



EDITED BY

GILLES
EMERY, O.P.

MATTHEW
LEVERING

≡ The Oxford Handbook of
THE TRINITY

The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity

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Edited by Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering

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(p. iv)

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Common Abbreviations

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BEM:	<i>Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry</i> (Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982)
CDF:	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
GNO:	<i>Gregorii Nysseni Opera</i> , ed. W. Jaeger (Leiden: Brill)
Haer.:	Irenaeus of Lyon, <i>Adversus Haereses</i> (<i>Against Heresies</i>)
In Sent.:	Commentary on Peter Lombard's <i>Sentences</i> (<i>In I Sent.</i> , <i>In II Sent.</i> , and so on)
LXX:	Septuagint (Greek version of the OT)
NRSV:	The Bible, New Revised Standard Version
NT:	New Testament
OT:	Old Testament
PG:	Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris
PL:	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris
RSV:	The Bible, Revised Standard Version
SC:	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf)

Common Abbreviations

Sent.:	Peter Lombard, <i>Sentences</i> (I <i>Sent.</i> , II <i>Sent.</i> , III <i>Sent.</i> , and IV <i>Sent.</i>)
ST:	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i> (ST I; ST I-II; ST II-II; and ST III)
WCC:	World Council of Churches

a.:	article
ad:	reply to an objection (in medieval works, e.g. 'ad1')
ch.:	chapter
chs.:	chapters
corp.:	corpus (body of a response in a systematic work)
dist.:	distinction
l.:	line
ll.:	line
lit.:	literally
ms.:	manuscript
parr.:	parallels
(p. xii) pref.:	preface
proem.:	proemium
Pt. (or pt.):	part
q.:	question
resp.:	<i>responsio</i> (response, main body of an article or of a question)
rev.:	revised translation

Common Abbreviations

	s.v.: sub verso
	v.: verse
	vv.: verses

	ST (in Amy Laura Hall's essay): Julian of Norwich, <i>Revelations of Divine Love</i> , Short Text
	LT (in Amy Laura Hall's essay): Julian of Norwich, <i>Revelations of Divine Love</i> , Long Text

Contributors

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(p. xiii) Contributors

Khaled Anatolios is Associate Professor of Historical Theology at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

Lewis Ayres holds the Bede Chair in Catholic Theology at the University of Durham.

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt is Associate Professor of Theology at Loyola University Maryland and a deacon of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

François Bœspflug, O.P., is Professor of the History of Religions at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Strasbourg, where he has taught since 1990. He also teaches at the Centre Sèvres (Paris), and he held the Chair of the Louvre (Paris) in 2010.

Romanus Cessario, O.P., teaches theology at the Boston seminary, Saint John's in Brighton, and is a *Socio Ordinario* of the Pontificia Accademia San Tommaso d'Aquino in Rome.

Contributors

Ellen T. Charry is the Margaret W. Harmon Professor of Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Gavin D'Costa is Professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Bristol. He has published six books on interreligious dialogues and advises the Catholic Church in Britain and the Vatican on interreligious dialogue.

Emmanuel Durand, O.P., teaches systematic theology at the Institut Catholique in Paris. He specializes in the study of Trinitarian theology and Christology.

Mark Edwards is Tutor in Theology at Christ Church, Oxford and Lecturer in Patristics in the Theology Faculty of Oxford University.

Gilles Emery, O.P., is Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He is a member of the International Theological Commission of the Catholic Church.

Karl Christian Felmy, Doctor *honoris causa* of the Moscow Theological Academy (2005) and of the Bucharest Theological Faculty (2008), is Emeritus Professor of History and Theology of the Christian East at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg.

David Fergusson is Professor of Divinity and Principal of New College at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *Faith and its Critics*.

(p. xiv) **Russell L. Friedman** is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium).

Contributors

Simon Gathercole is Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

Amy Laura Hall is Associate Professor at Duke University Divinity School and an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church.

Nonna Verna Harrison is an Orthodox nun and theologian and an experienced patristics scholar.

Stephen M. Hildebrand is Associate Professor of Theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville, received his doctorate in Historical Theology from Fordham University.

Vincent Holzer is Professor of Fundamental and Dogmatic Theology at the Institut Catholique in Paris and a corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology (Rome).

George Hunsinger is the Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the president of the Karl Barth Society of North America.

Daniel A. Keating is Associate Professor of Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, and the author of *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*.

Fergus Kerr, O.P., holds an honorary fellowship in the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. He serves as the Director of the Aquinas Institute, Blackfriars, Oxford, and is the editor of *New Blackfriars*.

Contributors

Ulrich L. Lehner, Dr. Theol. (Univ. Regensburg), is Assistant Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Marquette University. He is the author and editor of several books about Early Modern religious history.

Matthew Levering is Professor of Theology at the University of Dayton. He is co-editor of the English edition of the quarterly journal *Nova et Vetera*.

Andrew Louth is currently Professor of Patristic and Byzantine Studies in the University of Durham, UK.

Bruce D. Marshall holds the Lehman Chair of Christian Doctrine and is Director of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Charles Morerod, O.P., Dominican priest from Switzerland, is Professor at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome. He is also the General Secretary of the International Theological Commission (Rome).

(p. xv) Francesca Aran Murphy is Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Formerly she was Professor of Christian Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen.

Aidan Nichols, O.P., is a priest of the English Province of the Order of Preachers. He has written extensively on various aspects of historical and dogmatic theology, as well as on ecumenical issues and the relation of the Church to the arts.

Contributors

Lauge O. Nielsen is Professor of Church History at the Faculty of Theology in the University of Copenhagen.

Cyril O'Regan is the Huisking Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. He specializes in Catholic systematic theology and also works in the area of philosophy of Religion.

Aristotle Papanikolaou is Associate Professor of Theology and co-founding Director of the Orthodox Christian Studies Program at Fordham University.

Dominique Poirel is Researcher at the *Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes* (C.N.R.S., Paris) and Lecturer at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*.

Samuel M. Powell has taught at Point Loma Nazarene University since 1986. He is the editor (with Michael Lodahl) of *Embodied Holiness*, and the author of *The Trinity in German Thought*.

C. Kavin Rowe is Associate Professor of New Testament at Duke University Divinity School. He was recently awarded a Lilly Faculty Fellowship, the Louisville Institute's Christian Faith and Life Grant, and the John Templeton Prize for Theological Promise.

Tracey Rowland is Associate Professor and Dean of the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, Australia and a Permanent Fellow in Political Philosophy and Continental Theology.

Risto Saarinen is Professor of Ecumenics at the University of Helsinki. Since 1994 he has been a member of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission.

Contributors

Christopher Seitz is Research Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto. He is the author of numerous books on Isaiah, the Book of the Twelve, prophecy, and Old and New Testament method and hermeneutics.

J. Warren Smith is Associate Professor of Historical Theology at the Duke Divinity School. A minister in the United Methodist Church, he specializes in patristic theology.

Scott R. Swain is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida.

Kathryn Tanner has taught theology in the Religious Studies Department at Yale University and for many years at the University of Chicago Divinity School. She is currently Professor of Systematic Theology at Yale Divinity School.

(p. xvi) **Rudi A. te Velde** is Lecturer in Philosophy at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Tilburg; he also holds the Catholic Radboud Foundation Chair of Philosophy and Christianity in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Amsterdam.

Geoffrey Wainwright, a British Methodist, studied in Cambridge, Geneva, and Rome. Since 1983 he has been Professor of Systematic Theology at Duke University.

Joseph Wawrykow teaches the history of patristic and medieval theology at the University of Notre Dame (USA), specializing in the thirteenth-century scholastics.

Contributors

Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap., is currently the Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC.

Ben Witherington III is Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has authored a scholarly commentary on each of the books of the New Testament.

Introduction

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Abstract and Keywords

This introductory article discusses the theme of this volume, which is about the history of Trinitarian theology. This volume is divided into seven sections that cover general topics, including the Trinity in Scripture, patristic witnesses to the Trinitarian faith and medieval appropriations of the Trinitarian faith. It provides a valuable ecumenical overview of the key theological and philosophical discussions relating to the Trinity and reflects on the practical import of Trinitarian theology in the liturgy, art, and politics. It also charts the development of theological doctrine from the New Testament writings through the patristic medieval, Reformation, modern, and contemporary periods of Trinitarian reflection.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, Scripture, patristic witness, Trinitarian faith, liturgy, art, politics, New Testament, Reformation

THE development of Trinitarian theology constitutes one of the characteristic traits of contemporary theology. This development is a complex phenomenon that one can observe at least since the 1960s. It is often characterized as a 'renewal' or a 'rediscovery', but historical studies invite us to nuance this judgement, because in reality reflection on the Trinity has never ceased to be fruitful and to give rise to new approaches. It is perhaps more exact to speak of 'development' in order to describe the scope and multiplication of recent publications in this domain. This development is still ongoing, and it is probably too early to speak of a 'maturity': the enquiry continues to feel its way forward, and has not yet born full fruit. This Handbook bears witness to the *enquiry* that characterizes contemporary Trinitarian thought.

While recognizing the great diversity of the currents within this development, one can observe certain fundamental elements common to the contemporary enquiry:

- (1)** The Trinity is not a mystery among others, but it constitutes the central mystery of Christian faith and should illumine the entirety of the Christian life. The Trinity is the mystery of salvation, as Karl Rahner vigorously reminded us: 'The Trinity is a mystery of *salvation*, otherwise it would never have been revealed' (Rahner 2001: 21;

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italics in original). Trinitarian theology is situated at the heart of a *nexus* that is indispensable for understanding its meaning: the liturgy (which, in the concrete life of Christians, certainly has the first place), biblical exegesis, the dogmatic and moral ecclesial tradition, the teaching of the saints, the historical inheritance of the great theological syntheses, the necessary recourse to philosophy for expositing the faith, the task of preaching and the proclamation of the faith, relationships to politics and society, and the encounter with non-Christian cultures and religions. The fundamental nexus, formulated in an exemplary way by St Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century, is constituted by the sacraments (baptism), the confession of faith (creed), and the ecclesial prayer (doxology), ‘in conformity with the meaning of the Scriptures’:

(p. 2)

As we are *baptized*, so, also, do we *believe*; as we believe, so, also, do we *give glory*. Therefore, since *baptism* has been given to us by the Savior in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we offer a confession of faith consistent with our baptism, and also the doxology consistent with our faith, glorifying the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son (*Letter 159*, in Basil of Caesarea 1981: 313; emphasis ours).

(2) Trinitarian theology is intrinsically connected to Christology. Contemporary reflection seeks to avoid the dichotomy that separated what is ‘Trinitarian’ from what is ‘Christological’. On the one hand, contemporary works often underscore that Jesus’ Pasch (passion, death, resurrection, ascension, pentecost) is the ‘place’ par excellence of the revelation of the Trinity, without forgetting the presence and action of the Spirit in the life of Christ (‘pneumatic Christology’). On the other hand, Jesus’ words and actions, which the New Testament teaches, only possess their full meaning in light of faith in the Trinity.

(3) Trinitarian faith is not limited to illuminating the sphere of redemption and salvation, but it equally concerns creation: the doctrine of creation calls for a properly Trinitarian consideration.

(4) The majority of studies—not only the systematic works but also the biblical and histories studies—pay attention to the problematic of the unity and distinction between the ‘economic Trinity’ and the ‘immanent Trinity’ (or, if one prefers, between the Trinity in its work of creation and grace, and the Trinity in its inner life). The question of the relationships between the Trinity and *history* is often found at the centre of contemporary writing on the Trinity.

(5) The majority of studies also pay special attention to the complex question of the relationships between holy Scripture and dogma (conciliar formulations of dogma) as regards the Trinity.

(6) For related reasons, the separation between a treatise ‘*De Deo uno*’ (the one essence of God) and a treatise ‘*De Deo trino*’ (God as Trinity) is most often avoided—which does not negate the legitimacy of studies on the divine attributes common to the three divine persons. An important debate remains open here: how to link Trinitarian theology with ‘philosophical theology’?

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(7) Patristic doctrines today receive renewed attention in order to understand and express the monotheism proper to Christian Trinitarian faith, not only because of contemporary religious pluralism, but also in critical reaction to the *hubris* of the idealist subjectivity that has marked the modern conception of God (God as the Absolute Spirit which expresses itself in the human spirit).

(8) Ecumenical discussions of the Holy Spirit, especially between the eastern and western traditions (*Filioque*, divine energies), exercise a determinative role in contemporary reflections, beyond that of ecumenical studies in the strict sense.

(9) Interreligious dialogue, along with the dialogue of Christianity with cultures (without forgetting the confrontation of Christianity with atheism, which today enjoys a revival in western societies), likewise plays a role whose importance continues to increase.

(p. 3) Writing on the Trinity is not limited to books and essays that are devoted exclusively to the doctrine of the Trinity. Simplifying a little, one can observe three principal categories of studies (*cf.* Durand 2010: 9–10).

(1) New ‘treatises’ devoted to the mystery of the Trinity are not numerous. Only a few theologians, such as Karl Barth, Michael Schmaus, Karl Rahner, and Jürgen Moltmann, have formally undertaken this task.

(2) Many theologians have placed the consideration of the Trinitarian mystery at the centre of their dogmatic proposals (for example Eberhard Jüngel, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Wohlfart Pannenberg, Robert Jenson).

(3) More broadly, numerous books and essays in recent decades have treated particular aspects of Trinitarian doctrine (consider, for instance, the works of the French theologians Louis Bouyer and Yves Congar) or particular periods of the history of Trinitarian doctrines (for example Thomas F. Torrance, Lewis Ayres).

Little by little, in diverse fields of theological reflection, works have appeared that attempt to realize that programme that, already in 1952, Hans Urs von Balthasar had in view: ‘Christian proclamation in the school, from the pulpit, and in the lecture halls of the universities could be so much more alive, if *all* the theological tractates were given a complete trinitarian form!’ (Balthasar 1993: 29; italics in the English translation)—‘Wie lebendig könnte die christliche Verkündigung in der Schule, von der Kanzel, auf den Kathedern sein, wenn alle theologischen Traktate trinitarisch durchformt wären!’ (Balthasar 1952: 18). Henceforth one sees develop Trinitarian Christologies and treatises on creation structured in a Trinitarian manner. Still more, essays on ‘Trinitarian ontology’ express in a striking way the search for a unified understanding of all reality in light of faith in the Trinity. In addition to these new efforts, it appears more and more clearly that the doctrine of the Trinity goes beyond purely instrumental usages and that it should avoid ‘functionalization’, in order to become again what it is in the New Testament: the Christian teaching on God, with regard to the vivid knowledge of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who is the very object of Revelation and therefore of all Christian theology.

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One domain of research seems, however, to be developed in a particularly extensive way: that of historical studies. The present Handbook wished to honour this aspect: 18 contributions of this volume are devoted to the patristic, medieval, and modern history of Trinitarian theology. The interest in history is not surprising because, on this topic perhaps more than any other, reference to the dogmatic tradition and to theological traditions plays a determinative role. What one means by ‘Trinitarian faith’ can hardly be understood outside of reference to the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople and to their reception: the doctrine of the Trinity is indissociably connected to the reading of Scripture through the ecclesial and theological traditions, with the result that the development of Trinitarian theology today appears generally as a creative reappropriation of the patristic and medieval sources. In this history, a special place rightly belongs to the patristic period, but the medieval period also deserves particular attention, both because of the extensions of patristic thought that it offers (continuity), and because of (p. 4) the creative syntheses that it shows (newness). There is no ‘blank space’ between the patristic age and the era of the Reformation. In the same way, contrary to certain widespread prejudices, the modern period reveals itself to be surprisingly fecund in this domain. The modern period is characterized especially by the arrival of *history*, under two principal aspects. First, Trinitarian enquiry has been marked since the seventeenth century by the impact of the historical method, and then by history as a theological discipline—under the name ‘historical theology’ since the beginning of the twentieth century. Second, the development of systematic Trinitarian theology owes much to ‘philosophies of history’, in particular that of Hegel, which have considerably influenced the destiny of Trinitarian theology, although the consequences are ambiguous (Holzer 2008; for a critical reflection on this subject, see Ayres 2004: 384–429). The modern period presented other challenges, in particular one that involves the notion of ‘person’ and that at times gave rise—paradoxically—to a ‘depersonalization’ of the Trinity. The impact of the notion of ‘person’ derived from seventeenth-century philosophy appears already in the controversies of that epoch, in England, between Unitarians and Trinitarians (Dixon 2003; Libera 2007: 101–23). In analytic philosophy today, the notion of ‘person’ is often defined by the capacity for self-reflection or by the matrix of representation and recognition, in either case posing a challenge for theological thought (Allard 2010).

In contemporary theology, the principal ‘theological loci’ are Trinity and creation, Trinity and history, Trinity and monotheism, Trinity and Christology, Trinity and grace, and more broadly Trinity and human life (ethics, society, interreligious dialogue, politics and culture). All these theological loci are connected to biblical, liturgical, patristic, and historical renewals—without forgetting the revival of the eschatological dimension of biblical faith. It is clear that the liturgical renewal and communion ecclesiology, for example, are not posterior in time to the development of Trinitarian enquiry: we are dealing with concomitant movements. Thus, for over a century, ecclesiology has been marked by an effort to renew itself from a Trinitarian perspective. It is necessary finally to note that contemporary Trinitarian theology is no longer presented under the rubric of a unified doctrine and language. Formerly, St Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, elaborated different Trinitarian theologies, but their theological language and their references

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were similar: they spoke the same theological language, on the basis of common sources and with a common method. This no longer happens today. The diversification of languages, methods, and theological and philosophical sources is certainly a cause of a real difficulty, for students as well as for teachers, with respect to a unified presentation of faith in the Trinity. Trinitarian theology has also been widely freed from its connection to the literary genre of the theological manual, in order to appear in works that bear the marks of their authors and their own intellectual enquiry. This phenomenon, as one would expect, brings today a diversification of points of view, to which this Handbook bears witness in its way. We have sought to offer readers essays that do justice to this diversification of points of view, while also offering, in so far as possible, a coherent ensemble. The present Handbook is not a theologically neutral encyclopaedia, but rather (p. 5) presents contributions from scholars who differ on many points but who generally agree in working out their Trinitarian theology in relation to the Nicene faith. This Handbook thus offers not only a contribution to those who wish to know the history of Trinitarian theology, but it also reveals the Nicene unity still at work among Christians today despite the presence of ecumenical differences and the variety of theological perspectives.

The chapters that follow are divided into seven parts covering seven general topics: the Trinity in Scripture, Patristic witnesses to the Trinitarian faith, Medieval appropriations of the Trinitarian faith, From the Reformation to the Twentieth century, Trinitarian Dogmatics, the Trinity and Christian life, and dialogues.

1. The Trinity in Scripture

This first section considers Trinitarian doctrine in Christian Scripture, which attained canonical form during the same period in which Trinitarian doctrine was taking shape. Khaled Anatolios shows that the fluidity of the canon in the first centuries does not appear to have affected Trinitarian doctrine. Yet the development of the notion of ‘canonicity’ itself speaks to the understanding of revelation at work in the development of Trinitarian doctrine, and the canon of Scripture also provides certain norms that shaped the development of Trinitarian doctrine, such as the identity of the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New, the rule of faith as an interpretive key, the Christological reading of Scripture, and the understanding of history in light of missions of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Exploring the topic of the Trinity in the Old Testament, Christopher Seitz begins by noting the history-of-religions approach, which correlates certain developments within Israel's worship of one God with what Christians identified as distinct hypostases in God. Seitz proposes an alternative approach, namely that of recognizing that descriptions of Israel's God may have not only a referent within ancient Israel but also, in God's providence, a further divinely intended referent. The latter referent is not extrinsic to the former, because it is the pressure of the affirmations about Israel's one God, in light of the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, that lead Christians to identify Jesus and the Spirit in Trinitarian fashion. Kavin Rowe takes up the Trinity in the Pauline epistles and Hebrews. Rather than seeking ‘proof-texts’ or studying the implications of particular words as applied to Jesus, Rowe suggests that the narrative fabric of the books sets forth an id-

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iom, a grammar or logic, that can only be rightly interpreted through Trinitarian conceptions. Examining the synoptic Gospels and Acts, Simon Gathercole begins with the point that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is the one God of Israel, the Creator who chose Israel and promised to restore her to holiness. The synoptic Gospels include Jesus within the divine name and attribute to him the divine power of electing and forgiving, as well as pre-existence, although the synoptic Gospels also indicate that the Son receives everything from the Father. The risen Jesus gives the Spirit, whose divine (p. 6) personal agency appears particularly in Acts. In his essay on the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and Revelation, Ben Witherington III argues that John does not simply derive his Father language from the Jewish wisdom literature (despite its recognizable influence), but instead has in view the Son's relationship to his Father. After the Ascension, the Son's agency on behalf of the Father is continued by the Spirit's agency on behalf of the Father. Thus the Book of Revelation depicts the Father and the Son sitting on the divine throne while the Spirit dwells in the Church. Bringing this section to a close, Mark Edwards unites it to the next section by exploring how exegesis of Scripture, against the Gnostics' rejection of the Old Testament and in the face of other heterodox currents, led to the language in which Trinitarian doctrine was formulated during the first centuries of the Church.

2. Patristic Witnesses to the Trinitarian Faith

Discussing the Trinity in the pre-Nicene Fathers, Stephen Hildebrand traces the evolution of Trinitarian thought from Apostolic Fathers like Ignatius of Antioch through the Apologists (St Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch) to the great theologians of the late second and early third centuries: under the pressure of Gnostic and Monarchian theologies, a refining of theological language within a more systematic approach characterizes the work of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian; the dominant themes are the Trinity in the economy, the emergence of a theology of the Spirit, the theological appropriation of Greek philosophical thought in an effort to explain the faith handed down, and the emergence of Trinitarian technical vocabulary. Warren Smith offers a nuanced account of the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies. He shows how these fundamentally exegetical controversies began with Arius' insistence on the unique divine prerogatives of the Father and continued with decades of debate over the appropriateness of the word '*homoousios*', which had been rejected by third-century synods in Antioch because of concerns about modalism. Lewis Ayres presents the Trinitarian theology of Augustine, structured around the Father's begetting of the Word that breathes forth Love. Ayres identifies the roots of Augustine's theology in the Latin anti-modalist tradition and in his appreciation of God's transcendent simplicity, and Ayres sets forth Augustine's emphasis on the salvific missions as drawing us into the mystery of the divine processions. Andrew Louth examines Trinitarian theology in the fifth through the eighth centuries, with particular attention to Cyril of Alexandria as a consolidator of Cappadocian doctrine, Dionysius the Areopagite with his emphasis on God as ever greater, Maximus the Confessor whose emphasis lies on the transformation of the soul brought about by contemplating the Trinity, and John Damascene who roots his Trinitarian doctrine in the unity of God. Louth points

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out the importance of hymnody for transmitting Trinitarian doctrine, and he notes the impact of the rise of Islam.

(p. 7) 3. Medieval Appropriations of the Trinitarian Faith

Discussing the period between 800 and 1100 in the West, Lauge Nielsen highlights four figures: Alcuin, Gottschalk, John Scotus Eriugena, and Anselm. Alcuin's work on the 'undivided Trinity' defends the Augustinian emphasis on the divine unity, whereas Eriugena draws on Greek Orthodox theology to emphasize the proper mode of action of the divine persons. Anselm relies upon the Augustinian image and defends the *Filioque* against Greek theologians. Dominique Poirel treats twelfth-century theologians in the West, most notably Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Richard of St Victor, and Peter Lombard. Poirel examines the multiplication of models used to think about the Trinity: the triad 'power—wisdom—goodness', images in the human soul, traces in visible creation, interpersonal love. Despite tensions at the beginning of the period, these efforts draw toward a richer doctrine, notably toward the theory of Trinitarian 'appropriations'. Expositing Bonaventure and Aquinas, Joseph Wawrykow underscores the centrality of Trinitarian theology for both theologians and highlights their areas of agreement as well as their distinctive features: Bonaventure puts the good and love at the heart of his account of God, and emphasizes the primacy of the Father; especially important in Aquinas' teaching is his understanding of divine persons in terms of 'subsistent relations'. Russell Friedman describes two distinct ways in the late thirteenth century of talking about the 'constitution' of the divine persons, one based on 'relations', the other on 'emanations'. Friedman focuses especially on John Duns Scotus and sketches two important fourteenth-century developments: the denial that the Trinitarian mystery can be *explained* in any significant sense, and innovations in Trinitarian logic. Byzantine theologies of the Trinity from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries are traced by Karl Christian Felmy. After attending briefly to liturgical hymnody and art, he explores the controversy over the *Filioque* with particular attention to the ninth-century Patriarch of Constantinople Photius. He also treats, less-known authors and the Trinitarian doctrine of Gregory Palamas, whose approach he shows to have similarities with that of Augustine except as regards the *Filioque* and the divine energies.

4. The Reformation to the Twentieth Century

Our fourth section moves from the Reformers and the Baroque period to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These latter centuries are treated in seven essays, on the grounds that the influence of these centuries is decisive for much contemporary study of the Trinity. Scott Swain's study of the Reformers on the Trinity highlights their effort, in light **(p. 8)** of the new exegetical modes arising with the Renaissance, to articulate Trinitarian doctrine biblically with a focus on the economy of salvation rather than on metaphysical or logical debates *per se*, although the Reformers engaged in those too when

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necessary. Ulrich Lehner examines both Catholic and Protestant Trinitarian theology from 1550 to 1770, from the mystical visions of Ignatius of Loyola to the Augustinian approach of Jonathan Edwards. Lehner also attends to the growing variety of eclectic views and to the influence of anti-Trinitarian thinkers, beginning with Michael Servetus and Faustus Socinus. Cyril O'Regan examines how Immanuel Kant marginalizes Trinitarian doctrine, and he also explores the use made by G. W. F. Hegel and Friedrich Schelling (among others) of triadic dynamisms. Indebted to Jacob Boehme, Hegel rejects a tri-personal divinity in favour of a self-realizing triadic dynamic symbolized by the doctrine of the Trinity; the later Schelling argues for divine tri-personal agency ('semi-Arian' in its orientation) that is brought to completion in history. In his treatment of nineteenth-century Protestant thought, Samuel Powell shows that Friedrich Schleiermacher had a major impact through his view that traditional Trinitarian doctrine is abstracted from the experience of salvation, an impact reflected in Isaac Dorner's effort to develop a Trinitarian theology on the basis of analysis of the ethical or supreme good (indebted also to Kant) and in Johann von Hofmann's emphasis on the history of salvation (indebted also to Hegel). Aidan Nichols's exposition of nineteenth-century Catholic theology moves from the Roman scholasticism of Giovanni Perrone to the Tübingen School's emphasis on the Trinity's manifestation in history to Matthias Joseph Scheeben's creatively Augustinian approach to divine Persons and nature, with attention as well to lesser figures and to the mystical theology of Elizabeth of the Trinity.

Focusing on Karl Barth but also commenting on Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Eberhard Jüngel, George Hunsinger credits Barth with placing the revelation of the Trinity at the foundation of his dogmatics and with insisting that God's attributes (in his unity) be thought through only in relation to prior Trinitarian and soteriological reflection. Vincent Holzer argues that Karl Rahner's and Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trinitarian theology arises from a more fully historical theology of grace derived from Maurice Blondel. Rahner and von Balthasar attempt to reintegrate the more abstract notion of the divine essence into the historical revelation of the Trinity, Rahner through the self-communication of God rooted in the gracious dynamism that is our created spiritual existence and von Balthasar through his Trinitarian dramatics in which the Son undergoes the wrath of the Father for us. Exploring contemporary Orthodox Trinitarian theology, Aristotle Papanikolaou highlights the influence of Sergius Bulgakov, Vladimir Lossky, and John Zizioulas. Bulgakov conceives of the Trinity in terms of the actualization, in the Holy Spirit, of the self-revelation of the Father in the Son—in which process the tri-hypostatic being of God is revealed as Sophia in eternal communion with humanity (the world's 'sophianicity'). Lossky holds that the Trinity is revealed in the Incarnation of Christ, an 'antinomic' truth (the non-opposition of opposites) that requires, against both Bulgakov and scholasticism, an apophatic and mystical theology. In his theology of Trinitarian communion, Zizioulas adopts Lossky's emphasis on the monarchy of the Father and on personhood as freedom from the (p. 9) limitations of nature, but distances himself from Lossky's apophaticism and neo-Palamite commitment to the essence/energies distinction. Fergus Kerr inquires into the surprisingly limited interactions of theologians with the analytic philosophy that has dominated English-speaking universities for the past half-century.

5. Trinitarian Dogmatics

The biblical and historical studies of the previous four sections make clear that Trinitarian reflection has consistently been at the centre of constructive Christian theology. What might contemporary Trinitarian dogmatics look like? The fifth section seeks to answer this question by treating, in order, the dogmatic place of the Trinity; the role of reflection on the divine unity and analogous naming in Trinitarian theology; the theology of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Trinity, creation, and the human person; the Trinity and the sacramental Body of Christ; and deification. Kathryn Tanner shows that the dogmatic place of the Trinity arises in the early Church from reading the New Testament's testimony to the relationships and activities of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What came to be authoritative Christian teaching about the Trinity involves the convergence of biblical interpretation and theological pressures fundamental to Christian concerns about salvation in Christ. Rudi te Velde notes that the notion of a 'personal' God is presently in crisis in the West, and he explores what it means to apply the notion of 'person' analogously to God, with particular attention to intra-Trinitarian relationship and to the creation of persons made for relationship with each other and God. Emmanuel Durand underscores the eschatological ultimacy of the Father, fecund source of the Son and Holy Spirit and first principle of all Trinitarian action *ad extra*. This resituates the theology of Christ and of the Holy Spirit within the context of a Trinitarian and paternal theocentrism. Thomas Weinandy exhibits the Nicene affirmations that are central to all further teaching about the Son, and he explores the relationship between the divine Son and all those who are created and recreated in the image and likeness of the Son. Bruce Marshall underscores that a Trinitarian pneumatology treats primarily the identity of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's distinctive work in creation and redemption. Regarding the first issue, he shows two alternatives: one, exemplified by Aquinas, finds the identity of the Spirit in his relation of origin to the Father and Son; the other, exemplified by Scotus, finds the Spirit's identity in his unique way of originating from the Father. The Spirit's place in the saving work of the Trinity lies especially in his immediate indwelling by grace. Risto Saarinen outlines some traditional and contemporary views of the human being as an image of God, and discusses the analogical relationships between the triune God and creation, focusing on the problem of avoiding anthropomorphism; in this light he examines contemporary theologies that seek to affirm ontological links between the Trinity and created realities. With ecumenical and interreligious conversations in view, Charles Morerod argues that the theology of (p. 10) the Church requires first not an account of its visible structures but an account of how humans, through the missions of Christ and the Holy Spirit, come to share in the relationships of the divine Persons. Daniel Keating emphasizes that faith and the sacraments bring about real transformation through the indwelling of the Spirit and adoptive sonship in the Son, so that Christians already live in the Trinity.

6. The Trinity and Christian Life

Keating's essay forms a bridge from the dogmatic to the practical import of the doctrine of the Trinity. This practical import is no modern discovery, as Geoffrey Wainwright shows by beginning his essay on the Trinity in liturgy and preaching with Basil the Great's Trinitarian doxology. Wainwright shows how doxologies, preaching, and hymnody developed to foster Christians' worship in accordance with the Trinitarian and mediatorial patterns found in the New Testament. François Boespflug examines the theology of Trinitarian images and distinguishes five periods in Trinitarian iconography, cataloguing a vast array of artistic representations whose peak occurs in the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. Romanus Cessario depicts the moral life in terms of the creative Trinity and human participation, as the created image of God, in the eternal law—a participation that through grace (which brings forth not only the infused virtues but also the gifts of the Holy Spirit) becomes filial conformity to God the Trinity in truth and charity, whose glorious consummation is sketched in the beatitudes. Amy Laura Hall takes up Julian of Norwich's writings with a focus on Julian's context of the black plague and her insistence that in the Trinity all things will be well, a vision that inspires moral and physical solidarity with 'contagious' outsiders today. Weaving together the insights of such figures as Thomas Aquinas, John Owen, John Henry Newman, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, Francesca Murphy explores prayer as requiring the confluence of invocation and meditation, made possible in various forms (personal and liturgical) by real assent to God revealing himself in the humanity of Christ as the Mediator/intercessor/propitiator and inspiring us by his Spirit. Examining the Trinity and feminism, Nonna Verna Harrison argues that the use of feminine metaphors to describe God should not lead to a rejection or replacement of the names for the Trinity given in Scripture and Tradition, since divine paternity does not mean that the immaterial Father is male. The generation of the Son is a model for both human motherhood and fatherhood. The Son, incarnate in a woman's womb and as a man, redeems and sanctifies all humankind: like a mother and like a bridegroom, he enters into deep relationships of love with men and women alike. Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt critiques social Trinitarianism on the grounds that it grants too much to Kant's reduction of religion to the sphere of practical reason, and he goes on to show that the true political relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity consists in the fruitfulness of our participation in the Trinitarian life of God as it is revealed to us.

(p. 11) 7. Dialogues

Does Trinitarian reflection play a significant role in ecumenical dialogue? Does it pose a hindrance or a help to interreligious dialogue and to engagement of postmodern culture? David Fergusson shows how the agreement of Christians regarding the doctrine of the Trinity has stimulated efforts to extend this agreement to other areas of faith and practice (doctrinal, liturgical, and moral) informed by Trinitarian reflection. Fergusson also evaluates important contributions in this regard by George Lindbeck and Robert Jenson, among others. Examining Jewish-Christian dialogue regarding the doctrine of God, Ellen

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Charry explores two encounters that occurred during the patristic and medieval periods and two encounters that occurred in the past thirty years. While the former two encounters were hampered by Christian inability to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity, the latter two show signs of promise, in part because both the Jewish and the Christian participants share a debt to Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Abraham Heschel. Gavin D'Costa raises concerns about the approaches of Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, and Raimundo Panikkar to the Trinity and non-Christian religions, and he instead argues for explicitly Trinitarian and Christological approaches to these religions in terms of *praeparatio evangelica*, *semina Verbi*, and *vestigia Trinitatis*. Building upon recent critiques of modernity from theologians such as John Milbank and David Schindler, Tracey Rowland proposes that Trinitarian love infuses culture with a self-giving and teleological order that overcomes the ongoing mechanization and monetization of culture. An example of this renewal through self-giving love can be found in Pope John Paul II's theology of marriage and the family. Lastly, by way of conclusion, the editors of this volume present some brief Prospects for Trinitarian Theology.

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Gilles Emery

Gilles Emery, O.P. is Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He is a member of the International Theological Commission of the Catholic Church and a member of the editorial board of the *Revue Thomiste*. His publications include: *La Trinité créatrice* (1995), *Trinity in Aquinas* (2003), *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (2007), *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (2007), and *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God* (2011). He is co-editor, with Matthew Levering of *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (2011).

Matthew Levering

Matthew Levering, is Perry Family Foundation Professor of Theology at Mundelein Seminary. He serves as co-editor of two theological quarterlies, *Nova et Vetera* and the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*. He has authored numerous books, including *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (2005) and *Christ and the Catholic Priesthood* (2010). With Hans Boersma, he edited *Heaven on Earth? Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (2013). He and Gilles Emery co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*.

The Canonization of Scripture in the Context of Trinitarian Doctrine

Khaled Anatolios

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Abstract and Keywords

This article traces the history of the canonization of the Scripture in the context of Trinitarian doctrine. It presents a series of four vignettes illustrative of how early Christian interpretations of the fact and contents of the scriptural canon were determinative of its Trinitarian faith. These include the works of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Augustine. It shows that the fluidity of the canon in the first centuries does not appear to have affected Trinitarian doctrine but the development of the notion of canonicity itself speaks to the understanding of revelation at work in the development of Trinitarian doctrine. It also suggests that the canon of Scripture provides certain norms that shaped the development of Trinitarian doctrine, such as the identity of the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New, the rule of faith as an interpretive key and the Christological reading of Scripture.

Keywords: Trinitarian doctrine, Scripture, canonization, scriptural canon, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, God, Old Testament

CHRISTIAN faith purports to be an assent to divine revelation and posits a collection of writings, the Scriptures (or 'books'; in Greek, *biblia*), as authoritative witnesses to this revelation. These books are considered to provide a norm or rule (*kanōn*) for discerning the contents and interpretation of divine revelation. The mere fact of a canon, whose contents are determined or at least recognized by the community of Christian believers, delineates a nexus of relations between the notions of revelation, Scripture, tradition, and Church. The primary units of the contents of the Christian canon are the Old and New Testaments. The early Christian recognition of the Hebrew Scriptures as integral to the content of Christian revelation, already implicit in New Testament references to Old Testament texts, was confirmed in reaction to Marcion in the mid-second century. Marcion differentiated the God of the Jewish Scriptures, whom he considered to be an inferior creator God, from the God of Jesus Christ. He created his own canon which was comprised of only one gospel, an abridged version of the Gospel of Luke, and ten Pauline epistles. The

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excommunication of Marcion in the mid 140s indicated the Church's acceptance of what came to be called the Old Testament, though there was some fluidity in recourse to the books that have subsequently been distinguished as canonical, deuterocanonical, and apocryphal. The present differences between the shorter Protestant OT canon and the longer Catholic and Orthodox canons with respect to the 'deuterocanonical' books of Tobit, Judith, 1–2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and added parts of Esther and Daniel, indicate a range that is already in evidence in the early Church. In the last third of the second century, Melito of Sardis referred to the Hebrew Scriptures as the 'Old Testament' and listed a canon that is identical with the Jewish canon of the time, except for the omission of Esther. By the end of the first century, New Testament books, especially the gospels and Pauline epistles, were de facto used as authoritative (p. 16) Scripture in the life of the Church, as attested by such sources as *Didache*, *1 and 2 Clement*, and the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch. There was a degree of variability in the acceptance of other NT books, principally in terms of hesitations in the West with respect to Hebrews and in the East about Revelation. The terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' were first used by Irenaeus, c.180 (*Haer.* IV,28,1–2), who also insisted, against the prevalence of 'Gnostic' gospels, that only the four gospels are authoritative. In the late fourth century, Athanasius' Easter letter to his diocese, *Festal Letter* 39, includes a list of the books of the New Testament that is identical in content and order with the 27 books now universally accepted by the Christian Churches. For Catholics, a final dogmatic determination of the contents of the canon was promulgated at the Council of Trent in 1546, which included the OT 'deuterocanonical' books. Protestants opted for the shorter OT canon during the Reformation. The Greek Orthodox Churches added to the longer Catholic OT canon *2 Esdras* and *3 Maccabees*, while there has been a notable tendency in the Russian Orthodox Churches since the nineteenth century to prefer the shorter OT canon.

It may be safely asserted that the fluidity with respect to the material contents of the Scriptural canon in the early centuries, principally in reference to the choice between a shorter and longer canon in the Old Testament, and Hebrews and Revelation in the New Testament, was not a factor in the development of Trinitarian doctrine. That is to say, we do not find any instances from the early Church where questions that could later be categorized under the rubric of 'Trinitarian theology' revolved specifically around disagreements as to whether a particular text at issue was canonical. Nevertheless, an enquiry into 'the canonization of Scripture in the context of Trinitarian doctrine' can be profitably conducted under at least three aspects: how the very notion of canonicity grounds claims of Trinitarian faith to be revealed truth; how the contents of Trinitarian doctrine are configured in relation to the principal structural shape of the Christian canon as comprised of the Old and New Testaments; and how certain rules were devised, at once doctrinal and exegetical, to achieve coherence amid seeming tensions within the canon in order to achieve a properly Trinitarian reading of Scripture. Clearly, a comprehensive analysis of these questions would open up into an investigation of the whole practice of Christian exegesis as it relates to Christological and Trinitarian questions. The present essay, however, will be confined to sketching a series of four vignettes, in chronological order, illustra-

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tive of how early Christian interpretations of the fact and contents of the scriptural canon were determinative of its Trinitarian faith.

(1) In the second century, Justin Martyr provided an account of how the interrelation of the Old and New Testaments delineates a Christological narrative that in turn provides a Trinitarian identification of the God of Israel.

(2) Later in the same century, Irenaeus insisted on the nexus of Revelation, Scripture, Tradition, and Church as the indispensable foundation for the Trinitarian rule of faith.

(3) In the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century, differences were voiced not with respect to the material contents of the canon but rather in terms of its overall Christological shape or *'skopos'*, and Athanasius articulated the Christological-^(p. 17) exegetical regulation of the diverse contents of the canon which supported a Nicene interpretation of Scripture.

(4) Finally, in the early fifth century, Augustine presented his own reading of the fundamental shape of the Christian canon as presenting the salvific working of the Triune God in terms of Law and grace: the revelation of the Law in the Old Testament which is fulfilled by the indwelling of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit in the New.

Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr explicitly rejected the teaching of Marcion, quoted liberally from the Old Testament, and referred to 'the apostles' memoirs, which are called gospels' (*First Apology* 66), as well as to the major Pauline epistles and Revelation. Twentieth-century scholarship, somewhat under the spell of Adolf Harnack's preoccupation with the Hellenization of the gospel, has tended to portray Justin's theology as centrally revolving around a Middle Platonic conception of *'Logos'*. But it is legitimate to see Justin's Trinitarian theology from a different point of view, as arising out of a global reading of the Christian canon that constructs what some strains of modern theology refer to as 'a narrative identification of the Trinity'. In defence of the Christian faith against both pagan and Jewish critiques, Justin Martyr is concerned in both cases with presenting the Christian message as bearing an organic unity to that of the Hebrew Scriptures. In his *First Apology*, he addresses the objection that the Christian message is devoid of the authority of antiquity by constructing a coherent narrative that ties together the Old and New Testaments in witness to Christ. In the *Dialogue with Trypho*, he rebuts the objection that Christian teaching violates the Hebrew Scriptures' witness to the one God, by insisting that the God of Israel has been further identified as having an ineffable relation to the pre-existent divinity of Jesus Christ. In both cases, Justin configures the central structural shape of the Christian canon, the interrelation of the Old and New Testaments, as a Christological narrative leading to a Trinitarian identification of God. This narrative provides a Trinitarian elaboration of the soteriological theme of *'Christus Victor'*: the reign of the God of Israel is fulfilled through the crucified and risen Christ. It is Christ's victorious fulfilment of

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God's plan of salvation which reveals a dialogue within the divine and thus a Trinitarian conception of God. The Scriptures, which give witness to this revelation, were composed ultimately through the agency of the divine Word and the 'prophetic Spirit' (*First Apology* 36, 51).

In the *First Apology*, Justin explains that it is the divine *Logos* who speaks through the scriptural writers according to various *personas*: 'sometimes ... in the *prosopon* of God the Master and Father of all, sometimes in the *prosopon* of Christ, sometimes in the *prosopon* of the people responding to the Lord or to his Father' (*First Apology* 36). The *prosopon* of the Father is scripturally identified in terms of his being Creator of the world and (p. 18) the God of Israel. When Justin gives examples of scriptural texts spoken in the *prosopon* of Christ, all of them are understood as referring directly to the crucifixion. His citations of texts that were spoken in the *prosopon* of the people are variations on the themes represented in his first scriptural example, from Mic. 4:2-3/Isa. 2:3-4: 'For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and he shall judge in the midst of the nations and rebuke the peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares' (*First Apology* 39). We can identify these themes as first, the extension of God's covenantal relationship from Israel to all people; secondly, the universal reign of God through Christ; and, third, the manifestation of God's reign in the reformed lives of the gentiles who have followed Christ. Taken together, Justin's identification of the different scriptural *personas* of God, Christ, and the people thus form a narrative that determines his presentation of the divinity of Christ. According to this narrative, Christ's divinity is manifest in the fact that gentiles from every race have embraced the God of Israel through Christ and embody the character of God's kingdom in their lives. This narrative is intended to demonstrate that, while distinct from the God of Israel, 'the one who suffered these things has an ineffable origin and reigns over his enemies' (*First Apology* 51).

The *Dialogue with Trypho* offers an even more transparent presentation of how Justin's Christological narrative, comprising the Old and New Testaments, determines his account of the scriptural identification of God as Trinity. In this instance, Justin is clearly concerned to show that Jews and Christians believe in the same God. As in the *First Apology*, Justin characterizes this God as both Creator of the universe and God of Israel. On the basis of this agreement with his Jewish interlocutor, Justin proceeds to a demonstration that God's plan of salvation has come to fulfilment only through Jesus Christ. This fulfilment has two interrelated aspects in Justin's account: first, whereas the old covenant was comprised of 'elementary precepts' designed to wean the Israelites from idolatry but was powerless against sin and death, Jesus established a new covenant which accomplishes a deliverance from sin and death and a circumcision of the heart. This new covenant corresponds to the universal and eternal precepts of humanity's proper relation to God. The second aspect of the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation is the extension of God's covenantal favour to the gentiles. The turning of the gentiles to the God of Israel through the name of Jesus demonstrates that Jesus is the Messiah: 'If all the nations are blessed in the Christ and we who are from all the nations believe in him, then he is the Christ' (*Dialogue with Trypho* 121:1).

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Having established that Jesus is the Messiah who brings to fulfilment the victorious reign and universal manifestation of God, Justin can then assume that premise as the basis for claiming that all previous manifestations of divine presence should be assimilated to the identity of Jesus. Moreover, the dialogical relation between the human Jesus and the Father, which Justin typically characterizes in terms of Jesus' complete obedience to the Father's will, is read back into the titles of the pre-existent Christ. Among these titles is the characterization of Jesus as *Logos*, in connection with the scriptural *persona* of Wisdom/*Sophia*. There is a certain dialogical personalism that is integral to the relation between God and the *Logos*, as would be expected given that Justin's line of argument begins with the *persona* of the victorious Messiah who is obedient to the (p. 19) Father's will. Thus, Justin explains that the pre-existent Christ derives all his titles, including *Logos* and *Sophia*, 'from the fact that he ministers to the Father's will and was begotten by the will of the Father' (*Dialogue with Trypho* 61:1). Rather than merely God's speech or functional reason, *Sophia/Logos* is someone to whom God speaks; in the act of creation God 'conversed with one who was endowed with rationality and numerically other than himself ... This offspring, who was really brought forth from the Father, was with the Father before all creatures and the Father conversed with him' (*Dialogue with Trypho* 62:2,4).

Justin thus resolves the fundamental structural components of the Christian canon, the Old and New Testaments, into a coherent Christological narrative that identifies Jesus as the one whose suffering has ushered in the reign of God, overcoming sin and death by his redemptive suffering, bringing about the demise of the demons who have ruled over the nations, and allowing the nations to enter into God's covenantal embrace. Consistently with this narrative, Christ's divinity is largely associated by Justin with biblical motifs of the God who reigns over his enemies and who manifests himself in a universal and all-encompassing manner. This characterization is combined with an emphasis on Jesus' obedience to the Father in a way that allows Justin to read a dialogical relation into the very structure of divine self-manifestation. While Justin's primary characterization of the Spirit is as the 'prophetic Spirit' which inspires Scripture, there is also an important role for the Spirit in Justin's '*Christus Victor*' Christological narrative. As we have noted, this narrative points to the reign of God over the gentiles, which has come about through the name of Jesus and the power of his salvific passion, as testimony that Jesus is indeed the divine Christ. But, according to Justin, this victory of God's reign is actualized and manifested through the 'gifts of the Spirit', which are the fruits of Christ's passion and resurrection. The Church's holiness, which is comprised of the gifts of the Spirit, 'is derived from the Father himself through the crucified one' (*Dialogue with Trypho* 110:3). We can say, finally, that Justin's Christological narrative comes to the point of fully disclosing the Trinity in his representation of the Church. While Justin Martyr does not make explicit reference to the category of canonicity and does not provide us with a list of biblical books that he considered canonical, he constructs a Christological narrative that identifies Father, Son, and Holy Spirit out of the material that we identify as Old and New Testaments, the basic structural components of the Christian canon. He thus provides us with an account of the fundamental canonical shape of an early Trinitarian theology.

Irenaeus

Later in the second century, the prevalence of 'Gnostic' movements provoked a theological response from Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons, that included a more explicit reflection on how divine revelation, as announced through the Trinitarian rule of faith, is received by the Church through the Scriptures and authoritatively proclaimed. The various movements offering a salvific secret 'knowledge' (*gnosis*) expressed their teachings in documents that (p. 20) did not come to be included in the Christian canon, rejected much of what was later to be included in the New Testament canon, and depicted the Old Testament 'god of the Jews', as a rogue deity. The Christological-Trinitarian narrative that Justin Martyr had constructed out of the combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and what later came to be called 'New Testament' writings was thus effectively dismantled and replaced by an elaborate account that typically pitted the authentic divine realm, the *pleroma*, against the creator-god of this world. While these systems of '*gnosis*' often included the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their descriptions of the divine *pleroma*, they were clearly not reducible to a Trinitarian narrative identification of God in the way that Justin's account was. For example, Basilides, one of the principal teachers of '*gnosis*' with whom Irenaeus was polemically engaged, described the *pleroma* as constituted by a series of emanations beginning with the unbegotten Father, from whom is born Mind, from whom is born Word (*Logos*), followed by Forethought, Wisdom, Power, etc., until we reach the number of the solar year, 365.

Irenaeus, by contrast, accepted the Hebrew Scriptures, in the *Septuagint* translation, as an authentic Christian book. He refers to 'the gospel' as delivered 'fourfold in perspective but bound together by one Spirit' (*Haer.* III,11,8) and cites almost all of the books that would later be included in the New Testament canon (excluding Philemon, 2 Peter, 3 John, and Jude). Irenaeus is a witness to the still fluid state of the canon at this stage, inasmuch as he imputes scriptural authority to some writings that would not be part of the New Testament canon, such as *Shepherd of Hermas* and *1 Clement* (*Haer.* III,3,3; IV,20,2). As with Justin Martyr, Irenaeus constructs out of the combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament writings a coherent Christological narrative that delineates the Trinitarian shape of Christian confession. In his *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, Irenaeus presents 'the first and foremost article of our faith' as belief in 'the Father ... maker of all', who is addressed elsewhere as 'the Lord God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob and Israel, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (*Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 6; *Haer.* III,6,4); the second article is belief in Jesus Christ as the consummation and fulfilment of the prophetic witness of the Hebrew Scriptures and the 'recapitulation' of human reality and history in a mode that restores it to communion with God; and the third article is belief in the Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets and patriarchs of the Hebrew Scriptures were taught and who, in fulfilment of prophecy, has been poured out 'in a new way upon humanity throughout all the earth, renewing it to God' (*Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 6; Smith 1952: 51). Also similarly to Justin, the Trinitarian activity is formative of the scriptural witness: 'So the Spirit manifests the Word and therefore the prophets announced the Son of God, but the Word articulates the Spirit and therefore

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it is he himself who gives their message to the prophets and takes up humanity and brings it to the Father (*Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 5; Smith 1952: 51). Irenaeus' account of Christ's restorative recapitulation of humanity's broken relation to God also recalls the principal events of the Old Testament as finding their consummation in the fulfilment of the eschatological call to the gentiles through the Church. Humanity as a whole is thus offered the opportunity to be 'adopted' in Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and 'presented' to the Father.

(p. 21) The distinctive contribution of Irenaeus is his explicit consideration of how the Church's Trinitarian confession of faith is properly safeguarded only through asserting a series of strict continuities between Revelation, Scripture, Tradition, and Church. In his *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus follows his first two books in which he described and criticized Gnostic systems with a promise at the beginning of Book 3 to 'add proofs from the scriptures'. Irenaeus' subsequent explication of the structure of scriptural authority offers a sophisticated reflection on canonicity, as both enabling the material resources for the Church's Trinitarian confession and as itself constituted by the presence and activity of Father, Son, and Spirit. Significantly, Irenaeus begins his account of scriptural authority not with the Hebrew Scriptures but directly with what he calls 'the gospel of God', which is also to be identified with 'the economy of our salvation' (*Haer.* III,1,1). The 'gospel of God' provides humanity with 'the truth, that is the doctrine of the Son of God' (*Haer.* III, pref.), and begins with the 'perfect knowledge (*gnosis*)' (*Haer.* III,1,1) of the apostles, which is itself enabled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Acts 1:8). This unified gospel is refracted into the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, each representing a distinct aspect of the mystery of Christ; thus, John presents the Word's 'glorious generation from the Father'; Luke, 'Jesus' priestly character'; Matthew, his 'human generation'; and Mark presents Jesus as the fulfilment of the prophetic witness. Beyond the continuity between the truth communicated by the Holy Spirit and the scriptural writings, Irenaeus insists on a further continuity between the scriptural writings and the concrete tradition transmitted through apostolic succession in the Churches, such that 'there is one and the same life-giving faith, preserved and transmitted in truth from the apostles up till now in the Church' (*Haer.* III,3,3). Throughout his anti-gnostic polemic, Irenaeus presents 'false *gnosis*' as radically divisive in its view of reality: dividing the 'true god' from the creator-god and thus from creation; separating 'true knowledge' from the scriptural witness; severing the scriptures from the witness of tradition embodied in the Church; and sundering the earthly Jesus from the Christ who descends from the *pleroma*. In contrast, he presents Christian truth as 'a single ascending path' (*Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 1) comprised of a series of strict unities: the true God is the creator who desires union with his creation, a union accomplished by the salvific work of the one Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, who are themselves immediately united to the Father as his 'two hands'; and this Trinitarian economy of salvation is attested in Scripture, tradition, and Church. A sense of canonicity, not in terms of a defined list of books but rather as the intrinsic bond between the authority of the Scriptures and the Church's access to salvific truth, is central to Irenaeus' vision of true *gnosis*:

True Gnosis consists of the teaching of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the church throughout the whole world, and the distinctive mark of the body of Christ in accordance with the succession of bishops, by whom the apostles have transmitted the church in every place as it has reached us, being guarded by unadulterated Scriptures, a complete systemic whole, subject to neither addition nor subtraction. (Irenaeus, *Haer.* IV,33,8)

(p. 22) **Athanasius**

Surely the most tumultuous and fateful period in the development of Trinitarian doctrine was the controversy that erupted between Arius and his bishop, Alexander, in Egypt in the second decade of the fourth century and came to some decisive resolution only with the Council of Constantinople in 381. The controversy originally revolved around the question of whether the divinity of Jesus Christ, as Word and Son, was a created secondary deity or coeternal with the Father, and subsequently posed similar questions about whether the Spirit was fully divine or a creature of the Son. Athanasius, the successor of Alexander to the see of Alexandria in 328, had a clear sense of the notion of canon and, as we noted at the beginning of this article, was able to identify a list of canonical Old and New Testament books, the latter identical with later authoritative lists in the main Christian churches. Athanasius asserts the distinction between what he considers to be the genuine contents of the Old and New Testaments and ‘apocrypha’. His list of Old Testament books, based on the Septuagint, is intermediate between the Jewish canon and the longer canons now accepted by Roman Catholics and by Orthodox. Baruch, Lamentations, and the Epistle of Jeremiah are included, while the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, *the Didache*, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* are listed not as part of the canon but as recommended reading for catechumens.

At no point in the controversy surrounding the Council of Nicaea do we get any indication that Arius—or any of those theologians who took issue with the Nicene description of the Son as ‘*homoousios*’ with the Father—referred the controverted issues to questions about the contents of the canon. What we do find, however, is that there was fundamental disagreement about the overall Christological narrative shape of the canon. At the outset of the controversy, we have a letter from Alexander complaining that Arius and his supporters use passages that advert to the human lowliness of Jesus Christ as evidence of his secondary divinity, while ignoring those passages that evoke his majesty and intimacy with the Father. The former set of passages included both his human limitations (hunger, thirst, not knowing the hour of the Day of Judgement) and statements that seemed to posit the glorification of Jesus to an exalted status as a consequence of his human obedience, such as Phil. 2:8–9: ‘Being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name’. Thus, the point of issue was the regulation of tensions within the canon so as to render a unified and harmonious reading. In modern discussions of canonicity, this issue is sometimes dealt with by proposing the ne-

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cessity of a 'canon within the canon'. Such a stratagem would impose a certain theological consistency upon the putative diversity within the canon by asserting one canonical perspective to be primary and central while relegating other strata to secondary or peripheral status. Alternatively, the diversity of New Testament accounts (p. 23) of Christ is sometimes posited as a canonical endorsement of a plurality of Christological options. However, in the crucial instance of the exegetical difficulties and disagreements surrounding Nicene doctrine, what emerged was neither 'a canon within the canon' nor a recognition of a variety of options for identifying the person of Christ but a Christological rule (*kanōn*) derived from within the canon and understood to be a reflection of the Christological shape of the canon as a whole and not the privileging of one part of the canon over another. This Christological rule is articulated by Athanasius in the third book of his *Orations against the Arians*, written in the late 340s. He writes,

Therefore the scope (*skopos*) and characteristic feature (*charactēr*) of the holy Scripture, as we have often said, is its twofold proclamation of the Saviour: that he was always God and Son, as being the Father's Word, Radiance, and Wisdom, and that afterwards he took flesh from Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, for our sake, and became a human being. One can find this indicated throughout the entire divinely inspired Scripture, as the Lord himself has said: 'Search the Scriptures, for it is they which testify to me' (Jn 5:39) (Athanasius, *Orations against the Arians* 3:29).

Athanasius goes on to show how this 'twofold proclamation of the Saviour', which functions as a key to interpreting the coherence of the canon as a whole, is derived from specific texts within the canon, such as the double proclamation in the *Prologue* of the Gospel of John (Jn 1:1, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God'; and Jn 1:14, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us') and that of the Christological hymn of Phil. 2 ('being in the form of God'; 'taking the form of a servant'). For Athanasius, this twofold proclamation delineates a Christological narrative that is distinct from the competing 'Arian' narrative. Both narratives have to deal with the twofold aspects of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. However, the 'Arian' organization of this content posits the pre-existent Christ as a creature whose exaltation to divine status was granted by the one God proleptically as a consequence of the foreseen merits of his human obedience. Athanasius' interpretation insisted that the overall Christological shape of the canon, as read out of particular texts such as those cited above, was one of kenotic descent on the part of the fully divine Word and Son resulting in the exaltation of human beings through the exalted humanity of Christ: 'And if he descended to accomplish the grace of [humanity's] advancement, then he did not come to be called "Son" and "God" as a reward, but rather he himself made us sons for the Father and divinized human beings when he himself became a human being' (*Orations against the Arians* 1:38; Anatolios 2004: 96); 'He did not become greater, as one who was lesser, but, rather being God, "he took the form of the servant" and in the taking of it, he was not advanced but rather humbled himself' (*Orations against the Arians* 1:40; Anatolios 2004: 97). In this narrative of Christological divine descent-human ascent, the Holy Spirit is given through the divinity

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of Christ and received through his humanity. The net effect of this transaction is the definitive and 'secure' salvation of human beings:

But through whom and from whom should the Spirit have been given, if not through the Son whose Spirit it is? And, then again, when were we empowered to receive, if not (p. 24) when the Word became a human being? ... In no other way would we have partaken of the Spirit and been sanctified if it were not that the Giver of the Spirit, the Word himself, spoke of himself as anointed by the Spirit for our sakes. Therefore we have received in that he is said to be anointed in the flesh. The flesh was first sanctified in him and he is spoken of as having received through it, as a human being, and so we have the Spirit's grace that follows from his reception, receiving from his fullness. (Athanasius, *Orations against the Arians* 1:50; Anatolios 2004: 108)

Augustine

In the early fifth century, Augustine refers to the scriptural canon in his instructions for Scriptural interpretation in *de doctrina christiana*, and lists 44 books of the Old Testament (the longer canon minus Sirach and Baruch) and 27 books of the New Testament as 'authoritative' (*terminatur auctoritas*). He adverts to some degree of fluidity in the determination of the canon and advises the interpreter to settle questions of canon on ecclesiological grounds:

With regard to the canonical Scriptures, one should defer to the authority of the majority of Catholic Churches, certainly including among them those that were deemed worthy of having apostolic seats and to accept apostolic letters. The criterion to be applied to the canonical scriptures is that those that are accepted by all the churches are to be preferred to those which are not accepted by some. As to those that are not accepted by all, one should give precedence to those accepted by the majority of churches and churches of greater authority over those held by the minority of churches or churches of lesser authority. (Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 8:12)

Like Justin Martyr, Augustine also sees the fundamental narrative content of the Christian canon as the extension of covenantal grace from 'the Patriarchs and prophets' to the nations (*On the Instruction of Beginners* 39) and, like Athanasius, he considers that the essential rule for configuring the coherence of the scriptural canon is provided by such texts as Phil. 2:6, which adverts to the kenotic descent of the Word from the 'form of God' to the 'form of the servant'. The violation of this rule for ordering the contents of the canon was the foundational error of scriptural interpretation that violates orthodox Trinitarian faith:

People who have been less diligent in their investigation and consideration of the whole arrangement of the Scriptures (*universam seriem scripturarum*) have erred

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in trying to transfer the things said of Jesus Christ as a human being to his substance that was eternal before the incarnation and is eternal. (*On the Trinity* 1:14)

A more distinctly Augustinian contribution to the Trinitarian shape of the canon is found in his anti-Pelagian polemic, when he relates the Old and New Testaments according to the Pauline dialectic of law and grace, as found in *Romans*. Over against what Augustine considered to be Pelagian understandings of divine grace as constituted (p. 25) by revelation and teaching, Augustine insists that the essential content of the 'grace of Jesus Christ' communicated by the gospel is that the revelation of the divine will for humanity in the Old Testament is fulfilled by the enabling of the human will to conform to that divine will through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit. In this framework, the essential content of the Old Testament is the 'law' of divine teaching which not only enlightens human beings with respect to the reality and purposes of God but humbles human pride by manifesting humanity's pervasive and structural incapacity to respond appropriately to the divine will. In this way, 'the letter kills', inasmuch as it manifests humanity's entrapment in the death of estrangement from God. But this same law is also the handmaid of grace inasmuch as it prepares humanity to recognize and receive and be appropriately thankful for the deliverance worked by Jesus Christ and the Spirit in the 'fullness of time'. The essential content of this deliverance is delineated according to a Trinitarian pattern. The righteousness of God is enacted by Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection, bringing about 'the renewal of righteousness' (*On the Spirit and the Letter* 10), which involves not merely the doing of the divine will but the delight in and love for God that is only effected by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as 'the love of God which is poured into our hearts' (Rom. 5:5). The faithful acceptance and participation in this righteousness of Christ leads to the full vision of Christ 'in the form of God in which he is equal to the Father' (*On the Spirit and the Letter* 37). Augustine thus reads the fundamental OT-NT dialectic of the Christian canon in terms of a narrative which sees the economy of salvation as progressing from divine teaching in the Old Testament to the indwelling of the Trinity in the faithful believer through the New Testament revelation. While the salvific economy of the New Testament thus brings to Trinitarian fulfilment the divine disclosure in the Old Testament, the latter still has a certain precedence as the point of departure and frame of enclosure for the Christian narrative:

Many will come from the East and the West and will feast not with Plato and Cicero but 'with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matt. 8:11) ... All the Gentiles believe in the King of the Jews. He rules over all the Gentiles but He is still King of the Jews. The trunk is sturdy enough to transform the engrafted olive tree into itself, but the wild olive cannot usurp the name of the olive tree. (*Sermon* 218:7)

Conclusion

We noted at the beginning of this article that the articulation of the Church's Trinitarian faith did not explicitly intersect with disagreements as to the content of the canon. Nevertheless, the fact of the canon, and the strategies for reading the interrelation of its structural components of the Old and New Testaments, positively determined the contours of this faith in ways that are perennially relevant for the project of its appropriation. Irenaeus insisted that the rule of faith, in its Trinitarian form, must be received as (p. 26) grounded in the confession of a strict continuity between divine revelation, the Scriptures, and the Church. Earlier, Justin Martyr had posited the continuity of the Old and New Testaments in the construction of a Christological narrative which includes a Trinitarian identification of the God of Israel. The victory of the God of Israel is achieved through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which extends covenantal grace to the gentiles through the gifts of the Spirit in the Church, the same Spirit that inspired the prophetic witness to Christ in the Old Testament. In the fifth century, Augustine presented a complementary account of the unity of the two Testaments in which the law of divine teaching in the Old Testament leads to the grace of Trinitarian indwelling in the New. The Trinitarian identification of God through the Christian canon also required the construction of a Christological rule encompassing the entire contents of the canonical witness, by which the various scriptural presentations of Christ may be organized by referring them respectively to his divinity and his humanity, 'the twofold proclamation of the Saviour' in Athanasius' terms. The appropriation of orthodox Trinitarian faith will always necessarily include an affirmation of the scriptural canon as mediating authentic revelation to the Church which exists in continuity with the apostolic witness. It will also involve the construal of the primary components of the Christian canon, the Old and New Testaments, as comprising a Christological narrative that prescribes a Trinitarian identification of God. An orthodox Trinitarian interpretation of that narrative will also finally require the assertion of a Christological regulation of the canon that issues in the double proclamation of the divinity and humanity of Christ and the communication of the Spirit through the interactivity of Christ's humanity and divinity.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Brown (1990); Wilken (2003); Young (1997).

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Khaled Anatolios

Khaled Anatolios received his doctorate from Boston College in 1996. He is Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame and the author of *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (2011), *Athanasius* (2004), and *Athanasius: The Coherence of his Thought* (1998).

The Trinity in the Old Testament

Christopher Seitz

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Abstract and Keywords

This article analyzes the concept of the Trinity in the Old Testament. It discusses the history-of-religions approach which correlates certain developments within Israel's worship of one God with what Christians identified as distinct hypostases in God and proposes an alternative approach which involves recognizing that descriptions of Israel's God may have not only a referent within ancient Israel but also a further divinely intended referent. It concludes that the Trinity in the Old Testament is not an invitation to search for threesomes in the scriptures of Israel, but instead is tied up with a proper understanding and confession about how the literal sense speaks of its divine referent.

Keywords: Trinity, Old Testament, Israel, God, Christians, hypostases, scriptures, divine referent

Introduction: History of Religion (Economic) and Theological Literal Sense (Ontological) Considerations

THE idea of a 'Trinity in the Old Testament' will strike most in the present period as anachronistic and an inaccurate handling of the Old Testament's literal sense and historical integrity. At most, it would mean an undertaking to describe the kind of religious frame of reference, in terms of the depictions of God at home in the scriptures of Israel, that manifests a potential for later theological descriptions in Christian hands. Angels, the divine council, curious accounts of hidden divine action (as with the men/angels in the story of Sodom), David as 'son of God', the 'let us' of Creation, or the 'one like a Son of Man' in Daniel's fiery furnace—these and other accounts would have to be correlated with what we know of Israelite religion in its ancient near eastern context and held to be, from the modern perspective, capable of explanation as adumbrations of something like Trinitarian conceptuality, albeit in crude and imprecise form.

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This history-of-religion undertaking must work carefully (if for some, unpersuasively) in order to guard the historicity of the Old Testament witness, at the same time endeavouring to show that the God of Israel, in the light of a dynamic life with a people, is related to the world and the covenanted Israel in ways that find religious correlation with the later views of Christian faith, when it comes to the Doctrine of the Trinity. The economic life of God with the people of the Old Covenant, as expressed in the literal/historical sense of the Old Testament witness, would have to be preserved, such that the ontological claims of the later witness would not materially adjust that economic depiction, except as this might be shown to have some religious potential for future reference. Here, ironically, the fact that Israel worshipped one God and not many created the (p. 29) dynamic necessity of relationship through a variety of media (prophetic word, angelic vocation, cultic presence, creational co-work, divine presence in affliction, sonship) if God was to be truly transcendent and holy and present and active, all in one selfsame Deity. That is, the non-polytheistic eccentricity of this One God of Israel led to the development of a religious lexicon for expressing his 'hypostases' in the life of Israel, with the character of economic foreshadowings of later Christian formulation.

In the modern period, this effort to clear the ground for a Trinitarian adumbration within the economic life of God in the Old Covenant is not frequently pursued, though it has been undertaken on occasion from the side of New Testament reflection (Hurtado 2003; Viviano 1998). This reticence is tied up with a concern to honour the historical context of the Old Testament and its 'literal sense' depictions, and not to extrude into that world the conceptualities and theological convictions of a later period (on the possibility of a philosophical disconnection between a text's judgements and a text's conceptuality, see Yeago 1994).

At issue, then, more broadly speaking, is just what is meant by the Old Testament's 'literal sense' as well as what is meant by 'history' and 'historical context'—words which in the present period may seem enticingly univocal, but which were by no means taken to be such at earlier periods of the history of biblical interpretation.

For the purpose of introduction, consider an alternative way of thinking about the Trinity in the Old Testament. Here it would be held that certain expressions in the literal sense—beginning, light, word, first of ways, wisdom, son—themselves could not refer univocally to a single referent. That is, the literal sense of the Old Testament had an historically determined meaning at one level—it made sense to an audience in time and space within Israel's ancient referentiality—but pointed as well to a further reference. This sense of multiple reference does not evacuate the historicity of the witness nor the meaningfulness and intelligibility of the economic activity of One God. Rather, it evolves from an awareness that the subject matter being vouchsafed is richer than a single intentionality in time can measure. If this is so, a history-of-religion account of the economic life of God can only get one so far, and indeed, it could misunderstand the character of the literal sense and how it is to be appreciated.

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To say, for example, that the wisdom referred to as the first of God's ways, in Prov. 8:22, refers to a specific set of Israelite beliefs about God and his character (call it 'wisdom theology') only begs the question, but what exactly is this 'theology of wisdom' from the standpoint of God's own working and self? Or, to say that the 'let us make man in our own image' does not have as its subject matter 'the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' is nevertheless to ask, why such a plurality at all and just who is this 'we'? 'God in the divine council', one will respond. But what is this 'divine council' ultimately and why does God speak in his own single voice as 'we'? Similarly, what does the collocation of word, spirit, beginning, and God (*'elohim*) mean when the Bible begins its narrative (Gen. 1:1-3)? To answer with a source-critical description of the work or intention of an author ('the Priestly Writer') is to restrict the scope of the enquiry artificially, it could be held. Equally, to ignore the sense-making conjunction of sources in the intentionality of the final form could be an offence against the literal sense said to be respected by historical enquiry of a (p. 30) certain sort. Here again, we simply run up against the complexity of what it means to speak of a literal sense and mean by that both historicity and also a proper appreciation of the subject matter under discussion in the light of the canonical witness. How, then, can the historicity of the witness be retained (as much for theological as for purportedly historical reasons) but the subject matter under discussion not artificially limited to a single authorial intention as we can reconstruct that with critical tools (itself a sort of science of conjecture)?

'The Trinity *and* the Old Testament'

Rephrasing the title helps illustrate the character of the challenge for thinking about Trinitarian language in respect of the scriptures of Israel. It could be argued that the descriptions of God's identity and work testified to in His life with Israel, and how these diverge from alternative presentations in the surrounding culture, are what actually fund a Trinitarian conceptuality. That is, it is the unique theological depiction of the Holy One of Israel that forces one to reflect dynamically and dogmatically on the triune life of God as true to that life in an ontological sense. This is quite a different undertaking than hunting for threesomes hidden away inside the activity of God in the Old Covenant. The pressure toward accounting for the eternal life of God as 'Trinitarian' emerges because of the character of claims made about God in the scriptures of Israel, to which one frequently assigns the term 'monotheistic'. The problem here is that the term 'monotheism', when used in reference to the Old Testament, is nothing but a placeholder serving to rule out some obvious alternatives (Israel did not worship multiple gods in a pantheon) but in itself it is imprecise. At issue is the *kind* of monotheism said to mark the life of God with his people Israel. The very fact that this life belongs to the Holy One of Israel, and not several discrete deities, means that the ways in which this One God is personally related to his people must refract through a single lens but in such a way that God is truly present and truly alive in relationship and truly in communication. The terms the OT uses to express this Living character are manifold but not limitless. God creates through wisdom. God speaks through his word. God enlivens through the spirit. God is present in holiness and yet remains transcendent. God relates to an elect people and to creation as a whole but

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has also a beloved son (Psalm 2). Humanity is said to be made in the image of God. There is a beginning (*bereshith*) in relationship to God which can be seen as a begotten agency, through whom the heavens and earth are made (Genesis 1 and Proverbs 8; more below). Above all, God has a name, Yhwh, the name above all names, but by which he can be called upon by those to whom he has made himself known. The offices governing Israel's life—prophet, priest, sage, king, promised ancestor, hymn writer—respond to and speak forth the various ways that God acts dynamically in relationship to the world and to his chosen people.

Stated negatively, the fact that Israel 'shall have no other gods before me' (Deut. 5:7) does not result in a limitation of communication or a restriction of relationship, based (p. 31) upon simple arithmetic. Rather, this core conviction creates the conditions for the most personal kind of relationship because it is focused on a single divine referent, whose character is known through covenantal persistence in relationship—in judgement and in mercy—through time. Theologically, it is the peculiar eccentricity of this Holy One of Israel—the LORD, the LORD, compassionate and merciful—that calls forth a description of the divine character as inherently dynamic and personal, offering the potential for further clarification, such as Trinitarian claims will wish to make.

For later Christian theological reflection, it is the very existence of the scriptures of Israel and their commitment to a peculiar kind of monotheism that gives rise to Trinitarian convictions about the character of God, such that, lacking these scriptures and their specific literal-sense declarations, we would simply have no Trinitarian talk at all, but rather something like the divinization of Jesus (with the help of borrowed titles having not much to do with him in reality). The precondition of Trinitarian reflection, in other words, is precisely the Old Testament of early Christian reception and interpretation. Had there been no reception of these writings as the sole authoritative witness to the work and identity of God, during which period the New Testament writings were coming to form, the conditions would not have been in place for the kind of Trinitarian theological thinking that emerged. This thinking is witnessed to in nascent form in the writings that would come to form a second canonical record, the New Testament, in early Christian hymns and in specific exegetical handling of the OT in the NT. But the pressure for this nascent witness, as it comes to expression in the second testament, came from the literal sense of the Old Testament and what it said of God (Rowe 2002; Childs 1993; Bauckham 1999).

To say that 'Jesus Christ is Lord' is not then to answer a concern for awarding him a status above angels or other intermediaries and thus to legitimate Christian worship of Christ and insist that such worship is not blasphemy. Nor is it, in the first instance, to ward off efforts to divinize Jesus that would separate his deity so stated from what could be said of the God of Israel, the God of 'Jewish Scriptures'. These challenges will take form very quickly from different quarters and they are hovering around early New Testament descriptions, but they do not form the primary background or logic for why the Trinitarian talk that does emerge in nascent form emerges in the first instance.

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The reason for this is that it is everywhere assumed that the scriptures of Israel describe God as God is, and that no other means of speaking of God, or of understanding who God is, are available in the most basic sense. The fact that the scriptures of Israel, moreover, do not exist in the form of tidy theological propositions, but rather describe the lived life of God with a people, in 'many and various ways' present and communicating within a single literal sense witness (Hebrews 1), does not lessen this restriction just stated but enriches it. Early Christian argument about the character of Jesus Christ and his identity, therefore, cannot be anything more or less than *accordance with the scriptures* (Seitz 1998: 51-60). Jesus Christ is who he is *in accordance with* a witness stating the nature of God, alongside of which there is simply no rival. Earliest Christian belief is predicated on being able to distinguish between 'it is written' and what that entails, as against the general religious milieu of Judaism (itself variegated), on the one hand; and (p. 32) full acknowledgement with the Judaisms of the period that 'the oracles of God entrusted to the Jews' (Romans 3) come from within a privileged witness and cannot be accessed otherwise, but only correlated in crude ways (Paul's efforts with the very religious at Athens, for example).

Accordance can of course take the form of economic accounts, as in the speeches of Acts from Stephen, Peter, and Paul, where who Jesus is belongs within a sacred history, selective accounts of which serve to locate God's actions in time in respect of the earthly Jesus, 'who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried'—much as the narrative creeds and early baptismal interrogatories will state this. These selective accounts may choose to focus on creation, ancestors, judges, David, prophets, psalms, depending on the occasion and context, but they all assume that this selection, however wide or limited, is the only true description within which the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his ascension and coming again, make sense, gain their theological truthfulness and their capacity to convict and persuade.

The authority of the received scriptures, their irreducible accounts of the One God, and the kind of accounts these are, given the monotheism being testified to, are what create the conditions for the other kind of accordance we see in the NT, for which shorthand we label 'ontological accordance'. At issue here is describing Jesus Christ not as he can be located on a temporal grid, enclosing that which is set forth in the scriptures of Israel and then using that same time-line as well to speak of the place of the Church and Israel before his Coming Again. That is, allowing the first economic time-line to expand such as we see it in Romans 9-11, for example, and in this way deferring to its authoritative character ('the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable') whilst also seeing in it a 'mystery' only now fully grasped, in respect of the Church as comprised of circumcised and uncircumcised 'fellow heirs' both (Romans, Colossians, Ephesians).

This other kind of accordance is a reaction of theological and exegetical reflection occasioned by the pressure of the literal sense of the scriptures of Israel. It understands within the literal sense descriptions of God's eternal life with Israel there to be a surplus, planted in the original inspired testimony and so ingredient in the witness and so also in God's act of self revelation. It is not a sense *ad extra*. Moreover, if it were a dogmatic *ad*

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extra, or if it was the creation of an imaginative exegesis capable of correlation with Second Temple methods historically made more precise (as useful as this is in its own way), and *understandable chiefly on those grounds*, it would not be the kind of Trinitarian claim that Christians could say was true to who Jesus Christ genuinely is, such that he is to be worshipped and called Lord. What Christians (comprised in the first instance of the one people of God) claimed to be true of Jesus they grounded as truthfully alive in the one literal sense witness of the only scriptures, and their only true account of who God was and is and is to be, Yhwh, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.

Thus far we have been speaking about nascent Trinitarian reflection because, strictly speaking, we are speaking of the identity of Jesus Christ as enclosed within the literal sense reference of statements the scriptures of Israel—the sole scriptures of the early Christian movement—make about the One God. As such, they are strictly speaking ‘binitarian’, so long as we keep in view that the term is a weak one, meaning only that the character of (p. 33) the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Trinity requires extrapolation from within the same conceptual framework which, in the first instance, declares that the earthly Jesus is the Christ through whom all things were made, the eternal Son of God, the one to whom has been given the name above every name (Yhwh), at the right hand of the Father, and so forth. The difficulty attending to the Holy Spirit's co-ordination with the Father and Son is well known and cannot be the subject of a detailed treatment here. It is mentioned only to acknowledge that the challenge exists (and we will examine one creative account of it below), but this need not hinder the retrieval of the conditions under which the first Christians claimed that Jesus Christ was eternally within the identity of the One God of Israel, Yhwh, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. We return to the Person of the Holy Spirit at the close.

The Literal Sense as the Spiritual Sense

In his exegesis of Psalm 22 (LXX 21), Thomas Aquinas refers to the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, in the light of his interpretation of this and other psalms (translation made available online by DeSales University as part of their Aquinas Translation Project: (http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/Psalm_21.html); the issue is a much wider one, of course; Theodore held that only three psalms referred to Christ via prophesy). Aquinas speaks of the historical reading of Psalm 22, whereby the human author is held to intend a single referent only (David) and declares it an attenuated sense—such was the reading of Theodore in his view and in the view of Church councils (we speak here only of the record and not to rise in its defence). Aquinas is well aware of the problems attending prodigal sense-making and his own appeal to the literal sense of this and other psalms is remarkably constrained. He is fully aware that the author of the psalm refers both to realities in the days of Israel and especially to matters that relate more naturally at one level to the David of history (the reference to sins in verse 1 (LXX v. 2), as brokered by the translation process into Greek and Latin from the Hebrew's more neutral ‘groans’). Along with the tradition, he nevertheless sees Christ as the referent of the psalm and says that ‘sins’ refers to that which Christ bears for the Church. The sub-

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ject matter of the psalm has to do with David and Christ both. The author is inspired to see something which in God's providence has a dual reference. This is the literal sense, and for Aquinas the alternative to a literal sense is not a higher, spiritual sense but the restricted historical sense-making undertaken in the interpretation of Theodore. No, the literal sense *is* the spiritual sense, he states, as if self-evident. By this he means that the human author, as inspired by God, spoke of things of such lofty significance that the final intentionality might well not have been clearly seen, and indeed probably was only seen for what it was at a later time. Yet, that single author's literal sense-making contained the reality in earnest.

We see here an example of flexibility in thinking about authorial intention and sense reference that guards the historicity of the witness, but refuses to say that intentionality (p. 34) is governed or restricted by what we can say about the historical context of the inspired agent's literal sense. Subsequent use of the Psalm—as in the NT's recording of the crucifixion, with its various psalmic resonances—is allowed room to be included in what one can say about the author's intention and in that allowance Thomas and others believed they were comprehending the divine intention (the literal spiritual sense) which first warranted the speaking as such, within the historicity of Israel's life with God.

While this particular example functions against the backdrop of two testaments, we can also see it at work in the early interpretation of Christ's identity with God, within the context of a single authoritative witness (the Old Testament). How was this so? First, it was recognized (often in line with the instincts of someone like Philo, who was concerned with the dynamics of divine action and identity and was seeking to understand that in the context of kindred concerns of his day to speak of the divine logos, for example, apart from the scriptural witness which oriented his own enquiry) that to speak of the One God in relationship to the world and to an elect people was already to ask about the internal logic of scripture's literal sense. What was needed was a way to make the proper correlations. If Prov. 8:22 spoke of God creating a 'beginning' of ways, what might this have to do with the 'beginning' of Genesis 1? Or from within a very different set of constraints, if God spoke of a beloved son who would rule the nations, what did it mean that David did this only provisionally if at all, if the literal sense was to mean anything other than rhetorical excess? Psalm 89 described this same son as firstborn, a status God had to make for him (Ps. 89:27). What was one to make of what we might call the composite intentionality of these various different passages?

For our purposes, given the scope of this entry, we will focus on one prominent example: the way in which 'beginning' was seen to point to a divine agency generated from God's own self. The key texts are Genesis 1 and Proverbs 8—the latter of which would prove to be the major testing ground for Christian efforts to speak of Christ's relationship to God, in the generations leading up to and then culminating in Athanasius' *Contra Arianos*. Leaving the particularities of that long trail aside, it must be stressed that the debate was a thoroughgoing interpretative and exegetical one. At every point along the way, at issue is the strict letter, its appearance in a variety of textual traditions (Hebrew; the competing Greek versions; Jerome's own translations), word studies (what does the Hebrew verb

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qnh mean and what do the various Greek renderings clarify or obscure), and above all, associations across the Old Testament and within the flow of Prov. 8:22–31 itself (do the verbs relate to the same action of generation; various aspects of that; or of generation and incarnation, etc.). That is, the mature Trinitarian discussions, as these pertain to the relationship of Christ to God, are textual and exegetical ones, and they have to do with the way the Old Testament delivers its sense. It is for this reason that, while the discussion ranges over several centuries, after the existence of a two testament Christian Bible (in various forms), it is important all the same for our purposes, because it believes that the Trinitarian convictions of the Christian faith are grounded in the one scripture given by God to Israel and received through Christ by the Church. It is concerned with the sense-making of the Old Testament for the language about God, which will become Trinitarian in various ways.

