

nary course of nature. And whether or not this is the case, we can understand why it is that we pick out some small subclass of happenings to be taken as divine action in a special way.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup>This paper was presented at a conference "Evolution and Creation", held by the Center for the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame in March 1983. The paper has profited greatly from comments by Robert Audi, Richard Creel, Alfred Freddoso, James Keller, Alvin Plantinga, and Peter van Inwagen.

## *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit*

### I

This essay deals with certain aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. Christian theology assigns the Holy Spirit a wide variety of functions; He would seem to be quite busy. The Holy Spirit inspires, guides and enlightens a person, and, according to some versions, even takes over the normal psychological functions in prophecy, in the composition of the books of the Bible, in preaching the word of God, in speaking with tongues, and other "charismatic" phenomena. Over and above these more dramatic manifestations, the Spirit acts as an internal witness to the faith, producing a sense of conviction in the mind of the believer. The Spirit is active in the Church, the Christian community, knitting its members together in fellowship, guiding its decisions and activities, preserving its integrity. In this essay we will be concerned with another crucial function of the Holy Spirit, viz., the transformation of the believer into a "saint", into the sort of person God designed him/her to be. In other terms, it is the function of initiating, sustaining, fostering, and developing the Christian life of the believer, or, as we might well say, the "spiritual" life, thinking of that term as encompassing all the ways in which the work of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the life of the believer.<sup>1</sup> My topic thus falls within the

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<sup>1</sup>At one time I thought that in order to understand the concept of the Holy Spirit one would first have to understand what it is for a human being to engage in spiritual

territory labeled "Regeneration" and "Sanctification" by much Protestant theology, and within certain parts of the territory labeled "Grace" in Catholic theology, particularly "Sanctifying Grace".

In focusing on the work of the Spirit in the individual I do not mean to be denigrating the importance of the corporate in the Christian life. I am alive to the point that the New Testament and the ensuing Christian tradition present the Christian life as a full participation in the community of believers and make no provision for the salvation of the solitary individual, isolated from her fellow Christians.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the transformation of the individual with which I am concerned is a transformation into one who has both the capacity and the will to participate fully in the life of the Church. One cannot advance in love, patience, kindness, faithfulness, and other "fruits of the Spirit", without exhibiting these characteristics in one's interactions with others in the community. These are not aspects of "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine", to quote William James's profoundly misguided characterization of religion.<sup>3</sup> They are inclinations to social behavior. But having said all this we must also recognize that at least an essential part of the work of the Holy Spirit in building up the Christian community is the regeneration and sanctification of its members. Neither the New Testament nor

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activities, to be spiritual, or to lead a spiritual life. This is, indeed, in accordance with the general rule for theological language: concepts of divine attributes or aspects are formed by derivation from concepts of human matters. However, I am now convinced that in this case the derivation is in the opposite direction. I can't see anything that marks off what in Christianity is called the "spiritual life" or "spirituality" except for their explanation by the influence of the Holy Spirit. A human being is a *spiritual* person, manifests true *spirituality*, provides *spiritual leadership*, etc., to the extent that she exhibits such characteristics as love, peace, serenity, joy, and absence of self-centeredness, self-seeking, and dependence on recognition from others. I can't see what differentiates this list of attributes from other commonly prized features of which we are capable, such as intelligence, resourcefulness, and prudence, except that the former are deemed to be especially prized by God, given special divine priority in His rescue operation for sinful human beings, and so are thought to be what the Holy Spirit is specially concerned to foster in us. Apart from this theological dimension, spirituality simply becomes a catalogue of those attainments of which human beings are capable by virtue of their mental capacities. For a couple of examples of what spirituality becomes when shorn of its theological dimension, see George Santayana, *The Realm of Spirit*, and Julian Huxley, *Religion without Revelation*.

<sup>2</sup>This is not to say what constitutes isolation or participation. I do not intend these remarks to constitute a condemnation of monasticism. There are many ways in which the religious, even the cloistered religious, can be in vital contact with the community of believers.

<sup>3</sup>*The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Modern Library, 1902), pp. 31-32.

Christian experience through the ages represents the Spirit as working on what we might call a purely corporate level, in such a way as to bypass the inner psychological development of each individual. The sanctification of the individual is as fundamental for the building up of the Church as is the latter for the former. It is crucial to recognize both directions of dependence. On the one hand, the transformation of the individual is intimately dependent on the community, for without the Christian community we would not have the tradition that informs our Christian life, nor would we have the role models that play so central a part in spiritual growth. But, on the other hand, unless some members had made significant advances in the development of Christian character, there would be no communal spiritual life into which new members could be drawn and in the context of which each individual can receive resources to be used in further development.<sup>4</sup>

It will also be noted that I have chosen to concentrate on what might be called the "moral" aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit within the individual, the ways in which the Spirit modifies the character of the person, her values, tendencies, attitudes, priorities, and so on, rather than, e.g., the work of the Holy Spirit in "inspiring" the person to various sorts of exceptional activities, such as prophecy and speaking in tongues. Again I do not mean to imply that the latter are without value or that they are not genuine manifestations of the Spirit. I wish only to suggest that these phenomena are not the heart of the matter; they are not what the divine plan of salvation is all about. We were not created in order to speak with tongues or exhibit various forms of "enthusiasm". If these activities do have a place in the divine scheme, and I am prepared to recognize that they do, it is by way of assuring the individual and those around him of the presence of the Spirit and/or by way of communicating certain messages to concerned parties. But it still remains that, by well nigh common consent, God's basic intention for us is that we should become like unto Him, in so far as in us lies, and should thereby be in a position to enter into a community of love with Him and with our fellow creatures. And the work of regeneration and sanctification is directly addressed to the carrying out of this intention.

Although I am discussing these matters in terms of the work of the

<sup>4</sup>I also believe, though this is not directly relevant to this essay, that the individual's awareness of the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit constitutes a crucial part of his basis or ground for Christian belief. See my "Christian Experience and Christian Belief," in *Faith and Rationality*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), even though the discussion there is not explicitly in terms of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit, I am not concerned here with problems concerning the Trinity or concerning the nature and status of the third Person in particular. I am concerned with God's work in regeneration and sanctification, work that is traditionally assigned to the third Person of the Trinity, and I am following that language. Moreover, as we shall see, the term 'spirit' is quite appropriate for certain aspects of the phenomenology of these proceedings. Nevertheless, I want to avoid getting into controversies over which Person of the Trinity is doing a particular job at a particular time. I will adhere to the widely accepted theological principle that all Persons of the Trinity are involved in the external operations (external to the Godhead) of any Person. From this perspective the work of regeneration and sanctification is primarily attributed to the Holy Spirit because these operations are centered around the development of love in the individual, and within the Godhead the role of the Holy Spirit concerns the love borne each other by the Persons of the Trinity. By adhering to the principle just mentioned we can handle the fact that in the Pauline epistles and the Johannine writings there is quite a bit of oscillation between speaking of the Spirit and speaking of Christ as working within one. A famous passage from the Epistle to the Romans clearly illustrates this. "But that is not how you live. You are on the spiritual level, if only God's Spirit dwells within you; and if a man does not possess the Spirit of Christ, he is no Christian. But if Christ is dwelling within you, then although the body is a dead thing because you sinned, yet the spirit is life itself because you have been justified. Moreover, if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells within you, then the God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give new life to your mortal bodies through his indwelling Spirit" (8:9-11).<sup>5</sup> Here the indwelling divine presence that gives the new life is indifferently referred to as "God's Spirit", "the Spirit of Christ", and "Christ". I can see no way of reading the passage as specifying three distinct divine agents. If St. Paul does not find it necessary to distinguish between the Holy Spirit at work in one and Christ at work in one, I don't see why it should be incumbent on me to do so, even though he and I are separated by the Council of Nicea. In pursuance of this policy I shall feel free to use Biblical and other material put in terms of the indwelling of Christ, as well as material phrased in terms of the indwelling of the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup>All Biblical quotations are from *The New English Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

## II

If this suffices for a demarcation of my subject matter I can proceed to formulate my problem. Simply stated, it is this: how are we to think of this stretch of the activity of the Holy Spirit? Just what role does the Spirit play in bringing about these changes within the person? Just how is it brought off? These questions need further specification. They are not to be construed as a request for a delineation of the divine mechanisms or the divine flow chart. Even if there are such things, we could not expect to grasp them. Moreover, we should be alive to the possibility that God works differently with different people in different situations. It may be unreasonable to expect a simple account that applies univocally to every case. What I am specifically interested in exploring are two issues. First, to what extent is the transformation wholly God's work and to what extent is a human response, human effort, human voluntary choice, assent, or cooperation involved? And second, how intimately is God involved with the individual in this process? How internal is He to these proceedings?

