assumed in Christ and in the new law (on the basis of the resolution of the eternal law into the Christic predestination), and that which is assumed is not abolished: *quod est assumptum est servatum.* To one who does not believe, it is always possible to demonstrate the intrinsic reasonableness of a norm which is knowable even naturally, without failing from the beginning to present it as an ingredient of a whole which receives its full foundation only in the Christic perspective.   □

Retrieving the Tradition

Concerning the notion of person in theology

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger

> Relativity toward the other constitutes the human person. The human person is the event or being of relativity.

The concept of person, as well as the idea that stands behind this concept, is a product of Christian theology. In other words, it grew in the first place out of the interplay between human thought and the data of Christian faith and so entered intellectual history. The concept of the person is thus, to speak with Gilson, one of the contributions to human thought made possible and provided by Christian faith. It did not simply grow out of mere human philosophizing, but out of the interplay between philosophy and the antecedent given of faith, especially Scripture. More specifically, the concept of person arose from two questions that have from the very beginning urged themselves upon Christian thought as central: namely, the question, "What is God?" (i.e., the God whom we encounter in Scripture); and, "Who is Christ?" In order to answer these fundamental questions that arose as soon as faith began to reflect, Christian thought made use of the philosophically insignificant or entirely unused concept *"prosopon"* = *"persona."* It thereby gave to this word a new meaning and opened up a new dimension of human thought. Although this thought has distanced itself far from its origin and developed beyond it, it nevertheless lives, in a hidden way, from this origin. In my

judgment one cannot, therefore, know what "person" most truly means without fathoming this origin.

For this reason please forgive me because, although I was asked to talk as a systematic theologian about the dogmatic concept of the person, I will not present the latest ideas of modern theologians. Instead, I will attempt to go back to the origin, to the source and ground from which the idea of "person" was born and without which it could not exist. The outline flows from what was said above. We will simply take a closer look at the two origins of the concept of person, its origin in the question of God and its origin in the question of Christ.

I. *The concept of person in the doctrine of God*

A. *The origin of the concept of person*

The first figure we meet is that of the great Western theologian Tertullian. Tertullian shaped Latin into a theological language and, with the almost incredible sureness of a genius, he knew how to develop a theological terminology that remained unsurpassable in later centuries, because already on the first attempt it gave form permanently to valid formulae of Christian thought. Thus it was Tertullian who gave to the West its formula for expressing the Christian idea of God. God is *"una substantia-tres personae,"* one being in three persons.[1] It was here that the word "person" entered intellectual history for the first time with its full weight.

It took centuries for this statement to be intellectually penetrated and digested, until it was no longer a mere statement, but truly a means of reaching into the mystery, teaching us, not, of course, to comprehend it, but somehow to grasp it. When we realize that Tertullian was able to coin the phrase while its intellectual penetration was still in its infancy, the question arises, How could he find this word with almost somnambulant sureness? Until recently, this was a puzzle. Carl Andresen, historian of dogma at Göttingen, has been able to solve this puzzle so that the origin of the concept of person, its

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[1]The final formula of the West was *una essentia—tres personae;* Tertullian had said, *una substantia—tres personae,* Augustine *una essentia—tres substantiae.*

true source and ground, is somewhat clear to us today.[2] The answer to the question of the origin of the concept "person" is that it originated in "prosopographic exegesis." What does this mean? In the background stands the word *prosopon,* which is the Greek equivalent of *persona.* Prosopographic exegesis is a form of interpretation developed already by the literary scholars of Antiquity. The ancient scholars noticed that in order to give dramatic life to events, the great poets of Antiquity did not simply narrate these events, but allowed persons to make their appearance and to speak. For example, they placed words in the mouths of divine figures and the drama progresses through these words. In other words, the poet creates the artistic device of roles through which the action can be depicted in dialogue. The literary scholar uncovers these roles; he shows that the persons have been created as "roles" in order to give dramatic life to events (in fact, the word *"prosopon,"* later translated by *"persona,"* originally means simply "role," the mask of the actor). Prosopographic exegesis is thus an interpretation that brings to light this artistic device by making it clear that the author has created dramatic roles, dialogical roles, in order to give life to his poem or narrative.

