CHAPTER FIVE

Human Autonomy in the Process of Revelation

The best of workmen decided that that to which nothing of its very own could be given should be, in composite fashion given, whatsoever had belonged individually to each and everything. Therefore, he took up man, a work of indeterminate form; and placing him at the midpoint of the world, he spoke to him as follows: "We have given thee, Adam, no fixed seat, no form of thy very own, no gift peculiarly thine, that thou mayest feel as thine own, possess as thine own seat, the form, the gifts which thou shalt desire...Thou, like a judge appointed for being honourable, art the moulder and maker of thyself; thou mayest sculpt thyself into whatever shape thou dost prefer. Thou canst grow downwards into the lower natures which are brutes. Thou canst again grow upward from thy soul's reason into higher natures which are divine.

Pico della Mirandola[1]

Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer[2]

1. The Image of God

In the previous three chapters the mechanisms of the learning process have been explored. The question now to be attempted is the relation between these and the processes by which revelation is received. Is there a continuity between learning and the reception of revelation or a discontinuity? Are the cognitive processes used in comprehending and responding to revelation those of natural human learning or does the discontinuity between the natural and the supernatural or between sinful men and women and a holy God necessitate some altogether different means of understanding?

The account of learning requires for its coherence an overall theoretical framework consisting of an "image of man" or explanation of the fundamental nature of human beings. If the study of learning is to be related to that of revelation, then the anthropology by which it is undergirded must be theologically justified. Two aspects of this anthropology are particularly relevant:

a) The image of the learner.

This includes a definition of the form of knowledge, as well as a description of the way knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired and developed. It involves, in particular, an account of the sources of motivation which control and direct the orientation to learning.

b) An account of men and women as receivers of revelation.

This includes the definition of revelation and its relation to philosophical accounts of man, his significance, destiny etc. It involves an account of the possibility of knowledge of transcendent reality. But its most important element is an account of the

relationship between God and mankind within which divine communication may be understood to take place.

Each of the others having been dealt with, it is the last and most important of these elements which forms the subject for this chapter.

It is only comparatively recently that theological anthropology has become a subject in its own right. Discussion of "human nature" has always been implicitly an element in the understanding of the nature of sin or "fallenness", of the nature of the redemption available in Christ and of the destiny to which human beings are called. But in the second half of this century it is increasingly recognised that anthropology holds the key to theology. With the abandonment of the cosmological approach to God, the belief in the possibility of using the creation as the starting point for the interpretation of the divine nature and attributes, the anthropological approach, the starting point from the question of human nature, has had to bear increasing philosophical weight.[3] Moreover, as David Jenkins maintained, in a world which is everywhere threatened by depersonalisation, concern with the nature and significance of persons has tended to move towards the top of the theological agenda.[4]

The most important Biblical statement on the nature of humanity is to be found in the account of divine creation in Genesis 1, particularly verses 26-28:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his

> own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The statement that men and women are created "in the image of God" is repeated twice more. Genesis 5:3 implies in addition that Adam passed on the "image" to his son through the normal processes of biological descent, and Genesis 9:5-6 reaffirms the dignity that goes with the possession of the image in its prohibition of murder on these grounds. Both these passages clearly imply that the possession and transmission of the image survived the Fall, that the image of God in mankind is not eradicated by human sinfulness.[5]

Although these passages in Genesis, all three from the Priestly source, are the only references in the Old Testament to the image of God, it is clear that what they convey is of great importance. They sum up an evaluation of human nature which is everywhere implicit in the other literature, and which, most significantly, is taken up in the New Testament to express the significance of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.[6] It is not clear from these passages, however, in what precisely the image of God in humankind consists. Its significance is everywhere assumed, but nowhere explained. The best that can be achieved is to attempt to infer from the context what it is to which the "image" refers. Thus, several possibilities have been suggested.

a) It is assumed, in modern discussions, that the words "image" and "likeness", in Hebrew, *selem* and *demut*, are to be taken as poetical parallels, amplifying and explaining one another. This being so, the term *selem* refers to a physical, plastic image, while *demut* means predominantly abstract "appearance" or "similarity". Commentators have taken these terms to imply that it is the whole person, including the physical nature which represents the image of God, and not some particular aspect. This is reinforced by the insistence that throughout the Old Testament, a person is understood as a spiritual-psychological-physical unity.[7]

b) In the Ancient Near East, it was the king who was regarded as the earthly representative or image of God. By the application of this phrase to all mankind, the human role as God's agent in creation is stressed. The Genesis account twice links the creation of humanity in God's image intimately with their commission to have dominion over the world and everything in it. If the human vocation to rule over creation is not included in the image, it is at the very least implied by it.[8]

c) Karl Barth believed that the significance of the image was explained by the words, "Male and female he created them." These words, he argued, were to be taken as exegesis of the previous statement. That the existence of men and women in community or encounter is to be taken as essential to their being is suggested also by the words of God at this point, "Let *us* create..." The male-female relationship, Barth believed, was the archetypal encounter and the basis of all the other "I-Thou" relationships of which human life is constituted.[9]

Each of these suggestions expresses an important aspect of Biblical anthropology, but the significance of the use of the phrase, "image of God" as a description of mankind's essential nature lies in another direction. It suggests not only that human beings reflect the nature of God, but that the nature of human beings is to be known only in the light of the nature of God himself. There can be no knowledge of mankind's real nature without a corresponding revelation of the nature of God. Thus, the very fact that the human being is described as God's image reinforces the conclusion of an earlier section that the point of entry of divine revelation into human knowledge is that unknown yet foundational "image of man" which lies behind every person's consciousness of themselves and their world. The effect of revelation, then, is to make sense of what we already know of humankind from experience and reflection, to provide a framework within which to interpret that experience. At the same time, it points to the characteristics of God himself, insofar as they are revealed by his dealings with mankind. The self-revelation of God occurs, in the words of T.F.Torrance, within the "complex situation involving our cognition of the world around us and of ourselves along with it."[10] Human experience provides the context for the receipt of revelation, as revelation reinterprets human experience.[11]

The content of revelation, it has been argued, is itself an "image of man", a vision of human being in relation to God and a disclosure of the nature of that "image of God" which human beings share. It is received at that level of human cognition at which definitive personal identity is sought, the elusive "I" at the heart of personality. Our conclusion will be that the content of revelation is a Person, Jesus Christ, through whom

the image of God is revealed in the course of a human history. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ has three aspects:

a) His life, death and resurrection.

b) The historical context in which they took place. The Old Testament as the history of Israel provides the categories for understanding the significance of Christ.

c) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is a consequence of the exaltation of Christ and enables the contemporary appropriation of the revelation.

