

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS LATERANENSIS

ACADEMIA ALFONSIANA

INSTITUTUM THEOLOGIAE MORALIS

STUDIA MORALIA

II

DESCLÉE & SOCII - EDITORES PONTIFICII

ROMA — PARIS — TOURNAI — NEW YORK

Imprimi potest

G. GAUDREAU, Sup. Gen. C.ss.R.

10 decembris 1964.

Curia Archiepiscopalis Perusina

Imprimatur

Perusiae, 20 decembris 1964

DOMINICUS DOTTORINI, Vic. Gen.

INDEX

VISSER J., c.ss.r., Introductio	7-9
BUIJS L., c.ss.r., De Theologia morali et Sermone Montano	11-41
ENDRES J., c.ss.r., Genügt eine rein biblische Moraltheologie?	43-72
KOCH R., c.ss.r., L'imitation de Dieu dans la morale de l'Ancien Testament	73-88
CAPONE D., c.ss.r., Dissertazioni e Note di S. Alfonso sulla probabilità e la coscienza dal 1764 al 1769	89-155
HORTOLANO A., c.ss.r., La superconciencia moral cristiana	157-173
O'SHEA K., c.ss.r., Religious awe: an existential dimension of divine faith	175-189
PETERS B., La valeur morale de l'intimité personnelle. Un problème actuel posé à propos de l'influence pharmacologique délibérément exercé sur la personnalité	191-254
O'RIORDAN S., c.ss.r., The problem of pastoral theology	255-275
DE MARGERIE B., s.j., Mission des confesseurs et conscience sociale	277-291
FORNOVILLE TH., c.ss.r., Réflexions d'un croyant sur « La foi d'un incroyant »	293-326
SAMPERS A., c.ss.r., Quaedam de Academia Alfonsiana notitiae	327-336
Index vol. I Studio Moralia	337

K. O'SHEA, C.S.S.R.

RELIGIOUS AWE :
AN EXISTENTIAL DIMENSION OF DIVINE FAITH.

SUMMARIUM

Intenditur hic ostendere quomodo in ordine existenti detur quaedam veneratio seu reverentia religiosa cum actu voluntatis, in quo divina fides radicatur, necessario coniuncta.

Fides communiter considerata est assensus veritati propter testimonium attestantis, ad quem imperium voluntatis omnino requiritur. Huiusmodi imperium est actus amoris assensum intellectus informans: sed potest esse aut « intellectualisticus » aut « personalisticus », quatenus motivatur aut ex desiderio perfectionem propriam in cognitione veritatis assequendi aut ex affectu erga personam testificantis seipsam in veritate testata communicantem. In hoc altero casu habetur sensus admirationis et venerationis pro ipso revelatore cum quo amore communicatur secundum dialogum personalem. Talis habitudo diversa est ac illa quae in fide mere « scientifica » habetur. Ergo ut ad fidem hanc « personalisticam » via apte sternatur requiritur quaedam praeparatio profunda spiritualis qua persona credentis personae revelantis propter magnam eius excellentiam sese submittat.

Huic structurae fidei communiter sumptae correspondet structura fidei divinae, considerato tamen quod idem actus fidei simul est humanus, supernaturalis et divinus. In eius genesi momentum « intellectualisticum » et « personalisticum » distinguitur, sed huic altero momento *existentialiter* correspondet motivum supernaturale assensus quod est auctoritas Dei revelantis quatenus solis viribus gratiae attingitur: ita quod practice ubi gratiae non resistitur assensus « personalisticus » naturalis non habetur. Fit ergo hic assensus supernaturalis in « atmosphaera » quadam reverentiae et venerationis religiosae erga Deum Patrem in Verbo Suo Incarnato se revelantem. Haec atmosphaera de se naturalis ad fidem conducit non quidem sub aspectu eius supernaturali ut sic, sed sub aspectu eius personalistico et cum fide integratur veluti dimensio eius humana.

