be our Mediator with respect to God in genuine human freedom. It would of course be utterly false to say that the conceptual pair 'Person-nature' involves this monothelite interpretation (it would be better and clearer to say today 'mono-existentialist conception'). But the concept of *person*, as it is in actual fact understood,² in fact

¹ Existential.

² We shall later have to discuss at some length why it is that such a misconception or the danger of it cannot be removed simply by terminological exactitude. Clearly it can be laid down that by 'person' we shall understand only the ultimate substantial unity and completeness of a subject which is incommunicable and whose reality as one in this sense can only be expressed by this subject itself. But as soon as the concrete person understood in this way exhibits a plurality in its real being, the question must arise as to how and in virtue of what the plurality is combined with the personal unity: what is sought is just the unique unifying centre of this plural unity; the unique point prior to the instituted plural unity; we want to make clear to ourselves *in terms of its actual content* what the function of this prior unity is in establishing unity in plurality, not just in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which is only a *consequence* of this unity. Consequently when we are thinking, in connexion with this unity, of a person as *ens rationabile*, we tend to think that the function of the person which consists in establishing unity is not the actual, centralized, existential control and direction of the plural realities of the person, but rather their ontological foundation, which most clearly emerges to view *in* this control and direction. How little permissible it is simply to exclude this position out of hand may be seen from the defined doctrine that Christ's 'human nature', on account of the *unio hypostatica*, is wholly subject in its freedom to the Logos, and thus was

insistently suggests this interpretation, and it is again and again taken unreflectively in this sense, though the interpretation is never reflexively thought out and formulated (for that would be heretical). Inevitably the question then arises: how can the whole complex of Christological dogma be formulated so as to allow the Lord to appear as Messianic Mediator and so as true Man, as soon as possible, or at any rate with sufficient clarity? As true Man, who, standing before God on our side in free human obedience, is Mediator, not only in virtue of the ontological union of two natures, but also through his activity, which is directed to God (as obedience to the will of the Father) and cannot be conceived of *simply* as God's activity in and through a human nature thought of as purely instrumental, a nature which in relation to the Logos would be, ontologically and morally, purely passive? The ordinary doctrine of two natures just by itself is quite insufficient as a ground from which to derive this insight into Christ's mediation as something which arises from the inner tendency of the doctrine. For if someone says that a human nature has a free will and that *eo ipso* this gives us all that is required, he overlooks the point that the question arises just here as to how freedom can belong to someone¹ with whom it is not identical, whose intrinsic core it does not constitute; why this freedom is neither subjugated to the 'person' distinct from it nor in a position to rebel against it.²

essentially sinless. But once again, how little this doctrine offers us by way of an answer to the problem with which we are concerned, may be seen by putting the following question. Is it the case *either* that the *unio hypostatica* just in itself as such is the *immediate* real ontological ground for the realization of this sinless subjection of the humanly free spontaneity of Christ's human nature to the other will (that of the Logos)? Or is it only the mediately operative requirement in order that the Logos should effect this subjection by the use of means which elsewhere in the domain of creatures God is also capable of using as sovereign master over creaturely freedom, without thereby injuring it—indeed precisely realizing it? Or finally does the question itself in its disjunctive form show itself to be a false one, once the *unio hypostatica* is set quite generally in the wider context of the ontological relationship between God and the free creature?

¹ A person in the traditional ontological sense.

² There is no need to spend any time here in showing that the following approach provides no solution. Someone might say: The will is an accident of the substance of the soul (=nature), and freedom is its modality; consequently this cannot be conceived of in such a way that the question should ever arise as to how the freedom could be 'eccentric' to the person. The

It is easy to see from all this that only a *divine* Person can possess as its own a freedom really distinct from itself in such a way that this freedom does not cease to be truly free even with regard to the divine Person possessing it,¹ while it continues to qualify this very Person as its ontological subject. For it is only in the case of God that it is conceivable at all that he himself can constitute something in a state of distinction from himself. This is precisely an attribute of his divinity as such and his intrinsic creativity: to be able, by himself and through his *own* act *as such*, to constitute something in being which by the very fact of its being radically dependent (because *wholly* constituted in being), also acquires autonomy, independent reality and truth (precisely because it is constituted in being by the one, unique *God*), and all this precisely with respect to the God who constitutes it in being. God alone can make something which has validity even in his own presence. There lies the mystery of that active creation which is God's alone. Radical dependence upon him increases in direct, and not in inverse, proportion with genuine self-coherence before him. Measured against God, the creature is precisely *not* to be reduced unambiguously to the formula of merely negative limitation. Our problem here is only the supreme application of this basic truth concerning the Creator-creature relationship (a truth which at least historically has never been reached in non-Christian philosophy). And it immediately follows once again that the purely *formal* (abstract) schema *nature-person* is inadequate. We must conceive of the relation between the Logos-Person and his human nature in just this sense, that here² *both* independence³ and radical proximity⁴ equally reach a unique and qualitatively incommensurable perfection, which nevertheless remains once

starting-point of this answer is sound enough in certain respects; yet 'freedom' remains in its intrinsic ontological root supremely central to the person, and thus the question we have tried to put remains. If anyone doubts this, he should consider the fact that this modality of the second act of this accident is simply speaking master of the destiny and the decision of the *whole* reality of the free being, and that the free act can thus never be made 'central' enough.

¹ It is just this which is meant when Christ's merit as a man before God is spoken of.

² Corresponding to the general creature-Creator relationship.

³ Freedom of the human 'nature'.

⁴ Substantial appropriation by the Logos of this human nature and its freedom.

and for all the perfection of a relation between Creator and creature.¹ But in view of the fact that this simultaneous perfection can only be realized in a creature with regard to *God*, it becomes even clearer that the abstract concept of a 'person who has a nature' is not enough to allow us to infer this characteristic feature of Christ's human liberty with respect to God, a feature which is of such decisive significance for him and which characterizes him as Man and Mediator. This liberty is possible only when the person who has this free nature is either identical with this nature or is the *divine* Person as divine. And in this way it becomes clear how necessary it is to go beyond this 'Two-natures-one-Person' formula. In so far as this assertion (as predicate) 'one Person who possesses two natures' is made of the Logos (as subject), the subject must be introduced into the predicate, if we are to avoid the danger of saying too little and of conjuring up a—monothelite—error of interpretation. The metaphysical formulation of the truth 'This human history is the pure and absolute revelation of *God* himself' in terms of the formula 'This human nature is hypostatized united to the Logos', could very well be supplemented by a metaphysical formulation of the truth 'This human history, by the very fact of being God's own pure and radical revelation, is the most living of all, the most free before God from the world towards God, and thus mediatorial, because it is the history of God himself and because it is supremely creaturely and free.' But where are we to find the formula which expresses this latter truth with the same clarity as that with which the Chalcedonian formula expresses the former one?

Here we have entered upon a train of thought which it may seem profitable to pursue. Christological considerations have led the way back to the more general doctrine of God's relation to the creature and allowed Christology to appear as the clearly unique 'specifically' distinct perfection of this relation. Does this fundamental perspective not permit of being extended and built upon? In order conceptually

¹ If in the Incarnation the Logos enters into relationship with a creature, then it is obvious that the ultimate formal determinations of the Creator-creature relationship must also hold in this particular relationship. Hence the question remains entirely open as to whether the special character of the Incarnation, in so far as it is distinguished from all other relationships of God to a created thing, may be derived as a special case of this general property or not. A negative reply may be given to this question without its necessarily following that what we have said would have to be or could be contested.

to express the mystery of Christ, classical Christology makes use of concepts of formal ontology, the content of which recurs at *every* level of reality, according to the distinct mode of each: nature, person, unity, substance and so on. Would it not be possible to go further, without abandoning classical Christology, and make use of the concepts in terms of which the relation of created things to God is conceived?¹ The fact that this relation reaches its absolute peak in the case of Christ does not exclude such an application in advance. Such an analogical application of *general* concepts (and states of affairs) to a *unique* case occurs in classical Christology too. An attempt to carry out this suggestion would be of great importance if it were successful. The fact that the reality of Christ is intrinsically unique and cannot be derived from anything else, that it is a Mystery, does not mean that we may not regard it in a perspective in which it appears as peak and conclusion, as the mysterious goal of God's plans and activity for his creation from all eternity. Indeed this is not something new in theology. The fundamental lines of this perspective are in fact to be found in Scripture. But if this perspective is a valid one, we could try to express this inclusion of the reality of Christ in the total reality of all that is not God, not merely by stating it of him subsequently, *after* having spoken about Christ himself merely in the fashion of classical Christology; we could try to use this view in order to express the very essence of Christ. The advantage of this would be that the Incarnation of the Logos would no longer appear merely as something subsequent, a particular event in a world already *finished* (and hence in danger of seeming to be something mythological), a world into which God suddenly introduces himself by his action and to which he

¹ It goes without saying that it is above all the relationship of the *spiritual* creature to God that we must keep in mind, and that in a special way, as we have learnt from Existentialist philosophy. For it is the spiritual creature which in a special way, as person constituted by transcendence and freedom, enters into relationship with God. We shall be speaking in what follows about 'creation' in general; but this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that it is at men above all that we must look in order to learn what the Creator-creature relationship is. It should thus appear—and this is the point of all that follows—that Christology may be studied as self-transcending anthropology, and anthropology as deficient Christology; that Christology is the 'primitive conception' (although 'for us' in part subsequent) of anthropology and the doctrine of creation, as Christ is the *πρωτότοκος πλάτης κτίσεως* (Col 1:15).

makes corrections as a kind of afterthought and which he consequently presupposes as already given. The Incarnation of the Logos (however much we must insist on the fact that it is itself an historical, unique Event in an essentially historical world) appears as the *ontologically* (not merely 'morally', an afterthought) unambiguous goal of the movement of creation as a whole, in relation to which everything prior is merely a preparation of the scene. It appears as orientated from the very first to this point in which God achieves once and for all both the greatest proximity to and distance from what is other than he (while at the same time giving it being); in that one day he objectifies himself in an image of himself as radically as possible, and is himself thereby precisely given with the utmost truth; in that he himself makes most radically his own what he has created, no longer the mere anhistorical founder of an alien history but someone whose very own history is in question. Here we must remember that the world is something in which everything is related to everything else, and that consequently anyone who makes some portion of it into his own history, takes for himself the world as a whole for his personal environment. Consequently it is not pure fantasy (though the attempt must be made with caution) to conceive of the 'evolution' of the world *towards Christ*, and to show how there is a gradual ascent which reaches a peak in him. Only we must reject the idea that this 'evolution' could be a striving upward of what is below by its own powers. If Col 1:15 is true, and is not attenuated in a moralistic sense; if then in Christ the world as a whole, even in its 'physical' reality, has really reached historically¹ through Christ that point in which God becomes all in all,² then an attempt like this cannot be false in principle. But if it is in fact possible to attempt something like this, we can make use of the general categories of the God-creature relation (distance-proximity; image-concealment; time-eternity; dependence-independence) in their radical, sharply differentiated form in order to make fundamental statements about Christ, and regard all other realities in this field of what is distinct from God as deficient modes of this primary Christological relation.

