

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF JEAN ZURCHER: A CATHOLIC APPRECIATION

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From a Roman Catholic point of view, a very stimulating development from within Seventh-day Adventist theology has been the work of Jean Zurcher in philosophical and theological anthropology. In a subsequent article I hope to elaborate an approach to understanding the concept of immortality which will be faithful to both Adventist and Roman Catholic tradition, an approach which owes much to some of Zurcher's own ideas. Here, however, by way of a preliminary essay in this area, I would like to offer an interpretation and appreciation of his thought. First, though, it should be noted that just as Zurcher's position is not an official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, so neither am I an official spokesman of the Roman Catholic Church. Zurcher is an anthropologist in good standing as an Adventist. I am a theologian in equally good standing in the Roman Catholic Church. This essay is offered as an appreciation of Zurcher's work.

Philosophical Anthropology

In his *L'homme, sa nature et sa destinée: Essai sur le problème de l'âme et du corps*, Zurcher traces the history of philosophical thought on the body-soul relationship.¹ Since this history bears on Zurcher's own anthropology, it will be well to point out some of its more pertinent aspects. He maintains, for instance, that the dualism which has often been man's most characteristic view of himself results partially, at least, from

¹ Neuchâtel-Paris, 1953. This has been translated into English as *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York, 1969). References will be to the latter edition.

his history of reducing himself to the status of *object* for the sake of self-analysis.² To illustrate this phenomenon, Zurcher uses the myth of Narcissus: as a result of reflecting on himself, man has so fallen in love with his own image that he has in fact bestowed substantial existence to what he has come to know:

From that moment, the subject seems to himself to be divided into two essentially distinct spheres in one of which the "me" perceived becomes subject while in the other the organism, instrument of perception, becomes by essence the object. And in the extension of this perspective the two oppositional worlds which constitute human reality appear more and more clearly the interior world of the "me" and the exterior world of the "not-me".³

But it is to this initial perceptive process that the dichotomistic view of man is to be traced. This is what Zurcher refers to as the classical error: "to have conceived man as being a body or a spirit or an association of the two; to have believed in the actual existence of parts, into which our thought has divided him, and to have regarded them as heterogeneous entities."⁴ This anthropological dichotomizing seems to reflect the religiously dichotomistic view of nature, with its struggle between good and evil and the forces associated with them: light and darkness, spirit and matter, and so on. This religious world-view was later to have its effect on Plato himself.

Zurcher traces the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the *psyche* to the ancient Greek cult of Dionysus, in which the initiates worked themselves into a state of being with the god, or in the god ("en-thusiasm"):

It is precisely in this aspiration to merge the self with the god, to lose the self in divinity, that the incipient belief in the immortality of the soul is found. From this source Greek philosophy derived the necessary ideas for the construction of a metaphysical doctrine of a divine soul whose life is eternal.⁵

² *Op. cit.*, pp. xv-xvi.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 93.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

On the other hand, in contrast to the Platonic view of man composed of two really existing substances, body and imprisoned soul, there is the approach which Aristotle took to the same phenomena. Where Plato tends to be analytic (and consequently dichotomistic), Aristotle is synthetic (and tends, therefore, toward a more unified view of man).⁶

It is intriguing for a Catholic theologian to note how appealing to an Adventist like Zurcher is the approach of Aristotle in this connection. Since Adventist theology describes man so frequently in terms of *soma*, *psyche*, and *pneuma*, it would be easy, though erroneous, to assume that its option is for a trichotomistic anthropology. On the contrary, however, Adventists describe their view of man as "monistic" or "wholistic," and consequently close to the Aristotelian approach to understanding the nature of man. Zurcher himself follows Aristotle in describing the soul as essentially creative of the body, which is its expression: the human *form*, Zurcher insists, realizes itself in *matter* in order that an actual being be constituted. But in order for this self-realization to take place, of course, one must posit the action of an efficient cause and a final cause (which, however, work through the soul, and in a sense are contained in it, though they transcend it). Thus, for Zurcher, the "form and matter are one and the same thing, the one potential and the other actual. Together, they constitute the unity of substance."⁷ Therefore, "there is no body and no soul, but only a co-existence of two, as in the case of the wax and of the ball which is formed from it."⁸