Demum in ordine pastoralis munus venerationis religiosae magnum momentum habet, quatenus actione missionarii magis aperiri potest

cor hominis Personae divinae se in Christo homine revelanti. Ad missionem Ecclesiae pertinet conservare atmosphaeram reverentiae divinae in qua tanquam in terra frugifera seminatur verbum fidei.

This short note will present religious awe as an existential factor of that personal yielding of the will which is at the root of divine faith. A Thomistic view of the psychological genesis of faith is supposed as the framework of the study.¹ The role of awe will be first shown in the structure of faith as such; secondly, the role of religious awe will be shown in the structure of divine faith; and finally, the role of this awe, as an existential function of grace, will be shown in its pastoral application.²

Awe and faith.

Faith, in general, is an act of the mind assenting to the

¹ A debt must be expressed to recent excellent studies in the Thomistic psychology of faith, especially to B. DUROUX, O.P., *La structure psychologique de l'acte de foi chez S. Thomas d'Aquin*, FZPT 1954, pp. 281-291; IDEM, *Aspects psychologiques de l'« analysis fidei » chez S. Thomas d'Aquin*, FZPT 1955, pp. 148-172 and 296-315; IDEM, *L'illumination de la foi chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, FZPT 1956, pp. 29-38; M.M. LABOURDETTE, O.P., *La vie théologique selon saint Thomas*, *L'Objet de la foi*, RT 1958, pp. 597-622; IDEM, *La vie théologique selon saint Thomas*, *L'affection dans la foi*, RT 1960, pp. 364-380; J. ALFARO, S.J., *Supernaturalitas fidei iuxta S. Thomam, I, Functio « luminis fidei »*, GREGORIANUM, 1963, 501-542, and *II, Functio « interioris instinctus »*, GREGORIANUM, 1963, pp. 731-787. There is little need to mention the masterly works of recent times in this field: R. AUBERT, *Problème de l'acte de foi*, Louvain, 1950; and M.L. GUÉRARD DES LAURIERS, O.P., *Dimensions de la foi*, Paris, 1952.

A continuity must be acknowledged between modern biblical presentations of faith and the thought of this note, esp. B. HÄRING, C.S.S.R., *Das Gesetz Christi*, Freiburg/Br. 1961, pp. 49-89; F.X. DURRWELL, C.S.S.R., *Dans le Christ Rédempteur*, pp. 101-141; J. DUPLACY, *Foi*, in *Vocabulaire de Théologie biblique*, 1962. Use has also been made of writers who consciously use phenomenological and existentialist insights in this field, e.g. J. MOURoux, *The Christian Experience*, 1954; J. TRÜTSCH, *Glaube und Erkenntnis*, in *Fragen der Theologie Heute*, 1957, pp. 45-68; E.H. SCHILLEBEECKX, O.P., *Parole et Sacrement*, in *Lumière et Vie*, 1960, pp. 25-45; and R. LATOURELLE, S.J., *Théologie de la Révélation*, Rome, 1963.

² Those who have come to realise the interior crisis of all human faith as defecting from the true ideal of faith as such, and who have thus come to realise the uniqueness of divine faith as alone fulfilling the ideal of faith, may have difficulties with the method proposed. While remaining in full sympathy with those difficulties, it has seemed good to us for clarity of presentation to treat of the natural (ideal) structure of faith *as such* before treating of *divine* faith as divine, even though this natural ideal may not concretely attain perfect realisation elsewhere.

truth of a message to which a speaker has borne witness, precisely on the testifying authority of that witness. In so far as the witnessing authority dynamically and actually bears down as a warrant of truth on assertions whose intrinsic truth is not fully evident, it constitutes an object of belief. This authority is then the guarantee of the correspondence to reality of the assertions communicated.

