

THE THOMIST

A SPECULATIVE QUARTERLY REVIEW
OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY



EDITORS: THE DOMINICAN FATHERS OF THE PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

Publishers: The Thomist Press, Washington 17, D. C.

VOL. XVI

JANUARY, 1953

No. 1

EXEMPLAR CAUSALITY AND THE SUPERNATURAL ORDER



BOTH the purpose of this study and the profound theological problem which lies behind it demand a brief introduction. Recent years have seen many attempts to force a gap between the teaching of the Latin and the Greek Fathers concerning man's intimate supernatural relations with God. According to the theologians who supported these attempts, the Latins started from the notion of unity in the Divine Essence, which is common to all Three Persons. Applying that unity strictly to all the divine *ad extra* operations, they explained the relationship between the soul in a state of grace and the Trinity according to the iron law of appropriation. The Greeks, on the other hand, taught a more personal doctrine. They started from a scriptural basis. i. e. from the idea of the Trinity of Persons in God, and consequently they were able to discover, in those same *ad extra* operations, a

personal relationship between the soul and the Divine Persons which was based on something more than mere appropriation. This theory, which started with Petau, Sheeben and others, was not able to stand up to the serious criticism of its fundamental tenets by Froget and Galtier,¹ so much so that, at one time, it appeared to have lost most of its adherents, only to be revived once more through the influence on Catholic thought of the modern existential philosophies, with their doctrine of contact with God through immanent experience and the fundamental consciousness of one's own existence. This is the theme which runs through all existential writings, from Kierkegaard and Jaspers to Marcel, Lavelle and Zubiri. In their view man's inner consciousness reveals God to him as the Transcendent Being in whom all exist—a vain hope and a useless theory, perhaps, but one which reveals a mental anxiety, together with a desire for God which He, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, has already satisfied in the supernatural order through the gift of sanctifying grace with the subsequent Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul.

Under pressure from this modern philosophy theologians returned to the attack, because many of them considered that the classical explanations were not sufficient to satisfy this desire for God revealed in the existential writings. Would it not be possible to establish a more personal relationship between the soul in grace and the Three Divine Persons? To many of them the doctrine of appropriation still seemed vague and deficient, although they were able to see the difficulties which lay ahead. On the one hand, the Scriptures seemed to imply this personal and individual activity, whereas the unity of the Divine Essence in the Three Persons seemed to exclude it. Also the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* contained a warning which could not be ignored:

but, under pain of departing from true doctrine and the true teaching of the Church, they [that is, the theologians] must all

¹ Cf. B. Froget, O.P., *De l'Habitation du Saint Esprit dans les âmes Justes*, pp. 447 sq.; Galtier, S. J., *L'Habitation en nous des Trois Personnes*, pp. 4-150.

hold this as quite certain, that any explanation of this mystical union is to be rejected if it makes the faithful in any way pass beyond the order of created things and so trespass on the Divine sphere that one single attribute of the eternal God could be predicated of them in the proper sense. Moreover, this certain truth must be firmly kept in mind, that in these matters all things are to be held common to the Blessed Trinity, insofar as the same relate to God as the supreme efficient cause.²

This clear teaching of the Vicar of Christ altered the situation considerably. The approach along the line of efficient causality was definitely closed. Any attempt to establish such a personal contact between the soul and the individual Persons through formal causality would lead inevitably to open conflict with the decrees of Trent, while material causality was useless and absurd. There remained only two lines of approach to be tried, that of final causality and that through the notion of the exemplar cause. Theologians have turned their attention to the latter as holding out more hope of the personal relationship which they are seeking.³

The purpose of this article is to study the notion of exemplar causality as it is developed for us by St. Thomas, in order to see if it can throw some light on these great mysteries of the supernatural life of man, including the mystery of Grace, the adopted sonship and the Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul. The few attempts which have been made up to now to study this approach are, to our way of thinking, deficient, mainly because the clear philosophical notions have been wanting.

All these reasons force us to begin any study of this problem with a brief summary of the philosophical basis for exemplar causality as St. Thomas understands it. The exemplar cause has its origin either inside or outside the mind, but, when we come to examine it more closely, we discover that it is essenti-

² *Mystici Corporis*, C. T. S. Trans., p. 48, n. 78.

³ Cf. Dom. Lucien Chambat, O. S. B., *Les Missions des Personnes de la Sainte Trinité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Editions de Fontenelle; Abbaye S. Wandrille, 1947).

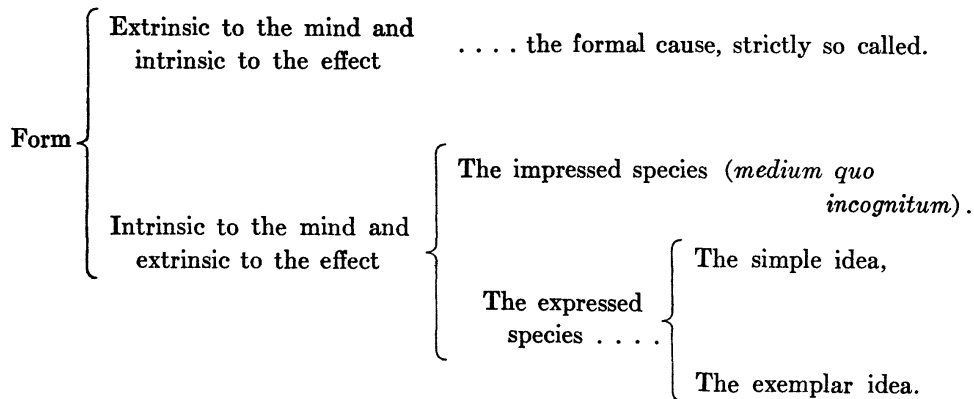
ally something which is internal to the mental process. Thus, the artist may have an external model for his painting, but that model reaches his canvas by means of the mental idea which he forms of it. For this reason no two artists have ever reproduced the same external object or scene in exactly the same way. In its strictest sense, therefore, the exemplar is that form or idea which the agent has in mind, and which he seeks to reproduce in an external medium. In this description of the exemplar the words "form or idea" indicate the genus, since the exemplar naturally belongs to the realm of ideas. The rest of the definition serves to distinguish the exemplar from all other ideas. From this it will be evident that the exemplar cannot be identified with the impressed species, since of its very nature the exemplar must be clearly known, while the impressed species does not form the object of knowledge, being, in the language of the text books, a "medium quo incognitum."

Nor can we identify the exemplar with *every* expressed species or idea properly so-called, but only with those which are regarded by the intellect as capable of external reproduction. The whole idea of the exemplar is that it should be an internal model of what the agent wishes to produce externally, for which reason it must belong to the sphere of the practical intellect rather than to that of the speculative. Since it cannot exist outside an intelligent cause, St. Thomas defines it as "forma quam aliquid imitatur ex intentione agentis qui determinat sibi finem."⁴ From which it follows that, even though there may be an intimate relation between them, nevertheless the exemplar is also clearly distinguished from the internal form which enters into the intimate constitution of the effect.