¹ Though in a history which is at the same time essentially spirit, freedom, 'moral'.

² And this must be understood in an essentially Christological sense, not as something abstractly metaphysical, 'permanently valid', because God in Christ really *became* world, and so 'All' in all.

The fact that classical Christology makes permanently valid statements about Christ which attribute to him an entitative determination¹ already (relatively) fixed and familiar (such as 'He is man')—so that we must already know what 'man' is) is no argument against this view. We may not say that it is illegitimate to try to take Christ as the starting-point in order to define these entitative determinations, and that consequently a 'Christian' ontology must necessarily be false in principle. For it will be clear on reflection that our presupposition is that statements about Christ himself (even though they are intended to serve as a point of departure for the more general statements of a theological ontology) are made with the help of a general doctrine of creation (and the ontology contained in it). Christology most certainly cannot and should not form an absolute point of departure for an ontology (and hence still less for an anthropology). Nevertheless the parallels in philosophical knowledge of God and the world show that a retrospective use can be made of Christology for ontological and anthropological assertions: God is known from the world, and yet we can start from God in order to say what the world is. It is neither necessary nor possible here to discuss more fully the general epistemological presuppositions of this shifting back and forth of initial and terminal points in the process of acquiring knowledge.

The only point with which we were concerned was to investigate the suggestion that other categories than those of classical Christology might be used to make the basic, initial statement of what Christ really is, categories, moreover, taken from a truly *theological* doctrine of creation. If such were the case, even the bare appearance that what was offered in orthodox Christology was an anthropomorphic myth, might perhaps be more easily avoided from the start.

A further question, to which classical Christology has given no very clear or far-reaching answer, is contained *implicit* in this question of a possible task for the future. The static categories of formal ontology employed by this Christology do not locate Christ in saving history in the narrower sense (or better: they do not locate the history with respect to him as goal and origin). The question suggests itself whether there might not be a formula for saving history as God's

¹ *Sachverhalt*. This can ordinarily be rendered 'state of affairs'. The word has however a technical philosophical usage, in which it means something like 'the objective content of a proposition'. 'Entitative determination' is offered as a rough approximation.—Tr.

progressive taking possession of the world in history, as the manifestation, ever clearer and more hidden at once, of God in the world as his quasi-sacramental *mysterium*. The Christ would appear as the summit of this history and Christology as its sharpest formulation, just as inversely saving history would appear as the prelude to and the extension of Christ's own history. Perhaps the ancients had a better idea of all this than we usually have today, with our still very pale and vague idea of the time before Christ as the preparation for the fullness of times. The old speculation about the Logos, which ascribed to him an activity and history in creation 'before Christ but Christ-like' distinct from the invisible Father, would be well worth rethinking, after being purified of its subordinationist elements. It is still by no means established that the extraction of this waste matter would inevitably lead to the ruin of these early speculations. The Logos did not merely become (statically) man in Christ; he assumed a human history. But this is part of an entire history of the world and of humanity before and after it, and, what is more, the fullness of that history and its end. But if we take at all seriously the unity of this history as centred upon Christ, it follows that Christ has always been involved in the whole of history as its prospective entelechy. We have then to ask how to conceive of history so that this result should follow from it. But if we do think of it in this way, it should then be possible, inversely, to learn from it who the Christ is to whom it is orientated and whom it has brought forth from its womb. What do we mean by Time, History, the Evolution of Humanity, if the Christ is to be the fullness of this time? Can all this be ascribed to Christ merely as an afterthought *after* he has been expressed in terms of the Chalcedonian formula? Or can it also be stated from the starting-point of a theology of history itself with such directness that the Chalcedonian formula in its abstract formality may rather be *derived* from this? Is it not possible so to conceive of Time and History *theologically* (not merely in terms of the philosophy of history) that one has conceptually stated the Christ of Chalcedon when one has said of him that he is the fullness of times, who as their Head definitively comprehends and recapitulates the aions and brings them to their end? We must not nurse the tacit yet active prejudice that conceptual exactitude and compressed formulas can only be found in those concepts which the Fathers and the scholastics worked out from Greek philosophy with their eye upon—*conversio ad phantasmata*—individual things of a physical and static kind and their

individual processes of change. Anyone who does not share this prejudice, anyone who is convinced that the conceptual apparatus of scientific theology can be enlarged beyond the bounds of the traditional pattern, will not immediately assume that there is no prospect of carrying out the task which has just been proposed.

A Christology which derives from Biblical theology might set us a further task. If anyone were to attempt to discover the Biblical foundation of scholastic Christology, he would reach the conclusion, which does not seem false or unjust, that it contrives to get along with a handful of texts from the Bible. Its predetermined goal is the dogma of Ephesus and Chalcedon and nothing more. The only texts from Scripture, whether they are sayings of Christ himself or appear in the teaching of the Apostles, in which it is interested are those which can be translated as directly as possible into the terms of classical metaphysical Christology. The method is a legitimate one; but it cannot cover the whole ground. A whole body of Christological statements remains unused in this way, statements which describe Jesus' relationship to the Father (God) in the categories proper to conscious experience (existentially):¹ Jesus as the only one to know the Father, Jesus who brings tidings of him, does his will at all times, is always heard by him and so on. The question, then, is whether it is possible on this basis to construct a Christology in terms of Christ's consciousness. We shall not attempt to offer a complete solution to this question here; but we may make some remarks about its meaning and significance.

When it is said of a spiritual substance that it is 'simple', what we have here is an *ontic* statement (as we shall call it). When we say that it is capable of a *reditio completa in se*,² we are making a statement which belongs to the metaphysics of knowledge: an *onto-logical* statement, or one which belongs to the philosophy of Existence.³ We need not delay here to explain the connexion between these two state-

¹ *Existentiell*.

² This phrase, deriving from the *Liber de Causis* and thus ultimately from Proclus, is made considerable use of by St Thomas in order to analyse the ontological status of beings capable of self-knowledge. See, for example, Ia.14.2 ad 1, where St Thomas quotes the proposition of the *De Causis*, 'Omnis sciens qui scit suam essentiam, est rediens ad essentiam suam reditio completa', and concludes that since to subsist in himself is proper to God above all, therefore he above all returns upon himself and knows himself.—Tr.

³ *Existential-philosophische*.

ments *in re*: they correspond to each other; the same asserted entitative determination is explained on the one hand by a characteristic feature of selfconsciousness (and thus by a concept applicable to a field in which the only entities are spiritual ones), and on the other by a metaphysical concept¹ which can be verified positively or negatively in *every entity*. Anyone who has grasped the metaphysical meaning of the scholastic axiom 'ens et verum convertuntur', 'ens est intelligibile et intelligens, in quantum est ens actu', will know that *in principle* at least, every ontic statement (whether positive or negative) is capable of being translated into an *ontological* one, however difficult or impossible this may often be 'quoad nos'. The higher an entity (in the widest sense of this word, including then entitative determinations and so on) in its grade of being, compactness of being, 'actuality', the more intelligible it is and present to itself (*bei sich selbst*). Clearly this axiom of scholastic metaphysics would require closer analysis if it is to be applied correctly in particular cases. Nevertheless we may say that the fact that Christ's humanity is substantially united to the Logos, in so far as this is a determination ('act') of the human nature itself, cannot be simply 'subconscious'. For as something ontically higher, this determination is something real which cannot be simply unconscious at least in the case where its subject has attained that grade of actuality in being which involves a presence to itself (*Bei-sich-selbst-sein*) of this entity. At least in the case where this presupposition is satisfied, it is metaphysically impossible that this actuality of the subject should be simply unconscious, when we remember that this actuality is entitatively higher in comparison with the level of actuality proper to the subject, and that this subject is present to itself; it is impossible that the immediate subject of the human presence-to-itself should not also be present to itself precisely in so far as it is wholly and substantially made over to the Logos. Here we must be careful to note that this 'presence to itself' is not to be confused with a 'knowledge of an object'. Presence-to-itself is the inner being-illuminated of actual being for itself; more precisely, for the subject which possesses this being in its own self. From this it follows that it is opposed to the true teaching of the scholastic metaphysics of knowledge to say that Christ's human soul knows of the *unio hypostatica* only in the way in which an object is known (and so through the 'visio immediata' as in

¹ *Seinsbegriff* ('Concept of being').

the vision of an object). Inasmuch as the *unio hypostatica* implies or involves an entitative determination, namely the being-united (*Ver-eint-sein*) of the human reality with the Logos, as an ontological determination of this human reality, Christ's human soul is 'with the Logos',¹ in an immediately ontic and conscious way. The 'visio immediata'² is (if we may be allowed to make our point in this way for the sake of clarity) the consequence and not the presupposition of the conscious being-with-the-Logos of Christ's soul. It is not (in the last resort) a *donum*, conferred as a moral 'title' on the human soul on account of its being united hypostatically to the Logos, for reasons of *convenientia* or *decencia*; it is the hypostatic union itself, in so far as this is necessarily an 'intelligibile actu' in the *intelligens actu* of Christ's human soul. Once again: in the measure and manner in which the *unio hypostatica* is (or includes) a real ontological determination of the human nature, and indeed its ontologically highest determination; further, in the measure in which this human nature is by itself 'present to itself': the union must also be a datum of the selfconsciousness of this human nature of its very self, and cannot simply be part of the content of its object-knowledge given 'from without'. The Chalcedonian *ἀνυ-χῆτως* must not be taken in a sense which would result in the denial in fact of a union between the Logos and his human nature which was still being affirmed verbally.³ But this would be the case if neither on

¹ *Beim Logos*. This being *with* is at a level of being which necessarily involves conscious presence (*bei sich sein*). For the phrase *bei sich sein* ('being with oneself') compare Marcel's *être chez soi*.—Tr.

