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Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Bonaventure

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The relation between history and metaphysics has long been a problem for Christian thought. History is the realm of the particular, the limited, the contingent, while metaphysics seeks to know the universal structures of reality. From its very inception, Christianity has been deeply committed to history, emerging out of the historical experience of the Old Testament and itself focusing its search for intelligibility in a limited cluster of historical events that center around the person of Jesus of Nazareth in whom the Christian sees something unique, unrepeatable, and of universal significance for mankind. If one can speak of the "scandal of the particular" relative to the Old Testament, even more so is this true in the case of Christianity, where the entire burden of man's quest for a universal word of intelligibility is focused in the history of the Man of Nazareth. Christianity is not first of all an ethical system or a metaphysical doctrine, but a historical, religious experience. It is, however, a religious experience that leads to ethical decisions and—if pursued by reflective thought—may be seen to be laden with metaphysical implications.

As a theologian, Bonaventure was convinced that Christian revelation implied claims as to the nature of reality and the nature of God's agency in the world. These claims are focused in the person of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word and have their implications not only at the metaphysical level but at the epistemological level in terms of human knowledge in general and in terms of the relation between reason and faith in particular. In a very real sense, Bonaventure's work may be seen as a theology of the Word; for it is an attempt to explicate the word-character of reality in all its metaphysical and epistemological ramifications. In this sense, it stands in relation to the Logos doctrines of

the ancient philosophers as well as to the Logos theologies of the early Christian apologists in that it is concerned with the principle of universal intelligibility. But unlike the Hellenistic philosophers, Bonaventure's search for this principle revolves around the historical career of Jesus Christ, the implications of which lead to a far more subtle doctrine of the Word and of the Trinity than was realized in the work of the apologists. While the theology of the apologists reveals little explicit connection with the Gospel of St. John, that of Bonaventure clearly takes its inspiration from that scriptural source. What emerges out of Bonaventure's efforts is a vision which sees an inner, positive relation between the order of creation and the order of grace, between the light of reason and the light of revelation, between the science of philosophy and the science of theology. While philosophy does not take its content from revelation, yet as it is carried out by a Christian philosopher, it will accept the external tutelage of revelation so as to avoid entering dead-end streets or terminating in erroneous positions. Relative to the science of metaphysics, this will mean that what appears as philosophical metaphysics must be held open to further clarification at a level which can appropriately be called theological metaphysics and which—in Bonaventure's theology—is the metaphysical elaboration of the implications of the revelation in Christ.

GENERAL RELATION BETWEEN REASON AND FAITH

In his recent monumental study of the historical constitution of Bonaventure's philosophy, John Quinn has argued that one can discern at least two levels of relation between reason and faith in the work of Bonaventure.[1] The first level is that at which Bonaventure envisions a fundamental compatibility between philosophy and faith.[2] In the eyes of Bonaventure, human reason is a gift of God; and the attempts of man to give systematic expression to the insights of reason are to be treasured. Bonaventure never condemns philosophical science as such, though he does find fault with those who have, in his eyes, falsified philosophy.[3] As Bonaventure considers philosophy at this level, it stands on its own basis, making use of its own method and principles, and borrows no specific content from the world of faith. Working at this level, Bonaventure himself develops a number of distinctive philosophical positions which can be most appropriately termed "Bonaventurian," for they do not represent a simple, eclectic transfer of principles and ideas from varied

[1] John F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 23 (Toronto, 1973).
[2] Quinn, p. 742.
[3] Quinn, p. 818.

sources. Rather, they represent a creative rethinking of past positions terminating in a new position that is not simply reducible to any of its historical sources.[4] There is, then, in Bonaventure's view a fundamental possibility of developing a philosophical science that does not draw material from revelation, and Bonaventure himself engages in philosophical investigations at this level. Yet even here his position seems to be conditioned from outside by a faith concern, for as a theologian, he approaches the question of philosophy with certain theological issues in mind. While philosophy at this first level does not draw specific content from revelation, yet faith functions as a twofold guide to the philosopher. At one level it guides by making known to the philosopher what revelation says concerning those issues which the philosopher seeks to understand by human reason, and at another level, it guides the philosopher's work by not allowing philosophy to go beyond its proper bounds.[5] While the guidance of reason by faith is extrinsic to philosophy as such, yet it is intrinsic to the intellect which is a single power by which man both believes and knows.