A difficulty arises, however, from the fact that there is the well-known Aristotelian distinction between the *nous* (the agent intellect, which as a universal participates in the Pure Intelligence, the Self-thinking Thought) and the *psyche* (the passive intellect), which is the individual form of the body. It is

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-32.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

here that a dualism enters Aristotle's anthropology; he is never completely able to reestablish unity, though he tries by linking the active intellect to the sensitive soul as illuminator to the illumined, and this in a body with each other, the image transformed by the reality known.⁹

The difference between the Aristotelian view and that of Plato is illustrated also in their respective views of death. Plato, when he comes to speak of death, sees it as something which has its effect only on the *soma*, from which the immortal *psyche* is released. This notion had its influence on Aristotle, who, however, introduced the concept of the *nous* as the immortal aspect of man, the *psyche* being simply the vital force of the *soma*, and consequently mortal. Neoplatonists (e.g., Plotinus) see corporeal existence as death for the *psyche*, with real life coming as the result of the liberation of the *psyche*.¹⁰

The early Christian philosophers were obviously influenced by this neoplatonic outlook (with death seen as either neutral or as a positive good). Zurcher sums up the subsequent development:

The Christian conception of man certainly rested, in its origin, upon a totally different anthropology. . . . But the Christian philosophy, founded by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and presented by St. Augustine in a vast system which became the doctrine of the Church, rapidly established the pre-eminence of the fundamental elements of the Platonic anthropology. In the Middle Ages the first of the scholastic philosophies borrowed all its doctrine from Plotinus and through him from Plato, while Aristotelianism triumphed with Thomas Aquinas.

Thus, throughout nearly twenty centuries, in spite of the diversity of succeeding systems, the various conceptions of man remain (with trifling differences) close to that of Plato or of Aristotle: that of a hybrid being, composed of an immortal soul and a perishable body.¹¹

Modern dichotomistic views, however, have another source

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁰ See Rudolf Bultmann, "Thanatos," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1965), III, 7-14.

¹¹ Zurcher, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

besides Greek philosophy, and Zurcher has traced them to the very great influence of the Cartesian distinction between the thinking-self and the being-self.¹² Descartes, in opposing to the *cogito* a substantial existence comparable to that of *thought*, passes thereby from a methodological dualism inherent in the fact of consciousness to a substantial dualism.¹³ This results, anthropologically speaking, in a thinking-substance (the spirit) on the one hand, and a non-thinking, understood body-substance on the other; the body is unnecessary to the spirit, which is self-sufficient and immortal. Descartes, however, denied being a Platonist: "The soul is not only in the body as the pilot in the ship; it is closely joined to it and constitutes with it a single whole."¹⁴ On the other hand, there are many passages in his writings which conflict with his expressed desire not to maintain a dualistic view of man.¹⁵ There is much about the *fact* of the union (which Descartes arrived at by intuition), but little about the *explanation*:

The Cartesian doctrine of the union of soul and body retains above all a conspicuously contradictory and verbal character with regard to the dualistic conception of thought and extension. The radical incompatibility of the two contrary substances makes the third order of things, constituted by the union of soul and body, a chimerical being.¹⁶

As we have mentioned, Zurcher's own philosophical anthropology is basically Aristotelian, though for obvious reasons he does not agree with Aristotle entirely, believing that the Christian concept of the spirituality of man leads to a more logical conclusion than that which flows from the immortality of the soul, and which Aristotle borrowed, consciously or unconsciously, from Plato. At the basis of Zurcher's own anthropological opinion is a postulate, *unity*: "With Kant we believe

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39, 43-57.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁵ Some of these are cited by Zurcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

that unity is actually a category of our mind, an indispensable condition which things must satisfy in order to be grasped by our intelligence and to penetrate into the field of consciousness." ¹⁷ And so, anthropological unity is a necessary condition of consciousness and comprehension.

With this postulate as the foundation, Zurcher develops his anthropology from three distinct approaches. First, he studies man *metaphysically*, that is, as human being—especially in its relationship to absolute being; then, *psychologically*, in regard to human being's encounter with itself; finally, *physically*, from the point of view of human being's encounter with the other. These three points of view correspond with Semitic anthropology with its threefold outlook on man as spirit, soul, and body.