² We prefer to say 'visio immediata' because this phrase expresses with greater exactitude and caution than 'visio beata' the 'theologically certain' content of the doctrine concerned here, in that the 'immediacy' of the possession of God follows from the considerations just proposed, while the 'beatitude' of this vision in Christ need not be experienced so nearly and immediately as something necessarily always 'beatifying'; after all, is it not conceivable that the vision may be undergone as a 'consuming fire' in certain situations proper to a 'viator'?

³ All 'unconfused' says is that the same One is truly God and truly man and not some third thing in between. It does not however deny the unity, the human nature's state of having given itself away (*das Sich-selbst-weg-geben-sein*) to the Logos. It is precisely the task of theology (One which is set by the Chalcedonian formula but has not yet been performed) to throw light on (which does not mean 'to dissolve the mystery of') why and how this thing, which has suspended itself in this way, not only remains what it was, but in the most radical sense, unspassably and definitively ratified,

the side of the Logos (because he is immutable) nor on the side of the human nature there were present a real ontological determination other than that which would exist even if there were no unity. But if such a determination does exist on the side of the human nature, really and truly determining it, then it will also be a datum of the presence to itself of this nature in consequence of its being what it is (*das Von-sich-her-bei-sich-seins dieser Natur*).¹ It is not our concern here to see how this may be harmonized with the data of our *a posteriori* empirical knowledge of the 'inner life' of Jesus and his psychology. The task is not an impossible one. In fact—given careful thought—it is considerably simpler than when traits, apparently postulated quite arbitrarily, are ascribed to Christ's inner life on the basis of argumentation *ex convenientia*, *ex decencia*. It only seems difficult to harmonize these traits with what we are told by Scripture about Christ's thinking and willing because these postulated 'traits' and 'endowments' are thought of as existing in the dimension of Jesus' everyday consciousness, on the surface of his awareness of objects. But our Lord's self-consciousness, which we have here inferred metaphysically from the *unio hypostatica*, is—in its source and primarily at least—a given quantity which must be thought of as being situated in that substantial depth of Christ's created mind which becomes aware of itself in the act of knowledge, pointing ontically beyond itself to that with which it is united, the Logos.

These are only brief indications, and we have no intention of taking

becomes what it is: a human reality. But this only becomes possible once it has been shown how in the essence of man this tendency to become self-suspended upon the absolute God (in the ontological, not just the moral sense) belongs to his most basic constitution. Thus the *highest* actuation (unobliged, only once and for all realized in even) of this obdiential potency (and this is no purely negative determination, no purely formal non-regretance) makes the self-suspended thing all the more man in the most radical sense, precisely unites it thus with the Logos. And it needs to be shown too how this self-suspension can be a datum of man's selfconsciousness, because it belongs to his selfconsciousness to have, ontically and existentially, a disposibility open to God's disposal and the absolute mystery, that disposibility towards becoming self-suspended which is supremely realized and brought to consciousness in the *unio hypostatica*.

¹ This is not the place to show how the approach outlined here—very briefly, of course—bears upon the controversy between P. Galter and P. Parente.

up the problem in its own right. All we wish to suggest is that a Christology using categories appropriate to the description of consciousness need not be false *a priori* or impossible. If there is an ontic Christology, there can also be an existential¹ one (or however one may wish to describe statements about the way in which a spiritual being is present to itself). Thus we may confidently ask whether an absolutely exact understanding of our Lord's statements about his 'spiritual' relationship to God (the Father) could not lead to statements which would be equivalent, as *ontological* (existential)¹ statements, to those of an ontic Christology. The fact that this existential² relationship of Christ as man to God is not immediately available in our own experience, thus where *our* concepts have their origin, does not absolutely forbid our making such statements. For the ontic relationship of his human nature is not immediately available to us either, and yet it can be stated in an analogical, indirect and asymptotic way. Otherwise there would be no Christology at all which could say something about what Christ really is. It is true that there have been attempts in this direction in modern Protestantism which, owing to hostility to the metaphysics in the 'Greek' theology of the Fathers and Scholasticism and the use of philosophically inadequate instruments, have led to heresy, because they reduce the mystery of Christ to the level of our own religious experience and our own relationship to God; but this is still no proof that such attempts are impossible and false *a priori*. Suppose someone says³: 'Jesus is the man whose life is one of absolutely unique self-surrender to God.' He may very well have stated the truth about the very depths of what Christ really is, *provided* that he has understood (a) that this self-abandonment presupposes a communication of God to the man; (b) that an absolute self-surrender implies an absolute communication of God to the man, one which makes what is produced by it into the reality of the producer himself; and (c) that such an existential statement does not signify something 'mental', a fiction, but is in the most radical way a statement about being. It may be objected that a Christological statement like

¹ *Existentielle*.

² *Existential*.

³ This example is not meant to anticipate the successful performance of an undertaking which has here only been postulated. It is only intended to illustrate, in a case which is clearly highly problematic and in need of cautious treatment, what the task proposed would in general involve.

this, bearing on Christ's mind, either remains outside the limits of Christological dogma and its ontic formulation (and thus is heretical), or must appeal to ontic formulations in order to characterize the uniqueness and specific otherness of this relationship to God in distinction from any religious experience of our own or of the prophets. The second alternative¹ may be granted, though it does not follow from this that such existential statements are superfluous. It is true that these statements (so far as we possess concepts for them) may perhaps² not be capable, without the help of formal ontic concepts, of distinguishing precisely enough from other relationships a conscious existential relationship to God which is not available to our immediate experience. Yet they are extremely useful in filling out the formal emptiness of a *purely* ontic Christological statement, which would otherwise be in danger of being filled out in some other way, namely by interpretations of Christological formulas which are not indeed formulated explicitly, but which only too easily crystallize round the formulas without being noticed; these interpretations then make Christ out to be nothing but God clothed in a human form. If this danger is really avoided by asserting a conscious relationship of the man Jesus with respect to God, and by asserting it in such a way that the assertion of the distinctively unique character of this relationship is *eo ipso* an implicit or explicit assertion of the *uno hypostatico*; then the Scriptural accounts of Jesus' conscious dispositions to the Father would really be translated into theological Christology. We need only consider the following two statements to see this.

a. 'The Logos, who possesses in identity the absolute divine being, assumes a human nature as his own and thus becomes man while remaining himself.' b. 'This man—who, as we have said, is God—can pray, adore, be obedient, feel in a creaturely way to the point of abandonment by God, can weep, receive the wonderful gift of "being heard", experience the claims of God's will upon him as something authoritative and alien, and so on. Does the second statement always come immediately to mind as soon as the first, which is a formula of faith and, it goes without saying, a true one, is uttered? Or do we know all this, but in a different compartment of our minds,

¹ As something not wholly avoidable 'quoad nos'.

² This question, which would lead us into general considerations belonging to the metaphysics of knowledge, cannot be treated of here, and must be allowed to remain open.

as it were, so that we have to 'switch over' from the first formula, almost entirely forgetting it, in order to make real to our minds what is also witnessed to by Scripture and what we find so difficult to think 'about God'? How would it be if we thought and spoke about the second, the human side, in such a way that it simply remained clear that all this was only possible in a man, and it became clear that this is only conceivable as a *human* happening if it is wholly the Happening of God himself, in all truth and in the most radical way?

Here we shall cease to pursue our investigations into Biblical theology, or more accurately, the transcendental hermeneutics for a Biblical Christology. We shall try to investigate the Chalcedonian formula itself, and make clearer to ourselves the problems it sets us. The formula speaks of two natures: it puts them clearly before our eyes in the characters proper to each. For we have some knowledge of what a man is, and our experience in this matter grows daily. And so we can make a fair estimate of what is really involved in being a man. What God is we only know by going beyond any information we may possess, in a *docta ignorantia*. But in this very way the Being whom we recognize as unknown is set apart from human nature. And now the Chalcedonian formula bids us conceive of the unconfused unity of the 'natures'. Isn't that hard? Of course we have at least a vague idea of what unity is. Someone may even like to call it a clear idea, and say that the apparent vagueness is not an indistinctness but is merely due to the formal generality and abstract emptiness of the concept. But that is just the point: here is the supreme particularity, the incomprehensibly profound, unique *Mysterium*, which decides my destiny and that of the world, on which absolutely everything in heaven and on earth depends because it declares God's own destiny and takes up into this the destiny of the world; and I am supposed to see this mystery expressed in a concept which is one of the most general concepts of formal ontology, like that of *entity*, something which is itself always one thing and thus gives rise to the concept of unity from this emptiest of all abstractions. One should suffer the heavy burden of obscurity before running up with an answer. And please let no one say just that the concept of unity is indeed highly formal and abstract, but that in this case it acquires density and fullness from what is united. No doubt this is true in a certain respect: as the concurrence of two things, a

unity consists of what is united.¹ But this is precisely on the assumption that something is known of the distinctive character of the concurrence which unites what is to be made one. Now it could be said here (as was done earlier) that what is being spoken of is not just any unity of divine and human reality in Christ. What faith really makes profession of is a substantial, lasting, indissoluble, hypostatic unity, the belonging of the two natures to one and the same Person as its very own in virtue of its being the selfsame.² So this unity is not so empty, it does not allow the united natures to stand 'isolated' before the spiritual eye of faith, as though the duality were clearly given while the unity is as it were unverifiably situated on the side turned away from the eye of faith. The unity reaches the highest point of clarity for our understanding in the fact that, precisely because it is hypostatic, we must and can state of one and the same Person both what is divine and what is human, because precisely *both* are really and truly proper to one and the same Person. All this is true, and belongs to the essential core of meaning of the *mysterium* which we are toiling to understand. But does it say everything which can be said towards an understanding of the unity in the twofold reality of Christ? We do not propose to show that this is open to doubt by pointing to the old controversies between Catholic theologians which have once again been revived today. This would be too long a way of clarifying the question which still remains. Let us put the question in a different way; let us start from a few of the usual notions of scholastic Christology, which we shall presuppose. God the Word of the Father, so we are told, 'changes' in no way when he assumes the human nature as his own. The change, the novelty, is entirely on the side of the human nature. We have no desire at all to make the usual objection that in spite of this proposition it must remain simply true that it was the Word of God himself who became man; nor do we wish to inquire how this divine truth can remain valid if the former proposition,

¹ This sentence illustrates the wider sense of the German *Einheit*, which means 'union', as well as 'unity'. Fr Rahner rarely uses the ordinary German phrase for 'hypostatic union', which is *hypostatische Vereinigung*; instead he either uses the Latin *unio hypostatica*, or speaks of the *hypostatische Einheit*. The English reader should bear in mind this wider sense of the word *Einheit* when he finds the phrase 'hypostatic unity' in the text.—Tr.