The first question is one that inevitably forces itself on us as soon as we reflect on the matter, for it is of the highest practical as well as theoretical importance. It obviously makes a great deal of difference to how I should proceed whether the course of sanctification is to any extent dependent on my actions, choices, or efforts; whether it is in any way "up to me" in what direction it goes, how fast it goes, or whether it goes at all. If, on the other hand, God is simply transforming me by His own immutable decrees according to some schedule of His own, that is quite a different ball game. And one or another position on this issue will have various theological and philosophical consequences that will tell for or against it and that will have an important bearing on one's conception of the divine-human relationship.

I won't say much about the second question now. It will become clear at a later stage of the discussion just what external-internal contrasts are relevant here and what is involved in choosing between them.

Now for a few preliminary points about the first question. Certain extreme views concerning regeneration and sanctification will be dismissed without a hearing. First, I shall rule out of court any view according to which God is not active at all in the process, except for the sustenance that He is always exercising with respect to the entire creation. On such a more-Pelagian-than-Pelagius position we are left on our own with just such natural capacities as we were initially endowed with by our Creator. God is not active in any special way. I take it that any such view goes radically against the mind of the Church, as embod-

ied in scripture, tradition, and normal Christian experience. The idea that God *acts* in order to redeem sinful humanity and bring those that respond to His redemptive action into a loving relationship with Himself is so central to Christianity that its excision would leave nothing worthy of the name. Our problem is not *whether* God is active in personal transformation but *how* we should think of this activity. Second, at the other extreme we have the view that God alone is active in this matter, that God simply “takes over”, replaces the human agent. God (the Spirit) lives one’s life for one; the human person is simply the “location” or “receptacle” in which this particular bit of divine life takes place. There are famous scriptural passages that suggest this construal, most notably St. Paul’s famous cry: “I have been crucified with Christ: the life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20; in the better known Revised Standard Version, “. . . it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”). However, there are abundant reasons for taking this as a bit of hyperbole. Paul certainly does not lose his sense of continuing personal identity; he gives every indication of being aware that it is he, the same human being who once persecuted Christians, who is writing to the Galatians and pursuing his missionary journeys. Furthermore, if it really were Christ, or the Spirit, who is the agent from now on, why should it be, as it is according to universal Christian witness, including Paul’s, that even after God has begun to work within them there is still a long job of combating and rooting out sinful tendencies? If it is God, not I, who is the agent from now on, whence these sinful tendencies? Finally, it is our faith that God has created us for loving communion with Him and with each other. If each of us were replaced by God as soon as he were firmly set on this path, the goal could not be reached; there would be no human agents left to enter into the desired communion. Thus any viable answer to our question must recognize both a divine and a human agent, both divine activity and human response.

Let me also point out that our problem does not pose the crucial issues for human free will that are notoriously posed by the Pelagian controversy. The latter, or at least an important segment thereof, has to do with putatively free human voluntary acts. For example, it has to do with the decisive act of repentance, of turning one’s back on sin, asking for divine forgiveness and divine assistance, and resolving to do one’s best to amend one’s life and to follow the commandments of God. The question was as to whether it is ever up to a human agent to make such a move, or whether any such move will be made only as the outcome of the irresistible grace of God. (On the latter alternative, God may be working through the will of the human person, though this will

can no longer be considered free, in that instance, in a libertarian sense. It was not, in the strongest sense, “up to the human person” whether that move was made.) The latter position on this issue really does deny that such acts of repentance are free in a libertarian sense. Likewise the position that fallen human beings cannot do anything good except when moved by divine grace implies that none of us has any real choice between good and evil. But the central problem of this essay does not concern putatively free voluntary acts; it has to do with personality or character changes, with changes in what we might call “motivational structure”. That is, it has to do with changes in one’s tendencies, desires, values, attitudes, emotional proclivities, and the like. It has to do with such changes as the weakening of a desire for illicit sexual intercourse, the strengthening of a desire for the awareness of God, the weakening of a tendency to be preoccupied with one’s status or reputation, and the strengthening of one’s interest in the condition of others. The issue is as to just what role the activity of the Holy Spirit has in such changes as these. To see that the integrity of human free will is not at issue here, consider the most extreme attribution of divine responsibility for these changes, short of the “takeover” position we have already ruled out. Say that all such changes result from God’s simply effecting them directly by an exercise of His omnipotence, without in any way going through natural psychological or social processes, and without in any way evoking a response from the creature in order to carry this out. God just decides that one of my tendencies shall be weakened and another strengthened, and Presto, it is done. Even on this view I could still have as much free choice, of a morally significant sort between good and evil, as the most dedicated libertarian would affirm. That is, this would still be a possibility unless it is further stipulated, as many Christian thinkers would wish to do,<sup>6</sup> that these new tendencies (or new strengths of tendencies) to holiness are irresistible, that they strictly determine my volitions. But that would be an additional thesis, one that does not follow from the attribution of changes in motivational structure to direct divine volition. If we allow that my altered desires, tendencies, and attitudes influence my volitions without strictly determining them, just as with my previous tendencies, then no negative consequences with respect to human free will ensue.

<sup>6</sup>“We must know that the only thing we possess of ourselves is evil. Good, on the contrary, comes from us but also from Almighty God who, by interior inspirations so forestalls us as to make us will, and then comes to our assistance so that we may not will in vain, but may be able to carry out what we will” (St. Gregory). “All good thoughts and all good works, all the efforts and all the virtues whereby since the dawn of faith we have made our way to God, have truly God as their author” (Pope Zosimus).

After all, even the most convinced libertarian recognizes that human motivational structure results, for the most part, from factors other than the individual's own free voluntary acts and, indeed, from factors that were, to a large extent, not under any sort of voluntary control. When we first arrive at the point at which there is some possibility of taking oneself in hand and trying to do something about one's own habits, likes, interests, and desires, one already has a character that arose without one's deliberate intervention or encouragement. And even after deliberate intervention becomes a possibility, this is only one factor in personality changes, and by no means the most important. If there is any hope for libertarianism, it will have to be compatible with the fact that one's desires and tendencies are largely determined by factors over which one exercises no effective control. This being the case, why should we suppose that the effecting of personality changes by direct divine volition should be subversive of human free will?

After introducing our topic as having to do with both regeneration and sanctification, I have been discussing them together without differentiation, sometimes using 'sanctification' as a catchall label. But the two phenomena are typically treated in quite different terms, both in systematic theology and in reports of Christian experience. Regeneration, being born again, is often represented as an instantaneous transition that is vividly conscious and that involves acts of repentance and faith, while sanctification is a long, gradual process, much of which takes place below the level of consciousness. Regeneration is the decisive turning away from sin and toward God that initiates the process of which sanctification is the continuation. If these phenomena occupy such different positions in the scheme of salvation, it might well be that our central questions would be answered differently for the two.