In their reading of Scripture, the Christian writers came upon something quite similar. They found that, here too, events progress in dialogue. They found, above all, the peculiar fact that God speaks in the plural or speaks with himself (e.g., "Let *us* make man in our image and likeness," or God's statement in Genesis 3, "Adam has become like one of *us,*" or Psalm 110, "The Lord said to my Lord" which the Greek Fathers take to be a conversation between God and his Son). The Fathers approach this fact, namely, that God is introduced in the plural as speaking with himself, by means of prosopographic exegesis which thereby takes on a new meaning. Justin, who wrote in the first half of the second century (d. 165), already says "The sacred writer introduces different *prosopa,* different roles." However, now the word no longer really means "roles," because it takes on a completely new reality in terms of faith in the Word of God. The roles introduced by the sacred writer are realities, they are dialogical realities. The word *"prosopon"* =

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[2]C. Andresen, "Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffs," *ZNW* 52 (1961): 1-38. The Patristic texts cited below are taken from Andresen's article.

"role" is thus at the transitional point where it gives birth to the idea of person. I will cite merely one text by Justin to clarify this process. "When you hear that the prophets make statements as if a person were speaking (*hos apo prosopou*), then do not suppose that they were spoken immediately by those filled with the spirit (i.e., the prophets) but rather by the *Logos* who moves them."[3] Justin thus says that the dialogical roles introduced by the prophets are not mere literary devices. The "role" truly exists; it is the *prosopon*, the face, the person of the Logos who truly speaks here and *joins* in dialogue with the prophet. It is quite clear here how the data of Christian faith transform and renew a pre-given ancient schema used in interpreting texts. The literary artistic device of letting roles appear to enliven the narrative with their dialogue reveals to the theologians *the one* who plays the true role here, the *Logos*, the *prosopon*, the person of the Word which is no longer merely role, but person.

About fifty years later, when Tertullian wrote his works, he was able to go back to an extensive tradition of such Christian prosopographic exegesis in which the word *prosopon = persona* had already found its full claim to reality. Two examples must suffice. In *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian writes, "How can a person who stands by himself say, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness,' when he ought to have said, 'Let *me* make man in my image and likeness,' as someone who is single and alone for himself. If he were only one and single, then God deceived and tricked also in what follows when he says, 'Behold, Adam has become like one of us,' which he said in the plural. But he did not stand alone, because there stood with him the Son, his Word, and a third person, the Spirit in the Word. This is why he spoke in the plural, 'Let *us* make' and '*our*' and '*us*.'"[4] One sees how the phenomenon of *intra*-divine dialogue gives birth here to the idea of the person who is person in an authentic sense. Tertullian similarly says in his interpretation of "The Lord said to my Lord" (Psalm 110:1), "Take note how even the Spirit as the third person speaks of the Father and of the Son, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies at your feet.' Likewise through Isaiah, 'The Lord says these words to my Lord Christ.'. . . In these few texts the distinction within the

[3]Text cited by Andresen, *ibid.*, 12.
[4]*Adv. Prax.* 12,1-3; Corpus Christianorum II, 1172f.; Andresen, 10-11.

Trinity is clearly set before our eyes. For himself exists the one who speaks, namely, the Spirit; further the Father *to* whom he speaks, and finally the Son *of* whom he speaks."[5]

I do not wish to enter into the historical details of these texts. I will merely summarize what results from them for the issue of the idea "person." First, the concept "person" grew out of reading the Bible, as something needed for its interpretation. It is a product of reading the Bible. Secondly, it grew out of the idea of dialogue, more specifically, it grew as an explanation of the phenomenon of the God who speaks dialogically. The Bible with its phenomenon of the God who speaks, the God who is *in* dialogue, stimulated the concept "person." The particular interpretations of Scripture texts offered by the Fathers are certainly accidental and outdated. But their exegetical direction as a whole captures the spiritual direction of the Bible inasmuch as the fundamental phenomenon into which we are placed by the Bible is the God who speaks and the human person who is addressed, the phenomenon of the partnership of the human person who is called by God to love in the word. However, the core of what "person" can truly mean comes thereby to light. To summarize we can say: The idea of person expresses in its origin the idea of dialogue and the idea of God as the dialogical being. It refers to God as the being that lives in the word and consists of the word as "I" and "you" and "we." In the light of this knowledge of God, the true nature of humanity became clear in a new way.