One look at any work of art will be more than sufficient to prove to us that the exemplar undoubtedly fulfills all the conditions necessary for a real cause; but, when we attempt to determine the exact nature of its causal influence on the final effect, we find ourselves in a more difficult position. Unless we wish to claim that the exemplar forms a fifth class of cause all

⁴ *De Verit.*, q. 3, a. 1.

on its own, we are forced, it would seem, to reduce it to one of the four causes. The classification is by no means an obvious one, and so it need not surprise us to find that there are several opinions on this subject. In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* St. Thomas includes the exemplar under the general heading of the formal cause, but it is clear that, in this passage, he is using the word "formal" in an analogous sense. In other words, there are several classes of things which may be called forms, some which exist inside the mind and others which are external to it.⁵ A simple scheme will make his teaching clear.



This does not, however, mean to say that there is no relation whatever between the exemplar and the other causes apart from the formal cause. In some ways, as St. Thomas himself indicates, there is a very definite connection between the causal activity of the exemplar and that of the final, efficient and instrumental causes. Nevertheless, since it seems to have much more in common with the formal cause, the exemplar is usually called the formal extrinsic cause. The reason why we incline to the opinion which relates these two causes so closely is simple. Not merely is the idea a productive form which has

⁵ V *Metaphys.*, lect. 2: "Alio autem modo dicitur causa species et exemplum, i. e. exemplar: et haec est causa formalis, quae comparatur dupliciter ad rem. Uno modo sicut forma intrinseca rei, et haec dicitur species. Alio modo sicut extrinseca a re, ad cuius tamen similitudinem res fieri dicitur, et secundum hoc exemplar rei dicitur forma."

for its object the formation of a new effect of which it is a true cause, but also it is the rule and the measure of the thing produced, specifying it in much the same way as the external object specifies the faculty which perceives it.⁶ For which reason we say that any effect is more or less perfect according to the degree of accuracy with which it represents the idea in the mind of the person who produced it. This depends, to a great extent, on the intrinsic form which constitutes the effect in a given species and is, at the same time, an imitation of the model in the mind which produces it. In this sense the roles of the intrinsic form and of the exemplar coincide, i. e. insofar as both are necessary to constitute the effect in a given species and both are forms.

The exemplar reaches out to the effect produced through the medium of the efficient and the instrumental cause, but since these are not in the genus of forms, it is not related to them so closely as it is to the intrinsic form. The relation between the exemplar and the final cause is obvious, but whereas the end in view provides both the motive for action and also the term produced and is willed as such by the agent, the exemplar is not desired or willed for itself, but rather with a view to the effect. The notion which is really specific to the exemplar is that of something which is *imitable*.

This explanation which is so important for a full understanding of the role of the exemplar cause has very deep roots in the metaphysics of Aquinas. In it we can find the ultimate reason for many of those philosophical axioms which appear so frequently in his writings. For example, the fact that every effect is contained in its cause “*eminenter*,” i. e. on a higher plane, is sufficiently illustrated, not merely by the power of the cause, but also by the fact that, if the cause is an intelligent one, the very form which is destined to constitute the effect in one species rather than another is contained in the exemplar idea. Applying this to the Divine Cause St. Thomas points

⁶ Cf. *de Verit.*, q. 3, a. 3.

out that even those things which, in themselves, are without life are alive in God.⁷

Similarly, if we consider the very notion of truth itself, and if we really wish to establish the reason for St. Thomas' definition of it as "adaequatio rei et intellectus," we can find the full and perfect explanation only with reference to the exemplar idea, i. e. insofar as all creatures represent perfectly the divine idea according to which they were created. This likeness lies at the root of all truth, and to ignore it would lead us, in the long run, to a purely relative or voluntarist idea of truth, lacking in all ontological value.

We have already mentioned the fact that to act in conformity with and through the medium of exemplar ideas is something which is proper to beings possessing intelligence. St. Thomas brings out the full significance of this when discussing the difference between rational and irrational natures. In the latter the "form" of the effect as it exists in the cause is to be found in the nature, and by means of it we can prove the truth of the axiom that "omne agens agit sibi simile." In the intellectual creature, however, over and above this natural tendency to produce effects in its own likeness, there is also to be found the exemplar idea, which is the intellectual pattern or model according to the details and the design of which the effect is produced.⁸ This is of considerable importance when we come to apply these general notions of exemplar causality to the First Cause, God.

There will be no need to stress the fact that, as the First Cause, God must have in Himself the exemplar idea of all

⁷ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 18, a. 4, ad 2: "Dicendum quod exemplata oportet conformari exemplari secundum rationem formae, non autem secundum modum essendi. . . . Unde et rationes rerum, quae in seipsis non vivunt, in mente divina sunt vita, quia in mente divina habent esse divinum."

⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 15, a. 1: "Agens autem non ageret propter formam nisi in quantum similitudo formae est in ipso. Quod quidem contingit dupliciter. In quibusdam agentibus praeexistit forma rei fiendae secundum esse naturale, sicut in his quae agunt per naturam . . . in quibusdam, vero, secundum esse intelligibile, ut in his quae agunt per intellectum."

creatures. However, although all such effects have their model in God, that does not mean to say that they all imitate His divine perfections in the same way. Thus, e. g. the exemplar of color which is in the Divine Cause is not quite the same as that of goodness or truth. All the magnificent effects of light and of color are found, as in their exemplar, both in the divine essence and also in the divine intellect in which their archetypal idea is formed; but they are there only virtually, i. e. inasmuch as the divine nature has the power to produce them. On the contrary, when we consider the created perfections of goodness and truth, not merely are their exemplar ideas to be found in the divine intellect, but also their concept is to be found formally in the divine nature as such. Naturally, such perfections are to be found in God in a much more perfect way than in His creatures, being infinite and free from all imperfection. Nevertheless, they do actually exist in God according to their formal concept. Therefore, we can say that God is good and true, and we mean that just as it stands. Not so, however, can we say that God is color.⁹

These truths are familiar to every theologian, but a deeper penetration into them is necessary if we are to understand the applications of the doctrine of exemplar causality to the spiritual life of the soul.