The second level of relation between philosophy and faith is found at that point where faith draws to itself the entire philosophical *instrumentarium* so as to obtain a properly theological understanding of the world of faith.[6] At this level, the light of reason is subjected to the light of faith. In as far as faith is seen to be an intrinsic perfection of the human intellect, faith does not involve the rejection of reason, but in as far as reason without biblical revelation does not have access to all the necessary data, the work of the philosopher must remain open ended.

Within such a general understanding of the relation between reason and faith, it is possible to distinguish in Bonaventure's work a level of metaphysical reflection which is a philosophical science carried out by reason with the extrinsic guidance of faith and a level of metaphysics which is carried out by the theologian applying the philosophical tools to faith. These two levels of metaphysical concern are not contradictory nor exclusive of one another, but may be seen as two levels of one metaphysics the content of which, in Bonaventure's perspective, is finally and explicitly known from the mystery of Christ. We will now turn to a consideration of these two levels of metaphysics so as to make clear the grounding of the general theoretical framework of the sciences of philosophy and theology as given above. At both levels, Bonaventure's view of metaphysics is focused sharply on the question of exemplarity which will unavoidably take us into his understanding of the Word.

[4] Quinn, p. 134, presents one example. Others may be found in the summary sections of subsequent chapters.

[5] Quinn, p. 809.

[6] Quinn, p. 742.

PHILOSOPHICAL METAPHYSICS AND EXEMPLARITY

On a number of occasions, including both early and late writings, Bonaventure sketches an outline of the division of the sciences.[7] That which concerns us here specifically pertains to the philosophical sciences. In general, man's knowledge is organized in multiple arts and scientific disciplines each of which pertains to a particular region of reality and human experience. While philosophy is distinct from these regional sciences, yet it is not unrelated to them, for one cannot hope to create a general or universal knowledge without first having some particular knowledge, and one cannot hope to achieve a comprehensive philosophical science independently of the particular sciences. One must proceed from sensible experience of the world, but the movement of reflective thought does not rest in the multiplicity of regional experience and particular sciences. Rather, it tends to reduce the plurality of experience to a unity. The multiplicity of the world is the expression of what is first of all a radical unity in principle; therefore it is to be expected that that which is one in origin, though diversified in its objectification, should find a unity again in the finite subject. Such a reduction to unity is, in Bonaventure's viewpoint, the work of philosophy.

When we turn to philosophy, however, we find a plurality of philosophical sciences, for there are three types of truth which relate to three aspects of the divine reality and which are the concern of three branches of philosophy.[8] The first type of truth is called the truth of things; it is concerned with things in terms of their origin, and it gives rise to natural philosophy. The second type of truth is called the truth of signs or words; it concerns that truth which is found in the mental act of judgment and gives rise to rational philosophy. The third type is called the truth of morals; it is concerned with the rightness of human actions, and from it arises moral philosophy. From a slightly different perspective, one can say that since God is the cause of being, the principle of intelligibility, and the order of living,[9] philosophy will deal with reality in terms of three disciplines corresponding to these three aspects of the divine reality, that is, natural philosophy, rational philosophy, and moral philosophy. It becomes clear that each of these sciences, which are further subdivided,[10] approaches the understanding of reality in terms

[7] *De donis Sp. S.*, 4, 1–12 (5:473–79), esp. 4, 9 (5:475); *Itin.* 3, 6–7 (5:305–6); *De red.* 4 (5:320–21); *Hex.* 4–7 (5:348–68). All citations to the works of Bonaventure are to *Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi ed.).