B. *Person as relation*

The first stage of the struggle for the Christian concept of God has been sketched above. I want to add a brief look

[5]*Adv. Prax.* 11,7-10; *ibid.*, 1172. In my judgment it would be important to investigate the rabbinic antecedents of this prosopographic exegesis. Interesting relevant material is found in E. Sjöberg, "Geist im Judentum," *ThWNT* 6.385ff. Sjöberg shows that in rabbinic literature the Holy Spirit is often depicted in personal categories: he speaks, cries, admonishes, mourns, weeps, rejoices, consoles, etc. He is also portrayed as speaking to God. Sjöberg notes on this "that the stylistic device of personification and dramatization is typical for rabbinic literature" and "that the pesonal reaction of the Spirit is always tied to words of Sacred Scripture" (p. 386). A closer analysis of the texts could perhaps show that the patristic elaboration of the concept of person does not take its point of departure from the literary criticism of antiquity, but from this rabbinic exegesis.

at the second main stage, in which the concept of "person" reached its full maturity.[6] About two hundred years later, at the turn of the fifth century, Christian theology reached the point of being able to express in articulated concepts what is meant in the thesis: God is a being in three persons. In this context, theologians argued, person must be understood as *relation*. According to Augustine and late patristic theology, the three persons that exist in God are in their nature relations. They are, therefore, not substances that stand next to each other, but they are real existing relations, and nothing besides. I believe this idea of the late patristic period is very important. In God, person means relation. Relation, being related, is not something superadded to the person, but it *is* the person itself. In its nature, the person exists only *as* relation. Put more concretely, the first person does not generate in the sense that the act of generating a Son is added to the already complete person, but the person *is* the deed of generating, of giving itself, of streaming itself forth. The person is identical with this act of self-donation.

One could thus define the first person as self-donation in fruitful knowledge and love; it is not the one who gives himself, in whom the act of self-donation is found, but it is this self-donation, pure reality of act. An idea that appeared again in our century in modern physics is here anticipated: that there is pure act-being. We know that in our century the attempt has been made to reduce matter to a wave, to a pure act of streaming. What may be a questionable idea in the context of physics was asserted by theology in the fourth and fifth century about the persons in God, namely, that they are nothing but the act of relativity toward each other. In God, person is the pure relativity of being turned toward the other; it does not lie on the level of substance—the substance is *one*—but on the level of dialogical reality, of relativity toward the other. In this matter Augustine could attempt, at least in outline, to show the interplay between threeness and unity by saying, for example: *in Deo nihil secundum accidens dicitur, sed secundum substantiam aut secundum relationem* (in God there is nothing accidental, but only substance and relation). Relation is here recognized as a third specific fundamental category between substance and ac-

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[6]For the historical background of the following discussion, see A. Grillmeier, "Person II," *LThK* 8.290-292 with bibliography.

cident, the two great categorical forms of thought in Antiquity. Again we encounter the Christian newness of the personalistic idea in all its sharpness and clarity. The contribution offered by faith to human thought becomes especially clear and palpable here. It was faith that gave birth to this idea of pure act, of pure relativity, which does *not* lie on the level of substance and does not touch or divide substance; and it was faith that thereby brought the personal phenomenon into view.

We stand here at the point in which the speculative penetration of Scripture, the assimilation of faith by humanity's own thought, seems to have reached its highest point; and yet we can notice with astonishment that the way back into Scripture opens precisely here. For Scripture has clearly brought out precisely *this* phenomenon of pure relativity as the nature of the person. The clearest case is Johannine theology. In Johannine theology we find, for example, the formula, "The Son cannot do anything of himself" (5:19). However, the same Christ who says this says, "I and the Father are one" (10:30). This means, precisely because he has nothing of himself alone, because he does not place himself as a delimited substance next to the Father, but exists *in* total relativity toward him, and consitutes nothing but relativity toward him that does not delimit a precinct of what is merely and properly its own—precisely because of this they are one. This structure is in turn transferred—and here we have the transition to anthropology—to the disciples when Christ says, "Without me you can do nothing" (15:5). At the same time he prays "that they may be one as we are one" (17:11). It is thus part of the existence even of the disciples that man does not posit the reservation of what is merely and properly his own, does not strive to form the substance of the closed self, but enters into pure relativity toward the other and toward God. It is in this way that he truly comes to himself and into the fullness of his own, because he enters into unity with the one to whom he is related.