In the interests of concision, however, I am going to continue to discuss them together. I am encouraged in this policy by the fact that by no means all sectors of Christendom carve up our general territory in the same fashion. The picture I have just presented is typical of Protestantism, more specifically of evangelical Protestantism. In traditional Roman Catholic theology there is much less emphasis on a conscious deliberate act of repentance and faith as a prerequisite for God's work of sanctification. "Divine grace" is portrayed as working largely through the sacraments of the Church. Insofar as there is a particular moment of initiation of the process it comes in baptism, often infant baptism when the individual is incapable of a conscious, deliberate repentance and acceptance of Christ as savior. And apart from theological differences, Christian experience indicates that the classic evangelical scenario is not always followed. As William James insisted,

there are both "once born" and "twice born" believers. In many cases, even in evangelical circles, a person would be hard pressed to specify some particular moment at which the decisive conversion and rebirth took place.

In any event, I shall be focusing on common ground within mainstream Christianity. It is recognized on all hands that God is at work within the believer to transform her into the kind of person God wants her to be, the kind of person capable of entering into an eternal loving communion with God. I shall henceforth use the term 'sanctification' for this process of transformation as a whole, including any conscious, deliberate initiation there may be. Although I shall not assume that a rebirth of the classic evangelical sort is required in every case, I shall feel free to draw on descriptions of regeneration in seeking to understand the work of the Holy Spirit. For where these dramatic turnings do occur, the divine activity is more out in the open than in the lengthy gradual process of transformation that ensues.

In this connection I should make a general statement about the place of conscious manifestations in sanctification. We are often warned both by theologians and by spiritual writers not to identify grace or the work of the Spirit with feelings, emotional reactions, or "consolations". One shouldn't expect the process of sanctification to be a perpetual "high", an uninterrupted train of ecstasies and exaltations. Most of it is a matter of digging out some deeply entrenched roots, and planting and nurturing new shoots; and that is certainly not all fun. God may well be hard at work within us when we aren't feeling "spiritual", and feelings can, notoriously, be deceptive when they are present. But these sage counsels need to be balanced by the equally important point that spiritual transformation does manifest itself from time to time in a, perhaps obscure, awareness of what is going on; and this awareness is often affectively toned with feelings of joy, love, exaltation, etc. I shall also assume that by attention to these conscious manifestations we can get some clue to what is going on, though I would warn against expecting too much from this source.

### III

Let's turn to the first of our two main questions, the one concerning the respective role of God and the believer in sanctification. The simplest answer to this question is that the psychological changes are wrought directly by the will of God. God simply wills that at a certain moment my concern for the condition of others will increase and my

concern for my own comfort, repose, and recognition will decrease; and it thereby happens, just as whatever God wills to happen thereby happens without any need for a further intermediary. Such a view can marshal considerable support. Many Biblical passages are naturally read in these terms. The Psalmist sings: "Create a pure heart in me, O God, and give me a new steadfast spirit" (51:10). Ezekiel represents God as saying: "I will give them a different heart and put a new spirit into them; I will take the heart of stone out of their bodies and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will conform to my statutes and keep my laws" (11:19-20, see also 36:26-27). In the Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul writes: "You must work out your own salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose" (2:13; see also 1:6). The Pauline love of paradox is such that this passage can be used to illustrate everything from the ultra-Pelagian view that it is all our doing to the ultra-Augustinian view that God has simply taken over and displaced the human agent. But, among other things, it expresses the conviction that God is at work in us, altering our action tendencies. Some of the prayers in the Pauline epistles seem to be informed by this conception of the matter. "May God himself, the God of peace, make you holy in every part, and keep you sound in spirit, soul, and body, without fault when our Lord Jesus Christ comes" (I Thessalonians, 5:23). "... may the Lord make your love mount and overflow towards one another and towards all, as our love does towards you" (I Thessalonians, 3:12). Though these utterances can be construed in other ways, we can see how they would encourage theologians to make statements like the following: "... the power which regenerates is the power of God ... there is a direct operation of this power upon the sinner's heart which changes its moral character."<sup>7</sup> "In the primary change of disposition, which is the most essential feature of regeneration, the Spirit of God acts directly upon the spirit of man."<sup>8</sup> "But man cannot himself extricate himself from this revolt. For everything that he undertakes is infected with it. Only the Creator can overcome the revolt. He does it in the fact of reconciliation in Christ, when he cancels the revolt through His assurance which is accepted in faith. The self is restored to soundness through justification by faith."<sup>9</sup> "To say that God gives us grace is to say that the author of our existence realizes in

<sup>7</sup>A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland, 1909), pp. 818-19.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 820.

<sup>9</sup>Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and The Consummation*, trans. D. Cairns and T. H. L. Parker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 272.

us a quality or property grafted upon our natural being. . . ."<sup>10</sup> "... sanctifying grace: that is, of a divine sanctity which only God can give us and which cannot come from our works, but by which we are renewed and therefore capable of performing works that are really holy."<sup>11</sup> The same picture of God directly producing new dispositions and tendencies in us is embodied in the traditional Catholic view that by grace we are "infused" with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, and endowed with such "gifts of the Spirit" as wisdom, fortitude, and piety.<sup>12</sup> Let us dub this model of the working of the Holy Spirit in sanctification the "fiat" model.

On the fiat model the inner workings of the Holy spirit constitute the same sort of divine activity as creation. It is just as if God had originally created me with these tendencies, the difference lying only in the context within which the divine activity takes place. Thus the present views in well with all those New Testament passages that represent the initiation of the moral changes in question as a "new creation" or a "new birth." The former phraseology is more typical of Paul (See, e.g., 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians, 2:10, 4:24; Colossians, 3:10), whereas the latter is more typical of John (e.g., John, 3:3-8). Since neither in being born nor in being created can I play any active part, the bearing on our question is the same.

Furthermore, this construal is richly illustrated in the reports of dramatic conversions and regenerations which abound in Christian literature. A common scenario has the individual in the grip of sinful tendencies, apparently helpless to do anything about it, until at a crisis point he turns to God, throws himself on the divine mercy, and receives as a gift from God the transformation he was unable to effect on his

<sup>10</sup>Jean Daujat, *The Theology of Grace*, vol 23 of the *Twentieth-Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Henri Daniel-Rops (New York: Hawthorn, 1959), p. 63.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>12</sup>Consider also such traditional prayers as the following. "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast made and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthy lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; . . ." Collect for Ash Wednesday. "Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and bring forth in us the fruit of good works . . ." Collect for the 17th Sunday after Pentecost. "Almighty and everlasting God, . . . make us to love that which thou dost command . . ." Collect for the 25th Sunday after Pentecost. "O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments . . ." Evening Prayer. These prayers and all others quoted in this essay are taken from *The Book of Common Prayer, According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1977).

own. To the person it seems a bolt from the blue; it seems that God alone by His almighty power has effected a fundamental change in his personality.

Now there is no doubt that God could do things this way, and perhaps He does, at least sometimes. But there are reasons for doubting that this is His normal *modus operandi*. First there are general considerations concerning God's conception of human beings, His relations thereto, and His intentions for us. It is a major theme of the Christian tradition that God created us for loving communion with Himself, for the richest and fullest possible personal interaction with Him. God envisages us and created us as *persons*, beings capable of such distinctively personal activities as the formation of purposes and attempts to realize them, the acquisition and use of knowledge, the entering into social relationships, and the creation of beauty. Moreover, He has created us as persons who have a share in the determination of their own destiny by the exercise of free choice between alternatives. If we enjoy this status in creation, we could expect God to relate Himself to us in a distinctively interpersonal fashion. To be sure, our creation is not, and cannot be, an interpersonal relationship, for prior to being created no person exists on the human side to stand in relation. Again there is presumably nothing distinctively interpersonal about God's sustaining our existence at each moment. But against the background of creation and preservation, the Bible, and the Christian tradition generally, represent God as entering into distinctively interpersonal relations with human beings: making covenants, laying down requirements and prohibitions, making promises, providing guidance and support, punishing and rewarding, exhorting, condemning, communicating messages, consoling, encouraging, and so on. And there are abundant indications that the game has not changed in this regard in the New Covenant. St. Paul tells us: "The Spirit you have received is not a spirit of slavery leading you back into a life of fear, but a Spirit that makes us sons, enabling us to cry 'Abba! Father!'. In that cry the Spirit of God joins with our spirit in testifying that we are God's children; and if children, then heirs" (Romans 8:15-16).