(p. 35) Colossians offers a good example of the way in which the literal sense of the Old Testament was seen as delivering up an account of Christ as eternally at work with God, an account which tracks well into subsequent Christian interpretation and argumentation. Christ is image (1:15), and from the various indications of Colossians' speaking of a New Creation, we can conclude that Christ is seen to be the image of Genesis 1, now restored and living the risen life into which the Church has been transported (Col. 3:10: 'being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator'). But most importantly Christ is firstborn (Col. 1:15) and—taking the cue from the language of 'before' that follows and the notion of creation through Christ (Col. 1:16–20)—it is clarified that this 'first-bornness' is *before* creation. The imagery being used and the terms being deployed come from the way in which the Old Testament is said to be delivering its literal sense, once one grasps the composite intention of Proverbs 8 and Genesis 1 (Burney 1926; Beetham 2008). The 'in beginning' of Genesis 1 is heard alongside Prov. 8:22, 'he acquired/begat me the beginning of his ways' (the proper translation of which comes by grasping the implications of the verb *qnh* as shown elsewhere in the OT; and in relationship with the verb 'bring forth' which follows in vv. 24–5; and in the light of the companionship clearly stated in verse 27), with the result that one speaks of Christ as 'begotten before' or *proto + tokos*. The Old Testament's literal sense, when heard in its composite intentionality, declares the reality of an agency with God before creation, not independently acquired or made (as a dominant later Greek translation would intimate, through the verb *ektisen*—compare *ektesato* of Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus or *bara'* of the Targum—creating debates within Christian circles, especially in the exegesis of Arius). Now Genesis 1 can be heard as saying: 'in *arche*—in beginning—in firstborn' God created the heavens and the earth. The rabbinic idea of 'in beginning' as referring to torah, as 'in Torah God created the heavens and the earth', tracks closely alongside this, and it is likewise derived from the way in which Proverbs 8 was thought to be speaking of 'eternal generation' and 'creation through', in this case, by/of Torah ('Now the Law says, "By *reshith* God created"; and there is no *reshith* except the Law; compare the passage, "The Lord gat me as the *reshith* of His way" ' (*Bereshith Rabba*)). When then John speaks of 'in beginning (*reshith*; *arche*) was the word, and the word with God' he also is tracking very closely the exegetical penetration of the literal sense of Genesis and Proverbs, consistent with the logic of

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Col. 1:15-20. Note carefully that this is at some remove from what one might call 'allegorical' interpretation, and it is equally distant from finding threesomes in obscure episodes of God's dealing with Israel. Rather, the earliest (incipient) 'Trinity in the Old Testament' is a conviction that the One God of Israel acts through the agency of his eternal companion to bring creation into being and order. In so doing, ruled out is tritheism or bitheism. And also to be denounced is any sense that the monotheism of the sole scriptural witness, so carefully guarded, because so true to God's character as the Holy One of Israel, has been voided or replaced.

Others have shown how the mature declaration of Christ as 'of one substance' with the Father—the Greek term never appearing in Christian scripture—is precisely the judgment rendered by the texts of scripture when one hears Phil. 2:5-11 properly, in the light of Isa. 45:20-5 (Bauckham 1999; Seitz 1998, 2001; Yeago 1994). The latter insists—in (p. 36) the strongest language the OT provides—that Yhwh is God alone, 'there is none beside me'. This declaration is stronger, one might conclude, than henotheism ('you shall have no other gods') or Ezekiel's ironic intimations that if 'gods' (*'elohim*) exist, they are 'dung balls' (*g'llulim*). God is alone, there is no other, and he can swear only by himself, and so only by his own name, declaring that every knee will confess his Lordship and in so doing be saved (Isa. 45:22-5). When Philippians, then, speaks of receiving the name above every name, it is declaring that Christ has the authority of The Name, Yhwh, and exists within that selfsame identity. This happens in such a way that the Father is glorified, in accordance with Isaiah, but now stated in incipiently Trinitarian terms: 'Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name (God's own majestic name Yhwh), that (now) at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow (so the solemn oath of Isa. 45:23), to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:11). Not far away are the Johannine 'I am' statements, and the declarations that Christ has declared the name (17:26) and kept his disciples in the name (17:11-12).

The Holy Spirit of the Trinity and the Old Testament

The conviction that God in creation acts through the agency of his word or wisdom finds its way into Hellenistic Judaism and early Christian writers like Theophilus of Antioch and Athenagoras. The former can speak of wisdom and word as hands of God (the means by which the 'let us' of God, Wisdom, and Word created humankind, as against creation by the word alone, 2.18). Less clear however is the relationship between Wisdom and Spirit. Ps. 33:6 (LXX 32:6) can be cited in such a way that its word and spirit refer to word and wisdom, but at other places this is left unstated. *Targum Neofiti* (difficult to date specifically) also provides Gen. 1:1-2 with a creation through wisdom and word. The fact that spirit is mentioned in verse 2 is not specifically correlated with this.

In these cases the confusion exists because of the way in which the various texts (Proverbs 8, Genesis 1, Psalms) when combined do not create a single or overly uniform account. So we can find Theophilus simply providing a kind of catalogue of titles which

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sum up the pre-existent agencies who operate with God, bringing about creation of the world and in time inspiring the prophets.

Therefore God, having his own Logos innate in his own bowels (*cf.* Ps. 109:3), generated him together with his own Sophia, vomiting him forth (Ps. 44:2) before everything else. He used this Logos as his servant in the things created by him, and through him he made all things (*cf.* Jn 1:3). He is called beginning because he leads and dominates everything fashioned through him. It was he, *Spirit of God* (Gen. 1:2) and *Beginning* (Gen 1:1) and *Sophia* (Prov. 8:22) and *Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35), who came down into all the prophets and spoke through them about the creation of the world and all the rest (*cf. Ad Autolyicum* 2,9). For the prophets did not exist when the world came into existence;

(p. 37) there were the Sophia of God which is in him and his holy Logos who is always present with him. For this reason he speaks thus through Solomon the prophet (citing Proverbs 8). And Moses, who lived many years before Solomon—or rather, the Logos of God speaking through him as an instrument—says, ‘In the Beginning God created the heaven and earth’ (*Ad Autolyicum* 2,10 (Grant 1970)).

Proverbs 8 can refer to either Word or Wisdom/Spirit in some of the earliest Christian accounts, including Irenaeus as well. In *Adversus Haereses* IV,20,3 the Word was always with the Father as well as the Spirit, in this instance declaring that the wisdom referred to in Proverbs 8 is the Spirit, not the Logos. In Athenagoras (*Legatio* 10.4) it appears that the reference to the Spirit in connection with Proverbs 8 means that agent of inspiration who clarifies that the referent of 8:22 is the Word (Schoedel 1972). Only with Clement and Origen do we begin getting a consistent referent for Prov. 8:22 as the Word, where ‘Beginning’ is a virtual title for Christ (Young 2003: 105).

Of course we are on very different ground when it comes to the Holy Spirit than we are with the question of Jesus Christ and the Holy One of Israel within a Trinity in the Old Testament. This is because the Holy Spirit is an agent in his own right in the Old Testament, even with allowance for the distinction between spirit/wind and the more specific third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is active in both testaments, inspiring Israel, as with David's psalmic compositions (‘the Spirit of the Lord speaks by me’, 2 Sam. 23:2) or Zechariah's thanksgiving or Elizabeth's confession (‘his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit’ or ‘Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit’, Lk. 1:41, 67). The idea of the Spirit of God inspiring prophets, priests, sages, judges, hymn-writers, and singers is ingredient in how divine action is understood. What takes time is understanding the Spirit of the Lord as his own person, and as we have seen, this happens in conjunction with the way in which God's activity in creation is comprehended in respect of the Word of God, in Jewish and Christian circles. The specifically Christian challenge is one of relating this Logos of God with God and the Holy Spirit both. Only in time will the language of generation and procession emerge, and the technical discussion will not govern and control all Christian talk at this point, just as matters of the Holy Spirit's procession will divide the East and the West. Some of the challenge, as relevant for our purpose, comes from handling the letter of two testaments carefully and knowing exactly how to relate the work of the Spirit (‘who spake by the prophets’) with the Pentecostal gifting it-

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self. Luther fought on two fronts at this point, challenging an account of the Spirit which located his work in the councils of the Church, on the one hand; and the other which saw the Spirit as a special gift only available this side of Pentecost and independent of an account of the Church or Israel at all. The independence of the Holy Spirit at work in the Old Covenant assured his integrity as a Person of the Trinity. David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was gifted to see the inner Trinitarian life, as the Holy Spirit showed him the Father and the Son in beloved dialogue before the day of Pentecost or the councils of the Church (Helmer 2002).

The Old Testament shows the Holy Spirit to be that Person of the Trinity whose sole agency is to point away from himself and to the God who is the source of creation and inspiration. He is the person whose activity is deferential. He is that 'hand of God' from (p. 38) the 'let us' of Gen. 1:26 whose sole divine vocation is to place Israel's and the Church's hand in the hand of their Lord. When in Psalm 2 or Psalm 110 we get direct speech from God to David; or when in Proverbs 8 we hear of God's 'Beginning of ways'; in all cases it is the Spirit with the divine warrant to reveal the inner life of God's own self, who says to His beloved Son 'today I have begotten you'; or 'sit at my right hand'; or 'the LORD made me Beginning of his ways'. This spirit who spake by the prophets is the Holy Spirit of Christian Trinitarian conviction, proceeding from God, alongside the Word, 'who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified'.

Several key NT passages also indicate that the Spirit of Israel's Lord is now in identification with Jesus Christ. In 2 Cor. 3:16 the unveiled turning to the Lord bespeaks Moses' unveiled beholding of God's glory in the Old Covenant (Exodus 34:34), and Paul calls this beholding an acknowledgement of the Spirit: the Lord is the Spirit. Turning to Yhwh is a turning to the Spirit of the Father (to use the language of Trinitarian differentiation). This beholding in the New Covenant is a beholding enabled by Christ, and of Christ, also 'the Lord'. Paul uses *kyrios* to identify the Spirit Lordship of the Father and the Son. 'Read canonically, then, the full unity of God as expressed through his name *kyrios* is that of the Father, Son, and Spirit: the *kyrios heis* (one Lord) of Deut. 6:4 is in the New Testament differentiated into *kyrios pater* (Father), *kyrios iesous* (Son), and *kyrios pneuma* (Spirit). Thus the oneness and unity of God is not impaired but dynamically upheld through the use of his name *kyrios* for the Father, Son and Spirit, the One Lord God' (Rowe 2002: 304). A similar move is at work in Gal. 4:4-6, where God's sending forth of his Son is paired with the sending forth the Spirit of the Son, a sending forth which enables us to cry out 'Father'. And in Rom. 8:9-11 the explicit movement back and forth of referents to the Spirit ('The Spirit' in 8:9a; 'Spirit of God the Father' in 8:9b, 'Spirit of Christ' (8:9c and 10), and 'Spirit of God the Father' in 8:11) means that the Spirit of the God of Israel now differentiates in One Lord, in three persons (see also Rowe 2002, and compare Soulen 1999).

Conclusions

The Trinity in the Old Testament is not an invitation to search for threesomes in the scriptures of Israel, but instead is tied up with a proper understanding and confession about how the literal sense speaks of its divine referent. It is important to observe how the discussions of the Trinity in the Early Church are relentlessly exegetical in nature, and indeed must be: Yhwh, the Holy One of Israel, is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit not because such was required for a proper estimate of Jesus Christ as God or the Spirit as God, but because this was held to be what the literal sense of the Old Testament required when its deliverances were properly grasped, in the light of Christ, as conveyed by the Holy Spirit. Later creedal formulations are the scriptures of Israel and the New Testament accordances 'coming to boil'. Luther was right to argue that (p. 39) any account of the Trinity must be based on a proper understanding of the semantics of Old Testament sense-making, and not be conceived either as later historical developments or located in the Church's authority to see something, and so warranting the Trinitarian talk from within its own sense-making. The Holy Spirit 'spoke by the prophets' and so revealed from the Old Testament the majesty of Yhwh, the Lord, upholding this majesty and showing it to be properly understood as a Trinity of Persons in One God.

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Christopher Seitz

The Trinity in the Old Testament

Christopher Seitz is Research Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto. He is the author of numerous books on Isaiah, the Book of the Twelve, prophecy, and Old and New Testament method and hermeneutics.

The Trinity in the Letters of St Paul and Hebrews

C. Kavin Rowe

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the concept of Trinity in the Book of Hebrews and Pauline epistles in the New Testament. Rather than seeking “proof-texts” or studying the implications of particular words as applied to Jesus, this article suggests that the narrative fabric of the books sets forth an idiom, a grammar, or logic, that can only be rightly interpreted through Trinitarian conceptions. It suggests that attending carefully to the linguistic pattern of the texts' speech about God requires us to look behind the actual arguments of the texts to the theological judgements that make such language possible and that the sense that the New Testament language makes depends upon a larger pattern of theological judgements.

Keywords: Trinity, Book of Hebrews, Pauline epistles, New Testament, Jesus, narrative fabric, linguistic pattern, God, theological judgements

About this we have much to say that is hard to explain

(Heb. 5:11)

Prolegomena

AS we know from ancient biblical manuscript evidence, Hebrews frequently circulated with the rest of the *corpus Paulinum* and was considered the fourteenth of Paul's letters. Indeed, even our earliest attested form of the Pauline letters includes Hebrews (P⁴⁶). This did not, however, prevent ancient scholars from expressing serious reservations or outright doubts about the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. Tertullian, to mention a prominent example, believed the author was Barnabas. Origen was less sanguine: about the author of Hebrews, he said, ‘only God knows’.

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Today it is safe to say that most scholars would agree with the ancient sceptics against the view of authorship implied by the manuscript tradition and accepted by Jerome and Augustine (among many others). Though there is hardly a consensus about the identity of Hebrews' author—the suggestions are many and varied (Barnabas, Apollos, Silas, Priscilla, etc.)—it would be exceedingly difficult to find a modern New Testament scholar who would argue for the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. Indeed, it would be only slightly less difficult to find academics in the mainstream of New Testament scholarship who would argue for the Pauline authorship of all thirteen of the Pauline epistles. From a typical New Testament scholar's perspective, therefore, grouping these fourteen texts together is likely to seem artificial.

Hermeneutically considered, however, a modern judgement of this kind is in fact no more than the concrete evidence of privileging a certain kind of interpretive commitment over others, the kind that believes that the New Testament texts should be arranged (p. 42) according to authorship (as it is critically reconstructed). But, as everyone knows, plenteous other schemata are on offer. We could, for example, organize the texts according to the drift of their reception history, their canonical order, their genre, their similarity in patterns of thought, and so on. In each case, the ordering of the texts would result from a particular hermeneutical posture vis-à-vis the canonical witness and would require—no less than presuppose—theological justification for its adoption. In the case of this article, the justification is rather simple: grouping Hebrews together with Paul allows us to inhabit a particular stream of Christian reflection on the biblical texts as a way to direct our attention to certain theologically productive modes of reading that have by and large been forgotten in the modern period.

Yet we would be mistaken were we to think that a Pauline/Hebrews organization in particular would facilitate a more Trinitarian reading than any other, or help us to draw more clearly the lines between Scripture and its dogmatic explication. The reason, of course, is that the doctrine of the Trinity is not based upon a particular ordering of only a few biblical texts. It is instead the antecedent theological logic of the Christian canon as a whole. Offering an ultimate justification for grouping all the letters attributed to Paul together with Hebrews is therefore not only unnecessary but, strictly speaking, impossible in an article focused on the connection between these texts and the doctrine of the Trinity. The working procedure herein is instead no more complicated than seeing how the Trinitarian framework helps us to read well the language about God in these texts. Methodologically considered, however, such a statement could point in any number of different directions, and we must therefore elucidate its intent for this particular article.

Approach

Taking Trinitarian doctrine as the hermeneutical lens through which we consider Paul's letters and Hebrews entails the following points as basic corollaries to the more fundamental shape of the enquiry:

(1) The texts considered below are not to be read as evidence of 'proof-texting' in the manner of the old *dicta probantia/classica*. Despite the disdain of modern critics, it is true that we can still learn much from this older way of reading Scripture. For example, we always have particular schemata that help to structure our reading of Scripture; we cannot think, that is, without ordering thought. The schemata of the *dicta classica* are clear—above board, so to speak—whereas those of contemporary New Testament scholars are frequently hidden behind false and illusory notions of an exegesis that prescind from larger doctrinal commitments. Paying attention to an overt schema should help us to become more aware of the way in which the order of our thought already directs our exegetical attention in certain ways rather than others.

(p. 43) Still, it is hard to deny that the manner by which these compendia remove particular words or phrases from their more immediate scriptural contexts ignores hermeneutically what is *prima facie* one of the most striking aspects of holy Scripture itself, namely, that it is has discrete literary units ('books'). Put more directly: the methodological moves of the older proof-texting approach occlude the theological significance of the surface shape of Scripture. If modern biblical studies has anything crucial to teach us in this respect, it is that engagement with the literary texture of Scripture's surface forms a critical part of fruitful interpretation in our own time.

(2) The texts considered below are also not focused interpretively by 'predication'. To put it bluntly, for many interpreters of Scripture, modern biblical criticism destroyed the possibility of taking the *dicta probantia* seriously as a way to conceive constructively the relation between Scripture and the Church's doctrinal teaching. They therefore sought other methods by which to connect the Bible with doctrinal explication. Prominent among these was a mode of reading whereby the New Testament was explored for passages in which, for example, the word *theos* (God) was predicated of Jesus (e.g. Jn 1:1, 18, Rom. 9:5, etc.). Because of their immediate relevance to what it would mean to think of Jesus as divine, these texts were thought to help fund materially the doctrine of the Trinity.

There is doubtless much to learn from the collection of such passages, but the problem remains that the exegetical procedure is still vulnerable to the critique of more sceptical scholars who see this approach as the residue of an older method of reading Scripture that extracted small amounts of texts for a predetermined outcome. Attending more carefully to the immediate context of these statements, so it was argued, disclosed not so much the prefiguration of later doctrinal truths as it did a complex set of exegetical ambiguities (e.g. the significance of the anarthrous use of *theos* in Jn 1:1 for the *Logos*). In short, though the predication approach helped to direct our attention to striking features

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of the scriptural texts, it remained within the ambit of a kind of exegesis that was unable to deal with the vast amounts of biblical material that would obviously not fit inside the range of texts generated by the methodology. It therefore furthered rather than countered the impression created by the older proof-texting model of reading, namely, that the Bible and Christian doctrine could only be related artificially through some version of an externally imposed schema.

(3) The texts considered below are not examined through a lens ground by a (re)construction of a particular historical trajectory: a kind of reading structured by the question of ‘how we got here from there’, or focused on the way in which Scripture raised theological issues that could only be settled after decades of rigorous doctrinal reflection. In more recent history—after the rise of the so-called ‘historical consciousness’—this approach has been rather common. All treatments of the development of doctrine, whether of a more liberal (e.g. Adolf Harnack) or more traditional (e.g. Alister McGrath) leaning, presuppose the theological importance of attending to the linear dimension of history and move from the biblical texts to the later creedal formulations.

(p. 44) Accounts of the relation between Scripture and the dogmatic tradition that are shaped by a conception of a historical trajectory that begins in Scripture and moves toward the creeds are particularly important. This importance is tied not only to the fact that such accounts take seriously the historical shape of our noetic boundaries but also because they can be read—whether their author intends it or not—as attempts to foreground the economy of God's self-revelation. By attending carefully to the linear dimension of doctrine, studies premised on the significance of historical trajectory correspond to the epistemic priority of the economic Trinity and help us to (re)trace the path of theological knowledge from the economic to the immanent reality of God.

(4) Instead of the three reading strategies just described, the approach in this article takes shape from the three primary considerations:

First, the theological grammar in the New Testament presupposes certain basic judgements about the identity of God. The particular grammatical moves of the texts could not be made, that is, unless larger theological judgements have been made that allow these linguistic possibilities. Put thetically: the New Testament speech could not have taken shape in precisely this way unless X or Y is true about God. This ‘unless’ then requires explication in a theological idiom.

Second, the development of the doctrine of the Trinity was the explication of this ‘unless’, the unpacking of the internal theological logic behind the particular form of Scripture's grammar. In part, of course, this is what it means to say that the immanent Trinity is ontologically prior to the economic (whereas the economic is epistemically prior to the immanent). But it is also what it means to say that Trinitarian doctrine is the lens through which we can rightly perceive the particular form of Scripture's speaking about the identity of the God who has revealed himself there. To employ a Trinitarian framework to read Scripture, therefore, is hardly to impose an artificial schema upon the New Testament. It is instead to reason inside the theologi-

cal patterns required to understand the language used to speak about God in the texts.

Third, precisely because the doctrine of the Trinity is the true reception of Scripture's particular way of speaking about the identity of the Christian God, it also constitutes an otherwise unavailable form of exegetical perception. Thinking in Trinitarian patterns does not obfuscate the specificity of argument in, for example, Romans or 1 Corinthians—turning it into, say, an actual argument about the Trinity—but rather interprets the particular language about God within the horizon of that language's subject matter (*res*). In this way, Trinitarian reasoning enables us better to understand the deep and theologically essential connection between the specific language of Scripture and the God who—always and antecedently—speaks it forth.

(p. 45) **Hebrews and the Pauline Letters**

Given the amount of material involved in treating Hebrews and Paul, we obviously cannot aspire to comprehensiveness. What we can do, however, is to select strategically important passages that have substantial bearing not only on our reading of the larger text under discussion (e.g. Hebrews 1 is important rhetorically for the whole of the letter) but also on our more central question. In so doing, we shall by and large omit discussion of the protracted exegetical debates that surround virtually every verse of these texts and shall instead simply display our readings of the selected passages on the way to a more synthetic judgement.

Hebrews

Hebrews is a complex text whose basic theological grammar exhibits many and various substantive connections to the doctrine of the Trinity. Because it would be impossible to canvas the entire letter, we must restrict our enquiry to particularly striking features of these connections. The opening two chapters of the letter relate directly to our central concern, and we shall therefore focus our attention there (though let it be noted that what can be said here about Hebrews applies elsewhere in the letter).

If Hebrews' theology has been thought to be 'supersessionist'—a judgement that is in need of serious rethinking—it cannot be on account of its doctrine of God. Indeed, the first verse of chapter 1 immediately and clearly identifies the God about whom Hebrews speaks as the God of Israel, the one who 'spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets' (Heb. 1:1). This is not a new God, a divine figure other than the Jewish God, the one who brooks no rivals, whose identity is bound together with his uniqueness, and whose demand for worship is therefore total and exclusive. Indeed, the opening of the letter both states and assumes that the *theos* of Hebrews is in no way anything other than the Old Testament God.

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This point is important to grasp clearly because immediately the letter begins to render more complex the identity of just that God by extending the range of language by which we could rightly speak of him: 'But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed as the heir of all things, and through whom he also made the ages' (Heb. 1:2). Over against the notion that the Son is a divine figure to be contrasted with God, Hebrews immediately speaks of their interrelation. The Son is the 'radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his nature' (Heb. 1:3). To put it in contemporary language, the Son is not other than God but is in fact God expressed or externalized—embodied, as we will shortly see—in relation to the world. That the Son is not fundamentally other than God is immediately made explicit by the citation of Psalm 44 in which the address to God (*ho theos*) is extended to include the Son: 'But of the Son he (God) says, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever"' (Ps. 44:7, LXX). The (p. 46) theological judgement underlying this hermeneutical move is rather clear: the Son is none other than the God of whom the Psalm speaks.

It is generally well known that in the Old Testament the creative and ordering power of the God of Israel was frequently rendered with metaphorical dexterity—spoken of as Word or Wisdom as, for example, in Prov. 8:22—and that this way of speaking of God's relation to the world became quite common around the time of the New Testament. Hebrews may well owe much to this way of thinking about God, but the letter also moves in a profoundly new direction, namely, that 'the Son' is not at all to be understood in a purely noetic sense. The Son of Hebrews, that is, is not a metaphorical way of speaking about God's mediated relation to the world, a kind of grammatical holding place that gestures toward the fact that the true, high God could never come directly into contact with the material realm. Indeed, Hebrews is resolute in affirming the Son's human life. The Son we hear of as *theos* in Heb. 1:8 is none other than the Jesus we hear of in Heb. 2:9: 'But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one'. That the suffering and death was that of a real human, moreover, is made clear on page after page of the letter. Jesus the Son partook of the 'same nature' that other human beings have—that is, flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14)—and he was tempted in precisely the same way that other humans are (which is why he is able to aid them in their temptations; Heb. 2:18; cf. 4:15). He was the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God' (Heb. 12:2).

It is this human life of the Son to which the statements in Heb. 1:5–6 make reference:

For to which one of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'? Or again, 'I will be a Father to him and he will be a Son to me'? And when he brought the Firstborn into the life of the world (*oikoumenē*), he says, 'Let all the angels of God worship him'.

Heb. 1:5–6 does not deny, that is, that the Son is eternally *theos* but instead speaks from the perspective of post-resurrection knowledge about the entrance of the Son into the life

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of the world in the person of Jesus. The 'begetting' of the Son, that is, does not point to the *creation* of the Son but to the beginning of his human life in the human realm, or *oikoumenē* (or perhaps, if the author of Hebrews indeed knows the traditions surrounding Jesus' baptism, it speaks of the beginning of Jesus' ministry). Even in his earthly life the 'Firstborn'—a reference to Jesus' resurrection from the dead, not his creation (cf. Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 1:5)—can be worshipped by the angels. In short, the figure of Jesus is the Son whom God is—both in himself and in his creating and redeeming relation to the world.

That the Son is internal to the identity of God is at bottom what differentiates him from the angels. Modern readers might be perplexed by the amount of energy the author of Hebrews expends to distinguish the Son from the angels. But in fact, as Athanasius saw so clearly in his own way in the fourth century, the question that lies behind such a focus goes to the heart of God's identity. If God is the God of Israel, and if God's Son is (p. 47) Jesus the human being, why then—a good Jewish theologian should ask—can the Son be worshipped? How is this worship of the Son not idolatry? Is this not an affront to the one and only true God? Hebrews' way of navigating this basic question is through a grammar of contrast: Jesus should not be conceived as, or in analogy to, an angel.

Hebrews develops this contrast already in the opening of the letter: the Son has become 'as much superior to the angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs' (Heb. 1:4). The contrast is then deepened by citing a variety of Old Testament texts, all of which are intended to emphasize the difference between the Son and the angels: 'Of the angels [God] says, "Who makes his angels winds and his servants flames of fire". But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever" '; and, later, 'But to which one of the angels has he said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet". Are not all [the angels] ministering spirits who are sent forth to serve those who will inherit salvation' (Heb. 1:13-14; cf. 1:5-6). Thus it is no less than God himself who declares through Scripture the Son's superiority to the angels. And yet—in view of the use of Ps. 44:7 in Heb. 1:8—it would be more precise to say that God declares his own superiority to the angels in the person of the Son. God does not, that is, declare the superiority of something other than God but speaks of himself as *theos* in the figure of Jesus the Son. As the text of Hebrews would have it, 'Son' is thus internal to the meaning of 'God'.

Still, in the theology of Hebrews 'God' is not collapsed into 'Son' or 'Jesus' any more than it excludes them. That is to say, 'God' is sufficiently relational in its meaning to require of the reader nimbleness in thought, a movement between selfsameness and difference. To put it in the terms of Hebrews, the Son can both be called *theos* and 'have' a *theos*. In the very same citation of Psalm 44 where the Son is clearly called 'God', to take only the most striking example, we learn that 'God' is not reducible to the Son. Addressing the Son, Heb. 1:8-9 continues, 'You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; for this reason God, *your God*, has anointed you' (cf. the expressions in Heb. 1:3; 2:17; 10:12; 12:2;

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13:20, etc.). Even within one citation, therefore, 'God' (*theos*) is both the Son and yet not reducible to the Son.

Or again, if we ask who the *kyrios* is in Hebrews, 'the Lord' is both Jesus the human being and the God of the Old Testament. Not only does Heb. 7:14 speak of Jesus clearly as 'the Lord' who was descended from Judah (*cf.* Heb. 13:20), in Heb. 1:10–12 it is no less than God himself who addresses the Son as 'Lord' through an Old Testament text in which *kyrios* originally referred to the God of Israel: 'You, O Lord [*kyrie*], did found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands' (Ps. 101:25ff., LXX). Yet in the citation of Ps. 110:4 in Heb. 7:21 and elsewhere 'the Lord' is clearly the God of Israel. In Heb. 8:8, for example, Jeremiah 31 is cited with the characteristic 'says the Lord', which plainly refers to God. Were we to attempt to assign one meaning of *kyrios* to Jesus and another to God, we would have already dismantled the language through which Hebrews presents God/the Lord and, therefore, moved away from the theological pattern created by Hebrews' continuous attempt to speak of the Old Testament God and of Jesus together.

(p. 48) Hebrews mentions the Holy Spirit only seven times (Heb. 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8, 14; 10:15, 29). Yet it does so in a way that makes clear the relational determination of the Spirit's identity. Speaking of the nature of salvation, the author of Hebrews says, 'It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will' (Heb. 2:3–4). Here the Spirit is explicitly described as God's Spirit—the Spirit's gifts are distributed according to God's will—and tied to the salvific life of Jesus (the Lord). To speak of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is also to speak of God and of the Lord Jesus (*cf.* the context in Heb. 6:4 and 10:29).

Moreover, the Holy Spirit cannot be reduced to a simple metaphorical way to speak about God's presence, as if using Spirit language were but another way to speak of God's immanence. The Spirit in Hebrews is rather the one through whom Christ offered himself to God. As the author argues *a minore ad maius*: 'For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ—who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God—purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God' (Heb. 9:13–14). Or again, Hebrews clearly portrays God as the one who provides the voice of Scripture, but no less do we find the Spirit performing the same task—indeed, with the same basic scriptural text:

And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds', he then adds, 'I will remember their sins and misdeeds no more'. (Heb. 10:15–17, citing Jer. 31:33–4; *cf.* the speech of the Holy Spirit in Heb. 3:7)

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As will be obvious to any reader, the letter to the Hebrews employs a highly complex theological grammar primarily because Hebrews speaks of God in ways that simultaneously maintain and extend the discourse of the Old Testament. 'God' is none other than the God of the Old Testament, and yet this God is described also in relation to a human Son that is internal to his eternal identity—Jesus the Christ—and in relation to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, in its defence of the propriety of Jesus worship (esp. chs. 1–2), Hebrews reveals a sense of the profound questions that surround its extension of the Old Testament's theological discourse to a 'flesh and blood' human being. To speak of the Old Testament *theos* and Jesus *anthropos* together (Ps. 44:7; Heb. 1:8) is already to effect a dramatic revaluation of both terms. And to tie inextricably the Spirit of God to the self-offering of Jesus is yet again to revalue the meaning of Holy Spirit.

Hebrews does not itself so much articulate this revaluation as presuppose it. Later doctrinal language—Trinitarian reasoning, to be precise—developed the interconnection between the relation of the terms that Hebrews presupposes for its particular theological grammar. Hebrews' grammar, that is, becomes intelligible in light of a larger linguistic range that allows one to say God and Jesus and Spirit together. In this way, Trinitarian doctrine explicates the intelligibility of the particular theological language (p. 49) of Hebrews no less than it creates an exegetical perception of 'God' in the text itself.

Pauline Epistles

As New Testament scholars have long emphasized, the letters by or attributed to the Apostle Paul are occasional documents. They are not systematic treatises aimed at the elucidation of the whole of the Christian faith. They are—with only one real possible exception (Romans)—written as 'words on target', pastoral responses to the particular problems and questions of early Christian congregations. Because of their character, it is an entirely unexceptional fact that the Pauline texts do not contain long discourses on the nature of God, person of Christ, and so forth. This is exactly what one would expect in occasional, pastorally-targeted letters. However, it does not follow from the absence of such direct discourse that one can understand Paul quite apart from thinking through the theological judgements that form the possibility of several of his particular formulations. Indeed, to attend carefully to the grammar of the occasion is immediately to perceive the larger syntax in which the theological logic of such particular formulations is made possible. With respect to the view of God found in the Pauline epistles, Trinitarian reflection is the larger theological syntax that illumines and—ultimately—renders intelligible Paul's particular grammatical moves.

Obviously the Pauline corpus is too vast to survey in this article. We shall therefore select only four instances from across the corpus that will serve to establish paradigmatically the theological point of view from which the identity of God should be seen when thinking through the witness of the Pauline letters. These four instances are not chosen, however, because they are unusual (and therefore particularly interesting to academics) but pre-

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cisely because they are typical of the theological grammar of the Pauline corpus as a whole (and therefore all the more important).

1 Corinthians 12

In chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians Paul begins to admonish the Corinthians for their misunderstanding of the importance of spiritual gifts. The Church in Corinth, it is well known, had an abundance of those who spoke in tongues, prophesied, and so forth. The question thus arose as to how the manifestation of the true (Holy) Spirit should be differentiated from its counterfeits ('spirits'). Paul instructs the Corinthians: 'I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Jesus be damned!"; and, no one can say "Jesus is Lord!" except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3).

What is initially intriguing about Paul's argument is that it does not argue for discerning the true Spirit by giving the Corinthians an extensive check-list of things that the Holy Spirit would or would not do through the Corinthians (scream profanity incoherently, foam at the mouth, attack people, and so on). He names only one thing, though of course it has both a negative and positive side: the Spirit never testifies to the permanent death of Jesus but, entirely to the contrary, leads one to confess that Jesus is Lord.

(p. 50) At its deepest level, the argument is that to know the manifestation of the true Spirit is to know the relational determination of the Spirit's identity. Such determination is by God on the one hand and Jesus on the other: God's Spirit is the one who enables the confession that the Lord is Jesus. Paul does not, of course, specify the proper method by which to construe this relational identity in any overtly metaphysical way. But he does say rather clearly that the way to differentiate the true from the false is to see the connection of the Holy Spirit to God the Father and Jesus the Lord. The Spirit of God, that is, cannot be abstracted from Jesus Christ. As Paul will later say, the Corinthians are baptized by the Spirit into one body (which of course is Christ; 1 Cor. 12:12ff.). In 1 Cor. 12:4-6 this relational determination of God's identity is expressed in a neat parallelism:

There are varieties of gifts—but the same Spirit (*to auto pneuma*)

There are varieties of service—but the same Lord (*ho autos kyrios*)

There are varieties of working—but the same God (*ho autos theos*)

Again, Paul's argument is not actually *about* God's relational identity. It is about how to know the true Spirit and the proper place and worth of spiritual gifts in Christian community. Yet God's relational identity is the ground upon which this argument is constructed, which is to say that the Trinitarian pattern of speech is the linguistic fundament of Paul's particular appeals. One can, of course, conceive of other ways in which he could make the same argument. But that is to miss the point (as hypotheticals often do). The point is rather that when attempting to shape the communal life of the Corinthians vis-à-vis the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, Paul draws upon a theological language that positions the Holy Spirit in relation to the 'same Lord' and 'same God'.

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Of course, when 'Lord' refers to Jesus, to say 'same Lord' and 'same God' almost in the same breath is to speak idolatrous nonsense—unless the referents of the words 'Lord' and 'God' are to be understood in a noncompetitive manner. And, indeed, Paul's argument gives us no reason to suspect that Lord competes with God. It is rather the case that Paul's seamless theological grammar requires us to think in terms of a reciprocally determining identity between the Lord and God. Differently said, while in the Old Testament the question of competition between God and the Lord could never arise—the Lord was simply God, and vice versa—Paul's language extends the referent of 'the Lord' to include Jesus in such a way as to condition what we mean when we now say 'God'. In brief, Paul's argument presupposes a linguistic interconnection between God, Jesus the Lord, and the Holy Spirit such that to speak of one is necessarily to invoke or imply the others. As Paul himself puts it: no one can confess that Jesus is Lord except by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

To receive such speech—to understand the theological possibility of the grammar—is already to reason in a Trinitarian pattern of thought. In this way, Trinitarian reasoning articulates theologically the ground of the text's grammatical moves and really is, therefore, the deeper presupposition of the particular Pauline argument in 1 Corinthians 12. That this is not an isolated instance but constitutive of Pauline argumentation as a whole could be easily shown from a variety of texts (e.g. 1 Cor. 2:2-5; 2 Cor. 13:13(14); Gal. 3:1-5; Phil. 3:3, etc.). Due to the necessary brevity of our reflection, however, we shall illustrate the material continuity with 1 Corinthians 12 by three further examples, each one of (p. 51) which is selected from a major textual area in the Pauline corpus (the *Hauptbriefe*, the deutero-Pauline letters, and the Pastoral Epistles).

Romans 5

Turning first to Romans, we can see several different places where a Trinitarian pattern of speech is employed (e.g. chs. 3, 9-11, etc.). A rather striking instance occurs in Rom. 5:1-11, where Paul describes God's reconciling work. Commentators have long noticed that chapter 5 begins another major section in Paul's argument. Having established that justification occurs through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (chs. 1-4), Paul now begins to describe such justification as 'peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (5:1). Of course, for Paul, peace in its Christian sense is not opposed to suffering; indeed, suffering provides the occasion for Christian hope (5:2-3). And hope 'does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us' (5:5). God's love is not a fickle declaration that can be given and taken away again, but is displayed in the fact that Christ in fact 'died for us while we were yet sinners'. We can rejoice, therefore, 'in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation' (vv. 6-11).

Here Paul does not argue for the truth of a Trinitarian way of speaking about reconciliation and the form of Christian life it commends. Instead, as in 1 Corinthians 12 and elsewhere, Paul's hermeneutical moves presuppose a fundamentally Trinitarian pattern. The way to articulate reconciliation theologically, that is, includes a reference to God the Father (with whom we now have peace, whose love is given to us, etc.), the Lord Jesus

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Christ (through whom we have been given such gifts), and the Holy Spirit (through whom such gifts are spiritually efficacious, 'poured into our hearts'). What argumentative logic we can detect in this portion of Romans thus rests more basically upon the linguistic ability to speak of the reconciling act of 'God by the death of his Son' in relation to the Holy Spirit's work in forming Christian life. The entirety of Paul's language about reconciliation in Rom. 5:1–8 requires a Trinitarian grammar for its intelligibility.

Ephesians 4

The so-called deutero-Pauline epistles are no less indebted to a Trinitarian grammar for their theological language than are the Pauline letters proper. Ephesians 4, for example, in which Paul urges the Ephesians toward Christian unity, couches its plea in an appeal to the unity of God himself. The Ephesians should 'maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'; for 'there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all' (Eph. 4:3–6).

It is remarkable that, in an attempt to ground Christian unity—one faith, one baptism—in the unity of God, Paul's language moves seamlessly between 'one Spirit', 'one Lord', and 'one God'. The implication of such language is that the Spirit, Jesus the Lord, and God the Father constitute the unity of God that makes intelligible Paul's exhortation. To embody unity in the life of the Church is precisely to display the unity of the Spirit, Jesus the Lord, and God the Father.

(p. 52) But, once again, the argument at this point in Ephesians presupposes rather than argues for a Trinitarian pattern when speaking of the unity of God. Paul does not, that is, argue one way or another about how Jesus' identity as Lord does not threaten the Lord God the Father; it is simply assumed in the course of the chapter that the theologically proper way to admonish the Ephesians toward unity is to speak of the unity of God—and this with the language of Spirit, Jesus the Lord, and God the Father.

Titus 3

The short letter to Titus is striking for its focus on salvation (e.g. 1:3, 4; 2:10, 11, 13; 3:4, 5, 6). For the purposes of this essay the most important aspect of this focus can be seen through the fact that if one were to ask, 'who is the Saviour?' the theological grammar of Titus would require us to answer at once both God and Jesus. After first speaking of God in 1:4 as 'God our Saviour', the letter moves only a sentence later to speak of Jesus as 'our Saviour': 'Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour' (1:4). In 2:10 the reader hears again of 'God our Saviour' and then immediately learns—in the same Greek sentence—of the work of 'our Saviour Jesus Christ' (2:13). And in 3:4 God is 'our Saviour' just as in 3:6 it is Jesus Christ 'our Saviour': 'When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour' (vv. 4–6).

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Attending to the language of salvation in Titus thus discloses a necessity to speak of God the Father and Jesus Christ together in one breath as 'the Saviour'. So doing extends the Old Testament's soteriological language about the God of Israel to Jesus Christ. The 'Saviour God of Israel' (Isa. 45:15) has become God/Jesus Christ our Saviour. Moreover, at least in vv. 4–6, the connection between God the Saviour and Jesus Christ the Saviour is the Holy Spirit: the Spirit is the way in which God's loving and merciful good work in Jesus Christ is mediated to the Christian community.

As in the other New Testament examples above, the letter to Titus does not actually argue for the legitimacy of the new theological grammar. The legitimacy is rather presupposed. It is in fact the foundation upon which Titus explicates the various facets of salvation for its readers.

Taking Hebrews and the Pauline corpus together, we can discern several common themes that together emphasize toward the hermeneutical importance of Trinitarian reflection. First, as in all the texts of the New Testament, both the Pauline letters and Hebrews presuppose that the referent of the common noun 'God' is the God of the Old Testament. The letters' arguments and exhortations, that is, are not constructed on a general or amorphous theological basis but are instead the quite particular outworking of the God of Israel's salvific self-disclosure.

Second, the explicitly theological language employed in the passages considered above forms a single linguistic skein: to remove either 'Jesus Christ' or the 'Holy Spirit' or 'God' from the argument of the passage would not be simply to truncate the strength of the argument—as if Paul's argument in Romans 5 could proceed with reference to Jesus but not to the Spirit. It would rather be to dismantle the sense of the passage as a (p. 53) whole. The significance of such linguistic unity inheres in the fact that to speak of salvation and of the one who saves requires a theological grammar sufficiently supple to speak of a final unity of identity and act between three distinct 'persons'.

Third, as a whole Hebrews and the Pauline letters presuppose rather than argue for any specific Trinitarian judgements. Though it explicitly addresses the question of the worship of the Son, even Hebrews does not engage in a debate about exactly how a ubiquitous God could be localized in a particular human being, how Creator and creature could coexist in one life, how the Son of God could actually die, and so forth.

Such presupposition is significant precisely because it manifests a pattern of speaking that Trinitarian reasoning later uncovers. Or, to put it more precisely, the reciprocally interpreting and overlapping ways to speak truly about the one God of Israel constitute the theological ground of the biblical texts' linguistic freedom.

Conclusion

As this brief survey of Hebrews and Pauline texts suggests, attending carefully to the linguistic pattern of the texts' speech about God requires us to look behind the actual argu-

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ments of the texts to the theological judgements that make such language possible. To put it simply: the sense that the New Testament language makes depends upon a larger pattern of theological judgements that makes the sense. This larger theological pattern of sense-making is precisely what we call Trinitarian reasoning. To speak in the manner of Hebrews and the Pauline letters is already to presuppose a Trinitarian range of linguistic possibilities vis-à-vis the identity of God. In just this way, Trinitarian reasoning proves to be exegetically illuminating—indeed, the requisite theological language by which to receive Scripture's grammatical moves.

To be clear: such exegetical illumination occurs not because the conceptual apparatus of the author of Hebrews or the Pauline texts was outfitted with ideas that were still two or three centuries in the future. Finitude—in intellectual terms, the intractable historicity of our reflection—conditioned the authors of Scripture, as it does all human enquiry. It is rather because Trinitarian judgements about the identity of God underlie the intelligibility of the linguistic patterns of the texts. Trinitarian reasoning works on the level of what must be the case to make theological sense of the way Paul and Hebrews speak of the Old Testament God's salvific act in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Precisely for this reason, to read Scripture within a Trinitarian framework of theological understanding is to move within the deep theological pattern of thinking that Scripture itself requires.

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C. Kavin Rowe

C. Kavin Rowe is Associate Professor of New Testament at Duke University Divinity School. He was recently awarded a Lilly Faculty Fellowship, the Louisville Institute's Christian Faith and Life Grant, and the John Templeton Prize for Theological Promise.

The Trinity in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

Simon J. Gathercole

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Abstract and Keywords

This article analyzes the concept of Trinity in the synoptic gospels of the Books of Gospels and Acts in the New Testament. It points out that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is the one God of Israel, the Creator who chose Israel and promised to restore her to holiness. It explains that the synoptic Gospels include Jesus within the divine name and attribute to him the divine power of electing and forgiving, as well as pre-existence, although the synoptic Gospels also indicate that the Son receives everything from the Father. It argues that the particular focus of the Synoptics is that of the accomplishment of the Father's plan of redemption in the death and resurrection of the Son.

Keywords: Trinity, synoptic gospels, Gospels, Acts, New Testament, God, Father of Jesus Christ, God of Israel, divine name, redemption

1. Introduction

THE Gospels are narrative testimony to God's saving action in Christ, with the Synoptic Gospels focusing in particular on easter and eschatology. Given their loosely biographical character, they focus overwhelmingly on the person of Jesus, a proportion which will to a large extent be mirrored in the present chapter. If one were writing about the Trinity in Genesis, for example, one might well venture out from a different starting point and have a differently proportioned account. In the first place, then, we will begin with what is clear from the Synoptic Gospels about the person of the Son, and proceed from there to the Father and the Spirit. We will then use Acts to fill out further the discussion of the Spirit and his Trinitarian relations.

This chapter will approach the subject matter in a literary-theological manner, focusing on the ideas explicit or implicit in the four books under discussion here. There will be no diachronic discussion of any possible developments or evolutions which may have underlain the composition of the Gospels or Acts. Similarly, there will be no attention to any dis-

tinctions, real or imagined, between the theological outlooks of the Synoptic Gospels and of the historical Jesus.

It must be remembered that the present chapter is dealing with four fragments of the canonical witness. This pragmatic portioning of the material is of course to some extent artificial. Nevertheless, it is heuristically useful to identify what the particular books of the canon contribute to the doctrine of the Trinity; on the other hand, no book of the New Testament is an island complete in itself giving us Father, Son and Spirit 'consubstantial, coeternal, while unending ages run'. The present study aims to examine what continuities there are between Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts on the one hand, and later Trinitarian doctrine on the other.

(p. 56) **2. The One God of the *Shema***

That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the one God of Israel is both assumed and asserted throughout the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. Clear examples of this come in the references to the *Shema*, which begins: 'Hear, O Israel: YHWH our God, *YHWH is one*' (Deut. 6:4). Jesus' interlocutors allude to this *Shema*, recited twice-daily according to earliest Rabbinic tradition (*Mishnah Berakhot* 1.1-4.1; cf. 9.5; *Sotah* 7.1), in the forgiveness of sins controversy: 'who can forgive sins except God alone (*lit. "except God-the-one"*)?' (Mk 2:7/Lk. 5:21). The same language is used by Jesus himself in dialogue with the rich young ruler: 'No-one is good *except God-the-one*' (Mk 10:18/Lk. 18:19). The fact that the same language here is used by both Jesus and his opponents is reflected in a passage which thematizes the *Shema*:

One of the Scribes came and heard them debating. Seeing that Jesus had given them a good answer, the Scribe asked him, 'Which is the most important commandment of all?'

Jesus replied, 'The most important is: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." No other commandment is greater than these.'

And the Scribe said to him, 'Finely said, teacher. You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.'

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God'. (Mk 12:28-34a)

In his reference here to the *Shema*, Jesus does not break off at the end of Deut. 6:4, but passes from the monotheistic formula to its ethical reflex, namely absolute devotion to the one God: loyalties need not and must not be divided among a pantheon of deities. Instead,

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'you shall love YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength' (Deut. 6:5).

The significance of this is not merely for the unity of God, but also that references to this one God in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts carry with them the whole characterization of God in the Old Testament. This one God is the creator of all things, the God who established a covenant with Noah for the preservation of creation (Genesis 9) and with Abraham and his descendants for the blessing of the nations (Genesis 15). This God chose Israel, and redeemed her from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Thereafter, God gave the Torah, and even after Israel broke the Sinai covenant, God promised to restore her at the end of days. Along the way, we also find poetic expressions of the traditional, more abstract divine attributes of omnipotence (e.g. Job 42:1-2), omnipresence (e.g. Ps. 139:7-12), and omniscience (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:3; 2 Sam. 14:20). The book of Exodus additionally has two special 'self-identifications' of God:

And he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God ... (p. 57) And Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, '*I will be who I be*. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "*I will be has sent me to you*"'. (Exodus 3:6, 13-14)

And YHWH passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'YHWH, YHWH, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation'. (Exodus 34:6-7)

These various characterisations draw attention to God's nature, to his identity, and to his action. As such, discussion of 'divinity' in the New Testament should not be dealt with *in abstracto* but concretely in relation to the portrayal of YHWH, the one God of Israel.

3. The Divine Son

It is a happy circumstance that there has been something of a drift in the past generation of scholarship on the Gospels. This drift—it is probably not quite a shift—has consisted in a movement away from reading the Jesus of the Gospels as merely an *agent* of God or a human-messianic figure, and towards understanding him as a more clearly divine figure. Martin Hengel, in a blurb on the first edition of Larry Hurtado's *One God, One Lord*, even spoke of a 'new "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule"' responsible for this new direction (Hurtado 1988). Some of the most important work has been concerned with the evidence from the New Testament more widely, such as Bauckham's essay on the worship of Jesus in the book of Revelation and his and Hurtado's exegetical work on Paul, especially on 1 Cor. 8:6 and Phil. 2:6-11 (Bauckham 1981 and 2008; Hurtado 1988). These and other

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scholars, however, have also been responsible for reshaping current views of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts.

The humanity of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts is not in question. Matthew's Gospel begins by including Jesus in a genealogy with the titles 'Son of David, Son of Abraham' (Matt. 1:1); Jesus is hungry in Matt. 4:2 / Lk. 4:2, and so on. Also emphatic, however, is the way in which Jesus transcends the traditional gulf between God and humanity. We will sketch this through examination of three areas: Jesus' sharing the name of God, the actions of Jesus as uniquely divine actions, and the responses to Jesus as responses to God or claims to divine identity.

Jesus' Sharing the Name of God

One development introduced into New Testament Christology by Bauckham in particular has been a movement away from two previously competing ways of construing Christology. Traditionally, one might say that much Christological reflection has been concerned with defining how Jesus shares in the divine essence. New Testament (p. 58) scholars, however, have often accused such concerns as unhistorical metaphysical speculation. As a result, a good deal of twentieth-century exegesis focused more on *agency* or *function*, that is, on Jesus' execution of divine action at the expense of making claims about his *nature* (e.g. Cullmann 1963). Bauckham has emphasised as a third way (without pronouncing a plague on both the other houses) the category of 'identity' as a means of avoiding the Scylla of anachronistic philosophizing on the one hand and the Charybdis of low Christology on the other. Bauckham's discussion of this has principally been applied to Paul, Revelation, and Hebrews (Bauckham 2008) but it can equally be extended to the Synoptic Gospels (Gathercole 2006: 65–8). Jesus' sharing the *name* of YHWH is a good place to start because a name is so obviously concerned with identity.

(1) Matthew 28:19. One clear statement of Jesus sharing the divine name in the Synoptics is the great commission: 'Go, then, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. As is sometimes noted, the *name* here is singular even though it has three owners. Neither Father, Son, nor Spirit exhaust the divine identity; rather each shares it. The three alike are also the reference point of the ritual of baptism, and thus of the salvation and 'belonging' of the Christian.

(2) Matthew 7:22; 18:20. In two other places in Matthew we find not the collocation of the Father, Son, and Spirit, but rather the substitution of the name of YHWH with the name of Jesus. This is undoubtedly—to borrow language usually associated with atonement debates—not 'exclusive substitution' but 'inclusive substitution': in other words, it concerns not the removal of YHWH but the incorporation of Jesus. In these places, Jesus is again the fundamental reference point of particular Christian practices:

For wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.
(Matt. 18:20)

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On that day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast our demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' (Matt. 7:22)

In the first case, we encounter Jesus as the point of orientation for the whole gathering of the congregation: the Jewish tradition about gathering 'in the name of heaven' (*Mishnah Abot* 4.11) is taken in a Christological direction in Matthew. The same is true in the case of our second example above. The language of prophesying in the name of YHWH is familiar from Jeremiah (Jer. 11:21; 26:9; 27:15), and perhaps alludes even more strongly to the discussion of true and false prophecy in Deut. 18:18–20: the Sermon on the Mount envisages prophecy (even if in this instance it is not sound) as being uttered in the name of Jesus.

The Actions of Jesus as Uniquely Divine Actions

Of various activities of Jesus which could be noted (Gathercole 2006: 54–64, 71–2), two particularly striking examples will be discussed: election and forgiveness. (p. 59)

(1) Matthew 11:27 / Luke 10:22. In the first place, although it is rarely remarked upon, it would probably have evoked awe in the earliest readers of the Gospels to learn that Jesus was the one who exercised election in salvation. This is hinted at in the calling of the disciples, where the choice of twelve indicates a restoration or reconstitution of Israel (Mk 3:13 / Lk. 6:13). Similarly remarkable is the fact that the Son of Man has his own elect angels (Mk 13:27 / Matt. 24:31). The co-ordination of all things having been granted to the Son by the Father, with the Son then having power of election, makes it clear that this is no independent action of the Son; nevertheless, it is a clearly divine—and only divine—action. Following on from this (though only in Matthew) is the striking role which Jesus assigns himself in the construction of the eschatological people of God later on in the Gospel: 'I will build *my* church', he says (Matt. 16:18).

(2) Mark 2:1–10 et parr.; Luke 7:49. More commonly discussed as a divine prerogative is the forgiveness of sins: 'Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralysed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven"' (Mk 2:5). This statement is variously construed by some scholars as a priestly absolution or a prophetic declaration, but attempts to provide parallels of similar statements made by priests or prophets have not been successful. Rather, the Old Testament presupposes the exclusive role of God as 'forgiver': 'Who is a God like you, who forgives sin and passes over the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?' He does not stay angry forever but delights to show mercy. (Mic. 7:18) From post-biblical Jewish tradition, Hofius has adduced a parallel from *Midrash Psalms*, in which David says to God, 'No-one can forgive sins but you alone' (Hofius 2000: 40 n. 21). The implied Christology in Jesus' statement here may have been lost on some commentators, but it was not missed by Jesus' audience in this pericope. It is to this audience that we now turn.

The Responses to Jesus as Responses to Claims of Divine Identity

The rather cumbersome subtitle immediately above reflects the fact that the responses we are dealing with here are not homogeneous; in fact they are in a sense mirror images of one another, namely the responses of worship, and the accusations of blasphemy.

(1) *Mark 2:1–10 et parr.; Mark 14:63–4 et parr.* Picking up on the ‘healing of the paralytic’ incident, then, after Jesus’ pronouncement of forgiveness, we see the response of the scribes: ‘Why does this man speak this way? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins except God alone?’ (Mk 2:7; cf. Lk. 5:21). There are some charges of blasphemy in early Judaism which are not accusations of encroaching on divine territory (pronouncing the tetragrammaton, for example, in *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 7.5). (p. 60) Here in the Gospel incident, however, the response is clearly an accusation precisely of claiming to do what is proper to ‘God alone’. Similarly, in the trial scene, the accusation of blasphemy is most probably a response to Jesus’ claim to a heavenly throne (Mk 14:63–4).

(2) *Matt. 28:17; Lk. 24:52–3.* More positively, we can draw attention to incidents where Jesus evokes a response of devotion or even the worship that is due to the one God of Israel. At several points, we see actions indicating respect or reverence (e.g. Mk 1:40, 5:22, 10:17). At the very ends of Matthew and Luke, however, there is clearly more. Matthew has the disciples both doubting and worshipping (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) immediately prior to the great commission (Matt. 28:17)—this after Matthew has highlighted such worship as due to God alone (Matt. 4:10). After the ascension, Luke has an equally strong response from the disciples: in the first place, Luke also reserves the particular worship terminology (again, πρὸς τὸν θεόν) for what is due to God alone (cf. Acts 10:25–6). Secondly, the disciples’ worship of Jesus is paralleled with their praise to God: ‘And they worshipped him (Jesus), and went back to Jerusalem with great joy. And they went on blessing God continually in the temple’ (Lk. 24:52–3).

Pre-existence and its Limits

In some recent theology, pre-existence has not been regarded as integral to the Son’s divine identity. It is probable, however, that the Synoptic Gospels presuppose a Christology of pre-existence (Gathercole 2006). The strongest evidence for this is the collection of ‘I have come to ...’ sayings, which assume that Jesus’ entire life and ministry are the purpose of his earthly visit. This is evident in the similar Son of Man sayings in Lk. 19:10 (‘For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost’) and Mk 10:45 (‘For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’). Attempts to explain the ‘I have come ...’ formula against a prophetic or messianic background have not proven successful: the closest analogy is in the language used when angels move from the heavenly to the earthly sphere. It is particularly difficult to domesticate to the merely intra-cosmic domain a saying as dramatic as Lk. 12:49: ‘I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled’.

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Some more content is given to the doctrine of pre-existence in the Synoptics in Matthew's Gospel, in the cry of lament in Matt. 23:37: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her—how often have I longed to gather your children, as a bird gathers her chicks under her wings. Yet you have not been willing.' The 'how often have I longed' here seems to presuppose the activity of Jesus in the history of Israel, as—probably—in Jude 5 (where Jesus rescues the people from Egypt) and in 1 Corinthians 10, where Jesus as the rock accompanied the people (10:4) who nevertheless 'tested Christ' (10:9).

(p. 61) On the other hand, the idea of pre-existence is neither as prominent nor as extensively defined in the Synoptics as it is elsewhere. There is no sense of the Son as *Schöpfungsmittler*, 'mediator of/in creation', in the Synoptics, as is clear elsewhere. Jn 1:3, 1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:16, and Heb. 1:2 all clearly state that Christ is an agent with the Father in creation. Again, none of the Synoptic Gospels stresses the coeternity of Father and Son as does the Johannine tradition, where Jesus is 'with God in the beginning' (Jn 1:2) and assigned the status of 'Alpha and Omega', 'First and Last', 'Beginning and End' (Rev. 22:13; cf. 1:17; 2:8; and Isa. 44:6; 48:12). Nevertheless, reports of the absence of pre-existence in the Synoptics (often because they are being compared unfavourably with John's Gospel) are greatly exaggerated.

The Son and the Father

We must also note, however, that although Jesus is clearly presented as sharing the divine identity and divine prerogatives in the Synoptic Gospels, there is also an asymmetry between Father and Son. In Pauline studies, this has been noted in the case of Philippians 2, where every knee bows to and every tongue confesses Jesus 'to the glory of God the Father': there is an ultimacy in the glory of the Father before which the worship of Jesus is a theological penultimate. In the Synoptic Gospels, this finds something of an analogue in Matt. 11:27 and 28:18. Both of these statements appear, as we have seen, in the company of passages of unquestionably high Christology, while making explicit the submission of the Son to the Father:

All things have been committed to me by my Father. (Matt. 11:27)

Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.' (Matt. 28:18)

In the first case, Jesus goes on to speak of the exclusive mutual knowledge shared by Son and Father, and of the Son's authority in election; in the second, he has been worshipped in the preceding verse and proceeds to talk of his sharing the divine name in the following. Additionally, in each case, the grant from the Father is limitless—'all things', 'all authority'. There is clearly a distinction made, however, between the giver and the recipient: the Son is not—though here one is treading perhaps on *terra incerta*—in and of himself by intrinsic or self-generated power ruler of all. Rather, to borrow the language of Hebrews 1 also employed by the wicked tenants (Mk 12:7 et parr.), he is 'the heir'.

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The Incarnate Jesus and divine attributes

The Synoptic Gospels raise most pointedly the tension between Jesus' divine and human natures. It is of course often asked how a divine Jesus could be 'hungry' (Matt. 4:2). Still more difficult is the question of the ignorance of Jesus in Mk 13:32: 'No one knows about (p. 62) that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father'. If omniscience is an attribute so integral to God, how can Jesus still be divine?

Within the framework of the Synoptic Gospels, the purpose of God and the will of Jesus are two considerations which help to explain some of the difficulty. The development of the Son of Man theme in Mark's Gospel is a nice illustration of this (Gathercole 2004). Jesus demonstrates early on in Mark the supreme authority of the Son of Man—even over forgiveness and over Sabbath (Mk 2:10, 28). The Son of Man *willed*, however, not to *exercise* this authority in his earthly ministry: this is a result of the twin facts that—to move to the cluster of Son of Man sayings in the middle of Mark—it is necessary (def) that he suffer (8:31), and indeed that is his intention in coming (10:45). The divine necessity highlights the Father's purpose; that the Son of Man 'came not to be served but to serve' accentuates Jesus' own willed action coming to expression. In this case, the willed action is negative: it is a decision on the part of the Son not to impose his authority in the course of his earthly ministry. He has not come in this instance to judge, but to save. As a result, it is perhaps more easy to understand why Jesus does not avail himself of the knowledge of when he will come back to judge: it is of no relevance to his present ministry of seeking and saving the lost, and so he does not exercise his will-to-know.

This also helps to explain a *crux interpretum* in Acts: 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God *has made* (©poýgsem) this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2:36). It has been noted that while the verb might be open to referring to a confirmation or declaration of an existing reality, it perhaps is a stretch. How then can God's 'making' of Jesus to be Lord and Christ be taken as other than adoptionistic? The first point to note is that in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is explicitly designated as both Christ and Lord from the beginning (Lk. 2:11). On the other hand, as was evident from the Son of Man motif in Mark, Jesus was not *exercising* his full authority as Lord and Christ in his earthly ministry. There are at least two senses in which Luke is explicit about this. First, Jesus is from the pre-Easter point of view still in the future destined to 'enter into his glory' (Lk. 24:26; cf. 24:46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23). This 'entry into his glory' is of double-edged significance: it means that Jesus is not 'in glory' in his earthly ministry; on the other hand it means that it is properly *his* glory (cf. Matt. 25:31; Lk. 9:26, and in the transfiguration at Lk. 9:32). Another important aspect of Jesus' identity as Lord and Christ which is not yet in view in his earthly ministry is his role as giver of the Spirit, which is central to this pericope in Acts 2 (2:33, 38). Therefore the *appointment* at the resurrection in Acts 2 is genuine: Jesus was not appointed in his pre-Easter ministry as the Spirit-giving Lord of glory.

The episode in the Garden of Gethsemane is sometimes considered difficult because the issue is on the surface precisely with Jesus' 'will' (hœkgla) apparently being opposed to

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that of the Father (Mk 14:36 and parr.). Without wishing to attempt to eliminate the complexity here, this problem is partly mitigated by the fact that this same statement is Jesus' declaration that he *does* align his decision with that of the Father: 'not my will but yours be done'. However one defines Jesus' 'executive' moral faculty (it clearly does not correspond to what Jesus calls his *höekgla* here) (p. 63) which adjudicates between the internal desire and the external divine plan, that moral faculty of Jesus ultimately prefers the external divine will. This becomes even more marked when one compares Jesus on this point with the surrounding actors—the disciples whose spirits are willing but whose flesh is weak, as well as Judas and the others.

The Son and the Cross

The Synoptic Gospels in particular show pointedly the tension between the heavenly identity of the Son (highlighted in the transfiguration) and his death. Two problems in particular come to the surface here: first, the problem of the *death* of the divine Son, and second the apparent *separation* of the Father from the Son voiced in the cry of dereliction. It is here, however, that our knowledge is at its most fragmentary.

First, on the question of the sense in which the Son dies, there is no hint in the Synoptics or Acts that Jesus dies only in his human nature while some other aspect of his identity endures. Luke 23:43's 'Today you will be with me in paradise' has been used as evidence that the Son had a continued existence between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but this is probably to read it too woodenly. The evangelists retain the paradox, expressed in the killing of the Son in the parable of the wicked tenants, and in Peter's statement, 'you killed the author of life' (Acts 3:15). The evangelists leave it for later theologians to ask how Jesus can at the same time be the glorious Son of the Father already in his earthly ministry and yet be subject to death. Leaving the theoretical realm, in terms of what *happens* to make this death possible, again the *will* of Jesus as described in the Gospels perhaps gives a clue. The Son of Man 'gives his life' (Mk 10:45): as such, it might be said that the Son's divine will can even be exerted over his life. His freedom extends even over his own existence in the earthly sphere.

Secondly, on the cry of 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' the point at issue is what is meant by this mysterious dereliction: Father and Son, inseparable from eternity, appear divided (Matt. 27:46; Mk 15:34; cf. Ps. 22:1). Here our knowledge is even more limited, but three observations may be made. In the first place, we may observe that it is precisely in the single event of the Father's judgement and Jesus' death that their wills are perfectly aligned. Additionally, it is a persistent biblical theme that judgement is not unqualified separation, but rather God's withdrawal of his presence-to-bless. Finally, the judgement, expressed in the Father's turning from the Son, is not ultimate: the fact that Jesus quotes the opening words of Psalm 22, rather than expressing the separation in another manner, implies this, for the Psalm proceeds from despairing abandonment (Ps. 22:1-18) through hopeful pleading (Ps. 22:19-21) to praise for divine deliverance (Ps. 22:22-31). Jesus' cry of dereliction, then, while a final gasp expressing curse-bearing and judgement on our behalf, is at the same time also the first line of a drama culminating in

Jesus' vindication in the resurrection and triumphal accomplishment of the Father's redemptive plan: as Psalm 22 ends, 'For he has done it' (Ps. 22:31).

(p. 64) 4. The Identity and Character of the Father

It is perhaps remarkable that the Father is seldom given extensive characterization in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. On the other hand, we have already discussed the relation between Father and Son, and later will proceed to that of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Like the Son and the Spirit, the Father of course also shares the divine name in the baptismal formula in Matt. 28:19. This is unremarkable: it is not unknown for God to be referred to as Father in the Old Testament (Deut. 32:6; Ps. 89:26; Isa. 63:16; Jer. 3:4, 19; Mal. 1:6; 2:10). The *novum* in the New Testament, perhaps, is that the Father does not exhaust the divine identity. In the first instance the Father is unknowable, but he is made known by the Son: 'nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him' (Matt. 11:27b).

The Sermon on the Mount is perhaps the richest source in the Synoptic tradition for the actions of the Father. He dwells in heaven, and rules his creation in his providence, such that he controls the sun and the rain (Matt. 5:45), feeds birds (6:26), and clothes people (Matt. 6:30 / Lk. 12:28); he forgives (6:14), rewards (6:4), and gives good gifts (Matt. 7:11; 'the Holy Spirit', in Lk. 11:13). It is striking, although it perhaps should not be, how much the Sermon stresses the Father's *generosity*. Luke also twice refers to the gift of the Kingdom by the Father to his 'little flock' (Lk. 12:32; *cf.* 22:29). The love of the Father is thus strongly in evidence.

This love begins in the Gospel narrative as the love of the Father for the Son, expressed in declarations at the baptism ('You are my beloved Son'; Mk 1:11 / Lk. 3:22) and the transfiguration ('This is my beloved Son'; Mk 9:7 / Matt. 17:5). This is then extended to God's people, seen most graphically in the parable of the lost son (Lk. 15:11-32). As such, the divine plan accomplished by Jesus' death is no mere mechanical outworking of a purpose, but an expression of the love of the Father.

Finally, as in the rest of the New Testament, the end of all things is taken to be the glorification of the Father (*cf.* Rom. 15:8-9; 1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 1:6, 12; etc.). One of the goals of discipleship is that this happens in an indirect manner: 'let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven' (Matt. 5:16). Disciples are also instructed, however, to pray for it: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name' (Matt. 6:9 / Lk. 11:2). Acts 2:46-7 defines as characteristic of the earliest Christians that they broke bread together and praised God.

5. The Spirit and the Son

In treating the relationship between Spirit and Son, we begin with what one might call actions of the Spirit on the Son. Thereafter, we will continue to Jesus' role in sending the Spirit.

(p. 65) The Spirit and the conception of Jesus

The first expression of this relationship which we encounter is in the action of the Spirit in the virginal conception, as expounded by both Matthew and Luke. The two evangelists of the birth both share, interestingly, a curious neuter phrase—well reflected in the literalism of the King James Version's 'that which is conceived in her' (Matt. 1:20) and 'that holy thing which shall be born of thee' (Lk. 1:35). In addition to this, they share mention of the agency of the Spirit:

Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because *what is begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit* (Matt. 1:20b).

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Lk. 1:35)

What content can be given to the creed's 'conceived by the Holy Spirit'? Matthew's version emphasizes that the Spirit has, in effect, taken the place of the male role in conception ('begetting' in NT language is usually a man's responsibility). The same is also true implicitly in Luke, with the angel's testimony coming in response to Mary saying that she knows not a man. John Owen goes further, however, in theological reflection on this, in his insightful discussion of the Spirit's work in the sanctification of the human nature of Jesus at the conception (Trueman 2007: 94–5): the flow of Luke's statement is certainly open to this interpretation ('the *Holy Spirit* will come upon you ... therefore that *holy* thing').

In Luke's Gospel, the Spirit of prophecy then animates witnesses to the coming of Jesus, in the cry of Elizabeth (Lk. 1:41–2), in Zechariah's *Benedictus* (Lk. 1:67–79), Simeon's *Nunc dimittis* (Lk. 2:25–32), implicitly in the reaction of Anna (a prophetess, Lk. 2:36–8), and, *in utero*, John the Baptist (Lk. 1:41; *cf.* 1:15).

The Spirit and the ministry of Jesus

All the Synoptics, indeed all four Gospels (*cf.* Jn 1:33) observe that the Spirit alights upon Jesus at his baptism (Mk 1:10 / Matt. 3:16 / Lk. 3:22). Immediately after the baptism, the language of the Spirit's agency is striking: in Mark the Spirit drives Jesus out into the wilderness (Mk 1:12). Matthew and Luke temper this only slightly, speaking of the Spirit 'leading' Jesus there (Matt. 4:1; Lk. 4:1).

Luke's Gospel in particular comments upon Jesus' activity in the Spirit in his ministry, with the quotation of Isaiah 61 in Lk. 4:18, and the reference to Jesus' speaking by the

Holy Spirit in Lk. 10:21. Matthew, similarly, writes in terms of the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit by the Father leading to Jesus preaching justice to the nations and casting out demons (12:18, 28). This is not developed especially in any of the Synoptic Gospels, however; rather they look forward to Jesus baptizing in the Spirit in the post-resurrection era (Mk 1:8 and parr.): similarly, we probably do not find in the Synoptics and Acts the agency of the Spirit in the resurrection (*cf.* Rom. 1:4; 8:11; 2 Tim. 3:16).

(p. 66) **6. The Mission of the Spirit**

Despite the actions of the Spirit above *upon* Jesus, the emphasis in the Gospels and Acts is upon the agency of Jesus in sending the Spirit. As has been noted, the main imagery deployed to depict this in the Gospels is 'baptizing in the Spirit', although 'clothing' language is introduced at the end of Luke, in anticipation of the 'power from on high' to be given at the beginning of the second volume (Lk. 24:49). It is notable that here we have the first hint of double agency in the sending of the Spirit: 'I will send upon you what has been promised by my *Father*'.

The Acts of the Apostles, then, identifies the Spirit first as the power enabling the Gospel to move—as is the main thrust of the book—from Jerusalem, through Judaea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Peter's sermon in Acts 2 develops the theme of the double agency involved in the sending of the Spirit: 'Having been exalted, therefore, to the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, and has poured out what you now see and hear' (Acts 2:33).

The risen and ascended Jesus, then, by virtue of the *sessio ad dexteram*, is granted the Spirit by the Father, and Jesus in turn sends the Spirit upon his people (*cf.* Jn 15:24, and Jesus sending the Paraclete 'from the Father'). Sending usually suggests the authority of the sender over the envoy, and so the fact that Jesus sends and pours out the Spirit also strongly suggests the submission of Spirit to Son (*cf.* e.g. Matt. 8:9 / Lk. 7:8).

7. Hints of the Personal Agency of the Spirit in Acts

Acts begins to use personal language to speak of the Spirit, in a way that is clearer in the John's Farewell Discourse. The Spirit talks to people (Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11; 28:25), can be lied to and tested (Acts 5:3, and 5:9), sends Paul and Barnabas (13:4), warns (20:23) and urges (21:4) Paul, but also on one occasion prevents Paul from travelling (16:6-7). This last passage also joins the Spirit and Jesus:

Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, *having been kept by the Holy Spirit* from speaking the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to pass into Bithynia, but *the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them*.

The glossing of the Holy Spirit (16:6) with the phrase 'Spirit of Jesus' (16:7) is interesting both for its implied Christology and its pneumatology.

(p. 67) 8. The Personal and Divine Identity of the Spirit in Matthew

Finally, we should draw attention to the inclusion of the Holy Spirit in the threefold divine name of God invoked in Christian baptism: 'baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 28:19). First, this statement identifies the Spirit as personal: the Spirit partakes of a *name*. Second, no less than in the cases of Jesus and the Father (as discussed above), the Spirit shares the *divine* name. Some of Matthew's earliest second-century readers repeat Matthew 28's 'Trinitarian' structure in other contexts (*Didache* 7.1,3; Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians* 9.1; *Letter to the Magnesians* 13.1,2; Papias, fragment 5 (?); *Gospel of Thomas* 44), and indeed similar triadic formulae are already present in other places in the NT (2 Cor. 13:13; Rev. 1:4-5).

9. Conclusion

Having said in the introduction that we were only dealing with fragments of the canonical witness, these particular fragments have actually produced a good deal of grist to the Trinitarian mill. The personal divine identity of Father, Son, and Spirit expressed in very brief compass in Matt. 28:19 is expanded elsewhere. The divine contours of Jesus' person are particularly clear in the Synoptic Gospels in actions such as his election and forgiveness of sins, while the Father-Son order of the great commission formula is reflected in the hierarchical submission of Son to Father. The Father is characterized especially by generosity and love, and this is expressed not least in his giving the Spirit to the Son; then the Son in turn gives the Spirit to his people. The particular focus of the Synoptics, however, is that of the accomplishment of Father's plan of redemption in the death and resurrection of the Son, with Acts relating how the Spirit enables this message to be proclaimed in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to all the ends of the earth.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Bauckham (2008); Gathercole (2006); Rowe (2006); Thompson (2000); Wainwright (1969).

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Simon J. Gathercole

Simon J. Gathercole is Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Cambridge.

The Trinity in the Johannine Literature

Ben Witherington III

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the concept of the Trinity in the Johannine literature in the New Testament. It argues that John the Apostle does not simply derive his Father language from the Jewish wisdom literature but instead has in view the Son's relationship to his Father. It explains that After the Ascension, the Son's agency on behalf of the Father is continued by the Spirit's agency on behalf of the Father. Thus the Book of Revelation depicts the Father and the Son sitting on the divine throne while the Spirit dwells in the Church.

Keywords: Trinity, John the Apostle, New Testament, Jewish wisdom literature, Ascension, Spirit, Book of Revelation

The Fourth Gospel

THE study of the NT doctrine of God has gone through various phases, permutations, and combinations, and none more so than the study of the God language in the Fourth Gospel. Even from the earliest commentaries on the Fourth Gospel (e.g. Origen's) it was recognized that this Gospel had much more to say about topics as varied as:

- (1) the pre-existence of the Son of God;
- (2) the deity of the Logos;
- (3) the Incarnation of the Logos;
- (4) the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

Even so, the ante-Nicene Church Fathers realized as well that even in the most theological of Gospels there was not a fully articulated doctrine of the Trinity. Indeed it would be anachronistic to suggest otherwise. What we have in the Fourth Gospel however is the most complete set of raw data from which such a doctrine could be constructed because here the interrelationships between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are given the most fulsome treatment of any NT document. It is not a surprise, then, that it was the Fourth Gospel which provided the major raw materials for much of the constructive theologizing

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that went on at Nicaea in ad 325 and then later at Chalcedon in ad 451. It will be appropriate then to explore in some detail some of the theologizing that takes place in the Fourth Gospel itself on this subject.

The proper place to begin our discussion is with the Father language in the Fourth Gospel. Despite some protests to the contrary, the Fourth Gospel is a Christologically focused book which views the Father through the lens of what the Evangelist believed about the Son. The Father language in the Fourth Gospel does not chiefly arise out of the (p. 70) OT language for God, where God is seldom called Father, and never directly addressed in prayer in that fashion, though a case can be made that some of the early Jewish Wisdom literature had begun to use Father language more frequently of God, a trend which the Fourth Gospel, because of its sapiential character, continues (Witherington 1995). However even this does not explain the enormous use of the term Father for God in the Fourth Gospel. Some 120 times this Gospel refers to God as Father, and some further 108 times the term God is used for this person, but the two terms are basically used interchangeably. This should not surprise us as the author is a Jew. What is surprising is that in addition the Logos is called $\text{h}\alpha\omega\lambda$ in Jn 1, and more explicitly the risen Jesus is addressed as 'my God' in Jn 20, two of the some seven times Jesus is called 'God' in the NT. One of the clear evidences that the use of Father language of God in the Fourth Gospel is Christocentric in character is that, as in the Synoptics, the reference to God as Father comes almost solely on the lips of Jesus himself (here Thompson 2000 simply goes awry in suggesting that by 'Father' Jesus simply is taking over the OT language about God being the Father of Israel). The clear, almost umbilical connection between the Son and the Father is delineated already in Jn 1:14-18 where Jesus is called 'monogenes' or the only natural son of the Father, in contrast to all believers who can become adopted sons and daughters of God by means of being 'born again' spiritually. A clear distinction is made between the natural and the adopted offspring of God and we should note that the author is clear that human beings are not born children of God, they must become so through the second birth. The Evangelist's use of Father language is then patterned on Jesus' in this Gospel where some two dozen times Jesus calls God 'my Father' (and no one else does) as well as 'the Father' (some 85 times), and simply 'Father' or 'holy Father' an additional eight times.

The Son then in this Gospel is said to be 'one' with the Father (Jn 10:30) which is not taken to mean that the Son and the Father are the same person, because the two can be distinguished (the Son alone becomes incarnate, dies on the cross, and rises again). It has often rightly been noted as striking that the Son is portrayed as God's agent or apostle on earth, who will not act without the divine approval and authorization, and this dependency of will on the Father is a manifestation of the fact that 'he who has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn 14:9), by which is meant the Son shares the same character and nature with the Father and agrees with the will of the Father. Their relationship is characterized as mutual abiding. They are not merely in agreement, they have a unity of character and purpose as well. The same Evangelist who stresses that in order to know who Jesus is, one must know where he has come from (namely from heaven as the divine Logos), is the Evangelist who places strong stress on the humanness of Jesus, who gets thirsty and tired

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(Jn 4), or angry (Jn 11), and who manifests a sort of dependency on the Father that can provide a paradigm for his disciples to follow. There is a balance in the portrayal of Jesus as human and yet clearly more than merely mortal. E. Kasemann's old cliché about Jesus bestriding the stage of this Gospel like a god is of course true, but only a part of the truth about the portrayal of the Son in this Gospel. The Incarnation is real: Jesus does not merely appear to be human or pantomime human behaviour, but really tabernacles with humankind in the flesh.

(p. 71) What binds the Christological portrait together in this Gospel is its rich indebtedness to the Jewish wisdom tradition. The portrait of the Logos in Jn 1 is in fact borrowed from the portrait of God's Wisdom in Prov. 3:8-9, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon and applied to the Son. In Wisd. 7:22 it was Wisdom that was said to be 'monogenes'. The personification has become a person on this reading of the Wisdom tradition, but it is by no means just in Jn 1 that this is evident. We could turn to the Son of Man language in the Fourth Gospel which is conditioned by the ascending and descending discussions, both about Wisdom in earlier Jewish literature (*cf.* 1 Enoch 42 where Wisdom comes to earth, is rejected, and returns to the Father on high), and about Enoch himself (1 Enoch 70:2; 71:1), and so we hear texts like 'What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending?' (like Enoch) or in Jn 7:25-7 where the key to understanding Jesus is knowing his origins in God and also his destiny in returning to God (*cf.* Jn 7:35; 8:21-2). In fact throughout this Gospel Jesus assumes the roles normally attributed to Wisdom who is said to provide light (i.e. truth), and life (i.e. salvation), and the path to both (*cf.* Prov. 8-9 and Wisd. 10:16). In a very explicit sapiential echo Wisd. 16:6 tells us the snake lifted up in the desert is a sign of salvation, and so in Jn 3:14 the lifting up of the Son on a stake, like the snake, is the sign of salvation in this Gospel. Furthermore, it is Wisdom who is said to perform miracles as signs and foretastes of salvation in Wisdom 10 and 16, just as in the Fourth Gospel. Then too, a close examination of the 'I am' sayings in John both in the absolute form and with qualifiers (e.g. 'I am the light of the world'; see in general Jn 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 17:6, 12, 26) equally reflects the indebtedness to the Wisdom tradition, for Wisdom had been called the living bread, the light of the world, the door, the life, the authentic vine (in places like Prov. 3:18, 8:38, 9:5; Wisd. 1-8; Sirach 24). In short the theological vocabulary of this Gospel has had a sapiential makeover, including its soteriological as well as God language (Witherington 1995).

If the discussion of both the Father and the Son in this Gospel is rooted in previous discussions about Wisdom, it will come as no surprise that the developed pneumatological language in this Gospel is also indebted to such patterns of speech. Wisdom 1-4 speaks of Wisdom being a kindly Spirit that inhabits the soul of the king and gives him revelation and understanding. Just as the Son is the agent of the Father on earth, so the Spirit is the agent of the Son on earth, once Jesus departs. There are some Paraclete sayings in the Farewell discourse where Jesus is presented as Wisdom teaching, and the Spirit is presented as Wisdom's substitute teacher (Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-11; 16:12-15). *Paqajkoetor* means a legal agent or advocate or even counsellor. Note that Jesus promises to send another one like himself, which implies he was the first counsellor or sage or conveyor of authoritative Wisdom. The Spirit is said to have three roles: (1) to indwell the believer

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providing divine presence and peace; (2) to teach and lead the believer into all truth; and (3) to enable the disciples to testify and convict, convince, and convert the world. As Jesus plays these roles in relationship to the first disciples and is the Advocate for the Father, so the Spirit plays this role for Jesus and is his Advocate. In short, just as the Farewell Discourses are laden with language that encourages the identification of the Son with Wisdom (*cf.* Sirach 4:11–13 to Jn 14–16) such that the Son teaches his children, gives help to those who seek him, and whoever holds fast to Him obtains life, joy, (p. 72) knowledge, glory (Jn 17:22) and thus the Lord loves those who love Wisdom (Jn 17:26) just as was previously said about Wisdom, so going forward the Spirit will play this role once the Son departs (Witherington 1994).