I believe a profound illumination of God as well as man occurs here, the decisive illumination of what person must mean in terms of Scripture: *not* a substance that closes itself in itself, but the phenomenon of complete relativity, which is, of course, realized in its entirety only in the one who is God, but which indicates the direction of all personal being. The point is thus reached here at which—as we shall see below—there is a transition from the doctrine of God into Christology and into anthropology.

One could go much further in following out this line of the idea of relation and of relativity in John, and in showing that it is *the* dominant theme of his theology, at any rate of his Christology. I want to mention only two examples. John picks up the theology of mission found in the Synoptics and in the Judaism of antiquity in which the idea is already formulated that the emissary, inasmuch as he is an emissary, is not important in himself, but stands for the sender and is one with the sender. John extends this Jewish idea of mission, which is at first a merely functional idea, by depicting Christ as *the* emissary who is in his entire nature "the one sent." The Jewish principle, "The emissary of a person is like that person" now takes on a completely new and deepened significance, because Jesus has absolutely nothing besides being the emissary, but is in his nature "the one sent." He is like the one who sent him precisely because he stands in complete relativity of existence toward the one who sent him. The content of the Johannine concept "the one sent" could be described as the absorption of being in "being from someone and toward someone." The content of Jesus' existence is "being from someone and toward someone," the absolute openness of existence without any reservation of what is merely and properly one's own. And again the idea is extended to Christian existence of which it is said, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (20:21). The other example is the doctrine of the *Logos*, the concept of the *Word* which is applied to Jesus. Once again, John picks up a schema of theological thought that was extremely widespread in the Greek and Jewish world. Of course, he thereby adopts a whole series of contents that are already developed therein and he applies them to Christ. However, there was a new element he introduced into the concept of the *Logos*. In important respects, what was decisive for him was not so much the idea of an eternal rationality—as among the Greeks, or whatever other speculation there may have been; what was decisive was much rather the relativity of existence which lies in the concept of the *Logos*.

For again, the point is that a word is essentially from someone else and toward someone else; word is existence that is completely path and openness. Some texts express this idea differently and clarify it, for instance when Christ says: "*My* teaching is *not* my teaching" (7:16). Augustine offers a marvellous commentary on this text by asking: Is this not a contradiction? It is either my teaching or not. He finds an an-

swer in the statement, Christ's doctrine is he himself, and he himself is not his own, because his "I" exists entirely from the "you." He goes on to say, "*Quid tam tuum quam tu, quid tam non tuum quam tu*—what belongs to you as much as your 'I,' and what belongs to you as little as your 'I?'" Your "I" is on the one hand what is most your own and at the same time what you have least of yourself; it is most of all not your own, because it is only from the "you" that it can exist as an "I" in the first place.

Let us summarize: in God there are three persons—which implies, according to the interpretation offered by theology, that persons are relations, pure relatedness. Although this is in the first place only a statement about the Trinity, it is at the same time the fundamental statement about what is at stake in the concept of person. It opens the concept of person into the human spirit and provides its foundation and origin.

One final remark on this point. As already indicated, Augustine explicitly transposed this theological affirmation into anthropology by attempting to understand the human person as an image of the Trinity in terms of this idea of God. Unfortunately, however, he committed a decisive mistake here to which we will come back later. In his interpretation, he projected the divine persons into the interior life of the human person and affirmed that intra-psychic processes correspond to these persons. The person as a whole, by contrast, corresponds to the divine substance. As a result, the trinitarian concept of person was no longer transferred to the human person in all its immediate impact. However, at present we can merely hint at this point; it will become clearer below.