[8] *De donis Sp. S.*, 4, 7 (5:274); *Hex.*, 4, 2 (5:349).

[9] *De sci. Christi* q.4, 24 (5:19); *De donis Sp. S.*, 4, 6 (5:474); *Itin.*, 3, 6 (5:306); *Hex.*, 4, 2–3 (5:349). Bonaventure draws this threefold distinction from Augustine, who attributes it to Plato; see *De civ. Dei*, 8, 4.

[10] Natural philosophy is divided into physics, mathematics, and metaphysics; rational

of a particular order of causality. Natural philosophy, treating of things in terms of the cause of being, deals with reality under the aspect of efficient causality. In treating of the principle of intelligibility, rational philosophy deals with reality under the aspect of exemplary causality. In its concern for the right order of living, moral philosophy deals with things under the aspect of final causality.

Without specifying further the task of the particular sciences, one can say that the task of philosophy, in its fullest sense, is that of drawing human knowledge into a unity. While the three major philosophical branches approach the problem each in terms of one order of causality, the task is not completed until that threefold causality is understood to be grounded in one first principle. Since the three orders of causality are one in God, it is necessary that the sciences which deal with reality from each order of causality be brought together to form a unified knowledge about the relation of all finite reality to its one cause. It is this task of unification which falls to metaphysics in a special way, for it has the task of unifying the various philosophical disciplines by reducing all of finite reality to one first principle which is origin, exemplar, and final end of all things.[11] Only when such a unity has been achieved has one arrived at the high point of philosophical knowledge and natural philosophical wisdom.

The presentation of the sciences in the *Hexaemeron*[12] takes place with a pressing theological problem in mind. While it offers a structure basically identical with what we have just described, at the same time, by delineating more precisely the similarities and differences between metaphysics and the other disciplines, it focuses the metaphysical question in a singular way on the problem of exemplarity. Metaphysics, writes Bonaventure, begins with the consideration of the principles that govern particular, created substances, moving from that level to the consideration of the universal and the uncreated. Thus it considers reality under the aspects of principle, means, and end. But when the metaphysician views being under the aspect of origin, his work harmonizes to a degree with the concerns of physics, which also views things in terms of their origin. When, on the other hand, the metaphysician views things in terms of finality, his work bears a certain parallel to that of the ethician, who is concerned with the direction of human actions to their end, the Supreme Good. But the concern of the metaphysician is most properly metaphysical when he views being in terms of exemplar-

philosophy into grammar, logic, and rhetoric; and moral philosophy into monastic, economic, and political disciplines (see *De red.* 4 [5:320–21]).

[11] *Itin.* 2, 12 (5:302); *De donis Sp. S.*, 4, 9 (5:475): *Hex.* 4, 2–3 (5:349).

[12] *Hex.*, 1,13 (5:331).

ity, for there is no other philosophical science that coincides with this.

Thus, at the level of philosophy, Bonaventure sees the work of philosophy to be focused in the contemplation of reality in terms of a threefold causality. While each of the three principal sciences apprehends God as the first cause in a particular order of causality, the goal of philosophy is not reached until these three are united in such a way that God is apprehended as the one supreme cause of finite reality and as the first being by which every other being is known to be one, true, and good.[13] We have seen, in the last of Bonaventure's writings, how the metaphysical question is most sharply focused in the problem of exemplarity so that the entire work of philosophy moves to one goal, namely, to know the one divine essence as the exemplary cause of finite reality.[14] The philosopher, therefore, approaches reality in terms of a threefold causality and brings his task to its goal when he perceives that this threefold causality is that of one principle who is the exemplar of all else. In carrying out his work, the philosopher can deal with the essential attributes of God and with attributes common to the three persons of the Trinity, but beyond this he cannot go. A more complete delineation of the meaning of these attributes must await the revelation of sacred Scripture, to which the metaphysician must be open.