Such an act of credence cannot be placed psychologically without the intervention of the will, inclining the mind to such a perfect adhesion to unseen truth.³ The mind is captive in the dominion of the will, and elicits a trans-rational act, swayed to assent in the direction given to it by the bias of the will.⁴ Thus a man believes, not because he sees the evidence of what is told to him, but because he wills to believe it.⁵ Although the assent is formally an act elicited by the mind, it stems from the will as from the psychologically dominant and principal factor in its origin.⁶

This vital, dominative intervention of the will must of necessity be an act of love for the doctrine proposed as witnessed by the revealing authority. For it is only in function of love that the will can ultimately act at all. The motive of such an act of love must be presented to the will by an affective evaluative judgment of the mind, assessing the attraction of the doctrine, witness, and act of communication for the addressee. These two intertwined acts of love and evaluation are the necessary immediate pre-requisites for the formal assent of faith.⁷

³ Cf. S. THOMAS, 2-2, q. 5, a. 2: « Intellectus credentis assentit rei creditae non quia ipsam videat vel secundum se vel per resolutionem ad principia per se visa, sed propter imperium voluntatis. »

⁴ Cf. S. THOMAS, 3 Sent., d. 24, a. 3, sol. 2, ad 2um: « Homo, dum credit, rationem non abnegat quasi contra eam faciens; sed eam transcendit, altiori dirigenti innixus, scilicet veritati primae ».

⁵ Cf. S. THOMAS, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1: « Non enim assensus ex cogitatione causatur, sed ex voluntate ».

⁶ Cf. S. THOMAS, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5: « Cum igitur fides sit in intellectu, secundum quod est motus et imperatus a voluntate, id quod est ex parte cognitionis est quasi materiale in ipsa, sed ex parte voluntatis accipienda est eius formatio ».

⁷ These two acts would appear to be simultaneous in time, in their definitive state, and inter-dependent in nature. The object of the affective judgment is materially the same as that of the assent of faith itself: but formally diverse. The

Within such a general motivation of the will, thus assessed by the mind, it seems possible to suggest two distinct psychological types, which may be termed « *intellectualistic* » and « *personalistic* ».

In the first, the will is motivated by the desire to fulfil that exigency of the faculty of intelligence by which it tends to accept a case presented to it as entirely reasonable. For the intellect, of its nature, cannot be satisfied without perfect adhesion to truth and to what is presented to it under the full appearance of truth. It is also in the nature of the will to enable the intellect to attain the fullness of its own good, for the will is the appetite of intellectual nature. The will may, then, in effect choose for the mind the assent of belief, in order thereby to confer upon the mind a fullness of achievement which it cannot otherwise have. What is operative in such a motive is the inner drive of *spirit-nature* itself which makes a man unwilling to be so unreasonable as to refuse the fullness of assent to what is proposed in the full appearance of truth. The repugnance of spirit-nature to act in an evidently un-spiritual manner is at the root of the will's act. Thus the very witnessing of the revealing person, as falling upon the doctrine communicated, formally in so far as it has the appearance of truth and is objectively and logically reasonable to accept in faith, becomes a material means to the formal aim of the will to satisfy the urge of its nature. This is a « selfish », a « self-centred » act. It is an act of love, but an act of love which through its formal motive can be deemed truly « intellectualistic » in psychological tone.⁸

On the other hand, the will may be motivated, not by the formal desire to fulfil any basic and irrevocable drive of its nature as a spirit, but by the formal desire to consummate a personal and vital need, by an inclination that is original, unique, and peculiar to the person concerned in this given moment and in this given existential ambient. Such an inclination is based

former act attains the authority of the witness as the source of affective attraction of the believer, the latter as the source of speculative truth of the doctrine accepted.