II. The concept of person in Christology

The second origin of the concept of person lies in Christology. In order to find its way through difficult problems, theology again used the word *persona* and thus gave the human mind a new task. Theology answered the riddle, "Who and what is this Christ?" by means of the formula, "He has two natures and one person, a divine and a human nature, but only a divine person." Here again the word *persona* is introduced. One must say that this statement suffered from tremendous misunderstandings in Western thought. These misunderstandings must be removed first, in order to approach the authentic meaning of the Christological concept of person. The first mis-

understanding is to take the statement, "Christ has only one person, namely, a divine person," as a subtraction from the wholeness of Jesus' humanity. This misunderstanding has occurred *de facto* and is still occurring. All too easily one thinks as follows: Person is the authentic and true apex of human existence. It is missing in Jesus. Therefore the entirety of human reality is not present in him. The assumption that some defect is present here was the point of departure of various distortions and abberations, for example in the theology of the saints and of the Mother of God. In reality, this formula does *not* mean that anything is lacking in the humanity of the man Jesus. That nothing is lacking in his humanity was fought through inch by inch in the history of dogma, for the attempt was made again and again to show where something is missing. Arianism and Apollinarianism first thought Christ had no human *soul*; monophysitism denied him his human *nature*. After these fundamental errors had been rejected, weaker forms of the same tendency made their appearance. The monothelites asserted that although Christ had everything, he had at least no human will, the heart of personal existence. After this view had been rejected too, monergism appeared. Although Christ had a human will, he did not have the actualization of this will; the actualization comes from God. These are all attempts at locating the concept of person at some place in the psychic inventory. One after the other was rejected in order to make one point clear: this is not how the statement is meant; nothing is missing; no subtraction from humanity whatever is permitted or given. I believe that if one follows this struggle in which human reality had to be brought in, as it were, and affirmed for Jesus, one sees what tremendous effort and intellectual transformation lay behind the working out of this concept of person, which was quite foreign in its inner disposition to the Greek and the Latin mind. It is not conceived in substantialist, but, as we shall soon see, in existential terms. In this light, Boethius's concept of person, which prevailed in Western philosophy, must be criticized as entirely insufficient. Remaining on the level of the Greek mind, Boethius defined "person" as *naturae rationalis individua substantia*, as the individual substance of a rational nature. One sees that the concept of person stands entirely on the level of substance. This cannot clarify anything about the Trinity or about Christology; it is an affirmation that remains on the level of the Greek mind which thinks in substantialist terms.

By contrast, at the beginning of the Middle Ages, Richard of St. Victor found a concept of the person derived from within Christianity when he defined person as *spiritualis naturae incommunicabilis existentia*, as the incommunicably proper existence of spiritual nature [*unmittelbar eigene Existenz*]. This definition correctly sees that in its theological meaning "person" does not lie on the level of essence, but of existence. Richard thereby gave the impetus for a philosophy of existence which had, as such, not been made the subject of philosophy at all in Antiquity. In Antiquity philosophy was limited entirely to the level of essence. Scholastic theology developed categories of existence out of this contribution given by Christian faith to the human mind. Its defect was that it limited these categories to Christology and to the doctrine of the Trinity and did not make them fruitful in the whole extent of spiritual reality. This seems to me also the limit of St. Thomas in the matter, namely, that within theology he operates, with Richard of St. Victor, on the level of existence, but treats the whole thing as a theological exception, as it were. In philosophy, however, he remains faithful to the different approach of pre-Christian philosophy. The contribution of Christian faith to the whole of human thought is not realized; it remains at first detached from it as a theological exception, although it is precisely the *meaning* of this new element to call into question the *whole* of human thought and to set it on a new course.