The immediate point of all this is that on the fiat model the inner working of the Holy Spirit is not distinctively interpersonal in character. We have already noted that the present view represents the divine activity in sanctification as being of the same sort as in creation, and hence as lacking any distinctively interpersonal character. But if God is primarily concerned to enter into interpersonal relations with us, why should He relate Himself to us here in such an impersonal manner, treating us as sticks and stones, or at least acting in a way that

is indistinguishable from one that is equally appropriate to sticks and stones. If one human being succeeds in altering the desires or attitudes of another without the other's consent, perhaps by some form of conditioning, wouldn't that constitute a violation of the other's personal integrity? Why, then, should we suppose that God acts in a way in which it would be fundamentally wrong for us to act? Would it not be more appropriate to our God-given nature and to God's intentions for us for God to go about our transformation in a way that is distinctively appropriate to persons, a way that would involve calling us to repentance, chastising us for our failures, encouraging us and assisting us to get started and to persevere, making new resources available to us, enlivening and energizing us, assuring us of His love, His providence, and His constant presence with us, leaving it up to us whether the desired response is forthcoming?

Indeed, the New Testament often speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in these terms. One thinks particularly of the characterization of the Holy Spirit in the farewell discourses of the Fourth Gospel, in which the Spirit is characterized as an "Advocate", who will "bear witness" to Christ (15:27), will "teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have told you" (14:26). Moreover, remembering that we are not restricting ourselves to what is specifically assigned to the Holy Spirit, we can note other references in these discourses to a distinctively personal activity of God within the believer. ". . . because I live, you too will live; then you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you. The man who has received my commands and obeys them—he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father; and I will love him and disclose myself to him" (14: 19-21). "Anyone who loves me will heed what I say; then my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him . . ." (14:23). In these discourses the Holy Spirit is represented as one who will engage in such distinctively interpersonal activities as teaching, witnessing, loving, and uniting others into fellowship.

Let's be more explicit as to how God's role in regeneration and sanctification could be depicted on an interpersonal transaction model (hereinafter termed the "interpersonal model"). There are many possibilities. First and most obviously, God can *call* the individual to repentance, to obedience, to a life of love lived "in the Spirit". There are calls for deliberate, voluntary responses from the individual. And apart from voluntary responses, these communications can, suddenly or gradually, have effects on the individual's likes, desires, and attitudes through various conditioning mechanisms and other psychological processes that do not involve consciously directed effort. But the com-

munication of divine messages, recognized by the individual as such, is only the most obvious possibility. God could affect the ideational processes of the individual in more subtle fashion. He could bring it about that facets of the person's present life appear to him in an unfavorable light and that the life of agape appears to him highly attractive, without this being consciously taken by the individual as a communication from God. Again, God could present Himself to the individual as a role model, giving the person more of a sense of things divine, thereby increasing the desire for holiness and communion with God. God could make His love and providence for the individual more obvious, more salient in the person's mind, thereby evoking responses of gratitude and yearning for closer communion. Finally, God could make new resources available to the individual, new resources of strength of will, of energy for perseverance in the face of discouragement, of inner strength that enables one to avoid dependence on the approval of one's associates. In these and other ways God would be seeking to *influence* the individual in the direction of holiness without stepping in and directly producing such a character structure by fiat. By proceeding in this more indirect fashion God would be relating Himself to the human person as a person, influencing the human being as one person influences another (albeit making use of some of His extraordinary powers in doing so), seeking to evoke responses, voluntary and otherwise from the other person, somewhat as each of us seeks to evoke responses from others. The only item on the above list that may seem not to fit this description is the "secret" manipulation of the subject's ideational processes. This is indeed something that human influencers are incapable of. But we do seek to alter the ideation of others by such means as are available to us, when we try to influence their motivations. Thus carrying out such alterations does not violate the distinctively interpersonal character of the transaction; it is just that the divine person has infinitely greater resources for the task.

For a live example of this way of approaching the matter, consider the excellent study by G. W. H. Lampe, *God as Spirit*.<sup>13</sup> One strand in this very rich book is an attack on "impersonal" ways of thinking of the action of the Holy Spirit. In opposition to that, Lampe suggests that in speaking of the Holy Spirit "we are speaking of God disclosed and experienced as Spirit, that is, in his personal outreach" (11). In accordance with this orientation, Lampe repeatedly emphasizes that the Holy Spirit works within us by entering into distinctively interpersonal interactions with us. That work is "a developing interaction, according

<sup>13</sup>Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

to man's capacity, of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man" (20). ". . . transcendent God creates man from within, as the immanent personal indwelling Spirit who inspires and guides and evokes that response of faith and love which is the human side of the relationship of sonship."<sup>14</sup> God's "creativity involves the personal interaction of divine Spirit with human spirits, by which persons who have the capacity to accept or to reject divine love are formed into the divine likeness" (21). The Holy Spirit should be thought of as "forming the human personality from within by communion with it" (22). The concept of Spirit provides material "for the construction of a theological framework in which to interpret our experience of God acting upon, and interacting with, thinking, feeling, and willing human persons" (35).<sup>15</sup> "The concept of Spirit" is "more suitable as a way of thinking about personal God drawing created persons into communion with Himself" (41-42).

But can this interpersonal model of sanctification accommodate the facts? I don't think it runs into insuperable difficulties with Biblical texts. The ones I quoted above as encouraging the idea of direct divine alteration of character are typical in that they affirm that God does this but are less than wholly explicit as to how God does it. As for experiential reports, first note that the phenomenology of sanctification, properly so called, tends rather to support the interpersonal model. The gradual process of mastering sinful tendencies and strengthening holy desires is typically punctuated by frequent prayers to God and the reception of messages therefrom—guidance, encouragement, exhortation, assurance, and so on. But what about regeneration? A very common picture here is that of a new character structure just appearing out of the blue, without the usual psychosocial prerequisites. Can we suppose that this process has been carried on by a distinctively interpersonal divine-human transaction? Well, although these accounts certainly do not suggest an interpersonal model, they can be squared with it, provided we recognize that much of the action is carried on below the level of consciousness. After all, in these typical accounts of rebirth a great deal of conscious divine-human communication goes on before the crucial moment. It is clear from these accounts that God is exercising, or seeking to exercise, personal influence on the sinner for some

<sup>14</sup>To understand some of these passages one must realize that Lampe considers creation and sanctification to be different stages of a single process, both involving an activity of God as a person. We are not concerned here with that aspect of his view.

<sup>15</sup>The reference in this quotation to God's "acting upon" as well as "interacting with" us is only one of many indications that Lampe has not broken completely with the fiat model. Nevertheless, the main thrust of his thought is clearly in the direction of the interpersonal model.



considerable period of time prior to the decisive shift. It is just that the individual is not aware of a series of individually small effects of this influence, effects that are accumulating during the process. But it should be no news at this time of day that motivational shifts, even large ones, can occur below the conscious level. Hence, if there were sufficient reason to adopt the interpersonal model, the phenomenology of regeneration could be made to fit it.