⁸ This is the sense exploited, in a different perspective, by B. DURoux, art. cit., FZPT 1955, p. 303, distinguishing « *oeuvre de l'intelligence* » and « *oeuvre de vie* ».

on the fact that the person, taken here and now as determined by a vast congeries of properly personal experiences, is «affected» towards an object in such a way that it needs here and now to translate that «affection» into actual express elicited complacency, or «love». Here then the willing believer is affected in love for the *person* of the revealer, who has thus engaged himself and his own personality in an incipient dialogue with him through his self-commitment in inviting him to communion in the truth which he witnesses. Such an object appears good to the willing believer, not so much as a means to any prior end, but rather as a new and original end and consummation of the person of the believer. The will's act is thus psychologically less that of election than of original primary intention. The person of the witness, whose doctrine is now regarded less as a bald statement of issues than as a living «word», whose witnessing is now regarded less as an impersonal warrant of speculative truth than as a bridge to dialogue and inter-personal communion, dominates the psychological attitude of the believer. The believer's act of love, and consequently his act of assent, are much more «altruistic» than in the case of «intellectualistic» assent to the authority of another. Here faith indeed is much more «faith» than in the previous case. The motive of the will is «personalistic» in the sense that it is centred on the person of the speaker, his living word, and the living rapport he has thus opened with the believer.⁹

In the influence of the «personalistic» motive of the will, a certain real wonder, admiration, and awe for the person of the speaker, his living word, and his living rapport with the believer will be at the root of the affective evaluative judgment regulating the will's love. This «awe» will be psychologically diverse from that quasi-scientific admiration which prompts assent through intellectualistically-motivated love. It will be marked by a feeling of loving submission to another person, a certain sense of helplessness before this new personal encounter

⁹ In the concrete it may often be difficult to distinguish these two psychological types of motive. In cases of mere human faith, it is likely that both lines of motive may have an influence on any given act.

which transcends and consummates previous personal experience and history, an attitude of fulfilment, in entering personal dialogue and communion with such a one. It is a disponibility towards personal communion and consummation, a type of spiritual fear that is born of the intimate attraction of love. That it will be existentially most varied in different subjects and cases is obvious, as is also the fact that it may overflow into sensible emotions to a greater or less degree. Perhaps its supreme human example may well be in the sense of veneration found in the religious instinct of mankind.¹⁰

Where such personalistic assent is to take place, therefore, it would appear that a certain preparation and orientation of the spirit of the potential believer is needed above and beyond the presentation of adequate motives of logical credibility in the witness and his teaching. The impact of the magnitude of the person thus entering into rapport with the believer must make him abdicate, as it were, the natural tendency of his spirit-nature to seek self-centred satisfaction, and release himself to the personal encounter of a yielding to another who has thus first yielded himself to him. Again, existentially, this impact can take place in vastly diverse fashions, and with varying degrees of emotional involvement.

The full human preparation for such faith contains more than than rational and logical elements: it demands affective elements creative of a certain climate of spirit. This climate, for want of a better name, could be termed « believing awe ».

Religious awe and divine faith.

The psychological structure of divine faith is in a certain way parallel to that which has so far been outlined. But many delicate nuances are needed to adapt this outline to an act which is, while remaining human, truly supernatural and divine. For

¹⁰ LABOURDETTE has pointed to the religious sense as kindred psychologically to faith, cf. art. cit., RT 1958, pp. 597-9. The role of experience as an influence on personal motive and action is suggested by HANS URS VON BALTHASAR in *God Has Spoken in Human Language*, in *The Liturgy and the Word of God*, Collegeville, 1959, pp. 33-52.

divine faith is an assent of the mind to the truth of a message to which God bears witness, precisely on the authority of God thus revealing.¹¹ To be truly *divine* faith, it must rely purely and formally on that uncreated authority as its specifying motive, and thus be intrinsically and essentially supernatural.¹² Its psychological genesis will demand, first of all, a prior objective representation of a message, surrounded by criteria which assure the full reasonableness of accepting it as warranted by God, Who cannot deceive or be deceived.¹³ After that logical judgment of credibility has been placed by reason, there must follow the critical intervention of an affective evaluative judgement of the mind, intertwined with a definitive positing of love by the will: otherwise, no real assent to truth will follow. It is of vital importance to analyse carefully this critical moment in the genesis of faith in God's message, from the point of view of «intellectualistic» and «personalistic» motivation. We shall see that this distinction, hitherto simply one of psychological type in the natural plane, will immediately involve in this unique case a vastly greater distinction between a formally natural and a formally supernatural love of the will, and consequently, assent of the mind.