² *Die Angeeignetheit der beiden Naturen durch die Selbstigkeit der einen und selben Person.*

deriving from human metaphysics, is soundly based.¹ On the contrary, the immutability of the Word in the Incarnation will be our presupposition. Thus as far as the Word itself is concerned, nothing is held to have happened, nothing emerged which has not always been there. It is purely on this side of the abyss between God and the creature that the new, emergent Event takes place.² Thus what we have to learn here is what happened when the Word became flesh. This flesh, this human reality, does not belong to itself, then, in that it came into being as united to the Logos. But what does it mean to say, 'It does not belong to itself', what does it mean—we keep falling back on the same formulas of the Tradition, a sign that we don't really understand them—what does it mean to say, 'This human reality is united to the Word of God'? The reality can be predicated of him, someone may answer; what takes place here in this world in his flesh is most personally his own affair, someone may explain. That is all very well, one might reply, almost in despair; but *He* is not a man as *I* am a man. For I am a man in such a way that the I, the person itself, becomes human through my human-being; this is its own lot, it does not itself remain untouched. And that is just what one cannot say about the Logos of God, according to just this doctrine of faith. Nor is that all; according to the theology current in our schools, this humanity of the Logos is, without injury to him, not only created by the one God (not by the Logos alone); but every influence upon it

¹ This metaphysics would need rethinking; and that would naturally lead to the problem, in what sense God does not alter when he creates the world. Here it would be necessary to say that he does not in himself become other to himself when he himself becomes other to the world as what is other than he and derived from him, and *vice versa*. This same formula would have to be applied in Christology. In fact the whole of Christology could be seen as the unique and most radical realization of this basic relationship of God to what is other than himself, measured by which all else in creation would be only a deficient mode, fading away into indistinctness; it would be the sharpest realization of this basic relationship, which lies in the self-alienation of the God who remains with himself, and thereby radically unchanged. However we have already alluded to this connexion between Christology and the doctrine of creation above.

² But what takes place on this side of the *ἐκσυγχώρωσις* is precisely and exactly the history of God *himself*! Primarily at least in the case of Christ. So something of the sort is possible. Anyone who suspected that we were practising Hegelian and not scholastic metaphysics in the preceding note, might well reflect on this point.

which it undergoes, either because it is a creaturely human reality or because it is precisely the humanity of the Logos, is the object of the operation of the whole Trinity as a single efficient cause *ad extra*, just because it belongs to the dimension of what is created from nothing. Thus all that this humanity possesses (in the highest measure, of course) in the way of tangible, expressible reality, is what can be given to any man: grace, knowledge, virtue, the *visio beatifica*. From this point of view again, the unique distinguishing feature which belongs just to it and to nothing else, is simply the formal unity which gives it the reality of the Logos without affecting the Logos itself. An example will show us what this means. How many sorrowful souls have been comforted and have seen through their tears the everlasting stars of love and peace because in their faith they knew, 'He, the eternal meaning of the world, the Word, has wept with me, He too has drunk of the chalice!' How many have died 'piously in the Lord' with the thought that this common and general death must mean something just because the Uncommon, the uniquely important, the absolutely Indiscutable, the incommensurable Measure, the coherent Meaning at the heart of being, because He—really He himself—died! 'One of the most holy Trinity has suffered', the Scythian monks used to say, with that brutality of faith which takes not only death but its hidden divinity with the same seriousness, so that hundreds of years after Ephesus and Chalcedon we are still startled by it, though it is perfectly obvious that we are bound to speak like this and that the whole truth, the single unique truth of Christianity, is contained in it. But—the same orthodox faith may now say—how do you understand this saying? Be careful not to take it too literally! God died, certainly. But he did so in precisely the same reality whose hopeless tears and death you believe are redeemed when you say, 'He wept too, he died'. But so doing he only made just *another* human reality weep and die, and thus himself remains the Holy One, serenely exalted above death, as he always has been, is, and will be. He wept only in the *flesh*, died in the *flesh*. When what is to be redeemed happens to the Redeemer, then it is itself redeemed. But does it really happen to him, when he remains untouched by the lot of what is to be redeemed? 'Non horruisti virginis uterum', we sing to him! As orthodox Chalcedonian theologians, are we not bound to say: 'You could not and need not ever have dreaded it, because it left you untouched in your real being; and why should your humanity have dreaded it, if it began like everyone

else's in your mother's womb?' Or where is your kenosis, which the Apostle adoringly celebrates, if you remained in plenitude, and the emptiness which we have been from the first and which you assumed, need not itself first be emptied but has never known anything but itself—emptiness, tears, death, the whole misery of man? Are we ever to escape from this hopeless dialectic? When we say, 'He has remained eternally the same, untouched, immutable, glorious', we say it not only under the tyranny of a rigid metaphysics of infinity, about some pure, unspotted, uninterrupted Being; we say it because we need someone who is not as we are, so that we may be redeemed in that which we are. But if that is why we say it, as soon as we say it the door beyond which we who thirst for redemption sit, seems finally to shut, and there the matter seems to end: he is in heaven and we on earth, he is not where we are, and we are not where he is. Suppose we say: he came to us; he too wept; he too died; he too is flesh; he too is the emptiness, the infinity of which is immeasurable hollowness—then the Redeemer seems to be with us, but precisely a captive with us, one who shares our fate. But what good does it do us, if he too is truly—just what we are? Yet suppose we say: the finite is good: it is by no means one pole of a tragic opposition, from which we have to be redeemed; that which makes redemption necessary is merely 'accidental' to the finite, something from which the finite must be cleansed; the finite has always been finite and yet always as a simple matter of course *capax infiniti*—what need is there then of the Lord, of the God who became flesh? Is the Redemption anything more than a small repair job to something which was good and basically has always remained good? Has he who became man still an eternal function, if it is the prior goodness of the world which supports him and not he who really gives it its foundation and completion? Of course the world is good; obviously there could be a world which would be good and so possible, even if He had not come who stands free in relation to a world already in existence and so has freely come. Of course the stock of meaning and goodness cannot be just consumed without remainder by darkness, death, guilt and damnation. But it is wrong from the start to divide up the meaning and goodness of the world and its need of redemption in this quantitative way. Because it is still good, it can be redeemed. But all this goodness, all this meaning, needs redemption, from the meanest atom to the highest spirit. All is to be redeemed, because as good it is capable of redemption, because

apart from Christ it is all lost, as a whole, with all its goodness. All. But how does this happen, when he shares the appearance and the concreteness of this lost state, when he himself becomes what is in need of redemption? He could have done this in another way? He could have saved the world even without this, and redeemed it *into* his freedom and infinity? Certainly: but *in fact* he did so by becoming himself what was in need of redemption, and in this way, this way alone, must take place that one Redemption which really exists and is the only one we know. And that is what is so difficult to understand, because it seems in fact not have helped us at all, both when we take seriously the proposition that he became flesh, and when we take seriously the proposition that by becoming flesh he remained immutable and intact. The dilemma becomes still more acute if we think of the ascended Lord. He must be present in heaven as the *God-man*, we reflect, in the plenitude of his redemptive function, in its complete actuality. As Son of Man in his eternity, can he be more than—let no one take offence at our boldness—more than the conservation of an instrument of past times, a meaningless instrument long since antiquated, fit only for a museum? No wonder textbook theology has nothing to say about Christ in the tractate *de Novissimis*! Thus the dilemma becomes more acute: God would be the Blessed One even without this humanity, and the humanity has strictly nothing more to do than to enjoy a *visio beatifica*, which could also be present in someone who was mere man. The Christ is split into two possibilities, held together only by the formal and empty assertion of their hypostatic unity.

We may put the whole question formally. What remains of the *ἐκπαίδεως*, when the *ἀποχύτως* is taken seriously with all its consequences, and how are we then to interpret the *ἐκπλοτὸς*? Can it be analysed merely in terms of the *communicatio idiomatum*, and what does this mean if the actual human reality predicated of the Logos as Person does not change the Logos, and so does not make him something which he would not be without this humanity? Can the 'average Christian' only get on by allowing the *ἀποχύτως* to slip into the background of his consciousness in faith in favour of the *ἐκπαίδεως*, by tacitly thinking in a slightly monophysite way, to this extent at least, that the humanity becomes something merely operated and managed by the divinity, the signal put up to show that the divinity is present in the world—a world which is only concerned

with this divinity and where the signal is put up pretty well for our sakes alone, because we wouldn't otherwise notice the bare divinity? Must it be an inevitable feature of our everyday religious life and practice that the Chalcedonian formula should be tacitly cut short like this, so that—here we must weigh up the matter for ourselves honestly—the 'average' non-Christian feels called upon to protest in his unbelief, refusing to admit that God has become man 'like this' and thus believing that he must reject the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation as a myth?