In all of this elevated sapiential discussion the Father, Son, and Spirit are treated as truly divine, giving what only God can give, and are depicted as persons who act in personal ways—loving, leading, teaching, and the like. They act in consort as the agents of human salvation, reflecting that the heart of God is a love for all of his creation, particularly his fallen human creation, for ‘world’ in this Gospel normally refers to fallen humanity organized against God (*cf.* Jn 3:16). The relationship of the Son to the Father is analogous to the relationship of the Spirit to the Son in that there is dependency and deference, but also mutual abiding. The Spirit that Jesus breathes on his disciples in Jn 20 is none other than the Spirit of God, the sanctifying and empowering and revivifying Spirit. Less is said in this Gospel about the relationship of the Spirit to the Father than about the other divine relationships, but in part this is because of the Christological focus of this Gospel—just as the Father is viewed through the lens of the Son, so also the Spirit is viewed through the lens of the Son, the Son being the middle term on all such discussions. The issue of testimony, so important in this Gospel, becomes clearer when seen in this light, as there are always two witnesses to testify on behalf of the other member of the Godhead, verifying what has been said or done by Father, Son, or Spirit. But they do not merely testify as One and to each other, they act in concert. The Son came down from above, and then the Spirit came down from above and dwelt on the Son permanently (Jn 1:33), and then the Son sent the Spirit down from above to dwell on and in the believers. The Spirit is the one in charge of the rebirth of all those who would see the kingdom of God, even the Nicodemuses of this world (Jn 3), for the world is literally in the dark, lost, and requires transformation even just to accept the light. Because of the soteriological focus of this Gospel only a little is said about a theology of original creation, but the Incarnation itself implies the ultimate divine imprimatur, the ultimate affirmation of the goodness of flesh, of creation, a theme further developed in the Johannine epistles where it becomes a litmus test for orthodoxy, for it was essential that Jesus Christ come in the flesh, die, and rise again if the Spirit was to be shed abroad and salvation was to come to humankind in general.

The sweep of the portrayal of Father, Son, and Spirit is in some respects breath-taking, not just because of the lack of veiledness of Jesus’ messianic character in this Gospel, but equally clearly because of the statements about unity of nature, will, identity of Father, Son, and Spirit, all personal, and all personally engaged in the salvation of the world. The lack of future eschatology in this Gospel is notable (though there are hints—Jn 5:28–9)

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but not surprising since the author is stressing that salvation has already arrived in the person of Jesus, and been applied directly and inwardly by his Advocate the Spirit. The biographical genre combined with the sapiential character of this Gospel lent itself to the telling of the part of the story directly related to Jesus' time on earth, and not its sequel, for when Wisdom returns to heaven after dwelling on earth (1 Enoch 42) she does not return again except in her Spirit. It is no wonder then that the Church Fathers and those who met at the Church councils turned to this Gospel primarily for a (p. 73) theology of the interrelationships between Father, Son, and Spirit and their relationship with Jesus' disciples, and the high Christology of this volume, and not for teaching on eschatology.

The Johannine Epistles

On first blush, when one turns to the so-called Johannine Epistles (so-called because 1 John is a sermon, not an epistle at all, unlike 2 John and 3 John), one can be forgiven for thinking on first glance that they have little to add to the conversation about the Trinity. This is in fact false, not least because 1 John in particular has a robust Christology which contributes to the reconfiguration of the God language in these documents, but also because 1 Jn 5:6-12, even without the later added verses 7-8 which are not found in any Greek manuscript before the fourteenth century, add considerably to the discussion of the Trinity. We will work backwards from 3 John to 1 John which not coincidentally is moving from least to most fertile material for our discussion.

Whilst 3 John is a short brief that is more like an ancient letter in character and length than any other NT document, it is not without theological content. In verses 6-7 for example we hear about showing hospitality worthy of God, and also about missionary work for the sake of the 'Name' which in this case is likely to refer to Christ who now bears the divine name (see similarly Acts 4:17; 5:41; 1 Pet. 4:14-16; James 2:7; Epistle of Barnabas 16:8; Ignatius' Letter to the Phil. 10:1, and especially Jn 15:21). The word *God* in this epistle refers to the Father both in verse 6 and verse 11, and in the latter verse doing what is good is the characteristic of those who are 'from God' whilst doing what is evil reveals a person has not seen God. Behaviour not merely reveals belief, it reveals relationship with God or a lack thereof.

2 John is a deeper well from which to draw on our subject for several reasons. Firstly grace, mercy, and peace which only God can give is said to come to the believer from both God the Father and from Jesus Christ 'the Father's Son'. In the proper sense in this document, only Jesus is called God's (non-adopted) Son, though the term 'monogenes' is not found here as in Jn 1. The toggling back and forth between the Father and the Son is noteworthy in this letter and it indicates the divinity of them both. It is on the one hand the Father that commanded the Christian believers to walk in the truth (verse 4: 'he commanded us'), but true believers are also required to and willingly acknowledge 'Jesus Christ coming in the flesh' (verse 7) thereby making clear that Christian belief is not just in the Father but in the Son as well. Furthermore, 'anyone who ... does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God' (verse 9), but whoever does do so 'has' both the

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Father and the Son. It's a package deal, and the point of entry for a relationship with the Father is implicitly and exclusively through the Son as is made clear here and in 1 John. The failure to embrace this teaching is the basis for exclusion from the community, just as embracing it is the basis of inclusion. Christological orthodoxy matters for this writer and it involves and is manifested in orthopraxy as well. Then too at the (p. 74) outset and conclusion of this document the author speaks of believers being 'chosen by God' as is manifested by their love of the truth. It is hard to doubt that the recipients of 2 John and 3 John had already been the recipients of the much fuller exposition on matters Christological and theological in 1 John, or at least had orally been told such things, for the references to God and Christ in 2 John and 3 John are telegraphic in form, and presume a pre-existing knowledge of what is meant.

1 John is certainly, along with Hebrews and James, an example of early Christian preaching, and its rhetoric is highly theological in character. It begins with an opening salvo about the Word of life which has appeared, and appears to refer to both the person of Christ and the message about him. The Christian *koinonia* is said to be with both the Father and his Son. Notice the exclusive relationship between the two—the Father has a Son (singular), not many, and here as elsewhere he is called both Jesus Christ and Son. Believers are called children of God instead (1 Jn 3:1-2), because they are born, or better said reborn of God (3:9). But Jesus is also called by another early Jewish title in this sermon, 'the Righteous One' (Acts 3:14; 7:12). This is interesting not least because it appears that the Spirit has a similar epithet, namely the Holy One (2:20) who anoints the believer with knowledge. Furthermore here in 1 Jn 2:1 Jesus is explicitly called *parakletos*, a term used explicitly for the Spirit in the Gospel, but also implicitly for Christ since the Spirit is called 'another Advocate' (Jn 14:16). The *theos* language in 1 John refers exclusively to the Father who is said to be Light (1:5) and Love (4:8), and is said to be the object of the believer's love (2:5 perhaps), but the epitome of love is said to be God's sending of his Son into the world and the Son's laying down his life in atonement for sins (3:16; 4:9-10). It also becomes clear that acknowledging Jesus as both Son and the Christ who came and is coming in the flesh is a statement of Christology as well as anthropology. But the author is not just interested in the first coming of Christ, he wants his audience to be prepared for the second coming as well which is said to be an appearing which will involve the transformation of believers into his likeness (3:2). Christ came in the first place to destroy the Devil's work (3:8) but will come a second time to complete his own work.

God sent not only his Son into the world but gave 'of' his Spirit to believers as well (1 Jn 4:13). It is only really in 1 John that we find much discussion of the Spirit, and here would be a good juncture to consider 1 Jn 5:6-10. Since it reveals the most about the author's Trinitarian thinking we will treat it in more detail.

1 Jn 5:6-10 provides us with one of the real cruxes in all of Johannine literature. Some preliminary remarks help us narrow the focus on what is actually being discussed here:

(1) we are talking about a person here 'the one who ...';

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(2) the verb tense is in the aorist, referring to a past coming;

(3) the first mention speaks of coming 'through water and blood' (using 'dia'), while in the second use of the phrase the preposition chosen is 'en'. Some would say the difference is not clear or intelligible, and it is not clear if anything hangs on this difference;

(4) if the difference in prepositions is just a matter of stylistic variation then what the phrase means in verse 6a is likely also what it means in 6b and 7a;

(p. 75) (5) we are told that the One who came is Jesus Christ. Thus the subject here is not 'grace' or the Holy Spirit, or in fact as we shall see the sacraments (Witherington 1989). It is rather Jesus himself. The use of the aorist participle *elthon* ('came') here points to punctiliar events in the past, not a continual coming through the sacraments in the present.

What is rather decisively against the sacramental interpretation is that the verb here is in the past tense, not a present tense indicating an ongoing coming. Furthermore, the term 'blood' by itself is nowhere used in the NT as an allusion to the Lord's Supper. In fact, the sacramental interpretation is not attested before the fourth century AD and earlier Church Fathers, like Tertullian (*On Baptism* 16), make clear that the sacramental interpretation should not be read into this text.

A second view is that we have an allusion to the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side according to Jn 19:34-5, referring, it is thought, to the cleansing and life-giving properties that derive from Christ's death (Calvin's view). Against this however is 1 Jn 5:6b which clearly distinguishes between the coming by water and the coming by blood. It says 'not only by water, but also by blood'. Furthermore, the order of reference in Jn 19 is blood and water, not the reverse. I would argue in addition that there is no sacramental significance in Jn 19 either. The point of that passage is to confirm that Jesus, a real human being, really died. Furthermore, the reference in 1 Jn 5:8 to there being three witnesses, not just two (as would be required if 'water and blood' refers to just the death of Jesus), seems decisive against such a correlation of our text with Jn 19:34-5.

More plausible is the suggestion that water and blood here refers to Jesus' baptism and death. But is there any other allusion to Jesus' baptism in this letter, much less a direct reference to it? Perhaps there is, but it is not Jesus who 'comes' through water, but rather the Spirit who comes upon Jesus as he is leaving the water according to the Synoptic accounts (see Mk 1:9-11 and parr.). I suppose one could argue Jesus came into his ministry, or was empowered for his ministry at the baptismal event, though it was not either through or in water, strictly speaking, that this happened. Furthermore, in the Fourth Gospel Jesus' baptism is not mentioned directly at all! Then too, notice that the Spirit is mentioned as a third witness here, after mentioning blood, and is not mentioned together with water as a joint witness which we would expect if water plus Spirit at baptism was what was in our author's mind. The focus here is on soteriological matters, not sacramental or broadly historical ones. The proper question to ask is: What events of soteriological significance for the believer could be referred to that are Christological in character? It seems more probable then that the reference is to Jesus' birth and Jesus' death, two sub-

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jects which definitely have been central in this sermon with water as the cipher for birth and blood the cipher for death. In support of this is also the fact that at 5:18 we have another reference to the birth of Jesus—he is called the One born of God just as he is called the one begotten of God earlier at 1 Jn 4:9. It has also been argued rather well that the similarities between 1 Jn 4:2 and 5:6 suggest that both texts refer to the Incarnation.

(p. 76) The word 'water', in both Jn 3:5 and in our text, refers to physical birth. Both the phrases 'came through or in water', and the phrase 'born out of water' (Jn 3:5), are perfectly natural ways to speak of this. In fact, as I have shown elsewhere water was used as a euphemism in Jewish literature to refer to: (1) semen; (2) the fluid in which the foetus was floating; (3) the 'breaking of the waters' as the birth process started. Physical birth took place in homes and in the regular view of family members. Talking about someone coming through or in or out of water would have sounded in that environment like a discussion of physical birth. Thus, water is not only a symbol of life in general in the Fourth Gospel (whether natural or everlasting life—see Jn 4) and 1 John, it is a symbol of new life, the beginning of life as well. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but only the Holy Spirit gives the new birth. If we ask what it means to say Jesus 'came' by water and blood to believers the answer is that we are talking about the soteriological significance of these events. The schismatics were not likely denying that Jesus of Nazareth lived and died, rather they denied the soteriological significance of these events in his life. This denial is tantamount to denying Jesus is messiah, Son of God, and Saviour.

The three great witnesses here then are the birth and death of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. These are the things that most confirm God's love and activity in the world, and for believers. Jesus came to the world through his birth and through his death, and he comes now through the Spirit. These are the means through which the believer has life, light, faith, power, hope, love—all the qualities this epideictic discourse is trying to inculcate and all the verities it is trying to remind the audience of in regard to Christ, with orthodox belief in him being the conduit of all these things. Put another way, the three nodal moments of most soteriological weight and importance for the salvation of human beings are the coming of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the coming of the Spirit.

We also learn here that the Spirit can be believed because the Spirit is Truth come in person (see Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:13), just as God is said to be love, and Christ is said to be salvation in this discourse. Notice that we are told that the Spirit's witness is now—'*marturoun*' is in the present tense here. Note as well that the terminology for witness occurs some ten times in five verses. Obviously it is the dominant idea here. All of this passage, and what follows it, is tremendously reminiscent of Jn 14-17. Since the Spirit is the Truth, the Spirit is best suited to lead the believer into all truth about Jesus. We need to keep in mind that in Jewish ways of thinking, the truth of anything needed to be validated by at least two viable witnesses (Deut. 19:15, *cf.* 17:6). Here however we have three impeccable ones, which the author is stressing is more than enough good reasons to believe Jesus is God's Son and as such the believer's saviour. Moreover these three witnesses are at one, says the text—they agree and are unified on these facts, unified in the way they testify about Jesus. They all attest to the same truth though in different ways. In the case of

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the Spirit one is dealing with divine testimony, so the point is that even if you don't listen to human testimony, the Spirit still should convince you about Jesus. God testifies to his Son through his Spirit. Trinitarianism is implicit throughout this passage, a fact which was to be amplified in the *Textus Receptus*, through the additions to verse 7 and verse 8.

(p. 77) In 1 Jn 5:8 we hear that 'the three are for the one' to put it literally. This is an all for one kind of statement. There is one particular Christological truth that these three witnesses are testifying to. The three witnesses converge, they are not merely univocal. 1 Jn 5:9 uses a 'from the lesser to the greater' form of argument to say that if one has believed human testimony about Jesus (e.g. by the Baptist: Jn 1; 5:33-6; or by the author himself), how much greater is the testimony of God to his Son (presumably by means of the Spirit internally: cf. Jn 5:36). The threefold witness is a threefold divine testimony to Jesus.

At verse 10 (1 Jn 5:10) we have two ideas—the testimony of God to the Son, and the divine and internal testimony that comes through the Spirit, when one accepts on faith the external testimony. The one who believes in the Son of God has assurance that his faith is not in vain from the internal testimony of the Spirit. Here the emphasis is on the individual—'the one who believes ...'. Thus quite logically the work of confirmation by the Spirit follows belief in the external testimony, and the making of the good confession.

While most Trinitarian discussion in the NT is implicit at best, here it begins to become more explicit because we begin to get rather clear-cut divisions of labour in regard to what Father, Son, and Spirit do, even though they all testify to the same truth. The Jewish character of the material remains clear in that 'God' is properly speaking of the Father, when it comes to what *theos* denotes in 1-3 John, but equally clearly the Son and the Spirit are said to be part of the Godhead and come from God. It is understandable why much of the theological discussion about the Trinity at Nicaea and later at Chalcedon focused on matters that arose from the Fourth Gospel and 1 John, with some important glances at the Pauline material.

The Trinity in Revelation

While it is rightly clear to most commentators that the last book in the NT canon was written by someone other than the author of 1-3 John and/or the Fourth Gospel, it seems likely that John of Patmos was influenced in various ways by the earlier Johannine materials, though he chooses to express the common truths using his own vocabulary (e.g. noting the different Greek word he uses for lamb to that found in the Fourth Gospel). The theology of Christ as the Word does not get prominent play in Revelation as it does in John 1, and instead the central Christological image becomes that of Christ as the Lamb of God (see e.g. Rev. 5:22). This is not however because the author had a so-called lower Christology, but rather because he wished to assert an equally high Christology in his own terms, not least of which was accomplished through applying the terms Alpha and Omega to both the Father and the Son (cf. Rev. 1 and 22).

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As is to be expected, Revelation speaks of the Spirit of God largely as the apocalyptic OT prophets Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah would, namely as the inspirer of words and visions. Importantly in Revelation there is a strong emphasis as well on the Spirit not only being in the prophet or the prophet in the Spirit (see Rev. 4:1-2), but also of the (p. 78) Spirit being immanent in the community ('the Spirit and the bride say': Rev. 22:17). This explains as well the reference to the seven Spirits of God (Rev. 4:5) by which John means the fullness of the Spirit dwelling in each of the seven churches he is addressing. The Spirit as in the rest of the Johannine corpus is seen as personal (e.g. 'the Spirit says ...', again noting Rev. 22:17), and is not treated merely as a force or power. In terms of theological space then, the Father and the Son are envisioned as above whilst the Spirit dwells below with the bride (i.e. the Church).

The theophany followed by Christophany in Rev. 4 and 5 shows just how far John is prepared to go in asserting the deity of Christ. Both Father and Son are objects of worship, and both sit on the throne only intended for God. Whereas God is rather monolithically presented as Father (not only of believers but he is even said in Rev. 1:6 to be Jesus' God and Father), by contrast there is a cornucopia of images applied to the Son in Revelation to make clear his exalted status and roles—the First and Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Living One, the Lamb and the Lion, the Rider on the white horse, as well as more familiar images like the Son of Man, the Son of God, Lord, and Christ. Indeed, John is prepared to transfer not only titles but images and features of the Ancient of Days to Christ (see Rev. 1-4). This is because John actually sees the Son and the Father as one not merely in will and purpose but in some sense one in nature as well. Here the helpful work of Richard Bauckham on the Oneness of God referring to God's unity of being, not his singleness of personhood, is helpful (Bauckham 2008). Distinction of some roles (only the Lamb is or could be slain) in no way compromises the singular divinity shared by Father, Son, and Spirit in this book. It is God in Christ who will dwell with God's people in the end, just as it is God in Christ to whom the martyrs appeal from under the altar, for he is the Judge of all the world who alone can unseal the seals (Rev. 5-6). Thus it is that Christ is the agent of both redemption and judgement, and indeed of redemption of God's people by judgement of others in various places in this book (see e.g. Rev. 19). The focus of course in Revelation is on the exalted Christ and what he is doing since his exaltation. So much is this the case that in Rev. 12 the earthly tenure of Christ is mentioned only in passing and God is said to snatch him from the earth after he has been born of 'the woman'. Notice that Rev. 12:5 refers to his post-exaltation judging of the world immediately after referring to the birth of the male child. But lest we think he is not much interested in the earthly role of the Christ, Rev. 4 makes clear that Christ is the exalted Lamb of God precisely because he was the slain Lamb of God.

We have seen much material in the Johannine corpus of import for the construction of a doctrine of the Trinity, and not only so we have seen in all these documents how the assembling of that document had already begun in the NT era. The doctrine of the Trinity cannot be said to be a later construct imposed on the NT so long as the Johannine literature remains a part of the NT canon.

Suggested Reading

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Ben Witherington III

Ben Witherington III is Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has authored a scholarly commentary on each of the books of the New Testament.

Exegesis and the Early Christian Doctrine of the Trinity



Mark Edwards

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Abstract and Keywords

This article considers the exegesis of the Scripture and the early Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It suggests that though the materials for the doctrine of the Trinity are scriptural, the doctrine is nowhere stated in the Scriptures. It explores how the exegesis of Scripture, against the Gnostics' rejection of the Old Testament and in the face of other heterodox currents, led to the language in which Trinitarian doctrine was formulated during the first centuries of the Church.

Keywords: exegesis, Scripture, Christian doctrine, Trinity, Gnostics, Old Testament

THE materials for the doctrine of the Trinity are scriptural, though the doctrine is nowhere stated in the Scriptures. It is necessary to keep both halves of this truism in mind, because for every critic who writes as though the doctrine belonged to the primitive deposit of Christianity, there is another who represents it as a stepchild which the Church acquired by cementing an imprudent marriage with Greek philosophy. It is possible that the human mind is inclined to think in threes when it does not think in twos or fours, and it is clear that Greek philosophers were fond of triads even before the advent of Christianity; it is equally clear, however, that the paradoxical notion of three persons, each identical with the one God but none identical with the other two, is one that no philosopher would have permitted to ensnare him if he were entirely free to choose his own premises. Christians, however, were required to hold, on the authority of Jesus and the prophets, that God is one (Deut. 6:4; Mk 12:29), while they were also required to acknowledge Jesus himself not only as Son of God but as Lord (Matt. 7:21–2 etc.), as creator of all (Jn 1:3–4; Heb. 1:2), and as the one on whom the name above all names had been conferred (Phil. 2:9). To us, declares Paul, there is one God and one Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8:6); the Church is thus required to make one of two, but, since the same apostle prayed that his correspondents might receive the fellowship of the Holy Spirit along with the grace of Jesus Christ and love of the Father (2 Cor. 13:13), and since the last injunction of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew is to baptize the nations in the name of the Father,

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the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), it would seem that where there are two there must be three. Once so much was conceded, one could discover an adumbration of the Trinity in the late coda to the Lord's Prayer, 'thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory' (*Didache*). Where the kingdom belongs to the Father, the Son is his power and the Spirit glorifies both Father and Son in the present world; or one could argue that at Rom. 11:36, where all is said to come from God, through God, and in God, each preposition signifies (p. 81) the activity of a different person. But such manoeuvres would have been superfluous if Christians had not felt bound to pay their devoirs to some name other than that of God the Father, or if they had not subscribed to the first commandment of the Decalogue, which forbade them to apportion different names to different gods.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is perhaps the first—and certainly the one canonical—writing which sets out a rationale for the worship of Christ from the unfulfilled imperatives and prophecies of the old covenant. It does not begin from nothing, for the author expects his correspondents to grant that the Son, through whom the world was created, is an *apau-gasma* or effulgence of the Father's glory and the *kharakter* or impression of his hypostasis (Heb. 1:3). The first metaphor suggests that the divine fecundity which was merely personified at Wisd. 7:26 has now been manifested as a real person; the second requires decipherment, and we shall see that it was from this phrase that the Greek Church learned to speak of three hypostases and the Latin of one substance. With the Sonship as his postulate, the author proceeds to demonstrate the necessity of Christ's ministry from liturgical texts, or rather from the want of another phenomenon to complete what these texts foreshadow. How, had he been an angel, would God have said to him, 'This day have I begotten thee' (Heb. 1:5, citing Ps. 2:7)? Where, except in his person, do we see man crowned with glory after a period of subjection to the angels (Heb. 2:9, citing Ps. 8:5)? Where are the people whom Jesus (that is, Joshua) led to the promised land, if God said to the fathers of the Israelites, 'You shall not enter into my rest' (Heb. 3:18, citing Ps. 95:11; cf. Heb. 4:8)? If further proof were required that it is in Christ, and not in Israel after the flesh, that the biblical promises are made good, we may ask what became of the priesthood of Melchisedek, which was evidently superior to that of the Levites, as they were descendants of Abraham, whereas he, the medium of God's benediction on Abraham, was a man without father or mother (Heb. 7:3–10). If the Levitical offerings were sufficient to expiate sin, the law would not have enjoined that they be iterated year by year (9:25). As the tabernacle was but an adumbration of its heavenly archetype, so the imperfect covenant in the blood of beast was sealed at last by the sacrifice of a 'high priest after the order of Melchisedek' (Heb. 6:20, 10:21), who, as celebrant and victim in one (9:11–12), may be likened to a testator who gives effect to his own provisions by his death (Heb. 9:16–17).

Here we see in its rudiments the casuistry that produced a Trinitarian creed from the Scriptures of a unitarian people. It would not be true to say that the sacred writ is merely a substrate for a prefabricated doctrine, for the author appeals not only to the records of Christ's death and exaltation, but to palpable inconcinnities and riddles in the text, which cannot be resolved (or so he argues) without an acknowledgement of his Messianic dignity. We do not know antecedently, however, what this dignity entails, and a fuller under-

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standing of it can be gained only by close attention to the text. We must already possess a first language before we can master the grammar of that language, but the grammar, once mastered, enables us to use the language with more accuracy. In the same way, one must already be a Christian before one can discover the face of Christ in the Scriptures of Israel; yet one who applies the Christian hermeneutic to these Scriptures is not doomed to learn only what he already knows, any more than being a native speaker (p. 82) of English will preclude me from discovering constructions new to me in an English grammar.

Early Gleanings

Revelations to Israel which had come to be deemed prophetic, disclosures of Christ's sonship and divinity in the gospels, and deductions from both prophecy and gospel in the writings of the apostolic age were parsed and amplified according to principles canonized in the same apostolic texts. It cannot be said, however, that these principles necessitated a doctrine of three persons in one substance. By the middle of the second century, some were prepared to assign a 'second place' to the Son in worship, while acknowledging the Spirit as 'third in order' (Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 13); nevertheless, the affirmation that each of the three is God was not an immediate corollary of the liturgical invocation. Although it can be maintained that the Greek word *theos* designates Christ at Rom. 9:5, Titus 2:13, and 1 Jn 5:20, the syntax is ambiguous in each case; at Jn 20:28, the exclamation of Thomas 'My Lord and my God' has been construed as an ejaculatory prayer of thanks to God the Father; and Jn 1:1, which undoubtedly uses 'God' (*ho theos*, with the definite article) as the proper name of the Father, omits the article when it goes on to declare that his Word is *theos*, and may therefore be understood to mean, not that the Word is God in essence, but that to those whom he creates he is all that God is, just as Moses was made *theos*—that is to say, the plenipotentiary of God—to Pharaoh at Exodus 7:1. A generation earlier than Justin, Ignatius of Antioch, whose letters celebrate the exaltation of the Christ who was also the Son and Word of God, seldom grants him the cognomen *theos* without the qualification that he is 'our God' (*Ephesians*, proem.; *Trallians* 7; *Romans* 1; but at *Smyrnaeans* 1, simply 'God'). It cannot be proved that Ignatius was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel, but this usage would sit well with a rigorous parsing of the word *theos* (in contradistinction to *ho theos*) at Jn 1:1. He avers that this second object of his worship coexisted before the ages with the Father (*Magnesians* 6), but does not add that he was God; he may, however, be ready to draw the inference from Jn 1:14 that, if *theos* and *logos* are predicated of a single subject, it was as *theos* that this subject 'became' or 'came to be' in flesh. He certainly declares in *Ephesians* 7 that the Saviour was both human and divine, but adopts an ambiguous construction (*en sarki genomenos theos*), so that he may be proclaiming either that God came to be in the flesh or that it was in the flesh that Christ came to be God.

Wisdom in Gnostic myths of the second century was a delinquent emanation of the Godhead who creates the world inadvertently and without the consent of her ineffable father. She may be an allegorical personification of truancy in the intellect when it turns from God to the weak and beggarly elements (Gal. 4:9). While they never propounded a doc-

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trine of the triune God, the Gnostics may have excited speculation in other quarters on relation between the hidden God and his manifold revelation. In the mid second century, a work that might be characterized as a transformational grammar of the Old (p. 83) Testament was compiled by Justin Martyr in the form of a dialogue with Trypho the Jew. To Trypho it seems incredible that a man should be god, that one who had died in ignominy should be the hope of Israel, or that the beneficiaries of this hope should not be those to whom the Word of God was first confided. To Justin, on the other hand, it is in his written word, where this has not been mutilated by the Jews who profess to hold it in awe, that God is revealed as another than the Father. Jewish thought had already bestowed a hypostatic character on such attributes as the name, the word, and the wisdom of god, which are frequently represented as his vicegerents in scriptural prophecy and narrative (Deut. 12:21; Ps. 33:6; Prov. 8:22). Passages in which he acts through angels were thought to prove that the Almighty can approach his own handiwork only through created intermediaries; yet it is commonly implied that when God speaks through proxies he also speaks in person, and even when his countenance is confessedly hidden he may be said to communicate face to face (Exodus 33:11; 33:23; 34:33–5). The solution advanced by Justin is that the one whom Christians call the Word is the vehicle of the Father's revelation to his creatures. It was (he explains) impossible that the Father, who has no form and no true name among his creatures, should assume the flesh and thus subject himself to the constraints of a finite world (Justin, *Second Apology* 6). The Son, and not the Father, is the one who manifested himself in angelic guise to the ancestors of Israel (Justin, *First Apology* 63; *Dialogue with Trypho* 56–61); hence it is that Moses can be said to have been addressed both by the Lord and by the angel of the Lord from the burning bush, and it is because there is more than one in the Godhead that Abraham played host to three at Mamre (*Dialogue with Trypho* 56). The Wisdom who proclaims herself the lieutenant of creation at Prov. 8:22 is evidently speaking in her own voice, not the Father's, and this is the voice of God the Word (*Dialogue with Trypho* 129.3–4); in other texts, the person or *prosôpon* of the speaker must be identified by the skilled and faithful exegete who is looking for adumbrations of the Gospel. The Jew may find his reasoning arbitrary, but he cannot hope to account for verses in which the Lord extols or enthrones the Lord, or in which the Lord rains fire from the Lord, unless he is willing to confess that God did not always manifest himself as one. At the same time, Justin remains a monotheist: distinct as the Son and Father may be, they are so much at one that, even in the Old Testament, it is by the name Jesus that the ineffable God has made himself known to humankind (*Dialogue with Trypho* 75).

Whether or not he derived it from the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, Justin took up the title Logos or Word, and like the evangelist, applied it to Christ as the maker of all (Justin, *Second Apology* 6; *Dialogue with Trypho* 61) and the perfect emissary of the Father's will. Theophilus of Antioch, a contemporary of Justin, was the first to subsume the three objects of ecclesiastical worship under a single term that is not found in the Scriptures: his *trias*—the common Greek for a triad—consists, however, not of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but of God, Logos, and Sophia (Theophilus, *To Autolytus* 15). From Justin we learn nothing about the distinctive powers and attributes of the Third Person, except that he is

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the source of prophecy (Justin, *First Apology* 13, 37–44 etc.). He and Theophilus concur, not so much in their anatomy of the Godhead, as in their willingness to seek elucidation of the term Logos among the Greeks. Theophilus described the (p. 84) second person in his latent phase as the *logos endiathetos*, or inward meditation, of the Father (Theophilus, *To Autolytus* 2,10); this usage may have encouraged the adoption of the Stoic antonym, *logos prophorikos*, to define his supervenient identity as the ‘audible speech’ of God. These speculations not only gave an extensive sphere of action to the Word before his nativity; they also put philosophy at the service of exegesis without surrendering the inspiration of Scripture or the primacy of Christ.

Logic and Plurality

We have seen that Justin adds the term *prosôpon* to the vocabulary of Christian hermeneutics: it was not a yet a term of Christian metaphysics, denoting one of three hypostases, and proponents of the Trinity had yet to devise a logic which would reconcile the existence of three persons with the simplicity of the one God. ‘Monarchian’ is the appellative in a number of ancient texts for those who argue either that Father, Son, and Spirit are the same entity in different modes, or else that Son and Spirit are epiphenomena of the true substrate, who alone deserves the name God. Such teaching is now heresy; in Rome at the beginning of the third century, on the other hand, to honour the Son as a being distinct from the Father was to expose oneself to the charge of ditheism, and hence of breaking the First Commandment. Two successive bishops of Rome, Zephyrinus and Callistus, are said to have countenanced, though Callistus (as his gadfly Hippolytus tells us) tried to break his fall into heresy by according the title ‘Son’ to the manhood of Christ, which he supposed to have been inhabited by the Father's spirit, not by a second person of the Godhead. According to the same informant, the war cry of the monarchians in Rome was *hen prosôpon*, a single person (Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies* 9.12.18). This is an unexceptionable formula if it means only that the Father is revealed in the works and teachings of the embodied Son, for then it merely encapsulates the saying ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father’ (Jn 14:9). Hippolytus, however, took it to signify that, even in the Godhead itself, there is no more than a modal or specious difference between the persons. His own watchword, ‘two *prosôpa*’ seems to have been an innovation (*Refutation of all Heresies* 9.12).

Hippolytus was a Greek in Rome, and it seems to have been in the Latin world that the noun which signifies ‘person’ was detached from its hermeneutic use and became the standard term to designate one of the three in God. It is common, in expositions of Tertullian, to oppose his three *personae* to his one *substantia*, seeking no antecedent to either in the biblical text. No doubt scholars are right to ignore his passing citation of Lamentations 4:20, which in the Latin version of his day speaks obscurely of a *persona* of the Father and his Spirit (Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 14); to neglect the biblical provenance of *substantia*, on the other hand, is to grasp only half of its meaning. One passage from his writings, with a supporting text from a younger contemporary in the Greek world, will direct us to its cradle. Tertullian advances it as an axiom at *Praxeas* 7.9 that the Son is *ex*

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substantia patris, from the Father's substance; in Origen this is a gloss on (p. 85) Heb. 1:3, where the Son is styled the *kharaktêr* or impression of the *hupostasis* of the Father (Pamphilus, *Apology for Origen*, 94ff.). This appears to mean that he is the manifest sign, and the Father the hidden reality that he signifies. Tertullian discovers in this one passage an intimation of both unity and duality in the Godhead. That which is engendered by the Father cannot fail to inherit his substance, but neither, at the same time, can it fail to possess the substantiality, the capacity to exist without reliance on other natures, which is the property of all substance, and of divine substance in an eminent degree.

The Johannine title *logos*, which not only denotes the person of Christ but defines it in contradistinction to the other two, received more attention in Christian Alexandria than the generic terms *hypostasis* and *prosôpon*. Clement of Alexandria does not forget the sense of the Greek term *logos*, which implies for him that Christ is the light of all rational creation, and that scriptural texts may be fruitfully juxtaposed with the aphorisms of philosophy. For all that, Clement's *Logos* is no abstraction. Greek passages, still extant, declare that the Son is no *prophorikos logos*, meaning that he is not a mere operation of the Father, as human speech is an operation of the speaker (Clement, *Stromateis* 5.1.6; cf. Photius, *Bibliotheca* 109). The embodied Word alone is the *prosôpon* or representative of the Father (Clement, *Paedagogus* 1.57); the Word above abides in sameness (*tautotês*) as the companion of the Father (*Excerpts from Theodotus* 8.1), and the Latin translator of a lost work implies that the two are eternally distinct (*Fragment on Epistle of John* 3.1).

Origen, an Alexandrian of the next generation, strongly maintains the coeternity of the three hypostases, which are never three *prosôpa* in his writings (Origen, *Commentary on John* 2.10.25). Like Clement, he draws the lineaments of the Word from his own revelation, his interpretation of which is almost injudiciously literal, if 'literal' means 'paying strict attention to the letter'. 'Allegory' is only one of his names—or rather, as he would say, the Apostle's name—for the higher sense which emerges when we assume that every letter in Holy Writ was penned for our sakes and under uniform inspiration (cf. *Philokalia* 5). To identify Christ with a character in the Old Testament, let alone with a mere personification, is to flout the modern protocols of historical criticism; but to Origen it seemed that only those who preached two gods would deny that the Father's helpmeet in creation was the agent known to John as the Word and to Paul as the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:21–4). Against those who had reified Wisdom and Word as different subjects, he explains that these are accommodatory titles (*epinoiai*); at the same time, they are titles of a real subject, with the attributes of God. We should not suppose, he urges, that the Wisdom of God, who is Christ, could ever have failed to exist or existed otherwise than hypostatically (Origen, *On First Principles* 1,2,2). It is true that the Son is Wisdom in relation to the Father, and Word or *Logos* in relation to a world of rational but transient beings, the *logikoi* (Origen, *Commentary on John* 1.31.223–6); it does not, however, follow that the *Logos* is posterior to Wisdom in time, for at all times the mind of God has housed a realm of noetic entities, the *logika*, which are subject to his government (*On First Principles* 1,4,5). The bond between Father and Son does not preclude our calling the latter a *ktisma* or creature (*On First Principles* 4,4,1, with Justinian, *Letter to Mennas*), for this is the appellation of Wisdom herself at Prov. 8:22 and signifies only that (p. 86) she exhibits the will of

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the Father without defect. The Son, who is styled the image of the invisible God at Col. 1:15, may be likened to a statue which reveals the character of an infinite prototype (*On First Principles* 1,2,8).

Because no clear distinction is observed here between the incarnate Christ and the Second Hypostasis before descent, we cannot be sure that an eternal subordination of Son to Father is implied. A certain ontological priority is certainly accorded to the Father, in Origen's view, by the opening verse of the Gospel of John, in which the word *theos* is enforced by the definite article when it refers to the father but not when applied to the Son. Origen concludes that, while Son is truly *theos* or god, the Father is *autotheos* or God in himself (*Commentary on John* 2.2.17). Because the Son is the image of the Father, the bond between them is a natural one, analogous to that between Adam and Seth, who at Gen. 5:3 is not only the first man's offspring but his image (*On First Principles* 1,2,6). Since the Scriptures call him the effulgence or emanation of the Father (Heb. 1:3, Wisd. 7:25), the Son resembles a vapour which is *homoousios* or consubstantial with the ointment that exudes it (Pamphilus, *Apology*, 100). Because, however, the adjective *homoousios* was most commonly used in his day of synthetic or material bodies, Origen cannot apply it without a caveat to the persons of the Godhead. Here, as elsewhere, the Scripture is sovereign; here as elsewhere, the parallels are collated and the metaphors that do not admit of elucidation from other scriptural texts are glossed by a partial and circumspect analogy from the corporeal realm.

Nicaea to Constantinople

In the early fourth century, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria revived the conceit that the Logos is so called because he is the utterance of the Father (Socrates, *Church History* 1.6.16). He nevertheless did not say that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father; on the contrary he might be thought to have granted the Son his own substance when he styled him his peerless image of the Father (Theodoret, *Church History* 1.4.47). This allusion to Col. 1:15, reminiscent of Origen, is put to similar use by the latter's admirer and biographer, Eusebius of Caesarea, who in other respects was no friend to Alexander (Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel* 5.4.10). Believing that one cannot prove more than the Scriptures teach, Eusebius declines to affirm the eternity of the Son, though he identifies him with the Wisdom of Prov. 8:22, created by the Father before all ages. He does not profess to determine in what sense the Son is created and in what sense he is begotten; to know so much would be to know more than Isaiah, who asked 'his generation who can declare?' (*Demonstration* 5.1.14, citing Isa. 53:8). Origen's compound *autotheos* is revived at *Ecclesiastical Theology* 3.17.14 to represent the whole God as mediated by the Son (*cf. Against Marcellus* 2.16-17). In his *Demonstration of the Gospel*, which purports to establish only and *in toto* what the Church is bound to proclaim with divine authority, Eusebius discovers that the Son is revealed in the Scriptures of Israel as a 'second God' (*Demonstration* 5.30.3). While he hints elsewhere that there is some likeness between the (p. 87) Son and the 'second' principle whom Plato subordinates to the 'king of all' (Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.22), the analogy is avowedly imperfect and

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could not have been maintained without biblical warrant. Furthermore, the audacity of the locution 'second god' lies in its affirmation of the Son's divinity, for it was this, and not the subjection of the Son to the Father, that was widely contested at the time.

Conflict between the churches was precipitated by a controversy in Alexandria. Against Alexander the presbyter Arius argued that to call the Son *homoousios* with the Father, or to speak of emanation and projection, was to introduce division and passibility to the Godhead. To many it appeared that he added blasphemy to defiance by declaring that the Son was 'out of nothing' (Theodoret, *Church History* 1.5.3), and that before he was begotten he was not. Arius culled a succession of phrases from the New Testament, though without direct citation, to prove that goodness, wisdom, truth, and immortality are peculiar attributes of God the Father (Athanasius, *On Synods* 16). His reading of the texts to which he alludes may be described as parsimonious, since he takes them to refer to the Father in contradistinction to every other subject, and not merely in contradistinction to the gods of other nations. According to his posthumous tormentor Athanasius he deduced from Prov. 8:22 that the wisdom which accompanied God in the fashioning of the world was itself created; certainly this notorious text would have justified his belief that the terms 'created' and 'begotten' may be used with equal propriety of the Son, or second hypostasis after the Father. Like many of his contemporaries, he assumes that the title 'Son' denotes a status which belonged to the second hypostasis before his incarnation; he does not, however, conclude that the relation between the Son and the Father is one of natural filiation, perhaps because he is conscious that in the Scriptures a son may be the disciple of a human teacher or a created representative of God. The equation of Christ with Wisdom, on the other hand, was a commonplace. It was after the Nicene Council that Marcellus of An-cyra declared the Proverbs of Solomon too enigmatic to serve as proof-texts (Eusebius, *Against Marcellus* 1.3.13–14), and a generation later still that Gregory of Nyssa (*Against Eunomius* 1.299) and Epiphanius (*Panarion* 69.25) drew its poison by appealing to the translation of Aquila, in which the verb is not 'created' but 'possessed'.

In reply to the 'Arians', Athanasius pleads that the exegete cannot be guided by a few words plucked from the text, but by the *skopos* or tenor of the surrounding passage. Thus to read on from Prov. 8:22 to Prov. 8:25 ('before all the hills he begets me' in the Septuagint) will suffice to disarm an adversary who, unlike Arius, maintained that the Second Person is created and not begotten (Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 2.56). Against Arius himself, who embraced 'begotten' and 'created' as equally halting approximations to an inexpressible mode of origin, Athanasius observes that the divine word never uses the term 'begotten' of things that are properly created (*Against the Arians* 2.48). Yet he himself is conscious that other passages, such as those which speak of Christ's susceptibility to passions or of his having received divinity as the reward of his obedience, will not support the claim that the Son is God by nature unless they are read through a Trinitarian prism. The required hermeneutic, he argues, is provided by the Church, outside whose discipline the most learned man is a heretic, as guilty of wresting Scripture to (p. 88) his own purpose as the devil (*Against the Arians* 1.1). Since the Church teaches us to worship Christ (*Against the Arians* 2.23), we cannot entertain any reading of the sacred text which reduces him to the status of a creature. As an instrument is inferior in dignity to the end

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for which we employ it, so a Son who was created or brought forth for no other object than the making of the cosmos would be inferior to those things in heaven and earth which we are expressly forbidden to worship in the Decalogue (*Against the Arians* 2.19, 2.30). To make him a product of the Father's will is to seek the cause of his existence in caprice and not in the necessary attributes of deity. He is not, in short, a product of the Father's will, but the will itself (*Against the Arians* 2.2).

These premises—that one cannot be at once creator and creature, that a creature cannot be the object of a cult, and that whatever proceeds from the Father's will does not proceed from his nature—are to him not so much presuppositions as luminous implications of the Christian faith, which must be brought as postulates to the interpretation of any given verse. Once it is thus established that the Arian construction of the text cannot be sound, the theologian may avail himself of a new prophylactic tool against false reading—the distinction between those titles, deeds, and sufferings which pertain to Christ as God and those which accrue to him as man (*Against the Arians* 3.29 etc.). It is in his flesh that the Logos trembles, not in that nature which he shares with the Father; he puts forth his hand as man and heals as God (*Against the Arians* 3.32). When he asks where to find the body of Lazarus he betrays a human ignorance; in raising him he demonstrates that God's power is also his (*Against the Arians* 3.37–8). Prov. 8:22, with other texts implying growth or the acquisition of glory through toil and sacrifice (Lk. 2:52, Phil. 2:10), should be referred to his creation on our account, or rather to the new creation that he effects in us (*Against the Arians* 2.50, 2.80). Even to be the true image of the Father (Col. 1:15), he must be the Son (*Against the Arians* 2.2), and we show to an Emperor's statue the reverence due to the original (*Against the Arians* 3.5). His subordination as man must not be allowed to obscure his majesty, for where a man is called both Son and servant in the Scriptures, it is the term 'son' that denotes the essence (*Against the Arians* 2.3). It follows for Athanasius, as he later contends in his letters to Serapion, that the Spirit is not a creature, since he accompanies Father and Son in all their works and is named beside them in the liturgy. We cannot, while upholding the divinity of the second person, deny that of the third.

Athanasius, as we have seen, distinguishes between proper and improper usage in the Scriptures, concluding that if the same entity is said to be both begotten and created, only the former term is employed in the proper sense. The party led by Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea—commonly styled, in their own day as in ours, the homoiousians—followed Arius and Eusebius in holding both terms to be equally instructive, and equally subject to qualification. Identity of nature is upheld, they urge, when we speak of the second person as begotten; on the other hand, we assert that he is created to make it clear that this communication of nature entails no lessening, alienation, or expansion of divine substance (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73.6.8). It was the homoiousians, not the homoousians, who were accused of making Father and Son equipollent, so that the latter no longer owed his generation to the former (Eunomius, *Apology* 26). Their accuser, Eunomius of (p. 89) Cyzicus, appears to have based his reasoning not so much on exegesis as on the dogmatic postulate of divine simplicity, which he shared with his orthodox contemporaries. For him this entailed that the Godhead possesses no accidental properties which

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could be divorced from the essence like the accidents of any created subject. Hence, he goes on in his *Apology*, if one person in the Trinity is ingenerate and another generated, their essences, like their properties, must be antithetical.

The most durable refutations of Eunomius came from the Cappadocian Basil of Caesarea and his younger sibling Gregory of Nyssa. Both hold that Eunomius has been led astray by the specious clarity of human logic, forgetting that no human intellect can fathom God, and therefore failing to see that all our knowledge of him is deduced from his operations or from the names and attributes disclosed in Scripture. Even the appellative *theos* (derived, as Gregory thinks, from a verb which means 'to see') implies that God is known to us through his providential government, but does not circumscribe his essence. The titles Father and Son should be preferred to the abstractions of Eunomius, not only because they are biblical, but because they indicate complementarity rather than opposition: it is as true that Sonship determines Fatherhood as that Fatherhood determines Sonship. Borrowing a caveat from Origen, Basil writes that even biblical terms are not true representations (*ennoiai*) of the divine, but *epinoiai*, or accommodations to our understanding. The Byzantine distinction between the unknowable essence of God and his known, though uncreated energies, is also anticipated in his writings. Gregory of Nyssa maintains that human reason is equally at fault when it infers that the Son is second in rank because his name comes second in the liturgy (Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 1.197-204), or that because there is dependence of one person on another in the Trinity, the effect must be inferior to the cause. Even the most self-evident deductions from the Scriptures may be challenged if they contravene the rule of faith: defending the analogy between three members of the class 'man' and the persons of the Trinity, Gregory is prepared to contend that, just as the three who are God make one God in the aggregate and not three, so three representatives of humanity constitute man and not three men. The use of the plural 'men' in the Scriptures is thus to be understood as a condescension to the vulgar idiom, not as a lesson in grammar to the theologian (Gregory of Nyssa, *Letter to Ablabius*). The principle of winnowing the human from the divine in Christ was adopted by this new generation of Nicene theologians, while Heb. 1:3 comes into its own again in a letter attributed both to Gregory and to his brother Basil of Caesarea. Admitting that, if the Son is a *kharaktêr* of the Father's *hypostasis*, it might appear that we have no grounds for assigning a distinct *hypostasis* to him, the author explains that it is precisely this unique dependence on the Father that constitutes the distinct *hypostasis* of the son. Like Tertullian, therefore, he employs one text to establish both the community of nature and the plurality of persons. The reasoning is consonant with Basil's exegesis of Mk 13:32, where the Son disowns knowledge of the final day. Where others construed these words as an 'economic' manifestation of the ignorance that is proper to a creature, Basil opines that the Son is speaking in his higher character, not so much denying that he knows as intimating that he knows only by virtue of the Father's knowledge (Letter 236).

(p. 90) Latin Epilogue

Latin exegesis before Nicaea, while it distinguished the humanity of Christ from his divinity, was not inclined to credit him with sayings that appertain to only one of these two natures. Novatian cites 'the Father is greater than I' (Jn 14:28) to prove that the Father and Son are distinct, and does not feel bound to say in what respect the Son is inferior (Novatian, *On the Trinity* 26). After the Council Hilary of Poitiers thought it better to deny that Christ had suffered any temptation in Gethsemane than to argue that he was frail as man and resolute as God. When he begged that the cup might pass from his lips, says Hilary, Christ was asking not that he himself should be spared the Cross, but that a share in his tribulations might be imparted to the disciples. In Augustine's masterpiece *On the Trinity*, the integrity of Christ's person and his equality with the Father are the two presuppositions to be defended, and he is loath to surrender one to preserve the other. Rather than propose that the gift of the Spirit or the mission of the Son are true of them only in an economic sense, he denies that sending and giving entail inferiority of nature. Such inferiority might be inferred if the Son, as Justin and others supposed, were the only person of the Godhead who became visible to the patriarchs. Augustine therefore surmises that either God was represented by an angel, as the text often indicates (Augustine, *On the Trinity* 3.11.22-7), or if one of the three is sent, this is not a proof of his inferiority but of his condescension (*On the Trinity* 4.18.24-20.30). Here, we may feel, is another case, where the canon is brought to the text and not derived from the text itself.

But Augustine grounds his theology on the dictum 'God is love' (1 Jn 4:8), which he construes both as a biblical affidavit to the Trinitarian character of God and as a rule for exegesis. As a metaphysical axiom, it teaches us that the Spirit who acts as the copula between the loving Father and the beloved Son cannot be less than God, from which it follows that the Son who exhales the Spirit must be God also (Augustine, *On the Trinity* 8.10.14). As a hermeneutic precept, it becomes fertile when combined with other beliefs that Augustine brings to the text—that, since the text itself is the Word of God, it must be informed by the living Word, and that, since the goal of all exegesis is to awaken charity (Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1.36.40), the object which we seek in the text is invariably love. If Christ himself were not love there would be no surety that when we find one in the text we shall find the other; if we identify Christ with love, on the other hand, it follows inevitably that the Christological reading will also be the charitable reading. But if the text speaks ubiquitously of Christ, if Christ is love and if love is God, it must follow from all this that there cannot be a Christophany which is not also a theophany. It is from the discovery that Christ is God, as we have said above, that the Church built up its doctrine of the Trinity. Augustine, like his predecessors, holds that we must embrace this tenet before we can search the Scriptures, but in his case the prolegomenon is written not in the liturgy or the pronouncements of a council but in the text itself: that God is love is the key that the text supplies to the interpreter, and without this key we cannot hope to unlock the meaning of a single verse.

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Mark Edwards

Mark Edwards holds a doctorate in Classics from the University of Oxford, and has been for twenty years lecturer in patristic theology at the same institution.

The Trinity in the Ante-Nicene Fathers

Stephen M. Hildebrand

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the works of Ante-Nicene fathers concerning the Trinity. It traces the evolution of Trinitarian thought from Apostolic Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch through the Apologists to the great theologians of the late second and early third centuries including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian. It discusses works on the Trinity in the economy, the emergence of a theology of the Spirit, the theological appropriation of Greek philosophical thought in an effort to explain the faith handed down and the emergence of Trinitarian technical vocabulary.

Keywords: Ante-Nicene fathers, Trinity, Trinitarian thought, Apostolic fathers, Ignatius of Antioch, Apologists, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian

Apostolic Fathers

CHRISTIAN authors of the first and second centuries, commonly designated 'Apostolic Fathers', spoke about God in terms reminiscent of the New Testament. If we set aside the thorny question of the nature and extent of their knowledge of the texts and traditions of the New Testament, both the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers use binitarian as well as Trinitarian expressions. At the end of *1 Clement*, for example, Clement of Rome (c. 96) offers a prayer to the 'Creator of the universe' that he will 'keep intact the precise number of his elect in the whole world through his beloved Child [*pais*] Jesus Christ'; the Holy Spirit is mentioned elsewhere in the letter, but not in the prayer (*1 Clement* 59,2; Clement 1996: 70). The prayer that Polycarp (d. 156) offered at his martyrdom, however, is Trinitarian. Polycarp blesses the 'Lord God Almighty, Father' of his 'beloved and blessed Servant [*pais*] Jesus Christ' for his own participation in the cup of Christ 'in the immortality of the Holy Spirit'. Polycarp closes his prayer with a doxology: 'I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Servant, through whom be glory to thee with him and the Holy Spirit both now and unto the ages to come. Amen' (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14; 1996: 154).

The Trinity in the Ante-Nicene Fathers

Far and away the fullest theology of the Trinity among the Apostolic Fathers is that of Ignatius (d. 110). For Ignatius, Jesus is the unique Son of God, 'who was with the Father from eternity and appeared at the end' (*Magnesians* 6,1; Ignatius 1996: 95). Ignatius repeatedly refers to God as the Father of Jesus Christ.

Ignatius also stresses that the Son is the revealer of the Father. He calls Jesus the 'guileless mouth by which the Father has spoken truthfully' (*Romans* 8,2; Ignatius 1996: 106), and calls him the 'knowledge [*gnomê*] of God' (*Ephesians* 17,2; Ignatius 1996: 92). Ignatius asserts that the prophets lived like Christ Jesus and were inspired 'to convince unbelievers (p. 96) that God is one, and that he has revealed himself in his Son Jesus Christ, who is his Word issuing from the silence and who won the complete approval of him who sent him' (*Magnesians* 8,2; Ignatius 1996: 96). Jesus Christ is the sole teacher (*Magnesians* 9,1; *Ephesians* 15,1).

As is done in many texts of the New Testament, Ignatius calls Jesus 'God', and here we find some of Ignatius' most striking and prescient images. Writing to the Romans lest they impede his martyrdom, he exhorts, 'Let me imitate the passion of my God' (*Romans* 6,3; Ignatius 1996: 105). In the opening of his letter to the Ephesians, Ignatius praises them as imitators of God who have been stirred by the 'blood of God' (*Ephesians* 1,1; Ignatius 1996: 87). Weinandy takes such statements to anticipate the communication of idioms and sees Ignatius' Christology as the forerunner of Chalcedon (Weinandy 2005).

Though he has far more to say about the Son, Jesus, Ignatius several times mentions the Holy Spirit, and always in connection with the saving work of the Father and the Son. The action of the Spirit spans the whole economy. He is present to the prophets of the Old Testament who were disciples of Christ by the Spirit (*Magnesians* 9,2). In one of several creedal passages, Ignatius confesses that 'our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary, in God's plan being sprung from the seed of David and from the Holy Spirit' (*Ephesians* 18,2; Ignatius 1996: 92-3). Finally, the Spirit provides for the unity of the Church in the bishop and in the imitation of Jesus (*Philadelphians* 7,2).

The texts considered so far and many others besides indicate that Ignatius' Trinitarian thought is dominated by reflection on the economy of salvation. As we will see later, sometimes economic views of the Trinity in the ante-Nicene period portray the Father as a distant transcendent God and the Son as the God who deals with the world. This is emphatically not the case with Ignatius, as Robin Darling Young has shown. For him, the Church has *henosis* with the Father through the bishop and through the 'acceptance of the reality of Christ's death' (Young 1999: 337). Young cites a fantastic text from the letter to the Ephesians wherein Ignatius calls them the stones of the Temple of the Father and the domicile of God our Father through the crane of Jesus Christ using the Holy Spirit as a rope (*Ephesians* 9, 1-2). The Father is, indeed, immanent, dwelling in the hearts of the Ephesians.

The Apologists

The Age of Apologists follows that of the Apostolic Fathers. A handful of second-century Apologists defended the Christian faith against the malice and prejudice of the Roman Empire. Some of the Apologists, moreover, bring to their Trinitarian reflection a familiarity with Greek philosophical thought and a willingness to use it in explaining the Christian faith to their pagan contemporaries. While it is true that one can find among some of the Apostolic Fathers both an acquaintance with aspects of pagan philosophical thought (one might think of elements of Stoicism in *1 Clement*) and a sensitivity to (p. 97) persecution at the hands of the Empire, with the Apologists we enter a new stage in Trinitarian theology, marked by a more profound interaction with Greek thought.

In his search for the true philosophy, St Justin Martyr (d. 165) turned from one ancient school of Greek philosophy to another until his conversion to Christianity, or ‘Christian philosophy’. St Justin cast a long shadow: he is easily the most important second-century Apologist, and his thought influenced many Christian theologians after him.

If one were to pick a central idea of Justin's Trinitarian thought it would be his Logos theology. This is true enough, but one must proceed carefully. The temptation has been to reduce Justin to his philosophical sources—and their presence is undeniable—and so to give an account of his understanding of the Logos that is too distant from its New Testament sources. Above all one must never lose sight of the fact that Justin's Logos theology is not about Stoicism, Middle Platonism, or Philonic Hellenistic Judaism; rather it is about Jesus Christ (Baechle, dissertation, 2009). Justin uses the word ‘Logos’ with an intentionally rich and varied range of meanings but, above all, the Logos is Jesus, the Son of God. As Justin writes in the *First Apology*, ‘we have been taught that Christ is the First-born of God, and we have suggested above that he is the logos of whom every race of men and women were partakers’ (*First Apology* 46; Justin 1997: 55).

The Logos, the Son, who became Jesus was begotten or conceived, Justin writes in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, ‘as a beginning before all creatures’ (*Dialogue* 61,1; Justin 2003: 94). Justin does not mention the eternal generation of the Logos but understands him primarily in relation to the economy of salvation. It is the Logos who has been planted or sown (the Logos *spermatikos*) among all men who strive to live uprightly (*Second Apology* 8). It is the Logos who speaks and acts in the Old Testament. Here we can see most clearly the Son's connection with the economy: he is God immanent; the Father, God transcendent. Genesis 19:24 reads, ‘The Lord rained fire from the Lord out of heaven’. The text, writes Justin, ‘indicates that they are two in number: one on earth, who says that he came down to witness the cry of Sodom, and one in heaven, who is the Lord of the Lord on earth and as his Father and God was responsible for his being the mighty one and Lord and God’ (*Dialogue* 129, 1; Justin 2003: 194). Justin makes the same point in his *First Apology* wherein he opposes the ‘Jewish’ interpretation of the burning bush theophany which holds that the Father and Demiurge of the universe spoke to Moses. Justin maintains that it was not the Father but the Son who spoke to Moses. Again we get the impression that for Justin the Father is God transcendent and the Son, God immanent, and, of course, the

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danger of this kind of thinking is that it logically tends toward subordinationism. Especially in a Platonic framework, the transcendent God is ontologically superior to the immanent God.

Like so many other ante-Nicenes, Justin confesses the Holy Spirit (third in rank, he says (*First Apology* 60)) and mentions several times the baptismal formula. Leslie Barnard writes that 'much of Justin's language about the Spirit has an impersonal ring but the epithet 'prophetic Spirit' has a more personal tone' (Justin 1997: 116, n. 77). Naturally enough, then, Justin's pneumatology is not advanced. There are, however, two famous puzzles in Justin's writings relating to the Spirit. In one case he identifies the (p. 98) Spirit with the Word: 'The Spirit and the Power from God cannot therefore be understood as anything else than the Word, who is also the First-begotten of God' (*First Apology* 33; Justin 1997: 46). It is texts such as this one that lead some to call Justin's theology binitarian rather than Trinitarian. In the other case, he interrupts the usual order of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: 'we worship and honour [the Father] and the Son ... and the army of the other good angels ... and the prophetic Spirit' (*First Apology* 6; Justin 1997: 26). In spite of many attempts to make sense of this text, the best reading, in itself difficult to explain, is that Justin offered worship and honour to the Logos' good angels (Justin 1997: 110, n. 36). In his confession and in liturgical practice, Justin was clearly Trinitarian, though in his theological formulations he is sometimes Trinitarian, sometimes binitarian.

It seems strange on the surface that Theophilus of Antioch, the last Apologist that we will consider, did not speak much about Jesus, and this in spite of the fact that his Trinitarian thought is thoroughly economic. Theophilus, for example, in *To Autolycus* (c.180) writes about Scripture, God, his Word and his Wisdom, creation, the resurrection, and other matters, but is silent on Jesus, perhaps, opines Robert Grant, because of apologetic convention, perhaps because of his peculiar Christology (Grant 1988: 165).

Theophilus' theology has both Jewish and Platonic roots: Grant calls him 'an heir of Hellenistic Judaism' and compares him with Philo of Alexandria (Grant 1988: 167). Theophilus holds that God transcends human speech, but can be known by his works. God is incomprehensible in glory, unfathomable in greatness, inconceivable in height, incomparable in power, unrivalled in wisdom, inimitable in goodness, and unutterable in kindness.

It is peculiar that for Theophilus, Father, Word, and Spirit are much like other words predicated of God. In *To Autolycus* he writes,

If I call him Light, I speak of his creature; if I call him Logos, I speak of his beginning; if I call him Mind, I speak of his intelligence; if I call him Spirit, I speak of his breath; if I call him Sophia (Wisdom), I speak of his offspring; if I call him Strength, I speak of his might ... if I call him Father, I speak of him as all things; if I call him Fire, I speak of his wrath. (*To Autolycus* 1,3; Theophilus 1970: 5)

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Again, Theophilus will say, following Psalm 32:6, that God made all things by his Word and Wisdom, but in the same text also that God prepared the heavens by knowledge and broke up the fountains of the deep by understanding. These texts seem to imply that, for Theophilus, Father, Word, and Wisdom, are not, as later theologians would say, distinct persons.

This, however, is not the whole story. Explaining his understanding of creation, Theophilus writes that God 'having his own Logos innate (*endiathetos*) in his own bowels, generated him together with his own Sophia, vomiting him forth before everything else' (*To Autolytus* 2,10; Theophilus 1970: 39). The Word, then, is generated for the economy, a point confirmed later when Autolytus asked Theophilus how God can be said to walk in paradise when he cannot be contained in a place. Theophilus explains: (p. 99)

The God and Father of the universe is unconfined and is not present in a place.... But his Logos, through whom he made all things, who is his *Power and Wisdom* (1 Cor. 1:24), assuming the role of the Father and Lord of the universe, was present in paradise in the role of God and conversed with Adam. (*To Autolytus* 2,22; Theophilus 1970: 63)

The voice that Adam heard was the Word of God, 'who is also his Son'. The begetting of the Son, however, is not to be understood after the manner of the pagan gods. Rather, the Word always resided in the heart of God and was with God as a counsellor, his own mind and thought. 'When God wished to make what he had planned to make, he generated this Logos, making him external (*prophorikos*), as the firstborn of all creation [Col. 1:15] without emptying himself of Reason' (*To Autolytus* 2,22; Theophilus 1970: 63). In these two texts we see an important (and, by later standards, erroneous) distinction, that Theophilus was the first to make explicitly, between the Word immanent (*Logos endiathetos*) and the Word expressed (*Logos prophorikos*). Of course, with this distinction in place, the Word is eternal but his generation or expression is not.

Theophilus' understanding of Wisdom is not so much immature as confused. In the same passage (*To Autolytus* 2,10) he speaks of him as distinct from the Word and identifies him with the Word and the Spirit of God. 'Probably', Grant tries to explain, 'Theophilus reflects both the earlier doctrine, according to which God's agent and aide was Sophia, and the later doctrine, which replaced Sophia with Logos' (Grant 1988: 169).

Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen

The age of the Apologists obviously ends with the conversion of Constantine and the toleration of Christianity in 313, but long before the intellectual centre of gravity in Christianity shifted away from the state and towards internal doctrinal differences. The shift was not abrupt. Apologists like Justin had also written works against the Gnostic interpretation of Christianity, and anti-Gnostic writers like Clement and Origen wrote in defence of the faith against pagans. At the very least, we can say that the most significant theological reflection on the Trinity after Theophilus occurs not in apologetic works but in

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polemic with other Christians: Gnostics on the one hand and Monarchians on the other. It is in works against these two mistakes that our remaining cohort of ante-Nicene theologians—Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, and Tertullian—will work out their understanding of the Trinity.

Gnosticism was not a monolithic or highly institutionalized form of Christianity, but a collection of sects loosely connected by a set of common basic beliefs. Gnostics interpreted the events of salvation history reported in the Old and New Testaments, from creation to Jesus, in the light of a fundamental myth (and the details of the myths vary (p. 100) from sect to sect). The world-view contained in the myth is always dualistic, positing opposition between spirit and matter and sometimes also the authors of spirit and matter, a good God and an evil creator God.

Monarchianism, like Gnosticism, names not a single group but several ways of thinking about God and Jesus whose common emphasis is the unity of God against the allegedly ditheistic Logos theology of theologians like St Justin. While Monarchians differ one from another, their theology tends to take two forms: modalism or adoptionism. Some, like Sabellius of Rome, confess one God who is now Father, now Son, now Holy Spirit. The three names do not refer to three individuals or three persons, but to the different ways or modes of acting of the one God. Such a thinker could, of course, hold that God became incarnate, but he would not hold that the Son became incarnate and not the Father, for there is no distinction between Father and Son: they are two names for the same 'person'. Others, like Theodotus the Shoemaker, hold that Father and Son are indeed distinct. Jesus, who was a mere man but an exceptionally virtuous man, became God's (adopted) Son at his baptism. Because the sources are scant, very little can be said with certainty about the two kinds of Monarchians. Whatever one says about them, it is certainly true that Monarchian errors are the backdrop for a great deal of third-century reflection on the Trinity.

Irenaeus

Robert Grant calls St Irenaeus 'the most important Christian controversialist and theologian between the apostles and the third-century genius Origen', and compares his theology to a Gothic cathedral. It is

strongly supported by columns of biblical faith and tradition, illuminated by vast expanses of exegetical and logical argument, and upheld by flying buttresses of rhetorical and philosophical considerations from the outside. (Grant 1997: 1)

This image well communicates how Irenaeus took up ideas from the Apologists, especially Justin, to explain the Christian faith against Valentinian Gnosticism. Gnostic thought threatened apostolic Christianity as Irenaeus understood it by positing division where there must, for the sake of our salvation, be unity. The Gnostics divide God from his Word and Spirit, the Word from his flesh, the Spirit from his prophets, the creator from the

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physical world, creation from redemption, the Old Testament from the New, and man from his body.

On many occasions, Irenaeus distils the preaching of the Apostles into a rule of faith, and the various expressions of the rule of faith typically confess the Father as the creator of the world as well as the genuine incarnation, passion, and death of the Son. Thus, the rule of faith is, above all, anti-Gnostic. One of the bizarre (to us) features of Gnosticism is the Pleroma, the Godhead, which consists of many beings related to one another by a complex set of emanations. Irenaeus saw this as ridiculous speculation, completely unfounded in revelation. If 'anyone asks', he writes in *Against Heresies*, 'what was God (p. 101) doing before he made the world? we reply that the answer to such a question lies with God himself' (*Haer.* 2,28,3; Irenaeus 1885: 400).

Even though Irenaeus is not inclined to speculate about God in himself, he clearly attributes pre-existence to the Son and the Spirit. Like Theophilus before him, Irenaeus considered the Son and the Spirit the hands of God (*To Autolycus* 2,18, e.g. *Haer.* 4,20,1). Unlike Theophilus, Irenaeus rejects any analogy between human speech and the generation of the Word. God is not sometimes silent, sometimes speaking; rather, 'God being all Mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly what he thinks, and thinks exactly what he speaks' (*Haer.* 2,28,5; Irenaeus 1885: 400). Irenaeus says even that 'the Word, that is the Son, was always with the Father' (*Haer.* 4,20,3; Irenaeus 1885: 488) and that 'the Son, eternally co-existing with the Father ... always reveals the Father to angels ... and all to whom he wills that God should be revealed' (*Haer.* 2,30,9; Irenaeus 1885: 406). Nonetheless, it is not clear whether or not Irenaeus here anticipates later statements of the eternal generation of the Son, for in both of these texts the context is economic. At his core, the Son is a saviour. His creative and revealing activity, his incarnation, of course, and passion and resurrection are all saving activities. 'From the beginning', the existence of the Son is bound up with man, for man is made in his likeness, and he exists to save man. 'For inasmuch as he had a pre-existence as a saving Being, it was necessary that what might be saved should also be called into existence, in order that the Being who saves should not exist in vain' (*Haer.* 3,22,3; Irenaeus 1885: 455; Weinandy 2003: 25-6).

Irenaeus has a more mature pneumatology than his predecessors. There is no confusion of the Spirit with the Word, as the Spirit is assigned a distinct role in the economy of salvation. The Spirit is the Wisdom in whom God freely and spontaneously made all things (*Haer.* 4,20,1). He ministers to the Father along with the Son, but angels are subject to the both of them (*Haer.* 4,7,4). The Spirit was poured forth in the Old Testament and by his influence the Father was revealed (*Haer.* 4,20,6). Weinandy well sums up the role of the Spirit in the new dispensation: 'through faith and baptism the Christian comes to partake of this risen life through the Holy Spirit [and] it is the Holy Spirit that molds and fashions us into the image of Jesus, and in this way we take on the likeness of the Father as his children' (Weinandy 2003: 30; *Haer.* 5,6,1). For Irenaeus the Spirit's activity is both inseparable and distinct from that of the Father and the Son. 'Those who bear the Spirit of God', he writes in his *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*, 'are led to the Word, that

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is to the Son, while the Son presents [them] to the Father, and the Father furnishes incorruptibility' (*Demonstration 7*; Irenaeus 1997: 44).

The attempt to analyse Irenaeus' rich thought from the vantage point of third- and fourth-century theological tendencies has generated a large body of scholarly literature. Dennis Minns believes that some passages in Irenaeus seem modalistic while others, subordinationist; 'we should admit that he did not address the question directly and that his remarks which seem to bear upon it have, in fact, another purpose' (Minns 2010: 63-4). Minns ends up arguing, I think rightly, that Irenaeus was neither modalist nor subordinationist. More than understandable, it must be expected that Irenaeus would not tease out the ontological implication of economic trinitarianism in the way that later theologians would.

(p. 102) **Clement**

Irenaeus' writings were diffused widely almost immediately, and Clement of Alexandria (d. 215) knew *Against Heresies*. Irenaeus, however, was not Clement's only source, for he drew upon the Hellenic Jew Philo as well as a wide array of pagan Greek authors. Clement is commonly acknowledged to be thoroughly Hellenized, and one can easily see why. Nevertheless, and despite his many philosophic debts, we do well to remember that for Clement the Scriptures are *the* privileged source for knowledge about God. Indeed Osborn stresses that in reading Clement one must have before one's eyes three problems that Clement wished to solve (Osborn 2005: 4), and one of these bears directly on his Trinitarian thought: the Gospels proclaim one God, yet how can Father and Son be one God.

Clement's problem, then, comes not from philosophy but from revelation, though he uses Middle Platonic philosophy to help answer the problem. Drawing upon the Middle Platonic understanding of Mind in relation to One, Clement writes in the *Stromateis* that God cannot be a 'subject for demonstration', but that the Son, who is Wisdom, Knowledge, and Truth is 'susceptible of demonstration and of description' (*Stromateis 4,25*; Clement 1885b: 438).

Clement casts the relationship between the Father and the Son in largely cosmological and metaphysical terms. The nature of the Son is 'nearest to him who is alone the almighty One, is the most perfect', holy, kingly, and beneficent (*Stromateis 7,2*; Clement 1885b: 524). The Son orders all things in accordance with the Father's will; he is the 'paternal Word, exhibiting the holy administration for him who put [all] in subjection to him' (*Stromateis 7,2*; Clement 1885b: 524). The Son is responsible for the Christian revelation of God and 'gave philosophy to the Greeks by means of inferior angels' (*Stromateis 7,2*; Clement 1885b: 524).

Clement writes in his *Instructor (Paedagogus)* that the Father is simply one, in fact, 'more than one, beyond unity' (*Paedagogus 1,8,71*; Clement 1954: 63), while the Son is 'one thing as all things', 'for he is the circle of all powers rolled and united into one unity' (*Stromateis 4,25*; Clement 1885b: 438). Thus the Son is a metaphysical mediator,

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ontologically subordinate to the One as he brings the many into contact with it (I think the subordinationist tendency in Clement is stronger than Feulner thinks it is (Feulner 2006: 164–7)). This position makes God the Word the ideal tutor and loving educator of man. While Clement's philosophical analysis of divine unity would not measure up to later standards, the all-transcendent God is not indifferent to his creation; rather Clement constantly stresses the love and concern of both the Father and the Son for their creatures, especially man.

The Holy Spirit is often called by Clement the 'prophetic Spirit' working in the Old Testament (e.g. *Paedagogus* 1,5,12). Beyond this role, the Spirit plays a part in the new dispensation by drawing us to a life of virtue (e.g. *Stromateis* 7,2) and is the baptismal Light in which we see Light (*Paedagogus* 1,6,28).

Clement closes the *Instructor* with a beautiful prayer that well reflects the contours and emphases of his Trinitarian thought: (p. 103)

Be gracious, O Instructor, to us thy Children,

Father, Charioteer of Israel, Son and Father, both in One, Lord.

The opening lines focus on the Father and the Son in the teaching economy, and the prayer is addressed to the two of them. Only half-way through the prayer is the Spirit mentioned:

Do thou thyself cause that all of us who have our conversation in thy peace ... may be wafted in calm by thy Holy Spirit, by the ineffable Wisdom ... and [praise and thank] the Alone Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son, Instructor and Teacher, with the Holy Spirit, all in One [the Son] in whom is all, for whom all is one, for whom is eternity, whose members we all are, whose glory the aeons are. (*Paedagogus* 1,12,101; Clement 1885a: 295)

The Father and Son are primary but the Spirit participates in the work of the Son. Also, one can hear here echoes of Clement's Middle Platonism, especially in his confession of the unity of all in the Son.

Origen

Clement had often promised to write a work on first principles, notes Charles Kannengiesser, and Origen (d. 254) delivered on that promise (Kannengiesser 1988: 238–41). For this Origen is thought to be the first systematic theologian, and, indeed, there had never before been a work like *On First Principles*, in which one sees a comprehensive and sweeping vision of Christianity in opposition to the Marcionites. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Kannengiesser argues, are the First Principles: 'thus there are three first principles in one Godhead, according to Origen, the Holy Spirit being also a first principle of salvation, like the Father and the Son' (Kannengiesser 1988: 246).

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Origen's theological reflection on the Trinity, like Clement's, is deeply indebted to Middle Platonic thought. Origen, however, would have us remember that 'the knowledge which calls men to lead a good and blessed life [derives] from no other source but the very words and teaching of Christ' (*On First Principles* 1, preface, 1; Origen 1973: 1). Even in his mistaken ideas—if we judge by a later standard—Origen is attempting to explain biblical revelation.

On First Principles opens with a long exposition of the Trinity which is recapitulated at the end of the work. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not considered apart from the economy of creation and redemption. The Trinity, for Origen, is the 'blessed and ruling power ... that exercises control of all things' (*On First Principles* 1,4,3; Origen 1973: 41). God is his creative and beneficent power, and, so, it is 'absurd and impious to suppose that these powers of God have been at any time in abeyance for a single moment' (*On First Principles* 1,4,3; Origen 1973: 41). Origen draws the conclusion that either creation always exists, or, at least, creation is always present and prefigured in the always existing Wisdom, who is the Son.

Origen writes of the Son in straightforward scriptural language, rather than the subtle (and still scriptural in its own way) language of the centuries after him. The Son is begotten of the Father's will (which Arius would say in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia). He is the 'image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15), 'the effulgence of his glory' (p. 104) and the impress of his substance' (Heb. 1:3), the 'firstborn of all creation' (Col. 1:15). He is a creature in a qualified sense, Wisdom, as Prov. 8:22 has it (*On First Principles* 4,4,1). Moreover the Son is always existing and has no beginning: there is no 'time when he did not exist' (a point that Arius would deny in the same aforementioned letter) (*On First Principles* 4,4,1; Origen 1973: 314).

To explain the union that obtains between the Father and the Son, Origen draws an analogy with the union that obtains between the Word and his soul, which, in Origen's thought, pre-exists, like every soul, the creation of the body. The Word is united in a 'spotless partnership' to its human soul and the same harmony of wills obtains between the Father and the Son, but Origen also speaks often of a natural union (*On First Principles* 4,4,4; Origen 1973: 319).

Origen is very clearly a subordinationist (*pace* Killian McDonnell 1994, who tries to clear him of the charge by arguing that Origen's language is economic and not ontological; Origen's texts seem both economic and ontological). The Son, for example, does not know the Father as clearly as the Father knows himself (*On First Principles* 4,4,8), and the Son has a smaller sphere of providence to correspond to his lower level of being:

The God and Father, who holds the universe together, is superior to every being that exists, for he imparts to each one from his own existence that which each one is; the Son, being less than the Father, is superior to rational creatures alone (for he is second to the Father). (*On First Principles* 1,3,5; Origen 1973: 33–4)

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Moreover, the Lord taught us to pray not to him but to the Father, 'for if ... the Son is distinct from the Father in essence and in underlying reality (*kat' ousian kai hupokeimenon*), then we should pray to the Son and not to the Father, or to them both, or to the Father alone' (*On Prayer* 15,1; Origen 2004: 147). The first two alternatives are absurd and unscriptural; so, we should 'pray to God the Father of all alone, but not apart from the high priest' (*On Prayer* 15,1; Origen 2004: 147). Of course, Origen sees his subordinationism in the Scriptures: after all, John the Evangelist refers to the Father as 'the God' and the Logos as just 'God' (*Commentary on John* 2, § 12-18).

As the Father is superior to the Son, so the Son is to the Spirit. The Spirit is less than the Son, for his sphere of providence is limited to the saints: 'the working of the power of God the Father and God the Son is spread indiscriminately over all created beings, but a share in the Holy Spirit is possessed, we find, by the saints alone' (*On First Principles* 1,3,7; Origen 1973: 36-7).

Explaining Jn 1:3 ('all things were made through him'), Origen maintains that the Holy Spirit came to existence through the Word because the Word is 'older than he' (*Commentary on John* 2, § 73; Origen 1989: 113). The 'Holy Spirit is the most honoured of all things which came to be through the Word' and is the first in rank 'of all the things which came to existence by the Father through Christ' (*Commentary on John* 2, § 75; Origen 1989: 114, translation slightly modified).

The great danger of subordinationism is that it tends toward polytheism: if the Son and Spirit are subordinate to the Father and yet all three are God, one cannot but conclude that they are three discrete beings, three gods. Origen is unintimidated by this danger. In his *Dialogue with Heraclides*, who was a monarchian, Origen puts to him this (p. 105) question: 'Is it not true ... that we do not hesitate to speak in one sense of two Gods, and in another sense of one God?' (*Dialogue with Heraclides* 2; Origen 1992: 58). Heraclides evades the question, but Origen will not let him obscure the point.

Origen said: 'And the two Gods become a unity?'

Heraclides said: 'Yes'.

Origen said: 'We profess two Gods?'

Heraclides said: 'Yes, [but] the power is one'. (*Dialogue with Heraclides* 2; Origen 1992: 59)

Though Heraclides got the last word of the exchange, Origen's victory was total.

Origen's thought in general and his Trinitarian thought in particular have been a constant source of dispute from ancient times to modern. He has always had detractors and defenders, those who make him the father of Nicene orthodoxy (he did confess that the Son is consubstantial with the Father together with a distinction of *hypostases*) on the one hand or the father of Arius on the other. The truth, I think, lies somewhere in the middle. There is in Origen's thought an inherent tension that calls for resolution in one direction

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(Nicene orthodoxy) or another (Arianism). Origen himself is aware of this tension. He knows when his thought is speculative, tentative, or offensive; he knows when his theological positions reach beyond the apostolic faith handed down to him even as he attempts to give a rational account of that very faith. It was left to his many intellectual and ecclesiastical heirs to sort out which positions were truly consistent with the apostolic faith and which were foreign to it.

The West: Tertullian

Now we must backtrack a bit and turn to the West, for with the writings of Tertullian (d. c. 220), whose career in Carthage overlaps with Clement's in Alexandria, we see the emergence of Western Latin Trinitarian thought. Tertullian set himself against the Gnostic thought of Marcion and the modalist thought of Praxeas (about whom we know next to nothing). Against Marcion he taught that there is one God creator of all, including the physical world, and against Praxeas that there are lasting and meaningful distinctions among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

At the outset of *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian confesses the rule of faith that has come down to him from the beginning. We 'believe', he writes,

that there is one only God, but under the following dispensation, or *oikonomia*, ... that this one only God has also a Son, his Word, who proceeded from himself ... [and] who sent also from heaven from the Father, according to his own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost. (*Against Praxeas* 2; Tertullian 1885: 598)

Tertullian offers an economic trinitarianism indebted to Theophilus of Antioch. Before all things God was alone, although he had Reason always with him, 'as he silently planned (p. 106) and arranged within himself everything which he was afterwards about to utter through his Word' (*Against Praxeas* 5; Tertullian 1885: 600). The Word, uttered at creation, is not a mere attribute of God but a substantive being and Son (*Against Praxeas* 7). As it is with the Word, so also with the Spirit: 'the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent persons, who are yet distinct one from another' (*Against Praxeas* 25; Tertullian 1885: 621). 'The Spirit is God, and the Word is God, because proceeding from God, but yet is not actually the very same as he from whom he proceeds' (*Against Praxeas* 26; Tertullian 1885: 622).

Operating within a Stoic philosophical framework, wherein spirit, including God, is rarified matter, Tertullian worked out some important conceptual and linguistic distinctions. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons (*personae*), three 'not in condition [*statu*], but in degree [*gradu*], not in substance [*substantia*], but in form [*forma*], not in power [*potestate*], but in aspect [*specie*]; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power' (*Against Praxeas* 2; Tertullian 1885: 598). Osborn calls attention also to Tertullian's use of the category of 'relative disposition' which anticipates Augustine's un-

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derstanding of relation in Trinitarian theology. 'Father and Son', he writes, 'have their existence in their disposition alone; therefore, when that disposition is denied, they cease to be... A father makes a son and a son makes a father' (Osborn 1997: 127; *Against Praxeas* 10).

'What then did Tertullian achieve? He handed on a form of discourse, which opened the way to further development, and above all a formula, "one substance in three persons"' (Osborn 1997: 138, citing Moingt 1966-9). Beyond this he was the first to use the word 'Trinity', the first to say that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were of one substance, and the first to say that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are persons. Tertullian came up with some unforgettable images for the Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit are like root, shoot, and fruit; spring, river, and stream; or sun, ray, and point of light (*Against Praxeas* 8). And finally Tertullian proposed a psychological analogy to explain the relationship between the Father and the Son: 'And that you may the more readily understand this,' he writes, 'consider first of all, from your own self, who are made "in the image and likeness of God", for what purpose it is that you also possess reason in yourself' (*Against Praxeas* 5; Tertullian 1885: 600). All these points foreshadow the thought of Augustine.

Conclusion

All ante-Nicene Trinitarian theology gives an 'account', a *logos* (see 1 Pet. 3:15), for the Trinitarian faith of the Gospel. Ignatius deeply penetrated and brilliantly summarized the Church's faith in Father, Son, and Spirit without the help (and the dangers) of the Greek philosophical tradition embraced by the Apologists upon whom Irenaeus was a clear improvement. Clement, Origen, and Tertullian carry on the basic project of the Apologists in a new context. It would be the work of fourth- and fifth-century theologians to pick up the insights and leave behind the deficiencies of second- and third-century understandings of the Father and the Son, and to carry still further the emerging theology of the Spirit.

(p. 107) Suggested Reading

There is no substitute for reading the texts of the Fathers first hand. Cyril Richardson's *Early Christian Fathers* (New York: Touchstone, 1996) contains many wonderful texts from the Apostolic Fathers (including Ignatius) as well excerpts from Irenaeus, and would be a good starting point. For scholarly guides to the whole ante-Nicene period, J. N. D. Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978) is still valuable if at times dated. One will find a much more recent treatment in J. Behr (2001). On Gnosticism, see Logan (1996).

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Stephen M. Hildebrand

Stephen M. Hildebrand is Associate Professor of Theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville, received his doctorate in Historical Theology from Fordham University.