CHRISTOLOGY AND EXEMPLARISM

Though broad in character, the above remarks are sufficient to indicate Bonaventure's conviction that the concerns of philosophical metaphysics are centered around the question of exemplarity, so that only in the light of exemplarity will the deepest nature of created reality be unlocked for the philosopher. From that perspective, it is possible to move from the philosophical dimensions to that which is properly theological.

In his final work, the *Hexaemeron*, and speaking as a theologian, Bonaventure asks where we are to begin our inquiry into the nature of reality if our work is to bear fruit. His answer is unambiguous. We must begin at the center of reality, and the center is Christ.[15] If we begin at that center, we can come to know how all things come forth into being and how they are brought to completion. "Such is the metaphysical center that leads us back, and this is the whole of our metaphysics; namely, it is concerned with emanation, exemplarity, and consumma-

[13] Quinn, pp. 437 ff.

[14] See also J. Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Z. Hayes (Chicago, 1971), pp. 134 ff., for a treatment of the problem of exemplarity in relation to Bonaventure's attitude toward Aristotle.

[15] *Hex.*, 1,1 (5:329); 1,10 (5:330); 1,11–39 (5:331 ff).

tion; that is, to be illumined by means of spiritual light and to be led back to the highest Being. And in this you will be a true metaphysician."[16]

The whole of the first collation on the *Hexaemeron* is a compact presentation of the seriousness with which Bonaventure takes this. The metaphysical question coincides with the christological question in as far as the problem of exemplarity which is focused in metaphysics at the philosophical level is related to the exemplarity of the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ. Already early in his career Bonaventure had had the conviction that the person of Christ lay at the center of reality.[17] Here in his final work we find the extent to which that conviction has been worked out. Initially, we seem to be dealing with a geometrical symbol, namely, the circle, which Alan of Lille had employed to symbolize God and his relation to creation.[18] As the symbol is adapted by Bonaventure, it refers first of all to God, then to man, and finally to the entire sweep of history. In ever more concentrated form, Bonaventure's attention focuses on the center of the circle which, in God, is the second person of the Trinity, and in creation, is the mystery of the incarnation of that same person. In the theological elaboration of this symbol we are lead ever deeper into the realm of Bonaventure's theological metaphysics.

The Son as the Center of God

It has been pointed out in a number of studies that Bonaventure's trinitarian theology bears stronger affinities with that of the Greek Fathers than does that of Aquinas.[19] Historically, the influences on Bonaventure's thought are to be found proximately in the work of Richard of St. Victor and remotely in that of Pseudo-Dionysius. Our concern here, however, is not to investigate its historical antecedents but merely to point out some of its peculiar qualities which relate to the question under discussion.

In Bonaventure's theology, God is seen primarily as fruitful being or as supreme goodness. Within that context, it becomes understandable that the inner-divine emanations should be seen as the full expression of that fruitfulness and goodness. Instead of explaining the emanations as one of intellect and one of will, Bonaventure clarifies them as one of nature and one of will.[20] The second person is first of all the Son of the

[16] *Hex.*, 1,17 (5:332).

[17] See Z. Hayes, trans., *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure*, with an intro. and commentary (Chicago, 1974), p. 79, n. 13.

[18] *Theol. Reg.*, reg. vii (PL 210,627).

[19] A. Stohr, *Die Trinitätslehre des hl. Bonaventura* (Münster, 1923); M. Schmaus, *Der liber propugnatorius des Thomas Anglicus und die Lehrdifferenzen zwischen Thomas von Aquin und Duns Scotus* (Münster, 1930).

[20] *Q. disp. de. myst. trin.*, q.8, resp. (5:114).