Ontologically, man is a participation in being according to a particular mode—*human* being; and, as Zurcher points out, by this very fact the concrete reality of a particular being "is not simple, but composite. . . . the fact of actually being a composite being signifies that there are in every particular being two fundamental principles without which there would be no particular being." One of these principles is real being-itself; the other is the limited mode-of-being. These, of course, are not two substances existing in themselves; rather, they correspond to the form and matter of the categories of Aristotle (whom he quotes with Aquinas at this point).¹⁸

There is a second dual aspect of man, and it follows from the fact that he is *living* being: man represents an essential synthesis of two correlative principles. There is no life where there is no being; and, conversely, when life ceases, *being ceases to exist*.¹⁹ This latter point is important, with a definite consequence for eschatology.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95. We might suspect that Biblical anthropology, which Zurcher would accept as revealed, is the basis of his postulate; but as a philosopher, he merely *postulates* unity.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-109.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-116.

We can summarize the metaphysical data in Zurcher's own words:

... he [man] is a material and spiritual being, a reasonable animal. Man is a corporeal reality endowed with psychic life whose superior activity has as formal object transcendental value. In fact, all his activity bears the seal of his physical dependency in regard to the things which surround him. His knowledge is above all an experience, a contact with present realities. But man is not corporeal only, he is also spiritual; that is why this contact with the "me" in the physical world is conscious. Man has "consciousness" of the organic character of his activity, because the latter also reveals a spiritual element. This is what permits the affirmation that the two constitutive principles of the metaphysical structure of man are on one hand a material principle and on the other hand a spiritual principle. It is these two principles which are habitually designated by the terms of body and soul.²⁰

The body and soul, Zurcher insists, are integral principles, neither of which can be defined without the other. The soul is man; the body is man, the subsistent being. Neither can be conceived without the other. The dead "body" is not a "body" but a corpse; the dead "soul" does not exist.

Zurcher also analyzes man from a *psychological* point of view—that is, in the act by which he himself constitutes his own essence, for Zurcher understands, as we have seen, that the "I" comes into existence with the consciousness:

It is by means of consciousness that our participation in life is realized. ... it is consciousness which gives us existence, for to exist without knowing that one exists is equivalent to not being or to being only an appearance in the consciousness of another. ... In reality, consciousness is not only the little invisible and vacillating flame which lights our existence; it is our very being.²¹

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119; here Zurcher shows himself to be of the "psycho-metaphysical school" of Louis Lavelle, whom he frequently quotes and who in his last work wrote: "The soul is nothing more than consciousness itself insofar as it is an aspiration toward Value" (*De l'âme humaine* [Paris, 1951], p. 465). From this point of view, man, experiencing his freedom and capacity for creativity, proceeds from existence to being. Here Lavelle's outlook is close to that of both Jean Guilton and Gabriel Marcel.

This is not, of course, the same thing as saying that consciousness *causes* existence, for, "Consciousness does nothing more than to apprehend the being, at the instant when it surges into existence, to communicate to it in some way the identity without which we should not recognize ourselves."²²

Thus, Zurcher rejects the view of "classical" philosophical thought which he sees as envisioning a spiritual substance, "realized even before being given to us,"²³ the role of consciousness being simply, in this case, to enable us to know. For Zurcher, consciousness is "not only inseparable from the interior experience, which is the very condition for the existence of the soul, but moreover, the possibility for the existence to constitute its own essence."²⁴

But once again, the soul is not an object in itself. This notion comes from the tendency to give the soul a role transcending that of consciousness, thereby giving the immortal-soul postulate a psychological justification. However,

intimate experience, far from revealing to us a transcendental soul substance, shows us, on the contrary, a soul whose existence and essence depend every instant on the activity of consciousness. . . . This implies that the soul and consciousness are inseparable and that there is the closest affinity between them. It is absolutely impossible to conceive of one without the other . . ."²⁵

Zurcher prefers to think of the soul, then, as *being* an existence rather than as *having* an existence, "since it is precisely the power that we have of making ourselves. . . . The essence of the soul is, thus, never a constituted essence, but an essence which constitutes itself throughout the duration of an existence."²⁶ And so, in identifying the soul and consciousness,

²² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 124; this, of course, raises the question "whether this personal consciousness is capable of persisting after the dissolution of the bodily organism"—W. R. Matthews, "The Destiny of the Soul," *The Hibbert Journal*, XXVIII (January, 1930), 193.