The exemplar ideas of all created things can be found both in the divine essence and also in the divine wisdom, but not always in quite the same way. The very simplicity of God demands that His divine knowledge should be one simple act of understanding. In that eternal act by which He comprehends His own divine essence He also knows the infinite variety of ways in which that essence can be imitated

⁹ *I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 4: “dicendum quod exemplar rerum est in Deo dupliciter: vel quantum ad id quod est in intellectu suo, et sic secundum ideas est exemplar intellectus divinus omnium quae ab ipso sunt, sicut intellectus artificis per formam artis omnium artificiatorum. Vel quantum ad id quod est in natura sua ratione suae bonitatis qua bonus est exemplar omnis bonitatis, et similiter est de veritate. Unde patet quod non eodem modo Deus est exemplar coloris et veritatis.” Cf. *Quodl.* IV, q. 1, a. 1.

in creatures. Thus, this one simple idea contains in its infinity the essences of all individuals. Such variety in absolute simplicity is not impossible in God, as Aquinas points out,¹⁰ because there is a difference between the idea as such and the exemplar. The latter is destined to be reproduced outside the thinking subject, and thus always implies a direct relationship to the effect produced. As St. Thomas says, speaking of this divine essence and its simple idea, “secundum ergo quod exemplar est, secundum hoc se habet ad omnia quae a Deo fiunt secundum aliquod tempus. Secundum vero quod cognoscitivum est, se habet ad omnia quae cognoscuntur a Deo, etiamsi nullo tempore fiant.”¹¹

It is, however, essential that this relationship between God and His creatures which is based on the exemplar idea should not be misunderstood. Every relation between God and the created world has to be judged from two very different points of view. From that of the creatures, there is a real relation between them and God both as the First Cause and also as the Exemplar Idea. From God’s point of view, however, such a real relationship would be impossible, and thus in place of it there exists a relation of reason only, implying no dependence of God on His creatures. Such is the constant teaching of Aquinas.¹²

To sum up, then—the divine wisdom is the exemplar cause of all creatures insofar as God, by His perfect knowledge of His divine essence, sees the infinite variety of created imitations of that perfection. This He sees in one simple act of knowledge which virtually contains many ideas when it is compared with the actual effects produced. But what of the divine essence itself? Is not that also the exemplar of creatures, since, however imperfect they may be, all creatures are the finite imitations of the infinite perfection of God? The attempt to reply to

¹⁰ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 15, a. 2c., et ad 2; q. 44, a. 3c.; *de Pot.*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3; *II Cont. Gent.*, c. 2.

¹¹ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 15, a. 3c., cf. *de Verit.*, q. 12, a. 6c.

¹² Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 28, a. 1, ad 3; q. 32, a. 2c.; q. 13, a. 7, ad 4; *I Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 1; *ibid.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 1; d. 37, q. 2, a. 3.

that question will take us one step further along the road we wish to travel in this article.

In God everything which implies causality belongs, of its very nature, to the divine essence, since God is the cause of created things by His essence which is identified with the causal attributes of intellect and will.¹³ However, as we have already seen, not all the perfections of the creature are to be found in the same way in that divine essence. Some are found there only virtually, insofar as God has the power to produce them in His creatures by His causal activity; while others are to be found there in their formal concepts, but in a more perfect way than they exist in creatures. It is this latter class of perfections which gives rise to the image of God in His creatures, inasmuch as the creature possesses a created participation of them in a greater or a lesser degree. For this reason St. Thomas says, “unumquodque dicitur bonum bonitate divina, sicut primo principio exemplari effectivo et formali totius bonitatis. Nihilominus, tamen, unumquodque dicitur bonum similitudine bonitatis sibi inhaerente, quae est formaliter sua bonitas denominans ipsum.”¹⁴

It is interesting to notice that at the very root of this question of exemplar causality in God lies the fact that the creature participates, not merely in the perfections of the divine essence as such, but also in the perfection of the divine being.¹⁵ In God this being is identified with His very essence, while in creatures it is distinct, since no creature can be pure act. Also the divine essence is not merely the foundation of the divine exemplar causality, but also it holds the key to all human knowledge. If there is any harmony between the human intellect and being, that harmony which we call truth,—it is due

¹³ *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 13: “Omne illud quod in divinis causalitatem habet ad essentiam pertinet, cum Deus, per essentiam suam, sit causa rerum.”

¹⁴ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 6, a. 4c.; cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 27, a. 3; *I Cont. Gent.*, cc. 40-42; *de Verit.*, q. 2, a. 4.

¹⁵ *I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2c.: “Unde patet quod divinum esse dicitur esse omnium rerum a quo omne esse creatum effective et exemplariter manat.” Cf. *Quodl.* IV, q. 1, a. 1.

to the fact that man's intellect is made on the pattern of God's, and because his knowledge is a participation of that infinite knowledge which is the exemplar idea of all things. Man can know truth because the things which form the object of his knowledge conform absolutely to the divine exemplar idea which, in its turn is based on the divine essence.¹⁶

According to the degree of participation in the divine perfections we can measure the perfection of the individual creature both in its nature and also in its imitation of the divine exemplar. According to the degree of perfection in this imitation we say that, whereas all creatures are made to the likeness of God, some, by reason of their special perfection, are made "in His Image."

When speaking of this image of God in His creatures we have to be careful to distinguish two distinct uses of the term. In its wide sense "image" can be used both to signify the exemplar idea which God has of all creatures by means of the operation of the divine intellect, and also the creatures themselves as being imitations *ad extra* of that idea. Apart from this general use, however, the word image has a strict theological meaning when applied to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. In this sense it refers to the Word of God, who is the perfect Image of the Father, proceeding from Him by intellectual generation. In this sense, as St. Thomas tells us, the word signifies the Person directly and the essence indirectly or "in obliquo," as identified with the Person.¹⁷

Thus it is possible for us to distinguish between the idea as such and the Word of God, since the idea signifies directly the exemplar in the divine mind, while the Person of the Word implies first of all origin by a process of intellectual generation which gives rise to a perfect Image of the Father, in which Image creatures have their due place.¹⁸ Not merely are they

¹⁶ *De Verit.*, q. 3, a. 2: "Et ideo, ipsa divina essentia, cointellectis diversis proportionibus rerum ad eam, est idea uniuscuiusque rei . . . et est quidem una omnium ex parte essentiae, sed pluralitas invenitur ex parte diversarum proportionum creaturarum ad ipsam."

¹⁷ Cf. *I Sent.*, d. 28, q. 2, a. 1c.

¹⁸ Cf. *de Verit.*, q. 4, a. 4, ad 4, et ad 5.

represented therein, but also the Word of God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is the operative principle through which they come into being. The perfect Image of God, then, is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Thus, when the word “image” is used of creatures it will be necessary to understand that application properly so as not to confuse the creature with the Creator.¹⁹ There are certain conditions which have to be fulfilled before anything can be said to be a true image. First, there must be a similarity between it and the object of which it is the image, and this similarity must be not merely analogous or generic, but a likeness in *species*, or at least, in some quality which is regarded as a sign of that species. In this way a man’s face, represented in a picture, is said to be an image of him insofar as it reproduces the various lines and contours of his face.

Secondly, the image must have its origin in the object or person of which it is an image. We do not say that one egg is the image of another, but we do speak of a son as being the image of his father or a portrait as being the image of the sitter. From this it is now possible to distinguish several types of image. There is the artificial image, as in a photograph or painting; the intentional image in the mental expressed species; and lastly, the natural image, which originates from the object of which it is the image, has the same nature and the same mode of being. It is in this latter sense that we speak of a son as the image of his father. The origin or cause of the image is, strictly speaking, the exemplar, while the object itself which proceeds from it with these conditions is the image.²⁰ The foundation of this relationship of image to exemplar is that particular quality of the object which formally fulfills these conditions. Thus, a son is the image of his father in his very nature; the portrait is the image of the sitter insofar as it reproduces in itself the lines and the contours of his face.