Our discussion of the problems of the Chalcedonian formula cannot set out to offer a precise and detailed answer to the question which has been raised; we shall merely make a few brief observations. Obviously what we should have to do would be to work out a fresh concept of unity (of a substantial, hypostatic kind, clearly). This concept would not *merely* analyse the unity in terms of a logical predication of *idionata* (however indispensable this may be), because by itself this would either only be understood 'monophysitically' in the form of a crypto-gamic heresy (*sic venia verbo!*), as we have pointed out above; or, while the immutability of the Logos and the Chalcedonian *ἀσυγχύτως* remained clear, the empty formal abstractions of the unity (for all its being hypostatic¹) would take on no real fullness of meaning for us. We cannot escape from this trap by looking at the unity as the (even merely logically) subsequent unity of two things to be united, already

¹ We repeat: anyone who is tempted by our speaking of a formal emptiness of the unity to maintain that on the contrary, the unity in question is a *hypostatic* one, and thus a perfectly 'full' and close unity, must be warned that he should consider what precisely it is that he is saying. He will then realize (supposing that he has taken the average Christology as his starting-point) that his explanation of the hypostatic unity is conceived of in terms of a *communicatio idionatum*. And then he will have to ask himself what it means for the Logos to remain 'unchanged' by this unity, when any sort of history which it implies takes place on this side of the abyss between God and creature, and what is more, without confusion. He is bound to indicate what remains of the former given the latter. If he says that this is just the mystery (and that we ought not to let go of one end of the famous chain because we don't know how it is linked with the other end, which we also hold), then we must ask with all moderation whether this mystery might not permit of being formulated more clearly, so as to come before the eye of faith as a whole; in this way the impression would not arise that the one truth must be utterly blotted out 'quoad nos' when we turn to look at the other.

existing independently as two prior to the unity. The Logos may be regarded in this way; but as soon as the humanity is so conceived of too, the position becomes untenable. It is not enough to say that the humanity has never existed apart from the hypostatic unity *in fact*, that is to say temporally. Nor is it permissible to suppose that it may *merely* be conceived of as always combined *in fact*, on the grounds that its nature is the same as ours, and we certainly exist apart from the hypostatic unity and yet are 'men'.¹ The only way in which Christ's *concrete* humanity may be conceived of in itself as diverse from the Logos is by thinking of it *in so far as* it is united to the Logos. The unity with the Logos must constitute it in its diversity from him, that is, precisely as a human nature; the unity must itself be the ground of the diversity. In this way, the diverse term as such is the united² reality of him who as prior unity (which can thus only be God) is the ground of the diverse term, and therefore, while remaining 'immutable' 'in himself', truly comes to be *in* what he constitutes as something united (*geeint*) with him *and* diverse from him.³ In other words, the ground by which the diverse term is constituted and the ground by which the unity with the diverse term is constituted must as such be strictly the same. But if what makes the human nature ek-sistent⁴

¹ It will appear from what follows that this consideration is at any rate lacking in force. Everyone who is a Thomist in Christology must grant this. Further, it must be borne in mind that a purely *de facto* unity in the strict sense would be an accidental one.

² *Geeint*. Fr. Rahner gives *einen* (to unite) the sense of an act by which one of the two terms of a unity is the cause of this unity. It is difficult to make the English 'to unite' bear this sense: in English it is usually some *third* term which unites the other two, a suggestion which would be quite unsuitable here. *Einen* here means simply and solely 'to one'.—Fr.

³ It follows from this statement that the assertion of God's 'immutability', of the lack of any real relation between God and the world, is in a true sense a dialectical statement. One may and indeed must say this, without for that reason being a Hegelian. For it is true, come what may, and a dogma, that the Logos himself has become man: thus that he himself has become something that he had not always been (*formaliter*); and therefore that what has so become is, as just itself and of itself, God's reality. Now if this is a truth of faith, ontology must allow itself to be guided by it (as in analogous instances in the doctrine of the Trinity), must seek enlightenment from it, and grant that while God remains immutable 'in himself', he can come to be 'in the other', and that *both* assertions must really and truly be made of the same God as God.

⁴ See Introduction.

as something diverse from God, and what unites this nature with the Logos, are *strictly* the same, then we have a unity which (a) cannot, as uniting unity (*einende Einheit*), be confused with the united unity (*geeine Einheit*) (this is not permissible)¹; (b) which unites *precisely* by making existent, and *in this way* is grasped in a fullness of content without any relapse into the empty assertion of the united unity; and finally (c) which does not make the *ἀσπύχτως* look like a sort of external counterbalance to the unity, always threatening to dissolve it again, but shows precisely how it enters into the *constitution* of the united unity as an intrinsic factor, in such a way that unity and distinction become mutually conditioning and intensifying characteristics, not competing ones. Properly speaking, we should now go on first to examine the question whether this position is in harmony with the Thomist theory of the unity of Christ, and how far it is so (we shall

¹ The weakness of the Christology associated with Scotus and Tiphanius is that it cannot distinguish these two concepts: it declares that the human nature and the divine nature are united in the Person of the Logos. When it is asked by what (i.e. by what uniting unity) they are united (in the united unity), the original formula is repeated, so that in fact no answer is forthcoming. If someone goes on to maintain that it is impossible to provide a further answer because it is precisely a mystery with which we are dealing here, it would be necessary to reply that this account would suffice *provided* that the mystery given expression in the original formula remains clear in its meaning (though not in its explanation) even when no answer is offered to the further question. But if this is *not* the case, i.e. if the united unity in the sense intended (a sense which, though undetected, must be there even in a mystery) does not permit of being thought unless the uniting unity comes into sight, then the *docta ignorantia* of Scotus and Tiphanius is simply not appropriate here—no matter how far the ancient tradition provides or fails to provide a further explicit question and answer as to the uniting unity. Someone may object that it is in fact the one hypostasis which is the uniting unity for the two natures. To this we must reply that this may well be true, so far as it is a matter of the two natures in their mutual concord. But the question here is to what extent the divine hypostasis unites the human nature to himself. When the question is formulated like this, the hypostasis, *in so far as* it is just the static concept of *ens per se et in se* which is involved, is something to be united—one 'part' of the united unity, and not the uniting unity. Thus it must be asked *by what* (i.e. by what uniting unity) the hypostasis unites to himself the human nature. Putting the same thing in another way: unity (as a formal transcendental property of an entity) is never something which can be set up as such, but is always the result of some other state or process among entities. Thus one has neither explained nor even understood what one is saying, when one elucidates unity by—unity.

not pronounce any final judgment on this matter here); secondly, to consider how far and in what way such a position makes it necessary to go back to a *more general* theory of the relationship between God and his world, of which the relationship 'Logos-human nature' would appear as a special case. Unfortunately this is not possible here either. All we shall do is to offer the following brief note. It might be supposed that any attempt to connect the general relationship of God to the creation with the relationship of the Logos to his humanity would immediately come to grief owing to the fact that the creation is the work of the efficient causality of the *one* God, while the hypostatic union is a relationship of the Logos alone. Before this is taken as finally settling the question, it would be necessary to offer a solution to another question: is it really agreed that another divine Person could also have become man? Or could it not be that—when the unity of the created with the Creator given in creation itself attains by God's free act that unique height in which an existence as distinction from the Creator is bestowed upon a creature, an existence through which the distinct term becomes absolutely and supremely God's very own—could it not then be that this God is necessarily the Logos and no one else? What theological considerations would suffice positively to exclude this view? But if they are in fact produced, the suggested objection ceases to be so obviously compelling as it seemed to be at first.

Now, if the positing of Christ's humanity in its free distinction from God itself becomes in this way the act of unification (*Einigung*) with the Logos, it further becomes clear why this humanity, in its concrete existence as such, is *eo ipso* the mysterious manifestation, the quasi-sacramental presence (*Anwesenheit*) of God with us. We have constantly to remind ourselves that human-being is not some absolutely terminated quantity, which, while persisting as a quite self-contained whole indifferent to all else, is combined with some other thing (in this case the Logos) by a wholly external miracle. Human being is rather a reality absolutely open upwards; a reality which reaches its highest (though indeed 'unexacted') perfection, the realization of the highest possibility of man's being, when in it the Logos himself becomes existent in the world. The fact that there is human being which is not of itself the presence of the Logos existing into the world, is no more a proof of the falsity of this view than the proposition, 'The *visio beatifica* is the most perfect realization of (pure)

human nature', can be objected to on the ground that human being is also to be found without the *visio beatifica*. The fact that an ('obediential') potency is only fulfilled by a free act from above is no argument against the view that this act is the pure fulfilment of just this potency for what it is in itself. It is quite true that we first become acquainted with human being in a less significant realization, and consequently derive our concept 'man' from this (and so can look forward from *our* point of view to a higher actualization of this concept only by way of an empty anticipation of the range, as yet undetermined, as yet open upwards, of our transcendence as a possibility perhaps possible). But this does not mean that we are not entitled to sketch the outlines of a theological anthropology from the starting-point of Christology, now that this has been revealed to us—no doubt by using our terrestrial concepts; nor is it perverse to conceive our human selves in terms of that Man who as such is God's presence for us, existent in the world. Only someone who forgets that the essence of man (although in a specifically human way, which is to say, in accordance with the point of departure, in terms of a point in space and time) is to be unbounded (thus in this sense, to be un-definable) can suppose that it is impossible for there to be a man, who, precisely by being man in the fullest sense (which we never attain), is God's Existence into the world. But if this is the case, we only radically understand ourselves for what we really are, when we grasp the fact that we are existential beings because God willed to be man, and thereby willed that we should be those in whom he as man can only encounter his own self by loving us. The fact that God could have had a different will for us, that he *freely* willed us 'so', does not necessarily mean that he has not in fact precisely willed us 'so'. This 'so' is not just something mental, external to what is willed and without significance for its real consistency; it is a genuine 'existential', a mode of our own existence, without which we can indeed grasp ourselves as question, but never as the answer which it alone gives to the question which we are.¹

¹ *Translator's note.* The reader may find it helpful to bear in mind the notion of existence as 'self-realization', a 'coming to the light', and this as eminently realized in *human* existence. It might be said that God, as supremely actual, cannot in this sense 'exist', cannot come to be himself: the Incarnation is what allows him to 'come to the light', 'existent into the world'. In this last paragraph, I take it that Fr Rahner wishes to point out

At the beginning of this section it was said that our rough knowledge of what man is, when we used the formula of Chalcedon, was due to the fact that we daily learnt what it is to be human by experience of each other and of ourselves. The slightest of discussions of the problems of this formula has shown that the attempt to advance our understanding of what this unity (unconfused and undivided) is which makes the human nature that of the Logos itself, would also further our understanding of who man is; we see that Christology is at once beginning and end of anthropology, and that for all eternity such an anthropology is really theology. For God himself has become man. The less we merely think of this humanity as something added on to God, and the more we understand it as God's very presence in the world and hence (not, all the same) see it in a true, spontaneous vitality and freedom before God, the more intelligible does the abiding mystery of our faith become, and also an expression of our very own existence.

In this third section we shall discuss in more detail, though without any attempt to treat them systematically, the problems of a modern Christology; and for this purpose we shall go beyond the immediate range of the Chalcedonian formula.