The Trinity in the Fourth-Century Fathers

J. Warren Smith

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This article offers a nuanced account of the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies. It shows how the fundamentally exegetical controversies began with Arius' insistence on the unique divine prerogatives of the Father and continued with decades of debate over the appropriateness of the word *homoousios*, which had been rejected by third-century synods in Antioch because of concerns about modalism. It argues that the doctrine of the Trinity that emerged in the years leading up to the Council of Constantinople in 381 was not so much a philosophical dispute as it was a conflict over the interpretation of Scripture.

Keywords: Trinitarian controversy, fourth-century, exegetical controversies, Arius, divine prerogatives, homoousios, modalism, Antioch, Council of Constantinople, interpretation of Scripture

THE theological controversies of the fourth century that began with Arius and culminated in the Council of Constantinople (381) are commonly spoken of in monolithic terms as the 'Arian Controversy' or the 'Trinitarian Controversy'. Yet these titles are misleading. First, although the first major controversy arose from the clash between the Egyptian presbyter Arius and his bishop Alexander of Alexandria, after his condemnation at the Council of Nicaea (325) Arius and his theology ceased to be influential, except as a polemical label that supporters of Nicaea liberally attached to their enemies. Second, while the ontological relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was a major point of contention, the Trinity was by no means the only disputed subject. Rather the Trinity stood out as the most important subject in a constellation of related theological loci, including epistemology, the Incarnation, and Biblical interpretation. For in the fourth century, theology was not broken down into discrete loci. The Son's coeternal relationship with the Father was inseparable from the Son's salvific work in the Incarnation. Thus there was not one controversy about the Trinity but many controversies, some theological some not.

The doctrine of the Trinity that emerged in the years leading up to the Council of Constantinople in 381 was not so much a philosophical dispute as it was a conflict over the interpretation of Scripture. In the end, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan formula provided a

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fourth-century version of the Rule of Faith that established the theological pattern or grammar to guide both the Church's reading of Scripture and its articulation of the apostolic faith in its liturgy, hymns, preaching, and catechesis. This grammar for Christian speech about God gained its ascendancy through a process of theological performance in ecclesial practices, such as Gregory of Nazianzus's *Theological Orations*, that narrated the essential unity of Scripture's polyphonic depictions of Christ as both one with the Father and yet distinct (Ayres 2004: 81). In the eyes of the late fourth-century defenders of Nicaea, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed that became Church dogma merely formalized the rules for Christian speech already implicit in the logic of the biblical witness. However, the logic of Nicaea that seemed incontrovertible in 381 was not so obvious in 318. The language and logic of the grammar unfolded gradually in the theological imagination of Nicaea's supporters and critics alike. Therefore, the fourth-century doctrine of the Trinity must be seen as a work in progress and so its evolution needs to be traced out chronologically.

1. From Arius to Constantinople: The Road toward Trinitarian Consensus

Phase 1: Alexander and Arius (313-25)

In the decades following Diocletian's persecution (305–6), the Egyptian Church was divided between followers of Peter Patriarch of Alexandria and Melitius of Lycopolis, a wandering bishop, who gained disciples when Peter fled persecution. In 313, Alexander became bishop of Alexandria and sought to restore unity to the Egyptian Church through promoting doctrinal unity. Around 318, Alexander wrote a circular letter establishing a model of right teaching. In the letter, Alexander declared that the Son was eternally correlative with the Father. Employing Origen's language of 'eternal generation' Alexander argued that the Son, as the Word and Wisdom of the Father, is intrinsic to the being of God and so is the perfect image of God. Arius, a popular priest who lost to Alexander in the episcopal election, criticized Alexander for compromising the uniqueness of the Father. In 320 Arius wrote a creedal statement, *the Thalia*, laying out his alternative. God is unique in his essence being 'alone ingenerate, alone eternal, alone without beginning ... alone immortal' and being unapproachable, unknowable, and ineffable. Consequently, Arius argued, God can be known only through a mediator or Son who is the *Logos* mentioned in John's prologue that serves as God's agent of creation and finally becomes incarnate in a human body where he suffers and dies. Unlike the eternal, ingenerate, and immutable Father, the *Logos* or Word was created by fiat from the Father's will. Arius' affirmation of the radical transcendence and uniqueness of God went so far as to say, 'The Father remains ineffable to the Son, and the Word can neither see nor know the Father perfectly and accurately'. The Son can reveal the Father only in as much as he is the perfect reflection of the Father's will. Moreover, since the Father who begot the Son is necessarily prior to the Son, the Son cannot be coeternal with the Father. Consequently, Arius adopted the slogan, 'there was once when the Son was not'. Arius' *Logos* was ontological-

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ly subordinate to the Father. Eventually forced to leave Egypt, Arius gained episcopal support from Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Asterius, collectively known as the Eusebians. (p. 111) In 323 Alexander condemned Arius; Eusebius of Nicomedia responded by condemning Alexander.

Phase 2: The Council of Nicaea and its Aftermath (325-35)

Concerned about the division within the Egyptian Church, Constantine summoned a council of eastern and western bishops in June 325 at Nicaea to address the theological disagreement between Alexander and Arius. The Council generated a creedal statement that repudiated Arius' doctrine. Contrary to Arius' claim that the Father's nature (οὐσία) is unique, Nicaea declared that the Son was begotten 'from the substance (οὐσία) of the Father' and therefore was 'of the same being (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father'. Confessing that the Son was 'begotten' rather than 'made' distinguished the Son from creatures implying equality in divinity with the Father, 'True God from True God'. Nicaea affirmed that Father and Son were coeternal by its condemnation of Arius' slogan, 'There was once when he was not'. Being coeternal with the Father was a necessary corollary of consubstantiality. Were the Son created from nothing, his Creator necessarily would have existed before the Son. Thus Nicaea confirmed Alexander's position that the Son is intrinsic to the Father's being. The immediate result of Nicaea was that Arius was excommunicated and sent into exile. Although Eusebius of Nicomedia unenthusiastically signed the creed, he nevertheless refused to sign the condemnations of Arius. However, shortly after Nicaea, an assembly of bishops in Nicomedia readmitted Arius to communion. Alexander sent his secretary and protégé Athanasius to Constantine to protest. After Alexander's death in April 328, he was succeeded as bishop by Athanasius, who would become Nicaea's chief defender over the next thirty years. Immediately, Athanasius drew the enmity of the Eusebians and their new-found allies the Melitians. Their attack upon Athanasius was not for doctrinal error but for episcopal malfeasance, including murder, and ultimately led Constantine to exile Athanasius.

Phase 3: Anti-Marcellan Phase (336-58)

Few signers of Nicaea were fully satisfied with the creed, especially its use of the term ὁμοούσιος, which had been rejected earlier at synods in Antioch (264, 268). Critics were troubled by the materialist connotation of the Son's being begotten from the οὐσία of the Father, as if the Son were begotten by a subdivision of the Father's substance. Moreover, although Nicaea used ὁμοούσιος to express the unity of Father and Son, it failed to qualify ὁμοούσιος in a way that preserved the New Testament distinction between Father and Son. Without expressing the difference between them, the creed's use of ὁμοούσιος implied that Father and Son were one and the same entity thus sounding Sabellian or modalist, i.e. the Son is not really distinct from the Father but merely a mode of God's self-revelation. This (p. 112) perception was only confirmed when Athanasius allied himself with Marcellus of Ancyra. For Marcellus, the Word was not eternally distinct from the Father but was eternally in the Father. At the creation of the world, however, the Word 'came forth' as the creating and redeeming ἐνέργεια or activity of the Father. Marcellus'

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disciple Photinus of Sirmium went so far as to insist that there were not three hypostases but only one. To the Eusebians, the Word's 'coming forth' as the Father's activity suggested that the Son was not truly distinct from the Father but was simply the form of the Father in action and thus Sabellian. Consequently, Marcellus' support for Nicaea and the language of ὁμοούσιος only confirmed the Eusebians' suspicions that Nicaea was a modalist creed. Therefore the Eusebians challenged Nicaea and the language of ὁμοούσιος by attacking Marcellus. In 336 at the first Council of Constantinople, Marcellus was condemned as a modalist and deposed from his see. Marcellus was succeeded by the anti-Nicene, Basil of Ancyra.

Athanasius, even during exile, fired a polemical barrage against the Eusebians with his *Orations against the Arians*. The rhetorical effect of this work was to tar his opponents with the label 'Arian' even though few of the Eusebians affirmed Arius' theology. From Athanasius' perspective, however, the Eusebians' subordinationism was tantamount to Arius' declaring the Son a creature. Unless the Son is *equal* in divinity with the Father, the Son is not fully and truly God and so cannot mediate the divine nature to humanity necessary for salvation.

In 341 at a council in Antioch, the anti-Nicenes issued the anti-modalist 'Dedication Creed' that emphasized the independent and eternal existence of the Son who is 'the exact image of the divinity, οὐσία, will, power, and glory of the Father'. Thus the Eusebian strategy to deal with the problematic language of Nicaea was to interpret it in a way that established the distinction between the Father and the Son. Although the council anathematized those who claimed that there was any period before the Father's begetting the Son and those who spoke of the Son as 'a creature like one of the creatures', Marcellus and Athanasius saw the Dedication Creed as contrary to the meaning of Nicaea. Consequently, when a council was summoned at Serdica in 343, there was an impasse between the eastern supporters of the Dedication Creed who opposed Athanasius and the western bishops who supported Athanasius and rejected the Dedication Creed condemning those who claimed Father, Son, and Spirit were distinct and separate hypostases. The next year, another Council of Antioch drew up the Macrostich Creed that affirmed the Dedication Creed but avoided language of οὐσία and ὑπόστασις and instead spoke of Father, Son, and Spirit as 'objects' (πράγματα) or 'persons' (πρόσωπα). In 351, at the first Council of Sirmium, Basil of Ancyra prosecuted Photinus for modalism and condemned him, along with Marcellus and Athanasius. Although Sirmium declared that the Son is subordinate to the Father, the council, nevertheless, insisted that the Son of Mary is also the Son of God.

While Basil of Ancyra shared the Eusebians' dissatisfaction with ὁμοούσιος, he was equally concerned with their subordination of the Son. He was even more troubled by the radical subordination of the Son advocated by Aetius and Eunomius, who argued that the Father is absolutely wholly unlike (ἀνόμοιος) the Son in essence. Basil responded by calling a council at Ancyra in 358. His goal was to offer a middle position between the modalistic language of Nicaea and Athanasius on the one hand and the radical subordinationism of Aetius and Eunomius on the other hand. Basil's alternative was to say that (p. 113) the Son was ὁμοιοῦσιος or 'like' (ὅμοιος) the Father 'according to his essence (οὐσία)'. Contra

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the Council of Sirmium of 351 that avoided οὐσία, Basil argued that οὐσία was acceptable if understood to be immaterial and indivisible. Moreover, unless the Son was generated from the Father's οὐσία, then he was made from nothing and so was a mere creature fashioned by the Father his Creator. Ὁμοιούσιος was preferable to ὁμοούσιος because ὁμοιούσιος recognized a difference between the Father and Son—they were *similar* in essence, not the *same* being—thus avoiding the modalist error of conflating Father and Son. The Council of Ancyra exiled Aetius and Eunomius. Thus after Ancyra, the Church was roughly divided into three factions: the pro-Nicenes of Athanasius and the western bishops, Basil's Homoiousian party, and the next generation of anti-Nicenes called the Homoians because they spoke of the Son as 'like' (ὅμοιος) the Father.

Phase 4: Ascendancy of the Homoians (353-70)

Whereas the Eusebians had countered the problematic language of ὁμοούσιος by the re-interpretation of Nicaea, the goal of the Homoians was to overturn Nicaea altogether. The principle leaders of the Homoian faction, Valens of Mursa and Ursacius of Singidunum, veiled their anti-Nicene agenda by focusing upon Athanasius whose disobedience to the emperor had earned him expulsion from Alexandria three times between 339 and 359. With the support of Constantius II, they summoned a council at Arles in 353 ostensibly to condemn Athanasius. Eusebius of Vercelli and Pope Liberius of Rome, discerning their theological agenda, called for the council to reaffirm Nicaea alongside the censure of Athanasius. The council was dissolved. In 355 and 356, Valens and Ursacius now with Constantius II's support convened councils at Milan and Beziers deposing pro-Nicene bishops, including Eusebius of Vercelli, Dionysius of Milan, Liberius of Rome, and Hilary of Poitiers, because they would not endorse the condemnation of Athanasius. In 357 at the second Council of Sirmium, the anti-Nicenes issued an Homoian creed that rejected οὐσία language as un-Scriptural (reaffirming the Council of Antioch 344), prohibited discussion of the Son's generation, which according to Isa. 53:8 is known only to the Father and Son, and affirmed that the name 'Father' indicates his superiority to the Son 'in honour, virtue, power, dignity, glory, and majesty'. The next year, 359, the Homoians convened councils at Seleucia and Ariminum to ratify the Homoian creed by eastern and western bishops. At Ariminum, Valens put forward a text called the 'Dated Creed' that said the Son was 'like the Father in all things'. The majority of bishops, however, rejected the Dated Creed as an innovation and condemned the Homoian bishops. After suspending the council, the Homoians introduced a new creedal statement called the Niké Formula. It reaffirmed the Council of Sirmium's ban of οὐσία language and affirmed that 'the Son is like the Father', deleting the phrase 'in all things'. The Council of Ariminum reconvened and adopted the Niké Formula plus an anathema against those who denied that 'the Son of God was not a creature like other creatures'. Hilary and other pro-Nicenes were outraged by the 'deception of Ariminum'. For the final anathema, far from affirming the divinity of the Son, implicitly sanctioned calling the Son a creature so long as he was understood to be 'a creature unlike other creatures'. In the east the Council (p. 114) of Seleucia replaced the Dated Creed with the Niké Formula on 1 January 360. Later in 360 a second Council of Constantinople comprised of Homoian bishops from the east and west

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adopted the Niké Formula as the official creed of the empire thus rendering Nicaea null and void.

The effect of the councils was to galvanize the pro-Nicenes and Homoiousians ultimately leading to their alliance. Although Basil of Ancyra had signed the Dated Creed, he added the qualification that the description of Father and Son as 'like' denotes the likeness of essence expressed by ὁμοιούσιος. He and others were conscious of the need to counter the subordinationism implicit in the Homoian Creed. In 359, when Athanasius published *On the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia*, he realized that even those who were troubled by ὁμοούσιος but nevertheless subscribed to Nicaea's anathemas against Arian subordinationism were 'brothers who mean what we mean but dispute only about a word' (Behr 2004: 95). Although Athanasius himself had originally been uneasy about the term ὁμοούσιος and preferred to speak of the Son as 'like' the Father, he argued in *De Decretis* (356) that the consubstantiality of the Son and Father was necessary if the Son is fully divine (Anatolios 1998: 87–9). In the West, after Constantinople (360), Hilary returned from his exile in the east where he had developed a friendship with Basil of Ancyra and gained greater insight into the Homoian theology. Hilary and Eusebius of Vercelli adopted the strategy of focusing on the Son's generation. The biblical language of begetting (Jn 1:18) necessarily implies that the Son is from the being of the Father. Since all offspring bear the same nature as their progenitor, the Son who is begotten from the Father is necessarily consubstantial with the Father. Marius Victorinus rejected the term ὁμοιούσιος arguing that a child does not have a *similar* nature to that of her parents but the *same* nature. It was acceptable to speak of the Son as having likeness (*similitudo*) with the Father so long as the likeness was of 'True God from True God'. Yet the unity of God, Hilary argued, did not imply singularity; God is One but not alone.

In 362, Athanasius upon his return from exile called a synod in Alexandria that issued the *Epistola Catholica* that reaffirmed Nicaea and offered pardon to those bishops who signed the compromise creeds at Seleucia and Ariminum because they were deceived by the intentionally opaque language but who now had 'come to their senses'. He also issued the *Tome to the Antiochenes* that sought rapprochement with the disciples of Eustathius and Meletius of Antioch by repudiating the modalist teachings of Marcellus and Photinus. Athanasius' goal was to make clear that ὁμοούσιος affirmed the Son's full share in the Father's divine nature without denying the distinction between Father and Son. With the death of Athanasius in May 373, the task of forging an alliance between pro-Nicenes and Homoiousians shifted from Alexandria to Cappadocia.

Phase 5: Endgame: The Eunomians vs. the Cappadocians

Although more radical than the Eusebians and the Homoians, Aetius and his disciple Eunomius led a third generation of anti-Nicenes called by scholars 'Neo-Arians', 'Anomoians', 'Heterousians', or simply 'Eunomians'. Trained in rhetoric and Aristotelian (p. 115) philosophy in Alexandria, Aetius in *Syntagmation* rebutted Athanasius' defence of ὁμοούσιος. Based on a theory of language derived from Plato's *Cratylus*, he argued that, since terms reveal the essence of a thing, God's essence is knowable. Against ὁμοούσιος,

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Aetius and Eunomius contended that God's essence (οσία) is 'unbegotten' or 'ingenerate' (ἀγέννητος) while the Son is 'begotten' (γέννητος). Since the essence of God is 'unbegotten', the Only-Begotten Son of the Father is, by definition, not ὁμοούσιος with the Father. The pro-Nicene rebuttal came from the Cappadocian bishops: Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus. In *Contra Eunomium* (364), Basil countered that concepts (ἐπίνοια) about God arise from the process of reflection whereby the mind analyses impressions of God from Scripture. Theology, therefore, does not give immediate knowledge of the divine essence but is a reflection upon the manner in which God revealed himself through the divine activities (ἐνέργεια). Reflection on the nature of God (θεολογία) centres upon the divine activities or economy described in Scripture (οἰκονομία). Nazianzen argues that the divine essence is wholly beyond human understanding and speech, 'to speak of God is not possible but to know God is even less than possible' (*Orations* 28.4). Since theological inferences are drawn from the divine activities in the sensible, corporeal realm, our concepts and language about God arise from impressions in the material world. However, because God is incorporeal, our corporeal speech cannot properly represent God's essence. Even negative theology, Nazianzen says, does not give knowledge of God. Saying what something *is not* does not give knowledge of the essence; it does not tell what God *is*. 'Unbegotten', as 'immutable', 'eternal', 'holy', are only properties of God's nature and not the essence itself. The Cappadocians appealed to a doctrine of divine simplicity to defend God's unknowability. Since God is immaterial, he is also simple and so cannot be known by being broken down into constituent elements. Thus the doctrine of divine simplicity comes to set conditions for speech about God (Ayres 2004: 287). Since God is infinite mystery, no single term sums up all that God is. By refuting Eunomius' claim to define the essence of God, the Cappadocians undercut the Eunomian claim that Father and Son are essentially different and so not ὁμοούσιος.

The Cappadocians ultimately cemented the alliance of the pro-Nicenes and Homoiousians against Homoians and Eunomians by defending the essential unity of Father, Son, and Spirit while at the same time explaining how, contra the Sabellians, they remain distinct even in their unity. Although the essence of God was unnamable, one could still argue from Scripture that the persons were consubstantial based on their power (δύναμις) revealed in their ἐνέργεια. Eunomius understood God's creative power as analogous to the imperial authority (ἐξουσία μόνη δημιουργεῖν) to command his minister to make what he willed. The Son is the Father's perfect minister (ὕπουργός) carrying out the Father's will (Barnes 2001: 212). This view is supported by Jesus' admission 'The Son can do nothing apart from the Father' (Jn 5:19). But drawing on 1 Cor. 1:24, 'Christ [is] the wisdom and power of God', Nyssen counters that the Father and Son do not have different powers but one and the same power. Logos is the power of God to create, sustain, and foresee the future (*Catechetical Oration* 5). Drawing on Plato (*Republic* 509B) and Plotinus (V.1.6), Nyssen appealed to the Platonist view that God out of his goodness (p. 116) is naturally generative. The Father's generative power that begets the Son is the same power by which the Son creates the world (Barnes 2001: 244-5). Yet, unlike the Platonists, Nyssen argues that the Son is not inferior to the Father who is the source of his being and power. The Father's goodness and power are, Nyssen and Eunomius agreed, perfect and ab-

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solute; therefore, they are unbounded and infinite. Since the Son and Spirit are consubstantial with the Father, they naturally possess the Father's infinite goodness and power. Since their natural goodness and power are infinite, they are necessarily equal to the Father's; for there is no deficiency or limit to their infinite power that would make the Son and Spirit inferior to the Father (*Against Eunomius* I.77). Thus the Son and Spirit are equal in divinity with the Father and so cannot be viewed as ontologically inferior to the Father.

The Cappadocians described the Father, Son, and Spirit's common nature and power manifest in the divine economy as a unity of operations (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 8.19–21; Nazianzen, *Orations* 30.11). All things issue from the will of the Father, are actualized by the Son, and brought to perfection by the Spirit (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38). As at Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, all three persons are simultaneously present and active together in every divine work. At the same time that the Cappadocians affirmed the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit, they avoided the charge of modalism that accompanied ὁμοούσιος by preserving clear distinctions between the persons. Each person, or ὑπόστασις, is eternal, discrete, and subsistent. Each is a mode of God's being distinguished from each other by its origin. The Father is ingenerate, the Son begotten, the Spirit spirated. Contra Eunomius, 'ingenerate' and 'begotten' do not denote different essences but are merely different *modes* of God's being, describing relationship (σχέσις) between the persons. 'Modes of God's being' differs significantly from Sabellius' 'modes of God's self-revelation'. For the modalist, the persons are the way the one God reveals himself in history, but are not real and eternal distinctions within the Godhead. For the Cappadocian by contrast, the persons are real distinctions within God. God does not merely appear as three persons in the economy of salvation but is triune from eternity. Thus the Cappadocians developed an understanding of Nicaea that upheld the unity of God necessary for affirming the Son's full divinity and at the same time that affirmed the distinction between the persons which earlier critics perceived was absent.

In the autumn of 379, Meletius of Antioch called a council at Antioch to solidify the pro-Nicene alliance. The council appointed Gregory of Nazianzus Nicene Bishop of Constantinople. In July and August 380 at the Church of the Resurrection in Constantinople, Nazianzen delivered his famous five *Theological Orations* (Orations 27–31) that attacked the theology of the rival Homoian bishop of Constantinople, Demophilus, as well as the Eunomians, and the Pneumatomachians led by Eustathius of Sebaste. In November 380, Demophilus left Constantinople rather than submit to Theodosius' edict of January 380 making Nicaea the faith of the empire and banning Arians, Eunomians, and Photinians. In May 381, Theodotus summoned the Council of Constantinople. Meletius of Antioch chaired the council until he died and was replaced by Gregory of Nazianzus. The canons of the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the (p. 117) Nicene Creed to which it added an affirmation of the divinity of the Spirit as the one who 'proceeds from the Father' and who is worshipped together with the Father and the Son. With the formula that God is one Being (οὐσία) in three persons (ὑπόστασεις), it anathematized the Eunomians, Arians (i.e. Homoians), Pneumatomachians, Sabellians, Marcellians, Photinians, and Apollinarians. The victory of the pro-Nicenes at the Council of Constantinople in 381 was confirmed in the West with Ambrose of Milan's prosecution the Homoian bishops Palladius of Ratiaria

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and Secundianus of Singidunum at a trial at Aquileia in 381 and with the Council of Rome in 382. Although conflict between Nicenes and Homoians persisted, as the showdown in 386 between Ambrose and the Homoian empress Justina over control of the basilicas in Milan indicates, nevertheless the Council of Constantinople 381 effectively brought an end to the theological disputes over the Trinity and Nicaea's language of *ὁμοούσιος*.

2. Exegesis

The Christian culture that emerged at the end of the fourth century was based upon a certain approach to reading scripture that developed from debates surrounding Nicaea about biblical descriptions of the Son and his relationship with the Father (Young 1997: 298). Central to Arius' as well as to the Homoian and Eunomian view of Christ as a creature was the insistence that, while God is immutable, the *Logos* had to be mutable in order to enter into a changeable body, suffer, and die on the cross. They found support for this view in passages that spoke of Christ's growing in wisdom (Lk. 2:40), confessing ignorance of the future (Mk 13:23), and experiencing suffering. The cornerstone proof-text, however, was Prov. 8:22 in which Wisdom, i.e. the *Logos*, says, 'The Lord created me at the beginning of his ways for his works'. The obvious meaning was that Christ was a creature, created by the Father to be his agent of creation. Pro-Nicenes countered that these passages were fundamentally misinterpreted and could rightly be understood by employing a method of interpretation that we call partitive exegesis. The Incarnation, Gregory of Nazianzus argued, was the intermingling of the immutable, divine nature proper to the eternal *Logos* with a mutable and passible human nature (*Orations* 30.3). Therefore, in reading Scripture one must distinguish the lofty expressions that are attributable to Christ's divinity from the lowly descriptions that must be ascribed to Christ's humanity (*Orations* 30.1). Thus descriptions of Christ's growth, ignorance, and suffering were attributes of Christ in his humanity and not proper to the *Logos* in his immutable divinity. Consequently, Nazianzen reasoned, the Eunomians could not infer from these passages that the *Logos* was subject to change and therefore was a creature rather than true God. Nazianzen used partitive exegesis to explain that Prov. 8:22 was prophetic, referring to Wisdom's earthly generation in the Incarnation. By contrast, when Wisdom later says, 'Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills I was begotten' (Prov. 8:25), it refers to the Son's 'primal and less comprehensible' generation from the Father (*Orations* 30.2).

(p. 118) 3. Subordinationism: The Legacy of Origen

Although conflict between pro-Nicenes and anti-Nicenes has been characterized as a debate about the divinity of the Son, recent work on the fourth century has argued that the real debate was not whether the Son was divine but whether he was true God, equal in divinity to the Father. Or was he merely a divine creature inferior to the Father? This division of opinion is traceable to Origen, who influenced bishops on both sides of the controversy. Commenting on Jn 1:1-2, 'the Word was with God and the Word was God', Origen

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identified ὁ Θεός as the Father who is true God, while the Word is θεός or divine but not true God. Thus, Origen and his Eusebian descendents conclude that the Son was unequal to the Father in divinity. They found further in Jesus' words, 'The Father is greater than I', and his rhetorical question to the lawyer, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone'. At the same time that Origen portrayed the Son as inferior to the Father, he insisted that the Son as the Wisdom of the wise Father is intrinsic to the being of the Father. Since the omniscient Father is never lacking wisdom, the Son, as the Father's wisdom, is eternally begotten by the Father. This was precisely Alexander's argument in 320. Yet the coherence of Origen's view is left unresolved; can the Son be intrinsic to the being of the Father and thus coeternal with the Father but not be true God, equal to the Father in divinity?

For Arius, that the Father is 'greater than the Son' is evident in the unique character of the Father's οὐσία or being. The Father alone is self-subsistent, unbegotten, and therefore absolutely free to will and do what he wills (R. Williams 1987: 98). By contrast, the Son is begotten from the Father's will. Therefore, the Son is neither self-subsistent nor free in his will. Rather, his existence and his will are dependent upon and derived from the Father. Therefore, Arius and the Eusebians used Paul's description of Christ as 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15) to distinguish the Son, who is the reflection of the perfect archetype, from the Father, who is the archetype. From the perspective of Arius and the Eusebians, image Christology explained how the Son could act as mediator between God and creation by revealing the Father but at the same time avoided the Sabellian error of conflating Father and Son into one being. For an image is not the same thing as the archetype, but a separate and discrete thing. Moreover since the Son was begotten and so was not coeternal with the Father, the Son was, as Arius declared in his letter to Alexander, 'a perfect creature, yet not among the creatures, a begotten thing, yet not as one among begotten things' (R. Williams 1987: 104). This view was repeated in the Dedication Creed of 341 and the anathema of Ariminum of 359 (D. H. Williams 1995: 34). Arius and Homoians did speak of the *Logos* as 'God' but 'God' did not denote the Son's nature. Rather it was an honorific title as when Ps. 131:6 says of human beings, 'You are gods and all of you are sons of the Most High'. Thus Christ is not properly God, but is called God because he mirrors the Father's will (Hilary, *De Trinitate* IV.3 and VI.18). Because for Arius Christ is God, not (p. 119) by nature, but by being the reflection of the Father who alone is true God, Christ is ontologically subordinate to the Father.

From the perspective of pro-Nicene bishops, such as Hilary of Poitiers, there is an absolute dividing line between creatures and the eternal, divine Creator. The Son must fall on one side or the other of that divide. If Christ is God, he is true God. He cannot be God but not true God any more than fire can be fire but not true fire (Hilary, *De Trinitate* V. 14). Therefore, Origen's distinction between the Father who is true God and the Son who was divine but not true God was incoherent to the pro-Nicenes. Even a perfect and unique creature, like Arius' Christ, is just a creature, not God. Consequently, the Eusebians and Homoians could not make the Son ontologically subordinate to the Father and still worship him as God. If, on the other hand, the Son is God he must be equal in divinity to the Father and so must be one with the Father in his divine nature (ὁμοούσιος). In the

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pro-Nicene grammar, the dividing line between Creator and creature was whether one possessed existence by nature or by participation. Since creatures are made from nothing, they do not possess life in themselves but must gain it by participating in the source of life, God. However, God, the great I Am, is being itself. Existence is inherent to God's nature. Because the Son is ὁμοούσιος with the Father, existence, as well as wisdom, goodness, and power, are proper to his nature and not derived through participation in some other nature (Nyssen, *Catechetical Oratio* 1). Humanity becomes divine and attains eternal life by adoption and participation in the divine nature through the Holy Spirit. The Son is God, not by adoption or participation, but by nature.

There were two chief reasons for the pro-Nicenes' uncompromising insistence upon the ontological unity and equality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. First was the apostolic witness to Christ's divinity expressed in Jesus' words, 'I and the Father are one' (Jn 10:30) and 'He who has seen me has seen the Father—I am in the Father and the Father [is] in me' (Jn 14:9-10). One key text for supporting the equality of Father and Son was the Christ Hymn (Phil. 2:6-11). For example, Marius Victorinus maintained that 'the form of God' denotes the Son's divine nature and power. When Paul says that Christ 'did not count equality with God a thing to be held onto' he implies that the Son is equal to the Father. The only way the Son can be equal to the Father, Victorinus concluded, is if the Son is ὁμοούσιος with the Father (*Against the Arians* IA.9). Second, Christ's divinity was necessary for the restoration of the *imago Dei* and for humanity's participation in the saving process of divinization or deification (θέωσις). As Athanasius succinctly put it, 'God became man that man might become god-like', and so gave us a share in his incorruption and immortality that our fall toward non-existence might be arrested (*On the Incarnation* 54.3). In the Incarnation, Christ leavens the lump of human nature with his divinity that humanity might participate in Christ's divine nature so that the image of God may be restored and humanity come to see and desire God (Nyssen, *Catechetical Oratio* 5). Hilary describes the causal relation between the full divinity of the Word and the divinization of humanity commenting on Col. 2:10, 'As the fullness of the Godhead is in [Jesus], so we are made full in him ... for all who are regenerated through hope ... abide even now in the body of Christ' (*De Trinitate* IX.8).

(p. 120) One challenge facing the pro-Nicenes was explaining Jesus' claim 'The Father is greater than I' without concluding that the Son is ontologically inferior to the Father. Nazianzen grounds both the Father's superiority and the ontological equality of the persons in his account of the monarchy of the Father. Nazianzen explains that the Father is 'primarily God' because he is the source and cause of the Son and Spirit who derive their divinity from their timeless generation or procession from the Father (*Orations* 25.15-18; Beeley 2008: 204). Because Father and Son are consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος), they share the same indivisible, and therefore equal, divinity derived from the Father. Nazianzen, nevertheless, interprets Jesus' claim 'The Father is greater than I' (Jn 14:28) not in economic term as the result of his 'emptying' himself in the Incarnation, but in terms of the Father's generation of the Son. The Father is greater than the Son and Spirit by virtue of being the source of the Trinity (Beeley 2008: 206). The Father as first principle is the begetter of the Son and emitter of the Spirit. The relationship of these subsistent modes

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of God's being is preserved as a unity because of the eternal generation and procession of Son and Spirit from the Father and their eternal return to the Father from whom their divinity is derived.

4. The Holy Spirit

For the better part of the fourth century, the Holy Spirit was a peripheral issue. Nicaea's inclusion of the phrase 'And [I believe] in the Holy Spirit' without commenting on the content of the belief indicates that the Spirit was not the epicentre of the controversy. Nevertheless, the pro-Nicenes, such as Athanasius and Hilary, were explicit in affirming the divinity of the Spirit. Although Arius' argument for the uniqueness of the Father's οὐσία implied that the Spirit, like the Son, was not the Father's ontological equal, the real dispute was between pro-Nicenes and a faction of Homoiousians called Pneumatomachians ('Spirit-fighters') who were followers of Macedonius of Constantinople. Macedonius was a Homoiousian who affirmed the divinity of the Son but denied the divinity of the Spirit. The Spirit, according to the Pneumatomachians, was the divine ἐνέργεια of the Father but was not God (Nazianzen, *Orations* 31.5). Their primary reason was Scripture's silence on the point. The rebuttal to the Pneumatomachians came in 375 with Basil's publication of *On the Holy Spirit* which was the first treatise devoted entirely to the Spirit. Although the object of the treatise was to argue for the Spirit's divinity, Basil did not speak of the Spirit as ὁμοούσιος with the Father and Son. In 376, the Council of Iconium affirmed the Spirit's divinity based on Basil's argument.

The defence of the Spirit's divinity hinged upon the Spirit's place in the practice of worship. Basil's disagreement with Aetius over the Spirit centred on the description of the Spirit in the doxology. Based on his theory of language, Aetius maintained 'the relationship between prepositions indicates a relationship between natures' and so concluded that in the traditional doxology, 'Glory to the Father *through* the Son *in* the Holy Spirit', the prepositions indicate the essential difference between Father, Son, and Spirit (p. 121) (*On the Holy Spirit* 2.4). The Son is the instrument through whom glory is given and the Spirit is the 'place' or 'time' in which glory is given. After refuting Aetius' theory of prepositions by demonstrating that Scripture (e.g. Rom. 11:36) applies multiple prepositions to each person, Basil argues for another new form of the doxology, 'Glory to the Father *with* the Son, *together with* the Holy Spirit', that affirms the Spirit's equality with the Father and Son in power and dignity (*On the Holy Spirit*, 5.7-12).

The pro-Nicenes' argument for the Spirit's ontological equality with the Father and Son focused on the Spirit's renewing and divinizing work in baptism. Following the principle that God cannot be known or confessed by sinful humanity unless he reveals himself, Athanasius claimed that the Spirit cannot mediate the knowledge of God unless the Spirit is itself divine (*To Serapion* I.25). By participating in the Spirit, the Christian participates in the Son and through the Son in the Father. Thus through the Spirit, the Christian participates in the life of the Triune God and so derives eternal life from God (Anatolios 1998: 115). This participation in the life of God is possible because the Spirit confers the gift of

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faith by which we may confess Christ in baptism. Appealing to both the baptismal formula from Matt. 28:19 and to the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit in baptism, Hilary said the Spirit is 'the Gift who gives us perfect hope' (*De Trinitate* II.1 and II.3). The Spirit is the gift of the Father because the Spirit is sent to infuse us with the divine light illuminating the soul and bringing knowledge of God; 'Unless through faith one has appropriated the gift of the Spirit, the soul will have the innate faculty of apprehending God, but be destitute of the light of knowledge' (*De Trinitate* II.35). Commenting on Ps. 36:9, 'In your light shall we see light', Nazianzen taught that the Spirit is the light by which we are able to see the light of the Father revealed in the Son who is 'the true light' (*Orations* 31.3). Christians gain the saving and sanctifying knowledge of God by ascending to the Father through his image revealed in the Son whom we behold through the light of the Spirit (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.47). Without the light of the Spirit, Marius Victorinus said, the Son appears as merely a man and his glory remains hidden behind the veil of flesh. Only when the Spirit speaks to our spirit do we see the form of God at work in the form of a servant (*Contra Arianos* IA.12).

The Church is able to participate in the saving work of Christ through the light of the Spirit. The Spirit renews the image of God in the believer by revealing the glory of the Son who is the image of the invisible God. When through the illumination of the Spirit 'we fix our eyes upon the beauty of the image of the invisible God ... [we] are led through the image up to the indescribable beauty of its source [i.e. the Father]' (*On the Holy Spirit* 18.47). This vision of the beauty of God arouses a holy desire for God such that 'Spirit-filled souls ... finally become spiritual themselves and their grace is sent forth to others' (*On the Holy Spirit* 9.23). The believer becomes conformed to the holiness and spiritual nature of the God whose Spirit dwells within his people individually and corporately. Even as humanity is made holy by participating in the divine nature that is holy, so too humanity attains immortality by participating in God's immortal nature. Since the Spirit 'proceeds from the mouth of the Father' and is consubstantial with the Father (Nazianzen, *Orations* 41.12), the Spirit possesses the 'essence of life' proper to the Father's divine nature whereby the Spirit is able to 'redeem our life from corruption [and] give us (p. 122) the power to be renewed' (*On the Holy Spirit* 12.28). The Spirit is, as the Council of Constantinople (381) declared, 'the giver of life' because through the divine Spirit the Church is able to attain eternal life from the nature of the Triune God. By participating in the life of God who is life itself, humanity that is by nature mortal and corruptible puts on the immortality and incorruptibility of divine nature.

Suggested Reading

Ayres (2004) offers a new narrative of fourth-century controversies. Behr (2004) provides an Eastern Orthodox view of the Nicene tradition. R. Williams (1987) explains the complexities of piecing together Arius' writings and thought.

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J. Warren Smith

J. Warren Smith is Associate Professor of Historical Theology at the Duke Divinity School. A minister in the United Methodist Church, he specializes in patristic theology.

Augustine on the Trinity

Lewis Ayres

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Abstract and Keywords

This article offers a positive exposition of Augustine's mature Trinitarian theology that builds on the best of recent scholarship. It describes the Trinitarian theology of Augustine as being structured around the Father's begetting of the Word that breathes forth Love. It identifies the roots of Augustine's theology in the Latin anti-modalist tradition and in his appreciation of God's transcendent simplicity. It considers Augustine's emphasis on the salvific missions as drawing us into the mystery of the divine processions.

Keywords: Augustine, Trinitarian theology, Father, Word, Love, Latin anti-modalist, God, transcendent simplicity, salvific missions, divine processions

THE account given of Augustine in this chapter will not accord with that still to be found in many textbooks. Those accounts frequently treat Augustine as the paradigm and origin of a distinct western tradition, over-emphasizing the unity of God, claiming to know far too much about God's inner life, forgetting that in all things the Father works through Son and (or 'in') Spirit, and separating reflection on the Trinity from reflection on the God who is revealed in Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection. One of the key sources for this reading in the twentieth century was the nineteenth-century French Jesuit scholar Theodore de Régnon. Although de Régnon's purpose in identifying different 'Greek' and 'Latin' paradigms of Trinitarian theology was to argue for the necessity of both, later scholars tended to take this division as an opposition, and eventually many identified the Latin model as deficient. More recent scholarship has questioned the adequacy of the model as such, and argued that Augustine himself has been grossly misrepresented by it (Barnes 1995). In this chapter I will make no attempt to discuss and refute aspects of this model directly (indeed, it has received no scholarly defence for some decades); instead, I offer a positive exposition of Augustine's mature Trinitarian theology that builds on the best of recent scholarship.

1. Father and Son

From eternity God speaks his Word, the Word in whom he determines all that will be (for the significance of the Father's role in Augustine's theology see Ayres 2010: ch. 7; and Dunham 2007). This Word is also Wisdom ('ordering all things well' as we find at Wisd. 8:1) and Image; as 'God from God' the Word is a perfect image of the Father's nature. To help us understand what it means to speak of God's Word Augustine draws an analogy with an artist who plans in her mind a work of art before bringing it into being externally. We might say she plans through a creative act of developing a knowing of what she wishes to create, or we might say that she plans by bringing to life the skill she has in her (p. 124) mind. Following this analogy, the Word or Wisdom of God is the Father's 'creative knowledge or skill' or *ars*. The Latin term *ars* gives rise to the modern English 'art', but it has a range of senses that are frequently lost in English. In Latin the term can describe the learned skill of an artist, the set of principles that will lead to the product of her skill exhibiting form and beauty. But, Augustine tells us, the Father's Wisdom or Word is an eternal, living, and active creative knowledge (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 1-3).

Augustine also offers the analogy of what he terms the 'interior word' conceived in the mind of a person thinking and desiring. Augustine speaks not just of any conception or plan present in the mind, but of a 'word' conceived in truth and conceived through rightly ordered love. Such a word—at one point he gives the example of 'God'—is a 'word' we speak internally because of and for the increase of love, and it is a 'word' which orients us to that which is true. It is, as Augustine writes, 'a true Son of the heart' (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 1.9). When we find Augustine also emphasizing that the Father speaks his Word in order to reveal himself, we see Augustine emphasizing that the Father's self-revelation in the Word is necessarily a revelation of who he is (the Son is also Truth) and necessarily a revelation of the Father as a God of Love.

For Augustine God is both intelligible and revealed as mystery: intelligible, because the Father reveals himself in the Son and in the creation (which exists in the Word and thus reflects the Father's self-revelation); but mystery because God transcends all analogies we may offer as created beings and always eludes any final grasp of the intellect. The Father's 'speaking' of his Word is, for example, an eternal speaking unmarked by the temporality that accompanies ours, and the Father's Word exists eternally, distinct, but without dividing God into Gods, being all the fullness of what it is to be God. We can strain our minds toward such a reality but it cannot be finally grasped by us.

The second of the divine three is not only Word and Wisdom and Image, but also Son. The Father generates a Son who shares all that the Father is save being the Father. How should we understand the relationship between Father and Son? What does it mean to say that the Son is 'generated'? Christians came to use this terminology because Jn 1:18 speaks of the 'only-begotten', but its meaning is not obvious. Indeed, one problem for all Nicene theologians during the fourth century was to find a way of distinguishing the Father's act of generation from all acts of creating (because then the Son would not be truly God) and from all acts that give rise to two beings who must be called two Gods (be-

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cause then the most fundamental confession of Jews and Christians, that God is one, would be compromised).

Eventually Nicene theologians came to agree that this act of generation is unique: it fits into no category of generation that we know—however much we can make use of very distant likenesses in the created order. The scriptural language of ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ enables us to recognize the continuity of nature that must obtain between the one who generates and the one who is generated (just as it does between human fathers and children). The same language suggests the eternity of Father and Son (if ‘Father’ may always be predicated of God then the Son must always have been there). The language of Word and Wisdom enables us to push a little further. But all Nicenes are also certain that one of our key confessions about this unique generation is that while it results in a (p. 125) distinction (Father and Son are distinct and not identical), there is no division of the divine (identifying Father and Son does not lead to the conclusion that now we have two divine beings). Whatever analogy we use, then, at some point we come up against the sheer incomprehensibility of the act for those of us who are created. Augustine's contribution to this tradition is to reflect on how the paradox of distinction without division presents itself to thought when we consider what it means for the Father to generate a Son who shares all that the Father is within the divine simplicity.

Through Faith toward Understanding

But before we press further into this mystery we must take a few steps back and reflect on Augustine's understanding of the theological task, specifically on the distinction between believing and moving toward understanding. Augustine is convinced that Christian attempts to understand scriptural discussion of God are founded in a rightly formed faith—a knowledge and acceptance of Scriptural imagery, language, and logic. One of the clearest examples is to be seen in his favourite style of Trinitarian summary:

although indeed the Father has begotten the Son, and therefore he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and therefore he who is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. (*The Trinity* 1.4.7)

This sparse language comes to Augustine from the Latin anti-Monarchian tradition. The Monarchians, flourishing during the early third century, argued that Son and Spirit are no more than names for the Father at work in the created order. Latin Trinitarian theology came into its own against this tradition, with figures such as Tertullian (c.160–220) and Novatian (c.200–58). Whereas their opponents argued that Jn 14:10 (‘I am in the Father, and the Father is in me’) implied that Father and Son were the same one divine reality, Tertullian and Novatian argued that the very grammar of Scripture here demands that for one to be ‘in’ another, one is not the other. Augustine drew extensively on this tradition to articulate his summary statements of Trinitarian belief, finding in this sparse language careful attention to the foundational Scriptural logic of Trinitarian belief.

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We advance toward understanding when we gradually grow in our skill at imagining how these words may be understood of a reality which is unmarked by space, time, and the divisions or imperfections of the created order. This is for Augustine partly a discipline of the mind in which we learn to remove from our interpretation of Scripture's logic any temporal or material qualifications, and it is a search for correspondences between Scripture's language and metaphors and the divine realities signified by that language. An example of the former is given below in discussion of generation without division; for an example of the latter see sermons 23 and 53, which were preached on consecutive days, where God's 'hands' and 'face' are God's 'power' and 'knowledge' (Augustine 1990b: 56-65 and 1991: 66-75). These correspondences are often inherited by Augustine from earlier tradition, and where they are new he is (p. 126) clear that they must follow clues within the text itself. Augustine's account is also shaped by his insistence that the 'missions' of Son and Spirit are intended to reveal their eternal 'processions' from the Father (Ayres 2010: ch. 7; Augustine, *The Trinity* 4.20.27-21.32). We have already seen Augustine reach out through deduction and a loose form of analogy toward understanding, and his sermons are peppered with passages in a similar style (Cavadini 2004). Throughout this chapter we turn again and again to texts where he attempts to push as far as the human intellect is able to reach, even if it must fall back constantly confessing its inability. Throughout our investigation, however, we must bear in mind that Augustine sees such an ascent of thought as fruitful only if it is founded in an ongoing reformation of desire and intellectual life shaped by the work of grace. Only through grace's education and drawing of the intellect and will are we drawn both to transcend the materiality of the fallen intellect and to accept and learn more of the mystery of the divine. This is always an education and a drawing that happens through our incorporation (by the Spirit) into the body of Christ. Christ's human words draw us into the mystery of his divine and transformative presence. In this sense, although Augustine celebrates the gifts of the intellect in those who have them, the smartest in the body of Christ must always learn from the one who is most humble before the divine mystery and most sincerely confesses his or her need for divine aid. In this sense theological thinking begins in the mystery of dying and rising with and in Christ. There is no salvation by Ph.D. alone (and this is one of the places where one sees how closely Augustine relates his account of the eternal processions of Son and Spirit to the work of redemption; see Ayres 2010: ch. 7; Gioia 2008).

Generation and Simplicity

In order to follow Augustine's reflections on how we can understand the Father generating a Son in the context of the divine simplicity, we need, first, to think about how Augustine understands the divine as such. For the mature Augustine there is only one truly simple being, God: all that we know in the created order is to some degree composite, composed of parts. Some things are composite in purely material senses, many are the subject of accidents. In its simplest usage an 'accident' is an attribute that is not essential to a being: a car may be purple or orange; a person may be wise or foolish. Accidents thus involve distinguishing between the essence of a thing and that which qualifies it (Augustine knows that some ancient philosophers argued for a category of accidents that were

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inseparable, but he dismisses the idea that we could make use of such an idea in the case of God). For Augustine, however, God cannot be conceived in such terms because God is the fullness and source of all such qualities—God is Wisdom, and Beauty and Justice and Goodness itself. Indeed, in Trinitarian discussions, one of Augustine's favourite ways of describing God's simplicity is just to say that God 'is' what God is said to 'have': when we say that God lives or is good we should understand that as meaning that God is life itself or goodness itself.

(p. 127) Divine simplicity is, thus, not only a doctrine about God, it is also a doctrine about the nature of the created order and its relationship to God. Augustine sees the created order as constantly sustained by Word and Spirit, the divine fullness played out for us through the changeable beauties of this world. For all in the created order to be informed by the same dependable perfect source, God must be this unique transcendent fullness, a unity which precedes all number. It makes no sense to speak of God, this transcendent fullness, as changing, as potentially losing that status, or in any sense needing to achieve it (Acts 17:24–5). But we should not assume that Augustine envisages God's immutability as simply the opposite to the dynamism and action that we often see as the attributes of change. Of the nine categories that Aristotle discusses, Augustine states that action is the only one that can without qualification be applied to God. At the same time, Augustine takes from Ps. 121:4 the term *idipsum*—the identical or the selfsame—to describe God (Ayres 2010: ch. 8; Marion 2008; Augustine, *Sermons* 7.7), but he is clear that for God to be this is for God actively to remain so from eternity.

When we ask about Augustine's Scriptural evidence for this account we must point not only to texts which speak directly of God's unchangeability (Mal. 3:6, James 1:17) but also to texts which speak of God creating through the Word who is immediately present in all things (Jn 1:3–4, 10; Wisd. 7:24, 27), of the creation as revealing the glory of God (Ps. 19:1; 104:24), of the existence of all in God (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 6:8; Wisd. 11:21; Isa. 6:3). Scriptural material is certainly here drawn together by a set of themes adapted from earlier Christian thinkers and non-Christian Platonists, but one can also say that resonances within and between a host of Scriptural texts are drawn out and highlighted through careful adaptation of those themes to Christian ends.

Now that we have seen something of what Augustine means by the expression 'God is what God is said to have', we can return to how Augustine articulates the mystery of the Father generating the Son without division. We must, for Augustine, speak of the Father as generating another, a Son who is his Word and Wisdom, because Scripture demands it. And, yet, if the Son possesses all that it is to be God, then the Son, like the Father, must be the one undivided source of all and there seems to have been no division of that one source. Thus, if we try to speak of the Father generating one who shares all that the Father is then we are drawn inevitably back to confessing the inescapable unity of God. Thus we can speak of generation, but we must also speak of that which generates being one with the one who generates.

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Under the conditions of created existence this can only seem a paradox. Seeing that it might logically be so under the conditions of divine simplicity does not enable us to comprehend God's existence, but it does help to refine our sense of what may and may not be said about God and the ways in which God's existence transcends our created understanding. To undertake such a task is to move our hearts, minds, and imaginations through the creation toward the Creator. Through this discussion of the Son's generation Augustine develops an argument that is uniquely his, and yet he does so at the service of highly traditional Nicene language—the Son is eternally God from God. This is a combination we shall see again.

(p. 128) **'Only what he sees the Father doing ...'**

Augustine's mature exegeses of Jn 5:19 ('The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing ...') offers us an excellent point of departure for seeing in more positive terms how Augustine thinks we can speak of the relationships between Father and Son. Naturally enough, Augustine refuses the idea that the Son sees the Father performing an action and then copies it. Such an interpretation would not only import temporal and spatial differentiation into the relations between Father and Son, it would also contradict Jn 1:3 ('All things came into being through him'). Augustine's solution is simple:

In your flesh you hear in one place, you see in another; in your heart you hear there where you see. If the image [does] this, how much more powerfully [does] he [do it] whose image this is? Therefore the Son both hears and the Son sees; and the Son is the very seeing and hearing. And for him hearing is the same as being, and for him seeing is the same as being. But for you seeing is not the same as being, because even if you should lose your sight, you can still be, and if you should lose your hearing, you can still be. (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 18.10)

The Son's being is identical with his seeing of the Father, and the Father is identical with his showing to the Son. In the 23rd of his tractates on John Augustine emphasizes, again, the failure of any bodily analogy for speaking or showing: 'simplicity is there. The Father shows the Son what he is doing and by showing begets the Son' (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 23.9). This last sentence is an important one: the Son is identical with his seeing of the Father, but Augustine does not envisage a sequence in which the Son is generated from the Father and then 'sees': the Son's being 'shown' is the same as his being generated, and the Son's seeing is his being.

Augustine's exegesis here fleshes out more positively how he sees Father and Son as each simple, as each act, and how he envisages a Trinitarian order grounded in the Father's eternal act. Note also that this more positive picture enables Augustine to be attentive to the text of Scripture in his account of the relations between Father and Son, but it also allows him to enter more deeply into the mystery of Scripture using human terms to speak of God's unique mode of existence. And thus we see here something of the movement from faith to understanding, but a movement always also into Scripture's depths.

2. The Holy Spirit

For Augustine Scripture and the inherited faith of the Church tells us that the Trinity consists of Father, Son, and Spirit. Father and Son are each named in many unique ways that provide us with obvious points of reference when we try to understand their eternal characteristics and mutual relationships. In the case of the Spirit, Scripture tells us much (p. 129) about the activities and roles of the Spirit in the life of Christ and the Church, but does not give us anything like the set of unique titles we have for Father and Son. The Spirit is, most importantly, named as the Holy Spirit, but this is a combination of terms that surely must also be true of Father and Son? However, Augustine's mature pneumatology takes the character of Scripture's naming of the Spirit not as a failing for which later doctrinal development must make up, but as an invitation to the Christian heart and mind, an invitation to see why the Spirit is so named, an invitation to come slowly to understand the heart of the Christian life and the nature of God (for Augustine's mature pneumatology see Ayres 2010: ch. 9; Augustine, *Tractates on the First Epistle of John* 6.9–14; and *The Trinity* 15.17.27–19.37).

At the foundations of Augustine's account lies Rom. 5:5: 'the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'. Augustine reads this verse as asserting that the Spirit gives us love, but the Spirit gives us the Spirit and thus the love that we receive *is* the Spirit. This love is also the Father's Gift (Acts 8:17–20). Indeed, 'Gift' is for Augustine the one unique title accorded the Spirit but, as he says, the Spirit is named Gift because the Spirit is love. The Spirit may even be understood as eternally gift, as a love eternally waiting to be given. Augustine is also especially attentive to the New Testament's naming of the Spirit as the Spirit 'of' the Father, of truth, of God, of Christ (e.g. Rom. 8; Gal. 4:6; Jn 15:26). The Spirit is 'of' both Father and Son and thus is necessarily 'something common'. Scripture, then, names the Holy Spirit in an allusive manner so that we will be drawn slowly to recognize, first, that the Spirit is not simply a third *beside* Father and Son, but one who is the Spirit *of* both. Second, we are drawn to recognize that the Spirit who is given and who is the heart of the Christian life is the love who joins Father and Son—in receiving the Spirit we are thus drawn into the divine life itself.

We will, however, miss much if we stop here and do not explore how Augustine sees this Spirit as also fully possessed of and being all that it is to be God, fully an irreducible divine 'person'. In his *On the Trinity* Augustine writes:

Nor because they give and he is given is he, therefore, less than they, for he is so given as the gift of God that he also gives himself as God. For it is impossible to say of Him that he is not a master of his own power, of whom it was said: 'the Spirit breathes where he will' ... there is no subordination of the Gift and no domination of the givers, but the concord between the gift and the givers. (*The Trinity* 15.19.36)

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Alongside this bare but precise statement that the Spirit gives himself, we should note Augustine's mature exegesis of Acts 4:31–2 ('they were all filled with the Holy Spirit ... and the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul'). Augustine uses the function of the Spirit within the Christian community as an analogy for the Spirit's eternal role in the Trinity:

[if] many souls through love are one soul, and many hearts are one heart, what does the very fountain of love do in the Father and the Son? ... If, therefore, 'the love of God [which] has been poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us' makes many souls one soul and many hearts one heart, how much more (p. 130) does [the Spirit] make the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit one God, one light, one cause? (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 39.5)

We should read such statements against the background of Augustine's exegesis of Jn 5:19, which presented the Son as identical to the intra-divine acts that Scripture predicates of him. The Spirit is understood as love, as identical with love itself, as the eternal act of love. Just as God's Word is not insubstantial like our words, but eternally spoken and eternally existing, so too the Spirit as love exists eternally and distinctly, eternally given by Father to Son and Son to Father, eternally breathed by the Father as the one who constitutes the divine unity.

One of the most controversial aspects of Augustine's theology—not in his own day, but in medieval and modern debate—has been his argument that the Spirit should be said to 'proceed' from Father and from Son. While some other Patristic figures, Greek and Latin, take a similar position, Augustine offers the most extensive reflections. His account is founded, once again, on the Scriptural texts stating that the Spirit is 'of' the Father and 'of' the Son. Although we always go through or into Scripture using the temporal language of the created order, Augustine sees no temporality in the procession of Son and Spirit: one does not proceed from the Father 'before' the other. Indeed, for Augustine, it is in the eternal act of generating the Son that the Father gives it to him that the Spirit proceed from him—part of what it is to be the Son is to be one who has by nature the Father's Spirit. We need almost to say that when the Father generates the Son from his essence and gives the Son all that he is, what the Father gives is the Spirit. In order for the Son to be one who shares all that the Father is, the Son must have this Spirit. The Son's love for the Father, his loving of the Father, is the Spirit that he is. And thus, from eternity the Spirit comes to be the one who is common to Father and Son, who is the love of both by being 'of' and 'from' both (on Augustine's theology of the Spirit's procession see Ayres 2010: ch. 9; Daley 2001a and 2001b).

We must take one further step. If the Father gives to Son and Spirit all that he is, such that each is truly God, then each must be wisdom, rationality, life, truth, and love itself. We have already noted this, but now we can draw a further conclusion. Each must embody the fullness of what it is to be a 'person' in ways that transcend human imagination—to be fully God involves possessing all the characteristics of the highest form of life in perfection, and thus possessing all that characterizes human personality in transcendent

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perfection. And thus in Augustine's theology, to assert that the Spirit is God is necessarily also to assert that the Spirit is irreducible divine 'person'.

But the mystery of the Trinity requires us to reflect on the unity of the three whenever we reflect on one of the divine three as individual, and in his *On the Trinity* Augustine uses the analogical language of memory, understanding, and will to speak of the divine life, and writes:

we should so conceive these three [memory, understanding, will] as some one thing which all have, as in the case of wisdom itself, and which is so retained in the nature of each one, as that he who has it, is that which he has ... in that simple and highest (p. 131) nature, substance is not one thing, and love another, but that substance itself is love, and that love itself is substance, whether in the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, and yet the Holy Spirit is properly called love. (*The Trinity* 15.17.28-9; Augustine 1963: 493)

Once again, because there is one simple and divine nature, we must be careful not to speak only of each of the divine three as fullness, without also noting that the fullness that they possess in such a way that they are identical with it is the one fullness that is God. I said a little while ago that it is *as if* the Spirit were the essence of Father and Son: we can now see that this statement is not quite right. That the Spirit is named as love should not lead us toward a picture of Father and Son having as their essence something that is not their own. Rather, we must say both that Father and Son are in their essence love *and that* the Spirit is the love of Father and Son even while being fully another beside and in them. But once again the intellect is drawn to a point where it must confess that God transcends its grasp.

3. One and Three

Many readers will have noticed that I have not yet shown Augustine offering any extensive discussion of the language of person and nature or substance (for this section see Ayres 2010: ch. 8 and Cross 2007). Augustine thought that such language could never make logical sense when used of the divine 'nature'. Relying on the logical discussions of the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry, Augustine argued that anything identified by a term which specifies a species can necessarily also be identified by a corresponding genus term and vice versa. For example, if one can say 'Socrates is a human being', one can also say that 'Socrates is an animal', and for any subject, if one can say it is an animal, one can also assign it to a subordinate species. Moreover, if it is true that Socrates and Augustine are two humans, it is true that they are two animals. In the case of the divine three these rules do not obtain. There is no general class of 'divine persons' and the divine nature is not divisible into discrete instances. In the quasi-credal formula 'one nature and three persons' the terminology can be helpful, but not if we think that it isolates a particular set of philosophical terms the rules of which will enable us to understand the divine.

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In some texts, however, Augustine does make important use of the concept of relation. In the *On the Trinity* he offers a good deal of initial discussion, focusing particularly on questions about how we should guard and shape our speech about the Trinity, questions of predication rather than directly questions of ontology. He argues that we should realize the terms 'Father' and 'Son' name 'relations', but not relations that are accidental (any human male called 'Father' became a Father at some point, the title is not his simply by virtue of being human and male). In the Trinity 'Father' names a relation that is eternally true of the Father: there is eternally the Father, and eternally the Son.

(p. 132) A few years later Augustine speaks a little more directly of the ontological reality to which these patterns of predication correspond. In the 39th of his *Tractates on John's Gospel* he distinguishes between human and divine existence. You and I exist and may or may not also be spoken of in relationship to each other. Father, Son, and Spirit are not only spoken of in relationship: they *are* in relationship (*ad aliquid*)—the relationships that the Father establishes from eternity between Father, Son, and Spirit are intrinsic to their being (Augustine *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 4). Augustine is reticent about this technical language and offers it very rarely. More frequently, and as we have seen, he develops this theology in the course of directly exegetical reflection and his accounts of Jn 5:10 and Acts 4:32 provide excellent and key examples of this reflection.

Inseparable Operation

Augustine inherits from earlier Nicene theologians the principle that Father, Son, and Spirit work or operate inseparably: in every action of one of the divine three the other two are also to be found at work. Why? Because the divine three are inseparable; they are not divided spatially or temporally, and there is only one divine will and nature even as Father, Son, and Spirit are each the fullness of that will and nature. The inseparable operation of the three is, however, a difficult principle to fill out without according each a different role in every divine action—and thus reimporting the idea that they are in fact separable! How does Augustine articulate this principle at his best?

In his 23rd tractate on John Augustine considers how the world is created, offering an account that depends on his reading of Jn 5:19. We cannot envisage the Father deciding to create and giving orders to the Son who then does the actual creating. This would be to see both Father and Son as operative in the act, but only by separating out their existence and roles inappropriately:

What the Father shows the Son, he does not receive from without. The entirety is done within; for there would be no creatures unless the Father had made them through the Son ... the Father showed it to be made and the Son saw it to be made, and the Father made it by showing it because he made it through the Son seeing it ... Neither that showing nor that seeing is temporal ... But the Father's showing begets the Son's seeing in the same way as the Father begets the Son. Showing, of course, generated seeing; not seeing showing. If we could look more purely and more perfectly, we would perhaps find that the Father is not one thing

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and his showing another, nor is the Son one thing and his seeing another. (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 23.11)

The Father makes all things through the Son (Jn 1:3), and the Father makes by showing all to the Son. But that 'showing' is identical with the eternal begetting of the Son. In the Son as Word and Wisdom all that will be is already contained (he is the true Life of all things) and 'created', merely needing to emerge in the temporal order. But remember that Augustine is not here describing an act prior to the creation of the world: he conceives of time itself as something created. From eternity, in eternity, the Father shows (p. 133) and the Son sees, our world comes to be and time with it, founded in that eternal action of Father and Son. The acts of the divine three in time are never the result of deliberation subsequent to their generation: those acts always occur from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit, and always simultaneously with Son and Spirit coming from the Father. At the same time, there is always an order to the working of the three, an order established from eternity by the Father. The three work, one might say, in accordance with their inner Trinitarian character and relations: the Father works through Son and in Spirit; the Son works as Word and Wisdom, as the revealer of the Father, as the one in whom all things are what they are; the Spirit works as the one who brings concord and draws together in love (although Augustine never offers a clear statement of principle like this).

Throughout his mature work Augustine consistently emphasizes that the missions of Son and Spirit—their redemptive work in the world—reveal the eternal ordering of the divine life. In other words, missions reveal 'processions', the coming forth of Son and Spirit from the Father. Augustine emphasizes this so strongly both because he trusts that God's love is such that God reveals himself to us truly (even as he transcends what we can understand of him), and because he sees the reformation and redemption of humanity to consist in a restoration of our seeing and knowing of the world in God, as enfolded by Word and Spirit who come from and lead us to the Father.

Turning Inward

Augustine views the human being as the pinnacle of the created order. Human beings do not only exist as inanimate objects, nor do they only live as do plants and animals, they exist and live intellectually: thinking, judging, creating, and loving. It is thus in our intellectual life that we find the highest form of life we know, and it is here that we find, for Augustine, that in us which is the image of God (the image, of course, of a life which still transcends our ability to understand). For Augustine, because God is Trinity, the image of God in us must be Trinitarian as well (Sullivan 1963). Accordingly, in the latter half of his *On the Trinity*, Augustine reflects on the Trinity as it may be seen in the *imago*, in the mind (on this theme see Ayres 2010: chs. 11–12; Gioia 2008).

In his exploration Augustine both assumes a certain account of the mind as his point of departure, and he examines the mind *in the light of* the Trinitarian beliefs he seeks to explore. In the latter respect, Augustine sees the language of faith as not only revealing

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something about the nature of the divine existence, but also as revealing to us something about the image: Trinitarian faith is a guide to understand ourselves as well as God. And thus it is wrong to think of Augustine simply as offering 'psychological analogies' for the Trinity: he is not simply analysing the mind to find threefold analogies for the Trinity, but using the language of faith to explore the mind, and using what he finds there to think through how we might imagine the divine three as distinct and yet never divided.

Augustine's view of the soul is taken in part from Plotinus, in part from the Latin rhetorical tradition (particularly Cicero), and in part it is his own, developed in a long (p. 134) reflection on the power of the memory and desire in the light of Christian belief. Augustine assumes that the human being's mental life is always an active desiring life, always seeking for that which it thinks is its natural home and end. At the same time the mind's seeking and desiring is constantly shaped by its memory. The mind is for Augustine a vast mysterious storehouse—indeed not even a passive store, but an active repository that sometimes thrusts into our conscious minds images and objects of desire that may have been long forgotten. The process of searching and acting on our memories involves the production of an 'inner word', as we discussed earlier in the chapter. This forming of words or images within the mind is not only an act occurring from time to time, it is an act constitutive of the knowing and loving mind.

Augustine differentiates between two modes of the mind's life. The fallen mind seeks to know itself as if it were a distant object to be found elsewhere. This is the mode of knowing with which we (fallen human beings) are most familiar because we have become obsessed with created objects. But this vision of intellectual life as lacking and seeking for what lies without does not well illustrate the perfect knowing and self-presence of the divine life. The mind, however, must know itself in order to seek itself and, Augustine argues following Neoplatonic precedent, in some way the whole of the mind is present to itself simply as mind. The trouble is that even though the mind is necessarily present to itself we cannot stop images of those things that we have come to desire occluding our vision. And thus we can better understand the mind as an image of the Trinity if we can work toward imagining the self-present knowing life that must be ours. But while we can imagine some features of this life (and the language of Trinitarian faith helps us understand), we will only come into a fuller sight of it when we are transformed and purified through grace, knowing ourselves as we are and that we exist in the constantly present Truth who is the Word. The image in us will then shine forth, but not only because it knows itself, but because it will be a threefold life attentive to and enfolded in God's own life, knowing all things in this light. Thus Augustine offers us an account of an image present and yet eschatologically realized.

As a terminology to express the threefold structure of our mental life Augustine makes use of the triad memory, intelligence, and will. This triad originates with Cicero and is part of a wider tradition in Latin rhetorical literature that seeks to describe the different aspects or skills of the attentive and/or well-educated and focused mind. The same tradition also makes use of similar terminologies to describe the different constituent parts of prudence, the virtue lying at the heart of the practical life, the virtue of judging good

from evil (and which for Augustine and Ambrose finds its foundation and end in clinging in love to God). Augustine does not use this triad as a standard terminology for the mind, even though his account of the mind as constantly in act appears many times elsewhere. And so, in some ways it is problematic to have spent so much time in this chapter exploring the explorations of the second half of the *On the Trinity*. These reflections are to be found uniquely there, although various aspects of the conclusions are to be found through his later work. They are then not so much representative of how Augustine writes about and teaches the Trinity, but they do constitute one of the most imaginative and fascinating products of Augustine's theological genius.

(p. 135) 4. Sources and Influence

Augustine is a complex figure to interpret, in many ways highly traditional, in others highly innovative. From the first winter after his conversion, even before his baptism at Easter 387, Augustine began reading the great Latin theologians of his age: Ambrose of Milan for certain, probably Marius Victorinus his fellow North African, and soon after Hilary of Poitiers. A number of figures who are slightly less well known such as Damasus (Bishop of Rome 366–84) also soon seem to have figured as authorities. Throughout his long career Augustine returned to these sources at a number of key points. Although a number of these figures—especially Ambrose—drew deeply on contemporary Greek Nicene sources, Augustine himself offers virtually no clear evidence that he ever drew extensively on Greek Trinitarian theology.

While Augustine draws deeply on his predecessors, he is also willing to move beyond them in striking ways. In part this follows from his being of a later generation: despite his mother's experience of participating in Ambrose's public confrontation with 'Arians' in 386, Augustine takes Nicene Trinitarian doctrine as a point of departure for exploration as much as he takes it as something to be proved from scratch (to understand the theology of these Latin 'Arians' see the pamphlet described by Augustine as an Arian 'sermon'; Augustine 1995b: 133–8). He is even able to criticize his predecessors when he sees them as having not taken a logical step that Nicene theology demands. Thus, for example, he finds it natural to extend to Son and Spirit the title(s) of being 'alone true God' that Jn 17:3 accords the Father alone, and which both Ambrose and Hilary find difficult to interpret. At the same time he celebrates the very idea of a mysterious unity of three (who remain undivided) that defeats our patterns of numbering. In this last move we see parallels in some texts of Gregory Nazianzen.

One of the problems with interpreting Augustine is the extent and character of his influence. Over time Augustine was increasingly read in cultural contexts different from his own, and mined for answers to questions that did not yet exist when he wrote or for definitions of terminologies that he (sometimes intentionally) failed to define precisely. The character of some of his more idiosyncratic and speculative discussions was also lost when they were read as if part of a clearly organized and finished theological system (especially if all the Fathers of the Church were thought to agree). Thus, for example, while

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some later writers follow Augustine in asserting the philosophical uselessness of genus and species terminologies for exploring the divine existence, most present Augustine simply as the most articulate of the Latin Nicene theologians of his period. He is also read in the light of later attempts in Latin tradition to define the now standard Trinitarian terminologies with precision (especially following the work of Boethius (c.480–525)). Many medieval and post-medieval theologians—especially in the Thomist tradition after the thirteenth century—also treat the interrelationship between love and knowledge as two necessary moments in intellectual life. In part this development shows the centrality that Augustine's legacy had taken on in Latin Christianity; in part it also (p. 136) shows how his more tentative ideas and explorations could take on a life of their own in a developing tradition. An increasingly clear and central account of knowledge, love, and the interrelationship between the two enabled, for example, a far clearer and easier analogy for describing the relationship between Son and Spirit than we find in Augustine himself.

Over the very long term the development of this theme also creates resources for those (such as Hegel and some post-Hegelian idealists) who tend to see the life of Spirit, whether divine or human, as having the same fundamental structure. I offer no judgment on these later theologies: their existence reveals both the importance of Augustine as an influence within Latin Christianity, and the complexities and fruitful tensions that may appear within that tradition when it is explored as a diverse and developing tradition, when Augustine himself is separated from the readings of him that later emerged. Far from relativizing Augustine's importance, such a procedure may even increase his importance as historical scholarship continues to give us a more and more richly textured account of the conversations that constitute the Latin Trinitarian tradition (Ayres 2011).

Suggested Reading

Through this chapter I have referred to Augustine's *On the Trinity*, to his sermons, and to his Tractates on John (a tractate is a type of sermon). *On the Trinity* is often treated as a point of departure for understanding Augustine. The work was, however, intended for readers with a good grasp of the fundamentals of Trinitarian doctrine. As a basic reading list of other Trinitarian texts in Augustine I suggest beginning with Augustine's exegesis of John: *Tractates* 1–3 first, then *Tractate* 39 and 19–23. *Letters* 120 and 238 also offer excellent introductions to his basic teaching, and *Sermons* 52, 71, and 117 offer important discussions on various aspects. *City of God* 11.10 and 24–8 offer a succinct and important summary; *Confessions* 12.11.12ff. offers both another (somewhat dense) summary and a beautiful exposition of the role Scripture plays in Augustine's conception of knowing God. For some of these texts there are many translations; all of the sermons and letters are now available in the series *The Works of Saint Augustine*. Below I give full bibliographical details only for those texts quoted in the text of the chapter.

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Lewis Ayres

Lewis Ayres is Professor of Catholic and Historical Theology at the University of Durham, UK. His most recent book is *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010/2014).

Late Patristic Developments on the Trinity in the East



Andrew Louth

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines Trinitarian theology in the fifth through the eighth centuries. It focuses on Cyril of Alexandria who served as a consolidator of Cappadocian doctrine, Dionysius the Areopagite with his emphasis on God as ever greater, Maximus the Confessor whose emphasis lies on the transformation of the soul brought about by contemplating the Trinity and John Damascene who roots his Trinitarian doctrine in the unity of God. It stresses the importance of hymnody for transmitting Trinitarian doctrine and considers the impact of the rise of Islam.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, Cyril of Alexandria, Cappadocian doctrine, Dionysius the Areopagite, God, Maximus the Confessor, soul, John Damascene, hymnody

FROM the fifth century onwards, the terms in which Christians confessed the doctrine of the Trinity both in the East and the West became in many respects settled. Confession of three ὑποστάσεις/πρόσωπα (persons) in one οὐσία (being)/φύσις (nature) became the universal language of Trinitarian Orthodoxy, in contrast to the tentative language of the fourth century. At the Council of Chalcedon, the distinction between ὑπόστασις/πρόσωπον and οὐσία/φύσις, originally introduced by Basil the Great in the context of Trinitarian theology, was applied to Christology, and for the most part thereafter theological reflection was driven by Christology. Christological terminology took longer to settle, and refinements in Christological terminology could have implications for Trinitarian theology. Nevertheless, although there are developments in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity in the East in the period from the fifth to the eighth century, these take for granted a settled Trinitarian terminology. One might almost say that this lack of interest in further definition in matters of Trinitarian confession was replaced by celebration. This is true for several of the theologians of our period, but we also find in our period an increasing tendency to express theology in song. Apart from a few—strikingly Trinitarian—hymns of great antiquity, notably the hymn φῶς ἱλαρόν ('O joyful light') and the little doxology ('Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages'), Byzantine hymnology seems to commence in the sixth century. From two

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of Dorotheos of Gaza's *Instructions*, we know that passages from Gregory Nazianzen's homilies were being sung as hymns in the sixth century, and later on Byzantine hymnology frequently consists of centos from the homilies of the Theologian (*Instructions* 16–17; Regnault and Prévaille 1963: 458–87). Also in the sixth century, Romanos the Melodist's *kontakia* (essentially verse sermons) consist of theological reflection expressed as song. Given the concerns of the time, this theological reflection is mostly Christological, but in the *kontakion* on the Theophany, or Epiphany, of the Lord, Romanos (p. 139) compares the manifestation of God at the baptism in the Jordan to various examples of God's self-manifestation in the Old Testament. Among these is the revelation of God to Isaias in Isa. 6, in which he beheld God's glory hymned by the seraphim. Romanos comments on this: 'Holy, holy is the one who became incarnate, Holy are you, O God; we sanctify thirdly a holy one of the holy ones' (*Cant.* 6, str. 7, ll. 7–8; Maas and Trypanis 1963: 44)—alluding to the increasingly popular theological expression about 'one of the Trinity' (itself of primarily Christological significance).

Cyril of Alexandria

The dominance of Christology in this period has meant that the Trinitarian theology of Cyril has only recently received much attention. His concern with Trinitarian theology is explicit mostly in his earlier writings, before the Christological controversy broke out in 428 over Nestorios' teaching: the *Thesaurus*, *Dialogues on the Trinity*, and his *Commentary on the Gospel of St John*. Cyril's Trinitarian theology, as we find it in these works, is manifestly indebted both to the Alexandrian tradition of Athanasios and Didymos the Blind and to the Cappadocian tradition. Both these traditions had been refined by engagement with what seemed to the Orthodox protagonists the long-running fourth-century Arian controversy (though this sense of a single controversy seems less credible to most modern scholarship): Athanasios was mostly concerned with Arius and his immediate successors, especially Asterius, while the Cappadocians faced the so-called neo-Arianism of Eunomios. The legacy of Athanasios' engagement with Arianism is found in the emphasis on the consubstantiality of the Son (and the Spirit) with the Father, and also in the distinction between θεολογία and οἰκονομία, for an important part of Athanasios' argument concerned the distinction between attribution to Christ θεολογικῶς, that is, attribution to Christ to eternal divine attributes, and attribution to Christ οἰκονομικῶς, that is, attribution of Christ of human attributes on account of his assumption of human nature in the divine economy, that is, in the Incarnation; confusion of these modes of attribution had led the Arians to argue that the only-begotten God, that is, Christ, was mutable. The legacy of the Cappadocian engagement with Eunomios is manifest in an insistence on the mystery of the Trinitarian Godhead—an *apophatic* emphasis, that denies the adequacy of any human concepts, when applied to the divine mystery—as well as a related awareness that names do not refer to the essence of the beings named, but rather to their activity or impact. Cyril weaves these emphases together in a striking and original way. His emphasis on the mystery of God does not lead to any sense of the remoteness of God, for it goes along with a sense of the intimacy and inseparability, expressed in his use of the word ἴδιος ('proper' or '[his] own') found in the Trinitarian relationships, as well as in the union

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of human and divine in Christ, which is extended to the union between Christ's body and the Eucharistic elements, through which we are brought into communion with the Trinity. This sense of intimacy is also expressed in Cyril's use of analogies such as a flower and its perfume: to smell a flower is to smell its (p. 140) perfume; indeed his fondness for vivid imagery is one of the striking features of his Trinitarian theology. Alongside features that Cyril shares with the two traditions of Trinitarian theology to which he is indebted, we can detect a growing confidence in his handling the themes of this theology. Like Basil he distinguishes between being/essence (οὐσία) and ὑπόστασις; like Gregory of Nazianzos he identifies ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον; indeed one of the marks of Cyril's originality is his introduction of the term πρόσωπον to Orthodox Trinitarian theology, or at any rate its use on a regular basis (Boulnois 1994: 330). He handles with assurance the Cappadocian way of distinguishing between the ὑποστάσεις of the Godhead in terms of their ἰδιώματα; he uses more frequently, and confidently, than the Cappadocian Fathers the term 'mode of existence' (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) to identify the distinct divine persons (Boulnois 1994: 311). He is also concerned about the mutual relationships of the persons of the Trinity, seeing the Spirit as proceeding from ((ἐκ) the Father, but coming forth (προιέναι) through (διὰ) the Son. Such passages were later to be cited as Greek support for the Latin *Filioque*, though Cyril's concern was rather different, namely, to affirm the Son's 'unity of substance with the Father, a fully divine status which the Son has himself received in being begotten' (Daley 2003: 147). This more assured use of Cappadocian terminology ushers in a new stage in Trinitarian theology, in which the notion of the consubstantial Trinity is taken for granted, as a kind of revealed premise. This is manifest, too, in the way in which the term ὁμοούσιος is applied not just to the relationship between the Son (and the Spirit) to the Father, as with Athanasios, but is applied to the term τριάς itself, and indeed in the relative frequency with which he uses the term τριάς, in contrast with fourth-century use. This sense of a settled doctrine of the Trinity is also found when Cyril refers to the 'One Godhead in three hypostases' (*Adv. Nest.* V.6; Pusey 1869-77: 6.133, ll. 20-1). This greater assurance in his use of terminology is partly down to his being more familiar with philosophical terminology, mostly derived from Neoplatonic commentary on Aristotle. But in all this, Cyril can be seen to be on a cusp in the development of the formulation of Trinitarian theology, for there is still manifest in his language the sense, prominent in Athanasios and the Cappadocians, that 'God', Θεός, refers primarily to the Father, as well as in his conviction that, although the activity of the Trinity *ad extra* is indivisible, it is possible to discern within this single activity the distinct contributions of the Persons of the Trinity, for 'everything is certainly from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit' (*On John* 17:1; Pusey 1869-77: 4.661, ll. 13-14; *cf.* Boulnois 1994: 577-89). The older sense of starting from the distinct persons is manifest in Cyril's way of referring to ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πάτηρ ('the God, [who is] also Father') and ὁ Θεός Λόγος: a usage which continues in the Byzantine tradition (not least in liturgical texts).

A Neoplatonic Strand

Although Cyril makes use of Neoplatonic logic, this is clearly subordinated to a Trinitarian theology that has its roots in the Scriptures and in the early traditions of theology that Cyril regarded as Orthodox. There are other expressions of Trinitarian (p. 141) theology in the Greek East where this is less clear. Two examples will be discussed here: Synesios of Cyrene and the theologian who wrote under the name of Dionysios the Areopagite, the judge of the Areopagus converted by the Apostle Paul, according to the account in Acts 17. Synesios was a somewhat older contemporary of Cyril's, a learned philosopher and local Alexandrian politician, who was consecrated bishop of Ptolemais by Cyril's uncle and predecessor, Theophilus. His mentor in philosophy was the learned pagan Neoplatonist, Hypatia, who died a victim of the Christian mob in the early years of Cyril's episcopate. Of the one who called himself Dionysios the Areopagite we know scarcely anything. He, too, was indebted to Neoplatonism, though of the kind associated with the Athenian *didochos*, Proklos, was likely of Syrian provenance, and wrote probably towards the end of the first quarter of the sixth century.

Synesios' Trinitarian theology is found in some of his hymns, in this following a tradition as obviously Neoplatonic as Christian, the nearest parallel being with another Christian Neoplatonist, Marius Victorinus (though Gregory of Nazianzos' *Poemata arcana* constitute another striking parallel). His Trinity is paradoxical. It is much closer to the Neoplatonic trinity of the One, Intelligence, and Soul than anything in Athanasios, the Cappadocians or Cyril; there is emanation from one *ὑπόστασις* to another (though he does not use the term *ὑπόστασις*), but at the same time, there is a kind of identity between the three *ὑποστάσεις*, which recalls the way in which Porphyry tended to collapse the Plotinian *ὑποστάσεις* into one another. The effect of this is to remove from his doctrine of the Trinity any trace of subordinationism, though perhaps at the price of a taint of Sabellianism. 'For what is not yours, Prince? Father himself, father of all fathers, forefather without father, Son of himself, the One prior to [the number] one, seed of beings, centre of all, Intelligence prior to any being' (*Hymn* 1.144-52; Lacombrade 1978: 49). The coequality of Synesios' Trinity is implied by its being both monad and triad: 'I hymn you, monad, I hymn you, triad; being triad you are monad, being monad you are triad; this intellectual division preserves inseparable what is still distinct' (*ibid.*, 210-16; Lacombrade 1978: 50). It is a further feature of Synesios' Trinity that the third person, the holy breath (*πνοιά*, not *πνεῦμα*), is feminine:

I hymn you, first-begotten offspring and primary radiance. Most splendid offspring of the ineffable Father, and together with you, Blessed One, I hymn the fruit of the Father's travail that comes after you, the fecund will, the mediating principle, the holy breath, centre of the begetter and centre of the child. At once mother, at once sister, at once daughter, delivering the hidden root. (*Hymn* 2.87-105; Lacombrade 1978: 63)

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Synesios' hymns were to echo among the elite scholars of Byzantium, and, perhaps more surprising, some of the hymns (though not the Trinitarian ones) seem, from the manuscript tradition, to have been used liturgically (Lacombrade 1978: 11).