2. The Elusive Agent

One of the most important aspects of the biblical account of creation is the distinction between mankind and the rest of creation. This distinction goes beyond the vocation to "have dominion" over the animals. It is emphasised by the fact that at the point at which the creation of man is described, the verb *bara,* used exclusively of the divine activity of creation, signifying perhaps creation out of nothing, is reintroduced and solemnly repeated:

> So God *created* man in his own image,
>
> in the image of God he *created* him:
>
> male and female he *created* them.

The implication appears to be that there is something distinctive about human beings which is not shared with the rest of creation, including the animals. This uniqueness is expressed by the author of Psalm 8. "Man", he observes is only a creature, hardly significant when compared with the grandeur of, for example, the heavens. Yet it is he who is made "little less than God" and crowned with glory and honour. There is a dignity given to men and women which is not shared with any other creature. The fact that human beings are created in God's image implies that there is something unique and highly significant about mankind, which distinguishes them from the rest of creation.[12]

The first conclusion to be drawn from this distinction between persons and nature is that Christian anthropology rejects the tendency to reductionism of much, if not most, of modern social science. In this context, "reductionism" refers to the assumption,

implicit in the "unity of science" hypothesis classically expressed by John Stuart Mill, that the phenomena of human behaviour may properly be explained in the same terms and with reference to the same underlying causes as those of nature.[13] This type of reductionism is philosophically related to the reductionism of empiricism, as expressed in Quine's two dogmas, through the methodological assumption that any meaningful description of human behaviour could, in principle, be verified by appealing to non-problematic empirical observation.[14] Christian anthropology tends, therefore, to support the "hermeneutical" rather than the reductionist approach to social science, the method of Dilthey and Weber, in which the meaningful level of description of human behaviour is that which takes into account the "agent's point of view" and the correct method of understanding that which is termed, *verstehen.*[15]

While the Priestly writer of the first chapter of Genesis makes use of technical, theological terminology in order to preserve the distance between God and his creation, the Yahwistic narrative is not afraid to express the essential distinction between nature and humanity by means of a homely and frankly anthropomorphic description.

> Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.[16]

In contrast to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, who are simply formed from the ground,[17] the man is not simply thus formed, but receives also the divine breath or *ruach,* with the result that he becomes *nephesh,* a living soul or being. The continuity

between persons and nature, expressed here in his creation from dust, as well as the words of judgement on their life uttered on the occasion of his banishment from the garden,[18] is not to be ignored. In the last one hundred years we have become more aware than ever before of the extent of what we share with the animals in terms of the instinctive foundations of our behaviour patterns. But the picture in which a person's life or *nephesh* originates with the breath of God points to an essential distinction from nature not shared with the animals, expressed, as in the Priestly account, in the dominion of the man over the animals implied by his naming of them.[19]

This essential distinction between nature and humankind emerges in the phenomenon of human culture. Whereas for the animal kingdom, the conditions of life are governed directly by their particular ecological niche, for men and women, the environment is mediated by both the creative and interpretative aspects of culture. The distinction is expressed in the phenomenon of human subjectivity, the fact that men and women are conscious of themselves as subjects, which has emerged repeatedly in the investigation of the learning process. Cognitive processes, including perception, comprehension and learning, require the activity of a subject. The subject acts as the interpreter of experience, assimilating information selected for attention to the structures of cognition arising out of previous experience. The existence of subjects creates a logical oddity, referred to by Gilbert Ryle as the "systematic elusiveness" of "I". It is impossible to confine the subjective "I" within tightly defined logical categories.[20] As Ian Ramsey pointed out, the nearest it is possible to come to a definition is to describe the sort of situation in which speaking of "I" makes sense.[21] Despite raising the problem of the

"elusiveness" of "I", Ryle attempts to avoid the implication that subjects actually exist as entities distinct from and irreducible to the world which is capable of description. According to Ryle, the use of "I" is an example of a "higher order action" which is a commentary upon, and so refers to, another action. Since the action which is the object of the higher order action must be in the past, the relations between actions and higher order actions is simply one of temporal series. The last act is at any given time the "I". It is unanalysable for the same reason that a diarist cannot record the act of recording the last act in his diary, or a review be its own subject.[22] Ryle's theory may be understood as a logically expressed version of William James's psychological argument that the "I" of experience was nothing more than the stream of thought and not a metaphysical entity.[23]

The logical impossibility of a commentary being about itself is not an adequate reflection of the dimensions of the problem. This impossibility applies only to the level of description or syntax. At the semantic level, every commentary is, implicitly, about itself, because it is presented *as a commentary*, that is within the context of intersubjective convention required for meaningful communication. This context includes a set of conventions irreducible to description, which are simply taken for granted, amongst which is the experience of oneself as the subject of one's actions and judgements. There is a qualitative difference between reflection on a past action and the immediate self-awareness which is present in the act of judgement itself. This difference reflects the fact that the subject can never become an object, an element of the world available to experience in the same way as other objects. The interpreting subject cannot be directly observed. Its presence is an inference from the process of interpretation.[24]

The peculiar logical status of the subject of cognitive processes is analogous to that of the "I" in the process of self-relation and social interaction in which identity is formed. In the "I-me" relationship, the "I" is the interpreter and evaluator of the self in the multiplicity of its roles and relations. There is, in Erikson's words, a need for a "central organising agency" as creator and maintainer of the self.[25] Identity or "self" is that part of the person which Jung called the *persona*, the "mask" which arises as a compromise between the individual and society.[26] Paul Tournier calls it the *personage*, which is distinguished from the underlying *person*, or real self.[27] The "self" is a social and psychological construct, an abstraction from experience. "Identity", in this sense, is essentially *synthetic* and *provisional*. But the existence of such a synthetic identity seems to demand an underlying "real" self or person, of which identity is the creation. It is the nature of this "I" which is at the root of the problem of identity.