Once this has been clearly understood we can see why the

¹⁹ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 1; *ibid.*, ad 2; *I Sent.*, d. 34, q. 2, a. 2c.

²⁰ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 35, a. 1, ad 1; a. 2, ad 3.

term “image” is reserved in its strictest sense to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, since the Son alone proceeds from the Father by way of intellectual generation in identity of nature. Consequently, only the generation of the Son by the Father demands, *by the very nature of the originative process*, the production of a term which is the image of the Father in all things. For this reason St. Thomas says that the term “image” cannot be applied to the Holy Ghost, except insofar as He has the identical divine nature with the Father and the Son—and not because of the nature of the originative process itself.

When we apply these notions of image to creatures we find that, while all without discrimination are made in the likeness of God, only the rational or intellectual creatures are called images of God. Even then, as Aquinas tells us, it is better to say that they are made “in the image of God,” to indicate that, at best, they are imperfect images.²¹

In the purely natural order, man is the image of God because of his faculties of intellect and will, which give him a natural aptitude and capacity for the knowledge and the love of God, not as He is in Himself, but as He can be known and loved through His created effects in the natural order. This doctrine is closely allied to what we have said with regard to the intimate connection between God and truth. All our natural knowledge is but a participation of the divine truth, which impresses itself upon our minds through the medium of created things—a fact which at once brings us up against the doctrine of the divine exemplar causality.²²

When we apply this same notion to the supernatural order, we find that man is made in the image of God insofar as he possesses a supernatural capacity for knowing and loving God as He is in Himself, imperfectly in this world by faith and charity, and perfectly once he is face to face with God in the beatific vision. This image of the divine perfections is a direct effect of sanctifying grace, and would be impossible without that gift.²³

²¹ *Ibid.*, a. 2, ad 3; q. 93, a. 1, ad 2.

²² Cf. *Quodl.* VIII, a. 4c.; *ibid.*, X, a. 7.

²³ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 4c.

The vision of God face to face is proper to God alone and can never be the proper object of any created intellect in the natural order.²⁴ However, our Faith teaches us that God has granted this face to face vision to His intellectual creatures, and that, in order to make it possible for them to attain it, He has raised them up to the supernatural level. This vision of God would be impossible unless God produced in the intellectual creature some proportion between the created intellect and the divine essence as its object. For this reason we are forced to conclude that sanctifying grace is a created participation of the divine nature itself, which alone can raise man up to the supernatural level and thus make him capable of this vision.

Now, we are indebted to the Salmanticenses for the clear distinction between the two elements which enter into the notion of participation, i. e. that of imitation and that of relationship.²⁵ Any relation between two things is always limited to that point in which they chance to agree and which can be formally predicated of both extremes of the relationship. Imitation goes further than this, because any image represents its exemplar in something which is proper to that exemplar *as it is in itself*. The exemplar and the image may differ to an infinite degree in their mode of being, but, at the same time, there is a relation and a proportion between them which depends on the very notion of exemplar and image. With this in mind St. Thomas says, “Deus non est forma ipsius animae vel voluntatis qua formaliter vivere potest, sed dicitur vita animae sicut principium exemplariter influens vitam gratiae ipsius.”²⁶

Grace is not, then, the divinity itself, but it is the foundation in the supernatural order by reason of which man is said to be made “in the image of God,” having for its exemplar the divine nature itself. Thus, there is a direct proportion between grace and the divinity. We may notice, in passing, that St.

²⁴ Cf. *III Cont. Gent.*, c. 52.

²⁵ Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, I, c. sub; IV, n. 63.

²⁶ Cf. *I Sent.*, d. 17, a. 7, ad 1, et ad 2.

Thomas closes the door against any kind of pantheism by excluding the possibility of God playing the part of the formal intrinsic cause, even in the supernatural order.

Man is the image of God, then, principally because he is raised to the supernatural level through sanctifying grace. Nevertheless, other things are also said to be images of God, and therefore the explanation we have just given is not altogether sufficient of itself to define exactly the nature of grace or to distinguish it clearly from all other created effects, whether natural or supernatural. To do that efficiently it will first of all be necessary to distinguish between the two very different types of image, i. e. the ontological and the intentional.

The intentional or intellectual image belongs, of its very nature, to the order of knowledge, implying a relation between the intellect and its object, or between the object and its representative idea in the mind, in both cases producing a unity between these two extremes which belongs to the intentional order. The ontological image, on the other hand, has its foundation in the real order, as something which reproduces or copies the thing of which it is an image in its very being. Now, it should be obvious that grace is not an image of God in the first sense, because no creature can fully represent to the understanding the divine essence as it is in itself. We are left, therefore, with the ontological image which, as we have already indicated, can be of several kinds. The perfect ontological image demands absolute equality between itself and its exemplar. This equality is not demanded by the imperfect image, which only requires imitation of its exemplar in some way or other.²⁷ Thus, within the Trinity there is a perfect Image, the Word of God; but outside the Trinity there are only imperfect images which vary in their degree of participation in the divine essence and perfections.

²⁷ *Summa Theol.*, q. 93, a. 1: "Aequalitas non est de ratione imaginis, quia, ut Aug. dicit, ubi est imago non continuo est aequalitas . . . est tamen de ratione perfectae imaginis; nam in perfecta imagine non deest aliquid imagini quod insit illi de quo est expressa. Manifestum est autem quod in homine invenitur aliqua

We must keep in mind all the time that the image is always at one extreme of a relationship, and, furthermore, of a relationship which is based on origin. Now, the two extremes of any relation are united merely through the foundation on which that relation is based. Where is this foundation to be found in the case of sanctifying grace? If we can answer that question we shall have discovered not merely the real basis for the supernatural nature of grace, but also the reason why it is an image, however imperfect, of the divine nature *as it is in itself*.

This foundation will have to be found in the very nature of grace itself, and not primarily in the fact that through it we are able to perform acts of virtue which enable us to attain to God as He is in Himself. To look for such a foundation in the virtues alone, in the beatific vision which is the term of grace or even in the act of loving God through the medium of charity, is really a waste of time. It is true that grace is the foundation of such operations, but it is not itself formally operative. Also we have to remember that the mode of being does not enter into the concept of the image, nor indeed, into that of formal participation; whereas the relationship which is the result of the participated form does enter into that concept.²⁸ Thus, St. Thomas says, “*exemplata oportet conformari exemplari secundum rationem formae, non autem secundum modum essendi.*”²⁹ This brings out even more clearly the close connection between the notions of formal cause and exemplar.

Dei similitudo, quae deducitur a Deo sicut ab exemplari. Non est autem similitudo secundum aequalitatem; quia in infinitum excedit exemplar hoc tale exemplatum.”