This brings us to the second misunderstanding that has not allowed the effects of Christology to work themselves out fully. The second great misunderstanding is to see Christ as the simply unique ontological exception which must be treated as such. This exception is an object of highly interesting ontological speculation, but it must remain separate in its box as an exception to the rule and must not be permitted to mix with the rest of human thought. I believe it is useful here to remind ourselves of a methodological insight developed by Teilhard de Chardin in a completely different field. He raises the question of the nature of life, "Is it only an accident, on a tiny planet in the midst of the great cosmos, or is it symptomatic for the direction of reality as a whole?" He uses the discovery of radium as an example to address this question. "How should one understand the new element? As an anomaly, an aberrant form of matter? ...As a curiosity or as the beginning for a new physics?" Modern physics, Teilhard continues, "would not have come to be if physicists had insisted on un-

derstanding radioactivity as an anomaly.'"[7] Something methodologically decisive for all human thinking becomes visible here. The seeming exception is in reality very often the symptom that shows us the insufficiency of our previous schema of order, which helps us to break open this schema and to conquer a new realm of reality. The exception shows us that we have built our closets too small, as it were, and that we must break them open and go on in order to see the whole.

This is the meaning of Christology from its origin: what is disclosed in Christ, whom faith certainly presents as unique, is not only a speculative exception; what is disclosed in truth is what the riddle of the human person really intends. Scripture expresses this point by calling Christ the last Adam or "the second Adam." It thereby characterizes him as the true fulfillment of the idea of the human person, in which the direction of meaning of this being comes fully to light for the first time. If it is true, however, that Christ is not the ontological exception, if from his exceptional position he is, on the contrary, the fulfillment of the entire human being, then the Christological concept of person is an indication for theology of how person is to be understood as such. In fact, this concept of person, or simply the dimension that has become visible here, has always acted as a spark in intellectual history and it has propelled development, even when it had long come to a standstill in theology.

After these two fundamental misunderstandings have been rejected, the question remains, What does the formula mean positively, "Christ has two natures in one person?" I must admit right away that a theological response has not yet completely matured. In the great struggles of the first six centuries, theology worked out what the person is not, but it did not clarify with the same definiteness what the word means positively. For this reason I can only provide some hints that point out the direction in which reflection should probably continue.[8]

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[7]Quoted from Cl. Tresmontant, *Einführung in das Denken Teilhard de Chardins* (Munich, 1961), 41f.

[8]On what follows, see the instructive contribution of B. Welte, "*Homoousios hemin,*" in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, *Das Knozil von Chalcedon* (vol. 3; Würzburg, 1954), 51-80; H. Conrad-Martius, *Das Sein* (Munich, 1957). For the patristic period, special mention should be made of Maximus the Confessor

I believe two points can be made. a) It is the nature of spirit to put itself in relation, the capacity to see itself and the other. Hedwig Conrad-Martius speaks of the retroscendence of the spirit: the spirit is not merely there; it goes back upon itself, as it were; it knows about itself; it constitutes a doubled existence which not only *is,* but *knows* about itself, *has* itself. The difference between matter and spirit would, accordingly, consist in this, that matter is what is "*das auf sich Geworfene*" (that which is thrown upon itself), while the spirit is "*das sich selbst Entwerfende*" (that which throws itself forth, guides itself or designs itself) which is not only there, but is itself in transcending itself, in looking toward the other and in looking back upon itself.[9] However this may be in detail—we need not investigate it here—openness, relatedness to the whole, lies in the essence of the spirit. And precisely in this, namely, that it not only *is,* but reaches beyond itself, it comes to itself. In transcending itself it *has* itself; by being with the other it first becomes itself, it comes to itself. Expressed differently again: being with the other is its form of being with itself. One is reminded of a fundamental theological axiom that is applicable here in a peculiar manner, namely Christ's saying, "Only the one who loses himself can find himself" (cf. Mt. 10:36). This fundamental law of human existence, which Mt. 10:36 understands in the context of salvation, objectively characterizes the nature of the spirit which comes to itself and actualizes its own fullness only by going away from itself, by going to what is other than itself.

We must go one step further. The spirit is that being which is able to think about, not only itself and being in general, but the wholly other, the transcendent God. This is perhaps the mark that truly distinguishes the human spirit from other forms of consciousness found in animals, namely, that the human spirit can reflect on the wholly other, the concept of God. We may accordingly say: The other through which the spirit comes to itself is finally that wholly other for which we use the stammering word "God." If this is true, then what was said above can be further clarified in the horizon of faith and we may say: If the human person is all the more with

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by whom the positive clarification of the Christological concept of person was pushed furthest; cf. H. U. von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners* (2nd ed.; Einsiedeln, 1961), 232-253.