Now that we have given the interpersonal model a bit of a run, it is time for a counterattack from the fiat model. "All this talk of respecting the integrity of the human person is quite inappropriate in the light of the actual divine-human relationship. My opponent is thinking of a relationship between *adult* human beings. True enough, if I were capable of directly modifying my wife's attitudes, whether by hypnotism, brain-washing, or whatever, and I were to use this power to bring those attitudes more into line with my wishes, I would be violating her personal integrity in doing so. I would be exercising control over her that one human being has no right exercising over another. But our status vis-à-vis God is quite different from the status of one adult human being vis-à-vis another. We should take more seriously the idea that even after having been 'born again' we are only 'babes in Christ'; we have only begun the new life. Therefore the rules governing the interactions of adult human beings are quite unsuitable for divine-human interaction. Let's think for a moment of the parent-infant relationship. The conscientious parent does everything she can, within limits set by other constraints, to mold the motivational structure of the child in what she deems a desirable direction, *without obtaining the infant's consent for these proceedings*. Of course, the human parent is not capable of instituting and extinguishing desires, scruples, and attitudes in the infant by fiat. But what if she were? Would she use this power to instill a good character in her child? I think she would. Would she be condemned for doing so? On what grounds? She certainly isn't condemned for using every mode of influence at her command to see to it that the child develops as good a character as possible. On the grounds that these changes have been brought about without the child's consent? But an infant is in no position to give consent; the infant has not developed to the point of being able to make a judgment on the matter. If the parent could accomplish her purposes by fiat she would merely have a more effective way of bringing about what she is already seeking to accomplish by the means at her command. Then why suppose that God would refrain from directly altering the character of the believer? Of course the adult believer is not incapable of making a judgment about such things, as the child is. Nevertheless, it could be argued that

the 'babe in Christ' is in no position to make sound judgments as to what is best for him, what kind of person it would be best for him to be, or what kind of life he should be leading. And even if he is in a position to make sound general pronouncements on these matters he is incapable of working out the details. It is only *after* the right sort of character has developed that he is in a position to judge. The opposing view is one more manifestation of the basic sin of pride, the tendency to deny our proper relationship of subservience to God and to demand our rights before God."<sup>16</sup>

I will rule that this controversy between the fiat and interpersonal models is a standoff. However, there are what I take to be weightier objections to the fiat model. The basic point is this. If God is to transform me into a saint by a fiat why should He do such an incomplete job of it, at least one that is far from complete at any given moment (up to now!), and why should the transformation be strung out over such an extended period? If the process depends on the creature's responses to divine influences we can understand both of these features; but on the fiat theory they seem to be inexplicable. Of course, God *could* have reasons we cannot understand for issuing His fiats in this kind of pattern; after all, we often fail to understand why God does things as He does. But insofar as we are in a position to form a judgment on the matter, the present consideration does provide a strong reason against the fiat theory and in support of some view according to which human responses play a significant role in the process.

#### IV

Now I want to call attention to an inadequacy in both the fiat and the interpersonal models. Noting this will bring us to the second main issue of the paper, the externality or internality of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification.

The inadequacy is simply that both models represent God as relatively external to the believer. To be sure there is a way in which God is

<sup>16</sup>A more complete treatment would give consideration to a mediating position according to which the divine fiat would be confined to removing our inability to respond in the right way to divine initiatives. On this view God does not produce or install particular motivational tendencies in us by fiat. Those will develop, if they do, by response to divine influence, as on the interpersonal model. But it is not all interpersonal interaction. God does produce a crucial change in us by an act of will, viz., the removal of blocks that had hitherto made it impossible for us to make the appropriate responses. This does not determine those response, but it makes them possible.

always internal to everything in His creation. God is omnipresent. In whatever sense He can be said to be located at all He is, at every moment, located everywhere. Whatever this comes to, and there are different views on that, God's activity of sustaining a tree, e.g., in existence, and everything else He does vis-à-vis that tree, is done *within* the tree. God is always where He works. Our two models do not, of course, deny that God is internal to the person in this way in His sanctifying activity. Nevertheless, the New Testament and much other Christian literature represent God as internal to the believer in a special way in His work of regeneration and sanctification. This internality is represented as requiring the satisfaction of certain special conditions, whereas God's omnipresence obtains whatever conditions the believer does or does not satisfy. Thus in the farewell discourses of the Fourth Gospel Jesus says: "If you love me you will obey my commands; and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another to be your Advocate, who will be with you for ever—the Spirit of truth . . . he dwells with you and is in you" (14:15–17). "Anyone who loves me will heed what I say; then my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him . . ." (14:23). Again, in the great figure of the vine and the branches, the integral connection of the branch to the vine is presented as optional. "No branch can bear fruit by itself, but only if it remains united with the vine; no more can you bear fruit, unless you remain united with me. I am the vine, and you the branches. He who dwells in me, as I dwell in him, bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing. He who does not dwell in me is thrown away like a withered branch" (15:4–6). Finally, Christ, and the Church, *prays* for mutual indwelling, and one does not request something that will necessarily be the case. "But it is not for these alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me; may they all be one: as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, so also may they be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John: 17:20–21). And from the Anglican Eucharistic prayer: ". . . humbly beseeching thee that we, and all others who shall be partakers of this Holy Communion, may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him." But no extensive documentation is needed to make the point. It is fundamental to the whole Christian scheme of salvation that in order for the Holy Spirit to be within me in the way that is distinctive of the Christian life I must satisfy conditions over and above being a creature of God; I must "repent and believe the Gospel", or I must be baptised, or I must

do whatever is necessary to be drawn into the Christian community. This indwelling is only a new-birthright, not a creature-right.

And now the point is that the fiat and interpersonal models do not embody this special mode of internality. Of course I can't demonstrate this without making explicit just what sort of internality this is; and that is a goal of the ensuing discussion (or of the larger discussion of which this essay is a fragment). Nevertheless, prior to such specification, I can at least indicate why it seems to me that the models are deficient in this respect.

First, the fiat model, as we have already shown, represents God as acting on the believer in the same fashion He acts on all the rest of His creation. The particular effects He brings about in sanctification differ from any that He could bring about in a stone or a tree, but the manner of going about it is the same. God simply wills that a certain change shall be brought about, and thereby it is. The model does not deny that God is present to the believer in some more intimate fashion, but no such fashion is built into the account.

As for the interpersonal model, it does not represent God as more internal to the believer than one human person is internal to another when they are related as intimately as possible. At least it does not represent God as any more internal to the believer than that in its distinctive account of the work of sanctification.<sup>17</sup> The distinctive thrust of the interpersonal model lies in its construal of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit on the analogy of the moral influence one human being can exert on another, by speech, by provision of a role model, and by emotional bonds. But all this leaves the parties involved external to each other in a fundamental way; they are separate, distinct persons, each with his/her own autonomy and integrity. Of course, human relationships can be more or less intimate; and at their most intimate they are even spoken of, figuratively, in the language of mutual indwelling. "I just feel that you are a part of me." "I carry some of you around with me wherever I go." *Unless* the talk of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can be interpreted in just such a figurative manner the interpersonal model does not embody the appropriate sort of internality. Let's now turn to the crucial question of whether the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is thought of in the New Testament, in the Church, and in the articulation of Christian experience generally, as something

<sup>17</sup>This last qualification is needed because the model will recognize divine omnipresence, and that constitutes a mode of internality that is not exemplified in human intercourse. But we have seen that this internality is not what is distinctive of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

different from any purely human intimacy that is only figuratively a case of indwelling.