²⁶ Zurcher, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

and consciousness with the self, he is saying that the soul is this self in process and that it (the soul/self) ceases to exist when consciousness ceases: "the soul is man in a way creating himself every day of his life. . . . The soul is . . . synonymous with man, or inversely, man is synonymous with the soul."²⁷ The application for the question of self-knowledge, then, is that self-knowledge "is not to discover an object which is the self; it is, rather, to awaken in oneself a hidden life, the life of conscience."²⁸

To sum up this psychological view of man as a soul, Zurcher has this to say:

If . . . we wished to give a precise definition of the soul insofar as it is the spiritual essence of man, we should simply say that it occurs . . . where the consciousness of self is allied to the capacity of self determination.²⁹

Thus, *freedom* is an essential constituent of human being, an aspect of human personality which results from conscious existence. These are aspects of man as a *living soul*.

Finally, Zurcher considers man's exterior self-manifestation as he discusses the *corporeal* reality of man. His main point is to insist that body and soul are elements constitutive of man: corporeal and spiritual principles. Actually, as he indicates, the word "spirit" is better used to describe the soul as a spiritual principle, thus making it possible to distinguish between the *corporeal*, *psychic*, and *spiritual* life of the individual.³⁰

He does not, however, want to move from a Cartesian dichotomy to a trichotomy of more or less heterogeneous substances. The body, for Zurcher, constitutes the normal mode of expression of the individual: "it is not only the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128; furthermore, "the birth into a new life—which is the Christian revelation *par excellence*—is . . . the birth of the life of the conscience."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

evidence of our existence, the expression of our affective life, but also the vehicle of all the movements of our thought.”³¹ The spirit is related to both body and soul, for as he points out, since the incarnation, “the spirit is no farther from the body than the soul, and the soul is not more spiritual than the body.”³² Zurcher also emphasizes the fact that the body-manifestation

can never be separated from the power which it expresses, since the means by which the soul realizes itself is also the means by which it expresses itself. . . . In short, expression is so essential to the existence of the soul that the soul actually exists only to the extent that it gives to itself a body.³³

Theological Anthropology

At this point there arises a question which remains unsolved in any purely philosophical approach to anthropology: that of the essential difference between man and the animal. Is it merely a question of degree of consciousness (and thus of personality and freedom)? From the Biblical point of view, there is no essential difference on the level of the constitutive elements of man and animal—both are living creatures in the sense of Gn 2:7—and life is life. What difference there is arises from the creation of man in the image of God. Man is destined for personal relationship with God, and consequently there exists “in” man a point of contact between God and man which does not characterize the relationship between God and animals. This “image” is understood in contemporary Adventist theology in terms of certain capacities possessed by man but not by animals: the capacity to reason, the emotional capacities analyzed by psychology (even some sort of physical relationship—although this is a vague area). But the apex of these capacities, and the key to any genuinely theological anthropology, is man’s capacity for spiritual fellow-

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

ship with God. This pneumatic level is the level at which the fellowship achieved in regeneration is reached.

It is quite clear, therefore, that it is impossible to develop an adequate doctrine of the nature of man (especially in an eschatological perspective) without speaking of the destiny given man at his creation. As Zurcher points out in the last part of his book, "the desire for immortality is found rooted in the depths of human nature."³⁴ This *natural desire* (although he does not use this classical term of scholastic philosophy) he considers the strongest proof for the fact of man's being destined for immortality. We should not, however, think of this deeply-rooted desire as simply a static phenomenon extrinsic to man, which will be fulfilled eventually in the world to come. Rather, since in Zurcher's view the nature of man has been identified with his freedom, he can achieve this destiny in the process of exercising this freedom throughout the duration of his existence.