A more profound influence on the liturgical tradition of the Byzantine East is found in our other Neoplatonist, Dionysios the Areopagite. Like Synesios, Dionysios can express his Trinitarian theology in prayer:

Triad beyond being, beyond godhead, beyond goodness, guardian of the theosophy of Christians, guide us to the highest peak of hidden oracles, beyond unknowing and any radiance; whence the simple, absolute and unchanging mysteries of (p. 142) theology are veiled in the dazzling cloud of mystically hidden silence, and shining beyond radiance in the deepest darkness fill to overflowing in what is utterly impalpable and invisible the sightless intellects with splendours beyond beauty! (*De mystica theologia* 1.1; Heil and Ritter 1991:141, l. 1-142, l. 4)

In chapter 2 of the *Divine Names*, Dionysios expounds his understanding of the Trinity in a combination of technical terminology and vivid imagery. He introduces a contrast between 'unions' (ένώσεις) and 'distinctions' (διακρίσεις) among the names applied to God, and furthermore argues that these names can be applied either in a unified way or by way of distinction. Unified unions are names that are attributed to the Godhead itself, and equally to all the persons of the Trinity—names such as being, godhead, goodness (though in attribution to God they become υπερούσιος ύπαρξις ('existence beyond being'), υπέρθεος θεότης ('godhead beyond godhead'), etc.)—he also calls them 'common names', echoing Cappadocian usage; distinct unions refer to the distinct persons of the Trinity—names such as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; unified distinctions apply to the Incarnation; and distinct distinctions to the divine energies, or the works of providence. He also speaks of the Trinity in terms of imagery: three lamps giving a single radiance (*De divinis nominibus* 2.4; Suchla 1990: 127, l. 13-128, l. 2), or, 'the Father is the originating Source of the Godhead, and the Son and the Spirit are divine shoots, and, as it were, flowers and transcendent lights of the divinely fruitful divinity' (ibid., 2.7; Suchla 1990: 132, ll. 1-3). Although there are evident reminiscences of Prokline Neoplatonism and its sources in the Chaldaean Oracles, what is being expressed in this terminology seems recognizably Cappadocian. Dionysios also makes use of the terminology of monad and triad, which is frequent in Gregory Nazianzen's works, both his sermons and his poems, saying in the last chapter of *Divine Names*:

Therefore the Godhead beyond all, hymned as monad and triad, is neither monad, nor triad, as understood by us or any other being, but that we may truly celebrate its being beyond all union and its divine fecundity by a threefold and single divine naming, we name that which is beyond any naming known to beings as beyond being. (ibid., 13.3; Suchla 1990: 229, ll. 6-10)

Dionysios' legacy is to give space to the use of precise language in relation to the Trinity, while preserving a sense of the unfathomable mystery of the Godhead. The use of the prefix υπερ-, while not his invention, was popularized by him and becomes characteristic of

Byzantine theology. He also reminds later theologians that in using language of God we are not defining the undefinable God, but rather celebrating—or ‘hymning’—the One who is beyond any conception we may have of him.

Sixth-Century Developments

Theological reflection in the sixth century was driven by Christology, and in particular the need to define in a tolerable way the notion of the person, and in particular to defend the Chalcedonian confession of Christ as uniting two natures in a single person (p. 143) against the objections of those who rejected Chalcedon, called by their opponents monophysites. The repercussions of this reflection for Trinitarian theology were, for the most part, relatively slight. One weapon, however, that was seized by the monophysites was the clarification provided by Aristotle's notion of substance (*cf. Categories* 5). Aristotle's distinction between first and second substance (πρώτη and δευτέρα οὐσία) was seen to imply that only first substance is real, second substance being simply conceptual. This was used to argue against the notion of a single person uniting two natures, but it had implications for Trinitarian theology, too, for it implied that Father, Son, and Spirit were three first substances, and so three gods. This entailment was accepted by the great logician and philosopher John Philoponos, a prominent monophysite. The controversy over ‘tritheism’ took place in the monophysite camp, dividing them one against another (Ebied et alii 1994–2003; Wickham 1993). Among the Chalcedonians, it was taken to be a lesson about the dangers of philosophy in theological matters: a warning echoed in John Damascene's *Against the Jacobites*, where he asserts that monophysite tritheism is down to their reverence for ‘St Aristotle’ (*Contra Jacobitas* 10; Kotter 1969–88: 4,113).

Further insight into the concerns of sixth-century Trinitarian theology is found in a work by Job the monk, a sixth-century Chalcedonian theologian from Constantinople, our knowledge of whom is derived entirely from codex 222 of Photios' *Bibliotheca* (Henry 1959–91: III,152–227). The work Photios discusses, and liberally quotes from, is called *Περὶ τῆς Οἰκονομίας* (‘On the Economy’ or ‘On the [Incarnate] Dispensation’), but he also mentions a work, now lost, *Against Severos*, which confirms a sixth-century date for our theologian. Although, as we would expect in the sixth century, the treatise is on the Incarnation, it raises several questions that pertain to Trinitarian theology. At the very beginning of the book, the question is raised: ‘Why was it the Son, and not the Father or the Holy Spirit, that was clothed in our form?’ (Codex 222: 181b10–12; Henry 1959–91: III, 153). A little later on in Photios' discussion, the question of appropriation is raised: for example, the work of creation is sometimes especially attributed to the Father or the Spirit, though such attributes are common to all the persons of the Trinity (and, indeed, in this case, there are plenty of places in Scripture where creation is attributed to the Son); similarly, our salvation is attributed to the Son (Codex 222: 187a; Henry 1959–91: III,168–9). Another Trinitarian question raised concerns the order of the persons of the Trinity: why is the Father first, followed by the Son and then the Holy Spirit (Codex 222: 192b23–6; Henry 1959–91: III,184)? Despite the fact that the treatise is called *On the Economy*, the eternal Trinity is the starting point. We have seen an early example of this in Cyril of

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Alexandria, but with him the doctrine of the Trinity, θεολογία, is never completely detached from the divine economy; sooner or later, however, the doctrine of the Trinity becomes a revealed fact in itself. The way that the Logos comes to be called 'one of the Trinity', as in the so-called theopaschite formula, canonized at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 553, encourages a way of understanding the Incarnation whereby 'one of the Trinity' takes flesh and lives a human life. Given that the Trinity is coequal, it is hard not to find oneself asking: Which one? The other questions have a similar basis. The doctrine of the ὁμοούσιος was defended in the latter half of the (p. 144) fourth century by the doctrine that the activity (ἐνέργεια) of the persons of the Trinity is one and the same. But that then raises the question as to why the Father is spoken of as creator, the Spirit as sanctifying, and so on; the language of appropriation (οἰκειώσις) might suggest that such attribution to the individual persons of the Trinity is no more than a way of speaking. Likewise, why should there be any preferred order in a coeternal and coequal Trinity? All these questions arise because the origins of the doctrine of the Trinity in the divine economy have been forgotten, and instead the Trinity is functioning as an independent revealed given. Job's response to the question of why the Son, rather than the Father or the Spirit, became incarnate is instructive:

This [Photios says] is what he considers a solution: that, since the Son is word or λόγος, and man, who had been honoured by the λόγος and image of God, has fallen from these and been abandoned to the level of the beasts without intelligence and become like them, therefore the Word has come to dwell among those who have fallen into unreason (ἄλογία), to repair our fall and restore us to our ancient dignity. For it is said, 'the Word became flesh', that is, he has assumed our nature that had fallen into unreason, lost all aspiration for the intelligible and became completely given over to the fleshly, 'and dwelt among us'. (Codex 222: 181b13-21; Henry 1959-91: III,153)

That is, Job's response is to piece together one way of expressing the economy of salvation, in which the role of the Son, as Word or Logos, seems intrinsic to him. Photios evidently found these responses of value for his own reflections, as they are repeated (in, admittedly, a more systematic way) in his own theological treatises, the *Amphilochia* (Louth 2006: 216-17). Put another way: why did the Father and the Spirit not become incarnate together with the Son?—a question that might arise from a strong sense of the unity of the divine nature. This question remains an issue in the succeeding centuries. For example, Anastasios of Sinai deals with the question several times (in slightly different forms) in his *Viae Dux* (towards the end of chapter 16 and in chapters 17 and 24) (Uthemann 1981: 269-70, 271-3, 315-20).

Maximos the Confessor

The doctrine of the Trinity in the thought of Maximos is a kind of overarching presence, lying behind and above everything, but to which he only occasionally directs his attention. It would be quite mistaken to suggest that it is unimportant for him or taken for

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granted, but it is, nonetheless, quite difficult to bring into focus. At the beginning of his second *Century on Theology* and his *Fifteen Chapters*, there are formal statements of his understanding of the Trinity. So, for example, the first chapter of the second century begins:

God is one because there is one godhead: a monad, unoriginate, simple, beyond being, without parts, indivisible; the same monad and triad; the same wholly monad, the (p. 145) same wholly triad; the same wholly monad in respect of its being, the same wholly triad in respect of the ὑποστάσεις. For the godhead is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the godhead is in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Capita theologiae et oeconomiae*, II.1; PG 90, 1124D–1125A)

These are settled statements, in precise language, expressing the accepted faith of the Church, still in touch with some of the characteristic emphases of the Cappadocians (e.g. it is the Father who is the principle of unity of the Godhead); there are also traces of Neoplatonic inspiration (by way of Dionysios?), but hauled back into the more Middle Platonic notions found in the Cappadocians (e.g. the Logos almost seems to be the Plotinian second ὑπόστασις, Νοῦς, Νοῦρ, but nonetheless the first ὑπόστασις, the Father, is also intellect).

We find very similar credal assertions of the doctrine of the Trinity in the *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* and in the *Mystagogia*. In both cases, contemplation of the Trinity is represented as the summit of the soul's ascent (indeed, the two passages seem to be very closely related: the passage in the commentary on the Our Father being an expansion of the one in the *Mystagogia*). The passage from the *Mystagogia* runs thus:

The Word then leads [the soul] to the knowledge of theology made manifest after its journey through all things, granting it an understanding equal to the angels as far as this is possible for it. He will teach it with such wisdom that it will know God to be one, one nature and three *hypostaseis*, a trihypostatic monad of being and a consubstantial triad of *hypostaseis*; monad in triad and triad in monad; neither one and another, nor one beside another, nor one through another, nor one in another, nor one from another, but the same in itself and by itself and next to itself, and with itself ... a sole ray shining in the single form of one triple-splendoured light. In this light the soul now equal in dignity with the holy angels, having received the luminous principles which are accessible to creation concerning the godhead and having learned harmoniously with them to praise the one godhead triadically without keeping silent, is brought to the adoption by grace through a corresponding likeness. (*Mystagogia* 23; Sotiropoulos 1993: 216, ll. 14–23; 218, ll. 9–15)

There is a curious combination here of very precise, technical theological language—especially the use (inspired by Gregory Nazianzen and Dionysios the Areopagite) of the expression, ‘monad and triad’—and a description of the summit of the soul's deifying union with God. It is essentially a celebration of the Trinity, there is no analysis of the terminology used (though, with such technical terminology, some analysis is taken for granted).

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Scattered throughout Maximos' writings there are, however, a series of passages of reflection inspired by a couple of mysterious passages about God as monad and triad in the sermons of Gregory Nazianzen. These passages are:

Therefore the monad is eternally moved towards the dyad until it reaches the triad. (*Oration* 29.2; PG 36, 76)

(p. 146) And

The monad is moved because of its wealth and the dyad is superseded; for beyond matter and form, out of which bodies are made, the triad is defined on account of its perfection. (*Oration* 23.8; PG 35, 1160)

What exercises Maximos about both these passages is not, alas, the roots of these reflections in ancient (presumably Pythagorean) number theory, but the suggestion that there is movement within the eternal Godhead. It would seem that Gregory did envisage some kind of eternal movement (therefore, in a way, transcending movement), but this is something that Maximos cannot conceive. Maximos' solution is to refer the movement to the intellect of the one seeking to understand the Trinity:

If, hearing of movement, you wonder how the Godhead that is beyond infinity is moved, understand that what happens is happening to us and not to the Godhead. For first we are illuminated by the reason for its being, then we are enlightened about the mode in which it subsists, for we always understand that something is before we understand how it is. Therefore movement of the Godhead is constituted by the knowledge about the fact that it is and how it subsists that comes about through revelation to those who receive it. (*Ambigua* 1; PG 91, 1036C; Louth 1996: 170)

This links up with the presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity in the passages from the commentary on the Lord's Prayer and the *Mystagogia* already referred to, for in these passages the understanding of the Trinity is presented, less as some objective fact, than a life-transforming experience (*cf.* Piret 1983: 70–83). We find a similar idea in Maximos' comments on the appearance of God as three men or angels to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre, where he addresses the problem of why Abraham saw three angels and Lot, his nephew, only two: Abraham sees the 'triad and monad' because of his spiritual perfection; Lot, bound to earthly affairs, cannot pass beyond the dyad (*Quaestiones et Dubia* 39; Declerck 1982: 32).

It is interesting to note how Maximos turns on its head Philo's interpretation of this passage, according to whom the vision of three is a lower stage than the vision of one (*cf.* Philo, *De Abrahamo* 24).

A final small point (at least in terms of text involved) concerns Maximos' attitude towards Western addition of the *Filioque* to the creed. From the quotations already given, it is evident that Maximos understands the Spirit to proceed from the Father, but to come forth through the Son: the position of Cyril of Alexandria, though it is clear in Maximos that

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this is eternally true, and belongs to the realm of *theologia*. In a fragment from a letter to Marinos of Cyprus, Maximos defends the Roman Church against accusations from Constantinople that the Romans were heretical in asserting that the Spirit also proceeded from the Son (this seems to be the first indication of this being a possible bone of contention between Rome and Constantinople) (*Opuscula theologica et polemica* 10; PG 91, 133B–137C, esp. 133D8–136C4). Maximos does not defend the precise accusation—that the Spirit proceeds (ἐκπορεύεσθαι) from (ἐκ) the Son; he seems to set that aside (as a misinterpretation?) and affirms that the Romans agree with Cyril of Alexandria in asserting that there is one cause within the Godhead, the Father, and that (p. 147) the Spirit goes forth (προϊέναι) through (διὰ) the Son (for this interpretation, see Alexakis 2001). This was perhaps the only creative eirenic gesture in the whole history of the *Filioque* (cf. Larchet 1998).

John Damascene

Despite the evident links between Maximos the Confessor and John Damascene, the Damascene's presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity is rather different, even though they clearly are in agreement on the fundamentals of the doctrine. Whereas Maximos, as we have seen, presents the Trinity as a fundamental presupposition of Christian theology, John Damascene seems rather to unfold the doctrine of the Trinity from a starting-point that underlines Christian belief in one God. One reason for this is the source that he uses for his presentation of his Trinitarian doctrine in *On the Orthodox Faith*, chapters 5–8, namely the *Catechetical Oration* of Gregory of Nyssa (Mühlenberg 1996: 7.3–14.25). In that work, Gregory, too, starts from the one godhead of the Father, from which proceed Word and Spirit, so that he unfolds the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than presenting it as a revealed given. But John chose his sources in *On the Orthodox Faith*; consequently we cannot simply ascribe his approach to his sources: he has chosen and endorsed them (for more detail, see Louth 2002: 100–16).

The presentation of the Trinity falls into two parts: first, the unfolding of the persons of the Trinity from the unity of God (chs. 5–7), and secondly, the lengthy exposition of the Trinitarian relationships in chapter 8. Chapter 5 begins with the unity of God, repeatedly affirming it by scriptural references, which John has added to the text of Gregory of Nyssa, thus underlining decisively his starting-point in the unity of God. He then moves on, following Gregory, to affirm that God is not irrational (ἄλογος), and therefore possesses a λόγος, as does a human being, but that God's λόγος is different from the human λόγος in being eternal, existing as a hypostasis (ἐνυπόστατος), 'living, perfect, not existing outside [the Father], but eternally being in him' (*Expositio fidei* 6.6–7; Kotter 1969–88: 2.15). He then pursues further the analogy between God and the human person who breathes forth a word, and extends it to the Holy Spirit—again in close dependence on Gregory—arguing that the divine Spirit is different from human breath in being eternal and personal (ἐνυπόστατος). This initial section concludes with the Damascene's repeat-

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ing the argument of Gregory that Christian Trinitarianism represents a middle way between the narrow monotheism of the Jews and the polytheism of the 'hellenes' or pagans.

Chapter 8 of *On the Orthodox Faith* contains a lengthy statement of the Damascene's developed Trinitarian theology. Again, he begins by iterating Christian belief in One God, ineffable and transcendent, and develops the doctrine of the Trinity by discussing the relationship of begetting between the Father and the Son, and of procession between the Father and the Spirit. He draws on a great deal of traditional imagery, such as light (p. 148) and fire, and traditional terminology which he develops, making clear the difference between 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητος) and 'unoriginate' (ἀγένητος), and developing the notion of ὑπόστασις as identified by its 'way of existence' (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως). The most original contributions of John to the doctrine of the Trinity are to be found in his notion of coinherence, περιχώρησις, and his understanding of the procession of the Spirit (once thought to be borrowed from Pseudo-Cyril, *De Sacrosancta Trinitate*, now demonstrated to be fourteenth-century and dependent on John himself: Conticello 1995). The doctrine of περιχώρησις maintains that the persons of the Trinity are wholly 'in one another'; whereas, with human beings, our common humanity is conceptual, the difference between individuals being real, in the case of the Trinity it is the opposite: their distinct individuality is conceptual, in reality there is no separate individuality, but a complete coinherence between the persons of the Trinity. In the case of the Holy Spirit, the Damascene develops hints found in the Alexandrians, Didymos the Blind and Cyril, and asserts that the Holy Spirit 'proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son' (*Expositio fidei* 8.173; Kotter 1969–88: 25). This seems different from the defence of the *Filioque* we have found in Maximos; rather, it seems to me, John is developing an understanding of how, given that the Father is the sole source or cause (αἰτία) of the Godhead, in the procession of the Spirit from the Father, there is still a relationship (in eternity) between the Son and the Spirit.

The Trinity in Hymnography

Despite his fame and influence as a theologian, it is arguable that John's influence has been greatest as a hymnographer. Along with Cosmas the Melodist and Andrew of Crete (all of whom have links with both Damascus and Jerusalem), John is one of the originators of what became the favourite form of Byzantine hymnography, the canon. This was a series of verses, intended to accompany the canticles drawn from the Old and New Testaments that formed the climax of the dawn service (*orthros* or matins). It seems to have originated in and around Jerusalem, and made its way to Constantinople at the beginning of the ninth century.

We have already noticed that several of the theologians in our period cast their Trinitarian theology in what might be called a hymnic vein: Synesios, Dionysios, and Maximos, for instance. With the canons and other liturgical verses, this becomes the direct purpose of literary composition. As each canticle at *Orthros* ends with the little doxology, the verses composed to accompany it often reflect on the doctrine of the Trinity. To give an example, the third canticle of Andrew of Crete's great penitential canon ends:

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Glory be... Simple, uncreated Monad, nature without beginning, hymned in a Triad of *ὑποστάσεις*, save us who worship in faith your might.

Both now ... O you who gave birth to God, you conceived in time without a man the timeless Son of the Father; strange wonder! Remaining a Virgin you gave suck.

(p. 149) Such examples could be multiplied. Expressed thus in song, the developed theology of the Councils came to be celebrated not simply by learned theologians, but by the whole people of God; quite precise theological notions are given expression, equally precise, through poetry.

The Trinity and Islam

The rise of Islam, with its strident monotheism, was bound to demand a response from Christian theologians. Such an engagement with monotheism had probably already taken place in the regions that fell to Islam in the seventh century, though then the engagement was with the monotheism of the Jews, who found a new freedom of expression under Islam. Leontios of Neapolis' work, *Against the Jews*, as well as dealing with Jewish objections to veneration of saints, icons, and relics, which they regarded as idolatry, also dealt with Jewish objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, but nothing survives of this part of the work (Thümmel 1992: 127–36).

John of Damascus was well aware of Muslim objections to the doctrine of the Trinity (Louth 2002: 76–83). In his chapter on the heresy of Islam (*On Heresies* 100), he meets the Muslim accusation against Christians of being 'associators', those who harm monotheism by associating someone with the one God, by taking up the language of the Qur'an which speaks of the 'word and spirit' of God, and arguing that to deny the divinity of the word and spirit of God is to become a 'mutilator' of God (*De Haeresibus* 100.69–77; Kotter 1969–88: 3.61–2). More interesting, perhaps, than this argument is the way in which, as we have seen above, the Damascene presents his doctrine of the Trinity: starting from an uncompromising emphasis on the unity of God, and then developing the doctrine of the Trinity by reflecting on the meaning of God's possessing word and spirit. It is difficult not to see some sensitivity (even if apologetic) to the objections of his Muslim neighbours in this approach.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Boulnois (2003); Daley (2003); Louth (2002), 89–116.

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Andrew Louth

Andrew Louth is Professor Emeritus of Patristic and Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, and Visiting Professor of Eastern Orthodox Theology at the Amsterdam Centre of Eastern Orthodox Theology (ACEOT), Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2010–14. He is also a priest of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh (Moscow Patriarchate), serving the parish in Durham. His books include *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (1981; revised edition, 2007); *Denys the Are-*

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Trinitarian Theology from Alcuin to Anselm

Lauge O. Nielsen

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This article focuses on Trinitarian theology during the period from the late eighth century to the beginning of the twelfth century. It considers the works of Alcuin of York, Anselm of Canterbury, Gottschalk of Orbais, and John Scotus Eriugena. It explains that Alcuin's work on the undivided Trinity defended the Augustinian emphasis on the divine unity, whereas Eriugena drew on Greek Orthodox theology to emphasize the proper mode of action of the divine persons. Anselm relied upon the Augustinian image and defended the *Filioque* against Greek theologians.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, Alcuin of York, Anselm of Canterbury, Gottschalk of Orbais, John Scotus Eriugena, undivided Trinity, divine unity, Greek Orthodox theology, divine persons, *Filioque*

FROM the late eighth century to the beginning of the twelfth century few theologians had the confidence to explore the mystery of the Trinity. Alcuin of York, father of the Carolingian renaissance, and Anselm of Canterbury, progenitor of rational theology, mark the start and the end of the period and are also the main contributors to the development of Trinitarian theology during these centuries. As theological thinkers they are on different levels but their shared perception of the relationship between unity and Trinity in the divine identifies the main line of thought in the Western tradition. Few individuals dared suggest modifications to the *opinio communis* and they met with limited sympathy and understanding.

Alcuin's Manual on the Trinity

Having retired to St Martin's monastery in Tours, Alcuin did not put the spiritual welfare of the Frankish emperor or his subjects behind him. Around 802 he finished *On the Faith of the Holy and Undivided Trinity* which is a magisterial exposition of the fundamental article of faith and a demonstration of its significance for the body of Christian doctrine. In the letter of dedication, addressed to Charlemagne as newly crowned Roman emperor, Alcuin explained the purpose of the work: in order to secure the eternal bliss of his subjects

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Charlemagne must ensure that the true faith in God's Trinity is preached throughout the realm; in order to facilitate this daunting task Alcuin offers his manual for use as a textbook in the training of theologians and preachers. Concern for orthodoxy was nothing new in the nascent Carolingian empire; what was new was Alcuin's insistence on orthodoxy in Trinitarian theology as such. Presumably the resurgence and spread of adoptionism in Spain had made Alcuin aware that the fundamentals of Christian religion could (p. 156) not and should not be taken for granted and that advanced theological education was a necessity.

The historical circumstances of the work and the author's guiding motive must be taken into consideration when assessing the significance and importance of Alcuin's manual. The volume cannot be said to be original inasmuch as it is a patchwork of excerpts lifted from the writings of the Church Fathers and especially Augustine (Cavadini 1991). Alcuin openly admitted to writing only what he had found in the works of the Fathers; as he said, those who seek a deeper understanding of God's Trinity should turn to God in prayer (Alcuin 1863: 21D). This circumstance, however, does not detract from the intrinsic merit of Alcuin's work. To him the crucially important challenge was not to find something new to say but to reclaim and appropriate the heritage of the Church Fathers in order to make their thought a living force in the Church of the time. Furthermore, Alcuin's volume testifies to the author's impressive familiarity with the Patristic texts, to his literary skills in weaving together excerpts of authority as well as to his ability to select significant passages and organize them so as to present a clear and coherent exposition. During the Carolingian period Alcuin's manual of Trinitarian doctrine was admired and seen as a testimony on a par with the writings of the Church Fathers; it was widely distributed and popularized in the form of a catechetical abbreviation.

Alcuin's Understanding of the Trinity

In his manual on Trinitarian theology Alcuin followed Augustine as his guide and he concurred wholeheartedly with the African Father that ignorance of dialectic is one of the main reasons for faulty understanding of God's unity and Trinity. In the first book Alcuin explains the basic 'facts' of the Trinity and the categories which are employed to classify predications about God. The unity of God's substance and essence Alcuin emphasizes at the very start. Thus he stresses that God is one because the three persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one substance. Moreover, the three persons should not under any circumstance be thought of as three substances. Equally, there is no way God can be said to be triple (*triplex*); any of the three persons is as fully God and the divine substance as two or three taken together (Alcuin 1863: 15B, 19D). The fundamental distinction between what is said of God according to His single essence and what is said of God according to the three persons Alcuin identifies as a difference between substantial and relative predication. The unity of substance guarantees that substantial predicates or attributes are said of the divine persons both when taken together and when considered in particular; such attributes should always be thought of and spoken of in the singular because of the unity of the divine essence. For instance, the essential properties of being, goodness, and

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unity cannot be talked of in the plural so as to state that there are three gods or three good beings, even with the intention of indicating the three divine persons.

Alcuin classifies attributes or predicates which belong to or signify the divine essence as being '*ad se*', which means that they indicate God's unitary being and substance. On (p. 157) the other hand, what is attributed to the three divine persons as such, Alcuin classifies as relative inasmuch as predicates of this kind are said to be with respect to something else (*ad aliquid*). Since the divine persons are distinguished solely by their mutual relationships, it is strictly limited what can be said relatively (*relative*). The Father gives birth to the Son and this relationship of father and son gives rise to both the Father's personal property as well as that of the Son. Accordingly, the Father is He who is from nobody else, while the Son is He who is from only one. Taking his cue from Augustine, Alcuin firmly and repeatedly insists on the *Filioque*. To him it is an established fact that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son in equal measure and, consequently, the relationship of procession gives rise to the personal property of the Spirit, which is to proceed from two (Alcuin 1863: 16D, 20A, 22B).

While the predicates that are said to be substantial and '*ad se*' derive from and indicate the divine nature, the personal relationships and the relative properties to which they give rise seem to be incongruous with the divine. In the world of creatures what is relative belongs squarely to the accidental or non-essential. In God, however, nothing is incidental or changeable; divine nature is immutable and timeless. To Alcuin it is incumbent to explain that the divine relationships and the predicates which signify these relations do not compromise divine nature for the simple reason that the personal relationships in God are eternal and immutable just as the persons are as timeless and unchangeable as the divine essence (Alcuin 1863: 19A sqq.).

Summing up the main points established in the first book Alcuin focuses on the ten Aristotelian categories and elucidates how predicates which accrue to God should be classified. Firstly, Alcuin states, what is said of God in '*ad se*', that is, essential predication, belongs squarely in the category of substance. Of the other nine categories only the category of relation or '*ad aliquid*' is directly applicable to talk of God. This is the category of the personal predicates which are predicated of the divine persons in a relative and non-accidental sense. When something is said of God which belongs in one of the remaining eight categories, one should avoid taking the sentence at face value. Statements about God which contain predicates that as applied to creatures belong to categories such as, for example, position or passion should always be subjected to careful interpretation. Accordingly, when in Holy Scripture God is said to regret something this might seem to imply that there is passion in God. But this cannot be literally true since God is not subject to passions. Consequently, the statement must be conceived as figurative speech, and the theologian should strive to elicit an acceptable meaning. In the same way, God is said to be seated in Heaven which seems to imply the category of position; but this cannot be true in the literal sense and, for this reason, the statement is figurative and in need of exposition (Alcuin 1863: 22C sqq.).

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As compared to Augustine's treatment in the fifth book of the *De Trinitate* Alcuin shifted the main point of the discussion in a subtle way. As Alcuin writes,

In all these ways Holy Scripture usually talks of God, but there is a difference between what is said properly, what is said figuratively and what is said relatively. *In the proper sense* God is said to be one substance, the highest and inexpressible, who always is what He is, with whom nothing is accidental.... God is said to be Father and Son (p. 158) and Holy Spirit in a relative manner, as we thoroughly inculcated above. But things like position, vestment, being in place and time, or undergoing passions cannot be said of God in the proper sense but only figuratively [which means] by way of likenesses [to what obtains in the world of creation]. (Alcuin 1863: 22D–23B; Hincmar 1852: 569C)

Alcuin's graduation of the 'literalness' of predications about God serves to underpin the absolute priority of the unity of substance in God; proper statements about God are only possible when talk is of the divine essence and substance. Predications of the personal properties or relationships are certainly not figurative but they are not on a par with what is said on the basis of God as a unitary substance.

Upholding this viewpoint Alcuin chose to disregard the equally pertinent and valid consideration that the term 'substance' is ill suited to describe the divine being, precisely because God does not receive accidents just as there is no difference between what God is, and that whereby God is what He is. The perception that God is 'beyond substance' is something that Alcuin would have learned from Augustine himself in the seventh book of the *De Trinitate*, but it was certainly also explained in the fourth chapter of Boethius' small treatise on the Trinity, which Alcuin probably knew but chose to disregard.

The strong emphasis on the unity of the divine substance is also present in Alcuin's treatment of divine activity. God's working is exclusively linked to the divine essence or substance and as a cause of creation God is only one (Alcuin 1863: 20C, 24AC). As a matter of course, Alcuin is fully aware that many things and operations are recounted in Scripture as if they originated with or belonged to only one of the divine persons. This is true of the Father's heavenly voice which sounded at the baptism of Jesus and of the assumption of human nature in the Incarnation which is attributed to only the Son. Notwithstanding appearances, Alcuin explains, the biblical testimony does not entail that it is necessary to attribute separate operations to the divine persons. The reason for this is that the heavenly voice as well as the human flesh assumed by Christ was made by the one God, that is, the whole and undivided Trinity (Alcuin 1863: 20D). With this explanation Alcuin appears to sidestep the fundamental issue, i.e. how different manifestations and operations can be ascribed to the single divine persons. However, Alcuin makes up for this in dealing with the divine Word's assumption of human nature in chapter 10 of the third book. Here he adduces one of Augustine's well-known maxims: a work or action may be attributed to a single divine person simply because this work concerns and belongs to only this person (Alcuin 1863: 44CD). This implies that the particularization and specification of the divine person to whom a particular created object or action belongs does not

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originate on the side of the divine person; instead, it belongs on the side of the created work or action, which as a creature is brought forth by the whole Trinity. In the case of the Incarnation, this entails that Christ's human nature was created so as to concern and belong to only the Son, whereas as a work of creation it depended on all three persons. Accordingly, the incarnation does not entail that the Son operates alone or in separation from the Father or the Holy Spirit.

(p. 159) In the *De Trinitate* Augustine had elaborated a complex comparison between the human soul and its faculties, on the one hand, and, on the other, the unity of essence and Trinity of persons in the divine. This part of Augustine's legacy Alcuin chose to ignore and he did not explain the reason for this omission. Alcuin may have viewed Augustine's depiction of the inner life of the Trinity by way of the analogy with the dynamic interplay of memory, reason, and will in the human soul as simply too sophisticated for the time and as something that could easily lead the more simple-minded to view the divine persons as particular beings and agents. At any rate such a misunderstanding would clearly have gone against Alcuin's obvious wish to emphasize the priority of essential unity and the propriety of essential predication.

Gottschalk's Challenge to the Carolingian Consensus

One of the more daring thinkers in the Carolingian period was the monk Gottschalk of Orbais, who for many years lived as an itinerant preacher and scholar. Gottschalk's free life was brought to an abrupt halt when he was charged with false teaching on divine predestination. He was condemned at a synod in Mainz in 848 and, the following year, at the provincial synod at Reims; after a public whipping he was sequestered in the abbey of Hautesville. His heresy consisted of a tenacious defence of Augustine's teaching on election and reprobation against the Pelagians and his condemnation became the start of a protracted conflict among Carolingian divines. Early in the struggle, Gottschalk's leading opponent and scourge, the archbishop Hincmar of Reims, was alerted to another heresy of Gottschalk's and this concerned the Trinity. In an attempt to gain additional support for his campaign Hincmar went to great trouble to publicize Gottschalk's doctrinal indiscretion but on this score he won scant support.

Surprisingly, Gottschalk's contribution to Trinitarian theology appeared, at least to his opponents, to compromise Augustinian orthodoxy. The sources to Gottschalk's theology of the Trinity are relatively few. There exist several small treatises of his which have been transmitted in a single manuscript (Gottschalk 1945: ix sqq.; Tavard 1997: 40). Against Gottschalk Hincmar composed a simply monumental and complex work entitled *De una et non trina deitate*. At the beginning of the work Hincmar included a set of notes which Gottschalk had sent to him and which in condensed form presented the main points of the opponent's Trinitarian 'innovation' (Hincmar 1852: 475C sqq.; Gottschalk 1945: 20-6).

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Against these notes Hincmar built up his defence of what he conceived to be Western orthodoxy.

From Gottschalk's notes it transpires that the main purpose of his deliberations on the divine Trinity was to underpin the orthodox middle between polytheism or, as he called it, Arianism, on the one hand, and, on the other, the dreaded Sabellianism. In order to achieve this, Gottschalk argued, it is not enough to state that God is one nature and three (p. 160) persons. Because divine nature is not cut off from or existing outside the persons, it is warranted to say that the deity is not only one but also three. This implies, according to Gottschalk, that every single divine person is God in the full sense and, accordingly, endowed with deity as his own proper principle (Gottschalk 1945: 20; Hincmar 1852: 478C). In other words, divine nature is not only one it is also 'trine' (*trina*) since it is proper to each of the divine persons (Tavard 1997: 45 sqq.). Accordingly, Gottschalk's emphasis on the less than common expression '*trina deitas*' was meant to provide a rationale for viewing the divine persons as substantial beings (Tavard 1997: 67-8).

Gottschalk took great pains to point out that this did not amount to introducing three substances in God. In order to establish this he distinguished sharply between the words 'trine' (*trinus*) and 'triple' (*triplex*); grammatical analysis reveals that the former does not allow of numbering while the latter indicates numerical diversity. Consequently, saying that the divine essence is trine merely implies that the attributes of divine nature, for example, being, holiness, majesty, and truth, pertain not only to divine nature but also to each of the three persons (Jolivet 1977). Equally, Gottschalk was keen to rule out the idea that his theory of the Trinity introduces a quaternity in God, i.e. that the divine nature and the three persons can be counted. Because divine nature is not distinct from the three persons it belongs to each of them in equal measure. As Gottschalk stressed repeatedly, divine nature or deity is naturally one and personally three (Tavard 1997: 65 sqq.).

Gottschalk's reasoning was undoubtedly based on Boethius' definition of person as that which is '*per se una*', which is not surprising in view of Gottschalk's obvious expertise in and predilection for grammar and logic as well as his conviction that grammatical analysis provides the key to theology (Jolivet 1958). But Hincmar was quick to point out that Boethius' definition of person cannot be applied to the divine without modifications and, at any rate, it was not the one favoured by Augustine, according to whom relation is what defines the divine persons (Tavard 1997: 68 sqq.).

Many details in Gottschalk's Trinitarian theology are rather opaque but his main motive was clearly spelled out already in the notes received by Hincmar. According to Gottschalk, it is necessary to affirm that divine nature is trine for the sole reason that divine nature did not assume human nature except in so far as it was the deity of the second person in the Trinity which became incarnate (Gottschalk 1945: 26; Hincmar 1852: 478CD). Because divine operation is inextricably tied to divine nature, Gottschalk argued, and because the divine persons are acting subjects and identifiable as subject terms, the only viable solution is to view the divine essence as both one and trine. If this is not al-

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lowed, Gottschalk thought, there would be no way to avoid Sabellianism and the ensuing heresy of Patripassianism.

Hincmar of Reims had little difficulty in refuting many of Gottschalk's arguments from tradition or pointing out the inherent dangers of the Boethian definition of person. Moreover, Hincmar was quick to identify and confront the main point of Gottschalk's theory. At the very start of his rebuttal he accused Gottschalk of having parted company with Alcuin—as well as Augustine—in his analysis of divine agency in God's assumption of human nature. In order to substantiate this claim he saw fit to quote the passage from Alcuin's manual in which the latter explained the assumption of human nature on (p. 161) the basis of Augustine's maxim (Hincmar 1852: 552C–553B). Moreover, Hincmar retorted that Gottschalk's basic perception entailed the denial of the individuality of the Trinity and, accordingly, it was a short cut to the hateful heresy of tritheism (Hincmar 1852: 553C).

John Scotus Eriugena and the Legacy of the Greeks

The great Irish scholar and theologian John Scotus Eriugena judiciously avoided public debate on Trinitarian theology. Occasionally Eriugena's interpretation of God's oneness and Trinity has been seen as similar to that of Gottschalk (Cappuyns 1933: 85; Tavard 1997: 78), but the Irishman was rather more daring than the German monk and had more considered reasons for deviating from Alcuin's well-trodden path of Augustinianism. In Eriugena's oeuvre, the Trinity is treated in the monumental *On the Division of Nature* and in his exposition of the prologue of St John's Gospel. In his systematic main work Eriugena considers God's Triunity in connection with the generation of the eternal ideas in the *Verbum Dei* and their realization in the world of creatures through the Holy Spirit. In this context John Scotus adopts the framework and terminology of Platonic causality and the triune God is viewed as both one cause and as three interrelated causes. Accordingly, John Scotus does not hesitate to speak of the divine essence and the divine persons as 'one essence in three substances' just as he without further ado depicts the divine principle as 'three subsisting causes in one essential cause' (Eriugena 1972: 164–5). Like Gottschalk he also refers to God as 'the triune cause of all things' (*trina omnium causa*) (Eriugena 1972: 170). The unusual terminology does not imply, however, that Eriugena distanced himself from the Augustinian heritage; he adopted Augustine's psychological explanation of the Trinity and adroitly adapted it to fit his own framework (Eriugena 1972: 174–6; Scheffczyk 1957).

Eriugena's approach to and perspective on the Trinity was undoubtedly prompted by his admiration for the theological traditions of the Greek Church to which his knowledge of Greek gave him direct access. This influence is not, however, the only explanation for Eriugena's views on Trinitarian theology. The Irish luminary in Charles the Bald's 'palace school' perceived a need to view the divine persons as subjects in their own right and for this he needed to stress their 'ontological' reality. This motive transpires lucidly from Eriugena's treatment of the *Filioque*, which at the time had become almost a Shibboleth

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of western orthodoxy. Against the united front of Carolingian theologians Eriugena did not waver in maintaining that the procession of the Holy Spirit originates solely from the substance that is proper to the Father, and not from the divine essence which is common to all three persons (Eriugena 1972: 200). Accordingly, the Father was the only cause of the Spirit. Eriugena's willingness to accept that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'through the Son' (Eriugena 1972: 188-90) was no concession to western (p. 162) sensibility but another reflection of Greek Orthodox tradition. In order to forestall the severe criticism which his speculative audacity openly invited, Eriugena was keen to stress that the Trinity is a lofty matter which can only be imperfectly conceived of and may be even less perfectly talked about (Eriugena 1972: 200).

Anselm of Canterbury

The divine Trinity was a subject of topical interest in three of Anselm of Canterbury's major works. The first was *Monologion* which was written for the monks in Bec around 1076. Anselm's second treatment of the Trinity is found in the polemical *Letter on the Incarnation of the Word* from 1094. Finally, as renowned theologian and English archbishop in exile Anselm became involved in the debate with the Greeks over the *Filioque*, and his reflections on the subject were set down in the treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* from 1102. Though Anselm's treatments of the Trinity originated under different circumstances and over a period of twenty-five years, they are marked by strong internal consistency and express a clear basic perception.

The *Monologion* is a rational enquiry into the divine being and its salient characteristics in which the legacy from Augustine and his work on the Trinity is apparent throughout (Holopainen 1996). In treating of the Trinity Anselm focuses on the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit as dynamic and interrelated aspects of the inner life of God. In so doing Anselm develops Augustine's psychological analogies whereas he refrains from elucidating the Trinity by way of logical terms and concepts such as 'per se' and 'per aliud' predications and the categories of substance and relation (Perino 1952; Schmaus 1975). Anselm defends this choice by arguing that God as the supreme and infinite spirit and the highest good is beyond the immediate grasp of the human intellect. Consequently, it is not possible to conceive of the divine as if it were a limited created object just as it is impossible to talk of God in the direct manner in which ordinary created things can be spoken about. This means that man's intellect must follow a more circuitous route and rely on the similitudes and analogies found in the world of creatures when meditating on God and speaking about the divine. As already Augustine had shown, the human soul presents the highest likeness to God in the created world, and for this reason the Trinity is best described in analogy with the interaction between memory, intellect, and love which characterizes the human soul (Anselm 1968: I, chs. 65-6).

In agreement with this, Anselm is keen to stress that it does not make any important difference which terms are used to signify unity and Trinity in the divine. With him the difference between the Latin and Greek ways of naming nature and persons in God should

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not be allowed to overshadow the basic agreement in faith and confession. Since words like 'substance' and 'person' signify independent and separate objects in the world of creatures, it makes little difference whether the divine persons are called 'persons' or 'substances'; what is important is that language does not deceive anybody into thinking (p. 163) of the divine persons as separate or mutually divided (Anselm 1968: I, ch. 78). Equally, it is not decisive whether divine nature is termed 'essence' or 'substance' as long as it is recognized that God as a substance is not subjected to accidental determinations and that his essence is not a universal nature (Anselm 1968: I, chs. 26-7).

Around 1190 Roscelin of Compiègne, a prominent master of dialectic in the schools of northern France, provoked dismay and confusion by advancing the following consequence,

If the three persons in God are only one thing (*res*)—and are not three things, each one [existing] separately in itself (as do three angels or three souls) and yet [existing] in such way that they are wholly the same in will and power—then the Father and the Holy Spirit were incarnate with the Son. (Anselm 1976: 9)

This is Anselm's rendering of Roscelin's argument and the sole contemporary source for the dialectician's thought on this point (Mews 1992b). The reception accorded Roscelin's excursion into theology was less than favourable; he was summoned to the council of Soissons in 1191 (or 1192) and was forced to recant. Shortly afterwards he retracted his recantation and reaffirmed his original position. This provoked Anselm to counter in public (Mews 1992a).

Anselm does not specify the original context of Roscelin's argument or his precise purpose in advancing it. On the basis of what Anselm indicates, it seems quite unlikely that Roscelin thought or argued along the lines of, for example, Gottschalk so as to target the intricate relationship between the divine essence and the divine persons, on the one hand, and, on the other, divine action in the world of creatures such as the assumption of human nature. It is far more likely that Roscelin aimed at making a logical point. To him it was evident that the proper name of 'God's Word' or 'Son' point to some thing (*res*), since this is what names do. If the object pointed to by this proper name is separate and different from the two other divine persons then the incarnation may be attributed to this subject without further ado. On the contrary, if there is no such separation or division between the divine persons then it is impossible that a noun placed as subject term may designate the second person in the Trinity without at the same time pointing to the remaining two persons. In this latter scenario it will be necessary to attribute the assumption of manhood not only to the Son of God but also to the Father and the Holy Spirit, since they will be pointed to by the subject term. In other words, there are sound logical and theological reasons for accepting that the three divine persons are persons in the ordinary sense of the word, that is to say, that they are three separate things or substances.

To Anselm this line of reasoning is completely superficial and a patent indication of Roscelin's seriously deficient understanding of the divine. In the first place, Anselm points out that Roscelin is mistaken if he thinks that his consequence is evident. In fact, it

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rests on an equivocation; the noun 'thing' (*res*) is ambiguous since it can be used to signify anything which can be said to be 'something' (*aliquid*). In other words, 'thing' like 'something' can be regarded on a par with transcendental terms. If, in the context of his argument, Roscelin interprets 'thing' as equivalent with 'substance', then he is clearly not a genuine Christian, since this entails the existence of three gods. If, on the other hand, he (p. 164) accepts the distinction between the one nature and the three persons, who are different by way of relations and personal properties, and interprets 'thing' as synonymous with 'person', then Roscelin's argument is totally uncontroversial (Anselm 1968: II, 11-12).

Anselm was convinced that Roscelin wished to claim that the three divine persons are three different substances. At the same time Roscelin claimed to maintain God's unity. This prompts Anselm to examine the possibility that three separate divine persons may come together so as to make up God's unity. Anselm concludes, as a matter of course, that this is no real possibility since God is not made up of parts. Furthermore, Roscelin's suggestion that God's unity may consist in an agreement in will and power between the three persons is simply folly inasmuch as this would debase the divine unity so as to be only accidental and, for this reason, secondary to the separate persons as substances (Anselm 1968: II, 16 sqq.).

In the realm of the divine Roscelin's line of reasoning is, according to Anselm, totally inapposite. He has no appreciation of the fact that God is not an object on a par with created objects and that He does not conform to the rules that apply to corporeal reality or to the imagination of man (Anselm 1968: II, 17-18). In accordance with this appraisal, Anselm undertakes to explain the true nature of the divine to Roscelin; for good order he also refers the reader to the fuller treatment found in the *Monologion* and the *Proslogion* (Anselm 1968: II, 20). Anselm focuses on God's ubiquity, eternity, and omnipotence. These attributes do not allow of multiplication, and the reason for this is that what is without limit cannot be separated from something of the same order—for example, two infinite things must be identical, or one of the two is not infinite (Anselm 1968: II, 22). The same holds true when God is seen in His proper nature as the highest good. If, for the sake of argument, it were assumed that there was more than one God, then the several gods would as the highest good be the same God; otherwise there would be something by which one god was different from another god and, consequently, both could not be the highest good. What is supremely good and perfect is by nature unique (Anselm 1968: II, 22-3). According to Anselm's appraisal, this elementary and necessary demonstration of God's unity is totally destructive of Roscelin's attempt to multiply the divine persons as divine substances. Just how much importance Anselm attached to this line of reasoning transpires from the fact that he could not resist simply repeating the argument towards the end of his treatise (Anselm 1968: II, 33-4).

The stylistically rough composition of Anselm's treatise shows that he found it difficult to argue against an opponent whom he considered to be a theological dilettante. Of course, Anselm felt obliged to repeat the well-known distinctions from Augustine and he explained in very elementary terms and likenesses the nature of the unity of essence and

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Trinity of persons. To him it was evident that the term 'person' cannot mean precisely the same when used of human persons and of divine persons. This is why it is important to focus on the similitude which justifies the use of the term for the divine persons (Anselm 1968: II, 30). As compared to the *Monologion* Anselm's reply to Roscelin does not signal a significant shift in doctrine. It is true that in the latter work he saw fit to rely on Augustine's logical models of explanation, and in this respect he was presumably motivated by the circumstance that Roscelin had argued solely in terms of logic.

(p. 165) In the late autumn of 1098 Anselm participated in the council at Bari where he debated the procession of the Holy Spirit with the Greek representatives (Gasper 2004). It is not known how the Greeks responded to Anselm's arguments in favour of the *Filioque*, but four years later in the *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* Anselm restated his case (Bertola 1986).

The treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit expands on Anselm's conception of divine simplicity and its implications for the plurality of persons. To Anselm it is incontestable that the Son and the Holy Spirit as divine persons are from the Father and that they have different modes of originating: the Son is generated by the Father and the Spirit proceeds from the Father. Since the Father is God and imparts divine nature in full to the two other persons, it is, according to Anselm, of paramount importance to realize that this implies that the Son and the Holy Spirit are 'God from God' (*Deus de Deo*), and that the Son and the Holy Spirit are one and the same God with the Father (Anselm 1968: II, 182-3).

As one of their main theological reasons for rejecting the *Filioque* the Greeks had argued that the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son entails that the third person would have two causes or principles. According to Anselm this is a patent inversion of the western position. At the very core of the Latin conception lie the absolute simplicity and unity of divine nature which determine the causality in the divine; and from this the *Filioque* follows with inexorable logic. In fact, the perfect unity and simplicity of God make it inconceivable that the third person could be from solely the Father (Anselm 1968: II, 205). Arguing for this Anselm demonstrates that the Son and the Holy Spirit cannot be separate from the Father with respect to the divine essence since the supreme simplicity and unity of the divine essence guarantee that generation and procession communicate the single divine being to the Son and the Holy Spirit, respectively. Because the Son is born from the Father as God from God and the Son is the very same divine nature as the Father it follows that the Father and the Son must be the very same principle of the procession of the Holy Spirit. Unless the Son had been split off from the divine essence, there is no manner in which the Son could be isolated or separate with respect to the communication of divine being to the Holy Spirit. This is, however, no real possibility and, as Anselm concludes, the third person in the Trinity cannot be even imagined to proceed from the Father as God from God without proceeding from the Son (Anselm 1968: II, 189).

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Somebody might claim that the Holy Spirit proceeds from that by which the Father is Father, that is to say, from the Father's relationship to the Son, and not from the Father's divine nature or essence. Anselm is willing to consider this possibility even though he finds it extremely foolish. As he sees it, even on this—unacceptable—premise it would not be possible to undermine the Latin position, since, in this case, it should be answered that the Son is not cut off from the procession of the Holy Spirit inasmuch as the relationship of being a father and the relationship of being a son imply each other and cannot be separated (Anselm 1968: II, 189–90).

Anselm's defence of the *Filioque* vis-à-vis the Greeks built on precisely the same conception of the absolute simplicity and unity of the divine essence which formed the basis (p. 166) for his refutation of Roscelin. Anselm was clearly aware of this and at the end of his treatise he explicitly referred the reader back to his *Letter on the Incarnation of the Word*; he even recapitulated his favourite argument concerning the infinite self-identity of the divine essence and the fundamental equality of the divine persons (Anselm 1968: II, 218). With equal justification he could, in fact, have referred to the *Monologion*.

Anselm's main contribution to the theology of the Trinity lies in his defence and exposition of the divine nature as that which, on the one hand, ensures that the persons are one and the same God and, on the other, sets a limit to their diversity (Anselm 1968: II, 181–2). His efforts in this respect were of importance for the preservation and development of the legacy from Augustine and the Carolingians and it foreshadowed not only the decree 'Damnamus' promulgated at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 but also the 'Sacrosancta Romana' passed at the council of Florence in 1442 (Hödl 2002).

Suggested Reading

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Lauge O. Nielsen

Lauge O. Nielsen is Professor of Church History at the Faculty of Theology in the University of Copenhagen.

Scholastic Reasons, Monastic Meditations and Victorine Conciliations: The Question of the Unity and Plurality of God in the Twelfth Century 

Dominique Poirel

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This article examines the thoughts of twelfth-century theologians in the West concerning the Trinity. It focuses on the works of Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Richard of St. Victor, and Peter Lombard. It explores the multiplication of models used to think about the Trinity. These include the triad power-wisdom-goodness, images in the human soul, traces in visible creation, and interpersonal love. It argues that despite the tensions at the beginning of the period, the efforts of the theologians led toward a richer doctrine, notably toward the theory of Trinitarian appropriations.

Keywords: Trinity, theologians, Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Richard of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, human soul, visible creation, interpersonal love, Trinitarian appropriations

IN the twelfth century, notable reflections on the Trinitarian mystery led to a series of conflicts between the scholastic and monastic worlds. On the one side stood the masters, Abelard, Gilbert of Poitiers, and Peter Lombard, on the other, the monks, mostly Cistercians, William of Saint Thierry, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Joachim of Fiore. In the middle stood the canons regular Hugh, Achard, and Richard of Saint Victor, neither monks nor seculars, but religious and masters at the same time, who played the role of intermediary. Perhaps they are the reason that the conflicts of the century were less acute and more favourable to the masters, especially if they were bishops. After the condemnations of Abelard at Soissons (1121) and at Sens (1140/1) and the simple warning of Gilbert at Rheims (1148), Peter Lombard is solemnly acquitted at Lateran IV (1215) of Joachim's accusations.

What brought on this desire to better understand the Trinity? First, it is the fundamental and distinctive mystery of Christianity. In the twelfth century, expeditions to the Holy Land and the translations of Greek and Arab philosophical texts put thinkers of the Latin West in contact with other conceptions of the divine, which incited them to defend the truth of their faith. At the same time, a taste for dialectic was growing in the schools and

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cloisters. People sought the support of 'necessary reasons', independent of (p. 169) scriptural authority, to understand better Christian doctrine, including the major challenge for the human intellect which is the Trinity. Boethius' *Theological Tractates* furnished the model of natural, universal, and necessary reason applied to the Christian mystery. He elaborated the notions of substance, person, essence, and relation in order to better understand God as one and triune. Nonetheless, the *aetas boetiana* is also the *aetas ovidiana*. In the cloisters and the courts, another taste, for the theme of love, sharpened the sense of the individual, his subjectivity, and his affectivity. It also stimulated interest in Cistercian and Victorine thinkers above all for the analysis of interpersonal sentiments and relationships. From these sources, Bernard and Richard drew new models for thinking about the Trinity.

Throughout the century, a question obsessed our authors: how to accord unity of substance and plurality of persons in God? How to avoid theological discourse separating into two treatises, one on God's unity, accessible to natural reason, the other on the triune God, supported by Revelation alone? Working on theological language, certain thinkers distinguished the names and formulated rules of predication (Abelard, Gilbert, and Peter Lombard). Others, insisting on divine transcendence, resisted the assaults of natural reason and revered the mystery (William and Bernard). Some found analogies in the human soul and creation (Hugh). Others proposed comparisons, that of a seal (Abelard), a kiss (Bernard), or interpersonal love (Richard). Still others meditated on plurality and its divine source (Achar). It is in this proliferation of reflection that appeared the doctrine of 'Trinitarian appropriations', a major twelfth-century contribution to Trinitarian theology (Hugh, Abelard, and Richard).

1. The Masters

Peter Abelard (d. 1142)

Peter Abelard composed three works on the Trinity, today distinguished as *Theologia 'Summi Boni'*, *Theologia Christiana*, and *Theologia 'Scholarium'*, in reality three versions of the same work. It was first entitled *De Trinitate*. He never ceased refining and modifying its title, subject, purpose, layout, and tenor. Its central thesis is that 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit' are the names by which Christ distinguished the 'perfection of the sovereign good', that is, God. Therefore, 'Father' names his power (*potentia*), 'Son' his wisdom (*sapientia*), and 'Holy Spirit' his goodness (*benignitas*). The triad 'power/wisdom/goodness' forms therefore a bridge between Christianity, Judaism, and philosophy, so that 'all human beings naturally have faith in the Trinity'. Objections against the unity of substance or the Trinity of persons are resolved by a careful analysis of notions: 'same', 'different', and 'person'. The processions from the Father and the Son are explained on the one hand by plausible arguments based on the relations that unite power, wisdom, and goodness (*Theologia 'Scholarium'*) and on the other hand by a controversial comparison (p. 170) with a seal. He distinguished the seal's matter (bronze) from its form (effigy of the sovereign); or, in a more precise way, (1) the bronze, (2) the 'apt to seal' (*sigillabile*), and

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(3) the 'sealing' (*sigillans*, once imprinted in the wax). Like the divine persons, these elements are at the same time identical by essence and diverse by their properties.

The Abelardian doctrine was condemned twice. At Soissons (1121), students of Anselm of Laon charged that he did violence to the Trinitarian mystery by employing an inappropriate dialectical method that separated the three persons or reduced them to names. At Sens (1140/1), the Cistercians William of Saint Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux called into question fourteen theses, several being Trinitarian: the names 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit' are improper; the three persons are of unequal power; the Holy Spirit is not of the same substance of the Father and the Son; the Holy Spirit is the soul of the world; and Christ is not a third person of the Trinity. Often caricatures, these theses do not reflect the real doctrine of Abelard, but rather manifest a real difficulty of his accusers in understanding it. As a matter of fact, this doctrine is as simple in its principal affirmation as it is complex in its demonstrations and corollaries.

At the centre is found the triad '*potentia—sapientia—benignitas*' and its identification with the three divine persons. The idea is not totally new. There are numerous precedents in the biblical, conciliar, and patristic tradition. Abelard's originality involves presenting this triad as a model that offers to natural reason a more universal terrain than Christian Revelation. In so doing, his purpose is threefold: polemical, apologetic, and theological-philosophical. He seeks: (1) to refute the theories of the 'pseudo-dialecticians', in particular his old master Roscelin; (2) to show that, in a certain measure, the Trinitarian mystery had been foretold or even acknowledged, outside of Christianity, by the prophets and philosophers: we find this preoccupation of universality in his *Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian*; and (3) to offer to reason a terrain for research and discussion, a sort of philosophical theology, in which even the strictest logic is not offended by the affirmation of the mystery of the Trinity, as found in the Scriptures, Councils, and Fathers. In his preface to the third *Theologia*, Abelard explains that he wrote his work because of the spontaneous request of students who

clamoured for human and philosophical reasons. They insistently sought things that we can comprehend rather than speak. They affirmed: that it is useless to pronounce words that do not result in comprehension; that one can believe nothing that is not first understood; and that it is ridiculous to preach to others that which neither oneself nor those whom one seeks to instruct is able to grasp intellectually, for the Lord himself disapproves of the blind leading the blind.

However, this model raises two questions that neither his opponents nor Abelard himself were able to address satisfactorily. What is the precise nature of the rapport between this model and the three divine persons? Even understood as a simple analogy, does it offer a teaching on the Trinity that is compatible with Christian tradition? At times, it seems that Abelard only sees the triad as an analogy. Thus, when he declares in the *Theologia 'Scholarium'* that wisdom is a certain power or faculty to discern and that goodness is in no way a power or wisdom, he quickly adds that nonetheless the three (p. 171) persons are equally powerful, wise and good. One can understand that these three faculties resemble above

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all the three persons by their relations of origin. Nonetheless, Abelard had declared in the preceding *Theologiae* that 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit' are respectively the 'names' given by Christ to the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, and that the latter 'define' the three persons and are 'proper' to them. If someone opposes his position by quoting the Creed *Quicumque*, which affirms that the three persons are equally almighty, he responds that the same name can be either proper or common depending on the context. Therefore, there is no contradiction to say that power is proper to the Father and that the three persons are equally and fully powerful.

Is Abelard incoherent? Did he evolve with time, from a radical theory towards a more moderate one? Did his incomplete *Theologiae* juxtapose textual layers from different periods that he put off merging better until later? Did the nature of the relationship between the triad and the Trinity remain unspecified or only implicit? It is difficult to determine. Abelard's doctrine, even reduced to its central affirmation, does not reconcile easily with the anterior tradition that, prolonged by Hugh and Richard of Saint Victor, would give birth to the theory of 'Trinitarian appropriations'. Abelard, for his part, does not 'appropriate' (i.e. 'makes proper'), rather he 'communicates' (i.e. 'makes common'). He does not want to explain why some attributes, that the most rigorous theology considers to be substantial and 'common', are sometimes applied as 'proper' to a particular person, but why power, wisdom, and goodness, which he holds to be 'proper' attributes in themselves (*per se dicta*), can in certain contexts (*in contextu ... orationis*) become 'common' to the Three.

From common to proper or from proper to common, the difference seems slight, the essential being maintained: to demonstrate that God is indissolubly one and triune and that certain names can, according to the case, apply either to the substance or to the person. If we seek to reconcile 'authorities' as did Abelard, the result is the same. That is why he was sincerely persuaded that his doctrine did not fall into heresy in any way. If on the contrary we consider, as they did at Laon, Clairvaux, and Saint Victor, that these 'authorities' do not come raw to the theologian, but are transmitted to him through an exegetical tradition that already partially articulates, balances, and interprets them, whatever his dialectical virtuosity, Abelard's abnormal theory becomes impossible to accept. This principal cause of Abelard's *calamitates* in Trinitarian theology is only amplified by his provocative personality and by the difference in method.

Gilbert of Poitiers (d. 1154)

A Master in Paris and perhaps in Chartres, Gilbert of Poitiers addresses the Trinity in his commentaries on Boethius' *Opuscula sacra*. He took from the *Hebdomades* a metaphysical distinction between the 'that which is' (*quod est*) or 'subsistent' (*subsistens*: the existing thing in its concrete individuality) and the 'that by which it is' (*quo est*) or 'subsistence' (*subsistentia*: the formal principle that makes it be that which it is). Gilbert radicalizes this distinction and makes it the universal key to a new and coherent philosophical (p. 172) system. In theology, he also distinguishes a *quod est* ('God') and a *quo est* (his 'divinity'). Thus, one can say that each person is 'God', although their common divinity is

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unique. This distinction shocked two of his archdeacons and then William of Saint Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux. At the Council of Reims in 1148, Gilbert defends his orthodoxy in front of Eugene III. Of four suspected theses, only the first is disapproved, even though it was not established that it faithfully expressed Gilbert's thought: 'The divine essence, substance and nature, that one calls "divinity", "goodness", "wisdom", "greatness of God", etc., is not God, but the form by which God exists'. Pope Eugene III required that no reason separate the nature from the person and that the divine essence be predicated of God in the nominative ('God is the divine essence') as well as in the ablative ('God is *through* the divine essence').

Peter Lombard (d. 1160)

Among the numerous twelfth-century doctrinal syntheses, Peter Lombard's *Sentences* were by far the most influential, because of their effort to harmonize the whole of the tradition around a moderate doctrine that was principally Augustinian. The first of the four books addresses God one and triune. It examines the processions of the Son then of the Holy Spirit and the names employed in Trinitarian theology, arranged in six categories. In spite of its general moderation, two of its theses provoked debate.

In the lost *De unitate Trinitatis*, Joachim of Fiore reprimanded him for having written that 'neither has the Father engendered the divine substance, nor has the divine essence engendered the Son, neither has the divine essence engendered the divine essence', arguing that, if there existed in God a 'thing' (i.e. the 'substance') that is not affected by the relations of origin, this 'thing' is added to the three persons, thus introducing a quaternitiy. In reality, the Lombard rejected statements such as 'the Father engendered the divine essence', 'the divine essence engendered the Son', 'the essence engendered the essence', in order to avoid coming to the conclusion that the Father engendered himself. Indeed, Peter knew that Augustine affirmed that God the Father 'engendered that which he is himself'. But he interpreted it by saying that 'God the Father engendered from himself ... the Son, who is that which is the Father'. Against Joachim's charges, the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 proclaimed the orthodoxy of the Lombard. Another controversial point from the *Sentences* is their identifying charity and the Holy Spirit:

the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and of the Son, by which they love each other mutually and love us. Moreover, the same Holy Spirit is the love or charity by which we love God and neighbour. When this charity is in us in such a manner that it makes us love God and neighbour, then one says that the Holy Spirit is sent or given to us; and the one who loves the love itself by which he loves his neighbour, in so doing he loves God, for love itself is God, that is, the Holy Spirit.

Certainly, charity, namely the Holy Spirit, is completely unalterable in itself, but it grows or diminishes in the heart of the person who receives it. It is therefore necessary to (p. 173) distinguish the presence of the Holy Spirit from its possession. Although being everywhere, it is neither possessed by everyone nor by irrational creatures. Against those who say that the charity of the Father and the Son is not the same charity by which men

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love God and neighbour, but is its source, Peter responds that charity can come from the Holy Spirit while being identical with it, since the Holy Spirit gives itself to men. Finally addressing the objections that affirm that charity is an affection, a movement, or a virtue of the intellect, he responds that charity is immutable, but that the mind is affected and moved by it as if it were a virtue. Never officially condemned, this thesis was nonetheless set aside by the thirteenth-century doctors, even if they limited its scope, as did Bonaventure.

2. The Monks

If the principal authors are Cistercians, the black monks also meditated upon the Trinity. In particular the Benedictine Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) left an immense exegetical opus. His *De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius* is a commentary on the entirety of Scripture following a Trinitarian reading. The Trinity manifests itself throughout the history of salvation, in such a way that the works of the three divine persons correspond to three ages: creation (Father); from the fall of Adam to the Passion of Christ (Son); and from the resurrection of Christ to the end of time (Holy Spirit). This concern to reunite Trinitarian theology and salvation history reappears in the work of Joachim of Fiore.

William of Saint Thierry (d. 1148)

A former student of Anselm of Laon, Benedictine abbot, then Cistercian monk and friend of St Bernard, William of Saint Thierry fought the theories of Abelard, wrote an original synthesis on the Trinity, and meditated upon the assimilation of man to God one and trine. His *Disputatio adversus Petrum Abaelardum* refutes the identification of the three persons with the attributes 'power—wisdom—goodness'. In the name of divine 'pure simplicity', he affirms that for God to be powerful, to know and to will are the same thing. He also rebukes Abelard for only considering the Holy Spirit in its action *ad extra* with creatures. This oversight confuses the two processions of God: on the one hand, of nature, in God; and on the other, of grace, toward creation.

Building upon the Latin and Greek Fathers, the *Aenigma fidei* proposes a vigorous synthesis of faith in the Trinity, insisting that this part of the Christian doctrine is a mystery. William distinguishes (1) the essential names (*ad se*) affirming the indivisibility of the divine nature, (2) the essential and relative names referring to the relations between God and creation, and (3) the names that are proper to a person and yet relative (*ad aliquid*) in that each is related to the others (*ad invicem*). For the first ones, the simplicity of God is such that each divine attribute signifies the whole divine essence and can be (p. 174) indistinctly predicated of the substance or of each person. In the divine essence, there is thusly 'neither singularity nor diversity'. Concerning the second ones, they imply in God neither mutability nor separation of persons, but the three create, govern, etc. as a unique creator or governor. Regarding the third group, William redefines 'person' as 'that which is made known with certainty because of its form'. The persons are 'three proper and relative realities' (*propria relativa*); while being relative, they are nonetheless 'some-

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thing *ad se*, without being three essences. The intra-Trinitarian life founds the history of salvation *ad extra*, 'from the Father'. In creation, redemption, or prayer, the divine action is exercised 'from the Father', 'by the Son', and 'in the Holy Spirit', the link of charity uniting between them the three persons.

The *Epistola ad fratres de Monte-Dei* (*Letter to the Brothers of Mont-Dieu*) contains the elements of a 'Trinitarian mysticism'. In the ascension toward God, William distinguishes (1) pure faith, founded on authority alone; (2) 'science' or 'the reason of faith', which, under the control of faith, manifests that which it contains in seed; and (3) the 'sense of the divinity' or the 'taste of wisdom', communicated by the Holy Spirit, where the soul knows God no longer by reason, but by a loving experience that anticipates the beatific vision. From one state to another, man is progressively divinized and further united to the three persons, through his three faculties of memory, reason, and will. In the third state, the soul is united to the Holy Spirit who unites the Father and the Son in a mutual love and reciprocal knowledge, so that 'in an ineffable and unthinkable manner, man merits being of God, if not God' (*Dei, non Deus*) and 'that which God is by nature, man is by grace'. William thereby develops 'a theory of mystical experience that is *essentially* Trinitarian and an approach to the Trinity that is *essentially* mystical' (Brooke 1959: 120).

Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153)

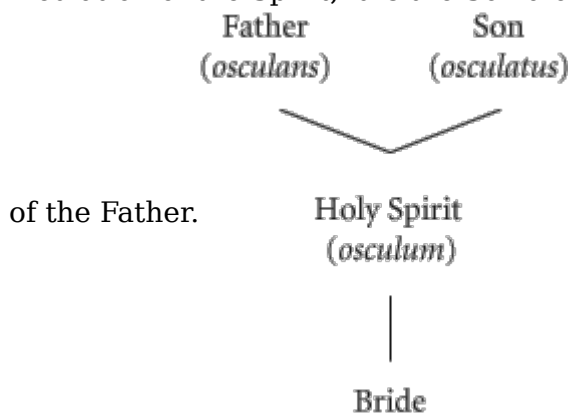
A friend of William, Bernard has a doctrine that is similar but more affective. Like him, Bernard insists on the divine unity, which is indistinguishable for him from the charity that links the three persons.

Before the Council of Sens, Bernard sent intense correspondence to the Pope and the prelates to warn them about Abelard, whom he accuses of 'disembowelling the mysteries of God', of 'evacuating the merit of the faith', of being 'ready to render reasons for everything, even that which is above reason', and of daring 'to do it against reason and against faith'. His principal grievance is that Abelard 'sets up degrees and levels in the Trinity' with his defective model of the bronze seal or his use of the triad 'power/wisdom/goodness'. God is 'that concerning which one can think nothing greater'. And yet, it is greater to be supremely great in whole rather than in part. Each person is therefore the whole of that which is substance, the whole of that which are the two others. Therefore it is false to ascribe 'properly and specially' power to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Spirit. It is not that Bernard critiques the link between the three attributes and the three persons: this link is found several times in his writings. But he rebukes Abelard's (p. 175) affirmation that the three attributes are 'properties' of the persons. The names of power, wisdom, and goodness, being names *ad se* (absolute such as 'divinity'), are substantial and common. On the contrary, names *ad alium* (relative such as 'engendered') are personal and singular. If power is ascribed 'properly' to the Father because he alone exists by himself, the same reasoning demands that he be ascribed 'properly' wisdom and goodness as well. Bernard goes so far as to say that Abelard lacks logic—a paradoxical reproach of this 'new Aristotle'! The doctrine of Gilbert is moreover attacked in

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Sermon 80 on the *Canticle of Canticles* and in *De consideratione* in the name of the supreme divine simplicity.

In his *Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*, commenting on the first verse, Bernard delivers a lesson on the Trinity in which the literary beauty rivals its theological finesse. The Spouse of the Canticle says 'Oh that he would kiss me with a kiss of his mouth' (Cant. 1:1). This kiss is first identified with the union of the two natures in Christ. Next it signifies the person of the Holy Spirit, who is the kiss of the Father and the Son. Indeed, each kiss proceeds from the two persons who embrace, as the Holy Spirit itself proceeds from the first two divine persons. Moreover, uniting two mouths, it is a sign of charity, peace, and unity, even as the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son and as it spreads, according to St Paul, charity in our hearts. Finally, constituted of a breath, it recalls the very name of 'Spirit' and this breath that the resurrected Christ breathed on his disciples saying: 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (Jn 20:22). When therefore the Bride, addressing the Bridegroom, asks him: 'Oh that he would kiss me with a kiss of his mouth', she addresses Christ and asks that the Father give the Spirit, who is also revelation of the Father and of the Son. This kiss is received on two lips: one for understanding, the other for loving that which is revealed. The two are necessary in order to receive the knowledge of the divine mysteries. Thus, a biblical and poetic image of great density recapitulates how the three divine persons—the Father who kisses, the Son who is kissed, and the Holy Spirit who is the kiss—are distinguished and united in the unique movement of uncreated charity; and how the soul's created charity is united to God's uncreated charity, while being distinct from it: for if the soul participates in the flow of love of the Father and of the Son by the mediation of the Spirit, it is the Son alone who is kissed, directly and fully, by the mouth



(p. 176) Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202)

A Benedictine monk, abbot, and reformer, then Cistercian and finally founder of the order of Fiore, Joachim produced a complex exegetical opus, rendered obscure by the presence of apocryphal writings. We have already mentioned that Joachim fought the Trinitarian doctrine of Peter Lombard, whom he reproached for positing the divinity as exterior to the Trinity. Moreover, he himself represented the Trinity in the form of the *Psalterium* of David, that is, as a trapezoid the shortest side of which is very narrow: the Father is the summit, the Son and the Spirit are the extremities of the base, and the common sub-

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stance in the centre of the instrument is represented in the form of a circle corresponding to his table of harmony. The divinity is thus interior to the Trinity.

Joachim is also famous for his Trinitarian conception of history. Prolonging and modifying the typological method of scriptural explanation, he observes, between the personalities and the events of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the time of the Church, certain proportional 'concordances' or analogies (often supported by calculations). For those who know how to read it, the Bible offers therefore keys for understanding the present and the future. The history of salvation is punctuated by three ages (*status*). The age of the Father, the period of nature and Mosaic law, corresponds to the Old Testament and the order of *coniugati* (laymen). The age of the Son, period of grace, corresponds to the New Testament and the order of clergy. After persecution by the Antichrist (that Joachim thought to be close) a third age will come, period 'of greater grace', peace, and freedom: it corresponds to the order of the spirituals, that is, of monks. Following this there will be the attack of Gog and Magog and finally the second coming of Christ to judge mankind. This Trinitarian conception of history wielded a deep influence on the Franciscan order, from Bonaventure to the Fraticelli.

3. Masters and Religious: The Victorines

Founded before 1113 by William of Champeaux, former teacher of Abelard, Saint Victor of Paris is an abbey of canons regular, at once clergy and contemplatives, whose encyclopaedic humanism is ordered toward a deeply Trinitarian Christian wisdom.

Hugh of Saint Victor (d. 1141)

Hugh's doctrine on the Trinity is principally expressed in the *De tribus diebus*, the *Sententiae de divinitate*, and the *De sacramentis* (I, 2–3). The first work proves the existence of God, his unity, and his immutability and, finally, using a psychological analogy inspired by Augustine, the Trinity of persons. He attributes—probably before (p. 177) Abelard—power, wisdom and goodness to the three divine persons, but without insisting and as if in passing. The contemplation of the immensity, beauty, and utility of creatures awakens mankind to fear, truth, and charity and thus makes shine on us the day of the Father, that of the Son, and that of the Holy Spirit.

Later revisiting the issue, Hugh elaborates a doctrine of Trinitarian appropriations, mindful to differentiate his theology from the Abelardian theories. Among the 'primordial causes' that govern creation, the first is the divine will or goodness, accompanied by wisdom and power. Power, wisdom, and goodness: all divine attributes lead to these three, which encompass the whole divine substance. They form therefore a sort of trinity, being at once three and one, without being the divine persons, since they arise from the divine substance, equally shared by the three persons. Nonetheless, the 'Catholic faith', that is, the Christian tradition, 'has assigned power to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Spirit', for two reasons. First, in order to correct the anthropomorphic conceptions that human language conveys: the names 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit'

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can evoke the impotence of the aged, the immaturity of youth, and the ruthlessness of strictness. Applying the substantial attributes to the three persons combats the excesses of human language. The second reason is more positive. Between power, wisdom, and goodness, there exist the same relations of procession as between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In each triad, the first term does not depend on any other. The second term is engendered from the first. The third proceeds from those that precede it. Finally, while distinguishing each one from the other, the three terms do not converge any less to unity. There is thus a structural analogy between the triad 'power—wisdom—goodness' (1b) and the Trinity of persons (1a). Moreover, the three divine attributes (1b) are reflected in the created perfections of visible creatures (3: immensity, beauty, and utility), while the three divine persons (1a) have as an image the three faculties of the human soul (2: mind (*mens*), intellect, and will). God, mankind, and the visible universe are therefore structured in a triadic manner, following degrees for decreasing resemblance.

1a Divine persons	2 human soul	1b Divine substance	3 visible creatures
Father	mind (<i>mens</i>)	power	immensity
Son	intellect	wisdom	beauty
Holy Spirit	goodness/will	goodness	utility

Achard of Saint Victor (d. 1171)

A master, abbot of Saint Victor, then bishop of Avranches, Achard is the author of a *De Trinitate* or *De unitate et pluralitate creaturarum*. Fragmentary and discovered late, the text expresses powerful originality. Fascinated by the metaphysical question of the one (p. 178) and the many, he demonstrates by several arguments that in God a true plurality exists, from which comes every created plurality. (1) The unity and plurality of creatures implies that in God there exists a unity and a plurality adhering to this unity. (2) The imperfect resemblance of creatures to the Creator implies that beyond them a perfect resemblance of God exists, equal to God, therefore in God. (3) The beauty coming from the aggregate of several realities surpasses each of them separately. But such beauty is greater in spirits than in bodies and greater in the uncreated spirit than in created ones. It must therefore exist in God. (4) An analogous argument is sketched while replacing beauty by charity, which can only be found between several subjects; but 'we are unable to conceive of anything better or more delightful'. This plurality is constituted by persons, who are distinguished among themselves as being Unity, Equal, and Equality, fittingly called 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit' (I, 19–36). We can see here, in embryo, one of Richard's arguments on the same subject. Nevertheless, Achard's enhances more audaciously the value of plurality. Far from being a mark of finitude or a degradation of the primordial unity, it has its origin in God, where it receives its perfection. Since God is

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alone true unity, he also is true plurality. Between God and creatures, the ontological gradation articulates itself, not by a progressive division of unity into plurality, but by a descent from God, truly one and plural, toward realities that are neither truly one nor truly plural.

Richard of Saint Victor (d. 1173)

A master, sub-prior, then prior of Saint Victor, Richard composed two famous works (known as *Beniamin minor* and *Beniamin maior*) on a type of contemplation that unites intelligence and affectivity. People spoke in his regard of a 'speculative mysticism'. In a certain way, his *De Trinitate* is an application and coronation of it. Here he teaches the contemplation of the principal mystery of the Christian faith using 'necessary reasons' in the tradition of St Anselm.

From unity to mutual love ('co-dilection')

In book III, Richard demonstrates that the one God is also three persons, by using three analogous arguments, founded on the notions of charity, beatitude, and glory. Their common mainspring is to apply to God a principle of maximal perfection. Since God is the supreme good, it is always fitting to attribute the best to him. 'Nothing is better than charity, nothing is more perfect' (VI, 2). Since charity involves tending toward the other, there is in God a plurality of persons. Likewise, the exigency of maximal felicity or glory constrains us to admit the existence in God of an equal, to whom he communicates every good. Supreme majesty could not be limited by solitary greed. The same demand of maximal perfection implies the equality of persons and their perfect unity of substance. Richard shows that this plurality is, more precisely, a 'Trinity'. Indeed, these equal persons are at least three. For charity, felicity, and glory are greater when two who love each other associate unanimously a third to the plenitude of their love, felicity, and glory, without prejudice to the equality of persons. Love (*dilectio*) becomes the shared love of a (p. 179) third (*condilectio*), each person being in relation with the other two by a double and reciprocal affection.

The Existencia of Richard

Another of Richard's novelties resides in his critique of the Boethian definition of person, which obscures the distinction between 'substance' (response to the question 'What?') and 'person' (response to the question 'Who?'). He resorts to the term *existentia*, which he gives a new meaning by analysing it thusly. '-sistentia' designates that which the thing is substantially. 'Ex-' specifies the relation of origin that defines this thing, that is to say, if it has being because of itself or from another source. The *existentia* varies therefore: by quality and origin for human beings, who have neither the same substance nor the same parents; by quality only for angels, who are all created directly by God; and finally by origin only for God, since the three divine persons are consubstantial but are different because of their relations of origin. The word '*existentia*' applies both to the divine substance (it is thereby common) and to the divine persons (it is thereby incommunicable).

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With this said, he replaces the Boethian definition of 'person' by a new one that can apply to God. The person is 'an incommunicable *existentia* of divine nature'.

Examining then the relations of origin, Richard affirms the need to posit a person who exists because of itself, in order to avoid an infinite regress. Such a person is unique; if not it would be a composition or a participation in another, prior reality. From this first person, existing because of itself, the others derive in a way that is (a) immediate, (b) mediate, or (c) immediate and mediate at once. The immediate procession necessarily precedes the other two. The immediate-mediate procession is required in order that there be *condilectio*. On the contrary, a purely mediated procession is excluded. It would introduce inequality. All the possible processions being thus exhausted, there is no place for a fourth person, since the divine persons are distinguished by their relations of origin alone. These persons are therefore three in number. The one exists because of itself. The second draws its existence from the first. The third draws it from the other two. These three persons are given the names of 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit'.

The Trinitarian 'Appropriations'

In Trinitarian theology, Richard forges the concept of Trinitarian 'appropriations' (almost at the same time as the *Sententiae divinitatis*) and completes the theory already sketched by Hugh. The appropriation consists in taking a common term, therefore substantial, in order to apply it more particularly to one of the three divine persons, because of the fittingness or the greater affinity between this common notion and the person in question. It refers therefore literally to *appropriare* or to 'render proper', to move from the common to the proper. Since this word also seems influenced by its quasi-homonym *appropriare*, 'to become close', appropriation is also in some way an 'approximation'. As Richard explains in the *De tribus appropriatis personis in deitate* (a non-Richardian title), the appropriation of common terms, practised by the Scriptures and the Fathers, aims to give mankind a certain access to that which otherwise surpasses natural knowledge. The appropriated names neither explain nor dissipate the mystery, but rather give an inkling of the mystery in an indirect (p. 180) way, as in a mirror, while waiting for the beatific vision. Concerning the triad 'power—wisdom—goodness', Richard takes up a Hugonian and Abelardian explanation: the three divine perfections are united between themselves by relations of origin that are analogous to those of the three persons. There is therefore between the triad of attributes and the Trinity of persons not identification, but an analogy of structure and proportion.

In his doctrine of appropriation as in his notion of *existentia*, Richard searches to gather together these two poles of the Trinitarian mystery, namely the unity of substance and the plurality of persons, by distinguishing them, certainly, but also by articulating them and by drawing them together as much as possible. Thus, the doctrine of this speculative thinker, who is also a contemplative, is at the meeting point between the current of the masters and that of the Cistercians.

(Translated from the French by craig Stephen Titus.)

Suggested Reading

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Dominique Poirel

Dominique Poirel is Researcher at the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (C.N.R.S., Paris) and Lecturer at the École Pratique des Hautes Études.

Franciscan and Dominican Trinitarian Theology (Thirteenth Century): Bonaventure and Aquinas 

Joseph Wawrykow

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This article explores Franciscan and Dominican Trinitarian theology during the thirteenth century, focusing on the thoughts of Saint Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas. It underscores the centrality of Trinitarian theology for both theologians and highlights their areas of agreement as well as their distinctive features. It explains that Bonaventure put the good and love at the heart of his account of God and emphasized the primacy of the Father. It highlights Aquinas' understanding of divine persons in terms of subsistent relations.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, Saint Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, God, Father, divine persons, subsistent relations

IT is not unusual in the scholarship for the Trinitarian theologies of Bonaventure (d. 1274) and Aquinas (d. 1274) to be played against each other. That there are significant differences between the two theologies is beyond doubt; there are differences in approach, stress, even particular claims. But, while the differences should not be ignored, the two great thirteenth-century theologians are united in certain basic convictions, not least about the absolute centrality of Trinity for Christian faith and a Christian understanding of reality. Bonaventure is insistent on the point, and scholars have readily accepted his assertion. Hence in the first of the disputed questions *De Trinitate* (a.2 *resp.*), he proclaims Trinity to be the foundation and root of divine cult and of the entire Christian religion, and then specifies how this article of faith informs other truths of the faith, about creation, providence, salvation, and incarnation. Some claiming acquaintance with Aquinas, however, have been more doubtful about his Trinitarian commitments and the shape of his teaching. Several criticisms have been made of the Dominican theologian, sometimes with a nod to the, apparently, more compelling, integrated teaching of his Franciscan contemporary. To cite but a few of these criticisms: this account of Trinity is too rationalistic and jargon-laden; the intimate connection between the immanent and the economic Trinity has been broken; Aquinas' talk of God over-emphasizes the essence and is relatively

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inattentive to the persons; the account of Trinity, sophisticated in itself, has inadequately informed the rest of the theology; the Trinitarian teaching is simply too speculative and fails to make a difference in Christian living and practice (Scheffczyk 1995). Aquinas, however, does affirm Trinity, and with (p. 183) Bonaventure affirms the centrality of Trinity; it is hard to see why he too should not be taken at his word. There are, he tells us (*ST II-II*, q.1, a.8, *resp.*), two main categories of articles of faith, the truths revealed by God that are necessary for salvation, for coming, in the next life, to the immediate presence of God and knowing and loving God directly: those about Christ, who is the way to eternal life; and those about God, who is the beginning and end of human existence. There are seven articles, in Aquinas' reckoning, that treat of God. Three have to do with God's activities, in creating, sanctifying, bringing the successful human journeyer to the end of eternal life. One has to do with the unity of the divine essence. The other three are concerned with the persons, who differ in person but are one and the same in divine substance and being. A single article, affirming the distinction and equality, might have sufficed, but for the explicit denial, by the Arians and Macedonians respectively, of the full and equal divinity of the second and third divine persons who truly are God (*ST II-II*, q.1, a.8, ad3). Thus, each of the persons receives an article; what is true about the one God who is three, active in the world, must be affirmed to attain eternal life. An even more striking affirmation of the centrality of the Trinity comes earlier in the *Summa* (*ST I*, q.32, a.1, ad3), and its bluntness is inescapable. By their natural powers, humans are unable to know the triune God, that God is a Trinity of persons. This must be revealed; and God does so reveal God. In this passage, Aquinas is clear about the significance of this self-manifestation. What difference does the revelation by God of God as triune make? It makes possible, Aquinas states, a correct understanding of both creation and salvation. By affirming that God creates by the Word, necessity is removed from creating. Creating is a voluntary activity that is intentional; God freely acts, according to a plan that is the Word. So too the involvement of the Holy Spirit in creating shows that God here acts by love, a love of God's own goodness that God wills in love to share with others. God need not share God's goodness, to be God; that God does, shows God's love for what is not God. And, Aquinas adds, that God is triune enables, and chiefly, a correct understanding of salvation, which is brought about by the incarnation of the Word, who as human is the way to God as beatifying end, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Here, Aquinas is invoking the divine missions, which are discussed in *ST I*, q.43 and then at greater length later in the *Summa*, as at I-II, qq.106ff. (of the grace of the Holy Spirit that is the New Law) and III, qq.1-59 (on Christ, the Word become human). For a Christian theologian, creation and salvation are not trivial or incidental matters, but will stand at the heart of theological work. Trinity, according to Aquinas, is needed for the perceptive handling of these central themes; the subsequent inquiries in the *Summa* will have, then, a Trinitarian cast.