Father's love. The third person is the bond of the mutual love breathed by the Father and the Son. Viewed from a number of perspectives, the second person appears ever more clearly as the center of the divine life. Thus, following the inspiration of Pseudo-Dionysius, Bonaventure argues to the plurality of persons in God, since if, as the Dionysian view suggests, God is the highest good, and if the good is by nature self-diffusive, then it would contradict the most noble thinking about God if one were to deny him the possibility of communicating himself in the highest way; but the highest mode of communication would be a personal one.[21] From this perspective, trinitarian theology is a metaphysics developed on the basis of the Dionysian axiom: *bonum diffusivum sui*.[22] Following the suggestion of Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventure suggests that if one sees God as supreme love, one is also led to a plurality of persons, since perfect love is unthinkable without such a plurality.[23]

From the first perspective, there appears a theory more metaphysical in character; the second person appears as a middle between the first person, who is totally self-communicative, and the third person who is totally communicated, for the second person is both communicated and communicating. From the second perspective, there appears a theory which is more psychological in character and in which the second person appears as a middle between love which is fully *gratuitus* and love which is fully *debitus*, for the second person is love *ab utroque permixtus*.[24] Thus, though viewed from a number of perspectives, the Son appears in each case as the very center of God's life.

The Son as Word

While the second person is first of all the fruit of the Father's love, to speak of him as Son expresses only his relation to the Father; hence that title is quite limited in its significance. Within the context of trinitarian theology that views God as primal love or as self-communicative good, the first term of that self-communication is much more than can be indicated by the term "Son," for in the fullest sense, the second person is the full and total expression of all that the divine love is in itself and can be in relation to the finite. The second person is the expression of all that God is in himself and of the various ways in which God can communicate himself to the world. The speaking of the immanent Word as an expression of the necessary immanent fruitfulness of God is simultane-

[21] *Brevil*, 1,2 (5:211); *Q. disp. de myst. trin.*, q.1, a.2 (5:56); q.8, resp. (5:114–15).
[22] I *Sent.*, d.2.,a.un., q.2 (1:53–54).
[23] Ibid.
[24] I *Sent.*, d.2,a. un., q.4 (1:57).

ously the expression of the possible free communication of being to the nondivine. Thus, the Word, as the Father's self-expression, is the openness of the Father to the other in all its forms. The second person, then, is God precisely as expressive being, and it is the first and proper function of the Son to be the *ratio exprimendi*.[25]

So it is that Bonaventure frequently speaks of a preference for the title "Word," a term which he sees to designate a complex network of relations which the Son bears to the Father, to creation, to man, and to revelation, all of which are grounded in the fact that he who is, first of all and by reason of an act of the divine nature, the Son of the Father's love, is simultaneously the Word of the Father's self-expression as loving source of all that is.[26] To speak of the second person of the trinity as Son is to speak of him in relation to the Father alone, but to speak of him as Word is to add beyond that the notion of expression.[27] God's being as self-communicative love gives expression to its entire fruitfulness in the generation of the Son, so that in generating the Son, the Father speaks one Word immanent to himself in which is expressed the possibility of creation.

As the Father expresses all that he is in the Word, it follows for Bonaventure that the procession of the Spirit is expressed in the Word in such a way that the Word appears as the point at which the entire triune structure of the divine life is focused in an exemplary way.[28] Briefly stated, the Word that lies at the center of the divine life is the ontological basis for all that is other than the Father; the first and primal relation (*relatio principalis*) is that between the Word and the Father, and in it is contained the basis for all other relation. So it is that he who is the center of the divine life is also the exemplar of creation, and creation will appear as an external word that gives expression to the one inner Word. If it is true that the triune God—as one, triune, orderly principle—creates after his image, or after the Word, then it follows that whatever created reality exists possesses in its inner constitution a relation to this uncreated Word, and since the Word is the expression of the inner-trinitarian structure of God, that which is created as an expression of the Word bears the imprint of the trinity in itself.