I will not aspire to coercive proof in this matter; I will merely consider what sort of language has been deemed most appropriate by those who have most to report of these matters. Here I am struck by the way in which the work of the Spirit is so often spoken of in terms of the believer being *filled, permeated, pervaded*, by the Spirit, by love, joy, peace, power, confidence, serenity, energy, and other gifts of the Spirit, and of the Spirit being *poured out* into us. (For Biblical references, see, e.g., Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:18, 3:19; Luke 1:67, 4:1; Acts 2:1–21, 10:45. See also such prayers as “O God, who has prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man’s understanding: Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee in all things and above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire . . .” Collect for the 6th Sunday of Easter.) The experience of the Spirit seems to lend itself to an articulation in terms of something like a *force, a gaseous substance*, or, to go back to the etymology of *pneuma* and *spiritus*, a *breath*, a movement of the air. One is impelled to report the proceeding in terms of one’s being *pervaded* by something that provides one with new resources, new directions, new tendencies, a “new spirit”. This language is, of course, eminently suited to the articulation of “charismatic phenomena”—prophecy, speaking with tongues, and the like—where one seems to have been seized by a power, indeed by an agent, from without, so that what one is speaking and doing is not really being done by oneself; one is simply a means used by the agent that has taken possession of one to do *its* work. Now whatever is to be said about these phenomena, we have already rejected this “takeover” model as adequate for the process of sanctification. But, and this is the important point, it is not only in cases of “possession” that one speaks of being filled or permeated by the Holy Spirit. This is richly illustrated by the Biblical passages just cited.

These ways of talking about the work of the Spirit seem to present it as quite another matter than intercourse with another person that is separate from the believer in the way in which two human beings are separate from each other, however intimate their relationship. The root metaphor is much more materialistic than that. Being filled with the Spirit is like being plugged into a source of electricity, being permeated by fog, being filled with a liquid, or, closer to the etymology, being inflated by air. Of course these material analogies are grossly inadequate. The Holy Spirit *is* personal; the believer is in a personal relationship with the Spirit, and the goal of sanctification is a distinctively personal goal, both as being a goal that involves a state of a person and

as being the kind of goal a person would have. Nevertheless, the wide consensus on the appropriateness of this language of filling and permeating indicates that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is of a fundamentally different character from the relationship of two human persons, however intimate, different by reason of being much more an internal matter. Or so I shall suppose. I shall endeavor to cast some light on just what different and more internal sort of interpersonal relationship it is.

The answer is to be found, I believe, in the idea that by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we “come to share in the very being of God” (2 Peter 1:4; see also 1 Corinthians 1:9), we partake of, or participate in, the divine nature. This concept has been made central in the Roman Catholic doctrine of “sanctifying grace”. Thus Aquinas speaks of “the light of grace” as “a participation in the divine nature” (*Summa Theologiae*, Iae 2a, Q. 100, art. 4).<sup>18</sup> As an initial fix on this idea let’s think of our being “drawn into” the divine life and living it, to the extent our limited nature permits. We realize in our life and, to some extent, in our consciousness, the very life of God Himself. Once we have made this idea central, much of the Biblical and other material with which we have been dealing falls into a new sort of pattern. The “new birth” can be understood as the initiation *in us* of the divine life, this life being *grafted* onto us, so that *we* are living this life; a rebirth indeed! All the talk in John (gospel and epistles) about our becoming “sons of God” is given a new depth. We become sons of God not just quasi-legally, by proclamation or decree, but also in a more intrinsic sense; just as a biological son shares a nature with the parents, so we, to some extent, come to share a nature with God. When Jesus says in the “high priestly prayer”, “as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, so also may they be in us. . . . The glory which thou gavest me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and thou in me, may they be perfectly one” (John 17:21–23), he can be understood fairly literally as asking God to bring it about that believers may share, in the measure of which they are capable, in the same divine life that is His by nature. “God became man in order that man might become God” (St. Augustine); “Adoptive sonship is really a shared likeness of the eternal sonship of the Word” (St. Thomas Aquinas: *ST*, IIIa, Q. 3, art. 8). The Eucharistic reception of the consecrated bread and wine can be seen, according to one’s sacramental theology, as an actual reinforcement of,

<sup>18</sup>See also such a traditional prayer as “O God, who didst wonderfully create, and yet more wonderfully restore, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, thy Son Jesus Christ . . .” Collect for the Second Sunday after Christmas.

or addition to, the divine life in which one is partaking, or as a symbol of that participation. An understanding of sanctification in these terms we shall dub the “sharing model”.

But perhaps this is just to explain the partially unknown by the totally unknown. What sense can we make of a creature’s *sharing* in the divine life? The rest of this essay will be devoted to this issue (and much more would be required to deal with it properly), together with the attempt to understand sanctification in these terms. Here are a couple of preliminary points, to smooth the way somewhat. First, let’s set aside any mystical idea of a wholesale *identification* of the human person with God. The terms ‘share in’, ‘partake in’, and ‘participate in’ are to be distinguished from ‘is’ or ‘is identical with’. Otherwise all the objections to the “takeover model” come back in spades. If I were God, I would not have the sinful tendencies I do, I would not have to struggle for an increase of sanctity, and so on. A human being shares in the divine life in a way that is possible for a finite being of that sort, one that is, moreover, disfigured by sin. Just what way that is we must consider. Second, the sharing must be compatible with a protracted process of growth in holiness. So the divine life one receives at the outset is not, in every respect, all that the individual is capable of. There may be some sense in which the participation is complete from the first, but that sense will have to be such as to allow for subsequent growth in the individual’s moral character.

Now I would like to consider a certain Roman Catholic interpretation of our participation in the divine nature. For this purpose I shall use the excellent presentation in *The Theology of Grace* by Jean Daujat. Quotations in this paragraph will be from this work. Since the life of God consists in a perfect knowledge of Himself and a perfect love of Himself for His own sake, our participation in the divine life will consist of our attaining a knowledge of God as He is in Himself and a love of God for His own sake (rather than for what He can do for us). Needless to say, neither the knowledge nor the love, especially the former, can be exactly like the divine exemplars thereof; but, so far as our finitude will allow, we are enabled by sanctifying grace to enjoy the kind of knowledge and love of God enjoyed by God Himself. Grace enables us to do in these regards what we are incapable of by our own nature. “. . . grace gives to our human intellect as an object of knowledge what is the proper object of the divine intelligence, that is, God himself in all his reality and all his divine perfection; and grace gives to our human wills as an object of love what is the proper object of the divine will, that is, God himself, loved for his own sake in his infinite divine goodness. Thus it is that grace deifies us, makes us share in what constitutes the very nature of God, and thereby establishes us, through

the complete intimacy of knowledge and love, in a fellowship of love with God, whom we know and love in himself and for himself, as children know and love their father” (73). Since “it is impossible for man to be God substantially, . . . it is not by our substance but by knowledge and love that the divine nature is imparted to us. Our union with God by grace is not substantial unity, but only in the order of knowledge and love” (74). It is only as an *object* of knowledge and love that God is present within us by sanctifying grace. “. . . knowledge and love mean the presence of the object known and loved in the subject knowing and loving, which possesses within itself the known and loved object by knowing and loving it. Thus, then, does grace give us what does not belong to our nature, and what our nature cannot procure by itself—the possession of God present within us as the object of knowledge and love” (73).<sup>19</sup>

My objection to this account is that it leaves God too external and so fails to account for the distinctive sort of internality we are seeking to understand. God is present within us *only* as something known and loved. It is stipulated that the knowledge and love is of a sort of which we are not naturally capable; but the way in which the object of this higher knowledge and love is present in the subject is the familiar Aristotelian-Thomist way in which *any* object of an intentional attitude is present within the subject. On this account, God is not present to me in any different, any more intimate way than that in which my wife is present to me as an object of knowledge and love. My “sharing” and “participation” in the divine life amounts to no more than my having, in infinitely lesser measure, a knowledge and love of God *of the same sort* as that possessed by God Himself. What is shared are attributes, features, aspects. On this account I don’t share in the divine life in any way other than that in which I share in your life when you and I know and love something (perhaps you) in the same way. And because the “sharing in the divine life” is of this relatively innocuous sort, the account provides us no new resources for understanding the divine role in sanctification. How does “sanctifying grace” as so understood *sanctify*? It will be by some combination of our first two models. First God, by fiat, will bestow on the individual the capacity and, presumably, the tendency, to know and love Him in this higher way. Then, by virtue of this knowledge and love, the individual is in a closer interpersonal relation with God and so in a better position to receive influences from Him by way of messages, example, loving encouragement, and so on. No new illumination of the work of sanctification is forthcoming.