²⁸ *I Sent.*, d. 34, q. 2, a. 2c.: “Cum Deus sit causa exemplaris omnium rerum, ipsae creaturae proponuntur ut quaedam imago Dei, per quam in ipsum devenire possumus. Similitudo autem in aliqua imagine reperta dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo, quantum ad rationem formae, et sic imago ab exemplari non dissidet, et id quod notat formam imaginis potest etiam exemplari convenire. Alio modo consideratur quantum ad esse quod habet in imagine, et sic dissidet ab exemplari . . . nomina ergo illa quibus designatur ratio formae secundum quam creatura est Dei quasi imago, de Deo et de creatura dicuntur; per prius de Deo, cum illa ratio formae a Deo in creaturam effluat.”

²⁹ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 18, a. 4, ad. 2.

By keeping these facts in mind it should be possible for us to obtain some idea of what we mean when we say that grace is a formal participation in the divine nature in such a way that it implies in itself the notion of image. Grace plays the part in the soul of a new supernatural nature, and this it does by reproducing in a created and imperfect manner the divine nature itself with its perfect activity as the root cause of all the divine operations and perfections. Nothing less than this would do, because grace has for its object the beatific vision, which is proper to God alone. Therefore grace must have for its exemplar the divine nature itself, and consequently, produces in man an image of that nature. Of its very nature it belongs to the supernatural order, and contains all the other supernatural gifts within itself as the seed contains the flowers or the fruit which flow from it. No other gift of God expresses the divine archetype so universally or so perfectly.

The divine exemplar of which grace is the created image must, therefore, be the divine essence itself, as common to the Three Divine Persons. In other words, grace is not merely an effect of the common operation *ad extra* of those Three Persons existing in one and the same divine nature from the point of view of efficient causality, but also it is related to that same divine nature as to its exemplar cause. For this reason St. Thomas says, “*gratia quae in nobis est, est effectus essentiae divinae non habens respectum ad distinctionem personarum.*”³⁰ To make it quite clear that he is speaking not merely of efficient causality but also of the exemplar cause he distinguishes, in the *Summa*, between the two meanings which must be given to the phrase “in the image of God.” In one sense this phrase refers to the efficient cause, the whole Trinity operating through the unity of the nature. In yet another sense it refers to the exemplar cause, which is, as he says, “*ipsa essentia divina, quae abusive imago dicitur secundum quod imago ponitur pro exemplari.*”³¹

³⁰ *III Sent.*, d. 4, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 1c.; cf. *de Verit.*, q. 10, a. 13c.

³¹ *I Sent.*, d. 28, q. 2, a. 1c.

Thus, we may put aside any ideas of a personal relationship between the soul and the individual Persons of the Trinity which is based on the nature of grace itself, whether we consider that divine gift in its efficient cause or in its exemplar. In both senses it is related not to the Persons directly but to the divine essence.³²

However, grace produces in the soul as a result of its presence there certain effects, such as the adopted sonship and the Indwelling of the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity. Therefore it will be necessary to examine these effects briefly, in order to see whether they imply a more personal relationship between the soul and the individual Persons of the Trinity from the point of view of exemplar causality.

1. *The Adopted Sonship.*

We may take it as an established fact that grace confers upon man the gift of divine adopted sonship, with a consequent right to the joys of the beatific vision. Because this effect is produced in the soul as a direct result of the divine love for man, it is attributed to the Holy Ghost, as to the Sanctifier of souls. However, even a brief meditation on the nature of this adopted sonship will make it clear that it unites us very closely to Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, who is the Eternal Son of God. This relation is brought about, not merely because He won for us our redemption by His incarnation, passion and death on the Cross, but also because His eternal sonship is the exemplar on which our adoption is based.³³ It is important, however, to distinguish the role of grace in our adoption from that of the Three Divine Persons.

³² *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 13: “Omne illud quod in divinis causalitatem habet, ad essentiam pertinet, cum Deus per essentiam suam sit causa rerum. Propria autem personarum sunt relationes quibus personae, non ad creaturas, sed ad invicem referuntur.” Cf. *IV Cont. Gent.*, c. 21.

³³ *III Sent.*, d. 10, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 3: “Potest autem notare formalem causam, et hoc dupliciter, vel inhaerentem vel exemplarem. Si inhaerentem, sic adoptati sumus per Spiritum Sanctum, cui appropriatur caritas. . . . Si vero designat causam exemplarem formalem, sic adoptati sumus per Filium, unde Rom. 8. ‘quos praescivit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui’.”

Our adoption is an effect of grace insofar as grace is a formal participation in the divine nature. From the point of view of grace, then, we are adopted by the whole Trinity and the exemplar of our adoption is the divine essence itself, of which grace is the created participation. This does not make it any less true to say that our adopted sonship is a created imitation of the eternal sonship of the Second Person of the Trinity. In this way we are united in a very special way to the Son of God, whose eternal sonship is the exemplar of our own.

St. Thomas explains this very simply. He points out the differences between our sonship and that of Christ, indicating, at the same time, that our adoption must be common to the Three Persons from the viewpoint of efficient causality. There is, nevertheless, a similarity between our adoption and the sonship of Christ; and thus, while our sonship is an effect of the united action of the Trinity, still it is appropriated to the Father as its author, the Son as its exemplar and the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier of souls.³⁴ From our point of view, then, this analogous participation in the eternal sonship produces in us a special relationship between our souls and the Three Divine Persons, and especially to the Second Person. This relation, like all others between creatures and their creator, must be real on our part and only a rational relation on the part of God.

We can distinguish several elements in this relationship. Its efficient cause is the divine action on the soul which is common to all Three Persons. The formal cause of it is grace as a participation in the divine nature and the root of all supernatural gifts. Its exemplar cause is to be found in all Three Persons, as identified with the divine nature, but in a special way in the Second Person, whose eternal sonship is the divine model of our adoption. While we are speaking of the Second Person of the Trinity it is as well to indicate that, in St. Thomas' teaching concerning the Incarnation, this idea of exemplar causality has full play. For example, he points out that Christ's Resurrection from the dead is the exemplar of our resurrection at the last

³⁴ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 23, a. 2.

day.³⁵ The mysteries of His life on earth have a direct bearing on our lives, as the model or exemplar to which we, as members of His Mystical Body, are expected to conform. We may leave it to writers on the spiritual life to develop this idea in its full perfection. Here it will be sufficient for us to point out that this teaching of Aquinas with regard to our adoption can only be correctly understood in the light of his doctrine with reference to the Divine Missions, of which we shall have more to say later.³⁶

Our relations with God, whether in the natural or the supernatural order, can be considered under two very different aspects: either from the point of view of the divine causality or from that of the created effect which follows from that causality. We make no apology for repeating once more that, if created effects are considered from the aspect of divine efficient causality, then they are all common to the Three Persons in such a way that it is not possible to distinguish in them the action of one individual Person rather than another. Causality in God is an essential and not a personal attribute, and, as we shall see, this is true of *all* causality.