A man who has placed the logical judgement of rational credibility just mentioned will see the doctrine proposed to him under divine authority as a possible object of some kind of belief in God. On reflection, he would see too the complete foolishness of not embracing, in an act of the mind swayed gently by his will, such a doctrine evidently so powerfully warranted. For deeper and extrinsic reasons of his heart, it is true that he can close himself to such love and assent as thus

¹¹ Cf. ST. THOMAS, 2-2, a. 9: «Ipsum autem credere est actus intellectus assentientis veritati divinae ex imperio voluntatis a Deo motae per gratiam».

¹² On this Thomist commentators are unanimous. Cf. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *De virtutibus theologicis*, passim, et pp. 544-555.

¹³ The recent theological tendency to deny a perfect judgment of (logical) credibility to reason before the grace of faith does not appear to harmonise with the teaching of St. Thomas. As shall be seen, it may well be true that in many cases the full judgment of *affective* credibility is not made without the influence of the grace of faith.

seems demanded of him as a spirit.¹⁴ But it is also true that normally he will find such an « intellectualistic » love and assent very easy and very desirable. Yet that is not the whole situation. If he is at all alert to the full values of the situation, he will see the possibility of a type of faith in God which is altogether different psychologically from the former, a personalistic faith rooted in the attraction of his heart to the Divine Person who has spoken His word to him in the intimacy of a superior engagement. Astonished and stupefied, and at the same time attracted from the roots of his being and personality to this dialogue and communion, he will as it were despise every semblance of intellectualistic belief in such a mighty Person and Event as he now conceives before him, and he will esteem at the same time a superior intimate personalistic yielding in assent as the sole response that is worthy of such a Divine Act in his regard, an assent flowing from personalistic attraction to the Divine Speaker, His word, and His act of condescension, as a new and unsuspected term of reference of his whole life, in which his whole life can achieve a new and suprahuman meaning and value. A climate of spirit can thus be formed in which the heart is open to something more than natural, even to the truly supernatural appeal of God its Father in heaven.

In such a psychological climate of awe, God touches the heart of a man, inclining him, attracting him, calling him interiorly through the supernatural movement and instinct of His grace to a supernatural yielding of the will and finally thereby to a supernatural assent of the mind in divine faith.¹⁵ In such a « faithful of Christ », there can be no problem of a simultaneous twofold faith, intellectualistic and personalistic, natural and supernatural. For faith is an ultimate condition of involvement of the spirit, in will and above all in mind. And there can only be one ultimate condition of the spirit at a given stage of its life. If, then, there has been a moment, or even a period, of a certain intellectualistic faith in God after the judg-

¹⁴ On the other hand, the pure spirit cannot act thus, cf. DUBOIS's excellent treatment of faith in the devils, art. cit. FZPT 1955, pp. 298 sqq.

¹⁵ We say, God actually touches, not, God *must* touch. The problem of the dispositive function of this awe to the act of faith will be treated below.

ment of logical credibility has been placed, there is no reason to think that it will perdure for long in one called to faith in Christ Jesus. And it will certainly have been superseded by the advent of grace. If, further, there has been a transient period of a certain *natural* personalistic faith in the Divine Speaker, which is not absolutely impossible, there is no reason whatever to think that it will be the abiding condition of one who places no obstacle to grace.¹⁶ Nor will it remain, as a distinct and separate activity of the spirit, after the advent of grace has rendered the yielding of the will and the assent of mind thus swayed by the will truly supernatural. Thus in the concrete, existentially, it may be sustained that the distinction between intellectualistic and personalistic motivation of the will's act in the process of belief in God involves the deeper distinction between a love that is formally natural and a love that is formally supernatural, and consequently between a natural 'human' faith and a truly *divine* faith in man.