The distinction between human beings and the rest of creation is reflected in a discontinuity in the pattern of explanation appropriate to the natural world due to the presence of the interpreting subject. This discontinuity is expressed in the process of decision. As Aurel Kolnai puts it,

> Action is not a 'resultant' of psychic urges, pressures, yearnings, cravings, attractions and repulsions, forces or bents, not an emergent product of motives relevant to its context; rather it is the execution of a decree issued by something like a unitary 'self' or 'ego' or 'sovereign ruler' who consults those motives and is influenced ('inclined',

> 'pressured', 'instigated' or 'coaxed') by them, but who in its turn is in control of motility and directs its workings.[28]

As we have observed, the intention of an agent can take the place of a causal factor. Actions are to be distinguished from movements by the fact that they can be seen to result from the intention of an agent translated into purposeful movement by a process of decision. The difference between, "I raise my arm," and "My arm goes up," is precisely the intention of the speaker to raise his arm, which can be said to cause the movement.[29] Advocates of the "unity of science" argue that the "decision" could, in principle, be explained in terms of the natural chain of causation, thus abolishing the need for Kolnai's "'self', 'ego' or 'sovereign ruler'". If this were the case, however, such a decision would, in principle, be predictable from a chain of natural causation. For an agent to predict a decision would involve consulting not the motive from which he expects to be acting at the time concerned, but the causes he predicts to be operating upon him. This is to blur the distinction between the theoretical and the practical, to reduce all meaningful explanation to verifiable description in the same way as logical positivism. Faced with the necessity of action, the agent does not attempt to estimate the relative valency of causal factors, but consults his motives and decides. This is what is meant by saying that motives influence but do not compel.[30]

The agent thus retains a measure of freedom of decision within the natural world, without thereby invalidating the laws which govern the course of nature. In fact, the agent's decision itself operates in the same way as a natural cause, and more often than not the means by which the agent's decision is carried out is his body, through which

he is himself a part of the natural, physical world. Thus, formed from dust yet animated by the breath of God, mankind is both part of creation yet stands over against it. Rather than subject to the one executive will expressed in the universal causal laws of creation, each person is a little executive, an independent centre of action.

The rejection of determinism poses the problem of the extent of the freedom available to the agent. In the interactionist framework proposed above, the choice between freedom and determinism is resolved in favour of "situational choice".[31] It has frequently been remarked that the extent to which it is possible for the agent to exercise his freedom is governed by the extent of his knowledge.[32] The theory of learning advanced in chapters 2 and 3 above adds to this the observation that the individual's knowledge is situation-specific. Comprehension is limited by the necessity to deploy a given schema, which stereotypes the situation in a certain way. The individual's response is to the situation *as he defines it*. The options available are limited by the way in which situations of a similar type have previously been understood and structured. Psychosocial theory offers an example of this general approach. There, the way in which the crisis of each developmental stage is resolved either imposes limits on or offers resources for the resolution of future crises.[33] Finally, the most important limitation on individual freedom is the power of the agency of others. No individual is entirely independent of the opinions and the esteem of others. There is, as Schleiermacher observed, a degree of freedom and dependence in all our relationships. As inhabitants of a shared world in which all cognitions are held as those of a particular reference group, the power of the group or of significant others is a major factor in the way the situation is structured.[34]

If the agency of others imposes limits on the individual's freedom of action, it is a feature of the relationship between God and mankind as recorded in Scripture that God is able to accomplish his purposes by means of human decisions without in any way limiting the freedom of situational choice of those through whom he acts. That this is the case is implicit in a wide range of Old Testament literature, of which one of the most celebrated examples is the "Succession Narrative" of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings. This document sets out to explain how it was that Solomon became king in succession to David, a process purposed by God from the day of his birth, but achieved with the minimum of direct divine involvement. One of the principle features of the "secular" world-view of the author, presumably a member of Solomon's court, is the way in which God is seen to be at work in and through the decisions of men and women. This feature is echoed elsewhere, in the stories of Joseph and of Ruth, for example. In the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and most notably Deutero-Isaiah assert that God makes use of heathen nations in order to accomplish his purposes for Israel. In the wisdom literature, the mind and decisions of kings is said to be in the Lord's hands. The most telling and difficult examples of this relationship between the purposes of God and of people occur in the New Testament, first in the case of Judas, and then in the case of Israel as a whole, whose hardening, Paul argues, using the case of Pharaoh as an example, is a necessary part of God's purpose of extending his salvation to the Gentiles.[35]

It may be correct to discern a parallel between this situation, in which God works through human agency without limiting the freedom of human decision and the way in which human freedom operates without invalidating the natural laws governing the creation as a whole. However that may be, there remains the question of the relation

between the dependence of men and women upon God as creator and the sphere of human independence. Reviewing the situation in modern theological anthropology, David Kelsey concludes that there are two types of relationship between God and mankind which need to be distinguished. The one is an unchanging and unchangeable relationship, the relationship to God in creation and preservation, in which God upholds the universe for the benefit of mankind. In this relationship, humanity is radically dependent and cannot be otherwise. But this relationship is logically distinct from any relationship constituted by the possibility of the knowledge of God, or of sin and redemption. "In modern theology," he concludes, however, "these two kinds of relationships between persons as creatures and God have collapsed into one kind of relationship, consisting in a mode of consciousness or a conscious decision, and admitting of degree." What is required, Kelsey concludes, is the recovery of a full-blown doctrine of creation to take the weight of the dependence which is an unavoidable dimension of human existence, in order to give men and women as agents their full place in the account of sin, salvation and the knowledge of God, and to allow for the modern consciousness of mankind as autonomous, self-constituting and historically conditioned.[36]

With the recovery of this distinction, the fact that persons are agents, independent centres of decision and action within the created world, is to be seen as the result of divine endowment. From this follow all the features which govern the conditions of human knowledge examined in the previous four chapters. The creation of a psychological world-model through the essentially hermeneutical process of interaction is the work of the *active* subject. The result of this process is precisely that lack of a

definitive "human nature" which results in the necessity for self-constitution, on the part of both individual and society, and which thus gives rise to the historical nature of human self-consciousness. It is precisely this proper autonomy of mankind in which the image of God consists.[37]