If, however, we consider this relationship between creatures and God from the point of view of the effect produced, then the position is very different. All efficient causality achieves its object in the effects it produces by means of a formal cause, which plays the major part in conforming the effect produced to the exemplar idea of it in the mind of the agent. This fact accounts for the close relationship between the formal and the exemplar causes. The created effect always has a real relationship to the essential attributes which are common to all Three

³⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 56, a. 1, ad 3.

³⁶ St. Thomas indicates this when he says: "Dicendum quod filiatio adoptiva est quaedam participatio filiationis naturalis, quod fit in nobis appropriate a Patre qui est principium naturalis filiationis, et per donum Spiritus Sancti, qui est amor Patris et Filii . . . et ideo, sicut Filio incarnato, adoptivam filiationem accipimus ad similitudinem filiationis eius, ita Patre incarnato, adoptivam filiationem recipemus ab eo tamquam a principio naturalis filiationis, et a Spiritu Sancto tamquam a nexu communi Patris et Filii." *Ibid.*, q. 3, a. 5, ad 2; cf. II-II, q. 45, a. 6, ad 1; III, q. 23, a. 2, ad 3.

Divine Persons, but occasionally there can also be noticed in it a certain similarity between some quality which it possesses and a *proper* attribute belonging to one of the Divine Persons. It is on this similarity that the whole doctrine of appropriation on the lines of exemplar causality is built up. Thus, returning to our adoption by God, it has a relation to the essential attributes of God as have all other created effects, but also there is an undoubted similarity between it and the true, eternal sonship of the Second Person. Similarly, the virtue of charity is infused into the soul by the joint action of the Three Persons. But this same virtue, both insofar as it has its origin, as a free gift, in the divine love for man, and also because it enables man to love God with a love of true friendship, bears a special resemblance to the Holy Ghost, as the personification of Divine Love, and therefore, as its exemplar. St. Thomas says, “*Quae quidem (caritas) efficienter est a tota Trinitate, sed exemplariter manat ab amore, qui est Spiritus Sanctus: et ideo frequenter invenitur quod Spiritus Sanctus sit amor quo diligimus Deum et proximum.*”³⁷ We shall see that this phrase, “*exemplariter manat,*” has for St. Thomas the meaning of appropriation.

2. *The Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity.*

Before we can hope to consider this mystery in the light of exemplar causality we must first of all examine its implications both in itself and also in connection with the doctrine of Aquinas on the Divine Missions.

St. Thomas’ teaching on the mystery of Divine Indwelling can be summed up as follows. This presence of the Trinity in the soul is real and substantial, distinct from the general presence of God in all His creatures through His divine immensity. Nevertheless, the presence of Indwelling presupposes the general presence of immensity, and that for several reasons. Before the Trinity can be substantially present in the soul we have to presuppose the existence of the soul and also the

³⁷ *I Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1c.; cf. *ibid.*, d. 30, q. 1, a. 2c., et ad 3; d. 15, q. 4, a. 1c.

creation in it of sanctifying grace, both of which demand the general presence of immensity. Also, since the presence of Indwelling is brought about by the knowledge and the love of God which proceed from grace, unless the Three Persons were already present to the soul in a general way as identified with the divine essence, this knowledge and love would never be able to produce more than an intentional or affective presence—which implies a denial of the substantial nature of this Indwelling.

There is only one supernatural gift which can make this Indwelling possible, and that is sanctifying grace; not as an effect of the divine operations *ad extra*, but as the root cause of the operations of knowledge and love which spring from grace.³⁸ For that reason St. Thomas says, “nullus alius effectus potest esse ratio quod divina Persona sit novo modo in rationali creatura nisi gratia gratum faciens.”³⁹ It is important to keep this fact in mind, in view of the opinions of some modern authors which we shall examine later. Notice that we have described grace as the formal cause of the Indwelling, not simply because grace is an effect of the divine operations in the supernatural order, but insofar as it gives rise to the knowledge and love by which man attains to God as He is in Himself. God is the cause of grace by the divine essence with which all divine causality is identified, and not by reason of the Trinity of Persons. Consequently, if we consider grace merely as an effect of the divine causal activity, it can never give rise in the soul to a relation with the Persons.⁴⁰ Yet, if this presence of Indwelling is to be real and substantial, such a real relationship must be established, and that through the medium of sanctifying grace. Moreover, this real relationship must be to God

³⁸ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 43, a. 3c.: “Et quia cognoscendo et amando creatura rationalis sua operatione attingit ad ipsum Deum, secundum istum specialem modum Deus non solum dicitur esse in creatura rationali, sed etiam habitare in ea, sicut in templo.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ St. Thomas teaches this fundamental truth in many places in his writings, cf. *ibid.*, q. 3, a. 3; q. 45, a. 3, ad 1; q. 36, a. 4, ad 7; *I Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2; d. 2, q. 1, a. 4; d. 5, q. 1; *de Pot.*, q. 9, a. 9, ad 3; *de Verit.*, q. 10, a. 13.

as He is in Himself, i. e. one in nature and three in Persons. Can such a real relationship be established by grace, which is an effect of the common action of the Three Divine Persons? Let St. Thomas answer the question for us. He says, “*creatura attingit ad ipsum Deum secundum substantiam suam consideratum, et non secundum similitudinem tantum, et hoc est per operationem, secundum quam aliquis fide adhaeret primae veritati et caritate ipsi summae bonitati, et sic est modus quo Deus est in sanctis per gratiam.*”⁴¹

From this passage and from others in which he insists on the same idea it is evident that, for him, grace is the formal cause of the Indwelling, but only insofar as it gives rise to the theological virtues which have for their direct object God as He is in Himself. This is confirmed by what we already know of divine exemplar causality. Grace, both as an entitative habit and as a new supernatural nature, has its exemplar, not in the Persons, but in the divine essence which is common to them all. Therefore, neither as an effect of the divine efficient causality, nor as an effect of the divine exemplar causality can grace bring about a new relationship between the soul and the Persons of the Trinity which will result in this new mode of presence which we call Indwelling. It is only when we consider grace together with the supernatural operations of knowledge and love which flow from it that we find this new relationship with the Three Persons for which we are seeking.

The theological virtues which flow from grace adorn it in much the same way as the human faculties adorn the human nature which is their root. These theological virtues are supernatural faculties, being in themselves operative habits. As such, they have a special relation to their proper object, which is God as He is in Himself. By reason of the general presence of immensity the Three Persons are already in the soul as identified with the divine essence. Grace, by giving rise to the theological virtues, brings about a new relationship between the soul and the Three Persons as distinct one from another. Thus, by grace,

⁴¹ *I Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 2.

God who until now has been present in the soul as the First Cause of our being, begins to manifest Himself to us as the intimate object of our knowledge and love, thus granting us a certain measure of intimacy with Him which we did not enjoy before.⁴² In the state of grace our knowledge and our love terminate in the Three Persons, not as a mere intentional or affective object far distant from us, but as intimately present to the soul. Thus, the presence of Indwelling depends for its reality on the previous presence of immensity—a fact which Suarez overlooked in his attempt to find a solution to the difficulties of this question, and which has been the cause of much confusion of thought ever since.