The text of the *Hexaemeron* to which we referred above is an indication of the seriousness with which Bonaventure worked out these convictions.[29] After quoting the Prologue of the Gospel of St. John, which speaks of the Word through whom all things were made, Bonaventure

[25] I *Sent.*, d.27, p. II, a. un., q.3, resp. (1:487); *Hex.*, 11,13 (5:382).
[26] *Comm. in Joann.*, I,6,q.1 (6:247).
[27] I *Sent.*, d.27, p.II, a. un., q.3, resp. (1:487).
[28] *Hex.*, 9,2 (5:373); 3,7 (5:344).
[29] *Hex.*, 1,13 (5:331).

proceeds to elaborate this in terms of seven orders in which this Word stands at the center: the metaphysical and physical orders, the mathematical and logical orders, the ethical and the political orders, and finally the theological order.[30] That which the philosopher sought as the exemplary cause and found in the one divine essence, the theologian comes to know as the person of the Word, the center of the divine life and the exemplar in whom the whole trinitarian structure of the divine nature expresses itself as the exemplar of all finite reality. Philosophically, the height of metaphysical knowledge is reached when the philosopher sees the union of principle, exemplar, and end in the one divine essence which is the exemplar of all else. Theologically, the question of exemplarity can be summarized in the following way. The Son of the Father's love is the eternal Word and the Image of the Father in such a way that he is simultaneously the ground of all other relations. In as far as the entire mystery of the trinity is expressed in the Word, he is the exemplar of creation which, while spoken in the Word, bears the stamp of the entire trinity which has its expression in the Word. The possibility of God's creative activity rests in his being as triune, which is another way of saying that God could not communicate being to the finite if he were not supremely communicative in himself. But the weight of this supremely communicative being is focused in the emanation of the Son-Word who is the openness of God to all that is other. Only a self-communicative God can be a Creator-God in Bonaventure's view, and the weight of that self-communication falls upon the Word as the necessary and exemplary condition for all created being.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

If, therefore, it is impossible to understand a creature except through that by which it was made, it is necessary that the true Word go before you.[31]

Here in his final work, Bonaventure gives succinct expression to a common Scholastic conviction which he shared; the principle of being and the principle of intelligibility are identical.[32] When, as a theologian, Bonaventure reads the Prologue of St. John, he hears a text that is laden with metaphysical implications and related epistemological questions. That this is the case is clear already in his early *Commentary on St. John*[33] as

[30] *Hex.*, 1,11 (5:331).
[31] *Hex.*, 1,10 (5:331).
[32] *Hex.*, 1,13 (5:331): Nam idem est principium essendi et cognoscendi.
[33] *Comm. in Joann.*, I,6 q.1 (6:247).

well as in the *Sentence Commentary*[34] and in the final *Hexaemeron*,[35] to say nothing of the smaller works.

If all things are constituted in being through the Word, and if it is through the Word that God enlightens all men who come into the world, and if it is the same Word who has become incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, then it follows that Jesus Christ lays claim to man's quest for the word of universal intelligibility. If all things are constituted in being through the Word, and if it is impossible to understand a creature except through that by which it was made, then in some way the Word is involved in all things are constituted in being through the Word, and if it is impossible to understand a creature except through that by which it was made, then in some way the Word is involved in all genuine knowledge at whatever level. It is one and the same Word to which the mind of man is tending in its knowledge of the world through the human sciences, and of which it receives the clearest and fullest knowledge in the person of Jesus Christ.