By contrast, I should like to suggest a stronger, more literal construal

<sup>19</sup>See also St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, Q. 43, art. 3.

of the sharing notion. To my mind, all the talk of being filled, permeated, pervaded by the Spirit, of the Spirit's being poured out into our hearts, strongly suggests that there is a literal merging or mutual interpenetration of the life of the individual and the divine life, a breaking down of the barriers that normally separate one life from another. You and I might be in close personal communion, we might have mutual liking, respect, regard, affection for each other, we might share many interests, attitudes, and reactions. But still our two lives are effectively insulated from each other, with perhaps minor exceptions to be noted below, by physical and psychological barriers. Mine is lived within my skin and yours within yours. When we have similar attitudes, still I have my attitude and you have yours; when we react alike to something, still each of us must react to it on his/her own. If we can now imagine some breakdown of those barriers, perhaps by a neural wiring hookup, so that your reactions, feelings, thoughts, and attitudes, or some of them, are as immediately available to me as my own, and so that they influence my further thinking and feeling and behavior in just the same way that my own do, there would have occurred a partial merging of our hitherto insulated lives. Some of your life would have become as intimately involved with my life as one part of my life is with another. When you are moved by a scene I will *thereby* be moved with your feelings; when you find a remark distasteful I will *thereby* find it distasteful. This is not to say that you will have taken over and eliminated me. Some of your life has been caught up in mine and vice versa, but caught up alongside what would have been there anyway. The details of this could be spelled out in various ways. The merging might be wholly egalitarian, with alien attitudes, thoughts, and reactions on exactly the same footing as the natives. This might lead to considerable incompatibility and tension. Another version would preserve a privileged status for the old settlers, relegating the new immigrants to a servile position. More soberly, your thoughts and reactions might influence the further course of events in me by virtue of being immediately accessible to me, but without being strictly speaking mine until I have taken them up in a certain way. And many other arrangements would be conceivable. However, my aim at present is not to make an exhaustive catalog of modes of life-sharing, but only to suggest that the concept of life-sharing between two persons is one that can be spelled out to some extent.

Another illustration of life-sharing is found in the breakdown of barriers between one psychological subsystem and another within a single human being. It is a truism of psychotherapy that people often wall off a certain sphere of thought, affect, or conation from the rest of

the psyche. Perhaps I "never think of" my father and don't consciously feel anything about him and my childhood interactions with him. But it may be that I do have strong attitudes and emotional reactions toward all this that continue to exert influence on my thought and behavior in various ways, but not via the normal conscious route. I have shut it out from conscious thought and feeling, and so my attitudes to it are forced to express themselves in devious ways. If, through psychotherapy or otherwise, these retaining walls are breached, there may be a sudden rush of thought and feeling into consciousness. The conscious part of me has regained touch with a part of my own life; my reactions to my father can now be integrated with the rest of me, and I can enjoy a greater degree of wholeness. There is now a sharing of life, a mutual participation between that memories-of-and-attitudes-toward-the-father complex and the rest of the psyche.

Finally, a more tenuous source of the concept. Earlier I alluded to the possibility of an exception to the insulation of the lives of different human beings—actual exceptions, not just conceivable ones. I was thinking of what happens when two people share a moving experience, like listening to a performance of a great piece of music. Why is it so much more satisfying to "share" something like this than to enjoy it alone? I find it hard to understand this without supposing that each listener actually experiences, to some extent, the reactions of the other; so that I am not just reacting to the music on my own but am also, to some extent, reacting with your reactions as well. This would account for the fact a shared experience is so much richer. If this is a correct reading of the phenomenon, it is another example of the breakdown of the normal barriers between lives. Perhaps we have an analogous phenomenon in the "identification" of the individual with the group that occurs at political rallies, religious worship, and sports events. Here too, perhaps, there is an interpenetration of reactions, flowing through what are normally impermeable walls, so that each individual shares, to some extent, in the life of the others.

We could also turn to mystical experience as a help in getting a purchase on the notion of life-sharing. Such experience is typically reported as involving a drastic breakdown of barriers, a merging of the self with the One, God, Nature, or whatever. However, this might be an unwelcome ally, since mystics often report a complete identification of self and God, and I am seeking to build up a concept of a *partial* sharing in the life of God. A study of orthodox Christian mystics, who are careful to avoid any suggestion of human-divine identification, might be quite pertinent to our problem. We shall nonetheless have to forgo that in this essay.

Here are a couple of additional points about life-sharing. First, an advantage of the term 'life' for what is shared is that it does not restrict us to a sharing of consciousness or of conscious psychological states and processes. This is not to say that there will not be conscious reverberations for the individual, but it will not necessarily be limited to what the individual is conscious of. I may be in contact with the divine life, and the latter may be actively involved in the work of sanctification, in ways I am not aware of. Second, it may well be that the sharing is fuller, or different in some other way, for different aspects of life. I will just mention a few possibilities. The constant admonitions of spiritual directors not to put much stock in feelings which are evanescent and unstable, and which may or may not be present when the spirit is at work, suggest that feelings are an epiphenomenon of the basic part of the sharing, rather than constituting its essence. On the other hand, the abundant testimony to feeling "filled with the Spirit" suggests that feelings and other experiences may be what is most readily and completely shared.<sup>20</sup> The sharing of attitudes, tendencies, and values may require much more time for consummation. Finally certain cognitive elements—beliefs, ways of looking at things, putting the divine scheme of salvation at the center of one's construal of the world—may be readily taken on by the individual from the Spirit at a time when little progress has been made in the transformation of character.

Thus far I have, at most, lent some color to the idea of a literal sharing of the divine life with the believer, and much remains to be done to fill out the details. But the task remaining for this essay is to indicate how the work of sanctification might be accomplished through God's sharing His life with us. The first point to make is that this model is by no means exclusive of the other two. If the Holy Spirit is within me by fiat; and He may seek to influence me by exhortation and loving encouragement. These moves will be made from a more "internal position" by virtue of the sharing, but they would still exemplify what is made central in the other models.<sup>21</sup> But even if sharing is compatible "by virtue of the sharing, but they would still exemplify what is made central in the other models."<sup>21</sup> But even if sharing is compatible

<sup>20</sup>On the other hand, one might suppose that such feelings are our reactions to, rather than part of, what is shared. That would certainly follow from the thesis that feelings are not involved in the divine life.

<sup>21</sup>I want to disavow any intention to try to place limits on God's action in our lives. I am suspicious of attempts to arrive at unrestrictedly universal conclusions as to how God achieves a certain effect, and still more suspicious of claims as to how God *must* carry out sanctification or any other divine operation. I don't feel that we are capable of that degree of insight into the possibilities for, or actualities of, God's activity. I am only seeking to lay out certain modes of operation that, so far as we can see, are real possibilities and, in addition, to suggest that some of these modes are more strongly suggested than others by the data at our disposal.

with the other means of sanctification, my present concern is to explore the distinctive implications of sharing for the work of sanctification; I want to show how, by virtue of sharing His life with us, God *thereby* provides us with resources for growth in the Christian life.