It is, moreover, a consequence of this interpretation that it involves the interpersonal aspect of human existence as a further aspect of the image. All knowing is a "knowing with". The fact that learning takes place in a social context is not merely a contingent but a necessary and integral part of identity formation. The recognition of significant persons is a necessity for the creation of schemata for the comprehension of the world. In particular, it is impossible to develop a self-concept except in the context of close relationships with others. The boundary between self and others is a fluctuating and permeable one. It is possible for others and even for things to become part of the self in the sense that they constitute part of that area of experience which is loved and defended.[38] What we call "me" is a particularly highly valued selection of the attitudes of others. Knowledge arises within the evaluative frameworks generated by relationships. Without others, there would be no self-evaluation, no self-knowledge and no knowledge of the world. As a person exists unavoidably in interaction with the world, so he exists unavoidably in relationship with others. Awareness of "I" is awareness of being in encounter.[39]

Finally, some account is needed of the estrangement from God generally referred to as sin. It is a feature of virtually every philosophical anthropology that it includes, as well as an assessment of the nature and destiny, a diagnosis of the essential

problem of mankind and a prescription for its solution.[40] There is a contradiction at the heart of human existence whose effects are inescapable, even though its cause, like the essence of human nature itself, defies precise analysis. Like the nature of mankind, the precise nature of sin requires revelation for its illumination, since it has to do with the relation between God and man. Sin is a distortion of value, a failure to act from the highest available value in a given situation, usually because of the force of the competing claims of some end of greater value to oneself. The salience of any given object or goal, as reflected in the more or less stable attitudes which form predispositions to action, is measured by its contribution to the formation, maintenance and defence of personal identity. The preference of some other good involves the costly sacrifice of some preferred value, although this may be compensated for by the ability to strengthen the image of oneself as a generous or altruistic person. Even given the desire to promote the good of others, the individual is compelled to work from within his own world-view or that of his reference group.

At the root of this predicament is the lack of a definite image of man or estimate of one's own true nature and value. In the absence of any definite knowledge of the real or underlying self, all value-judgements are based on the need to construct and maintain the social self, the *persona* or *personage*. Sinfulness and the lack of identity turn out to have a common root. In respect of sin, without the knowledge of God mankind is condemned to choosing on the basis of lesser values. Without the possibility of knowing and choosing God, his every act is unavoidably sinful. In respect of identity, man without the knowledge of God becomes, in the words of Reinhold Niebuhr, a "problem to himself".[41] The implication is that the discovery of true identity allows the possibility of

the choice of the highest good. The person whose actions reflect a secure knowledge of their own essential nature and value, though he may not avoid sin automatically, is at least enabled to make choices which are no longer dictated by the need to maintain an essentially inauthentic identity.[42]

3. The Spirit of Revelation

Like the cognitive processes of which it is the outcome, learning involves the activity of the subject. In perception, there is a balance to be observed between the constructive activity of the imagination, expressed in the formulation of "perceptual hypotheses", and the adjustment of imagination to the environment, expressed in the confirmation of the hypothesis and adaptation of the underlying schema to the information received. A similar balance is observed between the processes of assimilation and accommodation. In the one, the learner interprets the material in order to comprehend it in terms of his previous understanding. In the other, it is the pattern of the learner's understanding which is changed. The outcome is that the form of knowledge differs from individual to individual according to the circumstances in which and the process by means of which it has been learned. If revelation is to be learned, it must not only be capable of bringing about fundamental change in the believer, but it must be capable also of becoming subject to the process of shaping and alteration involved in assimilation without losing thereby its character as revelation.[43]

The activity of the subject observed in learning is the outcome of the freedom of the agent. Restricted as it may be by the constraints of social context, it is this essential freedom which is expressed in the search for authentic identity, whose outcome is learning. If revelation is to be received and understood by means of the ordinary processes of learning then its form must reflect the fact that the men and women to whom it is addressed are not only active but autonomous. As the necessity of understanding salvation as due to divine grace alone does not remove the necessity for insisting upon a

proper human autonomy, neither is this removed in the process of revelation, which is, in any case, but one aspect of the gift of salvation. Revelation must be understood in such a way as to take into account these aspects of the learning process and the anthropology by which that process is interpreted.

The way in which this is to be achieved is by means of the concept of "spirit" and in particular by means of an account of the work of the Holy Spirit in revelation. On the one hand, the idea of the human spirit is part of the terminology which expresses the essential nature of mankind, closely related to the "image of God". On the other hand, it is the Holy Spirit who is primarily responsible for the subjective dimension of revelation[44], who speaks through the prophets of both Old and New Testaments and who, it is promised, will guide the believer into all truth. It is important that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit not be simply "pulled out of a hat" at this point, as the classic means of legitimation, in order to fill the gap left by the inexplicable. But on the other hand, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is clearly relevant in this context. "Spirit" is a "bridge word", which expresses the human relation with the transcendent.[45] What is required is a coherent doctrine of the Spirit in relation to human nature, to human knowledge and learning, and in relation to revelation, one which will both explain and be illuminated by the model of learning and its anthropological presuppositions presented so far.

It has been suggested that the description of the creation of mankind in Genesis 2, in which God first, "formed man from the dust of the ground," and then, "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," should be taken as a parallel to that which, in the first chapter, is expressed by the creation of man in the "image of God".[46] It is the breath or

ruach of God which is pictured as the source of human vitality, a vitality which, Reinhold Neibuhr insists, is not to be confused with that which is proper to nature. The vitality of humanity is a vitality of spirit. It is the spirit which upholds the soul and enlivens the body, so that the unity of men and women as soul and body is derived from and grounded in their dependence upon God.[47] The meaning of *ruach* in the Old Testament may be divided into three groups:

1. wind
2. The force which vivifies men, the principle of life or breath, and, derivative of this sense, the seat of knowledge and feeling.
3. The life of God, the force by which he acts and causes action.