The reason for distinguishing philosophical metaphysics and theological metaphysics now becomes clear. God speaks but one Word in which the world and its history are co-spoken. The human sciences are the noetic explicitation of that Word as it has been objectified in the created universe. As reality is united in the one Word, so the knowledge of reality is united when it is led back to its first principle through the Word through whom it went forth. There is, however, a point in history at which the content of that Word is historicized with such explicitness that from that point light is shed on all of reality. So it is that when the philosopher contemplates reality, it is reality that is constituted in advance through the Word. To the degree that he is true to his discipline, he can arrive at genuine metaphysical knowledge. The problem with philosophy, in Bonaventure's view, resides, not in the science of philosophy as such, but rather in the fact that philosophers frequently fail to reduce reality fully to its first principle. But even when they do their task well, they can never move to a knowledge of the first principle as a tri-personal unity.[36] On the other hand, the theologian in contemplating reality is reflecting on the same reality as is the philosopher. There is, however, a further basis for his reflection in the light of which one and the same exemplary first principle can be seen in the fuller dimensions of tri-personal divinity. Without confusing these two dimensions of metaphysical reflection, it is apparent that for Bonaventure they stand in a complementary relationship. Only when

[34] I *Sent.*, d. 27, p. I, a. un., q. 1–4 (1:482 ff).

[35] *Hex.*, 1 (5:329 ff).

[36] I Sent., d. 3, p. II, a.2, q.3, concl. (1:93): Sed ista ponere vel intelligere in Deo potest fides, sed non ratio; et ita perfecta cognitio imaginis non habetur nisi a fide.

the metaphysician refuses to stand open to the further dimensions of theological metaphysics implicit in the New Testament revelation does he incur the censure of Bonaventure.

It is consistent with Bonaventure's basic principles that the Christian theologian cannot simply accept the categories of Greek metaphysics in an uncritical way, for every form of philosophical metaphysics must stand open to correction and completion in the light of the New Testament. This is reflected in the structure and in the content of two of his works in a singular way, namely, in the *Itinerarium*,[37] particularly in the last three chapters, and in the whole of the *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*.[38] Both of these works reflect Bonaventure's preference for the dynamically shaped image of God of Dionysian theology. The more Aristotelian tendency of Aquinas would lead to a preference for the name "*Qui est*," which for Bonaventure would correspond more to the Mosaic revelation than to the Christian.[39] The truth of the divine unity may be known by means of philosophy, and this philosophical knowledge is closely and positively related to the Old Testament revelation, for the being of God that is believed on the basis of that revelation also shines through the veil of every created being in such a way that the most basic human concepts operative in both philosophical and theological reflection are not possible except by reason of some contact with being.[40] Thus, in the *Itinerarium*, it is possible for Bonaventure to engage in a metaphysical meditation in which the Old Testament revelation is explicated by means of philosophical instruments to achieve a level of theology of remarkable metaphysical and epistemological depth.

Yet, not only must philosophy remain open to the Christian revelation, but so must the revelation of the Old Testament, which—as a stage in the history of revelation—would be untrue to its own deepest meaning if it were to remain closed upon itself. While John Damascene, following Moses, says that "He who is" is the first name of God,[41] Dionysius, following Christ, says that "Good" is the first name of God.[42] This datum, believed by faith, may also be explicated through the use of philosophical methods. Thus, immediately following the theological-

[37] (5:295–313).
[38] (5:45–115).
[39] *Itin.*, 5,2 (5:308).
[40] *Itin.*, 6,1 (5:310). The manner of contact is the problem of the doctrine of illumination, the treatment of which would go beyond the limits of this paper. For a very extensive and current presentation of the question, see Quinn, esp. chaps. 6 and 7 on the certitude of natural knowledge and the illumination of natural knowledge, pp. 447–663.
[41] *Itin.*, 5,2 (5:308).
[42] Ibid.

metaphysical reflection on God as being in the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure turns his attention to that which is the fullest revelation of the divine nature: the New Testament statement that God is good. If being is the basis for knowing the essential attributes of the divine nature, the good is the basis for knowing the mystery of the emanations. And if the knowledge of God as being is not yet the full revelation of the nature of God, then all that has been said, both philosophically and theologically, must be held open to the highest name; for from the perspective of the New Testament, Goodness is the proper name of the same God known from philosophy and known from the Old Testament as "He who is." At this point, Bonaventure develops the theological implications in what may be called a metaphysics of the good or a metaphysics of love, which, as a mystery of supreme self-communication, takes the form of the trinitarian principle. In a truly remarkable theological effort, he goes on to indicate how the various dimensions developed thus far are to be found in the mystery of the Incarnation.[43]