Let us inspect more closely this climate of heart into which the grace of faith thus comes. That the divine message be presented to a potential believer as credible with precisely *divine* faith, it must appear as more than a valid object of credence in general, adorned with the motives of logical reasonableness. It must appear as a valid object of intimate personalistic faith based on the yielding of the will to God as Other, armed with the power to create that exact psychological climate that is alone favourable to such an opening of spirit. This affective climate could be termed «religious awe».¹⁷ The proper notes of

¹⁶ The following citation must be made from GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, as given by MOURoux. *The Christian Experience*, p. 80: «Replying to the objection, 'If one admits the possibility of an acquired natural faith, it is impossible to distinguish it from infused faith', Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange replies: 'To this difficulty it must be replied that the soul with good will, who believes unrestrictedly propter auctoritatem Dei revelantis, performs the act of supernatural faith required for salvation. Facienti quod est in se, Deus non denegat gratiam. I believe that the natural faith mentioned in the objection is a very rare thing, if it exists at all' (*Le Réalisme du Principe de Finalité*, Paris, 1932, p. 330) ».

¹⁷ I am not sure that word «awe» is a sufficiently accurate epithet for the affective climate of which I write. Perhaps, at least in English, it has too general and broad a connotation for use, without caution, in the very determined sense intended here.

this «*religious*» awe, as distinct from the generic «*believing*» awe described above, must all come from the *divine* personality of the Speaker who confronts the believer, the *divine* sense of His Word offered to the believer, and the the *divine* manner of His encounter and entering into rapport with the heart of the believer. Whatever might be said on an abstract plane in analysing such a principle, once again, in the concrete existential order, this aspect will be determined by the divine salvific entry into man's history and experience to achieve his redemption by mighty acts and wonderful deeds, above all, in the Pasch of the Son of God, our Lord. To this we shall return later.

The problem which now, in full value, presents itself to our theological gaze is what might be called that of the *integral humanism of the supernatural* in man, the believer. The supernatural personalistic yielding of the will, in love, which is the psychological intrinsic source of the act of divine faith, has a deeply human, and deeply *natural*, radiance. Although formally and properly supernatural in its intrinsic and essential constitution, through its properly uncreated formal specifying object, it still contains an existential dimension of «*religious awe*» which *in itself* must be called formally, intrinsically, and essentially natural. Admittedly, it is so integrated into the whole human process of yielding to God under grace, that, from one point of view, one might wonder whether it is legitimate to attempt a proper specification for it. The contention of this note is that it is legitimate, and necessary, for both speculative and pastoral theology. What is involved is a yielding of the whole person of the believer to the Divine Revealer, under grace. Although abstractly and metaphysically the pure position of the supernatural act of love could be placed without this climate of natural religious awe, although then this religious awe is in the strictest sense no more than morally necessary for the supernatural act, still, concretely and existentially, it does not seem humanly possible for the supernatural yielding to be placed except totally within the ambient of the natural climate of awe. The actual, existential, human yielding under grace implies then two distinct elements, which are most intimately and profoundly bound together in the dynamism of the one person.

One element, the absolutely vital one, is supernatural, the element that derives most properly from grace. But the other element, the accessory in relation to grace, but the existentially necessary in relation to grace in man as he is, is in itself natural, the element that we have called «religious awe». We believe that it is necessary to distinguish these elements, as we have done, but that it is even more vital not to separate them in the person of the believer. For it is quite wrong to conceive them as separately dual in their functions in the believer. There are not «two» yieldings of love in the will, one natural, the other supernatural. There is but one, a supernatural yielding in love, whose necessary existential ambient is that of religious awe, be it in itself natural. Let us remove from our minds in this matter every vestige of «supernatural separatism» which would refuse to see their integration in the person of the believer, as also every trace of an excessively pure supernaturalism, which would look so exclusively to the pure metaphysical conditions for the possibility of the supernatural that it would close its eyes to its existential reality. Then, and then only, religious awe, as an existential dimension of divine faith, can appear as a significant expression of the perfect blending of the natural and supernatural principles of life in the one human person, the dynamic result of the truly immanent ingrafting of the gift of God's grace into his operative personality.