"Spirit" is not a category of substance, but of action or force, a principle of energy.[48] The "spirit" in man is thus the "seat of action" or dominant disposition. It is possible to speak of a "spirit" of intelligence or of wisdom, a spirit of jealousy or of an "'evil' spirit from the Lord".[49] For this reason also, "spirit" is frequently a parallel with "heart" where this refers to motive or intention.[50]

The fact that the presence of spirit in men and women is attributed to the breath of God implies that the distinctiveness of mankind within the created order is due to a particular mode of created relation with God. Exactly how this relationship is to be described, however, is a point of controversy. On the one hand, the conclusion may be drawn that the spirit by which a human being subsists as a person is a partaking of the spiritual nature of God. As Emil Brunner puts it,

> Man can be person because and insofar as he has spirit. Personal being is 'founded' in the spirit; the spirit is, so to speak, the substratum, the element of personal being. But what is spirit?...God *is* spirit, man *has* spirit.[51]

Karl Barth, in his even more radical presentation, declares,

> Man has Spirit. By putting it this way we describe the spirit as something that comes to man, something not essentially his own but to be received and actually received by him, something that totally limits his constitution and thus totally determines it...Man has Spirit as one who is possessed by it.[52]

What Barth and Brunner have done, however, is to conflate the second and third senses of "spirit" given above by subsuming the idea of spirit as the principle underlying human life and consciousness under that of spirit as the action of God. This has the effect of making the very life of the person a divine action and removing the autonomy proper to men and women in their created relationship with God. It also introduces the Holy Spirit unnecessarily into the relationship of men and women to God as creatures. It is true to say that Scripture speaks of the spirit of man as God's gift and under God's power, its removal resulting in death, but the Holy Spirit, for whose return the author of Psalm 51 prays, for example, is not the principle which upholds the psalmist's very life, but which upholds his relationship with God, a relationship characterised by a "willing spirit". It is not the Holy Spirit which animates the person as creature but the human spirit, which, so

long as he lives, is that person's possession. It is only in the economy of salvation that a relationship between the Holy Sprit and the spirit of man is effected.[53]

It is the spirit, with which mankind is endowed at creation, which is the source of human freedom, the foundation of human agency and proper autonomy. "It is spirit that furnishes the key to the Biblical understanding of man's self-transcendence; it is spirit that keeps the relation between God and man essentially free and personal."[54] It is the same principle, the spiritual nature of mankind, which governs both the essential nature of mankind and our relationship with God. It is the spirit which gives a person the capacity for a personal relationship with her creator, since it preserves her essential freedom in relation to God. "A distinction must be made between man's existential *dependence* on God, which he shares with all living creatures and which applies to him as an 'ensouled body', and man's personal *relation* to God, which can be realised only at the level of spirit...Man's relation to God, which corresponds to the structure of his being as God's creature, can be realised only by the free act of the human spirit."[55]

When God intervenes through his Spirit in the affairs of men and women, he does so by the infusion of a divine principle of action. The Spirit of God "comes upon" particular people to enable them to carry out God's will. This applies particularly to the judges, such as Gideon and Samson, but also to such servants of God as Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha. With the establishment of the kingdom, the Spirit is seen to be with the king in a particular way. In these instances, it is by means of his Spirit that God is shown to achieve his will through the actions of men without overriding their proper human autonomy. The Spirit is given to God's servants as a principle or spring of action

enabling them to do God's will. By post-exilic times, it had become customary to refer to the Spirit not simply as acting sporadically in and through particular men but as the means whereby God had acted and continued to act throughout the whole history of his people, in a way consistent with his personality, as well as the mode of God's presence with his people.[56]

There is, therefore, as Congar observes, a pattern of increasing inwardness in Israel's understanding of her relation with God. When God acts, it comes to be understood not simply as directed towards the achievement of a certain political goal, such as military victory, but towards the establishment of a relationship with such of his people as he can find who are receptive. Initially, the scope of this personal relationship is limited to particular chosen servants, including the prophets, but by post-exilic times, it is seen as more widely available, in particular to the "poor", such as those who speak in such passages as Isaiah 63:7-14. It is the Spirit who supplies the possibility of moral cleansing and of a holy life. In particular, a time begins to be envisaged in which all will share in the personal relationship with God which is the experience of the prophets, in which all will participate in the Spirit, and in the book of Joel, this hope is extended beyond the boundaries of Israel to embrace "all flesh".[57]

> The 'economy'...to which the Scripture bears witness moves forward in the direction of greater and deeper interiority: 'God all in all'. This progress is clear in the Old Testament. It reaches its conclusion in the New Testament where it is connected with a more perfect revelation and experience of the Spirit.[58]

The New Testament sees the fulfilment of what is foreseen under the Old Covenant. The new age inaugurated with the coming of Jesus is "the beginning of an eschatological period characterised by the gift of the Spirit to a people of God with a universal vocation."[59] In place of sporadic individual occurrences, the Spirit is given permanently and fully in and then through Jesus Christ to lead each of God's people to *teleiosis*, perfection or maturity.[60] The fullness of the Spirit is to be a characteristic of all Christians. In Galatians 3:14, Paul writes that it is through the gift of the Spirit that the promise to Abraham is fulfilled.[61] It was Lesslie Newbigin who pointed out the existence of an important strand in the theology of Christian experience which is frequently overlooked - the Pentecostal strand. According to this strand, it is participation in the Spirit, which is a definite and recognisable experience, which is the foundation of Christian life and of membership of the Church.[62] The significance of Newbigin's observation has been increasingly recognised since his early work. According to James Dunn, baptism in the Spirit is the high point of "conversion-initiation". The whole event involves repentance, faith, forgiveness, union with Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but it is the gift of the Spirit which both completes and enables Christian conversion and which demonstrates, both to the believer and to others, that a genuine work of God, with the potential of bringing about a changed life, has taken place.[63] As Hendry puts it, "The Spirit is the subjective counterpart to the objective fact of Christ,"[64] and Congar writes, "The Spirit makes it possible for us to know and recognise Christ. This is not simply a doctrinal statement. It is an existential reality."[65]

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit introduces into the believer's life a new centre of agency or principle of action, with the potential of producing aspects of the divine character, expressed as the "fruit of the Spirit", love joy, peace, patience, kindness and so on.[66] Given at Pentecost, the festival at which was celebrated the giving of the Law, the Spirit introduces a new law, the law of love, not as a written code but, as the prophets foretold, as a centre of action in the human heart.[67] But while the Spirit represents a new centre of action in Christian experience, the believer is in no way constrained or possessed by the Spirit. This is specifically the point of that passage, beginning in 1 Corinthians 12, in which Paul deals with the gifts of the Spirit in worship. It is, he maintains, the spirits of the "dumb idols" which his readers previously worshipped which constrain and possess. The Holy Spirit is not to be understood in this way, but rather as working according to the character of God, which is love. Rather, Paul maintains, in Galatians in particular, possession of the Spirit brings authentic freedom, freedom from the constraints of the Law, which can only condemn, and freedom from the desires of "the flesh", that orientation which is hostile to God and results in "slavery" to evil desires. Possession of the Spirit is what enables authentic personal choice against a background of sharp dichotomies, light or darkness, faith or works, life or death and so on.[68] To be filled with the Spirit means not a replacement of substance but the communication of an inner dynamism. "We become subjects of a quality of existence and activities which go back to God's sphere of existence and activity."[69]