Two very important conclusions can be drawn from what has been said with regard to this presence of Indwelling. In the first place, the conclusions of some modern authors on this subject, in which they speak of a double presence of the Three Persons in the soul, one by means of grace itself, and the other by means of our assimilation to the Divine Persons by the gifts of Wisdom and Charity, are not founded on the teaching of Aquinas.⁴³ In fact, it would seem that such conclusions have been reached simply because these writers have ignored the fact that it is grace *as the root of the theological* virtues which brings about the Indwelling, and that the reality of this new presence depends on the previous presence of immensity.

There are, in fact, many relationships between the soul in a state of grace and the Blessed Trinity—that cannot be denied.

⁴² John of St. Thomas, *In Iam Partem.*, q. 43, disp. 17, a. 3, n. II. “Hoc ergo modo existit Deus in omnibus quasi radix occulta et principium omnibus dans esse magis intimum . . . Cum ergo, mediante gratia, se manifestat incipit id quod est radix et principium comparari ut objectum se manifestans ipsimet intellectui creato cui adest ut radix et principium influens esse, et sic manifestat seipsum ut objectum, non quomodocumque, sed omnino intimum, utpote radix totius illius esse. Unde talis manifestatio et familiaritas et convictum necessario importat novum modum praesentiae, nempe, non solum per modum radicis et principii influentis esse, sed per modum Personae conviventis et seipsum manifestantis in ratione objecti.”

⁴³ Such seems to be the opinion of Fr. S. I. Dockx, O.P. in his work *Fils de Dieu par grâce*, pp. 112 sq. This is a novel presentation of the theory of Petau, De Regnon and others.

However, there is only one relationship which effects this real and substantial presence of the Trinity which we call the Presence of Indwelling. Grace puts us into direct contact with the Divine Nature of which it is a created participation, and with the Divine Persons as identified with that Nature. Consequently, both from the point of view of God and from that of the soul in grace there is but *one* fundamental relationship. From the point of view of God, the Three Persons act through their one common nature. From man's point of view there is a direct relation to the Divine Nature as subsisting in Three Divine Persons. If we were to affirm any individual causal relationship between the Three Persons and creatures we should be going contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas. Such personal activity is excluded for at least two reasons: the complete identity of the Nature in all Three, and the identity between God's power and His operation. In all their *ad extra* operations the Persons act through the one common nature and there can be no multiplication of essential attributes in God.

Secondly, there is no need to appeal to the divine exemplar causality as an explanation of this presence, but rather we are forced to conclude that there is no question here of exemplar causality at all! Here we are dealing with a real relation between the soul and the Persons which terminates in their proper attributes. To grasp what this implies we shall be forced to consider this presence of Indwelling in its relations with the doctrine of Aquinas on the Divine Missions.

The notion of Divine Mission implies two things, the eternal origins of the Persons and a new mode of existence in the effect.⁴⁴ Strictly speaking, therefore, only the Holy Ghost and the Son can be sent, while the Father gives Himself to us. Since the whole idea of the Missions is connected with the possession of the Divine Persons by creatures, it follows that the notion of mission also includes that of "gift," i. e. something to be possessed and enjoyed. Thus, the notion of Indwelling implies, at one and the same time, those of mission, of gift,

⁴⁴ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 43, a. 1c.; *I Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2; d. 15, q. 1, a. 1.

and also of the subsequent possession of the Divine Persons by the soul.

Since the notion of Mission includes in itself that of the eternal origin of one Person from another, it will be clear that the temporal mission of one Person also necessarily includes the presence in that Mission of the other divine Persons. Thus, Aquinas says, “cum Pater sit in Filio, et Filius in Patre, et uterque in Spiritu Sancto, quando Filius mittitur simul et venit Pater et Spiritus Sanctus . . . et ideo, adventus vel Inhabitatio convenit toti Trinitati.”⁴⁵ Thus, in these divine Missions there can be no question of individual causal activity *ad extra* of one Person apart from the others, since in God causality is an essential and not a proper attribute. At the same time, the temporal Mission connotes the eternal origins of the Persons, together with an effect which is produced, not in eternity, but in time—thus giving rise to a new mode of existence of the Persons. St. Thomas distinguishes clearly between this eternal and temporal aspect of the Divine Missions when he says, “Si igitur mittens designetur ut principium Personae quae mittitur, sic non quaelibet persona mittit, sed solum illa cui convenit esse principium illius personae; et sic, Filius mittitur tantum a Patre, Spiritus Sanctus autem a Patre et Filio. Si vero persona mittens intelligitur esse principium effectus secundum quem attenditur missio, sic tota Trinitas mittit Personam missam.”⁴⁶

How is it, then, that certain theologians have found a place for exemplar causality within the framework of the Divine Missions?⁴⁷ The answer probably lies in the fact that they have not distinguished with sufficient care between the notions of Mission, Indwelling and Assimilation—three things which are intimately connected with sanctifying grace and yet so very different in themselves.

The spiritual perfections which flow from grace produce in the soul an assimilation to the Three Persons which is some-

⁴⁵ *I Sent.*, d. 15, q. 2, ad 4.

⁴⁶ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 43, a. 8c.

⁴⁷ Cf. Dom Lucien Chambat, O.S.B., *op. cit.*, p. 179.

times called a “sealing,”⁴⁸ since certain of those perfections, such as those which belong to the intellectual order, impress on the soul a likeness to the Word of God, while others which belong to the spheres of love and power give it a likeness to the Holy Ghost and to the Father. This fact has made such a deep impression on some theologians that they have declared it to be the reason for the Presence of Indwelling. St. Thomas himself refers to the fact of the assimilation produced by grace in the soul; and in some of his writings it may even appear as if he, too, sees in it the real explanation both for the presence of Indwelling and also for the Divine Missions. However, such passages have to be interpreted inside the general framework of his whole teaching, not outside it. Once we consider them in that way, then we shall see that, far from being the formal cause of this Indwelling, such assimilation is, in fact, an effect of that presence, and is attributed to individual Persons by appropriation on the basis of exemplar causality.

That this is the true interpretation of St. Thomas’ mind on this subject seems to be confirmed by his teaching on the formal cause of the Indwelling as we have already explained it. As Aquinas himself tells us, the assimilation which we have described above can only be attributed to individual Persons of the Trinity by appropriation, while the Indwelling is a substantial presence, “*secundum propria*”—a fact which follows from his teaching on the Divine Missions, which include in their concept the origins of the Persons. Therefore he insists, “*adventus vel inhabitatio convenit toti Trinitati quae non dicuntur nisi ratione effectus conjungentis ipsi Trinitati, quamvis ille effectus ratione appropriationis possit ducere magis in unam personam quam in aliam.*”⁴⁹ This, in turn, is in perfect conformity with his general teaching on *ad extra* causality in God. The eternal processions of the Persons are not the direct causes of the created effects, but only insofar as they include the essential attributes of intellect and will. In other words, this

⁴⁸ Cf. *I Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, d. 15, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4.

likeness or assimilation to individual Persons of the Trinity which can be observed in the perfections which flow from sanctifying grace is due to appropriation, and that *through the medium of exemplar causality*.