In considering man's nature as very much bound up with his destiny, Zurcher insists that he is treating man "existentially"—*i.e.*, in his situation before God—and at the same time is returning to the Biblical and Christian view of man. He thus expresses the harmony between Biblical anthropology and the existentialist anthropology of contemporary theology. He stresses the monistic character of the former: it presents man as a perfect and indissoluble unity of body, soul, and spirit; and he sees the accent on this unity underlying the essence of Christianity:

When Christ speaks of the manifestations of our love to God and to our neighbor, the accent is not placed on the multiplicity of its possible manifestations—which vary, moreover, from one Gospel to another—but rather on the fact that each of them should be the most complete expression of the totality of the being. "Thou shalt love

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 147; he goes back to this idea later: "It is not necessary to search very long for the conclusion that the destiny of man is found entirely inscribed in the metaphysical structure of his being" (*ibid.*, p. 165).

the Lord thy God with *all* thine heart, with *all* thy soul, with *all* thy strength and with *all* thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."³⁵

This monistic character is also in accord with the two key passages for Biblical anthropology:

The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gn 2:7).

May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Th 5:23).

In both of these passages the unity of man's nature comes through. In the latter passage it might seem that Paul has a quite trichotomistic view of man; that this is not so is clear from the fact that Paul's other letters indicate that his anthropology is essentially Biblical. For instance, in 1 Cor 15:45, he even refers to Gn 2:7: "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." Thus, the spirit, soul, and body are aspects of man's being-for-communion with God. And, "even if the manifestations of the being are manifold and very different, depending on whether they are made by the body, the soul or the spirit, they imply every time the whole man in a certain expression of himself."³⁶

With this monistic stress as background, let us now turn to an analysis of Zurcher's theological view of the *soma-psyche-pneuma* relationship.

In his comments on the concept of *soma*, he maintains that corporeality is an essential presupposition for the self-expression of the human person in his relationship with God. Referring to Bultmann, he states that "there is no human existence, no human reality even in the sphere of *pneuma*, the mind, which is not corporeal, somatic," and any attempt

³⁵ "The Christian View of Man: Part One," *AUSS*, II (1964), 159.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 160.

to separate the two is ultimately destructive of man himself.³⁷ He points out that those cases in which individuals in the Bible speak of "my body" or "my soul"³⁸ are examples of man's psychological capacity to objectify his experiences, without which capacity human knowledge could not exist. This phenomenon is no proof of the substantial existence of a body and a soul in an adequate distinction from each other.

In his discussion of the Biblical concept of *psyche* (with its Hebrew background of *nephesh*), Zurcher indicates the essential corporeality of this concept. It "designates the individualized life in a physiological sense [Gn 35:18], as well as in a psychological one [1 Sa 1:10]. "... the idea of *psuchē* embraces the total man, the entire human personality, the individual being in his perfect unity."³⁹

In regard to the immortality of the soul, he repeats his contention that the soul is not one of the constituent elements of man, but rather man himself. Therefore, he reasons, the soul cannot be said to be immortal unless man can be said to be immortal. Man, however, is constituted by the union of matter and spirit, and the resulting "soul exists only insofar as man has consciousness of being." Perhaps if we identify "soul" with the "spirit" in man, we can speak of the separation of soul and body at death; but if so, we must remember, he says, that man as such dies (ceases to exist in the sense we have distinguished above) with their separation.⁴⁰

From this point of view, of course, death is a tremendous threat to man—it is not simply the death of the body, but of the *man*. Death, then, is not a mere change of dwelling, but a real death, that is to say, the cessation of life under all its forms, of conscious and psychic as well as corporeal life.⁴¹ All must die because all have sinned. The gospel does offer man

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 160, 162; see also Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York, 1951), I, 192.

³⁸ For example, Mt 26:38; Jn 12:27; 1 Cor 2:11; 9:27.

³⁹ Zurcher, "The Christian View of Man: Part One," pp. 163, 164.

⁴⁰ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, p. 165.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

deliverance from death, but not in the Platonic sense. Rather, Christianity "offers immortality only to the man who is freed from the law of sin by the Spirit of life which is Jesus Christ."⁴² There is even then, "no immortality whatever . . . inherent in human nature but life eternal is for him who grasps it by faith and fashions his soul in the image of Jesus Christ."⁴³

The destiny of man is bound up with the necessity for the body-soul entity we call man to become more "spiritual," that is, to become more configured to the image of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the life-giving Spirit. This is what the Bible looks forward to for the *sōma*, which is not a corpse, but the corporeal manifestation of the living man. The material body will be raised, but it will be *pneumatikon*, totally under the dominion of man's spirit responsive to the Holy Spirit.