1. Would it not be possible and appropriate to look for some sort of Transcendental Deduction¹ of faith in Christ? What we have in mind is an inquiry, more explicit than is usual, as to why man is capable of faith in the Christ of Christian dogma. Someone may answer 'He is the hearer of a message which is of itself credible, a message which exhibits its credibility by means of ascertainable facts.' But this

that we are existential beings (*wir die sind, die existieren*) because of God's will to be an existential being himself, and thus to achieve self-realization in common with other beings defined by their capacity to realize themselves, in a communion, a common 'presence', of love. For the meaning of the noun 'existential', see Introduction.

¹ In the Kantian sense.—Tr.

would be to overlook the fact that it is not only the knowability of the *object* which must be examined, but also the distinctive nature of the *subject* and *his* specific openness with regard to just that object. If this object is something indifferent and contingent, which has incontestably always been found within the region of this subject's experience, the transcendental deduction of the subject's capacity to know with respect to *this* object is simply that of the meaning and extent of his knowledge *in general*. But just in so far as Christ is the freest and in this sense (but also only in this sense) the most 'contingent' fact in all reality, so it is true that he is also at the same time the most decisive and important, and moreover that which is the most clearly related to man (*... propter nos homines*). His subjective knowability cannot tacitly be thought of as simply subsumed under the conclusions of a general metaphysics and critique of knowledge. He is too unique for that, too mysterious and existentially significant. It cannot be objected that such a 'transcendental deduction' of Christ's knowability by man would be to prejudge the question of what is contained in Christ, who can in fact be known only by obediently listening to a message which has gone forth in history. Nor can it be objected that such a deduction would imply the *necessity* of the fact of Christ, for this was something freely established by God. Both these considerations are unacceptable. An *a priori* sketch of the 'Idea of Christ' as the correlative object of the transcendental structure of man and his knowledge, even if it came to anything *purely a priori*¹, could never decide the question as to where and in whom this 'Idea' is reality (and without this reality this 'Idea' is of less existential significance than any other). It is only from the message of 'fides ex auditu' that this question could ever be answered. If and in so far as such an abstractly formal, *a priori* Christology were to offer a kind of formal schema of Christ to the Christology which hears the message *a posteriori*, we should reflect that such an *a priori* Christology is wholly capable of taking shape in the illuminating light of the grace of the real Christ (one need neither reflect on this nor be able to reflect on this and yet one's thought can move within the space enclosed by Christ's grace); we should thus consider that the *a priori* schema can owe its existence to the real object *a posteriori*,

¹ It did not come to anything *before* Jesus Christ. And now it is no longer capable of coming to anything, because he exists and it would be a delusion to suppose it possible—even in a purely methodological way—to abstract from him entirely.

and thus by no means implies a mastery of it. The question whether God might not wish to show us his grace, and what is meant if he did wish to show it, the deduction of a 'desiderium naturale' of the *visio beatifica*, neither makes the message from without superfluous nor restricts its content *a priori*, although these objects belong to the same strictly supernatural order as the *unio hypostatica*. Anyone who understands that an *a priori* openness to something is far from making this 'something' a *débitum* in a conceptually necessary way¹, will not say that such a deduction stands or falls with the affirmation of the necessity of the Incarnation.

A deduction of this kind must aim at showing that man is at once a concretely corporeal and historical entity on earth and an absolutely transcendent one. Accordingly he looks out—and looks out in the course of his history—to see whether the supreme fulfillment (however free it may remain) of his being and his expectation is not on its way to meet him: a fulfillment in which his (otherwise so empty) concept of the Absolute is wholly fulfilled and his (otherwise so blind) gaze can 'see through' to the absolute God himself. Thus man is he who has to await God's free Epiphany in his history. Jesus Christ is this Epiphany. It can, therefore, remain a completely open question whether the content of the *a posteriori* dogma simply 'coincides' with the Idea of Christ, which is the correlative object of this transcendental deduction, or whether this correlative only 'corresponds' to the real Christ declared to the hearing of faith and is essentially surpassed by him, although in its own axis.

An undertaking of this sort would be an important one. By means of it a religious *a priori* which lives today in every man who believes in Christ would achieve reflexive self-awareness. For this religious piety can only draw its life in fact from the historical Christ (from him and from no one else, from him and not from an Idea!) because man is continually kept in movement by the existential need to possess God concretely, to 'have to' possess him. Without such a deduction, and unless it is brought home to man as something really achieved, the historical message concerning Jesus the Son of God is always in danger of being dismissed as a mere piece of mythology. A deduction

¹ This proof can only conclude if the potency, the openness, etc., were to be purely and simply meaningless without just the act which is in question and which is itself foreshadowed in the potency. But that is by no means the case with the potency in question here.

of this kind might also contribute to the conceptual equipment used by Christology proper.

2. A theological phenomenology of the religious attitude with regard to Christ is greatly to be desired. It cannot be denied that in the ordinary religious act of the Christian, when it is not referred precisely to the historical life of Jesus by way of meditation, Christ finds a place only as God. We see here the mysterious monophysite undercurrent in ordinary Christology and a tendency to let the creaturely be overwhelmed in face of the Absolute, as though God were to become greater and more real by the devaluation and cancellation of the creature. Another sign of this is to be observed in the fact that Christ's humanity no longer has any part to play in the theology of the *visio beatifica*, as this is ordinarily presented. Theology is only concerned with the One who has become man in so far as he appeared at the historical time of his life on earth as Teacher, Founder and Redeemer. There is hardly any developed doctrine of his abiding function as man; and correspondingly, the doctrine of the specific character of our abiding relationship to him as Man-for-all-eternity is extremely fragmentary. Something is said about the adoration which is due to him even as man. But no one seems to have much to say about the fact that our basic religious acts, which are continually effected through the mediation of Christ, have an 'incarnational' structure. There is hardly any mention of Christ in the tractate *de Veritibus Theologicis*: the discussion moves merely in the thin atmosphere of pure theological metaphysics. Reflexion on the permanence of Christ's humanity according to Chalcedon, which alone really brings God within the reach of our acts, has not yet penetrated as far as these tractates on the theological virtues or on *religio*.¹ The Council of Chalcedon has still to conquer here. The anti-Arian reaction, the special character of the Latin doctrine of the Trinity and the existential undercurrent of monophysite tendency in Christology, have all delayed this victory. But this very fact, that Christ more or less vanishes for an act momentarily directing itself to God, has led to a situation, for which there are other causes as well, in which the Incarnation

¹ Cf. K. Rahner, 'Die ewige Bedeutung der Menschheit Jesu für unser Gottesverhältnis', *Geist und Leben* XXVI (1953), pp. 279-88 (which appears in vol. III of the German edition of these studies).

appears to be almost a transient episode in God's activity in his world and is thus unreflexively felt to be a myth unworthy of faith. In view of this situation, a theological phenomenology of an 'incarnational' piety, valid now and always, would not only have significance for the doctrine of the spiritual life; it would also be important as a means of removing the basic causes which have led to a demand for 'demythologization'.

3. The first proposal (no. 1) would further suggest that dogmatic Christology might pay a little attention to the general history of religions. There is no intention here of proposing a 'hunt for parallels' to the doctrine of the Incarnation in other religions, nor ultimately of showing that such parallels do not really exist. In the last resort the point of such a study would be to examine the history of religions from the standpoint of our knowledge of the historical Incarnation, and from this standpoint alone, the only one to offer a really illuminating interpretation of a history otherwise unintelligible in itself: and to examine this history with a view to seeing whether and how far man in fact shows himself in history for what he unquestionably is in the depth of his concrete nature: a being who in the course of his history looks out for the presence of God himself. When the early fathers kept a lookout for such an activity of the Logos, the beginnings of his Incarnation as it were, in saving history before Christ (at least in the Old Testament), they were better advised than we are, for whom God rules there simply from heaven. It may in general be allowed that the history of religions¹ as a whole only escapes the mortal danger of infecting Christians with some sort of relativism when it is integrated (as Yes or No) in the single history of the dialogue between God and the world, a dialogue which flows into the Word become flesh, and when it is not interpreted merely as the product of a purely terrestrial religiosity of rationalism and as a human perversion. If this is true, it holds good also of the history of religions in so far as they were an unconscious Yes or No to the Word of God who was to come in human flesh.

¹ For the first time since the patristic era, this history is becoming a reality for the West again, in the perichoresis of all cultures and historical movements which is in fact taking place today. Cf. H. de Lubac, *La Rencontre du Bouddhisme et l'Occident*, Paris 1952.

4. Would it be a delusion to suppose that the abstract formalism of Christology has also contributed to a decrease of interest in a theology of the mysteries of Christ's human life? There is still a lively theological (and not just pious) interest in the mysteries of the Life of Jesus in St Thomas and even in Suarez. In the ordinary textbook-Christology current today, one has to keep a pretty close lookout to find anything about Christ's Ascension, as if this was a matter primarily for *theologia fundamentalis*. The Passion is treated of from an exceedingly formal viewpoint in soteriology, which seems very little interested in the concreteness of the Passion on the ground that some other moral deed of Christ's would have redeemed us 'just as well' if God had so pleased. What do we hear of Christ's Circumcision, Baptism, his prayer, the Transfiguration, the Presentation in the Temple, the Mount of Olives, the abandonment by God on the Cross, the descent into the underworld, the Ascension into heaven and so on? Nothing or pretty well nothing.¹ All this is left to piety, and it is rarely that we find anything more than applications of a moral and edifying kind here. The mysteries of Christ, which precisely in their once-for-all character and indissoluble historicity form the law of once-for-all world history, are all too easily misconceived as mere illustrations and examples, as 'instances', in which general moral laws, which are just as clear even apart from Christ's life, are exemplified. Instead of a genuine theology of Christ's life, we find that the theology (not in itself unjustified) of certain abstract privileges enjoyed by Christ has forced itself into the foreground; and that this theology draws attention to certain features (in the field of knowledge, for instance, Christ's *vizio* in the course of his life on earth, his infused knowledge and so on) which distinguish

¹ The Biblical exegetes proper often seem today to be intimidated by the dogmatic theologians and their true—and often presumed—office as censors. They take the utmost care to avoid going a single step beyond the letter of the text and getting down to the real theological issues involved. What really happened at the Transfiguration? What took place at the Ascension? What did eating involve for Christ after his Resurrection? What really happened when he descended into Hell? What is Mt 27:51 s. telling us about the saints who rose from the dead, and what is its theological significance? What took place when Jesus was tempted? What are we to think about his remaining behind in the Temple as a boy? How are the postulates of dogmatic theology capable of being harmonized with Jesus' wonderment, his 'ignorance', and so on? It cannot be said that the exegetes have given much sign of theological heart for these questions and others like them.