Let's recall that our specific interest is in character development, rather than, e.g., the experience and knowledge of God. We want to consider how a participation in the divine life might alter the nature and/or strength of tendencies, attitudes, desires, habits, and emotional proclivities. Now just what possibilities there are for this depends on how we tie up some of the threads hitherto left dangling. Consider an attitude of love toward all of creation, or, more modestly, toward certain people with whom I come into contact. Are we to think of my sharing that divine attitude as sufficient for my *having* that attitude in the same fully incorporated fashion in which I have all my other attitudes? Or are we to think of the sharing in itself as consisting in some relation in which I stand to that attitude which falls short of full-blooded possession, albeit a relation that comes closer to full possession than a mere awareness of the attitude. On the former alternative the sharing model turns into a particular version of the fiat model, for presumably divine volitions play a crucial role in all these models. On the sharing model, in particular, it will be by divine fiat that I share whatever I share of the divine life. It is not as if participation in the divine life is at my beck and call. But then if the (partial) sharing of God's love itself constitutes my having that attitude of love, this is just a particular way in which God alters my motivational structure by fiat. This version of the fiat model will escape the curse of externality that haunts other versions; if God produces in me by fiat a loving attitude, by way of willing that, to some extent, the barriers should be broken down between His life and mine, this could hardly be deemed an *external* operation on His part. However, there will still be no room left for a human response to divine grace in the engendering of my attitude. That is not to say that no room is left for human voluntary activity at any stage. It can still be up to me whether, or to what extent, I do what the infused habits and attitudes tend to lead me to do; it can be up to me whether these tendencies are encouraged, strengthened, and extended by my further thoughts and actions. Nevertheless, so far as the crucial changes in tendencies and attitudes are concerned it will still be a matter of divine fiat alone.

Thus in order to explore the possibility of a place for human cooperation in character development on the sharing model, we will have to consider the idea that my sharing of divine love, in itself, amounts to something less than my fully taking on this attitude, while at the same time amounting to something that can be a push or a tendency in that

direction. How might that be? The weakest internalization of divine love that could lay claim to being a *sharing* in that love, in a way that goes beyond the mere exemplification of a common feature, would be an immediate awareness of that love, the kind of awareness that one has of one's own feelings, attitudes, and tendencies. This would, indeed, be a sort of breakdown of the walls that separate different lives, a breakdown of barriers to experiential accessibility. Normally I can't be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and sentiments in the same direct and unmediated way in which I am aware of my own. If I could, then the walls that separate our lives would have been breached in a very significant respect, and I could be said, in an important sense, to share in your (conscious) life. This breach would be of a cognitive nature, in the first instance, but it could have conative implications. If God has permitted me to be aware (to some extent) of His loving tendencies in the same direct way that I am aware of my own, that means that they are "available" to me as models in a maximally direct and vivid fashion. I now have a sense of what it is, what it feels like, to love others in this fashion. I can model my attitudes, not just on external manifestations of love, but on the inner springs of those manifestations. And by psychological processes the exact nature of which I won't try to delineate, processes that I very well might be able to facilitate or hinder by my own choices and my own effort, this may lead to similar loving tendencies in me, where these latter tendencies would be mine in the fullest sense. On this picture of the matter, the divine contribution is largely cognitive, the presentation in a specially vivid and intimate way of a role model; the actual changes in the individual's own motivational structure come from responses, voluntary and involuntary, to these models.

I believe that the preceding constitutes a possible model of (at least some of) the work of sanctification, a model that deserves further exploration. But now that we have come this far, a further step beckons. Immediate cognitive accessibility is not the last stage on the road to conative assimilation that falls short of installation by divine fiat. If I can be directly aware of divine love without thereby taking it on as my own, why can't I have *some* tendency toward loving in that way without my being fully disposed to love in that way whenever the opportunity arises. Tendencies can enjoy all degrees of integration into the dominant motivational structure. I can have passing fancies or yens that, without active encouragement on my part, will never blossom into effective action tendencies. I can have idle wishes to take a voyage around the world, or to chuck it all and live on a yacht, or to take up the cello. These are genuine conative tendencies, not just purely cognitive

awareness of possibilities. I do have some tendency to do these things (or to take steps in the direction of doing them). But those tendencies are so weak, or so effectively opposed by stronger interests or systems of interests, that unless I take active steps to encourage them and to dismantle the opposition there is no significant chance that they will influence my behavior. Why shouldn't we think of participation in the divine life as consisting, in part, of the introduction into my conative system of initially weak, isolated, and fragile tendencies like those just mentioned, as well as consisting, in part, of my immediate awareness of God's tendencies of the same sorts? This would be a foot in the conative as well as in the cognitive door; it would be a foothold, a beachhead from which the progressive conquest of the individual's motivational system could get a start. This would be a decisive act on the part of God without which, let us say, the individual has no chance of sanctification. Without the infusion of these initially weak and isolated tendencies there would be nothing to effectively oppose the status quo, the domination of the person by sinful self-centeredness and self-aggrandizement. But there is plenty left for the individual to do, by way of building up the motivational system from the rudimentary beginning supplied by God. At this point the mechanical metaphor might well give way to the organic metaphors used so effectively in the New Testament. We have been talking about a particular way in which God might sow a seed the further fate of which depends on what the recipients do with it. One is put in mind not only of the parable of the sower, but of the striking images in the Fourth Gospel of "water springing up into eternal life" and of the "true bread come down from heaven". It may well be that in its concern to give glory to God and to put a check to sinful pride and presumption, the Christian theological tradition has been too ready to attribute all the work of sanctification to divine activity and to neglect the roles we all, in practice, realize that we ourselves have. The model I have just been suggesting holds out the promise of according both partners their due share, while yet recognizing the necessity and the crucial initiatory role of divine grace.

In conclusion, I will summarize the advantages of the sharing model. First, as just intimated, it makes an important place in sanctification for human response and human effort, while at the same time recognizing the divine initiative as absolutely crucial.<sup>22</sup> Second, unlike the other two models it recognizes a distinctive and fundamental sort of internality in the process of sanctification, a mode of internality that goes beyond any

<sup>22</sup>This is in contrast to the fiat model, which attributes the whole proceeding to God; the advantage over the interpersonal model will be brought out next.

*interpersonal* intimacy, however close, and that goes beyond the internality God necessarily enjoys with respect to all of creation. Furthermore it indicates how this mode of internality is (or can be) essentially involved in the divine work of sanctification. And because it makes this mode of internality central to the process of sanctification it reveals the goal of sanctification to be not just moral improvement, however extensive, but rather a full communion with God, the fullest possible sharing in the divine nature, with respect to which moral development is both a necessary prerequisite and an essential component. Finally, the sharing model permits a satisfactory interpretation of regeneration. To be born again is to come to share in the divine nature. Given our development of this latter notion, regeneration is thereby represented both as a decisive divine initiative that fundamentally transforms the human condition, and as something that in itself leaves the individual with a lot of work to do before she is ready for full communion with God.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup>This essay has profited from comments by Charles Taliaferro, Robert Adams, and David Burrell.

## *Some Suggestions for Divine Command Theorists*

### I

The basic idea behind a divine command theory of ethics is that what I morally ought or ought not to do is determined by what God commands me to do or avoid. This, of course, gets spelled out in different ways by different theorists. In this essay I shall not try to establish a divine command theory in any form or even argue directly for such a theory, but I shall make some suggestions as to the way in which the theory can be made as strong as possible. More specifically I shall (1) consider how the theory could be made invulnerable to two familiar objections and (2) consider what form the theory should take so as not to fall victim to a Euthyphro-like dilemma. This will involve determining what views of God and human morality we must take in order to enjoy these immunities.

The sort of divine command theory from which I begin is the one presented in Robert M. Adams' paper, "Divine Command Metaethics Modified Again".<sup>1</sup> This is not a view as to what words like 'right' and 'ought' mean. Nor is it a view as to what our concepts of moral obligation, rightness, and wrongness amount to. It is rather the claim that divine commands are constitutive of the moral status of actions. As Adams puts it, "ethical wrongness is (i.e., is identical with) the property

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<sup>1</sup>*Journal of Religious Ethics*, 7, no. 1 (1979).