Aquinas and Bonaventure would seem to share a second, fundamental conviction: the affirmation of God as triune is dependent on divine revelation, and so too is theological reflection on the triune God. The two, it is true, advance the claim about the need for revelation in somewhat different terms. In Aquinas, the insistence on divine revelation meshes nicely with his basic epistemology (*ST I*, q.1, aa.1, 9, 10; qq.12-13; q.32, a.1). In this

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life, knowledge must originate in the senses, and one will be able to come to know what is accessible from that starting point. And so one can come to know that God exists and that God must differ from creatures, not subject to creaturely limitations and possessing all perfections in a supereminent way. But what God is in Godself, and in particular that God is triune, transcends the human capacity for knowing. Thus, knowing God is dependent on God's initiative, on God revealing God to human beings, which God does through Scripture. Without that revelation, humans in this life would not know who God is and what God does for them and what God seeks of them, as they move through their affections and acts to God as their God-given end. Bonaventure takes a different tack in arguing the indispensability of divine revelation, invoking the history of salvation as marked by human need, due to sin, and God's redemptive activity (*De Trinitate* q.1, a.2 *resp.*). As made by God, the world does offer testimony to the God that is triune; the world proclaims God in the ways determined by God in God's creative activity. The triune God can be read in the 'Book' of creation. But the intellect has been clouded by sin, and human beings as under sin consequently fail to read this Book correctly; they are thus blind to the witness to the triune God provided by the creation. Thus, for humans to know the triune God, other 'Books' are required. There is the Book of Scripture, which testifies to God. The Old Testament is concerned with being and unity; but there are figures of the triune God even in the Old. The New Testament more openly proclaims the triune God; here, God reveals God, in the process making it possible to read anew the Book of creation correctly. Yet, for the grasping of the scriptural message about God, and so too the correct reading of the world, a further Book is needed, the Book of Life, which is God's inner inspiration by which people are granted faith, and so accept God's self-manifestation in Scripture. Bonaventure is less interested than Aquinas in the epistemological need for divine revelation, but would seem to have room for that: his God, after all, is transcendent mystery, and while there are lesser and better ways of putting the triune God, ultimately this God transcends the ability of reason to fully grasp, in this life. But, in Bonaventure, it is the moral need that comes to the fore: God's revelation of God, and providing of aid in the Book of Life, aims at change in the person, to facilitate the attainment of the end—God—that has been set for people by God. Coming to affirm the triune God, and seeing in reality that God, are essential to the journey to God, which comes to its term in the next life. Correspondingly, to 'see' God through and in the world or the self requires the proper spiritual disposition, fostered in prayer and humble desire, on the part of the journeyer, a point nicely made in the Prologue to his great spiritual writing, the *Itinerarium*.

God's initiative makes possible the salvific movement to God as end. This initiative likewise for both theologians sets the stage, is the condition, for theological work, not least the discussion of the triune God. Theirs is a tradition-based and tradition-guided enquiry. Again, there are some differences between the two in the understanding of theology. Thirteenth-century Franciscans tend to conceive of theology in primarily practical terms. Just as is Scripture, so the theology made possible by Scripture aims at moral transformation, the furtherance of the movement of the person to God as end. Aquinas for his part thinks that just as sacred doctrine—the body of truths revealed by God that are necessary for

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salvation—is both practical and speculative (*ST I*, q.1, a.4), so too is the theology that pertains to it. By accepting in faith the God who is both beginning and end, and thinking correctly of that God, one will be led to action that is desired by God (p. 185) and conducive to reaching the end that is God. Theology thus is practical. But it is also speculative, mirroring the knowing that God has of God and that is the root of sacred doctrine, and anticipating that knowing, now held by the blessed (*ST I*, q.1, a.2, *resp.*), that will be granted at the term of the journey, in the next life. Yet, despite such difference in characterizing the point of theology, for both Bonaventure and Aquinas, theology remains ‘faith seeking understanding’. Through one’s theological meditation and argument, one is seeking a firmer understanding of truths that are crucial to one’s being and operation. For that seeking, there must be a faith, in objective terms; and the truths of faith are revealed by God, in Scripture. Scriptural revelation is the foundation of all theological work, and, in ways appropriate to their different writings, Scripture will provide the touchstone. In addressing the scriptural witness, neither theologian is on his own. In his reading and rendering of the scriptural witness, each is aided by those who have come before: the Church, in its conciliar determinations; the doctors or Fathers of the Church, whose skill in interpreting and exploring and defending God’s revelation has been acknowledged by the believing community; other theologians, including more recent theologians, who aspire to grasp and transmit saving truth; the philosophers, whose principal occupation lies elsewhere than sacred doctrine and theology, but whose insights and analyses may be useful, when appropriated and adapted by the theologian, in proclaiming and clarifying and defending Christian truth (*ST I*, q.1, a.8, ad2; *Breviloquium*, Prologue; Part One, chs. 1–2). As it happens, Aquinas and Bonaventure tend to favour different theologians and parts of the tradition in their particular Trinitarian discussions. But, for both, doing theology is a communal affair, and their theologies are possible only by virtue of Scripture and the mediating tradition. In discussing the triune God, they each are trying to do justice to what God has revealed about God, to what the Church has proclaimed through the centuries about the three-personed God. The ancient faith of the Church was known in the thirteenth century, and was still vibrant, and cherished. That faith, as delineated in the formative centuries of the Christian movement, and nicely restated more recently, at Lateran IV (1215), acknowledges both unity and substantial identity, and personal distinction and proper qualities (Tanner 1990: 230); one without the other will distort the reality that is the Christian God. Both Aquinas and Bonaventure strive mightily, each in his own way, to offer balanced accounts of God.

Bonaventure

Bonaventure offers extended discussions of the triune God in several of his writings. Among the chief discussions are the *Commentary* on the first book of the Lombard’s *Sentences*; the disputed questions on the Trinity (1255); the *Breviloquium*, Part One, chs. 2–6 (1257); and the *Itinerarium*, ch. 6 (1259). The *Commentary* on the *Sentences* follows the Lombard’s order and contains (in I, dist. 2–34) a detailed presentation on Trinity, articulating Bonaventure’s most typical insights. There are eight disputed questions on (p. 186) the Trinity, looking in turn at divine existence, unity, simplicity, infinity, eternity, im-

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mutability, necessity, and primacy. Each of the first seven questions falls into two articles. In a first article, he will reflect on an attribute, and in the second, make the appropriate Trinitarian comments, showing the compatibility of a given attribute with Trinity, indeed, its instantiation. The discussion is as a rule sophisticated, and more nuanced and advanced than that found in the *Commentary on the Sentences* or in the *Breviloquium*, playing up the thorny issues of Trinitarian discourse and for the most part assuming the basics of Trinitarian theology. The *Breviloquium* is meant to be a summary of theology for the benefit of newcomers to the discipline. It treats its topics briskly, in the process hitting on the high notes of theology. In the discussion of Trinity, Bonaventure announces three main questions which he considers in turn: how the unity of the divine substance and nature can coexist with a plurality of persons; how the unity of the divine substance and nature can coexist with a plurality of manifestations; how the unity of the divine substance and nature can coexist with a plurality of appropriations. In treating the first of these questions (Part One, chs. 2-4), Bonaventure introduces the most important Trinitarian terminology (emanations; hypostases; relations; characteristics or notions; personal properties) and, in reviewing basic rules of predication when it comes to God, is attentive to the need for precision in stating the triune God. In the *Itinerarium*, the discussion of Trinity, scattered throughout the work, is most intense in the sixth chapter. In the fifth, he has reflected on the name of God, Being, revealed in the Old Testament. In the sixth, he turns to that, Good, revealed in the New Testament.

The Good is central to Bonaventure's discussion of the triune God. Bonaventure invokes the Good in treating God's activities *ad extra*. Echoing Pseudo-Dionysius (e.g. *De caelestia hierarchia*, ch. 4; *De divinis nominibus*, ch. 4), Bonaventure notes that it pertains to the good to diffuse itself, to share its goodness or perfection with others. Hence, in creating, in bringing into existence and sustaining what is not God, God is sharing with creatures God's goodness. God is free of any necessity to create; God would be God even if there were no universe of creatures. But, as good, indeed the ultimate goodness, it is wholly in keeping with, compatible with, God's nature to bring others into existence. Thus, God creates, in a voluntary, non-necessitated act. That God is good also shapes the treatment of salvation, and of the incarnation that facilitates the attainment of God's salvific end for human beings. God wills to share the good that is God with those who are not God. God has set God as the end of human existence. God offers, as the end of human beings, the possibility of full communion with God, of coming to know and love, directly, the good that is God. And, to make reaching that end possible, God gives of Godself, entering into the world and taking up all that pertains to human being into a union that is personal and hypostatic. Again, there is no necessity for God to save or to become incarnate; but such are reflective of God's goodness. For Bonaventure, as for other medieval theologians (including Aquinas), there is an intimate link between goodness and love. Loving is the highest form of good and is a sharing of goodness. And so creating and saving and becoming incarnate all testify to God's love for what is not God. In the way appropriate to each of these activities, God shows God's love, because God is good.

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(p. 187) The account of the inner life of the Trinity too revolves around love and the good (e.g. *In I Sent.*, dist. 2, a.unicus, q.4, conclusion; *Itinerarium* 6.2). Several basic features of love are pertinent to the presentation of the triune God. Love is not self-contained; it has to do with another. To love is to give of oneself, to another. It is to share oneself with that other. Love is also mutual: it involves the love of that other in return. And true love involves more than the two; it will bring in a third, who is loved by the two. The two in their perfect love share themselves with a third, who so unites them fully. With respect to God, the relations that are constitutive of the divine persons are figured in terms of love. In the Father's loving self-giving, the Son is generated; the Son loves the Father in return; and in the perfection of their mutual love, there is a third, the Holy Spirit, with whom they share themselves, in their love.

Origin is important in this meditation on the divine persons. The Son is generated by the Father, arises from the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, receiving from both. The Father, however, is innascible, does not arise from another; the Father is of himself. On this basis, the Father enjoys a fundamental primacy (e.g. *In I Sent.*, dist. 27, pars 1, a.unicus, q.2, ad3; dist. 28, a.unicus, qq.1-4; *De Trinitate* q.8, conclusion; *Breviloquium*, Part One, ch. 3, 7). Now, from Aristotle (*Posterior Analytics* I, ch. 2) and the *Liber de causis*, we know that what is more prior is more productive of being. And so, to the 'negative' aspect of the Father (namely, the Father does not arise from another) Bonaventure adds the more positive description, that the Father possesses a fontal plenitude. It is out of this fullness that the Father generates the Son; that the Father does so is fully in keeping with the Father's underived goodness; this generating is for such a one necessary. There are different sorts of emanation, as, again, Aristotle reminds us (*Metaphysics* 6.22). This emanation can be termed in the manner of nature (*per modum naturae*), in the Father's full communication of what belongs to the Father to the Son, in generation. Another emanation is found in the spiration of the Holy Spirit. This is *per modum voluntatis*, and is a matter of liberality, more of the will (with the nature accompanying) (*Breviloquium*, Part One, ch. 3, 2; *In I Sent.*, dist. 2, a.unicus, q.4, conclusion; dist. 10, a.1, qq.1-3). In their mutual love, Father and Son bring to be the third that is the Holy Spirit, sharing themselves with this shared term of their love. The Son is the beloved of the Father, the Holy Spirit the co-beloved of the Father and the Son.

In his discussion of the emanations and relations, Bonaventure is attentive to the attributes of divinity. Perfection, eternity, unity, and simplicity might be mentioned here. God is utterly perfect, and eternally so. And thus there is no discursiveness in God, and God is not subject to time. Emanation is an eternal act, and there is no 'time' when the Son, who is generated by the Father, is not. Nor can that act be distinguished into constituent parts, falling into some sort of sequence. So too of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son in their mutual loving; the Spirit eternally is, as are the Father and the Son. The communication in each of these emanations is total; all that belongs to God the Father in the Father's divinity is given, without loss to the Father, to the Son who is generated; all that pertains to the first two persons as divine is communicated to the Holy Spirit. The three persons are coeternal and equal (e.g. *In I Sent.*, dist. (p. 188) 19). God's perfection might also be cited to explain why there are only the two eternal emanations in

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God. To posit others would be superfluous, and even impious; generating the Son, the Father communicates to the Son all that the Father is, and there is no need for further, additional emanation of this sort. So too the spiration by the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit is complete, fully constitutive of this divine person; there is no need for another spirit. God is also one and simple. In generating the Son in the self-giving love that expresses the fecundity of the Father, the Father is not bringing another being into existence. The Son eternally is; and is of the same being, and substance, as the Father. There are differences in God, marked by talk of persons, but these differences are not absolute. The Father is not the Son; but they, and the Holy Spirit, are the same God. The three persons, different from each other but always in fundamental relation, are each identical with one and the same divine essence. What is generated, what proceeds, does not go 'outside' of God but each stands in eternal relation to its Principle. What emanates is intrinsic and immanent.

Through his careful rendering of the divine emanations in terms appropriate to God, Bonaventure is able to allege the parallel between the inner life of the triune God and God's work *ad extra*, without confusing the two. In both, love and good predominate; and God's work in the creation mirrors and is rooted in the inner dynamic of the triune God. God's communication of good to creatures echoes, in accordance with God's creative plan, the eternal generation and spiration; this is why creaturely effects can act sacramentally, pointing beyond themselves to, and so proclaiming, the triune God who is their source and end. But divine emanation is not a creative act. God brings creatures into existence and sustains and guides them by God's will. However much, by the divine intention, creatures look like God, no creature is God; there is always an ontological distance between Creator and creature. The Father is the principle of the Son, but is not the creator of the Son; the Son is not a creature, but is God, one who arises from the Father and who eternally stands in full relation to the Father, who is Father because of the Son. The emanations characteristic of divinity and creation are of fundamentally different orders.

As testified to by Scripture and the tradition, the second divine person is known by several names proper to this person: Son, Image, Word (*Breviloquium*, Part One, ch. 3, 8; *In I Sent.*, dist. 27, pars 2). Each of these names helps to manifest important features of the second person. 'Son' underscores that the Father's generating is personal, and that what is generated is of one and the same nature as the Father. 'Image' points to the extent of the communicating in this generation. The second person receives, and fully, the divine nature; the second person who is Image also receives from the Father what pertains to the Father as that divine person. While the second person is not innascible, the second divine person does receive from the Father the Father's productive power, such that the second person is principle, with the Father, of the third. The name 'Word' has a more intellectual flavour. It discloses that this person expresses the Father, what the Father is and knows. And, on that basis, this person also stands as the model or exemplar of the creation, of all that is brought into existence as a mark of God's communication of God's goodness *ad extra*. All things that are made are made according to the second (p. 189) di-

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vine person, in accordance with God's plan for the wise communication of God's goodness outside of God.

The third divine person also has several names (*Breviloquium*, Part One, ch. 3, 9; *In I Sent.*, dist. 10, a.2, q.1 *resp.*; dist. 18, a.unicus, q.5, ad4). The Holy Spirit has the personal name of 'Love', for the Spirit is produced by the joint loving of the Father and the Son, sharing their love with this third. As such, the Spirit is also 'Bond', the eternal, personal result of the loving of these others. And, since that loving reflects the liberality of God, linked to the will of God, the third person is also termed the 'Gift', the first of all gifts who as fully God is the basis, and model, for all gifts given to those who are not God. The Spirit, however, is not 'Image', as the Son is Image; for the Spirit is eternally produced by a joint activity, not by the Father alone. And so the Holy Spirit lacks the generative power that the Father eternally communicates with the Son. The Spirit is in this sense purely receptive.

Bonaventure's description of the primacy of the Father is perhaps his most innovative Trinitarian move. It also occasioned some controversy. Why is the first divine person the Father? Here, paternity, the personal characteristic of the Father, is surely relevant. The Father is the Father because of generation. But Bonaventure also observes the fontal plenitude of the Father, which pertains to the Father as first; and this seems, logically, to be prior to, apart from, generating. It is because of this primal fullness, as unoriginated, that this person can/must generate. Relation, then, would only provide a partial account for the person. The first person would be Father in a lesser sense (due to the primal fullness), and then logically in a fuller sense, because of generation (Hayes 1979: 42; Friedman 2010: 28–30). The richness of Bonaventure's talk of the primacy of the Father in terms of plenitude might be offset by this relativization of paternity.

Bonaventure drew on several different sources in constructing this imposing Trinitarian theology (Hayes 1979: 13–24; Calisi 2008: 27–34). The twelfth-century theologian Richard of St Victor, in his *De Trinitate* 3, had anticipated him in rooting the discussion of Trinitarian relations and the divine persons in an analysis of love and its modes; so too Richard shared with Bonaventure the affirmation, on this basis, of necessity, that a plurality of divine persons is necessary, and precisely three divine persons. Richard too had linked love and the good, but did not invoke the Pseudo-Dionysian 'good as self-diffusive' in explicating the triune God. That move was made subsequently, by Bonaventure's Franciscan predecessors, by Alexander of Hales in his *Gloss* on the *Sentences* and in the collaborative *Summa fratris Alexandri* (Hayes 1979: 20; 21–2). The *Summa fratris Alexandri* also anticipated Bonaventure in his use of the two kinds of emanation (*per modum naturae*; *per modum liberalitatis* and will) to distinguish Son and Spirit (Mathieu 1992: 28–34). Philosophy too has made its contribution. The insight that what is more prior is more fecund goes back to Aristotle, and more clearly to the *Liber de causis* (propositions 1, 17); so too the identification of kinds of emanation has an Aristotelian inspiration. Yet, while the significant features of this theology have important antecedents and the teaching is 'Franciscan', there is a scholarly consensus that Bonaventure marks an advance on what has been

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accomplished previously, in his thor (p. 190) oughness and methodical application of the governing insights (Mathieu 1992: 16-17; Hayes 1979: 22-3).

Aquinas

Aquinas discusses the Trinity at length in several of his writings. He devotes considerable space in the systematic writings to an *ex professo* account of Trinity. Thus, he addresses Trinity in the first book of his *Commentary* on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which he prepared as a student at the University of Paris, making use of the commentaries of Albert the Great and of Bonaventure and, among other things, suggesting how the acts of God *ad extra* are patterned on the inner activities of Trinity (Emery 1995); in the final book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*; and in the *Summa theologiae, Prima Pars*. He also treats Trinity at length in writings of other genres; these writings can nicely complement what is found in the systematic writings. Thus, for example, there is a series of questions devoted to Trinity in the disputed questions *De Potentia* (roughly contemporary with the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa*); and Aquinas offers a rich teaching in his great *Commentary* on John. In what follows, the focus is on the *Summa contra Gentiles* and *Summa theologiae (ST)*.

Granted the scholarly debate about occasion and genre, the *Summa contra Gentiles* is best characterized as a work in Christian wisdom (Gauthier 1993). As suggested by the opening citation of Prov. 8:7 ('my mouth shall meditate truth, and my lips shall hate impiety'), the *Summa contra Gentiles* reviews the main truths of the Christian faith, exploring their meaning and coherence, while also distinguishing these truths from other versions of wisdom. An alternative title for the entire work helps to convey the double movement of the work, to proclaim and defend: *Liber de veritate catholicae fidei contra errores infidelium*. 'Unbelief' can take different expressions, and so those against whom Aquinas argues while teaching Christian wisdom will differ from case to case: at times philosophers, who have fallen short in this regard or that of some aspect of the faith, at others, heretics who share some but not all of the orthodox faith. Aquinas organizes the four books of the *Summa contra Gentiles* according to the distinction between the articles and the preambles of faith (*Summa contra Gentiles* I, chs. 1-9). Both are revealed by God and are tied to salvation; the articles transcend reason and must be held by faith; the preambles are open to demonstration, but are revealed since they can be attained by argument only after a long time, and only by a few, and then with error admixed in. While the articles cannot be demonstrated, they are not contrary to reason (although above it), and one can think about them, plumb their meaning, and try to obtain a greater sense of them. The first three books are devoted to the preambles; the final to the articles, covering Trinity, incarnation, sacraments, and the end things. The doctrine of God, consequently, is distributed across several books: that God exists and what God is/is not is found in book one; God's creative and providential activity are treated in the second and third books; the Trinity, with the continuation of the discussion (p. 191) in the account of Christ, is examined in the fourth. Each successive part of the discussion of God presupposes what has

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come before, while contributing to the overall doctrine. It is the same God, the Christian God, who is discussed throughout.

Aquinas discusses Trinity in Bk. IV, chs. 2–26 (chs. 27–55 look at the incarnation of the second divine person and its salvific payoff). The Trinitarian chapters fall into two main parts: chs. 2–14 are on the second divine person, chs. 15–25 on the Holy Spirit (ch. 26 offers a fine summary of Christian teaching, affirming the three persons who are equal in their divinity, rehearsing more methodically the technical language of procession and relation and notion that has been employed at points in the preceding chapters). The discussion of the second person itself falls into two sections, each prosecuting particular tasks of a Trinitarian theology. Chs. 2–9 revolve around the scriptural evidence, taking into account divergent readings of Scripture, offered by certain heretics (Photinus, Sabellius, the Arians). Scripture proclaims a generation in God and insists that what is generated is truly God. The heretics have failed to read Scripture correctly: Sabellius denies distinction in God and thinks that the names of ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ simply mark different moments in the activities of an, in effect, one-personed God; the Arians grant distinction, but equate the difference between Father and Son to that in effect between the creator God and creatures. The virtue of the orthodox formulation (the one God who is distinct in persons) is brought into relief by showing how the different heresies fail in their reading of Scripture. Chs. 10–14 approach the second person in relation to the first from a different angle. Ch. 10 raises objections to the orthodox teaching: even if it fairly renders Scripture, there are profound difficulties with that teaching; the objections reported in ch. 10 would seem to be insinuating the rational appeal of the heresies previously treated (even if they are defective readings of Scripture, don’t they nonetheless make more sense than the orthodox teaching?). Aquinas will answer these objections, and in the process make the orthodox case, in ch. 14. In the intervening chapters (11–13) he sets up that final chapter, showing the plausibility of what orthodox Christians, on the basis of Scripture as read and determined by the Church, proclaim about God. How is generation in God to be taken (ch. 11)? After considering different types of generation, Aquinas identifies the most suitable parallel as found in intellectual generation, and in particular, in one’s thinking of oneself, in which one forms a ‘word’ of oneself. He then painstakingly suggests how this would play out in God, taking into account the analyses offered in the first book. All perfections are to be affirmed of God; they are to be affirmed of God in a way proper to God; all imperfections, found in creatures, are to be denied of God. There is, in short, a grammar of divinity; and in the Trinitarian discussions, Aquinas observes that grammar. The upshot is that intellectual generation in God, by which the one spoken is distinguished from the one who speaks, is portrayed as a single, eternal act, in which the Word who is spoken possesses real being and indeed the same being as the Father. The Word is different from the Father, but does not proceed outside of God; the two stand in real relation, and the being of the two is the same. Each is identical with the divine essence, while different from each other. The relations constitutive of Father and second person, on the basis of the eternal intellectual generation, are subsistent.

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(p. 192) With the tradition, Aquinas knows of different names proper to the second person. Earlier in his career, he had tended to prefer that of 'Son', which nicely conveys personhood as well as identity in nature. By the time of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, he tends to play up that of 'Word', as this chapter underscores, corresponding to the manner of generation by which the second person eternally is (Paissac 1951). He can also employ the name 'Image' with facility: since God's knowing of God is perfect, the Word who is eternally formed by the Father is a perfect representation of the Father, the Image of the Father. The Word manifests the Father and can reveal the Father to others. And the Word of the Father is thus, in a distinctive way, the Wisdom of God; Aquinas will exploit this in his account of creation, as well as in a subsequent discussion of the fittingness of this divine person becoming incarnate for the purpose of human salvation (*cf. Summa contra Gentiles* IV, chs. 12 and 42) (Wawrykow 1998).

In the subsequent presentation of the third person, Aquinas is again intent on stating orthodox teaching succinctly and in linking that formulation to the scriptural witness. The Holy Spirit is distinct in person and one in being and substance with the Father and the Word; this is what Scripture affirms. Heresy (in particular, that that denies fully divinity to the Spirit) is invoked, to make clearer orthodox teaching by contrast, and rebutted, as a faulty reading of Scripture. Aquinas devotes considerable effort to the scriptural presentation of the activities of the Spirit, to gird the case for full divinity. He also brings in the *Filioque*, which with Bonaventure he affirms, although in different terms (*Summa contra Gentiles* IV, chs. 24 and 25; Emery 1996). He alleges several reasons for saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both persons, is spirated by Father and the Word, including the need to distinguish between the second and third persons. Given the identity of intellect and will in God, if the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone, then there would be no reason not to term this person a Son; yet there is only one Son. Both Father and Son are involved in spiration, in the love of God's goodness that eternally gives rise to the Spirit; and there is a logical priority of the Word's generation. Love proceeds from a word; humans are able to love nothing but that which a word of the heart conceives (*Summa contra Gentiles* IV.24.12); the same holds in God. In teaching *Filioque*, Aquinas asserts a continuity with the fourth and fifth ecumenical councils, as well as with the great doctors of the faith, both east and west (*Summa contra Gentiles* IV.24.5-6).

While presenting materially the same teaching, the *Summa theologiae* differs from the *Summa contra Gentiles* in several respects. First, Aquinas no longer uses the preambles of faith-articles of faith distinction to structure the entire work. Thus, what is distributed over several books in the *Summa contra Gentiles* is now found in the Prima Pars of the *Summa theologiae*: the unity and essence of God; the Trinity of persons; the creative activity of the triune God. Second, Scripture figures differently in the *Summa theologiae*. Aquinas is still dependent on scriptural revelation: apart from God's self-disclosure, one would not know that God is triune. But Aquinas is not intent in the *Summa theologiae* to show how dogmatic formulation is rooted in Scripture; that task of the *Summa contra Gentiles* (as in Bk. IV, chs. 2-9) is here taken as given. A third difference comes in the depth and extent of the *Summa's* analysis. The *Summa contra Gentiles* is much more

(p. 193) limited in scope, keeping to what is basic in the presentation of Christian truth,

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including Trinity. In its discussion, the *Summa theologiae* goes into much greater detail and the process is meticulous and precise.

In treating what belongs to the Trinity of persons in God, Aquinas follows what he deems the order of doctrine, beginning with the processions (q.27) and then relations (q.28) and then person (qq.29ff.); this is to reverse the order of knowing, in which person is revealed first, but is in keeping with the pedagogical aim of the *Summa theologiae*, as announced in its brief Prologue. The discussion of person falls into two main sections, as suggested by the transitional paragraph at the head of q.29: Aquinas first considers the persons absolutely, and then in comparative terms. In terms of the first section (qq.29–38), the general consideration of the persons involves four points: the meaning of the word ‘person’ (q.29); the number of the persons (q.30); what is involved in the number of the persons or is opposed thereto, as diversity and similitude and the like (q.31); and what belongs to the knowledge of the persons (q.32). A series of questions is then devoted to the persons singly: to the Father (q.33); to the second person, who is Son, Word (q.34) and Image (q.35); to the third, who is called Holy Spirit (q.36), Love (q.37), and Gift (q.38). In the second main section devoted to the persons (qq.39–43), Aquinas looks at what concerns the person in relation to the essence (q.39), to the properties (q.40) and notional acts (q.41), and then as compared to one another, first with regard to equality and likeness (q.42) and then with regard to mission (q.42).

The opening questions (27 to 29), on procession, relation, and person, are foundational, setting the tone for the rest of the discussion of Trinity. One begins with these since the divine persons are distinguished from each other according to the relations of origin. Questions 27 to 29 are brisk and adept. There are two eternal processions in God: the intellectual generation of the Word, and the procession which is the spiration of the Holy Spirit. The relations (paternity, sonship, spiration, and procession) are real, and distinguish the persons. But, as is proper to God, they are identical with the divine essence. This allows Aquinas to portray correctly ‘person’ as used of God. As Boethius says, ‘person’ is an individual substance of a rational nature. In God, relations are constitutive of the persons. While in creatures relation is an accident, in God relation is taken substantially. In God, there is no real distinction between essence and *esse* (*ST I*, q.3, a.4); and since the relations are identical with the divine essence, their being is not accidental. In God, person denotes subsistent relation (*ST I*, q.29, a.4, *resp.*). Previous questions in the treatise on God, dealing with what is common in the Christian God, have prepared well for the discussion of divine persons.

Organization is indeed Aquinas’ forte, and he has constructed a teaching on God that is comprehensive and precise, leading to fresh insight into the Christian God, in the service of Christian faith. While sharing much with Bonaventure’s theology—the basic terminology of Trinitarian discourse, as this had emerged over the centuries; the linking of the immanent and the economic Trinity; the stressing of God’s salvific intention as the beginning and end of reflecting on Trinity—Aquinas’ account of the Christian God (p. 194) takes a distinctive shape. The pace is measured as he unfolds that teaching, moving from what the persons hold in common, to the persons themselves, including in their individuality, to

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the creative and salvific activities of the triune God in the world. Aquinas favours, as well, different authorities; as in the discussion of the processions in terms of rational activities, the debt to Augustine is more pronounced and obvious. Aquinas has, finally, shied away from what is likely the most distinctive feature of Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology. Without naming Bonaventure, Aquinas rejects the parsing of innascibility in terms of fecundity; for him, innascibility simply means that the Father is not from another (*ST I*, q. 33, 4, ad1). And although Aquinas certainly invokes the Dionysian insight into the self-diffuseness of the good when it comes to the action of God *ad extra*—witness his argument for the plausibility of the second person becoming incarnate (*ST III*, q.1, a.1, *resp.*)—he does not use that saying to portray the inner life of the Trinity, preferring to base the distinction of the persons who are God exclusively in subsistent relations.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Emery (1995; 1998; 2007); Hayes (1979): 13–103; Mathieu (1992).

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Joseph Wawrykow

Joseph Wawrykow teaches the history of patristic and medieval theology at the University of Notre Dame (USA), specializing in the thirteenth-century scholastics.

Medieval Trinitarian Theology from the Late Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries 

Russell L. Friedman

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines Trinitarian theology during the period from around 1250 until around 1500. It outlines some of the major positions and identifies their most important adherents. It describes two distinct ways of talking about the constitution of the divine persons, one based on relations and the other on emanations. It discusses the contributions of John Duns Scotus and highlights two important fourteenth-century developments: the denial that the Trinitarian mystery can be explained in any significant sense and innovations in Trinitarian logic.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, divine persons, relations, emanations, John Duns Scotus, Trinitarian mystery, Trinitarian logic

IN the present chapter my purpose is to give an overview of aspects of the Trinitarian discussion from around 1250 until around 1500, outlining some of the major positions and identifying their most important adherents, and indicating how the discussion changed over time. In the process, I hope to give an impression of the richness of later-medieval Trinitarian theology, as well as of the argumentative and systematic rigor with which theologians from the period approached the subject. The chapter is arranged in four parts. The first part describes two distinct ways in the late thirteenth century of talking about the constitution of the divine persons, one based on relations, the other on emanations; the second part focuses on some of John Duns Scotus' contributions; the third sketches two important fourteenth-century developments, Praepositinianism (the denial that the Trinitarian mystery can be *explained* in any significant sense), and innovations in Trinitarian logic; the fourth part looks briefly at the still mostly uninvestigated fifteenth-century Trinitarian theology.

Late Thirteenth-century Trinitarian Theology

For the university-trained theologians throughout our entire period, the central fact in Trinitarian theology, given by the faith and confirmed by Church councils from Nicaea to Lateran IV, was that God is three and one. There are three persons, really distinct among themselves, yet truly identical in the one, common divine essence. All our theologians (p. 198) could agree on this. Nearly every other issue was up for discussion. For example, by far the most common view among our theologians was that each divine person was constituted, i.e. took on his own personal being, on account of a characteristic known as a ‘personal property’ that is unique to that one person and makes that person distinct from the other two. On this view, then, the three divine persons share everything—they are ‘essentially identical’—apart from each their own personal property bringing about the real distinction between the persons. We will see below (§3) that in the fourteenth century several theologians rejected the whole idea of personal properties and personal constitution. But already in the thirteenth century, one of the most heavily disputed questions concerned the nature of the personal properties: are they *relations* or are they *emanations*? In brief, a group of primarily Dominican theologians, following Thomas Aquinas on this issue, claimed that the personal properties are relations, whereas another group, mostly composed of Franciscans, developed in the course of the later thirteenth century an explanation of the Trinitarian mystery focusing on emanations. These views were grounded in quite divergent ways of thinking about the constitution of the divine persons, and hence in two very distinct approaches to Trinitarian theology. (On late thirteenth-century Trinitarian theology, see Friedman 2010: 5–75; Friedman forthcoming: chs. 1–5).

The relation account of divine personal distinction claims that, for example, the Father and the Son are personally distinct since a Father is only a Father because he has (in this case) a Son. If the relations between them are real and not mere mental constructs, then Father and Son must be distinct in some way—not distinct essentially (since they share everything else and are one God) but distinct as persons. During our period, defenders of the relation account of personal distinction laid a stress upon the fact that not only are these relations that constitute the persons real, they are also *opposed*. Thus, it is because paternity and filiation are opposed to each other that they are the constituting properties of Father and Son; *mutatis mutandis* the same is true concerning passive spiration's being the constitutive property of the Holy Spirit, although active spiration does not constitute a person in its own right since it is shared by the Father and the Son.

The emanation account takes a different point of departure. ‘Emanation’ is the term the medieval scholastics used to describe how the divine persons are put into being or originated. On the emanation account of the distinction of the persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the very same divine essence in three irreducibly distinct ways, the way that each one emanates or originates. Thus, the Father is the divine essence in a fundamentally different way than the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is the very same divine essence in a third totally different way, these three different ways being how each one originates or has being. Specifically, the Father has the divine essence from no other (the Father is unemanated), the Son has the divine essence naturally by the emanation

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'generation' (the Son is emanated by way of nature), and the Holy Spirit has the divine essence voluntarily by the emanation 'spiration' (the Holy Spirit is emanated by way of will). Thus, three irreducibly distinct emanational properties account for the fact that the three divine persons are emanationally distinct, yet essentially identical.

After around 1250 theologians began to consider these two Trinitarian explanations to be mutually exclusive, such that holding one of them more or less ruled out holding the other. Thus, after around 1250 one can trace the development of two mutually opposed complexes of Trinitarian positions—what I call Trinitarian traditions: one centring on relations, the other on emanations. As mentioned, one tradition was predominantly Dominican in composition and, following Thomas Aquinas, adopted the relation account to explain the distinction of the persons and played down the significance of the emanations. A predominantly Franciscan tradition, on the other hand, championed the emanation account, and viewed the relations as being of lesser importance. It was in the late thirteenth century and early fourteenth century that these two Trinitarian traditions stabilized—and this is visible in the works of such Franciscan theologians as John Pecham (d. 1292), William de la Mare (d. after 1282), Matthew of Aquasparta (d. 1302), Roger Marston (d. 1303?), and William of Ware (fl. c.1300), as well as in the works of Dominicans and those who follow a basically Dominican line, from major figures of the late thirteenth century like Giles of Rome (d. 1316), Thomas of Sutton (d. after 1315), and Godfrey of Fontaines (d. 1307?), to such diverse early fourteenth-century theologians as Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), Durand of St Pourçain (d. 1334), and John of Naples (d. c.1350).

As the two Trinitarian traditions, the Dominican and the Franciscan, gradually coalesced in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the particular differences between the emanation account and the relation account came to the fore in several 'flashpoints', loci in the Trinitarian debate where an emanational conception of the personal properties and a relational one were fundamentally at odds. Specifically, these flashpoints arose because on the Dominican interpretation of the relation account the persons are constituted in opposed pairs (Father in opposition to Son, Father and Son in opposition to Holy Spirit), whereas on the Franciscan interpretation of the emanation account persons are (or at least could be) constituted singly on the basis of their unique emanational property.

One of these flashpoints had to do with the constitution of the Father. The Franciscans made the claim that the Father's innascibility, the fact that the Father is not from any other (i.e. is unemanated), was the way that he was the divine essence. (To be more precise: as most of the later-medieval theologians in the Franciscan Trinitarian tradition recognized, it is most proper to speak of the *first person* being constituted by innascibility, since a Father is a Father on the basis of having a Son through generation.) Innascibility thus played a crucial role in Franciscan Trinitarian theology, being an indispensable factor in the Father's constitution. Innascibility did not play so crucial a role in Dominican Trinitarian thought: for the Dominicans, the Father and the Son only have being in relation to each other; it is precisely because the Father has a Son and the Son has a Father

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that they are distinct from each other. Thus, the Dominicans held that innascibility played basically no role in the constitution of the Father as a person distinct from the other two.

A second flashpoint in the later-medieval Trinitarian debate was over the Son's role in the spiration of the Holy Spirit. The issue is as follows: would the Son and the Holy Spirit be distinct if they each emanated from the Father alone, as the Franciscans maintained; or are the Son and the Holy Spirit distinct only if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son (p. 200) and the Father together, so that there are opposed relations between the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the Dominicans held? Since, for the Franciscans, the way in which each person took being is the distinctive property of that person, on the Franciscan view whether the Holy Spirit emanates from the Son or not, the Holy Spirit could still be distinct from the Son, because they each could emanate in different ways from the Father alone. This is only to say that each of the three divine properties is irreducibly distinct from the other two on its own account. The Dominicans rejected this entirely. For the Dominicans, only the Holy Spirit's emanating from the Son (and the Father), and hence the existence of directly opposed relations between them, could explain their distinction. Of course, the Franciscans were well aware that one of the issues that stood between the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches was the *Filioque* clause, the Greeks contending that the Holy Spirit in fact does not proceed from the Son; hence the Franciscans were always careful to stress that the question of the Holy Spirit's not proceeding from the Son was a purely counterfactual one and that the Holy Spirit does in fact proceed from both Father and Son (on this flashpoint, see Bruce Marshall's chapter in the present volume).

A special position in the early Franciscan Trinitarian tradition was held by Henry of Ghent (d. 1293). Henry was not a Franciscan—he was unaffiliated with a religious order—but his Trinitarian theology can only be understood as part of the Franciscan Trinitarian current. For instance, Henry stresses that innascibility is a crucial factor in the Father's constitution. Further, he maintains that the Holy Spirit would be distinct from the Son, even if the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, since they would be distinct on the basis of their disparate ways of emanating from the Father. In general, Henry stresses the emanational character of the properties constitutive of the persons and de-emphasizes the relational aspects. While supporting these typically Franciscan views, Henry also injects a new element into Franciscan Trinitarian theology: he claims that the emanation of the Son is the emanation of a mental word (*verbum*) or concept from the paternal intellect, and that the emanation of the Holy Spirit is the emanation of zeal (*zelus*) from the will of the Father and the Son. In this way, Henry moves Augustine of Hippo's psychological model of the Trinity into the heart of his Trinitarian theology, something that his contemporaries in the Franciscan Trinitarian current had not done. (See, on Henry's Trinitarian thought, Friedman 2010; Friedman forthcoming: esp. ch. 4; Williams 2010.)

In his *De Trinitate*, Augustine had given a clarification of the way that the Son relates to the Father, in his attempt to make sense of the opening of John's Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. The 'word' that John was talking about was a mental concept, according to Augustine, and the relation

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between the Son and the Father is in some way parallel to the relation between a mental word and the knowledge from which the word comes. Thus, the word is an exact likeness of the prior knowledge, differing only because the word is formed or given birth by the intellect. In just this way the Father and the Son are identical essentially, differing only on account of the Son's generation, his receiving the divine essence from the Father. Augustine extended this 'psychological model' to include the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is spirated as Love. Henry of Ghent overlaid onto the Franciscan tradition's (p. 201) emanation account of personal distinction the Augustinian psychological model of the Trinity. Capitalizing on the fact that in medieval philosophy the intellect was commonly considered a 'natural' faculty (i.e. when presented with an object it necessarily functioned), Henry linked in a stronger and more elaborate way than had been done previously the Son's procession by way of nature with the Word's procession by way of intellect. For Henry, the Father is unemanated, the Son is emanated by way of the divine intellect as a Word or Concept, and the Holy Spirit is emanated by way of the divine will as Zeal. Thus, Henry claimed that it is the very fact that the Son's emanation is an *intellectual* emanation that explained why the Son is distinct from both the Father and the Holy Spirit. Likewise with the Holy Spirit's voluntary emanation: this very fact explained why the Holy Spirit is distinct from both the Father and the Son. Henry went on to say that, because the divine attributes of intellect and will are the sources of the divine emanations, it is the merely rational distinction between these attributes that is the ultimate basis for the distinction between the emanations and hence the persons. In general, Henry stressed a tight link between the divine attributes and the divine emanations: the Son's generation is literally an intellectual emanation; the Holy Spirit's emanation is literally an emanation by way of will.

Henry's linking of the emanation account of personal distinction with a rather literal interpretation of the psychological model became a standard part of Franciscan Trinitarian theology beginning in the 1280s, and it remained highly important for some forty years, after which its significance waned, without ever disappearing. Franciscans of the period, then, often strictly identified the Son's emanation as an intellectual emanation of a concept or Word, and the Holy Spirit's emanation as a voluntary emanation of Love. Dominican theologians, on the other hand, from Henry's day and on were highly sceptical of a literal use of the psychological model of the Trinity: the Son is a Word, certainly, but not because he is emanated literally by way of the intellect; the Holy Spirit is Love, but not because he is emanated by the divine will. And this Dominican rejection of Henry's literal acceptance of the psychological model is simply a facet of the more general Dominican stress on relations: for them, Father and Son are constituted in opposition to each other on the basis of the relations paternity and filiation; while the Holy Spirit is constituted in opposition to both Father and Son on the basis of the relations active and passive spiration. In general, the Trinitarian traditions were a fundamental part of the later-medieval Trinitarian discussion.

John Duns Scotus

One of the giants of later-medieval theology, Scotus (d. 1308) worked at Oxford and Paris around the turn of the century, leaving behind a tremendous number of theological writings, including a highly coherent and creative reformulation of later thirteenth-century Franciscan Trinitarian theology. It was indeed a *reformulation*, since it is rare that Scotus makes a really radical departure from the core ideas of this Franciscan (p. 202) Trinitarian tradition; with few exceptions his own contribution was a ‘fine-tuning’ of ideas already laid out. After he made them public, Scotus’ ideas on the Trinity became a building block for later thinkers, and in this way his Trinitarian theology functioned as a type of conduit from the late thirteenth-century Franciscan tradition to the broader scholastic Trinitarian discussion of the fourteenth century and beyond (on Scotus’ Trinitarian theology, see Cross 2005; Friedman 2010: 50–115, 141–2; Friedman forthcoming: ch. 6).

Scotus’ most remarkable addition to the Trinitarian debate was the suggestion of a near total rejection of the relation account. Earlier Franciscans had downplayed the importance of relation in the constitution of the divine persons, but they had always maintained some space in their Trinitarian theories for relation and relational persons. Scotus’ rejection of relation was far more categorical. Although later in his career he backed away from it, early on Scotus suggested that relation played no part at all in the constitution of the persons; the persons were *absolutes*, constituted by absolute origin. This view had been defended even before Scotus by, for instance, William of Auvergne (d. 1249) and Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), as well as by the Franciscan Peter of John Olivi (d. 1298) and the Augustinian Hermit James of Viterbo (d. 1308), but after Scotus suggested it, it became closely associated with his name. Why are the persons not relative? Scotus basically argues that there are insurmountable problems connected with maintaining that the properties constituting the persons are relatives, and given these problems it is better to claim that the properties are absolutes, and more particularly that the properties are the origin of person from person. Scotus employs several lines of argumentation in favour of this view. First, he claims that one thing refers to another *through* relation, and therefore without two pre-existing things there is no relation. This is just to say that what refers through relation is at least logically prior to the relation itself; therefore relation cannot constitute the things related. A second argument that Scotus uses is that, given that we know the Son to be generated, then there must be a suppositum that generates the Son, and this suppositum has to have existence ‘prior’ (logically, not chronologically speaking) to the relation between Father and Son. It is not merely the case that the Father has the Son as a correlative, rather the Father originates or produces the Son, and according to Scotus, if relation were that which constitutes the persons, then there would be no origin of the Son from the Father. Correspondingly, the person who is produced must be produced as an absolute ‘prior’ to his being related to the person producing. Production comes ‘first’, relation ‘follows’. Finally, Scotus has an argument based upon his own view of the metaphysics of relation. For Scotus, relations are things, having quiddities or natures of their own, and thus a divine relation and the absolute divine essence are two different things with two different quiddities; consequently, Scotus contends that, if each divine

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person included both essence and relation, then each of the persons would be a sort of accidental unity composed of these two quiddities, rather than a per se unity. Scotus makes a great deal of this last point, and it leads him to conclude that what is constitutive of the persons has no quiddity of its own that could cause composition in the persons.

Although Scotus hedges his bets in various ways, nevertheless appealing to these and other arguments, he says that the relation account of personal divine distinction involves (p. 203) too many difficulties to be defended. He suggests instead that the persons are absolute, constituted by absolute properties, and he identifies the absolute properties as non-quidditative origin, corresponding, he tells us, to an efficient cause in creatures. To put this in another way, the constitutive or distinguishing feature of each produced person is the very production of that person, and this production has no quiddity or nature of its own (Scotus stresses that the unproduced Father is constituted not by the relative property innascibility but by some absolute property). This plays a role in Scotus' model of the constitution of the divine persons as the individuation of a particular member of some natural kind. For Scotus, the divine essence is a nature or a quiddity (i.e. a second substance); personal property is the act individuating the person, making this person an individual of the divine nature distinct from the other two persons; and the divine person is first substance or individual suppositum. Throughout his Trinitarian theology, Scotus will rely heavily on this distinction between first and second substance: the divine essence is nature or second substance or quiddity, the persons are first substance and are constituted 'quasi-efficiently' by non-quidditative absolute origin. Indeed, some of his further arguments for the persons being absolute hinge on this distinction. We know that first substance is most properly substance, and since it does not involve any imperfection it should be posited in God. But the persons would especially be first substance, since they exist per se (i.e. they subsist). Relation, however, could not formally constitute a subsistent thing or first substance. Therefore the persons are constituted by absolutes. Further, second substance indicates the entire quiddity of first substance; but if the quiddity of relation—different from the quiddity of the essence—were involved in the constitution of the persons, then the persons would not solely have the quiddity of essence.

One thing that should be noted about Scotus' ideas on absolute persons is that, although radically stated, they were in line with the Franciscan Trinitarian tradition's emphasis on emanation and origin. In his later works, Scotus retreats from his suggestion concerning the possibility of absolute persons, but he nevertheless maintains that we are in no way able to *demonstrate* the persons to be relative (as opposed to absolute): we must take this on faith due to the preponderance of evidence for its truth from Scripture and Church tradition. This appeal to the faith as the only reason to hold the persons to be relative is taken up by several important fourteenth-century authors like Francis of Meyronnes (d. 1328) and William of Ockham (d. 1347). Indeed, the position that the persons are absolutes was not very successful in the period after Scotus: it appears that only the little-known Michael of Massa, OESA (d. 1337), and the Franciscan John of Ripa (fl. 1358) would make the theory their own.

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The unmistakable relationship of Scotus' ideas on absolute persons to earlier Franciscan Trinitarian thought is borne out in many of the other Trinitarian views that Scotus holds. Thus, as seems clear from his suggestion of absolute persons, central to Scotus' Trinitarian theory is the fact that the productions or emanations are the most basic sources of the distinction between the divine persons. More specifically still, Scotus maintains that the produced persons are distinct because of the way that they originate, and this is traced back to the distinction between the sources of the emanations, intellect and will, and more particularly to the irreducibly distinct ways that intellect and will (p. 204) work, naturally and freely, respectively. Thus, the reason that the Son is a person distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit is because he emanates naturally by way of intellect and the reason that the Holy Spirit is distinct is because he emanates freely by way of will. In line with all this, Scotus will argue that the Holy Spirit would still be distinct from the Son if the former did not proceed from the latter (on this last issue, see Marshall's chapter in this volume).

With regard to the psychological model of the Trinity, a foundational claim of Scotus' is that that intellect and will are *formally* distinct both from each other and from the divine essence, and in this way they serve as the foundation for the distinction between the emanations and further the persons. Here Scotus appeals to his famous *formal distinction* or *formal non-identity*, a distinction in something prior to any act of the intellect, yet less than a fully real distinction (like that between two human beings). Because he thinks that merely rationally distinct attributes could not suffice to ground the real distinction between the persons, Scotus maintains against Henry of Ghent that the divine attributes must be more than rationally distinct from each other; in fact, according to Scotus, they must be formally distinct from each other in order to explain how they can act as sources of irreducibly distinct emanations: one absolutely undifferentiated essence, according to Scotus, could not produce in two irreducibly distinct ways. Arguing along these lines, Scotus intends to support a strong use of the psychological model of the Trinity: the Son literally is a Word emanated by way of the divine intellect, the Holy Spirit literally is Love emanated by way of the divine will, and this is only possible if intellect is formally distinct from will. Moreover, Scotus spells out in some detail the relationship between the formally distinct essence, intellect, and will in the emanation of the second and third persons, respectively. Thus, in the Son's intellectual emanation, the divine intellect in the Father, with the divine essence present to it as an intelligible object, is a productive source of generated knowledge, i.e. the Word. In the Holy Spirit's voluntary emanation, the divine essence, present as the loved object to the infinite divine will as it is in the Father and Son, is a productive source of infinite and subsistent Love.

All in all, John Duns Scotus passed on to the fourteenth century and beyond an extremely detailed and internally consistent Trinitarian theology in which the clear motivation was to explain as much as possible.

Issues in Fourteenth-Century Trinitarian Thought

Throughout the fourteenth century there was a lively discussion of Trinitarian theology, and both the Dominican and the Franciscan Trinitarian traditions and their relation and emanation accounts of personal distinction were represented. Indeed, all through the century there were theologians influenced by Scotus' version of Franciscan Trinitarian (p. 205) theology. Thus, men like Henry of Harclay (d. 1317), William of Alnwick (d. 1333), and Francis of Meyronnes tended to take their starting point in Scotus' ideas and even words. A similar fourteenth-century phenomenon can be seen with regard to the Trinitarian theology of Thomas Aquinas. This is not to say that the later theologians were slavish imitators of the great masters; indeed, they often developed and modified (and sometimes explicitly rejected) elements in the Trinitarian theologies of the masters. But Scotus and Aquinas, respectively, were central to their theologies. There were also a good number of theologians whose Trinitarian thought is not Scotistic or Thomistic in any significant sense but whose interests and techniques were clearly in continuity with the earlier period. Included in this category were two of the great minds of the Franciscan order, Peter Auriol (d. 1322) and William of Ockham. In the remainder of this section, however, I want to emphasize two major developments that appear to set apart fourteenth-century Trinitarian thought from thirteenth-century: Praepositinianism and developments in Trinitarian logic.

Several thinkers from the mid-fourteenth century held a view that can be labelled 'Praepositinianism', after Praepositinus of Cremona (d. after 1210), whose name was most often associated with the view in later-medieval texts. The view involved two major points: (1) there is nothing more than a grammatical distinction between a divine person and its property, for example between the Father and his paternity, since they are perfectly identical; (2) because there are no properties in any way distinct from the persons, properties cannot be appealed to in explaining the distinction of the persons, and hence the persons are distinct from one another 'in and of themselves' (the Latin term is *se ipsis*). The view, then, entails the rejection of both the relation and the emanation account of personal distinction, since in order to explain personal constitution both those accounts rely on properties in some sense distinct from the persons. Although there were never many adherents of the view, in the mid fourteenth century they included major theologians like Walter Chatton (d. 1343) and Robert Holcot (d. 1349) at Oxford, and Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358) at Paris. There are two major points to be stressed about fourteenth-century Praepositinianism. First, the main motivation behind it is to maintain the strictest form of divine simplicity possible, such that there could be no hint of any distinction within a divine person. This motivation is made explicit in the arguments most often used in favour of the view, for example, that each divine person must be as simple as the divine essence itself, and therefore subject to no distinction whatsoever; or that, if a person were constituted from common essence and personal property, then the person would not be absolutely simple. The second point to be stressed is that, beyond the two basic claims about person and property being merely grammatically distinct and the persons being distinct in and of

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themselves, as well as arguments against more elaborate Trinitarian theories, Praepositinians largely eschewed Trinitarian explanation, limiting themselves to restating the most indisputable Trinitarian dogma: that the one God is three really distinct persons. This comes across most clearly in Praepositinian responses to criticisms of their position developed in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, when basically all theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Henry of Ghent, John Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham had condemned the view. Thus, one argument against the Praepositinian view relied on the fact that persons and properties do not neatly coincide, e.g. the Father has two properties, paternity and active spiration, while the Father and the Son share the property of active spiration, and hence person and property could not be strictly identical as the Praepositinian view required. Adherents of Praepositinianism rejected this sort of move by denying that there was even a problem: the Father just is paternity and active spiration, the Son just is filiation and active spiration, and Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit. There is no genuine explanation here, merely the Roman Catholic view of the Trinity placed into a Praepositinian framework. (On later-medieval Praepositinianism, see Friedman 2010: 133–70; Friedman forthcoming: chs. 11 and 12.)

No discussion of fourteenth-century Trinitarian theology would be complete without a mention of the innovative developments in Trinitarian logic that took place especially in the first half of the fourteenth century. Although logical issues were important in several loci in the Trinitarian discussion, nevertheless the most interesting developments are found in discussion of the Trinitarian paralogisms, places where reasoning, as represented by Aristotelian logic, seemed simply to conflict with the doctrine of the Trinity. The most famous example of this is the case of the so-called expository syllogism, for example: the Father is this essence; this essence is the Son; therefore the Father is the Son. According to Aristotelian logic, this syllogism is valid, that is to say, it should yield a true conclusion. But its conclusion is, according to the Catholic faith, false, since the Father is a different person from the Son. For scholastic theologians, trained from the first in logic, this presented a paramount challenge, because if there was something wrong with Aristotelian logic in this case, the question would have to be asked whether there is a problem with it in all cases, and that question involved implications for the scholastic project in general. There were two basic ways of tackling this issue. The first was to say that Aristotelian logic is in fact universally valid and then to find a reason within Aristotelian logic itself as to why the syllogism does not work in precisely this case; the second was to say that Aristotelian logic is not universally valid, being unable to handle a case like this, and perhaps further to postulate a special non-Aristotelian 'logic of faith' to deal with the Trinitarian paralogisms. The second way was not particularly popular in the fourteenth century, although it is found in the *Centiloquium theologicum* (previously attributed to William of Ockham but more likely written by the Dominican Arnold of Strelley (*fl.* 1325)), and (less clearly) in Robert Holcot's theology. But the first way was a major source of interesting logical innovations, made with an eye towards defusing the Trinitarian paralogisms. John Duns Scotus provided the fourteenth-century starting point. According to Scotus the problem with the syllogism above is that it fails to take into account the formal distinction that obtains between person (or property) and essence. It is true that the di-

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vine essence is the Father essentially, but there is nevertheless a formal distinction between them—the Father is not purely or absolutely identical with the essence. The same is true of the Son: Son and essence are the same essentially, but there is a formal distinction between them. On account of the formal distinction, then, the syllogism does not conclude, since the ‘fallacy of accident’ arises and blocks the syllogism. Hence, Scotus believed that the formal distinction (p. 207) safeguarded both the doctrine of the Trinity and Aristotelian syllogistic logic: there was a perfectly good reason that the syllogism did not result in a true conclusion. Although William of Ockham thought Scotus’ formal distinction to be unintelligible, nevertheless he accepted that person and essence are formally distinct precisely because he could see no other way to guarantee the universality of Aristotelian logic. Dissatisfied with this ad hoc solution, thinkers coming after Ockham, like Adam Wodeham (d. 1358) and Gregory of Rimini, appealed to other Aristotelian logical tools in order to save the universality of syllogistic logic even when dealing with the Trinity. The discussion continued into the later fourteenth century with such scholars as Pierre d’Ailly (d. 1422) and further into the fifteenth. It has been suggested that theologians in Vienna at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries became convinced that the Jews living in the town would never convert to Christianity precisely because they could see the logical problems raised by the Trinity; thus the Trinitarian paradoxes seem to have had real world consequences. (On logic and the Trinity in the later-medieval period, see Gelber, dissertation, 1974; Shank 1988; Hallamaa 2003; Kärkkäinen 2007: esp. articles by Knuuttila, Maierú, Marshall, and Nielsen.)

The Fifteenth Century

The theology of the fifteenth century is not well researched at present, but already there are some indications of a few major figures and characteristics. A recognized trait of fifteenth-century thought is its tendency to consciously revisit and even defend the thought of earlier masters. One sees this clearly in the Trinitarian theology of several of the century's major figures, for example John Capreolus (d. 1444), who based his *Sentences* commentary on Thomas Aquinas’ own commentary on the same work. Peter of Nugent (fl. 1403–4) and William of Vorillon (d. 1463) appear to have done something similar with respect to John Duns Scotus’ Trinitarian theology. Finally, Gabriel Biel (d. 1495), best known for having been read by Martin Luther, tells us explicitly that his purpose in his *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* is to capture the meaning of Ockham's *Sentences* commentary in abbreviated form. (On Biel, see Friedman 2003.) Finally, one should mention Denys the Carthusian (d. 1472), whose immense *Sentences* commentary presents a spectrum of scholastic figures in discussion with one another on many issues, including the Trinity.

A second important tendency of the fifteenth century is the differing ways in which both artists and theologians read Aristotle: a nominalist way, harking back to William of Ockham (among others), and a realist way, harking back to Albert the Great (d. 1280), Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus. The *Wege Streit*, or dispute between these ways, became bitter at many fifteenth-century universities, and it influenced Trinitarian theolo-

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gy. Thus, nominalistic-leaning theologians were more inclined to say that the Trinity was not amenable to Aristotelian analysis, and, even when such analysis was defensible, it was founded on a parsimonious nominalistic understanding of Aristotelian metaphysical (p. 208) categories (e.g. of relation); realists, on the other hand, were more sanguine about the use of Aristotle, and understood Aristotle in a more concrete, realist way (Hoenen forthcoming). The influence of the nominalist/realist divide upon Trinitarian thought is to be seen already in the late fourteenth century with the Trinitarian theology of John Wyclif (d. 1384), a strong realist on the issue of universals, who conceived of the divine essence as a universal nature and the persons as particulars of that nature (Lahey 2006: 127–65).

Although it is true more generally about all later-medieval Trinitarian theology, from the late thirteenth century and on, nevertheless the thought produced in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is particularly under-studied, and there is a large amount of source material waiting to be integrated into our picture of this extremely rich theological tapestry. As we come to grips with this material, it is sure to deepen our historical picture of later-medieval thought and to inject a voice of philosophical and theological sensitivity and rigor into our own discussion of the Trinity.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Cross (2005); Friedman (2010); Kärkkäinen (2007).

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Russell L. Friedman

Russell L. Friedman is professor at the Institute of Philosophy, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. His major publication is *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* (2010). His main academic interests are medieval Trinitarian theology and philosophical psychology, and genres of medieval philosophical discourse.

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Karl Christian Felmy

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Abstract and Keywords

This article explores the Byzantine theologies of the Trinity from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries. It discusses liturgical hymnody and art and analyzes the controversy over the *Filioque* with particular attention to the ninth-century Patriarch of Constantinople Photius. It also considers the Trinity doctrine of Patriarch Gennadios II and Gregory Palamas, whose approach was similar to that of Augustine except with regards to the *Filioque* and the divine energies.

Keywords: Byzantine theologies, Trinity, liturgical hymnody, Filioque, Photius, Patriarch Gennadios II, Gregory Palamas, divine energies

The Trinity Doctrine within the Framework of Orthodox Tradition

SINCE the Council of Nicaea (325) there has been a growing tendency in the East to view the most important Orthodox dogmatic teachings as complete and the questions connected with them as answered. Canon VII of the Council of Ephesus (431) decreed that the decisions made at the Council of Nicaea could no longer be amended, thus prohibiting the formulation of new creeds above and beyond the Symbol of Nicaea. In fact, it was not the Nicene Creed itself, but the Creed of the second Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople (381), which is based on the Nicene Creed, that became the sole symbol of the Orthodox Church, beyond which later Councils may still have formulated their *Æqoi*, but did not dare to establish new symbols of faith.

Even the Byzantine theologian Maximus the Confessor (579/80–662), who was, as Hans-Georg Beck noted in an assessment with a very western slant (Oberdorfer 2001: 143, n. 53, rightly observes how strongly Beck's underlying assessment criteria are influenced by the West), the 'most universal mind of the 7th century and perhaps the last independently

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thinking theologian of the Byzantine Church' (Beck 1959: 436), when writing his liturgical commentary, shied away from newly interpreting passages of the Divine Liturgy that had previously been interpreted by Dionysius Areopagita, whom Maximus held in high esteem and who was revered as an apostolic authority beyond all doubt (von Balthasar 1961: 367). A general preference—at that time for the most part still (p. 211) shared in the West—for the ancient and traditional over the new, not yet tried and tested, as well as the binding character of the decrees of the Seven Ecumenical Councils for Roman imperial law, always made theological innovations, especially those in the area of the Trinity doctrine or Christology, seem suspicious to Byzantine theologians.

Contrary to a widespread eastern self-image and contrary to western prejudices, eastern theology, in spite of this, was not paralysed, and by no means remained without creativity. Indeed, proposals for new ways of rethinking traditional positions almost always came from outside the Church, or from theologians who challenged whatever consensus had been reached up to that point. Only when it was necessary to defend the traditional against challenges from within or without were new statements risked in theology—though more so in the field of questions on which there were no conciliar provisions, such as was exemplified by St Gregorios Palamas (1296–1359) in the development of the doctrine of the divine energies, or by St Nicholas Cabasilas (c.1320–c.1397), with his theology of mysteries (sacraments).

Complementary to an understanding of theology as a strictly rational permeation of doctrines, there is also, very early in the eastern Church, an understanding of theology as teachings cast in hymns and expressed through pictures. Saint Ephraem the Syrian (c. 306–73) carried out theology predominantly in this vein, and one of the most important writings of Basil the Great (329/30–79), that entitled 'On the Holy Spirit', in reality treats a liturgical question, namely that of the correct doxology of the Father and the Son 'with the Holy Spirit', and repeatedly includes the liturgical tradition as an essential component of historical tradition in his argumentation. After a long phase of diffidence towards ecclesiastic poetry, Byzantine theologians began to compose *kontakia* in the sixth century (Stephan 2001), whose *proemia* mainly treat questions of dogma. Over time, canon poetry, which presumably goes back to the seventh century (Felmy 2001), widely dispelled the *kontakia*. Canon poetry reached its highest point in the eighth century, although canons of the highest poetic and theological quality were still being written in the 9th century, and these repeatedly included the Trinity doctrine. In the ninth century, we have first and foremost Theodoros Graptos (born 775), Theophanes Graptos (775–843), Theodoros Studites (759–826), and Josef the Hymnographer (816–86), as well as the nun Cassia (born c. 910) (Schmalzbauer 1996), who wrote several *idiomela* that are still sung today.

The Pentecostal canon was in fact written earlier, by Cosmas of Maiuma (second half of the eighth century) (Hoffmann 2001; Hörandner 1997). However, the increasing development of this festival from its original purpose, to celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, into the feast of the Holy Trinity, which later found its conclusion in Russia, is reflected in the *idiomelon* of the Emperor Leon VI the Wise (886–912), which gave the trishagion, originally most likely understood Christologically, a Trinitarian interpretation

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(Plank 1992, *passim*) and taught the appearance (not the proceeding) of the Holy Spirit in the world through the Son, and sang of the Holy Spirit as He who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son (Πεντηκοστάριον 218).

The increasing transformation of the Feast of Pentecost into the Feast of the Holy Trinity (in Greek, this feast is to this day called Κυριακή τῆς Πεντηκοστής, *Sunday of Pentecost*, whereas in Russia it is more often called День Святой Троицы, *Day of Holy Trinity*) was also reflected in the growing numbers of the Trinity icon and in its reshaping as the best-known Trinity icon of St Andrej Rublev (1360–1427) in the Russian Church, which at that time was still under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. In a more traditional way than with certain later Byzantine theologians (see below), in this image it is not so much the unity as the independence of the three hypostases of the Trinity linked by love that is portrayed and emphasized (Felmy 2004: 56–63).

The Beginnings of the Debate on the Proceeding of the Holy Spirit

If Byzantine theology rose to meet challenges from within and without, rather than being inclined to follow up, on its own initiative, on issues of the Trinity doctrine that were in principle considered to be closed cases, the West soon presented it with such a challenge, by becoming increasingly fixated on Augustine with his tendency towards a doctrine of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father *and the Son* (*ex Patre Filioque*). As long as the West, with its new theological orientation, did not affect the text of the creed and, despite Augustine's leaning towards the doctrine of proceeding from the Father *and the Son*, continued to adhere to the proceeding of the Holy Spirit *principaliter* a Patre, which he taught all the same, the East did not react to the tendencies of the West to assume that the Son participated in the proceeding of the Holy Spirit.

Without question, Augustine's contribution was decisive for the development of the doctrine of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit *ex Patre Filioque*, over which the conflict, and in 1054 the schism, between the eastern and the western Church arose. According to Augustine's teaching, the Father and the Son breathe the Spirit back and forth to one another. The Holy Spirit is thus the Gift of the Father and the Son. It is, as their Gift, the bond of love that connects the Father and the Son with each other (Augustine, *De Trinitate* 5.16). But in doing so, Augustine was not thinking in inner-Trinitarian terms, but he assumed that the Holy Spirit, in the economy of salvation, is a gift and a donation. Because it is given to creation, it also proceeds from the Father and the Son in the sense that it is their gift to each other (Mühlenberg 1982: 430). Therefore we find here for the first time in the Trinity doctrine the axiom, though as yet not explicitly expressed, that there exists not only an outward relationship between the inner-Trinitarian existence and the economical workings of the Holy Trinity, but that the inner-Trinitarian relationship and the outer-Trinitarian workings, essence, and economy of the Trinity are completely identical.

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Augustine did not have in mind changing the text of the Nicene Creed. Furthermore, there are still diverse lines in his theological thinking. Alongside what one could call the true Augustine line just sketched, he maintains the old line of thinking according to which the Father is to be thought of as the *principium deitatis*. In order to balance the traditional line with his own new line, Augustine taught the proceeding of the Holy Spirit **(p. 213)** *principaliter a Patre et a Filio*. And yet with the new line existing alongside the old, he seemed to have found the solution to a problem for which the Cappadocian Fathers, who shaped the eastern theology, had found none. They were hesitant to specify the difference between the begetting of the only begotten Son and the proceeding of the Holy Spirit. According to Augustine, the main difference between the Son's begetting and the proceeding of the Holy Spirit is that the Son has his origin only in the Father, but the Holy Spirit in both the Father and the Son.

The *Filioque* is taught *expressis verbis* for the first time in a document that in its entire approach is typically western and that probably originates in Augustine's school in Spain: the so-called Athanasian Creed, often called the *Quicumque* after its opening words (Collins 1979: 332).

After a previous synod in Toledo had yet omitted a doctrine of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son in its profession of faith (Oberdorfer 2001: 131), the third Synod of Toledo in the year 589 imposed the penalty of anathema on all who denied that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father *and the Son*. Evidently, the Fathers of this synod were of the opinion that this was the only way to overthrow once and for all both Arianism, which the Visigoth king Reccared renounced at said synod, and the denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit as was practised by that king's father, King Leovigild. And yet it seems that the synod did not yet touch the text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol itself at that time, but left it in its original version—without *Filioque* (Gemeinhardt 2002: 5–55). This conclusion follows, in any case, from the older of the extant manuscripts of the synodal resolutions. It was not until the eighth Synod of Toledo in 653 that a text was adopted in which the wording of the Niceno-Constantinopolitanum itself was altered (Gemeinhardt 2002: 53–4).

For its further development, the reception of the doctrine and of the formulation of the *Filioque* by the Frankish Church is of crucial significance. At the time a young Church, the Frankish Church sought theological conflict with Constantinople, in order to prove itself a worthy successor to Constantinople as the keeper of the true faith. The 'suitability' of the *Filioque* issue for this conflict was not recognized right away, however, and the dispute concentrated initially on the question of icons (Gemeinhardt 2002: 88ff.). But the 'capitulary' made at the court of Charlemagne, which in the year 792 was taken to Rome, focuses on the problem in Trinitarian theology of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, in that it argues against a text by the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Tarasius (784–806) contained in the synodal files of the seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (787), which professes: 'and in the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father through the Son and who himself is God and is recognized [as such]' (Concilium Nicaenum II, actio III (Mansi 1766: vol. 12, 1119E–1127A, here at 1121CD)). Though this

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text has more affinity with the western doctrine in the sense that it speaks of an involvement of the Second Hypostasis in the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, it still met with harsh criticism from the Franks, because by this time the Frankish theologians were convinced that *Filioque* was the original version; they deemed it insufficient that the Second Hypostasis should function as a mere intermediary in the procession of the Holy Spirit. Pope Adrian (p. 214) (772–95), however, essentially decided in favour of the Constantinople party (Gemeinhardt 2002: 108–13).

A first very careful reaction to this special western doctrine is found as early as Maximus the Confessor. He still defended the Latins by attempting to interpret the *Filioque* in the sense of the δι' ὑἰοῦ of the Patriarch Tarasius. The Latin Church Fathers, he wrote, in their teaching of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, did not make the Son the origin (ἀρχή) of the Holy Spirit.

Still entirely without polemic, St John of Damascus (c.650–before 754) rejects the doctrine of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit from the Father *and* from the Son in his *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* when he writes:

Therefore we name not three gods the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but rather one God, the Holy Trinity, for Son and Spirit lead back to *one* principle, they are not put together or melt together, as Sabellius would have it (for they are unified, as I say, not in that they mix together, but in that they adhere to one another, and have the state of being in one another (ἐν ἀλλήλοις περιχώρησιν) without any mixture or amalgamation). (John of Damascus, *De fide Orthodoxa* I.8; PG 94: 829)

In the exposition of the relationship of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, the completely unpolemical and yet unequivocal rejection of the *Filioque* then follows:

The Son we call neither fundament nor Father, but we say he is from the Father and the Son of the Father; the Holy Spirit, however, we say is from the Father, and we call him the Spirit of the Father. But we do not say that the Spirit is from the Son, and yet we call him the Spirit of the Son ... of the Son, however, we say neither that he is of the Spirit, nor yet from the Spirit. (John of Damascus, *De fide Orthodoxa* I.8; PG 94: 832–3)

This last sentence is important, for it refutes the fear that a creed without the *Filioque* would diminish the honour of the Son. After all, he reasons, the honour of the Holy Spirit is likewise not lessened by the fact that the Son is neither of the Spirit nor from the Spirit.

More crucial, however, is the fact that behind John Damascene's polite rejection of the *Filioque* lurks the wholly diverse eastern approach to Trinitarian theology. He speaks of God's unity because the Son and the Spirit are founded on the same principle, the Father. A *Filioque* in this Trinitarian context would annul the unity of the Trinity!

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The insertion of the *Filioque* led to a true clash when Frankish monks used the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed on the Mount of Olives in the form which had become common in the Frankish realm (i.e. with the addition of *Filioque*). A monk from the monastery of St Sabas in the Kidron Valley subsequently accused the Frankish monks of heresy (Gemeinhardt 2002: 142ff.). An appeal on the pope's judgement ended with success for the eastern side to the extent that Pope Leo III (795–816), as reported by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, 'for the sake of love and of care for the true faith' had 'two silver tablets' made, 'on each of which the Symbol was written, one in Greek letters and the other in Latin, on the right and the left above the entrance to the tomb' of St Peter—without the controversial addition of the *Filioque*. Similar tablets were also installed in the church of San Paolo Fuori le Mura (Gemeinhardt 2002: 163).

(p. 215) Patriarch Photius and the *Filioque* Conflict

When considering the developments in the *Filioque* conflict under the patriarchate of Photius (c.810–93/94; Patriarch of Constantinople 858–67, 877–86), we cannot fully disregard the political and Church-political implications (Gemeinhardt 2002: 165–298 treats not only the theological questions, but also the attendant political circumstances and pre-conditions in great detail; on the topic as a whole see Hergenröther 1867–9).

Photius, one of the most learned members of the Byzantine aristocracy, had been consecrated archbishop and patriarch of Constantinople in the year 858 under Emperor Michael III (842–67) at the instigation of Caesar Bardas. He was the successor of Patriarch Ignatius (d. 877; Patriarch 846–58, 867–77), who after the fall of Empress Theodora II was forced to resign and was banned from Constantinople. Ignatius, who did not acknowledge his deposition, turned to the Roman pope, Nicholas I (858–67), who in a hitherto unusual estimation of his papal competences excommunicated Photius and reinstated Ignatius. Photius, who did not acknowledge the pope's actions, convoked a synod in Constantinople in 867, which declared the pope to be deposed. This led to a schism between Rome and Constantinople. When in the year 866 the Bulgarian khan, Boris I, despite Byzantine efforts decided to take on the Roman version of Christianity, a stormy polemic broke out between Rome and Constantinople in the context of which Patriarch Photius had all western special developments, especially in the liturgy, condemned and polemicized particularly strongly against the introduction of the *Filioque* to the creed. It was in the context of this conflict that Photius wrote his 'Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit' (Photius, *On the Mystagogy*, passim).

This text holds the insertion of the *Filioque* to jeopardize the monarchy of the Father, to invert it into a diarchy, to detract from the honour of the Third Hypostasis and its position in the Trinity; it sees the Holy Spirit as thus being 'blasphemed as being inferior than the Son' (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 84; PG 102: 313). In Jn 16:14 Christ does not say: the Holy Spirit receives 'of Me', but He receives 'of Mine' (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 77; PG 102: 300).

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Although you do not change the words, yet by subterfuge you commit the crime of changing 'of Mine' to 'of Me', and by this manoeuvre, you accuse the Saviour of teaching that which you believe. You distinctly slander Him of these three things: that He said what He did not say; that He did not say what He did say; and that He professed a meaning of the passage which He not only did not express, but which, on the contrary, is obviously opposed to His own mystagogy. (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 79; PG 102: 304)

That the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father is a property of the Father that cannot be transferred from Him to another hypostasis (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 76; PG 102: 296f.). If the Son as well is attributed with the capability of being an origin (ἀρχή, αἰτία, (p. 216) ἄριστον), then either the hypostases of Father and Son are modalistically mixed (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 75; PG 102: 293), or two origins are seen in God, which would amount to a Marcionitic dualism (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 85; PG 102: 316). In any case, this view fails to recognize the μοναρχία and thereby the unity of God. By the assumption that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is moved farther from the Father than is the Son (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 87; PG 102: 320). It is not the common nature of the Father and the Son that is the origin of the Holy Spirit, but the person, the hypostasis of the Father (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 89; PG 102: 325). Photius takes great care in his exposition to properly explain the designation of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6). If the apostle Paul here were teaching the procession of the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son, he would contradict and correct the teachings of the Saviour Himself (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 90; PG 102: 328). But this cannot be the case, says Photius; instead, the Apostle intends to bear witness, with very wisely chosen words, to the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 91; PG 102: 329).

Paul is demonstrating the identity of the nature, and in no wise does he imply the cause of procession. He acknowledges the unity of essence, but incontrovertibly does not proclaim that the Son brings forth a consubstantial hypostasis; indeed, he does not even hint concerning the origin. (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 91; PG 102: 329)

It is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, because it is of the same essence as both. It proceeds no more from the Son, as whose Spirit it is designated, than it does from the mental faculties of wisdom, understanding, and recognition, although it is called 'the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, and recognition' (Exodus 31:3) (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 94f.; PG 102: 336).

In particular, Photius is against taking on the *Filioque* for the mere reason that some of the Fathers appear to have taught it, and against making a dogma out of a point that some of the Church Fathers have taught without claiming dogmatic validity for it. Photius cites unclear thoughts among some of the Fathers, who in spite of this are highly esteemed in the Church, as for example the saints Clement, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 102; PG 102: 356). Even Basil the Great, he claims, for a time

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did not profess the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but this not in order to deny it, but so that it might later be professed with that much louder a voice (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 103; PG 102: 357).

As Patriarch Photius further states, the *Filioque* also contradicts the witness of several popes, who either did not teach the *Filioque* or even resisted it. This is particularly the case with Pope Leo III (795–816), who had two tablets made on which the Greek text of the Nicene Creed is to be seen without the *Filioque* (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 112; PG 102: 380). This version of the text was in the end acknowledged as authentic by Pope Adrian III (884–5) as well (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 112; PG 102: 381).

Photius would not be the great philologist as whom we know him today if he had not added to his expositions on the Latin Church Fathers who taught the *Filioque* contrary (p. 217) to general tradition the complaint that the Latin language was unsuitable for treating dogmatic issues with as much sophistication as is possible in Greek (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 110; PG 102: 376).

The phrase ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς, considered as a typical Photian formulation, does not appear word for word in the ‘Mystagogy’, though its sense is certainly contained here. The title, probably secondary and summarizing the contents of the ‘Mystagogy’, does however contain this wording:

On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit. That even as the Son is proclaimed by the Sacred Oracles to be begotten of the Father alone (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς), so also is the Holy Spirit proclaimed by theology to proceed from the same and only cause. He is however said to be of the Son, since He is of one essence with Him and is sent through Him. (Photius, *On the Mystagogy* 67; PG 102: 279f.)

Whether one could somehow still speak of the Holy Spirit as proceeding *through* the Son does not interest Photius, because his focus is on the monarchy of the Father, which, though not necessarily impacted by the phrase ‘through the Son’, would in no case be supported by it.

Yet Patriarch Photius did not see the *Filioque* as the western dogma purely and simply. It is indeed not by chance that he refers to Roman popes, who either did not mention the *Filioque* or even (like Pope Leo III) expressly rejected its addition to the Creed, or at least declined to ascribe any official validity to it. This was why it was possible for him to be reconciled with the successors of Nicholas I without an explicit papal correction of the doctrine of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit. Half a century later the situation was complicated even further by the official insertion of the *Filioque* in the Roman version of the Niceno-Constantinopolitanum. This happened when the German king Henry II insisted on the insertion of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol in the mass held at his coronation as Roman Emperor in the year 1014, namely, in the form in which it had already been used for some time in the Frankish mass, with the addition ‘Filioque’ (Jungmann 1948: 579). When the Church was separated in 1054 into East and West the *Filioque* played only a minor part, namely, of all things, in the completely unfounded accusation by the west-

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ern Cardinal Humbert that the eastern Church had of its own accord left the originally recited *Filioque* out of the creed (Oberdorfer 2001: 169–70). And yet the western insertion of the *Filioque* in the official text of the Mass reflects an estrangement that Pope Leo III had still been intent on preventing.

That estrangement can also be seen in the comparison of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit according to St Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022) with that of his disciple Niketas Stethatos (c.1005–c.1085). There is almost no theologian in whose writing the workings of the Holy Spirit played a greater role than Symeon the New Theologian (Архиеп. Василий (Кривошеин) 1980, *passim*). While in the doctrine of the proceeding of the Holy Spirit he does hold the traditional Orthodox position, it is without a trace of polemic and without being particularly insistent. It is possible that he was not at all familiar with the western special doctrine on the procession of the Holy Spirit *ex Patre Filioque*. Nikethas Stethatos, in contrast, who emphasized the properties of the three (p. 218) divine Hypostases even more than did Symeon the New Theologian, already reacts extremely polemically to the by now official Western *Filioque*:

They overthrow the entire Christian faith by not saying that the One is the principle of the Two [Son and Spirit], but groundlessly introduce a diarchy to the triad. This leads them either to the Sabellian mixture or to the Arianic splitting of the Trinity. They let the Son be the Father. If it is necessary for the Son likewise to give issue to the Spirit, in order to be of one essence with the Father, then the Spirit must in turn also give issue to something, in order to be of the same essence with the Father and the Son. (Cited in Wessel 1982: 357; Sabellius did not make a distinction between persons, but only between ‘modi’ of the one person's effects, and is therefore designated a modalist.)

‘You are the One who Receives and is Distributed’ and ‘The Father is Greater than I’

In the ‘codex Barberini gr 336’, the oldest extant manuscript of the Byzantine *euchologion*, which also contains the prayers of the liturgy of St Basil and of St John Chrysostomus, there is a prayer that is missing in many of the more recent manuscripts, and thus had evidently only been inserted in the liturgy shortly before the codex Barberini was written, but had not yet become widely accepted. It is the only prayer of the Divine Liturgy that is addressed to the Second Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, and it ends in ‘codex Barberini gr 336’ with the words addressed to Christ: ‘For You, Christ our God, are the Offerer and the Offered, the Hallower and the Hallowed, and to You we give glory’ (*L’Eucologio Barberini* 62; Parenti and Velkovska 2000: 266).