The relation between the qualities of God knowable through philosophy and the faith datum of the trinity is worked out with even more elaborate care in the *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*.[44] Here Bonaventure begins with the question of the existence of God as known and the trinity of God as believed and moves through a philosophical and theological analysis of unity, simplicity, infinity, eternity, immutability, necessity, and primacy. In each case, he shows first the philosophical reasons for the attribute in question. This is followed by a theological clarification of the fact that each attribute can be understood in its fullest sense only if it is seen in relation to the fullness of the trinitarian life of God. In this way, a great dialogue is set up between the demands of reason, on the one hand, and the revealed data, on the other; and the divine nature emerges not as a static reality but as a dynamic, unifying power in terms of which each attribute of being is brought to its fullest perfection in the tri-personal fullness of God's life. While the requirements of philosophical reasoning are respected, the final content of the attributes with which reason is concerned is derived from the revelation of the New Testament. The doctrine of the trinity, which is intrinsically associated with the christological dogma and which functions as a clarification thereof, is a theological-metaphysical doctrine in which the best of philosophical-metaphysical reflection is brought to its completion. Such a union of philosophy and faith is based on the

[43] It would go beyond the limits of this paper to pursue this in greater detail. For a clear and pointed presentation of the christological aspects, see E. Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 28 (1968): 27–46.

[44] (5:45–115).

compatibility of the truth of natural reason with the truth of revelation, which—in turn—is grounded in the unity of the Word in and through which God reaches to the nondivine, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace and consummation.

Since the uncreated Word is the ontological condition for the existence of finite reality, and since the same Word as incarnate brings the world to its redemptive completion, it is in the incarnate Word that the truth of reason and the truth of faith are unified and led back to God who is the radical principle of all knowledge, whether philosophical or theological.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Bonaventure sees his work as metaphysical both at the philosophical and at the theological level. The christological dogma of the Church, in his eyes, contains a metaphysical dimension in itself which, when explicated in terms of its prior conditions, leads to the trinitarian metaphysics on the one hand and to the theological understanding of man on the other. This metaphysical doctrine stands as the goal of all metaphysical thought and as the completion thereof. In the final analysis, for Bonaventure there is but one metaphysics, and that is one for which the Christ-mystery becomes paradigmatic for our understanding of all reality. In relation to this, philosophical metaphysics can be only a stage on the way and not a discipline that stands completely in itself.

What Bonaventure has done can be seen as a consistent explication of reality in terms of that axiom which says, "The principle of being and of knowing is the same."[45] When this principle is associated with the prologue of the fourth Gospel, which speaks of the Word in whom all things are made and of the Word that became incarnate, the foundation is laid for the sort of Christocentric metaphysics developed by Bonaventure. If the eternal Word is seen as the ontological *prius* of creation, then the intelligibility of the created order is a mediated intelligibility and may be discerned only in the light of that through which it is mediated. Hence, the whole of man's efforts to discover that intelligibility is in some way related to the Word. But since it is the same Word that is incarnate in Jesus, there is an inner relation between the order of creation and the order of incarnation. Thus, the search for the intelligibility of the created order coincides with the christological mystery. So it is that the incarnate Word stands at the center of reality as that point of unity in relation to which the multiplicity of reality holds together.

[45] *Hex.*, 1,13 (5:331).

At the center of Bonaventure's vision we discover a profound theology of the Word in the explication of which ontology, theology, and christology find a remarkable unity in which, at one level, the quest for the ultimate principle of reality converges with the religious quest for God, and at a second level, the quest for God converges with the quest for Jesus Christ. Both the philosophical quest and the religious quest are orientated to Christ, who lays claim to the search of man's mind and heart for a Word of universal intelligibility.