It is the gift of the Holy Spirit which offers the believer the possibility of the knowledge of God. It is the Spirit which enables the ongoing process of revelation in the

believer's life. "When the Spirit of truth comes," Jesus declared, "he will guide you into all the truth...He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." Knowledge of God, he declares, is the defining characteristic of "eternal life".[70] Revelation is a transaction between the human spirit and the divine Spirit in which the Holy Spirit touches, meets or "impinges" on the human spirit, to make God known at a deep level of personality.[71] The Spirit witnesses 'with our spirits' that we are children of God.[72] In revelation, God's self-consciousness is communicated by the Holy Spirit to the seat of human self-consciousness, making the believer aware of his standing and relationship with God. As Hendry puts it,

> The Spirit constitutes the subjective condition which is necessary for the apprehension and recognition of the objective self-manifestation of God in Christ; for the Spirit is God knowing himself, and to receive the Spirit is to participate in that knowledge.[73]

The most important passage in this context is 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. There, Paul writes of the role of the Spirit in revelation and explicitly draws an analogy between the human spirit as the seat of a person's knowledge of his own thoughts and the Holy Spirit as the communicator of God's own knowledge of himself. The kind of knowledge available in this way through the Spirit is, Paul declares, unavailable from any other source. The "unspiritual man", and indeed the "carnal" Christian, cannot know the things of God, since it is only by the Spirit that they are made known. But the outcome for those who possess the Spirit is the "mind of Christ". In the context of the argument in 1 Corinthians, the "mind of Christ" refers to the knowledge of the "depths of God", that wisdom which

is available to those who trust in Christ and so receive the Spirit. But the phrase also carries overtones of another meaning, the "character" or "attitude" of Christ, as for example in Philippians 2. The implication is that the knowledge of God is something which works in a human life from the inside out, beginning with the spirit, the seat of self-consciousness or subjective identity and working outward through the change in character enabled by the gift of the Spirit. Such "wisdom" as does not arise in this way is, declares James, "unspiritual and devilish."[74]

Knowledge of self and the world is the product of agency, that power of choice and self-constitution with which men and women are endowed in creation. In the same way, the subjective dimension of revelation is the product of agency, God's own agency experienced by the believer in the form of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Learning is the outcome of a search for identity which is the expression of the God-given power of self-constitution. Revelation, similarly, is the outcome of the gift of a new identity as children of God on the model of Jesus Christ, which is realised in the believer's life by means of the Spirit. The source of revelation is supernatural, but the manner in which it is appropriated is entirely natural. It involves the mechanisms of learning and identity formation already in place as the result of the created relationship with God which the believer shares with all men and women. The experience of revelation is a process of learning, but it is a process of a particular kind, one whose distinctive characteristic is the centrality of Christ, whose Person constitutes the objective datum of revelation.

Notes

1. *The Dignity of Man,* tr. Wallis. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, p.12.

2. *Letters and Papers from Prison,* p.173.

3. Kelsey, "Human Being", *Christian Theology,* ed.Hodgson and King, p.141; Anderson, *On Being Human,* p.vii; Pannenberg, *Anthropology,* p.11f. The anthropological basis of theology is seminally expressed in the theology of Schleiermacher.

4. Jenkins, *Glory of Man,* p.3-12.

5. Von Rad, *Genesis,* p.70-71; Cairns, *Image,* p.20-21.

6. See below, p.173f.

7. Von Rad, p.57f. See also Eichrodt, *Old Testament,* vol 2, p.147f.

8. Von Rad, *loc.cit;* Berkouwer, *Man,* p.70-72, Pannenberg, *Anthropology,* p.75.

9. Barth, *Dogmatics III/1,* p.191-202, *III/2,* p.203-324.

10. Torrance, *Theological Science,* p.32.

11. See above, p.32-34.

12. This point emerges even more strongly in Genesis 9:2-6. While, after the Flood, man is given the beasts for food, to shed the blood of man is a capital offence, since man bears the image of God. Eichrodt, *op.cit.,* p.118f.

13. See above, p.23-24.

14. See above, p.47f. In the case of behaviourism, the implicit basis in Humean empiricism is demonstrated by Charles Taylor, *Explanation.*

15. See above, p.24f.

16. Genesis 2:7. See below, next section, for discussion of the interpretation of the "spirit" terminology.

17. Genesis 2:19.

18. Genesis 3:19.

19. The question of the relationship between man and nature inevitably raises the problem of evolution, and makes it necessary to give a brief account of the status of evolutionary theory in relation to theological anthropology.

The first point to be made is that "evolution", as an approach to science as a whole, and particularly biology, is a metaphysical and philosophical point of view. Its roots go back to the materialism of Hobbes and the mechanism of eighteenth century philosophers like Hartley for whom man was to be understood exclusively in terms of nature. Another important element was Hume's sceptical demolition of the cosmological argument, which undermines the necessity of belief in a transcendent Creator. Evolution, then, was a philosophical outlook long before it became a scientific theory, and continues to be essentially a philosophical outlook. There are a great many theories of evolution but all depend upon overall philosophical, and particularly anthropological, assumptions within which the evidence is interpreted.

One of the principle planks of the scientific argument for evolution is the theory of natural selection. But natural selection alone is not enough to demonstrate the validity of evolutionary theory as a whole. Natural selection can be said to *assist* evolution only if it is assumed that there is something in the constitution of matter which is predisposed to

the formation of life and, eventually, intelligence. As a recent correspondent in *The Listener* put it, "To advance it as *the* evolutionary drive is like saying that a rocket rises solely on account of getting lighter as fuel is used up." *(Listener,* Feb 19, 1987, p.17) The relation of natural selection to evolution as a whole is similar to that of stimulus-response theory to behaviourism. The theory itself may be regarded as valid for the particular area of experience to which it refers, but to extend it to cover human behaviour as a whole involves the importation of a considerable body of methodological and metaphysical assumptions, the same body of assumptions which is involved in transforming natural selection into a full-blown theory of evolution.