him from us, and even these features it does not always postulate for reasons which are really illuminating. This development is conditioned (if not perhaps with a very high degree of self-awareness) by that purely formal understanding of the unity of Christ as united, of which we have spoken above. In a conception like this an event in the field of Christ's humanity only has 'interest' in so far as it is dignified by being adopted by Christ's person, and thus precisely not in itself; or again in so far as it possesses special features not to be found elsewhere among human beings. Once attention has been turned in these two directions, the only soteriology to be expected is of that single type which (perfectly correct in itself) we do in fact find even today. This still contains a section on certain permanent 'consecratoria unionis hypostaticae', but lacks any theological consideration of the history (which is in itself theological in the highest degree) of the particular, once-for-all events of the life of Christ as man, born of a woman, subject to history, law and death. This human reality as human (not as something abstract, of course) in its 'bare' humanity can only be of theological importance if it is as such (as just this) the manifestation of God in the world, not just as something joined on in a logically subsequent way; if, that is to say, it is one with the Logos in virtue of being the reality of the Logos itself, and not the reality of the Logos in virtue of being 'one' (how?) with the Logos. If we are to have a true theology of the human life of Jesus (not merely a theology of the extraordinary in Jesus' life) we must recover that right view of things which does not (by 'abstracting') overlook just that which cannot be really separated from what is human in Jesus: we must learn to see that what is human in Jesus is not something human (and as such uninteresting for us in the world) and '*in addition*' God's as well (and in this respect alone important, this special character however always merely hovering above the human and forming its exterior setting, as it were). On the contrary, in this view the everyday human reality of this life is God's Ek-sistence, in the sense cautiously determined above: it is human reality *and so* God's, and *vice versa*. Then it will no longer be necessary to ask the question: What is there exceptional about this life over and beyond ours as we are already familiar with it, whose heights we have already climbed and into whose depths we have already plunged, what is there about it (still strictly only as a plus-quantity) which could make it important for us too? But the question we must ask is: What does our life mean, this

life which we ultimately fail to understand when we examine ourselves, however familiar with it we may be, what does it mean when it is first and last the life of God? It is because we need this ultimate interpretation of our lives, one which is not to be had elsewhere, that we must study the theology of Christ's life and death. Why does this happen so seldom in current Christology?

5. Thus we have reached the point of laying down requirements for *soteriology*, and have indicated why and how the average textbook-Christology leads to inadequacies or omissions in this field. The gravamen of our charge may be simply formulated as follows: as far as soteriology is concerned, the average theology current in our schools today is only interested in the formal value of Christ's redemptive act, not in its concrete content, the inner structure of the redemptive process in itself. Now the account usually given of the infinite worth of Christ's act as regards satisfaction and merit, on account of the infinite dignity of the Person, is a perfectly correct one. But it would be false to suppose that this accounts for all that is essential in soteriology. Yet this is in fact what is supposed. The simplest proof of this statement is found in the fact that the satisfaction theory in soteriology not only assumes tacitly but also explicitly maintains that Christ would equally have been able to redeem us by any other moral action, provided only that God had so willed it and had accepted this action as vicarious satisfaction. The inner content of the redemptive act (i.e. the Cross, death, obedience, abandonment by God, death due to the action of sinners themselves) thus only has significance for the Redemption as such in its abstract moral quality, which as it were gives up its substratum and its matter for the value which this action acquires in virtue of the dignity of the divine Person; the precise content of the action makes no difference. Now we have no intention of denying that God would have been able to forgive us our sin in regard to any one of Christ's acts at all, and that this forgiveness would be 'Redemption', and what is more Redemption on account of a 'satisfactio condigna'. But if the matter is so regarded, essential facts and problems of a really adequate soteriology are overlooked, in that a soteriology is bound to say how *we* were redeemed in concrete fact. The view which we have just described supposes that it has already proved that all the concrete particulars of the redemptive act really do not belong to the cause as

such of the Redemption as such. But in fact all it makes clear is that an *abstractum* of Redemption can be achieved by means of various species of one generic redemptive cause. If it is true that the Redemption consists *only* in God's purpose of forgiveness, conceived of in juridical and moral terms, or is considered only under this single (formal and abstract) respect, the view we have described may be accepted as the correct one. But what reason is there for saying that this presupposition is correct? Strictly speaking, one and the same effect can only be brought about by a *single* cause. If the causes *as such* differ, they cannot have the same effect. Thus when it is said that we could have been redeemed 'in another way', one of two things may be meant. *Either* it is meant that these differing causes do not in fact differ *as such*, that they are distinguished from each other in their subject only by modalities which are simply indifferent so far as their causality as such is concerned (as two knives, for instance, which are distinguished from each other only by the colour of their handles, can really cut in 'exactly the same way'), and consequently can really bring about the same 'Redemption'. *Or* it is meant that these causes differ even as such; thus they do not bring into being exactly the same Redemption, even if these different Redemptions can be conceived of subsequently in a conceptual unity of an abstract, generic kind such that in *this* sense it is possible to say that God could have effected 'the same' Redemption through some other redemptive action of Christ's. It would be necessary to prove that the first sense of the proposition is the right one; it cannot simply be presupposed. In fact no proof can be offered. This means that when Scripture says, 'We have been redeemed by Christ's death (with all that death, and death alone, implies) and by his obedience (his concrete obedience, realized precisely in death, and capable of being realized only in death)', we must assume, until the contrary is proved, that *this* is what characterizes the redemptive action *in so far as* it is cause, and not other characteristics, fundamentally unimportant as far as its causality is concerned, as the usual version of the theory of satisfaction assumes. This is not to deny that this death in obedience, which is *as such* the cause of our Redemption, is precisely cause in virtue of being the death of the Logos become man and thus of participating in the infinite dignity of the Person. If the death as such is the cause of Redemption, it naturally follows that *this* cause has not brought about exactly the same Redemption as would have been achieved if we had been redeemed in some other way.

These are primarily considerations of an abstract, methodological kind. But they do point to the fact that the soundness of the moral and juridical satisfaction theory, with regard to what it says positively, does not serve as a proof that there is nothing more to be said in soteriology.

There are various points at which any attempt to complete positively and give real content to the abstract formalism of the average treatment of soteriology would have to begin. (a) We could first enquire whether the various theories of the *unio hypostatica* have any significance for the foundations of the satisfaction theory, and what that significance might be, for the doctrine, that is, that the infinite Person endows with infinite value even the actions he performs in his human nature. It is certainly not obvious that these theories about the hypostatic union are of little importance for this soteriological doctrine. If we do not wish to defend any sort of juridical and moral Idealism or a modern theory of 'values', and if the principle '*ens (reale) et bonum convertuntur*' is true, then in the last resort every 'value', every 'dignity' (just to use another word and to look at what is involved from another point of view) is a reality, a real entitative determination, and does not merely 'rest upon' such a determination. Transposing our proposition into the ontological order, then, what does it mean to say, 'The Person endows its action with a certain definite dignity'? The variety of theories concerning the *unio hypostatica* cannot be without importance for this question, the answer to which again is of decisive significance for the precise meaning of the proposition to be transposed. Both the inquiry as to the uniting unity, the essence of the intrinsically hypostatic function of the Logos with respect to the human nature, as well as the inquiry as to the independence of Christ's human reality given precisely by this unity, must, if they are properly conducted, be capable of giving the satisfaction theory new depth. (b) It would then be necessary to work out in greater detail a theology of death in general and of Christ's in particular. Only then would it be possible to give a really adequate answer to the question: Why is it that we have been redeemed by Christ's *death* (and by nothing else), and what exactly does a redemption of this kind look like, which is brought about in just this way and no other? It is no exaggeration to say that a theology on these lines is still entirely lacking in our average modern treatment. Nothing is said about it in soteriology, and pretty well nothing in the tractate *de Novissimis*. Death would have to be

seen in its indissoluble unity of action and passion.¹ Only so can it become clear that the Redemption takes place in virtue of Christ's obedience (action) and yet in virtue of his death (itself); not, however (as is generally said in a minimizing and superficial way), in virtue of the 'Passion bringing death in its train', for then once again this Passion would as such remain outside the redemptive act and would form merely the matter 'in which' obedience is actively engaged—something in the last resort accidental and for which substitutes may be found at will. Death would have to be set forth as the conatural manifestation of alienation from God by sin (and not just as the externally inflicted 'penalty', something for which God could just as well have found some substitute) and at the same time, as the manifestation and constitutive sign of absolute obedience to God (at least when Christ dies this death or someone with him).² It would further have to be shown that in spite of the separation of body and soul, death does not simply withdraw man from the world and make him acsmic; rather it transposes him into a new and more comprehensive relationship to the world, freed from the limitation to a single point in space and time characteristic of his earthly existence.³ This result (together with much else which would also have to be considered) would make it possible to achieve a better understanding of the significance of Christ's descent into hell, as something which does not merely signify a phase of his historical existence made void by what happened after. More searching questions could then be raised about the possibility of reaching a more concrete understanding of the lasting efficacy of Christ's humanity with regard to grace than is

¹ On what follows, see the short sketch: K. Rahner, 'Zur Theologie des Todes', *Synopsis* III (1949), pp. 87–112. (Also, by the same author, 'Zur Theologie des Todes', ZKT LXXIX (1957), pp. 1–44.—Tr.)

² It is not possible here to show that death has a basic nature open to further determination, such that it becomes the death of sin or the death of redemption according as it is undergone in disobedience or obedience. Nor is it possible to show here that this is why death is 'natural', indeed that this is the fact on which is based the possibility of the above-mentioned existential-ontological dialectic of death as Adam's death and Christ's death.

³ That the soul is not in consequence of this 'everywhere' is illuminating. This would certainly imply a more extensive relationship to the world in that dimension precisely which is abandoned in virtue of death (until the Resurrection). Thus the theory indicated above has no connexion with Luther's doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's resurrected body.

allowed of in the rather thin formalism of the Thomistic teaching of the instrumental causality of Christ's humanity.¹ But it would then once more be necessary to show how all this is connected explicitly with the proposition that the humanity and the human events in the history of this humanity in Christ are the ek-sistence of God himself in the world.