This is not the place to undertake a detailed study of St. Thomas' teaching with regard to appropriation, but it can be noticed that, among the four classes of appropriation which he defines, a special place is reserved for that class which depends on exemplar causality. Indeed, it would be difficult to separate the two notions entirely, although we do not maintain that every appropriation is based on exemplarity, but merely that it is the basis for many of those appropriations which we can find in the writings of St. Thomas. Thus, wisdom is appropriated to the Son as the image of the Father by eternal generation. Charity is appropriated to the Holy Ghost as the Personal Love of the Father and the Son, while all effects which imply the use of divine power are attributed to the Father as to the "principium sine principio." The created effect is attributed to the individual Person because of some similarity between the proper attribute of the Person and the essential attribute which causes the effect. St. Thomas makes this clear when he says, "dicendum quod per unum et idem Deus in ratione diversarum causarum se habet: quia per hoc quod est actus purus, est agens, et est exemplar omnium formarum, et est bonitas pura, et per consequens, omnium finis."⁵⁰ This becomes even clearer when we remember that this assimilation of the created effect to God, the Cause, is effected simply because the creature is reproduced according to the exemplar idea of it which is in the divine intellect and which is put into effect by the decree of the divine will. "Appropriatio causae ad effectum attenditur secundum assimilationem effectus ad causam. Assimilatio autem creaturae ad Deum attenditur secundum hoc quod creatura implet id quod de ipsa est in intellectu et voluntate Dei . . . Sic, igitur, Deus propria causa est unicuique creaturae, in quantum intelligit et vult unam-

⁵⁰ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3.

quamque creaturam esse.”⁵¹ We are driven back every time to the essential causal attributes of intellect and will.

Some theologians have found difficulty in accepting this doctrine owing to certain passages in the writings of St. Thomas in which, at first sight, he seems to indicate special activity of the Three Divine Persons individually, based on exemplar causality. One such passage which is frequently quoted is to be found in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, where he writes:— “in reductione rationalis creaturae in Deum intelligitur processio divinae personae . . . in quantum propria relatio ipsius personae divinae representatur in anima per similitudinem aliquam receptam quae est exemplata et originata ab ipsa proprietate relationis aeternae. . . .”⁵⁴ Seen in the light of St. Thomas’ general teaching on the Trinity this and similar passages present no real difficulty, nor do they imply individual activity on the part of the Divine Persons based on exemplar causality.

There are two essential attributes which enter into every act of Divine Causality, i. e. those of intellect and will. These attributes are both the cause of the identity of the Divine Nature in all Three Persons and also of the distinction between the Persons themselves. They are also the cause of the production of all created things. In the production of creatures these attributes have an *essential* activity, while in the processions of the Persons their activity is purely *notional*, but the same attributes are at work in both cases. Therefore, it follows that the relations between the Persons enter into all the divine activity *ad extra* insofar as all creatures are made in the image of God. In the rational or intellectual creatures this likeness will be much more perfect, since they too are capable of acts of knowledge and love which, under the influence of grace, will lead them to know and love God as He is in Himself.

The exemplar cause of this likeness is not to be found in any personal or individual activity of the Three Persons nor in

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, q. 3, a. 16, ad 5.

⁵⁴ *I Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1; cf. d. 14, q. 2, ad 3.

their proper attributes as such, but in the Divine Essence insofar as it includes the essential attributes of intellect and will. For this reason St. Thomas himself affirms many times that this similarity is based on *appropriation*. This at once excludes any idea of individual causality on the part of the Persons, as we have already explained.

Thus the difficult passages from the *Sentences* fit in perfectly with the rest of Aquinas' teaching, forming with it one harmonious whole. In the *Summa* we can see his own interpretation of these difficult passages. Thus he affirms:—"Unde oportet quod imago divinae Trinitatis attendatur in anima secundum aliquid quod representat divinas personas representatione speciei, sicut est possibile creaturae. . . attenditur igitur divina imago in homine secundum verbum conceptum de Dei notitia, et amorem exinde derivatum."⁵⁵ If we compare this quotation with the passage cited above from the *Sentences* we shall see clearly what St. Thomas means by the "similitudinem aliquam receptam quae est exemplata et originata ab ipsa proprietate relationis aeternae. . . ." This similarity is through the knowledge and the love of God as He is in Himself, which is possible only to the soul in a state of grace. It is worth noticing that this similarity is consequent on the state of grace, as one of its effects and, therefore, although the presence of Indwelling cannot be brought about by this similarity, that presence can give rise to the divine image in the soul which is afterwards appropriated to the Persons as identified in the one Nature with the essential attributes.

From all this it follows that those theologians who persist in their attempts to find a more personal relationship between the soul and the individual Persons of the Trinity through the medium of exemplar causality have not understood this connection between the divine exemplar and the doctrine of assimilation which is based on appropriation.⁵² Nor have they kept in mind the fact that, in God, all causality is an essential and not a proper attribute. It is the divine essence which is the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 93, a. 8c.; cf. *ibid.*, a. 7; q. 45, a. 6, ad 2; *I Sent.*, d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3.

⁵² *Summa Theol.*, q. 39, aa. 7-8.

exemplar, either as it is in itself, or as it is communicated to the Persons. For which reason it would be absurd to identify the work of sanctification in the human soul with the Person of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to exclude the other Divine Persons from that activity, since such effects are attributed to Him as being the personification of divine goodness and holiness, and these are essential attributes.⁵⁸

From its very beginnings in the Garden of Eden the great tragedy of the human race has been its vain seeking for something which it already possessed. Frequently theologians themselves are not exempt from this charge. There is a real relation between the soul in a state of grace and the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity by the very fact that grace, as an invisible Mission of the Trinity, brings the Persons into contact with the soul in a new way, as the objects of its knowledge and love. This real and substantial presence far exceeds anything which could be attained or imagined along the lines of exemplar causality—and yet there are still some theologians who are not content with what they actually possess, but who would throw away the substance for the shadow. The theological position of Aquinas is very different from that adopted by such writers as Sheeben, Petau, De Regnon and Tyciak. It is in perfect accord with the teachings of both the Latin and the Greek Fathers, and serves as an admirable commentary on their doctrine with regard to the Indwelling of the Trinity in the soul. It expresses perfectly the personal nature of this union between the soul and the Three Persons, without going to any extremes. If St. Thomas' doctrine on the relation between exemplar causality, appropriation and assimilation had been more closely followed perhaps there would not have been so many extremes in the writings on this subject.

DAVID L. GREENSTOCK, T. O. P.

*Colegio de Ingleses,
Valladolid, Spain*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 45, a. 6. “secundum hoc processiones personarum sunt rationes productionis creaturarum, in quantum includunt essentialia attributa quae sunt scientia et voluntas.”