Zurcher's treatment of the concept of the *pneuma* of man identifies it with the "complete manifestation of man in spiritual or intellectual form." He states that "Paul . . . uses *pneuma* in the sense of *nous*, intellect," and maintains that, "when it signifies the human spirit, *pneuma* probably always has this sense. It then designates the manifestations of the intelligent being who 'knows,' who 'comprehends,' who 'decides' [Php 4:7; 1 Cor 14:14-19; Rom 7:23; 14:5]." But again, Zurcher insists, this is not the Greek philosophical sense of a disembodied spirit: "No more than *psuchē* or *pneuma* is *nous* ever opposed to *sōma*; *nous* is indeed unthinkable without *sōma*. For the human personality of which they are the manifestation has been created *nous* and *sōma*."⁴⁴

Having discussed from a theological point of view the constitution of man as he is in himself, we turn to that of man in his relationship to God. Zurcher would, of course, maintain that a genuine Christian anthropology views man as having existence only in relationship to God his Creator. As he puts

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴⁴ "The Christian View of Man: Part One," pp. 164, 165.

it, "creation signifies . . . that while there exists a reality different from God, it does not exist in itself, but only through God."⁴⁵ Thus, there is no dichotomy here, either. Dependence is an aspect of creaturely existence, and a creature is a "being continually menaced by the possibility—excluded by God and by God alone—of *nothingness* and of *ruin*."⁴⁶ And this creation, this creaturely existence, is fundamentally *good*:

What is not good God did not make; it has no creaturely existence. But if being is to be ascribed to it at all, and we would rather not say that it is non-existent, then it is only the power of the being which arises out of the weight of the divine "No."⁴⁷

Besides the creaturely, there is a second aspect of man's relationship to God: his existence as the *image of God*. Zurcher sees this as consisting, first, in man's function as representative of God on earth, as an expression of his real presence (Gn 1:26; Ps 8:6-7). But this involves also a responsibility towards God, which Zurcher situates in the context of obedience to the divine will—the area of *decision*. It is here that the freedom of man "permits him to think and to act, to accept or to refuse Being."⁴⁸

There is a third aspect of man's existence in relationship to God: his existence as a *sinner*.⁴⁹ It is in this connection that the Biblical notion of *sarx* must be discussed. The temptation to sin, Zurcher points out, is not the result of a body-soul dichotomy, but because of the conflict between "the law of the mind" and the "law of sin." Because of the moral history of humanity, man is not entirely free in making his decision.

⁴⁵ "The Christian View of Man: Part Two," *AUSS*, III (1965), 67.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York, 1959), p. 57, quoted by Zurcher, *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁴⁸ Zurcher, *AUSS*, III (1965), 70-73. Here, however, Zurcher seems to imply that the decision to accept or refuse "Being" is the same thing as to accept or refuse "being." At this point we get into the problem of the relationship between Being and being, which, though vital, we cannot treat here. See John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York, 1966), pp. 105-110.

⁴⁹ See Zurcher, "The Christian View of Man: Part Two," pp. 74-83.

A distinction must, of course, be made between sin and flesh; because of the existential situation of *sarx*, they are connected but not identical: "It is evident that the flesh is neither an evil substance nor . . . is it incarnate sin," says Zurcher.⁵⁰ Yet the carnal state is *de facto* a state of powerlessness before the power of sin; and Adventist theology is not idealistic:

[The] carnal reality of man is the first revelation of Christian anthropology. . . . A mysterious power makes man a slave of the "law of sin" incapable of submitting to "the law of God" even though he takes pleasure in it. . . . Such is the tragic situation of nature man, left to himself. He is a dead man who does not know true life, because he is a servant of forces contrary to life.⁵¹

Having discussed Zurcher's theology of man's nature and relationship to God as creature, image, and sinner, we come to his thinking on the relationship of Jesus Christ precisely as life-giving Spirit, to the *pneuma* of man in its state as *sarx*, or powerlessness. As Zurcher has indicated: by the work of Christ the Spirit of God has become an effective anthropological reality, "because it communicates to man the power of becoming a child of God, first in freeing him from slavery to sin and then in causing him truly to participate in the nature of God."⁵²

Zurcher connects at least some aspect of dichotomistic thinking about man to dichotomistic thinking about the central mystery of Christianity, the redemptive incarnation. The fact, however, remains that the Word became *sarx*, not "in order to oppose human nature as such and to destroy it, but rather to free it from the power of sin, to sanctify it and to restore it to its original perfection."⁵³ The Son, by uniting himself to humanity, has made of his Spirit the fundamental Christian Spirit, and thus a vital factor of Christian anthropology. From this point of view, also, there can be no dichotomy in Christian anthropology:

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁵¹ Zurcher, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, pp. 159-161.