In thus attempting to give a deeper meaning to ordinary soteriology, we should take account of another point of view, which could also have found a place in an earlier stage of our discussion. Scripture speaks to us in many places of Christ's *σάρξ*.² We ordinarily take this to be a reference to Christ's human nature or to his body. This is quite sound; but it clearly fails to exhaust the Scriptural meaning. What we involuntarily think of when we speak of Christ's humanity and his human nature is nearly always just that element in the meaning of *sarx* which belongs to the necessary and permanent constitution of the entities so characterized. But *sarx* is intended to characterize man or his corporeality precisely in so far as this possesses a quite definite character arising out of an historical development within a history of salvation and damnation. Flesh is the weak, the corruptible, consecrated to death, the dimension within which sin becomes manifest and tangible: it is man's essential reality in so far as it did in fact become flesh at the beginning, yet in free history, and so in primordial history. The Logos assumed the 'flesh of sin'. We must take this phrase seriously, and we must say what exactly 'flesh of sin' is. Only then can we understand why it is in Christ's flesh precisely that we are redeemed. Only then can we see that the Event of the Redemption has taken place precisely in that dimension of man's personal existence which is capable of being simultaneously the dimension in which his personal guilt becomes historically tangible *and* that in which his guilt is overcome. A really adequate soteriology cannot renounce the task of laying as its foundation a sharply defined theology of what is meant by 'flesh'. We should then see more clearly that Christ had not only to be 'like us in nature' so as to be our Redeemer, but with us had to spring 'from one' (Heb 2:11), our brother according to the flesh. For he could only possess this flesh, which was to be redeemed and in

¹ Cf. K. Rahner, 'Die ewige Bedeutung der Menschheit Jesu', pp. 279-88.

² Jn 1:14; 6:51; Rom 8:3; Eph 2:14; Col 1:22; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb. 5:7;

¹ Pet 3:18; 4:1; 1 Jn 4:2; 2 Jn 7.

which we were to be redeemed, if he who was 'born of woman' shared our origin as well as our nature. Here again we see that a satisfaction theory of a purely formal and juridical kind does not exhaust the Biblical truth of Redemption. For in such a theory the Logos would have been able to redeem us whatever creaturely form he assumed, and not only in a flesh derived from a single origin and stamped by the history of man's sin.

What has been said in this fifth section only has any real importance for our purposes in so far as the usual soteriology too shows the same kind of formal and almost juridical abstractness which we have noticed in ordinary Christology today, and for the same basic reason. Any progress beyond Chalcedon, and thus really any further insight into the meaning of its definition, would then be to the advantage of both tracts. We intend to offer only a few brief indications here.

6. There are two distinct points as regards which the problems raised by the old Christology deserve fresh consideration.

a. The *single* Christ.

The question as to whether the Logos did not also become *angel* was raised as early as Origen. Today it is less possible than ever to dismiss as an idle speculation the question why there is and will be only *one* Christ, and one Christ as man, simply by appealing to 'God's decree'. There are indeed decrees of God and ultimate dispositions of his free choice. But free acts of this kind do not exclude the possibility of our asking what they mean. On the contrary, it is precisely God's field of action that is the field of the greatest intelligibility, more so than the field of a mechanical and meaningless 'necessity'. And so we should not appeal to God's decrees and his 'unsearchable' will in order to lighten our theological labours or dispense with them altogether. Anyone who wishes to proclaim the Incarnation as something worthy of faith, that is, who wishes to make it possible for modern man to assimilate this Truth of all truths, must find a place for it in his *single* historical world. But it is no longer a simple matter for modern man to accept as worthy of faith the position that the event of the Incarnation should have taken place just once. Why is there no Godmanhood in general? Or better: why does this exist in fact (as regards grace and

eternal life) in such a way as precisely to 'require'¹ that the *unio hypostatica* in the strict sense took place just once? How are we to understand the inner connexion and unity of the cosmos as a whole, the nature of man and angel, in such a way as to make it comprehensible that the Logos became 'only' man, and yet that as such he is Head and End of the whole cosmos (including the angels), and this not only in respect of a higher dignity (than that of the angels) but also in respect of a real function which he exercises with regard to the angels as well? We have to offer a picture of the world in which the *one* Christ, the *one* Christ as *man*, seems meaningful. This point is of keyrigmatic importance today. A clearer and more explicit treatment of it would help to show (and this itself is important) that the classical Christology of the dogma is in no need of demythologization.

b. The same is true of the *time* of the Incarnation.

The Fathers took a more active interest in this question than the thinkers of later times. Today it has become important again: on account of the prolongation in time both of human history *before* Christ, as well as of possible history *after* Christ. Both are more extensive, stirred by more various movements, than the Middle Ages used to think. In the expectations of many men, the higher development of humanity seems only to reach its ultimately intended realization in a mastery of the material world, the unification of men in society and their planned, i.e. rationally ordered life in common. It is of the first importance to show, with a sympathetic and yet critical regard for current patterns of thought, why this expectation does not contradict the fact of faith, that the finally decisive Event of history for all time to come has happened already: God's becoming man. To the stature of this Event all humanity can only asymptotically grow, in all its cosmic and moral dimensions, in the dimensions of grace and eschatology, whatever conceivable 'evolution' it may undergo. It can never surpass this Event, because the summit of all 'evolution', the irruption of God into the world and the radical opening of the world to the free infinity of God in Christ, has already been realized for the whole world, however true it may be that what has already taken place definitively in this Event must still reveal itself within the world

¹ It need hardly be said that the question is left open here as to how far this 'requirement' signifies a pure *convenientia*, i.e. a genuine connexion of meaning obtaining in objective reality, or a strict necessity.

in the reflexion and image of all history still to come, in an eschatological climax.¹

7. It would be to the benefit of both Christology and the other dogmatic treatises if both were more clearly aware of their unity. The fact of this unity has already been touched on more than once in the foregoing discussions. The division and structure of the treatises in the textbooks of dogmatic theology available today is a problem in its own right, and a much more serious and important problem than is generally recognized. Perspectives and existential allocations of attention are very nearly as important as the question, 'Is what is said here correct?' We shall say nothing about these matters here. But even within the customary framework of a modern treatise of dogmatic theology more Christology could be studied in the other treatises than is actually the case; it would be highly beneficial for these treatises. We have already discussed the way in which the truth and richness of content both of a 'protology' as well as of an eschatology essentially depend on its becoming clear that man and his environment and his history are from the first devised with a view to Christ, and that the man Christ at the end of all history still retains his fundamental significance. The tractate *de Gratia* is commonly entitled *de Gratia Christi*. Commonly it contains little else about Christ. And yet we only have a Christian understanding of grace when it is conceived of not only in the most metaphysical way possible, as a divinization, but rather as assimilation to Christ. And the existential transposition of this is the following of Christ, something about which moral theology ought to say rather more, although it offers a schema less handy for casuistical purposes than the Ten Commandments or other schemata of natural moral law. Furthermore, why is it only in Christology that Christ is said to have sanctifying grace in his soul? Why is it not stated conversely that grace is the unfolding within human nature of

¹ In such a theology of time in Christ, it would naturally also be necessary to discuss the question to what extent the grace of Christ, the communication of the Spirit, justification, could exist *before* Christ; and again, why, for example, there was no *visio beatifica* before Christ, and why, then, in the former case the 'post Christum' became in the historical development of theology a 'propter Christum', 'intuitu meritorum Christi futurorum', while this is not possible in the latter case.

the union of the human with the Logos (in the sense mentioned above) and is therefore, and *arising thence*, something which can also be had in those who are not the ek-sistence of the Logos in time and history but do belong to his necessary environment? Sacramental theology is again becoming more Christological today, so too the theology of the Church as a doctrine of the 'Mystical Body of Christ'. A theology of history, and what is more a Christocentric one, is almost entirely lacking.

8. Would it not be fitting for someone to make a systematic study of the ways in which the real teaching of faith about Christ is unfortunately misconceived? This is not a question of the 'official' heresies from the earliest days up to the liberalism of our time, or if these, only in so far as behind them a profound misconception of the real dogma is at work. It would rather be a matter of investigating with exactitude and system what sort of idea the average Christian and non-Christian really has of Christ, whether it be to 'believe' this idea or reject it as not worthy of belief. It would probably emerge that the content of this idea by no means coincides with the real dogma, or at any rate renders the dogma with really serious, that is disastrous, distortions and omissions. We should then have to ask which misunderstood formulations of the dogma, either in solemn pronouncements or (what is of more practical importance) in the normal catechesis and preaching, have given rise and continue to give rise to such pre-theoretical and cryptogamic heresies in Christology. Such an investigation could be of use not only for apologetic and kerygmatic ends. It could make clear to academic theology that what are apparently very ticklish questions of theology could be of the highest missionary significance, provided that they are properly put and answered. For a true theology of proclamation is nothing else than the one theology, which takes its religious task so seriously with all the scientific means at its disposal, that it becomes at once more scientific and more kerygmatic.

6

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

ON December 8, 1854, Pius IX made the following solemn declaration, which the appeal to his supreme teaching authority in the Church shows to have been infallible: 'The doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, has been, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, preserved and exempted from every stain of original sin, is revealed by God, and consequently is to be believed firmly and inviolably by all the faithful.' Since then a hundred years have passed; and to mark the occasion Pius XII, in his encyclical 'Fulgens Corona' of December 8, 1953, has announced a Marian Year.

The first thing which this centenary celebration and the announcement of a Marian Year would seem to demand is an attempt to understand more deeply this truth of Catholic faith. The fact that the Supreme Pastor so explicitly desired the celebration of this centenary, more so than in the case of similar commemorative feasts (such as those of Ephesus, Chalcedon and Trent, in recent times), makes it immediately clear that a true Catholic's attitude in faith and love to this definition cannot be one of 'minding one's own business'. 'We desire', the Pope says, 'that sermons and lectures should be delivered on this subject in each diocese, so that this Christian doctrine might be made clearer to men's minds.'¹

A truth of faith can be brought home to the understanding in various ways: we can find out what Scripture says about it; we can trace the historical course of the doctrine with the passage of time, and learn what is involved, both as regards its content and as regards its binding force on faith, from the examination of this long and often fluctuating history in which the Church's consciousness in faith has come to maturity. We can observe the influence of such a doctrine on

¹ AAS XLV (1953), p. 587.