[9]H. Conrad-Martius, *Das Sein,* 133.

itself, and is itself, the more it is able to reach beyond itself, the more it is with the other, then the person is all the more itself the more it is with the wholly other, with God.

In other words, the spirit comes to itself in the other, it becomes completely itself the more it is with the other, with God. And again, formulated the other way around, because this idea seems important to me: relativity toward the other constitutes the human person. The human person is the event or being of relativity. The more the person's relativity aims totally and directly at its final goal, at transcendence, the more the person is itself.

b) In this light we may venture a second approach: According to the testimony of faith, in Christ there are two natures and one person, that of the *Logos*. This means, however, that in him, being with the other is realized radically. Relativity toward the other is always the pre-given foundation to all consciousness as that which carries his existence. But such total being-with-the-other does not cancel his being-with-himself, but brings it fully to itself. Of course, one will admit that the chosen terminology, *"una persona-duae naturae"* remains accidental and is not without problems. But the decisive thing that emerges from it for the concept of the person and for the understanding of human beings is, in my judgment, still completely clear. In Christ, in the man who is completely with God, human existence is not canceled, but comes to its highest possibility, which consists in transcending itself into the absolute and in the integration of its own relativity into the absoluteness of divine love.

As a consequence, a dynamic definition of the human person flows from Christ, the new Adam. Christ is the directional arrow, as it were, that indicates what being human tends toward, although, as long as history is still on the way, this goal is never fully reached. At the same time it is clear that such a definition of being human manifests the historicity of the human person. If person is the relativity toward the eternal, then this relativity implies "being on the way" in the manner of human history.

c) In closing, a third idea. In my judgment Christology has a further significance for the understanding of the concept of "person" in its theological sense. It adds the idea of "we" to the idea of "I" and "you." Christ, whom Scripture calls the final Adam, that is, the definitive human being, appears in the testimonies of faith as the all-encompassing space in which

the "we" of human beings gathers on the way to the Father. He is not only an example that is followed, but he is the integrating space in which the "we" of human beings gathers itself toward the "you" of God. Something emerges here that has not been sufficiently seen in modern philosophy, not even in Christian philosophy. In Christianity there is not simply a dialogical principle in the modern sense of a pure "I-thou" relationship, neither on the part of the human person that has its place in the historical "we" that bears it; nor is there such a mere dialogical principle on God's part who is, in turn, no simple "I," but the "we" of Father, Son, and Spirit. On *both* sides there is neither the pure "I" nor the pure "you," but on both sides the "I" is integrated into the greater "we." Precisely this final point, namely, that not even God can be seen as the pure and simple "I" toward which the human person tends, is a fundamental aspect of the theological concept of the person. It explicitly negates the divine monarchy in the sense of antiquity. It expressly refuses to define God as the pure *monarchia* and numerical unity.[10] The Christian concept of God has as a matter of principle given the same dignity to multiplicity as to unity. While antiquity considered multiplicity the corruption of unity, Christian faith, which is a trinitarian faith, considers multiplicity as belonging to unity with the same dignity.[11]

This trinitarian "we," the fact that even God exists only as a "we," prepares at the same time the space of the human "we." The Christian's relation to God is not simply, as Ferdinand Ebner claims somewhat one-sidedly, "I and Thou," but, as the liturgy prays for us every day, *"per Christum in Spiritu Sancto ad Patrem"* (Through Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father). Christ, the one, is here the "we" into which Love, namely the Holy Spirit, gathers us and which means simultaneously being bound to each other and being directed toward the common "you" of the one Father.