This last part of the prayer was changed, probably around the time of Emperor Manuel I (1143–80), to read as it does today in the received text of the liturgy: ‘For You, Christ our God, are the Offerer and the Offered, the One who receives and is distributed, and to You

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we give glory' (Ἱερατικόν 87: 127). Christ is, according to this prayer, not only the sacrificer and the sacrifice, but also He who accepts the sacrifice. This means the sacrifice of the *Logos* incarnate was offered not only to God the Father, but also to the Holy Spirit and the Son, the indivisible, single-essence Trinity. Soterichos Panteugenēs, the deacon of Hagia Sophia and patriarch-elect of Antioch, took steps against this view and its expression in the new version of the prayer spoken at the Grand Entrance; he was supported by Eustathios of Dyrrhachion and the deacons Michail of Thessaloniki and Nikephoros Basilakes, all of whom were—disregarding their not yet very high position in the hierarchy—leading theologians (Beck 1959: 623–4; Wessel 1982: 341–4).

A synod was summoned for 26 January 1156, because the monk chosen for the seat of the Metropolitane of Kiev, Konstantinos, wished to have a clear answer for the questions raised before he left for Russia. The synod formulated anathematizations from (p. 219) which the doctrines of Soterichos Panteugenēs and his fellow campaigners can be deduced. Apparently they designated exclusively God the Father as the recipient of the sacrifice of Christ: the Divine *Logos* did not receive the offering of His own body and blood (anathematism 1). In connection with this, Soterichos rejected the idea that the Divine Liturgy be celebrated in honour of the Holy Trinity (anathematism 2). The daily offering of the Eucharist repeats the self-sacrifice of Christ φανταστικῶς καὶ εἰκονικῶς, that is, in mind and in image (anathematism 3). And finally they claim first the Son, upon becoming human, took in the mortals in grace, then the Father did so for the sake of Christ's suffering, and finally, humanity was accepted by the Holy Spirit (anathematism 4).

In contrast to these views, the synod decided in favour of the *textus receptus* of the above-mentioned prayer: Christ's life-giving sacrifice was offered to the entire undivided single-essence Triad, and not to the Father alone. The opposing doctrine that rules out the Son and the Holy Spirit as recipients of Christ's sacrifice, it stated, splits the Trinity and robs the Son and the Holy Spirit of the same honour that is owed them together with the Father.

Against the symbolic reading of the Eucharistic sacrifice it was argued that the Eucharistic sacrifice is in no aspect different from Christ's sacrifice on the cross. For the Orthodox concept of the Eucharistic sacrifice it is essential that one cannot in this context speak of more than *one* sacrifice, but only of one and the same sacrifice, so that in the liturgical sacrifice the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is present in the mind, but the former cannot add anything to the latter, because the two are identical. And against the doctrine of three stages in terms of humanity's receiving divine grace the succinct statement is given that the consubstantial and indivisible Trinity does not allow such a division (Wessel 1982: 344).

Since Soterichos Panteugenēs, in contrast to his associates, did not abide by the resolution handed down by the synod, but rather wrote a paper defending his position, a new synod was called to session in May of 1157, which confirmed the decisions of the synod of 1156. A review of his views that came too late did not protect Soterichos from being stripped of his qualification for high religious office.

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A second Trinitarian-Christological dispute during the reign of Emperor Manuel I concerned the right understanding of the word of Christ 'My Father is greater than I' (Jn 14:28). The conflict was initiated by one Dimitrios who had repeatedly travelled to the West as an emissary. He was driven by the question of whether Christ's word from the Gospel of John referred to Christ's divinity or his humanity. The explanation that the western Catholics give, that Christ is lower than God the Father and at the same time equal to Him, does not satisfy Dimitrios. In the writings of the holy Fathers of the eastern Church, he found different statements. (1) With the statement that the Father is greater than He, Christ was thinking only of the origin (ἀρχή) that caused Him, according to His divine nature. (2) According to other sources, Christ had His human nature in mind. (3) Yet other statements indicate that this sentence only referred to the *Logos* in His state of humiliation. The Emperor Manuel I, who (p. 220) dallied in theology, stated that in terms of His humanness, the Second Hypostasis is lower than the Father, but in terms of His divinity, He is equal with Him. A synod convened in 1166 in the palace of Blachern laid a creed before Dimitrios according to which Jn 14:28 refers to the 'flesh of the Saviour, created and capable of suffering' (Wessel 1982: 346).

The Trinity Doctrine of St Gregorios Palamas

Saint Gregorios Palamas (1296–1359) stuck with the received Orthodox doctrine regarding the Trinity in its fundamental traits, and therefore also rejected the *Filioque*. Several years ago, however, Reinhard Flogaus was able to show that Gregorios Palamas had no qualms about borrowing from, of all places, the writings of St Augustine (Flogaus 1997: 146), and that his Trinitarian theology thus was quite different from the established theology. Like Augustine, Gregorios Palamas speaks of analogies between the divinity and the man in God's image. God the Father, he says, corresponds to the human νοῦς, and the counterpart of the Son is the Word which lies embedded in the human νοῦς (λόγος ἐμφύτως ἡμῖν ἐναποκείμενος τῷ νῷ), or the knowledge that is always with him (ἡ ἀεὶ συνυπάρχουσα αὐτῷ γνώσις), respectively, but not the orally spoken word (λόγος προφορικός) or the unspoken word (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) lying dormant in the human (Flogaus 1997: 143). An analogy between the divine and the human κῶσος was also perceived by various eastern Church Fathers. The differences between the four types of human *logos* are found in this manner only in Augustine (Augustine, *De Trinitate* 15.10–15). In Augustine we also find the expositions on the various modes of *Logos* that were evidently borrowed from him by Gregorios Palamas (Flogaus 1997: 143–6).

What is true of the doctrine of the divine *Logos* is also true of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. No one who is gifted with the νοῦς could—says Gregorios Palamas following Augustine—think a word without πνεῦμα. 'The Holy Spirit is Itself certainly neither πνεῦμα in the sense of that breath that accompanies the λόγος προφορικός that is spoken with our lips, nor is it connected with the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος or the λόγος ἐν διανοίᾳ, as this would imply a temporal existence and thus also the potential for change. That πνεῦμα of the most high Word is rather the unspeakable love of the Procreator to the *Logos* begotten by Him in unspeakable manner, with which the beloved Son as well loves the Father,

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to the extent that He has already received from the Father this love that proceeds with Him and rests on Him' (Flogaus 1997: 146).

This interpretation of the Holy Spirit as an inner-Trinitarian love of the Father and the Son can, as Reinhard Flogaus notes, be found in the writings of no other eastern Church Father before Gregorios Palamas, and must therefore be seen as a loan from Augustine, (p. 221) as incidentally the Orthodox theologian Protopresbyter Jean Meyendorff had suspected (Meyendorff 1959: 316). Because analogies to Augustine's *De Trinitate* can be proven in much greater number than previously known, the dependence of St Gregorios Palamas on St Augustine that Jean Meyendorff construed can be claimed without a doubt. Despite the differences in terminological detail Gregorios Palamas is even dependent on Augustine when he describes the Spirit as the common joy of the Father and the Son (Flogaus 1997: 150).

However, whereas in Occidental theology the statements on the Holy Spirit as a bond of love between Father and Son served to support the *Filioque*, Gregorios Palamas at this point diverges from his model. Here it is interesting to note the above-cited statement, among others, that the Son 'has already received from the Father this love that proceeds with Him and rests on Him', with which the one equal originality of the Father and the Son is rejected (see above). Despite his clear dependence on Augustine, Gregorios Palamas declines to follow him not only on the question of the *Filioque*, but also where Augustine declares 'it is the Holy Spirit Itself that is poured out as love in our hearts' (Flogaus 1997: 149). As Palamas sees it, it is not the Holy Spirit Itself that is poured out in the hearts, but the Divine Energies, which he distinguishes from the essence of God.

In this respect, the distinction—which Gregorios Palamas may not have invented, but which he at least developed to a certain conclusion—between the Divine being and the Divine Energies touches on the Trinity doctrine itself. It is not completely unfounded that Dorothea Wendebourg in this context spoke of a 'de-functionalization' of the Holy Spirit (Wendebourg 1980), a charge that could in fact be aimed at Augustine for even more cogent reasons. And yet even the Russian priest and religious philosopher Pavel Florenskij, himself under no suspicion of harbouring any all too great western sympathies, raised a charge similar to that expressed recently by Wendebourg. 'Unnoticed and gradually' a tendency had permeated the Church

to speak, rather than of the Holy Spirit, of 'grace', that is, of something already and conclusively impersonal. What we know is usually not the Holy Spirit, but Its gracious energies, Its powers, Its effects and workings. 'Spirit', 'spiritual', 'spirit-giving', 'spirituality', etc. pervade the works of the holy Fathers. But from these works it is also clear that the words 'spirit', 'spiritual', etc., refer to special states of the believer which are called forth by God, but which only slightly if at all have in their sights the personal independent existence of the third hypostasis of the all-holy Trinity. (Флоренский 1914: 123-4)

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As applicable as these observations may be, it must nevertheless be emphasized that the Orthodox Church even at the time of St Gregorios Palamas maintained the sanctifying of the Eucharistic gifts through the invocation and effect of the Holy Spirit, and this 'de-functionalization' thus has always remained limited. The theological thinking of the Neopalamitic School of the twentieth century, with its '“personalistic” correction of Palamism' (Flogaus 1997: 189, n. 430), furthermore showed that the Palamitic doctrine of energies can also stand in the context of a strongly pneumatologically oriented theology.

(p. 222) The Trinity Doctrine of Patriarch Gennadios II

From earliest times the Orthodox Trinitarian theology differed from that of the West essentially in its stronger emphasis of the independence of the three hypostases of the Trinity. For the dialogue with monotheistic Islam this position is not particularly favourable. Thus the first Constantinopolitan patriarch under Islamic rule, Gennadios II (1453–6, 1458–63) (Blanchet 2008; Tinnefeld 1984), attempted by means of a peculiar new interpretation of the Trinitarian dogma to make the position of the Orthodox Church plausible to the Ottoman conquerors. The doctrine of the three hypostases he explained in his *Homologia* (Καρμύρης 1968: 432–6) as a doctrine of three $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$. Here he went so far as to claim that the three hypostases of the Trinity were distinguished no differently than were God's essence and energies in the thinking of St Gregorios Palamas. 'As fire, even if there is nothing to be illuminated and warmed by it, yet always has light and warmth and radiates light and warmth, so—even before the world was created—the Logos and the Spirit existed as physical energies of God, for God is one, just as in one human soul there is reason, intellect and thinking will and at the same time these three are in their essence one soul' (Καρμύρης 1968: 433). For Gennadios, all old-Church anthropological analogies serve to prove the *unity* of the Trinity, not to explain the *homousia* of *three* independent hypostases. However, this viewpoint, with its obvious apologetic motivation, was not capable of influencing the further development of the history of Orthodox theology.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Beck (1959); Gemeinhardt (2020); Oberdorfer (2001); Photios (without place and date).

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Karl Christian Felmy

Karl Christian Felmy, Doctor honoris causa of the Moscow Theological Academy (2005) and of the Bucharest Theological Faculty (2008), is Emeritus Professor of History and Theology of the Christian East at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg.

The Trinity in the Reformers

Scott R. Swain

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This article examines the thoughts and views of Protestant Reformers on the Trinity. It highlights the efforts of the Reformers, in light of the new exegetical modes arising with the Renaissance, to articulate Trinitarian doctrine biblically with a focus on the economy of salvation rather than on metaphysical or logical debates *per se*, although the Reformers engaged in those too when necessary. It considers the relationship between the Reformers and ecumenical Trinitarian orthodoxy and describes the shape of early Protestant Trinitarian thought as it is expressed in exegesis, dogmatics, and catechesis.

Keywords: Protestant Reformers, Trinity, exegetical modes, economy of salvation, Trinitarian orthodoxy, Protestant Trinitarian, catechesis

THE doctrine of the Trinity as received and confessed by the ecumenical Church was not a point of dispute between Rome and the Protestant Reformers. Despite occasional claims to the contrary, the major theologians of the Reformation era (c.1517–78), including Martin Luther (1483–1546), Philip Melancthon (1497–1560), Martin Bucer (1491–1551), Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), Heinrich Bullinger (1504–75), Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), and John Calvin (1509–64), embraced the Church's traditional doctrine and vigorously opposed the rising tide of anti-Trinitarianism that emerged in the sixteenth century. However, the Reformers' largely conservative stance towards the doctrine did not translate into a lack of interest in Trinitarian theology, nor did it contribute to a lack of doctrinal development. An analysis of the Reformers' biblical commentaries, dogmatic treatises, and catechetical works reveals the opposite to be the case. Because they were committed to grounding all ecclesial dogmas in Holy Scripture, and because they were able to take advantage of the 'new' exegetical tools and methods of Renaissance humanism, early Protestant reception of Trinitarian dogma occasioned a new era of Trinitarian biblical interpretation which, in turn, influenced the exposition and defence of the Trinity in early Protestant dogmatics and catechesis. The present essay will attempt to demonstrate this claim in four sections: first, we will consider briefly the relationship between the Reformers and ecumenical Trinitarian orthodoxy (section 1); then, we will survey the shape of

early Protestant Trinitarian thought as it is expressed in exegesis (section 2), dogmatics (section 3), and catechesis (section 4).

(p. 228) **The Reformers and the Ecumenical Doctrine of the Trinity**

The relationship between the Reformers and ecumenical Trinitarian orthodoxy has been a subject of debate since the sixteenth century. As early as 1537, Lausanne pastor Pierre Caroli (c.1480–c.1545) accused Calvin, William Farel (1489–1565), and Pierre Viret (1511–71) of holding heterodox views of the Trinity in his *La refutation du blaspheme des Farellistes contre la sainte Trinite* (Backus 2003: 179–80; Gordon 2009: 72–7). More recently, John Henry Newman identified Luther and Calvin as the ‘definite anticipation’ of the Socinian heresy (Newman 1968: 198–9). Though Calvin, Farel, and Viret were acquitted of heresy charges by Bernese pastors in December 1537, and though Newman’s judgement reflects an unsympathetic reading Luther and Calvin, it must be acknowledged that the Reformers bear some of the blame for the ambiguity surrounding the question of their Trinitarian orthodoxy. Thus, for example, when Caroli demanded that Calvin subscribe to the ancient creeds, the Genevan Reformer displayed ‘a somewhat curious attitude’ (Wendel 1997: 165) and refused to do so. Similarly, both Luther and Bucer exhibited an occasional reticence toward using traditional terminology such as ‘Trinity’, ‘person’, and ‘procession’, suggesting that clarity of expression and the avoidance of ‘godless quarrels’ would be better served by sticking to an exclusively biblical idiom (Muller 2003: 62–5; Kolb 2009: 60). Perhaps the most infamous example of ambiguity vis-à-vis Trinitarian orthodoxy comes from the 1521 edition of Melanchthon’s *Loci communes theologici*. Therein, the Wittenberg theologian argued that the doctrine of the Trinity does not belong to ‘the essence of theology’ and therefore that the Christian should seek to know Christ by knowing ‘his benefits’, instead of seeking to comprehend divine mysteries such as the Trinity which are better ‘adored’ than ‘investigated’ (Pauck 1969: 20–2).

The preceding examples present riddles for the interpreter of Reformation thought. Nevertheless they should not be viewed as reflecting doubt on the part of early Protestants regarding the truth, meaning, or importance of historic Trinitarian doctrine. According to Luther, the Trinity was among ‘the sublime articles of the divine majesty’ that were ‘not matters of dispute or contention’ between Catholic and Protestant churches (Tappert 1959: 291–2). In later editions of the *Loci communes*, Melanchthon identified the ecumenical dogma of the Trinity as ‘the first article of faith’, the object of his sincere and eternal confession (Melanchthon 1982: xlix, 11). For Melanchthon and Calvin alike, God’s triunity was that which distinguished the true and living God from idols (Melanchthon 1982: 3–10; Calvin 1960: 122). The Reformers, moreover, were committed to the doctrine’s traditional modes of expression and to its propagation in the Protestant churches. Many of the major Protestant confessions produced in the sixteenth century employed traditional Trinitarian terminology and affirmed the early catholic creeds as reliable summaries of biblical teaching. Included in this category are the Augsburg Confes-

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sion, prepared by Melancthon for Emperor Charles V in 1530, Luther's Schmalkald Articles (1537), the French Confession (1559), which was largely the product of Calvin's hand, the Belgic Confession (1561), and (p. 229) the Thirty-Nine Articles (1562). Already in his 1536 *Christianae religionis institutio*, published the year before his conflict with Caroli, Calvin expressed what would become the mature position of the magisterial Reformers regarding technical Trinitarian vocabulary, arguing that such terminology is necessary both to refute heretics and to 'explain nothing else than what is attested and sealed by Scripture' (Calvin 1975: 62–6; cf. Muller 2003: 64–6). And in later controversies with anti-Trinitarians such as Michael Servetus (1511–53) and Giovanni Valentino Gentile (1520–66), Calvin applied the lessons learned in the Caroli affair, taking great pains not only to argue the biblical warrants for Nicene Trinitarianism, but also to demonstrate the orthodoxy of the ante-Nicene Fathers (Backus 2003: 106–13, 180; de Greef 2008: 160–7).

Given the Reformers' clear commitment to ecumenical Trinitarian orthodoxy, we must look elsewhere for an explanation of the ambivalence they occasionally displayed toward the doctrine's traditional vocabulary and creedal symbols. This ambivalence is best explained by the struggle that early Protestants faced to ground Trinitarian dogma in biblical exegesis (Muller 2003: 17–19, 62, 71) and to communicate that dogma in a manner that remained transparent to the Bible's main subject matter and scope, the economy of salvation realized in Jesus Christ.

The Trinity in Early Protestant Exegesis

The Reformers' material commitment to the doctrine of the Trinity was shaped by their methodological commitment to derive that doctrine from the sacred Scriptures. The latter commitment is comprehensible only in light of specific medieval antecedents related to the norms of theology, as well as certain Renaissance developments in biblical criticism. With respect to the norms of theology, Heiko Oberman identifies in medieval theology two competing understandings of the relationship between Scripture and tradition that informed later Reformation debates. According to the first understanding, which Oberman labels 'Tradition I', there is perfect coinherence between Scripture and tradition: whereas Holy Scripture contains all doctrinal truth, tradition serves to explicate and transmit the truth that is wholly contained in Scripture. According to the second understanding, which Oberman labels 'Tradition II', Scripture and tradition represent two distinct sources of doctrinal truth that together comprise the totality of God's revelation (Oberman 2000: 361–412). At the time of the Reformation, Protestants appropriated the first understanding of the Scripture-tradition relation (Helmer 1999: 3, 18; Muller 2003: 21), whereas Tridentine Catholicism appropriated the second. The Reformers were also significantly influenced by the medieval theological trajectory, exemplified in Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) and Nicholas of Lyra (1270–1349), that emphasized the necessity of rooting *sacra doctrina* in Scripture's literal sense (Preus 1969; Muller 2003: 197). The rhyme, '*Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset* (If Lyra had not lyred, Luther would not have danced)', barely overstates the significance of this trajectory for the theology of the Reformers (Yarchin 2004: 98). It is here that a third influence on the Reformers' (p. 230)

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Trinitarian biblical exegesis deserves mention. Though the influence should not be overstated (Rummel 2000; Mattox 2008), the 'New Learning' of Renaissance humanism provided early Protestant theologians with a number of tools, including critical editions of the text of the Old and New Testaments and the philological skills required to interpret that text, which served their attempt to ground ecclesial dogma in the literal sense of the Bible. The humanist slogan *ad fontes* ('to the sources') well captured the Protestant desire to pierce through what it considered the cloud of churchly exegetical tradition in order to behold the pure light of the prophetic-apostolic text (Rummel 2009).

The confluence of these factors in Reformation-era exegesis was not without complication however. When the tools of the New Learning were applied to the Bible, the result was often a diminished number of proof-texts for the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. This was true not only in the case of the great Catholic scholar Erasmus (1466-1536) (Meijering 1983: 120-3). It was true in the case of Calvin as well. To be sure, Calvin regarded many of the classical Trinitarian proof-texts as solid bases for the doctrine. Nevertheless, he rejected many others, often concluding that such texts did not refer to God's triune nature but to his saving work *pro nobis* through Christ the Mediator (Baars 2004: 291-308; Baars 2009: 247-9, 254-5). One example of this tendency is found in Calvin's comments on Heb. 1:3, a text commonly taken by the tradition to indicate the Son's eternal relation to the Father *ad intra*. According to Calvin, the titles ascribed to Christ in this verse are not intended to teach us 'of what Christ is in himself'. On the contrary, 'these high titles ... bear a relation to us'; they are 'given to Christ for our benefit ... to build up our faith, so that we may learn that God is made known to us in no other way than in Christ'. While Calvin stresses the evangelical import of this passage and denies that it speaks directly concerning the internal relations of the Father and the Son, he argues nonetheless that the author's use of *hypostasis* in Heb. 1:3 'sufficiently confutes the Arians and Sabellians', teaching both 'that the Son is one with God the Father, and that he is yet in a sense distinct from him, so that a subsistence or person belongs to both' (Calvin 1998, vol. 22: 35-7; cf. Calvin 1998, vol. 21: 149-50). Calvin exhibited an even greater degree of reticence toward finding Trinitarian warrants in the Old Testament, a fact that earned him the title *Calvinus iudaizans* ('Calvin the Judaizer') from Lutheran theologian Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603) (Puckett 1995; Pak 2010: 103-24). This reticence is especially clear in his commentary on the Psalms, where the Genevan Reformer's primary focus with respect to the doctrine of God is upon God's fatherly mercy, not Christology or pneumatology (Selderhuis 2007: 45-60; Pak 2010: 82-4, 85-6).

Though Erasmus' exegesis created for him a unique set of problems in relation to Catholic theologians (Rummel 2009: 281, 291-2), a decreased exegetical basis for Trinitarianism did not present the same problem for the Catholic exegete that it did for Protestants. On the one hand, Erasmus did not face the virulent anti-Trinitarian movement that the Reformers faced. On the other hand, because Erasmus was willing to rely upon the authority of the Fathers for his Trinitarian faith, he had less to lose as a result of his exegetical conclusions (but cf. Levering 2008: 36-62). Such a route was not open for Protes-

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tant interpreters who sought to establish orthodox Trinitarianism on the basis of Scripture alone (Gerrish 1981: 79–80; Meijering 1983: 121–3).

(p. 231) The difficulty of relating orthodox Protestant exegesis with the new biblical criticism was clearly recognized by Luther. Though he initially appropriated the new exegetical tools with enthusiasm in pursuit of the Reformation cause, Luther eventually acknowledged the mixed nature of their results (Mattox 2008: 22–5). A much neglected aspect of Luther's later theology concerns his work of re-establishing the biblical bases for orthodox Trinitarianism. This work of re-establishment not only involved reassessing traditional Trinitarian proof-texts he had earlier in his career dismissed, now often following the readings of the Fathers and the Medieval Doctors, it also involved articulating a sophisticated theological hermeneutic that could account for the lively interplay between Scripture's diverse two-testament *signa* and its self-revealing Trinitarian *res* (Helmer 2002; Mattox 2008). According to Luther, the knowledge of the triune God made manifest in the gospel and confessed in the creed must govern biblical interpretation, including the interpretation of the Old Testament (Luther 1957: 70–4; Mattox 2008). Central to Luther's hermeneutic at this point is the person of the Holy Spirit. According to Luther, the self-same Spirit who overhears the Father's eternal Word in the person of the Son inspired the Old Testament prophets to speak in human languages in order that we too may hear the triune voice:

The Spirit, who knows the inmost depths of God, moves from inner-Trinitarian silence to outer-Trinitarian speech by building a seamless bridge to the speech recorded in the text. The Spirit knows no other speech than Christ's speech, yet the Spirit has no other words than the prophet's words. (Helmer 2002: 64; *cf.* 51–5, 63–4)

The fact that 'the Spirit has no other words than the prophet's' invests the Hebrew text with Trinitarian significance, and this significance gave Luther the opportunity to put his own philological expertise to work. Thus, for example, in his 1543 *Treatise on the Last Words of David*, essentially a theological exposition of 2 Sam. 23:1–7, Luther takes the Hebrew text's threefold description of the divine speaker in verses 2–3 ('the Spirit of the Lord', 'the God of Israel', and 'the Rock of Israel') as more than a matter of poetic repetition. According to Luther, this threefold description is a revelation of God the triune speaker: 'Thus all three Persons speak, and yet there is but one Speaker, one Promiser, one Promise, just as there is but one God' (Luther 1972: 276). Similarly, in his 1532 lectures on Psalm 2, Luther rehabilitates the ancient practice of 'prosopographic exegesis' and identifies the shift in speaking subject from 'the Lord' in verse 6 to his 'King' in verse 7 not simply as a common feature of Hebrew language but as evidence that the Spirit wished to teach us a lesson about the *opera Trinitatis ad extra*, namely, that 'God does everything through the Son. For when the Son preaches the Law, the Father Himself, who is in the Son or one with the Son, preaches' (Luther 1955: 43; *cf.* Helmer 2002: 61–6, 69 n. 49). Luther draws from this lesson concerning unified Trinitarian action a word of evangelical consolation:

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It is useful to learn this, lest we think that the Father is disposed toward us otherwise than we hear from the Son, who surely cannot hate us, since he died for us.... [A]lthough the persons are different (that is, the Father is not the Son nor the Son the Father), nevertheless the will and the Word are the same. (Luther 1955: 51)

(p. 232) Luther's Trinitarian interpretation of the Old Testament was largely continued in post-Reformation Lutheran dogmatics (Preus 1972: 131–8). His approach evoked severe criticism, however, from modern theologians (Bornkamm 1969: 261–6).

The Trinity in Early Protestant Dogmatic Theology

Biblical commentaries, lectures, and treatises did not provide the only outlet for Protestant Trinitarianism in the sixteenth century. The Reformers employed a number of theological genres inherited from the tradition in order to expound and defend the doctrine of the Trinity. Luther, for his part, found in the medieval *disputatio* an especially suitable format for training his doctoral students for the spiritual conflict (*Anfechtung*) they would face as they argued with heretics and the devil (Helmer 2003: 133; cf. White 1994; Helmer 1999: 41–120; Bielfeldt 2008). In the doctoral disputations of Erasmus Alberus (1543), Georg Major and Johannes Faber (1544), and Petrus Hegemon (1545), Luther engaged a series of dogmatic topics discussed in medieval theology, including reason's inability to comprehend God's triunity, the relationship between the unity of divine essence and the plurality of divine persons, the nature of theological language, and the question of whether in God it may be said that 'essence generates essence' (Hinlicky 2008: 191–209). With respect to the latter question, Luther argued, contrary to Peter Lombard (c. 1100–60) and the fourth Lateran Council (1215), that an affirmative answer may be given, provided that the phrase is understood 'relatively' and not 'absolutely': 'the essence does not generate or bring into being *qua* essence but *qua* person' (Knuuttila and Saari-nen 1999: 9).

Another genre that proved useful to the Reformers' theological agenda was that of the *loci communes*. The collection and orderly arrangement of dogmatic topics derived from biblical exegesis provided one of the primary formats whereby early Protestants elaborated their Trinitarian doctrine (Muller 2000; Muller 2003: 397–412). Melanchthon's discussion of the Trinity in the 1555 edition of his *Loci communes*—the largest locus therein—begins by stating that although the Trinity far transcends 'the wisdom of all creatures, angels, and men', God nevertheless designed human beings in such a way that they might truly know his triune nature (Melanchthon 1982: 11). This point later becomes the basis upon which Melanchthon develops a modest analogy for the Son's eternal generation, arguing that just as our thoughts are an 'image' of the things we contemplate, so the Son is generated as the essential image of the Father's self-contemplation (Melanchthon 1982: 13–14). As the discussion proceeds, he defines and distinguishes Trinitarian persons, affirming both the Son's eternal generation and the Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son, provides extensive discussion of the biblical bases of Trinitarian doctrine, and

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presents a series of patristic testimonies in support of his argument (Melanchthon 1982: 11–28).

(p. 233) The length devoted to the doctrine of the Trinity in the 1555 *Loci communes* is noteworthy, given its absence in the 1521 edition of the work. Also noteworthy is the extent to which the doctrine is integrated with other dimensions of the German Reformer's overarching theological program. A particularly elegant example of this integration comes when Melanchthon applies his Augustinian understanding of the Trinity's external operations to his Protestant 'theology of the Word'. According to Melanchthon, while the external works of the Trinity are common to all three persons, each person nevertheless 'has his own distinctive work' corresponding to 'the order of persons' (Melanchthon 1982: 16; cf. 14–15). Consequently, when it comes to what Melanchthon's Swiss counterpart calls 'the history of the proceeding of the word of God' (Bullinger 1849: 49), the Second Person of the Trinity acts as the one through whom the Father 'pronounced the order of creation and the salvation of men' and through whom he 'preserves the office of preaching, through which this person effectively works' (Melanchthon 1982: 12–13). Melanchthon's concern to affirm both the undivided work of the Trinity *ad extra* and the ordered action of the persons within that undivided work is echoed in Vermigli's discussion of the incarnation (Muller 2003: 255–7).

Largely influenced by Melanchthon's work, Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* ceased to be a catechetical manual in its 1539 edition and instead took on the form of a *loci communes* (McKee 1989; Muller 2000: 118–39). This new format provided Calvin with the opportunity to elaborate upon doctrinal topics treated only briefly in his commentaries and to engage at greater length in dogmatic disputation (Muller 2000). The locus on the Trinity underwent significant change and expansion throughout the numerous editions of the *Institutes* until it reached its final form in 1559. These transformations reflect Calvin's lifelong work as a biblical commentator, his increasing interaction with the Fathers, and his debates with heretics such as Servetus and Gentile (Warfield 1956: 219–24; van Oort 1997: 664–84). In the 1559 *Institutes*, Calvin begins his discussion of the Trinity with a brief statement regarding 'God's infinite and spiritual essence' in order to restrain excess speculation and to remind readers of the accommodated nature of divine revelation. He then identifies triunity as the mark that more precisely distinguishes God from idols, introduces the disputed concept of 'person' by way of a few brief comments on Heb. 1:3, defends the legitimacy of using non-biblical terminology in theological discourse, and defines a divine 'person' as 'a "subsistence" in God's essence, which, while related to others, is distinguished by an incommunicable quality'. In the two sections that follow, Calvin traces in sequence the scriptural witness to the deity of the Son and the Spirit. He then proceeds to discuss the unity, distinction, and mutual relationships of the three persons. In this section, the Reformer questions the long-standing practice of drawing analogies 'from human affairs' to illumine the distinctions between the persons, preferring instead to distinguish them in accordance with their outward order of operation: from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. This section ends with a 'brief' and 'useful' summary of the doctrine. With his constructive exposition of the doctrine in place, Calvin concludes the

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locus on the Trinity with an extended polemic against the Trinitarian heresies of the ancient Church and of his own day (Calvin 1960: 120–59; Warfield 1956: 223–4).

(p. 234) Interpreters of Reformation theology often note that early Protestant dogmatics tends to emphasize the Trinity in its external works, particularly the work of redemption, over against the Trinity in itself (Butin 1995; Bayer 2008: 334–45). The Reformers' emphasis in this regard corresponds to their desire to ground Trinitarian doctrine in biblical teaching, where God's redeeming work is central, and to avoid any speculation that would transgress biblical boundaries. Thus, according to Luther, if we would seek to know God in his infinite majesty without erring and without being 'crushed', we must 'touch and lay hold of the Son of God manifest in the flesh' (Hinlicky 2008: 197). Similarly, Calvin argues that the experience of the incarnate Son's work in quickening, justifying, and sanctifying the sinner provides 'more certain and firmer' proof of his divinity 'than any idle speculation' (Calvin 1960: 138). Nevertheless, the Reformers' emphasis on the *opera Trinitatis ad extra* does not come at the expense of the *Trinitas ad intra*. The 'immanent Trinity' is a consistent theme of Luther's theology, spanning his exegetical, dogmatic, and catechetical labours (Helmer 1999; Helmer 2003). Even Calvin, who is more reticent to find the Trinity *in se* within Scripture than much of the exegetical tradition that precedes him, and who in his *Institutes* commonly distinguishes the divine persons by means of their outward order of operation, consistently affirms the doctrines of the Son's eternal generation and the Spirit's dual procession (Baars 2004: 669–72; Helm 2004: 46–50). For early Protestant dogmatists, the distinction between the Trinity *ad intra* and the Trinity *ad extra* does not mark out the dividing line between biblical revelation and unwarranted speculation, as it does for many theologians operating on the presuppositions of modern German idealism (Gerrish 1981: 77–80; Helmer 1999: 15–25; Helmer 2003: 129–31; Helm 2004: 11–50). For early Protestant dogmatists, the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is a deliverance of biblical revelation, something God wants us to know (Helmer 1999: 18 n. 66; Mattox 2008: 36). Indeed, in Luther's judgement, it is the revelation of the triune God as he is in himself that ultimately illumines the meaning of his outward actions towards his creatures (Helmer 1999: 190, 211–15). The contrast at this point between Luther and much contemporary Trinitarian theology could not be sharper.

Luther's 1538 work, *The Three Symbols or Creeds of the Christian Faith*, well illustrates the Reformer's understanding of the Trinity in its internal relations and outward operations (Luther 1960: 201–29). Following 'the theologians', Luther identifies two ways in which the Scriptures differentiate the divine persons. The first way concerns the Son's 'immanent birth' and the Spirit's 'immanent procession'. These occur 'within the Godhead' and preserve God's 'one single, undivided, and unseparated substance'. According to Luther, the doctrine of God's immanent processions 'is not even comprehensible to the angels', and 'those who have tried to grasp it have broken their necks over it'; nevertheless, he insists, it is a doctrine 'given to us in the gospel' and glimpsed 'by faith'. The second way the Scriptures differentiate the divine persons is by means of the Son's 'physical birth' of his mother and the Spirit's 'physical procession' in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism and in the fiery tongues at Pentecost. These occur 'outside of the Godhead, in the creatures'. According to Luther, each person's outward appearance is 'an external like-

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ness or image of his internal essence'. The reason, moreover, that the Son and the Spirit 'have and keep the very same terms of differentiation when they reveal themselves (p. 235) to us' is due to the fact that it is 'the same Son of God in both births' and 'the same Holy Spirit in both kinds of proceeding' (Luther 1960: 216–18; *cf.* Emery 2007: 338–412).

As noted above, Calvin commonly distinguished the divine persons on the basis of their external operations. But, as also noted, he did not fail to distinguish the divine persons on the basis of their internal operations. With the topic of the Trinity's internal operations, we meet one of Calvin's most controversial and misunderstood *theologoumena*, his view regarding the Son's status as 'God of himself'. Calvin criticized Nicaea's formulation that the Son is 'God of God'. According to the Reformer, preserving the full deity of the Son requires us to confess that he is *autotheos*, God of himself (Warfield 1956: 230–50; Muller 2003: 324–6). Some interpreters have seen in this teaching a radical corrective to Nicene Trinitarianism and consider it to be Calvin's distinctive contribution to Trinitarian doctrine (Warfield 1956: 251, 257, 273; Reymond 1997: 324–41; but *cf.* Reymond 2001: 323–42). This understanding of the Reformer probably overstates the significance of his teaching on this point. Calvin's criticism of Nicaea concerns the form, not the substance, of the Creed and does not entail a rejection of the doctrine of eternal generation (Warfield 1956: 249; Baars 2004: 705). Moreover, this understanding of Calvin fails to appreciate both the nature of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, which is thoroughly anti-subordinationist (Ayres 2004: 21, 362–3), and the fact that Calvin's view stands in continuity with certain medieval developments in Trinitarian thought, which also sought to account for the ingenerate nature of the Son's divine essence (Wendel 1997: 167 n. 54; Muller 2003: 35–7, 54, 87, 326; *cf.* Marshall 2004). For Calvin, the fact that the Son is 'God of himself' reflects a truth about his consubstantial divine essence, where all divine attributes—including divine a-seity—are one; whereas the fact that he is 'begotten of the Father' reflects a truth about his unique divine personhood (Calvin 1960: 143–4, 153–4). Calvin's Trinitarian 'development' at this point thus represents an exercise in classical Nicene Trinitarianism, intended to preserve the Son's consubstantial deity without denying his personal distinction. Regardless of this fact, Calvin's doctrine continued to be a cause of controversy, not only among Reformed theologians, but also between Reformed, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic theologians into the eighteenth century (Warfield 1956: 252–84; Muller 2003: 326–32).

The Trinity in Early Protestant Catechesis

For the Protestant Reformers, the doctrine of the Trinity was not merely a topic for classroom disputations and dogmatic handbooks (Helmer 2003: 143). It was a doctrine that was to be taught in the Church and transmitted to all the faithful, including children. Writing to the Duke of Somerset in 1548, Calvin explained the need for catechesis: 'the Church of God will never preserve itself without a Catechism, for it is like the seed to keep the good grain from dying out, and causing it to multiply from age to age' (Calvin 1983: 191; *cf.* Tappert 1959: 358–62). The Reformers' catechetical labours resulted in the

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production of catechisms, sermons, and commentaries, commonly structured around the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. Many of the themes already surveyed appear in these works.

As in the case of their exegetical and dogmatic counterparts, Protestant catechetical literature regularly employs traditional Trinitarian vocabulary, even as it seeks to expound the sense of this vocabulary by means of the Scriptures. Thus, in his sermons on the Apostles' Creed, Bullinger commends 'the holy fathers' for confessing 'that the Son is of the same substance with the Father', and then confirms this confession by commenting on what he regards as 'most evident testimonies of the natural Godhead of Christ' in John 5 (Bullinger 1849: 128). Early Protestant catechetical texts also regularly distinguish the Trinitarian persons *ad intra* from their works *ad extra*: 'We should ... distinguish between the Spirit and the works he does or the gifts he gives', Vermigli insists in his 1544 commentary on the Apostles' Creed (Vermigli 1999: 31). Yet it is not only the distinction but also the relationship between the persons and their works that reveals the rich Trinitarian piety of Reformation era catechesis. In response to the question concerning why we call God 'Father', Vermigli provides two reasons: 'first, because he is the Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, the second person of the Godhead; the other reason is that it has pleased him to be called our Father, since he shares with us both likeness and inheritance' (Vermigli 1999: 8–9; *cf.* Bullinger 1849: 125; Schaff 1996: 315–16). In a similar fashion, Calvin's 1538 catechism distinguishes the Son of God from those who are sons 'merely by adoption and grace', and then goes on to relate Christ's Sonship to ours, stating that 'he put on our flesh in order that having become Son of Man he might make us sons of God with him' (Hesselink 1997: 23). According to Luther, in the three articles of the Creed, 'God himself has revealed and opened to us the most profound depths of his fatherly heart, his sheer, unutterable love.... Moreover, having bestowed upon us everything in heaven and on earth, he has given us his Son and his Holy Spirit, through whom he brings us to himself'. In other words, the triune God 'gives himself completely to us' (Tappert 1959: 419–20; *cf.* Schaff 1996: 314).

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Baars (2004); Helmer (1999); Muller (2003).

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Scott R. Swain

Scott R. Swain is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida.

The Trinity in the Early Modern Era (c.1550-1770)

Ulrich L. Lehner

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Abstract and Keywords

This article explores Catholic and Protestant Trinitarian theology from 1550 to 1770. It discusses various issues, from the mystical visions of Ignatius of Loyola to the Augustinian approach of Jonathan Edwards. It considers the growing variety of eclectic views and the influence of anti-Trinitarian thinkers, beginning with Michael Servetus and Faustus Socinus. It also highlights the rise of confessionalism and anti-Trinitarianism and the explosion of mystical theology during this period.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, Catholic, Protestant, Ignatius of Loyola, Jonathan Edwards, Michael Servetus, Faustus Socinus, confessionalism, anti-Trinitarianism, mystical theology

THE sixteenth century saw not only the Reformation and with it a sudden diversification of Christianity and the end of Christendom, but also for the first time in a thousand years a powerful and innovative anti-Trinitarian movement that spread with considerable speed (Schmidt-Biggemann 2007: 79–130). The obvious poles of Trinitarian theology in this era were therefore confessionalism and anti-Trinitarianism. However, there is a third, usually overlooked one: the explosion of mystical theology in all confessions and, with it, numerous different approaches to the mystery of the triune God, only a few of which can be touched upon here. The first part of this article will trace the developments within Catholicism, making it clear that it was easier for Catholic theology to maintain traditional Trinitarian belief than for the various Protestant denominations, which will be analysed in part two.

Catholicism

It was especially the twentieth century reform movement around Vatican II, which found its inspirations in patristic theology, that explicitly scorned the a-historical, allegedly monolithic thought of Baroque scholasticism, labelled it a fruitless project, and thus rejected a tradition of over three hundred years of faithful, diverse, and insightful theological enterprise. Some even accused early modern scholasticism and especially its treatise

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De Deo Uno of paving the way for modern atheism due to its alleged demise of positive, biblical Trinitarian theology. These undifferentiated views have been challenged by the research of the last decades, mostly carried out by philosophers (Buckley 1987; Schäfer 1993; Muller 2003; Marschler 2007: 1–80). Baroque scholasticism is also often charged with being unoriginal and textbook-like. This however was the aim of this theological method, thus its name *school theology* (Blum 1998). Trinitarian speculation had its peculiar place within it, especially in the treatises on the Trinity, but also in the questions which were treated in liturgical, mystical, Mariological, angelical, and Biblical theology.

(p. 241) Since the foundation of the Society of Jesus was one of the most crucial events of Early Modern Christianity, the Trinitarian theology of St Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) can serve as a starting point for our brief overview. When Ignatius in Manresa saw the Trinity in the form of three musical keys, symbolizing divine harmony, it was only the beginning of a lifelong reflection on the Trinitarian mystery. In his *Spiritual Exercises* one can find the image of the three persons on one throne, followed by an explication that the Incarnation is a work of all three persons. Ignatius furthermore acknowledged the grace of having seen the *perichoresis* of the three persons in a sun-like ball. He described the Trinity as a union of love, and creation as the gift of this love. However, his mysticism was rooted in his spiritual relationship with Christ, who is for him not only the manifestation of the triune love but also the key for the participation in the divine life. By serving Christ, one becomes one with him, and thus with the Trinity. Apostolic service and adoration of the Trinity coincide—that was the specific characteristic of Ignatian Trinitarian mysticism (Zechmeister 1985; Strucken, dissertation, 2001: 38–75).

Although Jesuit theology soon lost touch with the mystical tradition of its founder, the Jesuit authors treated the Trinity differently from other religious orders and thus tended to be more innovative. This derives from the *Ratio Studiorum* (1586/91), which allows two opinions about the Trinitarian dogma to be discussed freely. A good example of Jesuit ingenuity is Francisco Suarez, S.J. (1548–1617), who also had enormous influence on Early Modern Protestantism. At the basis of his Trinitarian metaphysics was the insight that humans only have epistemological access to the Trinity through revelation. Thus, all the arguments he proposed are based on analogies or appropriations which presuppose revelation. In his treatise *On Angels*, he reflected upon the question of how angels can come to know the Trinity if they do not possess natural knowledge of it. It was certain for him that the angels acquire a supernatural faith in God, in the short span of time after creation but immediately before their decision for or against God. Moreover he thought it highly probable that Adam in his original grace already had knowledge of the Trinitarian Mystery. Such knowledge was for Suarez only quantitatively superior to every baptized Christian's knowledge in faith. Moreover, for Suarez God inserted Trinitarian wisdom into the Old Testament in order to prepare his chosen people for the Incarnation. However, it was only after the explicit revelation of the Trinity through Jesus Christ that belief in the dogma became necessary for obtaining salvation. In *On the Incarnation*, Suarez also speculated on the Trinitarian knowledge of Christ during his earthly life. In *On the Mysteries of Christ's Life*, he reflected upon Mary's knowledge of the Trinity: in contrast to her son, she did not have an earthly *vision* of it, but did have perfect faith, which included an

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equally perfect assertion of belief in the Trinitarian mystery—an axiom Luther vehemently denied. Erasmus' opinion that Mary did not adore Jesus as Divine immediately after birth since she was still ignorant of his Divinity was for Suarez outright heresy (Marschler 2007: 81-115). Regarding the *immanent* Trinity, Suarez maintains that the acts of the Divine nature, which constitute the persons, are *necessary but also free*—in the Trinitarian act of love there exists no difference between the two. This of course has consequences for his theological anthropology since the Trinity is used as proof that necessary actions of a personal will are compatible with (p. 242) the freedom of that will, such that freedom is more than choice (Marschler 2007: 712). Since all three persons act through their common nature *ad extra*, Suarez avoided the modalist trap, and through the strict separation of necessary intra-Trinitarian processes and creation he was able to maintain God's absolute freedom in regard to the world (Marschler 2007: 684). Regarding the distinction of the Trinitarian persons, Suarez argued for a *virtual* distinction between person and nature in order to avoid an absolute person in God (Marschler 2007: 719). Suarez's understanding of Jesus Christ as the second person of the Trinity, however, was problematic: for him the son-relationship of the man Jesus is not constituted by the union of human nature and divine person, since the 'being of the human person is none other than the being of the Logos, but by the grace following the Incarnation, which constitutes a special relationship of the human being Jesus Christ ... to God as Trinity' (Marschler 2007: 704).

Closely connected with the critique of Trinitarian thought—despite his orthodoxy—and a renewal of positive theology was Dionysius Petavius, S.J. (1583-1652). In *De theologicis dogmatibus* (1644-50) he aimed to show how the Trinitarian dogma is founded upon the Bible and the post-Nicene Fathers. However, he also stated that Platonism had infiltrated Christian theology, especially the pre-Nicene Fathers. He was even convinced that most of these early Fathers contradicted the Nicene Creed and were Arians or Tritheists. Thomassin (see below) together with Jean-Francois Baltus, S.J. (1667-1743) defended the pre-Nicene Fathers against the charges of Petavius, but they did not reach the erudite level of the Maurist Prudentius Maranus, O.S.B. (1703-1778) (Werner 1867: 27). Petavius' ideas were of course immediately put to use in the anti-Trinitarian movements. One of the most influential authors was the Arminian minister Jacques Souverain (d. 1698), who in *Platonism Unveiled* (1700) followed Petavius' critique of Platonic theology but went so far as to contrast the Jewish-Christian Divine Logos tradition with platonic thought: the Logos in John 1 was, for Souverain, relying on Socinian and Jewish exegesis, not the second person of the Trinity but the *law* of God. Christ was therefore only a manifestation of this Divine law but not God incarnate. Catholic authors, not happy about Petavius' outspoken ideas, from that point on carefully established in their textbooks the orthodox faith of the pre-Nicene Fathers (Berti 1770: 457-86). Positively, Petavius' idea of history as *vestigium Trinitatis* led to a sophisticated reflection on the development of dogma, namely his thoughts about the substantial indwelling of the Holy Spirit and thus of the Trinity to the acknowledgement that being a child of God is a gift of the Holy Spirit and not of the Divine nature. Moreover, Petavius modified the teaching of the actions of the Trinity *ad extra* and introduced the concept of an exclusive mission of the Spirit and his connection with the human person. In all these regards he influenced the Tübingen School, John

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Henry Newman, the Roman School (Passaglia and Schrader), and Matthias Scheeben (Chatellain 1884; Chadwick 1987: 58-60; Courth 1996: 34-41).

A different Jesuit innovation in Trinitarian theology was the so-called *figurist theology* of the missionaries to China which stated that the Chinese religion entailed important elements of Christian wisdom. Jean Baptiste Duhalde, S.J. (1674-1743) in his highly influential *General History of China* (1735) even went so far as to claim that in the pre-Christian (p. 243) Dao-de-jing the Trinity was anticipated. The papal rejection of the Jesuit attempts to reconcile Chinese religion and Christian faith in the so-called rite-controversy also meant an end of this experiment in interreligious Trinitarian metaphysics (Rowbotham 1956; Lackner 1991). Figurative theology, however, had an ongoing impact through Leibniz, Wolff, and Scottish Catholic Wolffian Andrew Ramsay (1686-1743), and even influenced Jonathan Edwards, who also came to believe in hints of Trinitarian belief among the Chinese (McDermott 2000: 207-16).

Louis Thomassin (1619-95), an Oratorian, derived his Trinitarian theology to a great extent from the works of his community's founder, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629). The latter's theology had stressed that through the connection of the justified Christian with Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit, one enters the life of the triune God (Cognet 1949: 58-65). Thomassin's Trinitarian theology was equally Christocentric: the baptized Christian receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God. As Father and Son are united in the Spirit, so are the members of the Church united in the Spirit. This led him to the conviction that the personal indwelling of the Spirit widens the Incarnation and that the Church is the image of the hypostatic union. Consequently, in the Eucharist, the faithful also receive the life of the Father. Thus, Thomassin succeeded in connecting Trinitarian theology with Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and the doctrines of creation and grace in a fashion that follows salvation history rather than pure speculation, despite his clear preference for the platonic tradition. Moreover, he laid out one of the most consistent theologies of *perichoresis* in the western tradition. Thomassin's Trinitarian theology was founded upon the Bible, and on this ground he denied that any other person of the Trinity besides the Son could have been incarnated. For him, only the economic Trinity enables one to talk about the immanent Trinity (Lachenschmid 1968; Courth 1996: 41-7).

From the Dominican Order, John of St Thomas (1589-1644) deserves mention, since he contributed lastingly to the progress of Trinitarian theology by explicating Aquinas' idea of divine love between Father and Son and the consequent procession of the Spirit:

The love that is the Holy Spirit proceeds from a love of friendship, the reciprocal love of friendship, the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son, the same love that accompanies the generation of the Word, and is common to the two persons inasmuch as it is the operation of love with only one identical motive, the infinite Goodness that is common to them, but though common yet in that it pertains to the Father it bears on the Son and in that it pertains to the Son it bears on the Father. (Margerie 1982: 319; Cuervo 1945 Simon 1989)

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From the field of mystical theology, the Spanish Carmelites have certainly contributed most greatly to the Catholic tradition: the Carmelite nun St Teresa of Avila (1515–82) regarded the contemplative union with the triune God as a ‘spiritual marriage’. She described her way of contemplative progress towards a union with the triune God in the *Interior Castle*, not to mention in her autobiography. In the seventh stage, the mystic receives, according to Teresa, a specific knowledge about the Trinitarian mystery by means of an intellectual vision, in which the soul realizes that ‘all these three Persons are (p. 244) one Substance and one Power and one Knowledge and one God alone ... all three Persons communicate themselves to the soul and speak to the soul’ (Teresa of Avila 1961: 209–10). Teresa’s most important Trinitarian visions occurred between 1567 and 1582: she received insight into the indwelling of all three Trinitarian persons in the soul of the mystic, the way in which the soul becomes one with the Trinity, and increasingly perceived the unity and *perichoresis* of the Trinity. Moreover, after her spiritual marriage she felt that her soul ‘rests’ in the mystery of the Trinitarian God (Strucken, dissertation, 2001: 76–134). For her Carmelite companion St John of the Cross (1542–91), God created the world in order to communicate his love and, more explicitly, in order to give the Son the human soul as a bride. However, the imitation of the suffering Christ in the ‘dark night of the soul’ is the only way to the Father. Christ as the bridegroom of the soul communicates knowledge, gifts, and virtues to the soul of the mystic and accompanies her, while the Spirit, who is aspirated by the bridegroom, perfects the union of the soul with God, which John called ‘divinization’. For him and for almost all Spanish Trinitarian mystics, the Father was the goal of mystical union. To him all creation is on pilgrimage with the Son and the Spirit (Strucken, dissertation, 2001: 135–202; Faraone 2002). The Trinitarian implications of the Sacred Heart mysticism of St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–90) also proved to be of tremendous influence, since the heart was for her the symbol of the Logos’ divine Person in humanity, which recapitulated the passion of Christ, his sanctifying action through the Church, and his eschatological gift of himself in the future. Thus, it became an icon of the Trinity (Ciappi 1959; Margerie 1982: 347–8). Moreover, the visionary insights of Marie de l’Incarnation, O.S.U. (1599–1672) deepened theology’s understanding of the conjugal analogy of the Trinitarian mystery (Mali 1996).

Despite its diversity, the scholastic approach to Trinitarian theology was criticized early on from within the Church, for example by the French Oratorian Pierre Faydit (1644–1709), who accused scholasticism of modalism and the early Fathers of tritheism, or by Martin Gerbert, O.S.B. (1720–93) and Placidus Stürmer, O.S.B. (1716–94) (Faydit 1696, 1702; Gerbert 1758; Stürmer 1760). Radical reinterpretations of Trinitarian theology did not happen until the eighteenth century, when the *Catholic Enlightenment* evolved, e.g. in the work of Anton Oehms (1735–1809), who proposed that each person corresponds to one substance (Schlich 1906–7). Among the French Catholic theologians, the most prominent and ingenious case was Isaac Berruyere, S.J. (1681–1758), whose *History of the People of God* (1728–55) was a narrative theology of salvation history, which minimized the importance of the Fathers and of tradition in order to enable the papacy to define the faith according to the Bull *Unigenitus*—a theological vision which Berruyere inherited from his teacher Jean Hardouin, S.J. (1646–1729)—and which, together with his hetero-

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dox positions, led to the formal censoring of his work in 1734 and 1755. In 1758, Benedict XIV forbade all parts and all translations of this work; the accused theologian recanted. In Trinitarian terms Berruyere's Christology was especially questionable since he understood Jesus Christ as the Son of God who subsists in three persons and not as Son of the Father as the first person of the Trinity—thus Jesus was for him the Son of the Trinity. Since God in three Persons united the Logos, the only 'natural Son', to the humanity of Christ, Jesus Christ is *made* in time and is not Son because of the Logos' (p. 245) pre-existence from all eternity. This proposition is taken from Hardouin, namely his commentary on the New Testament. This of course leads to the consequence that Jesus Christ had two fathers: as natural Son of God, he had the first person of the Trinity as Father; but as Son made in time he had God in three persons as Father. A further conundrum is that, for Berruyere, during the three days in the sepulchre Jesus Christ ceased to be a living man: thus, the human nature was separated from the Logos (Liguori 1857: 597-633; Schüzler 1870: 201-3; Palmer 1961: 65-76).

Protestantism

The anti-Trinitarians of the sixteenth century understood themselves as radical reformers of Christianity who were completing the unfulfilled task of Luther and Calvin, namely a purification of the concept of God from all non-scriptural influences. The earliest important anti-Trinitarian was Miguel Servet (1509-53), burnt for his *Christianismi restitutio* (1553). He denied the triple personhood of God as early as 1531, and taught an Arian Christology (Friedman 1978; Hillar and Allen 2002; Sánchez-Blanco 1977). More important, however, became the Italian Faustus Socini (1539-1604), who developed the anti-Trinitarian ideas of his uncle Laelio into a system. His basic conviction was that the existence of three persons in one nature was contradictory. Socinus' Christianity, which was based on good works, since atonement through Christ was not accepted, was founded upon a strict Biblicism that lacked any regulative principle except the principle of non-contradiction. This also led him and his followers to a denial of the divine attribute of eternity in so far as it is understood with the scholastics as an enduring present moment. For Socinian Unitarianism, eternity had to be understood as successive duration—an innovation that anticipated process thought and open theism. In Poland, the Socinians formed a loose Church under the name *Polish Brethren*, whose *Racovian Catechism* (1605) was their official confessional charter. Over the next two hundred years, anti-Trinitarianism spread throughout eastern Europe, especially in Transylvania, but also to the Netherlands, England, and Germany and, with its strong belief in freedom of conscience and freedom from authority, became a driving force of the Enlightenment (Wilbur 1946; Muller 2003; Rohls 2005; Mulsow 2002; Knijff 2004).

In the seventeenth century, Arminian theology from the Netherlands, but also Socinian thought from Poland, started to transform English theology, especially in regard to its metaphysics and its rejection of speculations about the immanent Trinity. Moreover, Descartes's principle of conceptual evidence and self-certainty as starting points for any rational enterprise made Trinitarian theology appear to be an irrational enterprise, and

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his dualism introduced a philosophy of mind that undermined any ontological definition of the human, but also the Divine persons (Scheffczyk 1967; Leahy 2003: 19-37). The Civil War (1641-51) created an atmosphere in which extreme religious and philosophical ideas flourished, as evidenced by the publication of Thomas Hobbes's (1588-1679) *Leviathan* in 1651. For Hobbes, himself heavily influenced by Descartes, the (p. 246) Trinity was an unclear, indeed artificial concept, not central to Christianity. Moreover, he reintroduced the Ciceronian understanding of the person-as-actor and understood it no longer as subsistence, which rendered traditional Trinitarian theology problematic. The Cambridge Platonists, especially Ralph Cudworth (1617-88), defended the Christian Trinity by relying on the traditional *theologia prisca*, which detected traces of the Trinity in ancient wisdom and the Old Testament. Their emphasis on moral activism, which somewhat marginalized the Trinity, and their understanding of creation as emanation from the ultimate, triune monad (Taliaferro 2003; Muller 2003: 100-1) were problematic, however. Among the English Puritan theologians, John Owen (1616-83) deserves special attention, since he applied his ingenious combination of eastern and western Trinitarian theology rigorously to Christian piety, and thus conceived a highly sophisticated, thoroughly biblical theology of communion with the triune God (Trueman 1998).

In the midst of another political crisis, immediately before and after the *Glorious Revolution* (1688) and thus in close connection with anti-Catholic sentiments, Stephen Nye (1648-1719) published *A Brief History of the Unitarians* (1687), in which he asserted that the Trinity was an unnecessary, and moreover irrational, dogma. Nye and others were furthermore convinced that belief in the Trinity had contributed to the decline of Christianity, since it had corrupted the Gospels and embraced polytheism. Briefly before, in 1685, Bishop George Bull (1634-1710) had unsuccessfully attempted to defend the dogma in his *Defence of the Nicene Faith*, in which he argued that the Church had always believed and taught the explicit Trinitarian doctrine of Nicaea. As a response to Nye, in 1690 the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London, William Sherlock (1641-1707), published his famous *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity*. However, instead of helping the Trinitarian cause, his book started one of the biggest crises of modern theology, especially because Sherlock aspired to explain the Trinity in easily understandable but *new* terms. Thus, he stated that the three persons are three infinite minds, each of which has a self-consciousness of its own, which is distinct from the others. The unity of the three persons lies in the fact that these three minds are aware of each other, in a mutual-consciousness, which 'ensures that ad extra is one will, energy and power' (Dixon 2003: 114). Critics, however, remarked that consciousness cannot be the formal reason for a Divine person since the latter is ontologically prior; moreover, if one followed Sherlock's stream of thought, there could be innumerable persons and minds in God; additionally, his real distinction of the divine persons (instead of a modal or virtual distinction) leads to tritheism. Among the debaters, Matthew Tindal (1655-1733) observed two camps: *Nominal Trinitarians*, like Robert South (1634-1716), who were orthodox but irrational, and *Real Trinitarians* like Sherlock, who were rational but tritheists. John Locke (1632-1704) held a concept similar to Sherlock's. Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99), who defended the classical concept of person as a manner of subsistence with incom-

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municable properties in a common nature, consequently saw in Locke's philosophy of the person, but also in his undermining of the concept of sub-stance, the grounds for the rising denial of the Trinitarian dogma. Moreover, he publicly charged Locke with Socinianism (Montuori 1983; Marshall 1994). Eighteenth-century (p. 247) rationalist, mostly Arian theology also contributed to the marginalization of the Trinity, for example Samuel Clarke's (1675–1729) *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712). Clarke not only denies the existence of one indivisible divine essence, but also the idea of coeternal, distinctive persons, since the traditional terms were irreconcilable with the Newtonian understanding of extension (Muller 2003: 131). In order to defend the dogma against the charge of irrationalism or historical corruption, Trinitarians increasingly turned to a univocal language about the Trinitarian mystery and avoided the rich analogical tradition which had kept the dogma alive in public devotion. The Trinity became more and more a theological problem and almost vanished from Christian devotional life, also because the cause lacked any popular apologist. The structural problem of Anglicanism as the embodied compromise between Puritanism and Catholicism made it inevitable to follow the steadily narrowing concept of reason as the key to interpreting the scriptural sources for Trinitarian theology. The road was set for subordinationist and Unitarian tendencies (Mulsow 2002: 275–6), and, in this setting, it comes as no surprise that as early as 1718 the English Presbyterians had already split into a Trinitarian and a Unitarian/semi-Arian Church (Dixon 2003; Muller 2003: 94–135).

In the structure of the treatises on the Trinity, Lutheran theology followed to a great extent the Catholic tradition with minor changes. With Johann Gerhard's (1582–1632) *Exegesis of the Articles of Faith* (1626), however, the treatment of Trinitarian theology began to take a new shape. Gerhard still followed traditional belief, e.g. that the persons' modes of subsistence are identical with their intra-Trinitarian relations, but he split the theological exposition of the dogma now into prolegomena, onomatology, and pragmatology. Whereas the prolegomena contained the main axioms, e.g. the necessity of the doctrine for salvation, onomatology laid out a clarification of the terminology. Here, Gerhard insisted that theologians should only use terms that were already received by the Church. Pragmatology then proved the Trinity from Scripture. Despite the heavy emphasis on the scriptural proof of the Trinity, orthodox dogmatic theology never gave up central scholastic axioms, that is, the virtual differentiation between divine nature and persons or the personal order within the Trinity (*ordo personalis*) (Schäfer 1983: 122–41; Ratschow 1966: 84). Dissenters from this classical outline, like Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), who explained the Trinity voluntaristically in his main Trinitarian work *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence* (1619) and who consequently influenced Rosicrucians and Spiritualists, as well as Pierre Poiret (1646–1719), who applied an ingenious combination of rational psychology and theology to the Trinitarian mystery, were exceptions (Krieg 1979; O'Regan 2002).

Within the Reformed Tradition, Jacob Arminius' (1560–1609) contribution to Trinitarian thought is usually overlooked in favour of his demolition of the belief in predestination. However, his explanation of the Trinity argued that God the Father had *aseitas*, life in himself. When the Son is begotten, the Father communicates to the Son this essence, and

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therefore it is the former's *exclusive* attribute. The Son therefore cannot be *autotheos*. Arminius thus started a controversy that asked the fundamental theological question of *what* was generated in the generation of the Son, and made clear that the Remonstrants differed from Reformed Orthodoxy, which with Calvin and Lucas (p. 248) Trelcatius (1542–1602) claimed that the generation of the Son was one of ‘sonship, and that the divine essence, belonging to the three persons in common, was itself ingenerate, and that the Son, ... as God has the attribute of *aseity* as well’ (Muller 2003: 87–8). Moreover, Remonstrants also gave up the Trinity as a fundamental article of faith, which not only led Lutheran Orthodox like Johann Friedrich König (1619–64) to assert that belief in the Trinity was necessary for salvation, without which no one could achieve salvation, but also increased popular catechesis in order to secure the Trinitarian belief among the faithful (Hauschild 1999: 439). However, Lutheran Orthodoxy also faced a number of theological problems: as a result of the Lutheran axiom of the ubiquity of the human nature of Christ, some theologians appropriated to the human nature divine omniscience and power. Georg Calixt (1586–1656), however, argued that the infinite nature of the Divine Being could not be communicated to a finite human nature, and that this Lutheran doctrine led to *Euty-chianism* (Baur 1843: 441–52). In his *On the Trinity* (1649) Calixt also questioned one of the most cherished axioms of Lutheran orthodoxy, namely the scriptural proof of the Trinity from the Old Testament, which was due to the anti-Trinitarian controversies at the centre of the doctrine and thus one of the best-developed parts of Lutheran thought. For this move, he was criticized not only by fellow Lutherans but also by the reformed theologian Francis Turretin (1623–87), since the Socinians immediately put Calixt's arguments to use (Muller 2003: 92–3).

While the vast majority of the Protestant tradition confirmed the doctrine *a posteriori*, a few tried *a priori* explanations. The reformed Bartholomew Keckermann (1572–1609), Henry Ainsworth (1571–1622), and Franz Burmann (1628–79) offered proofs of the Trinity by setting up a logic of the divine emanations. For Keckermann the object of God's intellect can only be God, since both have to be perfect. Thus, the divine intellect eternally reflects upon itself and has as object the perfect image of itself. Such an image, he continued, can properly be called a generation, since generation is ‘nothing other than the act of a substance, by which it produced from itself a like substance; when therefore God by conceiving of himself produces a substantial image of himself, this is rightly called the generation of that self-image’ (at Muller 2003: 163). Erhard Weigel (1625–99) attempted to explain the Trinity with mathematical theories but was forced to recant his ideas in 1679. It is, however, a common misconception that Leibniz (1646–1716) also gave a rationalist explanation of the Trinity. Rather, he defended the dogma against Socinians and Spinozists by showing the non-contradictoriness of Trinitarian faith. His apologetic strategy relied on the presumption of faith. This presumption of faith, however, was valid until a proof to the contrary had been given. Thus, the dogmas of the Church handed down through the centuries could be considered true ‘until it has been proved incontrovertibly that they are self-contradictory’ (Antognazza 2008: 20). Unfortunately, Leibniz' theology remained an exception. The fact that theologies about the Trinity in the Protestant world became increasingly Biblicist, without offering an effective, rational exposition of the im-

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manent Trinity, contributed heavily to a fading of Trinitarian imagination, to anti-intellectual and ultimately modalist expositions of the Trinity in the Pietism of Samuel Urlsperger (1685–1772) or the mysticism of Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) (Dorner 1878: 383–4; Rohls 1997: 110), but especially to the surrender to the narrow, rationalist concept of reason.

(p. 249) A good example of this narrowing concept of reason is the ‘new scholasticism’ of Christian Wolff (1679–1754), whose eclectic use proved to be helpful for the orthodox theologies of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706–57) and Kant's teacher Martin Knutzen (1713–51) (Sorkin 2008: 113–65; Gómez-Tutor 2004). However, if one applied Wolff's mathematical method radically to theology, it led to rationalist outcomes, for instance in the theology of Johann Peter Reusch (1691–1758), who identified three principles in God, and thus a clear modalism (Baur 1843: 590–4), or Joachim Darjes (1714–91), who claimed that the Trinity was no mystery of faith but comprehensible with the means of natural theology and psychology (Bernet 2001). Similar things can be said about the Dutch Arminian Paul Maty, who in 1729 asserted that the second and the third persons of the Trinity were finite, created minds, only afterwards united with the always-existing infinite mind of the Father (Meier 1844: 81–2). The attempt of the medical doctor Gottlieb Berger to explain the Trinity (1778) with new analogies from natural science, e.g. the mixtures of certain chemical components, also did not support traditional Trinitarian faith but ended in modalism (Bretschneider 1819: 430–1).

A further diminution of Trinitarian belief during the Enlightenment was due to the increasing historical critique of the Bible. While Johann Salomo Semler (1725–91) did not contribute content-wise to a better understanding of the Trinity, he emphasized the individual freedom of conscience in accepting the Trinitarian dogma and introduced the idea of the historical relativity of dogmatic decisions, including the realm of Trinitarian debate. For him, the Church Fathers were in no better position to judge the mysteries of the Faith than eighteenth-century thinkers (Powell 2001: 69–79). Lessing's (1729–81) remarks about the Trinity would not be worth mentioning if they had not influenced German Idealism and Romanticism so lastingly. For Lessing, creation as the act of the triune God was of the same metaphysical necessity as the generation of the Logos. The Trinity itself was for him just an extrapolation of human consciousness into the absolute. He also asserted the impossibility of identifying the historical Jesus with the second person of the Trinity. By bringing history to the table of Trinitarian discussions, Semler and Lessing paved the way for Hegel (Nisbet: 1999).

Pietism evolved in Reformed and Lutheran areas, heavily influenced by Jacob Philip Spener (1633–1705). The majority of pietist groups accepted the traditional orthodox doctrine of the Trinity but stressed the spiritual experience of the Trinitarian mystery while neglecting the theological explanation of it. Also, the Evangelical Revival of John Wesley (1703–91) borrowed from the pietist tradition (Vickers 2008: 69–190). As an example of the anti-intellectual pietist tradition, the Trinitarian theology of Count Zinzendorf (1700–60) might suffice. By accepting the revelation of the Trinity through Jesus Christ, the faithful acquire a new nature that transforms every aspect of their lives due to the newly

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acquired access to the Trinitarian Mystery. This approach also led him to restrict his theology to the economic Trinity and to reject philosophical investigations of the Trinity. Consequently, he gave up central axioms of scholastic thought, so that he appropriated creation, redemption, and sanctification to the Divine Logos alone. For him the Trinity acts towards humans *only* in and through Christ. Also problematic was his constant use of the Holy Family as analogy for the Trinity which easily conveyed a tritheistic (p. 250) connotation (Zimmerling 2002). Thoroughly orthodox however was the Trinitarian theology of the American Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), which consistently applied the Augustinian mutual love analogy to the Trinity. Moreover the relational ontology he developed served as foundation for his ecclesiology (Sairsingh 1986; Studebaker 2003; Studebaker 2009).

Suggested Reading

Antognazza (2008); Courth (1996); Dixon (2003); Margerie (1982); Marschler (2007).

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Ulrich L. Lehner

Ulrich L. Lehner, Dr. Theol. (Univ. Regensburg), Dr. Phil. Habil. (Central European Univ.), is Professor of Religious History and Historical Theology at Marquette University. He is the author and editor of several books about Early Modern religious history.

The Trinity in Kant, Hegel, and Schelling

Cyril O'Regan

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the thoughts of Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel and Friedrich Schelling about the Trinity. It describes how Kant marginalized Trinitarian doctrine and how Hegel and Schelling made use of triadic dynamisms. It explains that Hegel rejected a tri-personal divinity in favour of a self-realizing triadic dynamic symbolized by the doctrine of the Trinity while Schelling argued for divine tri-personal agency that is brought to completion in history.

Keywords: Trinity, Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Friedrich Schelling, triadic dynamisms, tri-personal divinity, tri-personal agency

WHILE it would be a gross simplification to say that the eighteenth century witnessed an eclipse of the doctrine of the Trinity, one can say with some confidence that in general the doctrine of the Trinity is fairly marginal to eighteenth-century Protestant thought. This is especially the case in its two dominant regimes, those of rational theology and of Pietism. The school of Wolff concerned itself in the main with natural theology, which consisted of rational demonstrations of the existence and nature of God with the view to establishing a minimum ratio of belief that can plausibly be extended by appeals to revelation. At least for much of the century, Pietism determined itself as a reform movement within Protestantism which concentrated on the appropriation of faith and showed little interest in doctrines, least of all doctrines that could not be traced back to the experience of regeneration. As with all generalities, this conspectus is approximate. It is possible to see even in Wolff's philosophical inspiration, Leibniz, something like an adumbration of the Trinity. Moreover, in what might be called the second wave of Pietism in the second half of the century, even if the doctrine of the Trinity did not play a defining role, it was enlisted both in attempts to resist rationalism and to present a dynamic picture of history which legitimated the ideal of community and ratified moral progress.

Kant's Marginalization and Negative Capability of German Idealism

With Kant, however, the fact of marginalization becomes a principle. In a text such as *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone* (1793) the Trinity is an *adiaphora*, that is, outside the scope of Christian faith which, in the last instance, is practical or moral. As he says in what is, arguably, his most explicit statement on this theological topic, the Trinity requires a faith about what God is in himself that 'would be a mystery surpassing (p. 255) all human concepts, hence unsuited to a revelation humanly comprehensible' (Kant 1998: Bk. 3, 143). Kant here is entirely faithful to the epistemic reservations about the knowledge of God that he lays down in the first *Critique*. Indeed, it would follow from his invalidating reason's ability to know the nature and existence of God that constructions of the divine as Trinity are in an even worst position. Kant's marginalization of the symbol of the Trinity in *Religion* is also consistent with the practical protocols laid down in the second *Critique* which draw attention to the illiminable element of hope in a reality that will square the imperative of duty with happiness. But it is not simply the case that *Religion* coheres with the two earlier texts. It also represents the hermeneutic turn in Kant's thought in which important questions of freedom and its relation to reason and the possibility of conversion can only be handled by means of an interpretive detour through the biblical text as focused in the narrative of original state-fall-conversion-sanctification. The interpretive detour is essentially two-sided: on the one hand, Kant pays the biblical text a significant compliment by thinking that it can play a productive philosophical role in pointing beyond inadequate construals of the self in the first two *Critiques*; on the other, the biblical narrative is subjected to a rational—if practical—mode of interpretation, which is under obligation to move beyond the historical or literal sense of the biblical text. The reinscription of the ultimate authority of philosophy is important and shows that Kant's insistence on the lack of existential transparency of the symbol of the Trinity is of a piece with his earlier objections to the conjunction of dogmatism and mystery.

Still, given the somewhat exigent tone of Kant's exclusion in *Religion* it is worth asking the question whether there might not be provocation in excess of what is supplied by natural theology. Now while the conventional wisdom that Kant's view of Pietism is largely positive is, undoubtedly, true in fundamental respects, there are complications in Kant's relation to this more experiential form of Lutheran Protestantism, which are in significant part a function of developments within Pietism itself. The form of Pietism in the second half of the eighteenth century is significantly more theologically brazen than the earlier form of Johann Arndt and P. J. Spener who focused on the regeneration of the individual believer. A sign of this is the resurgence of the symbol of the Trinity. Pietist thinkers for whom the Trinity is important include F. C. Oetinger and A. Bengel, both of whom Kant regarded as mystagogues. In the case of the former, the symbol of the Trinity is deployed to counter the rationalism of Spinoza, which is thought to license a lifeless divine at odds with the living God of the Bible. In addition to the second wave of Pietism exhibiting a speculative form of Trinitarianism, one can also find a chiliastic apocalyptic form. If Bengel's work is only broadly Trinitarian, it connects reflection on the *eschaton* with re-

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lection on the Spirit, and does so before G. E. Lessing, who arrives at a similarly eschatological and/or Joachimite form of theology in his influential essay, *The Education of the Human Race* (1780), albeit by a very different route.

The rise of German Idealism in Fichte and its early developments in Hegel and Schelling does not effect an immediate redress of the marginalization of the Trinity, since the anti-dogmatic principle of Idealism dictates an inhospitality to any notion that philosophy cannot license. The dogma of the Trinity is one of the easier candidates for dismissal, since it (p. 256) depends on revelation viewed as a brute fact, what will come to be known pejoratively as 'positivity' (*Positivität*). At the same time the arrival of German Idealism, which can be dated in Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* (*Wissenschaftslehre*, 1794), brings to the centre of philosophy the idea of a triadic dynamic encompassing all of reality, both conscious and unconscious, both subject and object. This basic idea constitutes the horizon of German Idealism, while not dictating any particular formulation. This triadic dynamic, which begins with an absolute characterized by identity, proceeds through self-differentiation and alienation, and culminates in a produced absolute which involves both, is inflected rather differently by Schelling in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1799) and by Hegel in his *Differenzschrift* (1801). Fichte himself is no exception to this rule: if the various editions of the *Science of Knowledge* themselves make a number of important alterations without compromising the specifically Fichtean emphasis of the impossibility of closure of the triadic movement, in later texts Fichte himself seems to agree with the criticisms of Schelling and Hegel for the need for closure and a measure of identity in the third and final term. In general, one can say that in the very early texts of all three Idealists triadic schematization functions independently of any attempt to appropriate the historical doctrine of the Trinity or to deal with any of its magisterial expressions. The issue among the three Idealists is how to imagine the mode of resolution which would square the demands of science set by Spinoza and the demands of history set by Lessing and Herder.

Nonetheless, in the evolving thought of each of the German Idealists one finds evidence of a willingness to sanction an encounter between philosophical 'speculation' (the visionary connotations are to the fore in the very term) and the symbol of the Trinity as the summation of Christian faith. Fichte, who launched his career with a critique of the concept of revelation (1793) and who quickly found the charge of 'atheism' hanging over his head, in 1806 pens *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben* which articulates a *philosophia perennis* which unites the Logos doctrine of John's Gospel with a Neoplatonic metaphysics of appearance. Together Johannine theology and Neoplatonic metaphysics articulate a new and improved kind of Trinitarian theology. Schelling's theological turn is at once less eccentric and more consistent. If his very late *Philosophy of Revelation* (1841) is the exemplary site in which Schelling links the economy of salvation to the self-becoming of God, notices of this are provided in the famous *Essay on Freedom* (1809) and *The Ages of the World* (1815). Still it is not without reason that the fate of the Trinity in Protestantism in the nineteenth century is inextricably linked to G. W. F. Hegel. As is well known, unlike Fichte and Schelling, Hegel was from the very beginning a religious thinker—albeit one who like Kant and Fichte was quite critical of Christianity—who grad-

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ually evolved into being an Idealist philosopher. Nonetheless, religion was never left behind, and from the *Phenomenology* (1807) to the end of his life (1831), the topic of the relation of philosophy to Christianity and theology and, even more narrowly, the topic of the relation between philosophy and the symbol of the Trinity was a crucial one.

Although Hegel borrowed considerably from Fichte and Schelling, he is singular in the consistent way in which he maps the triadic articulation of what he takes to be the absolute onto the Christian symbol of the Trinity. It is for good reason, then, that we will give Hegel pride of place. In addition, I will privilege the *Phenomenology* (1807) and *Lectures* (p. 257) *on the Philosophy of Religion* (1821–31). I do so, however, only as I insist that as all of Hegel's discussions of the constructs and practices of Christianity are ordered towards their completion and justification in speculative philosophy, the Trinity is no exception. With respect to this Hegel's discussion of the relation between the religious and philosophical syllogisms of the *Encyclopedia* (§§564–74) is in important respects exemplary.

Hegel and Trinitarian Schematization

Recent scholarly investigation of Hegel's pre-*Phenomenology* period has unearthed significant clues to the effect that even as early as 1803/4 Hegel was exploring the prospects of aligning the Idealist triadic schema with the Christian symbol of the Trinity. Still, what is found there is anticipation, and it is best to begin with the *Phenomenology*, and more specifically chapter 7 on Revelatory Religion (*Die offenbare Religion*) in which the symbol of the Trinity figures prominently. The twin foci of Hegel's treatment are the incarnation (Hegel 1977: §748–70) and a complex non-triadic narrative of salvation history, which, however, admits of being reduced to a triadic dynamic (Hegel 1977: §771–87). This synoptic dynamic gets described abstractly as the movement from Universality (*Allgemeinheit*), through Particularity (*Besonderheit*), to Singularity (*Einzelheit*). This language continues to be used throughout Hegel's career, and receives full-blown philosophical justification in the *Encyclopedia*. But it is obvious in the *Phenomenology*, as it will be the case later in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and the *Encyclopedia*, that the triadic dynamic is linked to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in two different ways: the realm of Universality seems to be associated with what in the classical theological tradition is the Trinity *in se*. Hegel admits a triadically shaped divine as the non-temporal ground of the economy (Hegel 1977: §§771). It is essentially on the basis of what is at least a facsimile of the immanent Trinity that the activities of creation, redemption (Hegel 1977: §§774–85), and sanctification (Hegel 1977: §§786–7) are associated with the agency of the Son and the Spirit respectively.

There can be no doubt that Hegel makes the symbol or 'representation' (*Vorstellung*) of the Trinity central once again for Protestant Christianity by regarding it as nothing less than the symbol of symbols. Thought rightly the symbol of the Trinity is not a dogmatic abstraction; rather it is the perfect symbol for a dynamic, self-differentiating divine who necessarily becomes in and through history. On the philosophical front the symbol cor-

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rects for various forms of monism; on the theological front it legitimates Christianity over other religions which are unable to synthesize unity and plurality, stasis and becoming. More specifically it validates Christianity over other monotheistic faiths, and in doing so determines them to be unphilosophical, that is, not capable of being assimilated by and justified within a self-authenticating conceptual network. It is also clear that the symbol of the Trinity serves a major role in the legitimation of modernity. When its eschatological thrust is correctly taken into account, Hegel is persuaded that the symbol of the Trinity offers a way to value appropriately the human community which, precisely (p. 258) as the moment of human actualization, is the moment of the divine self-realization. Here an essentially Joachimite perspective has been enlisted in a speculative program of divine becoming that would have been foreign to the still very medieval Joachim.

Given Hegel's agenda in the *Phenomenology* to trace those historical expressions of Spirit that have been constitutive of human (and now divine) self-realization, one would not expect Hegel to appeal to the creedal tradition. It is sufficient for him to show quite generally that in its symbol of the Trinity Christianity anticipates the fully self-validating truth of speculative philosophy. Still there are marks of fairly deliberate separation between his view and that of the mainline theological traditions. For example, Hegel makes it plain that he has no time for a tri-personal divine, which he deems to reduce to tritheism. Accordingly, he advocates thinking of the divine 'before' economic activity as consisting of three moments rather than three mutually relating entities (Hegel 1977: §771). In addition, as he comes to connect the Son not only with incarnation and redemption but also with creation, by confounding Lucifer (Son of Light) and Christ (Hegel 1977: §776), he shows his dependence on the texts of the heterodox Lutheran mystic, Jacob Boehme (1575–1624). The recall is, however, fully substantive and not simply lexical: as in Boehme there seems to be an intrinsic connection between creation and evil considered as a productive contradiction essential to the Trinitarian divine being really real. Although Hegel may very well have understood himself to be articulating a Trinitarian scheme in light of Luther's theology of the cross, and may even have in mind Luther's *Small Catechism*, which speaks to different roles of Father, Son, and Spirit, it is obvious that it is not Luther's own position, but that of Boehme which gets elaborated. For in the Lutheran tradition, it is Boehme who also felt it necessary to deny that the immanent Trinity consists of three persons and affirm that it consists of a triadic dynamic, which, however, fully realizes itself only in and through divine activity in the world or, put better, in divine activity *as world*.

If Hegel's departures from the Lutheran tradition do not seem to worry him very much, despite repeated avowal of his Lutheranism, his departures from the mainline theological tradition would have worried him even less. Still, these departures are worth mentioning, especially in light of contemporary appropriations of Hegelian Trinitarian thought, which are anxious to claim theological validity for these departures. Here I will give no more than an inventory of the most obvious departures in the *Phenomenology*. If we consider, for example, Augustine's *De Trinitate* and/or Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* part 1, questions

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27–43 as benchmarks for the classical articulation of the Trinity, it is not difficult to notice the following:

(i) While in the *Phenomenology* the Trinity seems to parse revelation, Hegel is insistent that the Trinity is not a mystery.

(ii) Although Hegel offers something of a facsimile of the immanent Trinity, his position differs from those of Augustine and Aquinas in at least two crucial ways. The first is, as we have already mentioned, that the *Phenomenology* invalidates any tri-personal view of the Trinity; the second is the eternally differentiated dynamic divine is considered neither to be self-subsistent nor fully real.

(p. 259) (iii) In the *Phenomenology* the classical notion of economy is also emended. In the Trinitarian schemes of Augustine and Aquinas, whatever the clarity or lack thereof with respect to the personal activity of the Son and the Spirit, as subjects rather than predicates of divine activity the Son and Spirit are ontologically separate from and superior to the created order. Not so in the *Phenomenology* in which creation, as the ‘other’ to the divine, is at the same time a divine self-othering.

(iv) The purpose of divine self-othering in the world of nature and finite spirit is to supply something like a theodicy in which the ultimate justification of evil and horrendous suffering in the world is that this is the only way—the ‘logical’ way—in which the divine becomes all that it can be.