The question which science cannot answer is whether, whether or not there is a mechanism within the constitution of matter which could achieve the "rolling out" of the forms of life we find on the planet, God is personally involved in the process as its transcendent Source, its Creator. The issue is between metaphysical approaches, the one denying the necessity for "that hypothesis", the other affirming it. (In the modern context, Deism, despite its considerable residual influence, may be said to be a variety of evolutionism.) In the light of this conclusion, Pannenberg's comment, "The idea that there was an original unity of humankind with God which was lost through a fall into sin is incompatible with our currently available scientific knowledge about the historical beginnings of our race," (*Anthropology,* p.57) fatally misses the point. If "currently available scientific knowledge" is taken to validate the metaphysical assumptions of evolutionism, there can, indeed, be no "artificial attempts to rescue traditional theological formulas." But the failure to see that scientific conclusions do not and by their nature

never could validate their philosophical and metaphysical foundations invalidates his argument and vitiates the approach of the whole book, which is based on it.

It is possible, despite Pannenberg's doubts, to take Brunner's position. Brunner interprets the image as an "origin", if not a historical then a divine origin, and sin a "contradiction" of this origin. To transfer the image from origin to *goal*, in the manner of modern theology, is, he believes, to capitulate to optimistic evolutionism. (*Man in Revolt,* p.82-88.)

20. Ryle, *Mind,* p.177-189. According to A.J.Ayer, the subject is something which can be demonstrated but not described, known but not comprehended. *Problem of Knowledge*, p.184-187.

21. Ramsey, "Elusiveness", p.198-201.

22. Ryle, *op.cit.*, p.182-189.

23. James, *Principles of Psychology*, p.314-350.

24. See the argument of Kant in the "Transcendental Deduction of the Categories", *Pure Reason,* A84-130, B116-169, p.120-175. Kant distinguishes "pure apperception" from "empirical apperception" or "inner sense". "Empirical apperception" is the "self" of which we are aware. It is an objectification of the subject. Our knowledge, Kant argues, is never of objects in themselves but only of appearances. Accordingly, before it can become an object of knowledge, the self must be become an appearance. This takes place when it is projected into the sensible manifold by means of an action. The action by which the self becomes part of the sensible manifold is *synthesis*, the process by which unity is imposed on the manifold. What is known is the action - the performance, but not the performer.

"We intuit ourselves [ie.perceive ourselves] only as inwardly affected *by ourselves*." *(Pure Reason,* B156, p.158) Or, as he put it in the first edition,

> The mind could never think its identity in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this identity *a priori*, if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its act, whereby it subordinates all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, thereby rendering possible their interconnection according to *a priori* rules. (*Pure Reason,* A108, p.137)

The term "pure apperception" refers to the knowing subject, the "I". The "I think" or transcendental ego is the presupposition for the activity of synthesis. The "transcendental unity of apperception" is the condition for the attainment of knowledge by means of synthesis. It is this which enables the subject to impose unity on what would otherwise be a confused mass of perceptual data. And it is because we are aware of such a unity that we are driven to presuppose the existence of the transcendental subject.

> Only insofar as I can grasp the manifold of representations in one consciousness, do I call them one and all *mine*. For other-wise I should have as many-coloured and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself. (*Pure Reason*, B134, p.154)

Kant's argument is rejected by empiricists on the ground that the sensible manifold need not be thought of as confused, requiring the synthesising action of the knowing subject. But sensation need not be thought of as a "blooming buzzing confusion" in order to require an active contribution of the subject for its comprehension. It is the limitation of

cognitive capacity and consequent need for selective attention which most effectively points to the role of the subject, a subject understood, moreover, as agent.

The epistemology presented in chapter 2 of this thesis differs from Kant in that we have postulated a process of *interaction* in place of the simple combination of passive sensibility and active understanding. This change has far-reaching consequences for the Kantian scheme. In interaction, the "categories" of the understanding, expressed in schemata, are formed and modified by experience. There is, therefore, no need for a system of universal innate categories. This disrupts the static, a-historical nature of Kant's scheme and allows for the influence of social and cultural context and psychological history. What remains, however, is the point outlined in the "Transcendental Deduction", the necessity to assume the presence of a knowing subject.

For a similar view of the value of the Transcendental Deduction, see Hamlyn, "Perception and Agency", in *Perception, Learning and the Self,* p.52 and Korner, *Kant,* p.56-59.

25. Erikson, *Identity*, p.149. See Allport's similar comments, p.137-38.

26. Fordham, p.47-49.

27. Tournier, *Meaning of Persons,* p.7f.

28. Kolnai, "Agency and Freedom", *Royal Institute Lectures,* p.24. Kolnai points out the connection with the thought of Kant's First Critique, in which the intelligible ego acts as a cause, that is an initiator of new chains of events. The agent intervenes in the causal pattern of the world without invalidating the chain of cause and effect. Kant, however, places the agent's motive exclusively within the moral context, attempting to explain it in

terms of moral self-legislation. Agency in its fullest sense is the foundation for moral experience, but applies to all contexts. A similar point is made by Hampshire, *Thought and Action,* p.213-216.

29. See above, p.66-67.

30. Hampshire, *op.cit.,* p.101-134.

31. Bigge, *Learning Theories,* p.180f.

32. Hampshire, *op.cit.,* p.133.

33. See above, p.120f.

34. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith,* §4, p.12f. See Tounier, *Strong and Weak.*

35. 2 Samuel 9-20, 1 Kings 1-2; Genesis 37-50; Ruth; Isaiah 10:4f, 37:21f; Jeremiah 5:14f; Isaiah 45:1-7; Proverbs 16:9, 21:1; Matthew 26:24; Romans 9-11.

36. Kelsey, "Human Being", p.154-167, esp. p.164f.

37. *ibid.,* p.152-156. Cairns, *Image,* p.188-192.

38. The concept of the *proprium,* which Gordon Allport uses to define the "self", includes those things which are particularly loved, under the category of "ego-extension".