The bracketing from Christian piety of the reality of the human person appears in the three-fold formula "through Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father," and that binds us into the "we" of God and into the "we" of our fellow human be-

[10]Cf. E. Peterson, "Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem," in *Theologische Traktate* (Munich: 1951), 45-147.
[11]Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum* (11th ed.; Munich, 1970), 92; 139f.

ings, happened as a consequence of the anthropological turn in Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity and was one of the most momentous developments of the Western Church. In fundamental ways it influenced both the concept of the Church and the understanding of the person which was now pushed off into the individualistically narrowed "I and you" that finally loses the "you" in this narrowing. It was indeed a result of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity that the persons of God were closed wholly into God's interior. Toward the outside, God became a simple "I," and the whole dimension of "we" lost its place in theology."[12] The individualized "I" and "you" narrows itself more and more until finally, for example in Kant's transcendental philosophy, the "you" is no longer found. In Feuerbach (and thus in a place where one would least suspect it) this leveling of "I" and "you" into a single transcendental consciousness gave way to the breakthrough to personal reality. It thus gave the impetus to reflect more deeply on the origin of our own being which faith recognizes as once and for all disclosed in the word of Jesus the Christ.*—*Translated by Michael Waldstein*   □

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[12]On Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity up to 391, see O. du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon St. Augustin* (Paris, 1966); for the further development, see M. Schmaus, *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des heiligen Augustinus* (2nd ed.; Münster, 1967). Today, of course, I would not judge as harshly as I did in the lecture above, because for Augustine the "psychological doctrine of the Trinity" remains an attempt to understand which is balanced by the factors of the tradition. The turn brought about by Thomas through the separation of the doctrine of the one God and the theological doctrine of the Trinity was more incisive. It led Thomas to consider the formula "God is one person" legitimate, although it had been considered heretical in the early Church (*Summa Theologica* III, 3, 3 ad 1). On the subject of the "we," see H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person* (2nd ed.; Münster, 1967).

*This article reproduces a lecture given at a congress on the understanding of the person in educational theory and related disciplines. The form of the lecture was preserved with slight modifications. This origin explains the sketchiness and preliminary nature of the text.—Author's note.

The article is a translation of the chapter, "Zum Personenverständnis in der Theologie," from Joseph Ratzinger, *Dogma und Verkündigung* (Munich: Erich Wewel Verlag, 1973), 205–223.—Ed.

Notes and Comments

RELATION, THE THOMISTIC *ESSE*, AND AMERICAN CULTURE: TOWARD A METAPHYSIC OF SANCTITY

The debate which has arisen between George Weigel and David Schindler over the bourgeois state of America and its people can become the catalyst for an analysis into deeper things. Those deeper things would be the question as to whether human reality has as its ontological *prius* substance, relation, or both. If Schindler[1] is correct in his analysis of Weigel,[2] then America is built, however unwittingly, on a kind of metaphysic of substance which is the intellectual underpinning for a people

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[1]David Schindler, "Is America Bourgeois?" *Communio*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Fall, 1987): 262-290; "Once Again: George Weigel, Catholicism and American Culture," *Communio* vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring, 1988): 92-121. See also, pertinent to our theme here, Schindler's "Catholicity and the State of Contemporary Theology: The Need for an Ontologic of Holiness," *Communio*, vol. 14. no. 4 (Winter, 1987): 426-450.

[2]George Weigel, "Is America Bourgeois?" *Crisis* (October, 1986); "Is America Bourgeois? A Response to David Schindler," *Communio* 15 (Spring, 1988).

who do good, but are uncommitted in their deepest selves to the service of God and others. Their ontological profile would be that of a self-contained substance, in its deepest recesses seeking self-fulfillment while externally performing statistically verifiable deeds of altruism and God-centeredness. In a word, they would be a selfish people with a veneer of do-goodism. If Schindler is correct in his own presentation and explication of Cardinal Ratzinger's mind on the topic, the dimension of relation has to be included in the ontological profile, not merely as an accident of substance, but as an equal category of being which is necessary to describe reality. Such an analysis, although provoked by Revelation, would be metaphysical. It would be telling us that the notion of person, besides including substance, must be formally inclusive of relation. The notion of person would take its meaning and fulfillment from love. Person as such could only take place in the plural, in the presence of another.

As a result, we would have a metaphysic which would coincide with the asceticism of sanctity. We would have escaped from the two-tiered world of the minimum—the moral (based on the substance whose primary exigency is to be for itself and in itself), and the maximum—sanctity (based on the now merely superogatory relation which consists in being for the other). This expansion of the notion of substance alone into substance and relation when dealing with the person evidently has deep implications for the meaning of secularization. If person is merely substance, an *in se*, then the actions whereby he or she relates to others are all accidents which re-