There is one final issue. Religious awe has been presented as a concrete ambient of divine faith, *at least* concomitant with its supernatural reality in man. But, once again in the concrete perspective of this note, it must follow that, normally and humanly, it will naturally *precede* the actual act of supernatural loving yielding in the will. In so far as it does actually precede the supernatural act, it comes under consideration more as a reality in itself, antecedent to the supernatural, than as a concomitant dimension of the supernatural. To that extent the question may be raised whether this chronologically antecedent state of awe in the spirit could be termed a *disposition* to the supernatural act. Must we be content with saying that it is a «pre-amble» to that act, using a general term, refusing to call it a «disposition» for fear of making something formally

natural a disposition to the supernatural? No. This antecedent awe is certainly not a disposition to the supernatural act formally as supernatural, but it is truly a disposition to the supernatural act formally as personalistic in its own psychological orientation. This distinction is not irrelevant to pastoral issues. If certain events and agencies possessed the power to create in the spirit of man this climate of soul which leads to faith, which indeed is a disposition to faith in the way mentioned, then these same events and agencies could — in a unique way, it is true — be credited with some unique type of causality of faith, even of supernatural faith, in us, subordinate to the decisive influx of grace from God. Thus perhaps a nuanced position on the debated problem of the causality of the Christian Kerygma might be adopted.¹⁸ And a deeper integration of the ministry of the Word of preaching with the ministry of the sacramental Word might be achieved.

Pastoral aspects of religion awe.

An understanding of the role of awe in the genesis of divine faith is of great pastoral importance. Most men to whom the divine message of salvation is proposed and who seem not to reach divine faith probably do not do so because they do not reach a stage of sufficient wonderment at the mystery of what is proposed to them. Most of those who seem to fall away from divine faith, seemingly for no other evident reason, probably do so because they have allowed the human climate of awe needed for such faith to vanish from their hearts.

It is interesting, from a pastoral angle, to consider those who are approaching divine faith and who have reached a certain initial stage of awe at the mystery contained in it. It might be suggested that, at this precise moment of their psychological evolution, they take an incipient attitude, generally, either « for » or « against » the person of God offering his Word to them for communion in faith. From this comes an initial « openness » or « closedness » of heart towards that mystery, towards that divine

¹⁸ Cf. M. FLICK - Z. ALSZEGHY, S.J., GREGORIANUM 1959, pp. 671-744 passim.

«Other» in whom they see that the trust of divine faith is possible and right.

If the attitude is «for» and the heart is «open», it is possible, at this early stage, that they simply give it no further consideration and continue without faith. But if they do give it the attention that they must recognise it deserves, it would seem that they will experience a certain loss of self-contained security in no longer proposing to act according to the clear drive of their own spirit and reason, that is, in an «intellectualistic» way. Further, they will experience a certain abandonment into the hands of the great divine «Other» to whom they are open in heart. As persons now seeking God in some incipient way, they will show a certain human docility to Him and to the human messengers who bring them His Word of peace. They will have a certain sense of joy and expectation, an awareness that a spring is open and that they are thirsting for its waters, a deep gratitude that those waters are now so near, and perhaps, at times, an instinct that the great «Other», the divine Speaker, to whom they are open in spirit, has Himself been responsible in His providence for their present state. All this will be concretely linked with and coloured by factors of a moral, social, environmental, historical and even genetic nature, used by the hand of providence to form this effective climate of religious awe which naturally leads to the fulfilment of divine faith. The grace of faith may be concomitant to and, in a real sense, causative of the whole process, or it may come at any given step in the whole process. Indeed, it will be impossible exactly to pinpoint the moment of its invasion. But what is much more important is that it does seem possible to diagnose naturally the climate of spirit without which that invasion does not and humanly cannot take place. Surely, here, we have a pastoral aid of no little importance to the counsellor, confessor and missionary.