39. The fact that persons can be known only in a manner distinct from other objects leads to speculation about the nature of "person" as an ontological category, which has a long history in Christian theology. It was the need to preserve the concept of person from reduction to the terms appropriate to the analysis of nature which lay at the heart of the doctrinal debates of the early centuries, in particular in the context of the discussion of the correct way of understanding the Trinity and the Person of Christ, leading up to the

promulgation of the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Definition. The discussion turns on the meaning to be given to the Greek word *hypostasis* in relation to the term *ousia*. In secular usage the terms had broadly the same meaning, namely "being", but the term *hypostasis* was adopted by the Fathers to stand for the distinct "Persons" of the Trinity in contradistinction to the *ousia* which they share in common. Thus, Gregory Nazianzus could write, "The Son is not the Father, but he is what the Father is," and Basil could write,

> It is indispensable to have clear understanding that, as he who fails to confess the community of the essence (*ousia*) falls into polytheism so he who refuses to grant the distinction of the *hypostases* is carried away into Judaism...For merely to enumerate the differences of Persons (*prosopa*) is insufficient; we must confess each Person (*prosopon*) to have an existence in real *hypostasis*.
>
> (Basil of Caesarea, *Ep*.ccx.5. Stevenson, *Creeds*, p.112.)

It is extremely difficult to grasp the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* because of its apparent similarity to the Aristotelian distinction between the general and the particular. In the West, there was a tendency to assimilate the understanding of persons to Aristotelian categories, seen for example in Boethius' definition of "person" in man as *substantia individua rationalis naturae*, where *substantia* is a translation of *hypostasis*. This makes the human person an individual of the particular rational species, man, but it has the disastrous consequence of making the Persons of the Godhead "individuals of the species 'divinity'", thereby destroying the unity of the Trinity.

Is the idea of *hypostasis* as an ontological category denoting personal existence applicable interchangeably to both God and man? If the Fathers fail to make this connection, it is because of their reluctance to be drawn into definitions of either *ousia* or *hypostasis*. But the analogy was certainly developed in the twelfth century by Richard of St.Victor. Rejecting the Aristotelian framework, he appeals to the human experience of subjectivity as the basis for our understanding of the Trinity. "Person" he defines as *divinae naturae incommunicabilis existentia*, or the incommunicable "standing forth" of the divine nature. The substance of the individual, he maintained, tells you the What?, the nature or *ousia* of that individual. But the person tells you the Who?, the only "definition" of which is a proper name, an incommunicable and irreducible individual. (Richard of St.Victor, *De Trinitate*, iv.6-7.)

If the image of God is to be interpreted in terms of the ontological category, "person", then it is the relation between *ousia* and *hypostasis* which is shared by both God and man. The *ousia* of God and man are entirely different, but in both God and man *ousia* individuates not simply as an individual actualisation of the common substance on the Aristotelian model, but as *hypostasis*, a unique and irreducible subject, a Who? rather than a What?

40. Stevenson, *Seven Theories*, p.3-8.

41. *Nature and Destiny*, vol.I, p.3f.

42. The difficult concept of the "formal image" or the "remnant" of the image can also be reinterpreted in these terms. What the idea of the "formal image" points to is the question at the heart of existence posed by the need for definitive identity. It is the "gap" left by

the lack of the knowledge of true identity caused by the broken relationship with God. The material image is known only in Jesus Christ.

43. See above, p.89-90.

44. See above, p.11f., for the use of the term, "subjective dimension" of revelation.

45. Moule, *Holy Spirit,* p.7; Lampe, *Spirit,* p.34.

46. Hendry, *Holy Spirit,* p.107.

47. Niebuhr, *Man I,* p.13f, 27-29, 151f.

48. Congar, *Holy Spirit I,* p.3.

49. *ibid.,* p.4; Snaith, *Ideas,* p.146-150.

50. Snaith, *loc.cit.*; Moule, p.7f.

51. Brunner, *Man in Revolt,* p.237.

52. Barth, *Dogmatics III/2,* p.354.

53. See Hendry, p.29, 48-52; Moule, p.11-13, 16-17; Heron, *Holy Spirit,* p.140f.

54. Hendry, p.105.

55. *ibid.,* p.107. See above, p.151f.

56. Congar, *Holy Spirit I,* p.5-7; Lampe, *Spirit,* p.41-43.

57. Congar, *op.cit.,* p.8-9.

58. *ibid.,* p.12.

59. *ibid.,* p.15.

60. Congar, *Holy Spirit II,* p.73f.

61. Congar, *Holy Spirit I,* p.29f.; Lampe, p.73f.

62. Newbigin, *Household,* p.87f.

63. Dunn, *Baptism,* p.4, 224f. Dunn sums up his position as follows:

> Faith demands baptism as its expression
>
> Baptism demands faith for its validity
>
> The gift of the Spirit presupposes faith as its condition
>
> Faith is shown to be genuine by the gift of the Spirit. (p.228)

64. Hendry, p.25.

65. Congar, *Holy Spirit I,* p.37.

66. Galatians 5:22-23.

67. See eg. Romans 5:5 and 13:8-10, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Jeremiah 31:31-34.

68. Heron, *op.cit.,* p.44f; Congar, *Holy Spirit II,* p.120f. See especially Romans 7:7-8:8.

69. Congar, *Holy Spirit I,* p.32, citing Galatians 2:20 and 3:26-27, Philippians 1:21, Colossians 3:1f and 3:11, 1 Corinthians 15:28.

70. John 16:13-14 and 17:3.

71. Moule, *Holy Spirit,* p.7f.

72. Romans 8:16.

73. Hendry, *Holy Spirit,* p.34.

74. James 3:15.

The work of the Spirit in the believer has a parallel in the unbeliever. As the Spirit makes the believer aware of the character of Christ and of his standing before God, he does the same thing in the unbeliever in the process of conviction of sin. Congar, *Holy Spirit II*, p.122f.

An example of this may be given from the experience of Charles Colson, formerly one of President Nixon's aides:

> During the throes of Watergate, I went to talk with my friend, Tom Phillips. I was curious, maybe even a little envious, about the changes in his life. His explanation - that he had "accepted Jesus Christ" - baffled me. I was tired, empty inside, sick of scandal and accusations, but not once did I see myself as having really sinned. Politics was a dirty business, and I was good at it. And what I had done, I rationalised, was no different from the usual political maneuvering. What's more, right and wrong were relative, and my motives were for the good of the country - or so I believed.
>
> But that night when I left Tom's home and sat alone at my car, my own sin - not just dirty politics, but the hatred and pride and evil so deep within me - was thrust before my eyes, forcefully and painfully. For the first time in my life, I felt unclean, and worst of all, I could not escape. In those moments of clarity, I found myself driven irresistably into the arms of the living God.

(Charles Colson, *Who Speaks for God?* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, p.138)