⁵² "The Christian View of Man: Part Three," *AUSS*, IV (1966), 90.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

The spirit speaks to the whole man and solicits his total participation. To the extent that He is in man, the Spirit acts. He creates and His action is manifested in the whole being: mind, soul, and body.

This action begins by the renewing of the intelligence. After having been led captive to the obedience of Christ, then transformed by the knowledge of the Saviour, the intelligence becomes capable of discerning the will of God, . . . From that moment nothing further escapes the sanctifying action of the Spirit; the thoughts, the feelings and the desires, are all purified. The body itself becomes the temple of the Spirit.⁵⁴

Linking this fact with that of man's constitution as image of God, Zurcher sees the relationship implied in the image as characterized now by a new dynamic, that of the call of the Spirit in man's life (Rom 8: 16; 9: 1): "As soon as man responds to the call of God, to the witness of the Spirit, the rupture between God and man is no more, . . . the power of sin no longer has an unshakable hold on him."⁵⁵ Hence, the apparent dichotomy between the Holy Spirit and the flesh is overcome by the power of the Spirit in dialogue with the free spirit of man, which is strengthened by this contact to overcome the tensions with its own *sarx*-aspect: "Though the conflict between *sarx* and *pneuma* is real, it is a conflict in which the spirit triumphs."⁵⁶ Thus man enters into new life according to the Spirit, a life-in-process, looking forward to the attainment of the perfection of Christ himself.

It seems, therefore, clear that Zurcher's phenomenological approach to the mystery which is man is in striking harmony with the Biblical intuition based on God's people's experience of itself in its concrete, historical relationship with God. What, moreover, makes it interesting to a non-Adventist is its openness to the interpretations of man emerging in many continental theologies. This fact offers the possibility of greater mutual understanding between other Christians and Adventists on the issue of man's immortality. This issue is rooted

⁵⁴ Zurcher, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, p. 163.

⁵⁵ "The Christian View of Man: Part Three," p. 98.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

in the question: what is man? Zurcher, as we have seen, views consciousness as the constitutive factor of *human* being; and here he is consistent with the Aristotelian concept of the *nous* as the distinctive element of man; since Zurcher denies the natural immortality of man, he would say that there can be (naturally) no noetic existence after death. This, however, reduces death to a "state" of non-existence—which, it would appear, fails to bear witness to the fact that the just man *now* participates in eternal life, the victory of Christ over death—a participation which would not take place until the second advent of Christ.

How can we speak of the "existence" of man after death? Karl Barth has expressed our faith-reaction:

If he, the Lord of death, our gracious God, the ineffable sum of all goodness, is present with us even in death, then obviously in the midst of death we are not only in death but already out of its clutches and victorious over it, not of ourselves but of God. We die, but He lives for us. Even in death we are not lost to Him, and therefore we are not really lost. . . . Hence our future non-existence cannot be our complete negation.⁵⁷

The response that the just exist in the mind of God might seem not very helpful, but it would appear to be a possible starting-point rather than a dead-end, for, as Josiah Royce has phrased it:

If God is God, he views the future and the past as we do the present. . . . What has, for us men, passed away, is, for the divine omniscience, not lost. . . . if God views facts as they are, this indeed implies that death, . . . cannot . . . be . . . an absolutely real loss to reality of values which, but for death, would not become thus unreal.⁵⁸

Exploring the question via the route taken by Zurcher, that of theological anthropology, would at least be to take a new approach to the problem. But this is a subject for another article.

⁵⁷ *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh, 1936-), III/2, pp. 610, 611.

⁵⁸ "Immortality," in *William James and Other Essays on the Philosophy of Life* (New York, 1911), p. 263.