If the initial attitude is «against» and the heart is «closed», it is possible that the persons who have begun so badly on the road to faith simply remain in that condition, with, surely, some degree of culpability which we do not now wish to assess. It will not be too difficult, pastorally, to recognise or at least suspect such a psychological condition. It is at root a state of inward

spiritual resistance to the personal good of those concerned, and often engenders a real personal disequilibrium in matters of personal involvement, not without certain neurotic manifestations at times. The conversion of such people will mean essentially the conquest of this inner resistance by the attractive power of the Person God speaking His Word to them and offering them communion in that Word for their personal fulfilment. The loving appeal of such a Person can become too strong for them to maintain their resistance: the splendour and attraction of the Word of Salvation that he brings to them can melt the hardness of their resisting hearts into a total yielding of spirit. Such a conquest can be the smooth, progressive accumulation of dispositions increasing in intensity, almost unconsciously, for a considerable period of time, or it can be quite sudden. It may well be that there is a slow un-realised incubation period of the conquering motive, followed by its manifest triumph on the occasion of some emotional shock in which the spiritual situation stands out and is perceived more vividly and more intimately. Once again the exact moment of the invasion of grace is impossible to determine, but once again, the natural dimension and/or disposition for it, in religious awe, would appear possible of diagnosis by an observant and understanding pastor.

It is the duty of a true pastor, and a function of the pastoral office of the Church, not merely thus to recognise the human indications of the entry of God's grace into souls, but much more, to stimulate and create them in souls thus made ready for the divine gift. Our final comment will show the way which a merciful providence has set up in the Church.

In stressing the existential dimension of grace in awe, we have really been expressing an insight into the *incarnate* quality of the supernatural as poured out upon man. In the mercy of God it has been decreed that the central mystery whose proposition to man stimulates religious awe in him be also an *incarnate* mystery. The Divine *Speaker* who confronts the believer has taken our flesh and is Man. The Divine *Word* that he offers the believer is a message pregnant with the deepest human values of man's salvation in the visible Pasch of the God-Man, a message expressed and made incarnate in a new way in

the living human language of the Bible, and given actuality in the conscience and life of the Church of each age. And the Divine *Encounter* and entering into rapport with the heart of the believer is again something incarnate, for the meeting takes place in the deeply human mystery of contact with the living Church of Christ. Truly, it is the Church, the Mystical Christ Risen yet remaining with us, that speaks the word of life to-day in the language that attracts the heart of man to-day, that confronts the man of to-day, alive with an appreciation of his own experience and personality and desire, as his peace and salvation. The saving mystery of the Church in the world is the powerful voice of Christ inviting men in the deepest intimacy of their hearts to open themselves, in awe, to Him who can save them from their misery.

It is a duty of the pastoral charity of all members of the Church to keep the Church ever radiant in her presentation of the mystery of divine mercy in Christ to the hearts of men. Her preaching, her liturgical assemblies, her prayer life, her manifest and active charity, her whole being stemming from the Eucharistic Lord in the banquet of love, must perpetually speak out — with a God-given attractive power — the appeal of God's love. Of itself it is the divinely instituted means of stimulating in the hearts of men that climate of religious awe in which the grace of faith is sown. From it rises ceaselessly the kerygma of the «*magnalia Dei*» — the proclamation of those marvels of divine mercy in the history of salvation which are the mystery of Christ, and in which the hearts of all men can open to their Father.¹⁹

Wendouree, St. Mary's Monastery.

¹⁹ Cf. CONCILIIUM VAT., II, *Constitutio de Sacra Liturgia*, n. 35, 2 «*ministerium praedicationis.... quasi annuntiatio mirabilium Dei in historia salutis seu mysterii Christi, quod in nobis praesens semper adest et operatur...*