(v) If the *Phenomenology* rings fundamental changes on classical construals of the immanent and economic Trinity, in consequence it rings a fundamental change on their relation. A quick comparison of the *Phenomenology* with *De Trinitate* and the *Summa* confirms this. Although Hegel follows the classical pattern in formally grounding the economy in the immanent Trinity or its facsimile, it seems evident that substantively the grounding goes in the reverse direction. It is the economy—the work of the divine in the world and history—that retrospectively gives authentic reality to the immanent sphere of the divine that it otherwise would not enjoy. The immanent Trinitarian sphere requires the economy in order to be real or ‘actual’ (*wirklich*). The relation between the immanent Trinity and the economy is then erotic in the strict metaphysical sense of being governed by a movement that overcomes lack. One consequence of this retrogressive dependence is that it effectively abolishes the classical immanent-economic Trinity schema, since it makes the immanent Trinity something like the first moment of a process of divine self-development from the less to the more real. This in turn leaves it open to say that in Hegel's case there is but one Trinitarian horizon, and it is only a matter of preference as to whether one calls it economic or immanent.

In leading with the *Phenomenology* by no means do I intend to diminish the importance of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, which has rightly been thought by scholars to provide Hegel's most extensive and illuminating treatment of the symbol of the Trinity. There, Hegel is perhaps clearer than anywhere else in his oeuvre that the marginalization of the symbol leads to a disastrous misunderstanding of the very nature of Christianity as a religion of revelation (Hegel 1984: 121–3). Kant and Schleiermacher are but two of the more prominent culprits. In the 1824 *Lectures* Hegel has Schleiermacher's

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Glaubenslehre (1821) very much in mind. The following is just one of the many asseverations directed against Schleiermacher's neglect of the symbol: 'Thus it is just this definition of God by the church as a Trinity that is the concrete determination and nature of God as spirit; and spirit is an empty word if it is not grasped in this determination' (Hegel 1984: 127; also 192). As a philosopher Hegel cannot ignore the fact that the marginalization of the symbol of the Trinity rests upon (p. 260) methodological choices that he feels are unfounded. In other *Lecture* series Hegel inveighs against Schleiermacher's appeal to the experience of 'absolute dependence' which is at the root of the marginalization of all doctrines (Hegel 1984: 166). For Hegel, doctrines are forms of representation (Hegel 1984: 106). In contrast to Schleiermacher he thinks that the distance from the immediacy of experience, which characterizes any and all species of representation, is a condition of the possibility of philosophy or more specifically speculative philosophy. Closely connected with the attack on the validity of immediate experience is Hegel's reservation about the authority of scripture (Hegel 1984: 157; also 168). Scripture is interpretively underdetermined, or to use Hegel's metaphoric idiom, nothing more than a 'wax nose' capable of being impressed with any shape (Hegel 1984: 123).

In terms of diagnosis, basic outline, and philosophical assessment, the Trinitarian articulation of *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* corresponds fairly exactly to that of the *Phenomenology*. The same irony we saw in the case of the *Phenomenology* is also operative here. Despite the palpable desire to articulate a Trinitarian form that admits of philosophical justification, and despite an antipathy to the claims of scripture, Hegel assumes that his account remains within the co-ordinates of Luther or at the very least represents an authentic development. Precisely as an internal emendation of Luther, the speculative mystical thought of Jacob Boehme has significant status for Hegel in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Moreover, unlike what was the case in the *Phenomenology*, there is a significant measure of direct attribution. In the 1827 *Lectures* Boehme is mentioned as providing a template for the kind of dynamic Trinitarianism that Hegel recommends (Hegel 1985: 289). And Hegel invokes rather than merely evokes Boehme when he avails of the theosophist's symbol of Lucifer to indicate that creation as the other of the divine is as such evil (Hegel 1985: 293; also 200). As a precursor, Boehme is not only in select company, he is in strange company. The other two figures Hegel routinely mentions as providing precedents for the symbol of the Trinity are the Jewish Platonist, Philo of Alexandria, and the Gnostic Valentinus.

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While it would be fascinating to explore further the why and the wherefore of Hegel's allusions to Philo and Valentinus in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* as well as his actual discussion of these figures in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, it is more important to outline the ways in which Hegel departs from the mainline Trinitarian tradition, even if it is not especially his brief to be faithful to it. With a view to as much brevity as possible let it be said that the set of five subversions of classical Trinitarianism we diagnosed to be in play in the *Phenomenology* are repeated in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

- (i) The Trinity parses revelation, but is not mysterious in the sense that it would be beyond the scope of reason;
- (ii) Hegel's Trinitarianism is not tri-personal;
- (iii) the economy of salvation is not constituted by divine action that coheres into a story, but rather by the divine as enacted in and as its non-divine other;
- (p. 261) (iv) the connection of the Trinity and theodicy is very much to the fore in that evil and suffering are justified in that they come to be regarded as essential features of divine becoming; and
- (v) against the classical position of Augustine and Aquinas Hegel insists that rightly understood the economy grounds the immanent Trinity.

Although Hegel goes into considerable detail on all of these points in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, perhaps the areas in which the level of detail makes most difference relative to the *Phenomenology* are (ii), and (iv). Here also the influence of Boehme is at its most transparent.

(ii) In *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel continues to take his distance from the classical view of the immanent Trinity. Arguably, relative to the *Phenomenology* the polemic against the tri-personal view of the Trinity is sharpened. Hegel argues against persons as discrete entities, and diagnoses that the constitutive problem is the reifying understanding (*Verstand*) which tends to freeze and fetishize (Hegel 1985: 86). Correlatively, Hegel insists that on the level of the immanent Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit should be regarded as 'vanishing moments' (Hegel 1985: 194). In fact the only candidate for ascription of 'personhood' (*Persönlichkeit*) is the third, although strictly speaking the personality of the divine requires relation to nature and history in order to be fully actualize itself. Since Hegel's discourse is not all the way down theological, the validity of categorizing its deviance from the classical articulations of the Trinity in theological terms may be open to question. Yet provided one claims no more than relative adequacy, the category of modalism naturally comes to mind. Of course, besides the usual caveat about difference in contexts between the ancient and the modern world, one would have to insist that there are three substantive differences: first, the ontological inflection of Hegel's modalism is dynamic and developmental in a way that ancient modalism is not; second, it is the third rather than the first term that enjoys ontological priority; and finally, there is a much closer relation between the economic and immanent Trinity such that the third term itself is only fully established subsequent to, and as a consequence of, the history of salvation. As suggested already, while Hegel points to any number of precedents, includ-

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ing various forms of Platonism and Neoplatonism, the credentials of the Lutheran mystic, Jacob Boehme, stand out. In texts known to Hegel Boehme not only argues that on the level of the immanent Trinity it is best not to think of persons but of a unified dynamic movement, he also suggests that the full personhood of the divine requires the other to the immanent triadic divine in order to arrive at a divine personality that transcends the virtual.

(iv) The relative capaciousness of *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* vis-à-vis the *Phenomenology* allows Hegel to give content to his dialectical view of the relation of the divine to nature and history which puts him in opposition to the classical tradition. Nature and finite spirit are other than God—or belong to the self-othering of God—and as such are evil. This contradicts the gratuitousness of creation that goes under the banner of *creatio ex nihilo* in both Augustine and Aquinas, and transgresses the theological rule that evil can neither be attributed to God nor to his creation. An important feature of the regime of dialectic is that suffering and death is ingredient in (p. 262) self-development of the divine subject which avails of matter, time, and history to come to itself. Hegel parses more fully his understanding of what he takes to be the suffering and the ‘death of God’, which he had somewhat more obliquely evoked in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel underscores the epistemic aspect of this death, that is, modern human beings experientially and culturally interiorize the overcoming of the transcendent God of Christian worship. At the same time Hegel speaks also in a more objective register and equally emphasizes that pathos and death belong to the self-development of the divine. Contemporary theologians are surely not wrong-headed, therefore, in thinking of Hegel as representing a pivotal point in the questioning of the apathetic axiom in Augustine and Aquinas, which is developed rather than compromised in their Trinitarian thought.

Schelling: The Critique of Hegel; The Way Beyond Idealism

In my introduction I made a remark that demands qualification, and a promise that requires keeping. The two are related. The remark that demands qualification is the suggestion that because the religious interest is there from the beginning Hegel should be judged the most theologically sensitive of the German Idealists. The implication is clear: Hegel is without qualification more Trinitarian than Fichte and Schelling, and whatever his systemic deviance from the classical tradition, Hegel is closer to it by dint of his taking the symbol seriously. The promise that I have to keep is to say something about the theological commitments and subtexts of Schelling's thought after his initial transcendental Idealist phase. Obviously, it is the first of the two issues that is crucial, but we necessarily get to it by treating the post-Idealist, anti-Hegelian, Schelling.

Even if the dating and the criteria for attribution continue to excite scholarly debate, it is a commonplace in studies of Schelling to mark a theological turn in his work. Sometimes the turn is traced back to the *Essay on Human Freedom* (1809); at other times to the *Ages of the World* (1815); at others again is the *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (1841). There is

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little or no disagreement that it is the latter collection of lectures that represents the exclamation point to a theological turn that has been ongoing for years. By the end of his career Schelling had travelled quite a distance from his Idealist beginnings in which thought moved to and from a point in which it could lay out both the conditions for thought and its objective correlative. This entire philosophical procedure is foresworn as the world and history are judged to rest on a groundless ground that does not answer to the principle of sufficient reason. As commentators on Schelling have decisively demonstrated, the influence of the mystical and esoteric traditions is more to the fore in the 'later' Schelling than in either Fichte or Hegel. Moreover, these traditions operate differently in Fichte and Hegel in that by comparison with Schelling's work their role is more confirmatory than productive. This is especially the case with regard to Jacob (p. 263) Boehme, who is important for both Hegel and Schelling. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that Schelling's *Essay on Human Freedom* is a paraphrase of Boehme's account of the becoming of the divine through an opposition which brings into the divine the possibility—if not the reality—of evil.

The mixing of the specifically philosophical with the theological in the 'later' Schelling obviously complicates the verdict as to whether Schelling or Hegel is in the last instance more in line with the mainline Christian tradition. While there are significant differences, for example, between *The Philosophy of Revelation* and Schelling's earlier post-Idealist productions, it is clear in all that in every case Schelling is engaged, on the one hand, in a philosophical mapping of revelation that takes more seriously than Hegel both its sheer gratuity and its imperviousness to exhaustive analysis, and, on the other, in an attempt to articulate a philosophical conceptuality that translates better than Hegel the Christian articulation of the Trinity. When, for example, Schelling insists that revelation is beyond reason or beyond speech (*unvordenklich*) (Schelling 1977: 160, and 162), he is by no means regressing to the fideism of Jacobi, who receives a scathing press in Hegel. Reason enjoys considerable scope even as it must presuppose revelation as the given without which its conceptual articulation belongs merely to the realm of the possible. Always the philosopher of religion, revelation is not a brute fact, but rather the intuition that there is a *prius* to philosophy and a remainder after philosophy has done its discursive work. While it would be going much too far to suggest that Schelling's view of the Trinity as mystery recalls exactly the apophatic riders that accompany Latin forms of Trinitarian thought as much as Greek, it is certainly true that Schelling's view achieves greater proximity to the classical Trinitarian tradition than anything found in Hegel. Schelling's considerably greater epistemic humility is connected with two other commitments that move him beyond Hegel and in greater proximity to the mainline theological tradition. First, Schelling believes that the Bible is perspicuous, although his adoption of this Lutheran axiom neither issues in the claim of the constitutive authority of the Bible nor removes the necessity for reading it in 'a higher sense'. Second, although the higher sense is narrative, as it is in Hegel, it is symbolic rather than allegorical. It concerns the metanarrative of creation, fall, and redemption considered not as autonomous processes (Hegel), but as involving divine agency of a personal sort (Schelling 1977: 197–208). If the fall has to be laid at the door of human misuse of will, the acts of creation and redemption are

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gratuitous acts of a personal, indeed, triune God (Schelling 1977: 194–6). If Schelling's Trinitarian thought goes beyond the economy, it is, nonetheless, true that the economy provides its *raison d'être* (Schelling 1977: 197–8).

Schelling's emphasis on the free acts of the divine as personal (Schelling 1977: 174–6) supports the traditional Trinitarian view of the economy that one finds in *De Trinitate* and in the *Summa*. Undeniably, however, it does so with considerable tension. As anxious to avoid theological voluntarism as Hegel, Schelling underscores the intelligibility of divine self-revelation as much as possible. It is fitting, he argues, that the divine reveal itself even if it is neither logically nor ontologically required to do so: God would be somewhat less than God without the display of infinite generosity in bringing into existence an other. Schelling here seriously qualifies divine aseity. As Schelling (p. 264) trinitarianly specifies his thought, the qualification deepens and threatens to subvert the self-subsistence of the Trinitarian divine that he seems anxious to defend. As divine agents neither the Son nor Spirit are replete as archaeologically given. They are perfected in and through their agency in the world. It becomes unclear then, the insistence on personal agency aside, how Schelling has avoided Hegel's view of the reciprocal determination of God and the world, which, indeed, is the basic axiom of German Idealism as it was inaugurated by Fichte. Despite the move away from German Idealism, then, Schelling's Trinitarian view destabilizes the classical immanent-economic Trinity distinction which depends not only on the personhood and agency of the immanent divine, but also on its full actuality precisely as origin. 'To destabilize' is not, however, fully equivalent to 'to subvert'. This distinction marks the difference between the Trinitarian view of Schelling and that of Hegel vis-à-vis the classical Trinitarian tradition.

Destabilizing the relation between the immanent and economic Trinity affects the interpretation of both. Nonetheless, Schelling supports at least verbally the relative independence of the immanent Trinity and the relative dependence of the world on the triune God (Schelling 1977: 192). Within the bounds of philosophy Schelling intends to be a friend of Christianity and what for him, as for Kierkegaard, is the same thing, he intends to be an enemy of Hegel. With respect to the immanent Trinity Schelling's main argument for independence is the personhood of the divine, which is uniquely specified by the three persons (Schelling 1977: 194–6). In *Philosophy of Revelation* Schelling clearly wants to avoid a repetition of the modalism that he thinks typical of pantheism (Schelling 1977: 197), of which Hegelian Trinitarian thought is the ultimate expression. Interestingly, however, Schelling's desire does not result in the embrace of the classical western formula of three persons and one essence, but rather a vision of three persons in which unity is to be secured without reference to unity of substance or essence. In any event, the main point should not be lost. Unlike what is the case in a major Catholic detractor of Hegel in the 1840s, Franz Anton Staudenmaier, Hegelian modalism finds a heterodox as well as orthodox Trinitarian answer. This fact speaks eloquently to the possibilities in twentieth-century German Trinitarian theology.

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In insisting on the tri-personal agency Schelling in effect lumps the orthodox tradition with Hegel, whose Trinitarianism is in the last instance judged to be monistic as well as panlogical. At the very least then, on Schelling's view, the mainline Trinitarian tradition shows a much greater affinity with Sabellianism than it would like to admit. In *Philosophy of Revelation* Schelling's tendency towards tritheism serves both as ground and consequent to his adoption of a subordinationist view of the Son (Schelling 1977: 259–84). Schelling adduces this position by means of an interpretation of scripture in which the pre-existence of Christ in the Pauline literature plays a prominent role. Phil. 2:6 is especially important for him (Schelling 1977: 261). He argues that the language of the 'form of God' implies that the Son was not equal to God the Father in every respect, but rather suggests an 'intermediary being'. Although Phil. 2:6 bears an especially heavy burden in Schelling's anti-orthodox argument, he also produces as supporting evidence Jn 17:7 and 13:31, which are well-known passages of distinction, and recurs to the Synoptic (p. 265) Gospels for expressions of the Son being ignorant of the hour. Schelling shows some awareness that both in its basic form and exegetical practice his position is redolent of Arianism by volubly denying it. His view, he maintains, differs *toto coelo* from Arianism because his position contravenes the Arian axiom that the Son is created (Schelling 1977: 273–4). While strictly speaking this is correct, it is not clear that his position differs from semi-Arianism, which does not involve a commitment to the createdness of the Son. The homology with semi-Arianism becomes apparent in his interpretation of the Prologue to the Gospel of John (Schelling 1977: 271–2), often thought to be the textual bastion of the orthodox party. He argues in *Philosophy of Revelation* that the Prologue supports the view that the *Son* pre-exists the world and is *with* the Father but does not prove that the Son is generated by the Father.

As with Hegel, the 'later' Schelling thinks that a Trinitarian divine is a requirement for a 'speculative' mode of thought which has no intention of obeying Kant's epistemological strictures concerning God-talk. It is equally clear, however, that despite his much greater knowledge of the Trinitarian tradition Schelling has no more interest in underwriting the traditional view of the Trinity and the relation between the immanent and economic Trinity than Hegel. He considers himself to offer an alternative to the traditional theological view while also proposing an alternative to Hegel's alternative. As we have indicated above, his philosophical construction of the Trinity heads in a tritheistic and subordinationist direction quite different from Hegel's more or less Sabellian orientation. None of this should disguise, however, how much Schelling has in common with Hegel in terms of an elaboration of dynamic ontology in which actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of the Trinity is a function of 'theogonic process' (Schelling 1977: 197–8) and the similar ways in which the action of the divine subject or subjects in history are constitutive of their identity. Like Hegel, Schelling also recalls Joachim's Trinitarian schematization of the 'ages' of the world under the spotlight of the future which is the lure of all movement and differentiation (Schelling 1977: 315). One can rightly conclude that for all his interest in going beyond Hegel in general, and his Trinitarian construction of reality in particular, Schelling corrects and emends Hegel's scheme, rather than break with it altogether.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Hodgson (2005); O'Regan (1994); Hegel (1984, 1985, and 1977).

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Cyril O'Regan

Cyril O'Regan is the Huisling Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. He specializes in Catholic systematic theology and also works in the area of philosophy of Religion.

Nineteenth-Century Protestant Doctrines of the Trinity



Samuel M. Powell

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This article aims to illustrate the prominent features of Trinitarian theology in nineteenth-century Protestant thought, focusing on developments in Germany. It shows that Friedrich Schleiermacher had a major impact through his view that traditional Trinitarian doctrine is abstracted from the experience of salvation. This impact was reflected in Isaac Dorner's effort to develop a Trinitarian theology on the basis of analysis of the ethical or supreme god and in Johann von Hofmann's emphasis on the history of salvation.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, Protestant thought, Germany, Friedrich Schleiermacher, salvation, Isaac Dorner, supreme god, Johann von Hofmann

Introduction

THERE is a well-known narrative about nineteenth-century theology: the doctrine suffered a grievous blow at the hands of the rationalistic theologians of the Enlightenment, that Friedrich Schleiermacher provided the *coup de grâce*, that the doctrine consequently lay moribund throughout the nineteenth century, and that its vitality today is due only to the efforts of Karl Barth and those who followed his lead. As with all narratives made familiar by retelling, there is a pith of truth here. Enlightenment theologians had little regard for the doctrine; Schleiermacher harboured grave doubts about the traditional form of the doctrine. And Karl Barth did in fact stir up enthusiasm for the doctrine with his powerful advocacy. But the simplicity of the narrative warns us against its plausibility. Schleiermacher's view of the Trinity resists easy summarizing and, far from being moribund, the doctrine was vigorously discussed and employed throughout the nineteenth century by Protestant theologians of all types. The Barthian renewal of Trinitarian theology, accordingly, was no recovery after a period of neglect; it was instead the continuation of a dialogue underway for more than a century before the appearance of *Church Dogmatics*.

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The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the prominent features of Trinitarian theology in nineteenth-century Protestant thought. The treatment is necessarily brief and adumbrative; I will not rehearse the thoughts of the many Lutheran and Reformed theologians who dutifully transmitted the doctrine in its traditional form without substantial change. Instead I will focus on the ways in which the debates of the nineteenth century shaped Trinitarian discussion. That means that I will be focusing on the innovative ways in which the doctrine was understood; however it is important to remember that for (p. 268) many Protestant theologians the important thing was preservation, not innovation. I will also focus on developments in Germany, since this was the principal ground from which the twentieth-century discussion has sprung. This focus does not, of course, imply that important thinking about the Trinity took place only in Germany. On the contrary, there were highly significant currents of thought in Britain, America, and elsewhere; however, few of them proved to be as influential on later theology as developments in Germany.

A Brief Look at the Eighteenth-Century Background

Discussion about the Trinity in the nineteenth century was conducted in the shocked aftermath of the eighteenth century's discussion among Enlightenment theologians, which was, to put it mildly, often dismissive of Trinitarian theology (Powell 2001: 60–103). Responding to the traditional claim that the doctrine was a mystery surpassing human reason, available only by piecing together relevant Scriptural passages, many eighteenth-century theologians found the doctrine to be an incredulous mixture of misinterpreted Scripture and philosophical confusion. Their way had been prepared by Socinian theologians, who discerned no Biblical teaching about eternal distinctions in the divine nature and thus found the orthodox doctrine lacking in scriptural support. Biblicists in their own way, many eighteenth-century theologians agreed with Socinian exegesis and argued for a purging of the doctrine on the basis that it failed the Reformers' demand that the Church's teaching have unmistakable and substantial biblical warrants. To this argument Immanuel Kant added that the doctrine of the Trinity served no practical spiritual purpose. Kant was puzzled by the notion that an abstract and suspicious theory about the divine being could have a serious role to play in the religious life. Finding no such role, he dismissed the doctrine as idle.

Of course, the eighteenth century had its share of orthodox theologians who saw neither exegetical nor logical problems with the doctrine and vigorously resisted the assaults of the Enlightenment. But the debate had clearly identified some weak spots in the doctrine and laid the foundation for even more serious troubles in the nineteenth century.

Some General Features of Nineteenth-Century Theology

The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth delivered to theology several powerful if controversial stimuli to the doctrine of God. These stimuli appeared in the philosophies of German Idealists such as Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel (Powell 2001: 104–41). These thinkers fashioned a (p. 269) new landscape for the doctrine of God and introduced a set of questions and concerns that previous generations had not considered. Following the lead of these philosophers, we find nineteenth-century theologians asking hitherto unraised questions about God's self-consciousness and actuality. Does God become? If so, does God become actual through a relation with the cosmos? Is God free? Is the cosmos an element of God's being? Is God's knowledge of the cosmos an act of self-consciousness? In what sense is God personal? Does personality imply finitude? All of these questions were either new in theological history or were asked in new ways.

Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel not only posed these questions but also provided philosophical answers with expressly Trinitarian features, although many disputed the Christian character of these answers. Nonetheless, their philosophical appropriation of the Trinity freed nineteenth-century theology from the exegetical preoccupations of eighteenth-century theology and bequeathed an approach to the Trinity that portrayed it as the solution to a set of characteristically nineteenth-century problems. All that remained was for theologians to bring this philosophical discourse into dialogue with the concerns of Protestant theology.

At the same time, although many theologians were happy that the philosophical tsunami of Idealism had swept away some of the difficulties of the eighteenth-century, Idealist philosophy was not the only force with which theology had to contend. Eighteenth-century thought had also introduced the historicist legacy into theological studies. Consequently, many theologians found that the Bible could no longer be read, as it had been before the Enlightenment, as a relatively straightforward source of doctrines. The task for nineteenth-century theologians was to assimilate the consequences of idealist philosophy while doing justice to the increasingly historicist approach to the Bible.

Friedrich Schleiermacher

Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768–1834) response to eighteenth-century rationalistic theology was, in retrospect, as simple as it was profound and innovative (Powell 2001: 87–103; Schleiermacher 1999). Confessional, orthodox theologians sought to rebut Enlightenment historical critique of Bible and creeds by buttressing the authority of Scripture and the idea of inspiration. Schleiermacher saw that this approach was doomed. In its place he offered a theory, not of divine inspiration but of human language.

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Language, he argued, is one of several ways in which humans communicate the subjective world of feelings, desires, and thoughts. It is language that enables human community to exist, for community is a matter of communication. As human culture develops, language becomes more technical in the sense of being capable of expressing increasingly precise concepts. In the modern world, this technical quality rises to the level of scientific discourse.

With this analysis of language, Schleiermacher turned to the Christian community and its language. Religion, according to Schleiermacher, is a special sort of feeling (p. 270) (*Gefühl*), a pre-reflective awareness of the unity of all things and the divine ground of that unity. Christianity is grounded in an important modification of that feeling; Christianity is based, not on the feeling of unity abstractly considered, but on the dependence of spiritual life on the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. This dependence is, like other feelings, a subjective phenomenon—it is the effect of redemption on the inner life of believers as that redemption was conveyed by early Christian teaching and preaching. So, like other feelings it can be communicated in various ways, including language. At first, the religious language of the Christian community was deeply poetic and homiletical. This is the language of the Bible. Eventually, the Christian community and its language developed until the sense of dependence expressed poetically and informally in the Bible came to be expressed more exactly in the language of creeds and dogmatic theology.

Schleiermacher's point was that Christian doctrines are the products of a particular society—the Church—and are conceptually precise, verbal formulations of the basic impact that Jesus made on the first disciples as that has been transmitted through the generations as the Church preaches, teaches, and provides living examples. The creeds thus contain the same content as the Bible; they differ from the Bible only in mode of expression. Both Bible and creeds are verbal expressions of the impact (in the form of feeling) of Jesus on believers. Consequently, neither creeds nor Bible constitute an infallible, miraculous book of divine revelation. And although they function as norms of faith, they are secondary to the redemption accomplished by Jesus and experienced as feeling.

Armed with this theory of doctrine and language, Schleiermacher tackled the doctrine of the Trinity in his main work of theology, *The Christian Faith*. Two preliminary remarks are appropriate. First, to the puzzlement of many later commentators, he placed the doctrine at the end of his system, misleadingly suggesting that the doctrine is a mere appendix. Second, his treatment of the doctrine in this work was, by his own admission, incomplete and unsatisfying. Schleiermacher went on record with his belief that the time was not yet right for an adequate treatment of this doctrine. All he could do, he claimed, was to help lay some groundwork for future labour.

Regarding the first point: Schleiermacher placed the Trinity last in his system, not because it forms an appendix (*ein Anhang*) but instead because it forms the keystone (*Schlußstein*) of Christian doctrine. As a keystone, the Trinity is critically important to understanding his system. This point becomes clear when we see that his *Christian Faith* is organized in such a way that theological abstractions about God are presented in the early

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pages and gradually give way to the concrete knowledge of God. The penultimate concepts for God are wisdom and love, for these attributes are most concretely related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus. The doctrine of the Trinity, then, when fully articulated, would express the most concrete knowledge of God. As Schleiermacher explained, the Trinity has to come last because it depends on the historical appearance of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is the keystone of Christian doctrine because it draws all the other doctrines together and explains their basis in God's union with the world. This interpretation of Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* (p. 271) explains why his system has no express doctrine of God. The whole of the *Christian Faith* is the doctrine of God, proceeding from abstractions to concrete knowledge.

Regarding the second point: Schleiermacher acknowledged, in the *Christian Faith*, that his treatment of the Trinity was unfinished. What he offered, in fact, was largely a critique of the traditional doctrine with a few hints of the direction an adequate doctrine would take. Honesty, of course, is no excuse. If the Trinity is truly the keystone of Christian doctrine, then he was obliged to offer something better than he did. But it may be instructive to explore why Schleiermacher felt that the time was not right for a more adequate presentation.

Schleiermacher believed that the traditional doctrine said too much—that it contained statements about God that bore no relation to the ground of doctrine, the sense of spiritual dependence on Jesus Christ. There is, he asserted, nothing in the actual experience of believers that requires belief that God exists as three eternally distinct persons. Schleiermacher himself was sceptical about the idea of eternal distinctions; he conceived of God as a unity without difference. Nonetheless, his main point was the lack of connection between the nature of redemption and the idea of eternal distinction. It irked him that the Church had sanctioned a doctrine that contained, he felt, a substantial core of speculation unrelated to lived experience. Accordingly, he argued, before he could offer a reformulation of this doctrine, it was necessary to show the inadequacies of the traditional doctrine.

Schleiermacher did not reject every aspect of the traditional doctrine. He believed that it contained an important truth that must be retained in any reformulation of the doctrine. That truth is that God united with human nature to form the person of Jesus Christ and that the Holy Spirit is likewise the union of the divine being with human nature. More exactly: in the incarnation, the divine being (which, Schleiermacher insisted, should be thought of as an activity) was united with human nature in a person-forming activity. The result of this activity was Jesus Christ. Thereafter, the divine being was united with human nature a second time; however, in this case the union was not person-forming but community-forming. The result was the Church and its common spirit, the Holy Spirit. It was, he held, these uniting-activities that were directly experienced in the Christian life and expressed in the New Testament and creedal affirmations about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This was, he argued, the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity and the basis of a future adequate treatment.

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For Schleiermacher, then, the doctrine of the Trinity is not about eternal, personal distinctions in God. It is instead about the way in which, in history, the divine being unites with human nature. Far from being a speculative doctrine about eternity, it is a collection of statements about God's redemptive activity in history and is the immediate consequence of the lived experience of redemption. As such, it has to come last in the system of doctrine, because it presupposes Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology.

The distinctive features of Schleiermacher's doctrine of God—God as a unity without difference, the divine being as pure activity, the process by which God *becomes* a Trinity by successive unions with human nature—failed to gain much following in the nineteenth-century, even among those who were otherwise avid supporters. At the same time, he did (p. 272) impress on subsequent theologians the importance of tying the doctrine rather directly to the experienced facts of redemption and the suspicion that the traditional doctrine fell short in this respect. Consequently, although his own programme for reformulating the doctrine was a failure, his larger programme of rethinking the nature of Christian doctrine was monumentally influential. Except for the confessional orthodox theologians, all subsequent Protestant presentations of the Trinity in the nineteenth century exhibited a commitment to Schleiermacher's insight that every authentic doctrine is rooted in the Christian experience of God's redemptive activity.

Hegelian Theologians: Philip Marheineke

As noted previously, Schleiermacher was not the only influence on later nineteenth-century Protestant theology. Friedrich Schelling and G. W. F. Hegel were also highly influential. Nearly every theologian was influenced to some extent by these thinkers; some, however, intentionally developed theologies that reflected their thought with great sympathy and faithfulness.

Among the theologians most closely identified with Schelling and Hegel was Philip Marheineke (1780–1846). His main dogmatic work, *Die Grundlehren der christlichen Dogmatik als Wissenschaft* (Marheineke 1827), went through several editions that reflected the change in his thinking from a primary commitment to Schelling to a primary commitment to Hegel.

For Marheineke, as for Hegel and Schelling, the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity is a description of God that, using familiar and concrete language, expresses the same truth about God that speculative philosophy discovers as it reflects on the structure of thought. Philosophy and Christian theology are thus about the same truth; however, they express that truth in very different ways.

Marheineke's main categories for understanding God are being, thought, identity, and difference. Being and thought are together the constituents of the divine essence, since God cannot be thought of as merely substantial being or the activity of thinking. Instead, God is being which is thought, and thinking which subsists. Identity and difference are ways in which we can conceive the divine essence. In Judaism and other religions, God is consid-

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ered to be merely an identity, a substantial being. Christianity recognizes, of course, God's identity (in its doctrine of the unity of the divine being); however, it also recognizes difference within God, but a difference that does not compromise the identity. We can see in Marheineke's conceptual apparatus the fundamentals of idealist philosophy—a concern that God's identity be conceived dynamically and not statically, and a concern that God be conceived as the activity of thought as well as being.

Marheineke's approach to the doctrine of the Trinity was to see in the terms Father, Son, and Spirit references to the nature of God as articulated by the Idealists. 'Father' thus refers to God thought of as substantial being and as self-caused. This is the way in which God is typically portrayed in theistic proofs: the first cause and the original being (p. 273) possessing a-seity. Moreover, in this aspect God is depicted as a being who is distinct from the world and independent of the world's existence. The idea of the eternal Son adds to this picture of God by portraying God as rational—as *logos*. Marheineke thus saw the ideas of Father and Son as the Church's way of stating the truth that God is both being and thought, substance and subject. At the same time, the 'Son' is the principle of otherness and difference within God. Whereas 'Father' designates God as a pure identity without difference, 'Son' designates God as the dyad of identity and difference, as substantial being standing over against thought and subjectivity in otherness. However, the ecclesiastical doctrine does not leave Father and Son in their difference; it asserts that the Son proceeds from the Father and that the Son is of the Father's being. For Marheineke, this signifies that, for all the difference between being and thought, there is an underlying identity of the two. The Son is, in fact, the divine essence in the mode of otherness and difference, whereas the Father is the divine essence in the mode of identity and substantial being.

What about the Spirit? In the Augustinian version of the Trinity (which exercised a profound influence on the western theological and philosophical tradition), the Holy Spirit is the bond of unity between Father and Son, the love that subsists between Father and Son. Idealists such as Marheineke felt that this Augustinian insight expressed just the point that they wanted to make: that God is the unity of substance and subject, the identity of identity and difference. To say that God is Spirit is to say that God is not simply the opposition of being and thought, substance and subject, but to affirm as well that this opposition subsists within an encompassing identity. If the divine were only Father, God would not be self-conscious subjectivity, since self-consciousness presupposes difference. Instead God would be the universal substance of all, as conceived in pantheistic systems. God could not be only the Son, for as the principle of difference the idea of the Son presupposes the identity and substance expressed by the Father. God as Spirit is thus neither mere pantheistic substance nor simply self-consciousness lacking substance. Spirit is neither merely Father nor Son, but the identity-in-difference of both, the identity of identity and difference. In this way, Marheineke believed, idealist philosophy and the theology it inspired were rendering the truth of theological doctrine in a philosophically rigorous form.

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It is important to note that Spirit is more than an aspect of deity; it bears an essential relation to religion. This is because God is not a being that exists in opposition to the world. On the contrary, the world is an element in God's actualization. So, just as (in the doctrine of the Trinity) the Spirit is the unity and relation of Father and Son, so the Spirit is the unity and relation of the divine essence with the world. This unity and relation become concrete in religious and philosophical knowledge. Although the Son is the eternal principle of revelation, this is not actual revelation; it pertains to God's potential to be known. God becomes actually revealed (that is, known) in and through religion and, in a more adequate way, in philosophy. Religious and philosophical knowledge is the revelation of God and is the actualization of Spirit in human thought. In other words, this knowledge of God is the world's union with God. Here Marheineke most clearly revealed his Hegelian commitments: the Trinitarian movement from Father to Son to (p. 274) Spirit describes the movement of God from being to actual Spirit. But this movement is not confined within the divine essence. On the contrary, God as Spirit passes over into the world in the form of human knowledge of God, first in religion and then in speculative philosophy. To say that God is Spirit is to affirm that God is an identity-with-difference that embraces the world and to affirm that Spirit becomes actual when human beings come to know God in religion and, more profoundly, in philosophy.

Mediating Theologians: Isaac August Dorner

The period between Schleiermacher and the rise of Albrecht Ritschl's school saw the development of a style of Protestant theology that was doctrinally conservative but that owed a great debt to Schleiermacher and to idealist philosophy. Isaac August Dorner (1809–84) was an outstanding representative of this development (Dorner 1888–91; Dorner 1872–82).

Although agreeing with Schleiermacher that doctrines are ultimately grounded in religious consciousness, Dorner actually began with the concrete form of consciousness, faith, especially as verbalized in the Bible and tradition. Faith, he argued, contains an inner impulse to know the truth of what it affirms. Consequently, he agreed with Schleiermacher that doctrines such as the Trinity are not metaphysical in nature or rooted in speculation, but are instead soteriological, rooted in faith's struggle to understand and to attain certainty of its truth.

The point of departure for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is the idea of 'the ethical', that is, the supreme good. The ethical, he argued in agreement with Kant, is a necessary object of the human mind, since human thought necessarily postulates an ultimate end. God is this supreme ethical reality. But this affirmation raises important questions: is God good strictly by the necessity of the divine nature? Or does God also, in freedom, will to be good? If the former, then God is good of necessity and without self-determination (a sort of platonic form without freedom). But this cannot be God; the ethical cannot be merely a substance. The ethical must also be an object of will and chosen for itself. However, if the ethical is merely the object of volition and of free choice—if it is not substan-

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tially and intrinsically good—then it is arbitrary. The ethical, God, must therefore be a perfect unity of freedom and necessity. It must be intrinsically good but also be self-conscious and in freedom affirm its own goodness. As the unity of freedom and necessity, God must encompass difference. The unity and difference of the divine being, Dorner concluded, is the content of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The doctrine of the Father points to the moment of necessity in God, in which God is conceived as substantially good. Yet there is a second moment, which is (in ontological terms) not the moment of divine being but the moment of divine willing. Because of this second moment, we think of God not only as the good by nature, but additionally as (p. 275) willing to be the good. In freedom God affirms God's own self as the ethical, and this second mode of being, the principle of freedom, is designated in the doctrine of the Son. On this second mode of being depends everything that is associated with freedom, including love and personality. This second mode is not independent of the first, but is instead grounded in the first, for just as necessity logically precedes freedom, so the Father generates the Son. And, just as in the Augustinian tradition the Spirit is the principle of unity between Father and Son, so in Dorner's theology the Spirit is the unity of divine freedom and necessity. Because God is Spirit and not simply Father and Son, there is no opposition between freedom and necessity. God freely affirms and wills to be what God is by nature.

Dorner's theology testifies to the influence of Idealist philosophy and converged with Hegel's philosophy at some points. Like Hegel he viewed God as a harmony of opposites, a unity that embraces difference; he grounded the second Trinitarian moment (the Son) logically in the first (the Father); he saw the inadequacy of thinking of God simply as substance; and he regarded the Spirit as the ideal unity of the first two moments. At the same time, Dorner did not hesitate to disagree with the Idealist elevation of philosophical conceptuality above religious faith. For Dorner, the doctrine of the Trinity fulfils faith's need to achieve truth and coherence; only this doctrine makes sense of the concept of the ethical. Only this doctrine resolves the potential contradiction between necessity and freedom. As rationally satisfying a demand of the intellect, this doctrine is a 'scientific' doctrine. But whereas for Marheineke and other Hegelians the Trinity is a scientific doctrine because it can be conceptually reproduced by speculative thinking, it is scientific for Dorner because it is the coherent solution to a concrete intellectual problem posed by faith. Scientific verification of the Christian idea of God comes about when this problem is solved in the doctrine of the Trinity. Philosophy thus does not represent, for Dorner, a higher stage of cognition than faith. It should also be added that in one important respect Dorner's method owes more to Kant than to Hegel: for Dorner the truth about God is attained not through the reflexive nature of self-consciousness, but through seeking the necessary presuppositions of moral-religious experience.

The Erlangen School of Lutheran Theology: Johann von Hofmann

Another variety of nineteenth-century Protestant theology was found in the renewal of Lutheran theology. Some representatives were interested only in returning to the methods and interests of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theology; others, however, took seriously the alteration of the intellectual landscape resulting from Schleiermacher's theology and idealist philosophy. Johann Christian Konrad von Hofmann (1810–77) is the leading representative of the latter theologians (Hofmann 1841–4; Hofmann 1857–60).

For Hofmann, the key to understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is not particular biblical texts but instead the Christian concept of history. Scripture, he believed, refers (p. 276) directly to the acts and revelation of God within history. Only indirectly does it describe the eternal being of God. It does not, therefore, provide information about the eternal Trinity. In speaking of Father, Son, and Spirit, the Biblical writers were depicting relations within God in so far as God had acted within history. Theological knowledge, accordingly, begins with revelation in history and infers from it the necessary presuppositions of that revelation.

The place to begin, then, is with Hofmann's understanding of history. (Hofmann's theology of history encompasses the entire created world, so that the beginning of creation is also the beginning of history.) History is no mere aggregate of events, but a unified whole with a beginning and end. The beginning was not simply an origin. On the contrary, history's beginning was God's decision to establish fellowship with humankind. The beginning thus implies a teleological end—the full actualization of this fellowship. Corresponding to history's beginning and end is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the person in whom this fellowship was actualized and, therefore, is history's *telos*. But he is just as much the archetype of humanity, for he represents humankind in perfect relation to God. History, in other words, is thoroughly Christological. So, the history of the world is, theologically considered, the realization of God's will to fellowship with humankind and, Christologically considered, the person of Jesus. It is, in a word (which Hofmann apparently coined or at least popularized), the history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*).

The theological and Christological nature of history has implications for our understanding of God. Somewhat abstractly, we can affirm that history has a Trinitarian ground: God the creator, God the primordial image, and God the ground of life. However, more concrete affirmations are possible. In creating the world and its history, God had resolved to bring history to its realization by entering into that history. God's relation to history is therefore not simply the relation of creator to creation. Instead, God had in a way joined the divine being to the historical process. Through this union with history, the creator becomes the Father of Jesus Christ; the primordial image becomes Jesus Christ; and the ground of life becomes the Spirit of Jesus and his Father. God thus becomes, in and through world history, more concrete, so to speak, as the relation between Jesus and the Father, transpiring in the Spirit, brings the divine will to fellowship to perfection. Hof-

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mann was affirming that God has become Trinitarian (in the express sense of Father, Son, and Spirit) in order to create a historical world whose culmination would be the actualization of a relationship with humankind. In eternity, God determined to become Father, Son, and Spirit for the sake of this history.

However, this determination was in a sense costly for God—it disrupted the ideal unity and harmony of God's eternal being. The primordial image, in fully entering history and becoming Jesus Christ, divested itself of its divine attributes in an act of *kenosis*. There was thus established an inequality within God; the Son had become something different from the Father. Of course, Hofmann maintained that a fundamental equality of the persons endures as the background of this historical inequality. Nonetheless, by identifying with history in the person of Jesus, the primordial image experienced a change of status that qualified its divinity. This is Hofmann's version of the Idealist intuition that God is an identity-amid-difference. For Hofmann, the (p. 277) difference arose from the disparity between the image-become-human and the divine nature of the Father.

History is thus enclosed within the Trinitarian life of God; the Trinity's self-translation into history is the precondition for all becoming, for the act of creation was not simply the creation of a world but was also the creation of a world destined for fellowship with God. The Trinity's self-translation into history means that the Trinity is no static reality. The decision to create and to culminate history in Jesus constitutes God as Father, Son, and Spirit. Of course, because of the limitations of revelation, we cannot know what the Trinity was before the creation of the world, beyond such abstractions as creator, primordial image, and ground of life. We can, however, affirm that with the incarnation there is a significant modification in God. Although not (in Idealist fashion) by necessity, God passes over into otherness and disparity through the historical process and leads history to its divine telos.

Liberal Theology

The final decades of the nineteenth century were notable for the rise of a new and dominant impulse in Protestantism, liberal theology (Powell 2001: 142–72). Drawing on the work of Schleiermacher and on developments in historical criticism, liberal theologians took up a highly critical and unappreciative stance toward the doctrine of the Trinity. In this way they differed from Marheineke, Dorner, and Hofmann, all of whom saw the Trinity as a central doctrine and made serious attempts to interpret the traditional form of the doctrine.

The progenitor of liberal theology was Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89). Among his many students were Wilhelm Hermann (1846–1922), Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), and Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923).

There were several reasons for liberal hesitation about the Trinity. One was their interpretation of Martin Luther's theology. Luther's theology displays a twofold character. On one hand, he strongly affirmed the Trinitarian creeds. On the other hand, he objected

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strongly to the framework in which medieval theologians had presented the Trinity, regarding it as overly speculative. In place of the medieval approach he employed a rather consistent Christocentric approach to doctrines. The liberal theologians, committed to Luther's theology but sensing an ambivalence in his views about the nature of doctrine, gave precedence to Luther's Christocentric method and downplayed his affirmation of creedal doctrines such as the Trinity. Although they were inclined for other reasons to downplay these doctrines, they felt that they were thinking in an authentically Lutheran spirit when they did so. Luther, they argued, had recovered a matter of the first importance—the fact that the chief thing in the Christian faith is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. They further argued that Luther had correctly seen in this fact an epistemological principle, namely that doctrines are essentially soteriological and not speculative. Doctrines, in other words, tell us about God's actions toward us but not about (p. 278) God's nature in itself. Accordingly, the liberal theologians saw the doctrine of the Trinity as a statement about God in soteriological terms; they did not, however, accept it as a statement of God's eternal nature. They regarded this latter sort of statement as hopelessly speculative.

Liberal theologians were inclined to adopt this understanding of Luther because of their affinity for Immanuel Kant's philosophy. From it came their revulsion toward the speculative approach to God and also the conviction that religion is essentially ethical. Of course, they were not slavish followers of Kant. In fact, they probably interpreted Kant in terms of Luther as much as they interpreted Luther in terms of Kant. They saw Kant as offering a philosophical account that was compatible with Luther's theology in important respects and that supported their interpretation of Luther. In particular, they viewed Kant's critique of metaphysics as supporting their Luther-inspired rejection of speculative accounts of God. They also viewed the centrality of ethics in Kant's philosophy of religion as a modern version of the soteriological impulse in Luther's theology.

Liberal hesitance about the Trinity resulted as well from their use of historical criticism. By the late nineteenth century, university-based academic historiography was more than a century old. Theologians of the nineteenth century were aware of the historical character of the Bible and Christian theological history. However, in the aftermath of F. C. Baur and others, the liberal theologians were much more likely than previous theologians to find discontinuity between the Bible and the creedal tradition and, accordingly, to discount the importance of the creeds. The creeds, for them, were no longer authoritative guides to the interpretation of Scripture. On the contrary, they were seen as (to some extent) alien to the spirit of the Bible and to the interests of religion. By driving a wedge between the Bible and the later tradition, liberal theologians relegated the creeds to a position of relative unimportance. With that relegation, the doctrine of the Trinity lost its role in theology.

Finally, liberal theology had little place for the Trinity because its fundamental conviction about God was a function of its Kantian inclinations. Within a Kantian framework, God was regarded as the ground of the moral order of the world. Liberal theologians condensed Kant's idea of morality into the notion of personhood, which for them was the eth-

ical ideal. God, for them, was the ultimate person whose soteriological activity consisted in forming human persons according to the ethical ideal. But because they regarded God as a person, the idea of God as three persons was both problematic and unnecessary. Of course, the liberals were employing the term *person* in a sense different from the creedal concept of person. But this observation emphasizes the fact that the issues that liberal theologians found compelling differed from those that were compelling in the fourth century. In the fourth century it was important to understand the relation of the Son to the Father and of the Holy Spirit to both. For the liberal theologians, the main problem of religion was how to affirm the possibility of human personhood in the mechanistic and deterministic world that the sciences were describing. For that purpose, what was most important about God was not the eternal relation of Son to Father but instead God's capacity to sustain human personhood and lead us toward the ethical ideal.

(p. 279) **The Nineteenth Century and the Twentieth Century**

The strength and impressive accomplishments of the Barthian movement in theology give an impression of great discontinuity between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Powell 2001: 173–259). There is an element of truth in this; Karl Barth and, to an even greater extent, many of those influenced by him frequently lamented the general tendencies of nineteenth-century Protestant theology. They intentionally set themselves in opposition to those tendencies. At the same time, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Barth himself, whether consciously or not, was deeply influenced by important aspects of nineteenth-century theology. Most important for the doctrine of the Trinity is the extent to which Barth's theology resonates with impulses in Hegel's theology. There is, for instance, the centrality and Christocentric character of revelation in Barth's theology. This bears a close resemblance to Hegel's view of revelation. More important is the dialectical relationship between Father and Son that Barth presented in volume 4 of *Church Dogmatics*, which portrays God as passing over, in the incarnation, into the negation of God, without thereby ceasing to be God. None of this suggests that Barth was a Hegelian. But Hegel's philosophy of religion provided the intellectual context in which later theologians such as Barth could discuss the Trinity in a fresh way.

Continuity between the nineteenth century and the twentieth is clearer with other theologians. Rudolf Bultmann, for all his criticism of the liberal theologians, essentially adopted their view of the Trinity and their reasons for deprecating it. Paul Tillich expressly reached back into the nineteenth century for his doctrine of the Trinity, creatively amalgamating the Idealist philosophies of Hegel and Friedrich Schelling. Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg have frequently expressed their debt to Hegel. Although twentieth-century theology advanced considerably beyond the nineteenth century, it is also true that the twentieth century was in large measure an attempt to work out the problems that the nineteenth century identified.

Suggested Reading

Suggested Reading

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Samuel M. Powell

Samuel M. Powell has taught at Point Loma Nazarene University since 1986. He is the editor (with Michael Lodahl) of *Embodied Holiness*, and the author of *The Trinity in German Thought*.

Catholic Theology of the Trinity in the Nineteenth Century

Aidan Nichols

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Abstract and Keywords

This article offers a sampling of what can reasonably be considered highlights of the dogmatic culture and Catholic theology of the Trinity during the nineteenth century. This analysis of nineteenth-century Catholic theology moves from the Roman scholasticism of Giovanni Perrone to the Tübingen School's emphasis on the Trinity's manifestation in history to Matthias Joseph Scheeben's creatively Augustinian approach to divine Persons and nature. It also discusses the theology of the liturgy and mystical spirituality as represented by, respectively, the Benedictine abbot Prosper Guéranger in the period's middle years and the Carmelite nun Elizabeth of Dijon at the close of the century.

Keywords: Trinity, Catholic theology, dogmatic culture, Roman scholasticism, Giovanni Perrone, Tübingen School, Matthias Joseph Scheeben, Prosper Guéranger, Elizabeth of Dijon, liturgy

Introduction

THIS essay offers a sampling of what can reasonably be considered highlights of the dogmatic culture of the period: specifically, the eclectic, patristically inclined, Scholasticism of the Roman school; the (Catholic) Tübingen school attuned as this was to the new German philosophy after Kant; between these, the bridging figure of the Bonn theologian Heinrich Klee, and, after them, towards the end of the nineteenth century, that theological colossus, the Rhinelander Matthias Joseph Scheeben. By way of coda, I add a brief visit to two adjacent areas, the theology of the Liturgy and mystical spirituality, as represented by, respectively, the Benedictine abbot Prosper Guéranger in the period's middle years and the Carmelite nun Elizabeth of Dijon (Elizabeth of the Trinity), at century's close. Trinitarian doctrine, after all, is not only confessed in theoretical statements, it is also celebrated doxologically and lived along the ascetical and mystical way.

The Roman School

We may take as a representative figure of the Roman school Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876), professor of dogmatic theology in the Roman College from 1824 until, with some short interruptions, his death over fifty years later. In the fourth of his nine-volume *Praelectiones theologicae*, from the years 1835 to 1842 and frequently reissued, Perrone opens his treatise ‘De sanctissima Trinitate’ by declaring ‘the most august mystery of the Trinity ... the basis and foundation of the entire faith. Once posited, the remaining (p. 282) mysteries of our religion subsist; once removed, the rest, equally, fall to the ground’ (Perrone 1865: 172). Misconstruals of Trinitarian believing, Perrone suggests, take three forms: failure to recognize the distinction of the persons; failure to sustain the consubstantiality and equality of the persons; failure to acknowledge the origin of the Spirit from Father and Son, as from a single principle. In order to prepare students to deal with these misunderstandings, Perrone sets out a programme of instruction. First, from the fonts proper to dogmatics, namely Scripture and Tradition, he will expound the truth of the three persons subsisting in the unity of the divine nature as a mystery which right reason in no way contradicts. Secondly, working from the same sources he will explain the two-in-one procession of the Spirit (the unusual prominence given this issue is suggestive of the continuing concern in mid-century papal Rome for reunion with ‘the Greeks’). Lastly, he will add some ‘scholia’ intended to enable readers to enhance their appreciation of this mystery.

Perrone insists that while the dogmas of the faith—where the affirmation of the triunity of God has its place—are found disclosed only in Scripture and Tradition, of which the Church is the guardian and interpreter, he does not wish to prejudge (or indeed judge) the question. Once the revelation of the triune God has taken place, can the three-in-oneness of God be demonstrated by reason? Granted the importance of this issue for the case of Anthon Günther, which played itself out during the first half of Pius IX's pontificate, it is surprising that even as late as the 31st edition Perrone is so cool on this subject, simply listing a variety of figures, from the twelfth-century Victorines Hugh and Richard to his own near-contemporary, the canon regular Tommaso Vincenzo Falletti, who thought a post-factum justification of Trinitarianism possible. The issue would be determined dogmatically in the opposite sense at the first Vatican Council five years later.

Perrone's commendation of a triply hypostatic but uni-essential God as the real Lord of New Testament revelation has to come to terms with the fact that nowhere in Scripture can anything like the phrase *mia Trias* be discovered. But ‘what matters is the existence of the reality; once that is established, the terminology comes forth of itself’. The ‘perpetual and constant traditional sense of the Church’ confirms the evidence of Scripture for the divine Trinity as one in essence, threefold in personality. Appealing to the Tübingen school Johann Adam Möhler's *Athanasius der Grosse*, Perrone distinguishes between the ‘faith of the Church about the Trinity’, which is unanimous, and ‘individual explications’ of that faith, which vary not only one from another but in their success. Moving from the historical to the dialectical mode: no rational objection can be brought against Trinitarian belief unless it can be shown (and it cannot) that unity of essence may not be combined

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with distinct modes of existing. That the divine nature is indivisible tells us only that the persons, as modes of subsistence, are undivided. It does *not* tell us that they are indistinct. Each, after all, is identical with the divine nature whereas their distinction is only in relation to each other.

Perrone investigates in turn the divinity of Son and Spirit. On the Son, ancient Arianism impugned directly the consubstantiality of the Word, modern Arianism differs from it by attacking directly only the divinity of Christ and thus indirectly that of the Word, though 'rationalists and new theory biblicists' may be said to amplify Arianism in (p. 283) a fresh direction by treating the Word as merely an attribute of God, a 'wisely operative spiritual, i.e. rational, power', which can just as well be called the holy Spirit of God or his Wisdom. Perrone makes considerable play of the Johannine Prologue, arguing that everything said of the incarnate Word in the Fourth Gospel coheres with it, whereas, should its affirmation of the Word's distinct divine identity be removed, what the evangelist says about the personal subject of his Gospel would at once become unintelligible. Throughout his account, Perrone emphasizes that an orthodox Christology, framed within a Trinitarian narrative, can make sense of the total Gospel record in a way that 'the system of Socinians and rationalists' cannot.

On the Spirit: when inspected at diverse New Testament *loci* Scripture ascribes to the Spirit—understood not only as 'power, attribute, and efficacy' but as 'true hypostasis or subsistent person'—both the divine name and divine 'properties and operations'. Though care must be taken to distinguish out instances where the language of *Pneuma* signifies, rather, the concrete divine nature, the third person is 'truly and properly God'. To be sure, the liturgical prayer of the ancient Church addresses the Father, through the Son, 'in' or 'with' the Spirit. This is not, however, a matter of 'discerning grades [of divinity] but of registering distinction of origin'.

On the *Filioque*, the Spirit's procession from Father and Son: instructed by recent polemical literature of the Eastern Orthodox Perrone sets himself the twofold task of demonstrating the catholicity of the *Filioque* belief, and the legitimacy of an addition to the profession of faith for a just cause. The key biblical text for the two-in-one procession of the Spirit is, to Perrone's mind, a portion of Jn 16:15, 'all that the Father has is mine'. If all reality has its common fount in the Father, and all the Father has is the Son's, the power to spirate the third divine person will be the Son's too and not the Father's alone. As to the addition to the Creed of the clause that embodies the claim, Perrone argues that the Ephesian prohibition on 'another [profession of] faith' was intended to proscribe in advance any Nestorian interpolation. 'Another', in this context, means 'a faith that is contrary to or different from the faith transmitted in the Nicene Symbol'.

Perrone's 'scholia' are recognizably Augustinian-Thomist in character, and as such will already be familiar to readers of this compendium. The last seeks to round off the entire treatise by indicating some grammatical indicators key to Trinitarian discourse by the way they allow one to move securely in speech, avoiding either Unitarianism or tritheism.

Heinrich Klee

Klee (1800–40), generally regarded as the weightiest figure produced by the early Mainz school—self-consciously orthodox but informed about cultural and philosophical developments—taught chiefly at Bonn, though at the end of his short life he succeeded Johann Adam Möhler who had moved from Tübingen to the chair of dogmatics at Munich. The ‘de Deo uno’ of the opening volume of Klee’s *Katholische Dogmatik* leads into his account of God as Three by way of a protest against early modern and modern monism in the (p. 284) philosophies of Spinoza and Hegel. Whereas Spinoza’s ‘realistic pantheism’ implausibly seeks to integrate impossibles within a single Substance as attributes thereof, Hegel’s ‘new intellectual pantheism’ treats God as only potentially infinite, emerging into consciousness and personality/freedom, and including within his own substance (in another version, evidently, of ‘realistic pantheism’) contradictory qualities and states—with the rider that contradiction is sustainable if it can be rethought as the contrast between ‘aspects’ or ‘moments’ of *Sein*, ‘being’. Pantheists, comments Klee, rightly seek to move away from the ‘dead deistic Monas’ in order to win through to a ‘living God’, but their strategy of transposing into God the finite and its developments is misplaced. God’s essential livingness is ‘infinite and immanent, his essential life consists indeed only in his tri-personality, the knowledge of which lifts one far above, at one and the same time, the deistic dead Monas and the finite living God of pantheists’ (Klee 1844: 101). The ‘form and ordering of [the] immanent self-positing and livingness’ of God is the Trinity, God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The principle that the inner relation of the three is the foundation of their relation *ad extra* governs what Klee has to say about the Trinitarian outreach in creation and salvation. In all the works of God vis-à-vis the world, the Father determines by his plan, the Son executes that plan in the Father’s name, and the Holy Spirit fulfils the Son’s work in the Son’s name: a formula devised by Klee on the basis of texts from the Cappadocians and St John Damascene. Klee considers the operation of the Son and the Spirit in humans to be a series of mediations. The Son mediates the union of the creature with the Father, the Spirit their union with the Son. Through the Son we enter into the being hypostatically represented in the Father, through the Spirit into the knowledge likewise represented in the Son. The Spirit is in humanity individually (the ‘little Church’) or generally (the ‘great believer’) through the grace which is God’s love for us and ours for him. Filling out this picture, Klee describes the Son as (‘so to say’) ‘between’ God and the creature, the Spirit ‘within’ the creature as ‘mediating the mediation of Christ’. That is why the signature-preposition of the Son is *dia*, the Spirit’s *en* or *eis*, the Father’s *ek*. Here Klee seeks to formalize lexical uses found in the Pauline corpus (understood as including Hebrews). ‘As everything is from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, so the Father is above all, the Son through all, the Spirit in all’ (Klee 1844: 121). These outer relations mirror, as will be expected, their inner equivalents which are also their foundation, for from the Father as primordial Ground issue Son and Spirit; from the Father and through the Son the Spirit proceeds; into the Spirit the Father and the Son ‘out-mind themselves’, *geisten sie*

sich aus, abiding in the Spirit in mutual love (Klee 1844: 122). The emphasis on mediation as a means to unity in Klee's Triadology suggests a debt to G. W. F. Hegel.

The Catholic Tübingen School

The Tübingen school will be represented here by its two most important figures in the perspective of Trinitarian theology: Franz Anton Staudenmaier and Johann Evangelist Kuhn. Although Klee's dogmatics furnish some evidence of a conceptual conversation (p. 285) with post-Kantian philosophy in Germany (which means, above all, F. W. J. Schelling, as well as Hegel), he shares a fundamentally Scholastic structure of thinking with Perrone and the Roman school. What such writers as Staudenmaier and Kuhn add is a far more thoroughgoing presentation of the Trinity as manifested in history, for which they draw on not only the enhanced sensibility of Romanticism for past epochs but also the philosophical conviction of the Real-Idealists that the historical process is itself a revelation of the Absolute: the meaning of history is to be identified as the history of God. The upshot, predictably enough, is a theology of salvation history the content of which has been speculatively rethought. What emerges, however, from the Catholic Tübingen writers, by contrast with the German philosophers, is a vision of history where, as in a covenant dialogue, divine hypostases are disclosed *for the sake of personal union* with their human images. Furthermore, there is a conviction that, in the disclosure of the Trinitarian names, history yields up its own infinite ground, the Triune God *as he is in and for himself*, beyond the horizon of any creature.

Franz Anton Staudenmaier (1800–56) had his intellectual formation at Tübingen but taught elsewhere: at Giessen and (especially) Freiburg. The twin volumes of his *Encyklopädie*, giving his account of the overall shape of Christian theology, were published at Mainz in 1834, and his four-volume dogmatics, which has as subject the content of Catholic Christianity, at Freiburg between 1844 and 1852. In the *Encyklopädie* he treats the history of divine revelation before his account of the one God, in accordance with the basic notion of the work that theology is a science which represents and develops knowledge *from* God, raising 'God-consciousness', *Gottesbewusstsein*, to scientific form (Staudenmaier 1840: vol. 2, 26). It is in history that God has unveiled himself, rendering objective thereby the highest ideas of his being. He appears there as a twofold: relation to himself and relation to the religious existence of the human family. More specifically, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have revealed themselves through their work of founding in humanity the Kingdom of God—an 'outer economy' which itself discloses the 'inner economy' of their own divine life. The revelation of that triune work and its origin enters our consciousness as the distinctively Christian knowledge of the 'creation, redemption, and sanctification of the world' (Staudenmaier 1840: vol. 1, 516).

In *Die christliche Dogmatik*, Staudenmaier adopts the more chronologically apt order of a 'de Deo uno' followed by an account of the divine tri-personality which has entered the noetic realm of the Church through a phased historical manifestation. By means of historical events the Holy Trinity calls man with a view to reshaping his personal existence by

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reference to the Kingdom, the centrality of which in Tübingen school thinking was established from its inception by the school's effective founder, Johann Sebastian Drey. Staudenmaier insists on the immanent character of God's fullness of life in the eternal love-exchange: the 'inner movement' of the processions is the true dialectic—far removed from the 'dialectic of the logical Idea, thoroughly hypostatized in our time, to be sure' but increasingly reduced to a 'sheer dialectical game' (Staudenmaier 1844: 567). His is an objective transcendentalism that treats God's triune nature as the primary presupposition of a gratuitous creation. At the same time, Staudenmaier's thought also exemplifies an historical personalism. His conviction that in God personhood exists in [\(p. 286\)](#) self-surrender to another fuelled his opposition to Günther's attempt to demonstrate divine Triunity from the analysis of infinite self-consciousness, while his anthropology is structured by a cognate conviction: God's tri-personal being in, through, and for another has its created mirror in man as the image of God. This is the final topic of his 'de Deo trino', serving to link the treatise to the account of creation which will follow.

Johann Evangelist Kuhn (1806–87) bears comparison with Perrone for academic stability and longevity, since he held the chair of dogma at Tübingen from 1837 to 1882. His unfinished *Katholische Dogmatik*, dating from the 1840s and 50s, deals only with God, as One and Three, though a further volume, dealing with creation and grace, appeared in the following decade. The hallmark of his theological work has been defined as *unterscheidende Zuordnung*, the 'distinguishing out' of levels through the exhibition of the 'ordering of one to another' (Courth 1996: 82). 'Rational faith', *Vernunftsglaube*, by which philosophy has confidence to entertain truth universally, is, so Kuhn explained in essays on fundamental theology propaedeutic to his dogmatics, distinct from but ordered to revelational faith—that faith by which Christian truth is accessed in the saving history attested in Old and New Testaments and unfolded in the life of the Church. Idealist a-priorism, which pre-empted history and nature in their givenness, renders this ordering impossible. In the saving-historical events, the Absolute discloses itself through the medium of the relative, and thus by way, precisely, of natural, historical reality. Resisting disclosure of this sort inhibits access to the truth of Christianity in its transcendence of all purely human question-setting and thinking.

In that history which is Christianity's basic character and primordial element, the key event is the Incarnation of the Word, itself anchored in Israel's story. As Kuhn remarks in *Katholische Dogmatik*, since the divinity of Christ is the guarantee of supernatural truth's accessibility, it has to be the 'decisive question of the doctrine of the Trinity' (Kuhn 1857: 57). The temporally displayed sonship of Christ is the correlate of his eternal sonship as Logos, so the history of Jesus—his life, death, and resurrection—has irreplaceable significance. It is a history which presents to us the being of the triune God, revealed not only for our knowledge but also for our intimate sharing in a union of life, itself exhibited in the communion of the Church as Bride of Christ, sustained by the Spirit.

For Kuhn, just as, in philosophy, a condition of truth's validity is its universality, so in theology a condition of this truth's validity is its recognition by the catholic (universal) mind of the Church. The crucial role of confession of the Trinity in the developmental exfolia-

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tion of doctrine shows how this dogma is central not only to the subjective dialectic of the Church's consciousness but also to the objective dialectic of the Christian system. It is, in yet another challenge to Hegelianism, the key universal and objective speculative concept. Kuhn's attempt at a 'scientific mediation of dogma' moves through a consideration of the 'thinkability', *Denkbarkeit*, and, subsequently, 'knowability', *Erkennbarkeit*, of the Trinity to 'analogical and speculative clarifications' of this, the Church's most fundamental confession of faith. Trinitarianism is 'concrete', over against 'abstract', monotheism, deepening and enriching theism by its revelation of God as 'the absolutely personal', for God's life is person-forming while in the same moment unconditionally fulfilling its own unity of essence (Kuhn 1857: 588). The Trinity is (p. 287) objective love in its own disposing self-possession: the Father who knows himself in the Son spirating their mutual love as the Holy Ghost. In this way, for Kuhn, the Holy Trinity serves as the model for human personality whose vocation is the overcoming of egoism in moral union with others. Once again, as with Staudenmaier, this anthropological corollary permits a transition to a theology of the created realm.

Scheeben

Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835–88), formed in the Roman school, was well instructed on the German theology of his period, his own working life being spent entirely in the seminary of the archdiocese of Cologne. Though Scheeben has been described as a 'Hegel of Catholic theology' for the way in which, like Hegel, he has a universal system for the mediation of the Absolute, the comparison is limited to the formal consideration of the overall scheme. Materially, or content-wise, no two writers could be more different. The fruitfulness of the triune divine life is in Scheeben's thought the superordinate category integrating all abstract particularity into a single totality: Scheeben's riposte to Hegelianism.

In the second volume of his (1873–87) *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, the place to look for his views on the historical emergence of Trinitarian thought, Scheeben shows high respect not only for the dialectical skills of the Greek Fathers in handling concepts pertinent to the Trinitarian relations of origin but also for the repertoire of sensuous images by which they sought to persuade their interlocutors of the truth of the orthodox doctrine: the Root, the Flower, the Perfume; the Spring, the Source, the River; the Light, the Radiance, the Beam, and so forth. That is not to say there is any disprizing of their Latin opposite numbers. Quite apart from the fundamentally Augustinian caste of his theology of the processions of the second and third persons as 'Word' and 'Love' respectively, Scheeben regards the typically western pneumatology for which the Holy Spirit is 'bond and pledge of the mutual love' of Father and Son as complementing the Greek. Scheeben proposed to integrate one with another the western (above all, Augustinian) and eastern (above all, Cappadocian) doctrines of the Holy Spirit as the 'communion' or 'bond' of Father and Son, in the first case, and, in the second, the 'complement and conclusive seal', the 'culmination and flower', of the divine Trinity. It is precisely 'as unitive bond' that the Spirit is the 'sealing' of the unity of Father and Son.

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In his rich account of the Holy Trinity in the 1865 *Mysterien des Christentums*, Scheeben characteristically describes this mystery as combining obscurity with intelligibility. On 'obscurity': the dogma proposed to us by the Church posits not the demonstrability of Trinitarian doctrine but its opposite: *indemonstrability*. From what is not God, that is, from reflecting on the created world, there can be demonstrated, philosophically, the unity of the divine nature but hardly the distinction between the divine persons. Only the divine persons can know themselves in their mutual distinction and their mutual relations. To ascertain that God's knowledge and will issue in a product (p. 288) *distinct from himself as Father* is beyond human capability. Attempts to construct the doctrine of the Trinity from the divine self-consciousness, whether these be medieval, as with Anselm in the *Monologion*, or modern as with Günther, cannot deliver the goods.

[N]othing can be inferred from a consideration of the divine nature except what belongs to its constitution or unfolding. The persons, however, do not constitute the nature but possess it; and the production of the persons is no unfolding of the divine nature, which in any case is not capable of any real evolution, but is a communication of the complete, perfect, simple nature to distinct subjects. (Scheeben 1946: 36–7)

From within the resources of reason we simply do not know whether such a communication of nature to distinct subjects—but without multiplication of that nature—is admissible in God. We cannot be sure of our ground in saying it entails neither contradiction nor imperfection for him. Once, however, we accept through faith the existence of the Trinity, arguments like those of Anselm, Bonaventure, Richard, enable us to see how in this revealed truth the divine power, goodness, and beatitude is incomparably displayed. Scheeben adds that aesthetic admiration for the beauty of Trinitarian doctrine could well be a motive which would lead an unbeliever to consider the claims of revelation for the first time.

The reason for the inconceivability of this mystery is its supernaturality, which is the true ground of its suprarationality. Whereas the principle of causality, arguing from effects in the world to their source in God, gives access to a representation of the divine nature which, if not adequate, is nonetheless, when our concepts have been rationally purified for the purpose, valid so far as it goes, by contrast, God as Trinity, in relation to whom that principle necessarily falls short, enjoys an inconceivability to reason which goes far beyond that of God as God. However, as Scheeben points out, just because something is not 'absolutely conceivable' is not to say it is 'absolutely inconceivable': hence the intelligibility or 'light-side' of Trinitarian belief.

Scheeben's method in his dogmatics is by choice a progressive, synthetic method, starting from what he considers the 'root principle in the Trinity': the productiveness of the divine knowledge as the Word, and the productiveness of divine love as the Holy Spirit, even if he also admits the liceity of a regressive, analytic method, where one moves from the Trinity of persons, through the distinctions and relations in God, to the 'processions, the productions, and the communications' that take place in him. While one can begin to

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explore Trinitarian doctrine from any point whatsoever within its basic structure (that must be so, if the various interrelated doctrinal theses that make up Trinitarianism are fully coherent), not every point is as good to begin from as every other. Indeed, he claims there is only one point from which to survey the whole 'in correct alignment'. Thomas Aquinas appraised this rightly when in the *Summa theologiae* he built up his version of Trinitarian doctrine from the productions and processions, only on that basis going on subsequently to treat of the relations and then the persons.

The genetic starting-point or root-principle for Scheeben's Trinitarian doctrine is plain. While reason already tells us that divine substance is sheer being and so sheer activity, and likewise that this activity of God is the perfect knowledge and love of (p. 289) himself, faith enters the picture—by way of the Church's teaching on the basis of Scripture and Tradition—to reveal that the activity of the divine life is *also personally productive*. Contrasting his own approach with the Thomasian one, Scheeben believes he can show the personal character of the inner products of divine knowledge and love not only 'more easily' but also more 'clearly and understandably'. In his short cut to the tri-personality of God, Scheeben first defines a person as a subsistent bearer of a nature who is endowed with 'proprietaryship' over that nature—namely, the aptitude for conscious enjoyment of the powers of that nature, and for free dominion over them. Persons are the noble owners of all they have and are. Scheeben argues that the internal divine productions issue in 'bearers and proprietors of the divine nature' which can only be persons in mode. In the case of God, the issue or outcome of divine productivity 'cannot be regarded as something contributing to the perfection, actuation, completion of the producing subject ... [since] otherwise the producing subject would not be pure and perfect actuality'. Once we have excluded this option, all that remains is that 'the producing subject, operating out of the fullness of his actuality, communicates his own perfection to another subject, and places another subject in the co-possession of his own perfection' (Scheeben 1946: 73–4). The upshot of Scheeben's account of the immanent Trinity is that the divine persons are relative proprietors of the divine nature; that is, they are proprietors of the nature in and through their relationship to other proprietors of the same nature. Indeed, if the persons did not remain essentially relative among themselves, then 'they could not all be absolute; for they would have to be distinguished from one another by something else than the sole mode of possession' (Scheeben 1946: 82).

Scheeben's account of the economic Trinity considers the missions of the Son and the Spirit in close connection with their eternal processions, themselves rooted in the divine 'productions', the fecundity of knowledge and love in God. In contrast to the writers of the Catholic Tübingen school who characteristically put forward at an early opportunity and with maximum concreteness the topic of divine action in salvation history, Scheeben postpones his account of the Incarnation and the Pentecost economy of the Spirit. Like Aquinas in the *Summa theologiae*, he wants to put in place first an account of the general ontological structure of the gracious relation between the Trinity and man. Only subsequently does he deal with the historical mode, in which by mercy shown to fallen humanity, Father, Son, and Spirit filled this structure with its content on the basis of the work of

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Jesus Christ in a particular stretch of time, on a particular part of the surface of planet Earth.

In Scheeben's theology of the processions, only the second person proceeds by way of being the expression—the Word or the Image—of the Father's knowledge of himself. By contrast, the third person proceeds from the first in conjunction with the second not as the expression of the Father but as, rather, the outpouring of the mutual love of Father and Son. 'Spirit' is a synonym for *aspiration*, the 'sigh of love'. But 'sigh of love' or 'sigh of the heart' can indicate the procession of a divine person only if we perceive in it 'a real outpouring of the divine substance and life'. If etymologically a 'procession' means a (p. 290) movement, then procession is well exemplified in spiration: the movement of the 'torrent of love' of Father and Son poured into the divine Third.

The missions are continuations of the processions, so understood. But granted his resolve to postpone his account of the Incarnation until he has dealt with creation and Fall, Scheeben is obliged to confine himself to an account of the enlightening and enlivening activity of Son and Spirit as faith and charity are brought about in justification and sanctification, and there follows on those redemptive acts the indwelling in the soul of the produced persons, the Son and the Spirit, and through them the indwelling of their producer, the Father. '[B]y their common activity and mode of action the divine persons externally prolong and continue, or imitate and reproduce their internal relations, and thereby call into being an order of things which is an objective unfolding and revelation, of the inner heart of this mystery, and which can be thoroughly understood and perfectly grasped only in the light of this mystery' (Scheeben 1946: 136).

In the context of the divine plan to deify human creatures: that is, to communicate to them by grace—therefore, essentially as gift—a share in the divine nature, the Son is the exemplar and motive for our adoptive filiation, sent into us as the *means* of this adoptive sonship of ours—though to appreciate those means adequately we cannot prescind from the mission of the third person, the Holy Spirit. The Son can come to dwell in us in a manner exceeding mere divine omnipresence by means of an effect which reproduces his own hypostatic distinctiveness as the Father's Image and Word. That effect for Scheeben comes about in the act of Christian faith, when the Son of God marks us with an 'impress' of himself, bringing about in us an 'expression' of himself. That is possible because when, in the act of faith, supernatural light is communicated to our minds, imparting to us a reflection of the divine nature, the Son reproduces in us a likeness of his own procession as the Father's radiant Image. Thus through faith the Father's consubstantial Word is born in us by an 'imitation and extension' of his eternal production.

Our adoption as God's children is 'rooted in the procession of the Holy Spirit' (especially emphasized in Scheeben's theology of grace: the real ground of the higher dignity of the engraced is the indwelling Spirit as substantial complement to the accidental 'grace that sanctifies and makes gracious'), precisely because it is rooted in the Son's procession from the Father and relation to the Father, for the Word does not come from the Father *except as* breathing forth the Father's love in the spiration of the Spirit. Likewise, the Son

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cannot be born in us by faith unless at the same time there is an 'application to the creature of the divine love-flame, flaring up in the Holy Spirit by the enkindling of a similar flame' (Scheeben 1946: 157), in the charity, namely, without which, for the apostle James, faith is dead.

The upshot of this interrelated 'impression and expression' of Son and Spirit on us in faith and charity—the supernatural acts of knowledge and love belonging with grace—is that those persons are in us to be vitally and intimately *possessed and enjoyed*. 'Possession' and 'enjoyment' are Scheeben's key terms for the life with God which follows on the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which missions bring with them—also to be possessed and enjoyed—the presence of the Father. This brings me in conclusion to two areas of lived theology: worship and spirituality.

(p. 291) Guéranger

Prosper Louis Pascal Guéranger (1800–75), ordained priest in 1827, revived the Benedictine life in France by restoring in 1832–33 the pre-Revolutionary priory of Solesmes of which in 1837 he was appointed the first abbot by Pope Gregory XVI and where he remained for the rest of his life. He published his commentary on the Church year, *L'Année liturgique*, in nine volumes between 1841 and 1866. It soon established itself as a classic of liturgically oriented reflection. In the sections of his commentary which deal with the 'Time after Pentecost', Guéranger begins his comments on the texts of the Roman rite Mass and Office of Trinity Sunday by an affirmation of the sacred Liturgy's Trinity-centredness. 'Every homage paid to God by the Church's liturgy has the Holy Trinity as its object. Time, as well as eternity, belongs to the Trinity. The Trinity is the scope of all religion. Every day, every hour, belongs to It. The feasts instituted in memory of the mysteries of our redemption centre in It' (Guéranger 2000: 90). In teaching us that he and the Father are one (*cf.* Jn 17:22), the Son made known their unity of essence in distinction of persons, while by sending, with the Father, the Holy Spirit as the 'new Gift', he communicated the 'eternal link of the first two'. In these 'three eternal Terms of His uncreated Substance' is 'the Act, pure and infinite'. If the introduction of the language of *actus purus* shows Guéranger's debt to Thomas's metaphysics, his more characteristic emphasis is on the way the Liturgy constitutes, in the unfolding Church year, a mimesis of the Trinitarian revelation, the graciousness of whose developing episodic structure is opened again for human beings each time the sequence of seasons and feasts is played out.

This is a process Guéranger links to the economy of the Son in so far as it is *illuminative*, where 'the soul gains continually more and more of the light of the Incarnate Word, who, by His examples and teachings, renovates each one of her faculties, and imparts to her the habit of seeing all things from God's point of view', and to that of the Holy Spirit in so far as it is *unitive*, for the Spirit 'has been sent into this world that He may maintain each one of our souls in the possession of Christ, and may bring to perfection the love whereby the creature is united with its God' (Guéranger 2000: 8–9).

Elizabeth of Dijon

Élisabeth Catez (1880–1906), the daughter of an army officer who two years after her birth settled in the Burgundian town of Dijon, entered the Carmelite monastery there in 1901, abandoning thereby a promising musical career. She was given the ‘title of devotion’ Elizabeth ‘of the Trinity’, and, in the course of what remained of her brief life, mystical charisms to match it. Not that their communication had altogether awaited her consecration as a Carmelite nun. In a poem of 1898 addressed to the Holy Spirit she had (p. 292) asked the third divine person to ‘consume with your divine flames/ this body and this heart and this soul,/ this spouse of the Trinity who desires only your will’ (Elizabeth of the Trinity 1984: 17). But a charism rooted, no doubt, in the gifts of the Spirit bestowed at Confirmation expanded wonderfully in the context of monastic life. She underlines the merciful kindness of the Trinitarian economy in which the God who is ‘all love’ continually bends over his human work, seeking its deification. As she wrote in August 1905 to her sister, a married woman and mother: thanks to the Trinitarian indwelling the centre of the soul is the ‘house of the Father’:

You can withdraw to this solitude to surrender yourself to the Holy Spirit so He can transform you in God and imprint on your soul the image of the divine Beauty, so the Father, bending over you lovingly, will see only His Christ and say: ‘This is my beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased’. (Elizabeth of the Trinity 1995: 215)

Her doctrine is best summed up in the widely circulated prayer, *O mon Dieu, Trinité que j’adore*, dated 21 November (the feast of the Virgin's Presentation in the Temple) 1904, and included as an appendix to the spiritual biography she wrote when she was dying, at the behest of the prioress of her Carmel (Elizabeth of the Trinity 1984: 183–4). Having addressed the triune Lord globally (‘O my Changeless One’) from a posture she describes as ‘all adoring’ but at the same time ‘completely given over to your creative action’, she salutes the persons by turn, following the order Son, Spirit, Father. Elizabeth begins the Christological section of the prayer with an appeal to Christ as ‘crucified by love’, before deepening her approach to his hypostasis with a shift of address to him as ‘eternal Word, Speech of my God’. Her request is that ‘through all the nights, all the emptiness, all the powerlessness’, she might ‘remain under your great light’. Her apostrophe of the Spirit asks for an analogous reproduction in her soul of what he did at the Word's Incarnation, that she might become ‘another humanity’ in which the Son can ‘reveal his mystery’. Her address to the Father is couched in the same terms as the letter to her sister quoted above, and leads into the prayer's conclusion where she turns to ‘my Three, my All’, and in daring imagery, invites the Trinity to ‘bury yourself in me so that I may bury myself in you’. The prayer, which has been the subject of substantial commentaries, corresponds to the testament she left her prioress, bequeathing ‘this vocation which was mine in the heart of the Church Militant and which from now on I will unceasingly fulfill in the Church Triumphant, “the Praise of Glory of the Holy Trinity” ’ (Elizabeth of the Trinity 1984: 180).

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Aidan Nichols

Aidan Nichols, O.P., is a priest of the English Province of the Order of Preachers. He has written extensively on various aspects of historical and dogmatic theology, as well as on ecumenical issues and the relation of the Church to the arts.

Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Trinity, and Some Protestant Doctrines after Barth 

George Hunsinger

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines Karl Barth's doctrine of the Trinity and some other Protestant doctrines after him. It credits Barth with placing the revelation of the Trinity at the foundation of his dogmatics and with insisting that God's attributes (in his unity) be thought through only in relation to prior Trinitarian and soteriological reflection. It also analyzes the thoughts and works of Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Eberhard Jüngel.

Keywords: Karl Barth, Trinity, Protestant doctrines, dogmatics, God's attributes, soteriological reflection, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Eberhard Jüngel

PRIOR to Karl Barth the doctrine of the Trinity had played a minor role in modern Protestant theology. The tone was set in the eighteenth century by Immanuel Kant, who stated that Trinitarian doctrine offered 'absolutely nothing worthwhile' for practical life. Friedrich Schleiermacher, in turn, would relegate the doctrine to what was essentially an appendix, because he could find nothing in it of 'constitutive significance' for the consciousness of God. All this dramatically changed after Barth. By front-loading the doctrine, jarringly, at the very outset of his dogmatics, he not only managed to reorient Protestant theology back toward the great catholic tradition. At the same time, he also sparked a major revival of interest in the ancient doctrine itself, one that surged in the second half of the twentieth century and that shows no signs of abating to this day.

Barth's own treatment of the doctrine was characteristically subtle, deep, and idiosyncratic. It has not always been well understood. Synthetic attempts to summarize his views invariably tend to miss a great deal. Perhaps the best procedure would be to unpack his account by following the order in which he presents it (*Church Dogmatics*, vol. I/1, 295–489). His later use and development of the doctrine did not depart from these basic outlines.

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In this chapter, 'I/1' refers to Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I: *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Part 1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), and "rev." to the revised translation.

(p. 295) **God in His Revelation: The Place of the Doctrine of the Trinity in Dogmatics (I/1: 295-304)**

Barth was well aware that the doctrine of the Trinity had rarely been accorded the prominence he allotted to it. 'In putting the doctrine of the Trinity at the head of all dogmatics we are adopting a very isolated position from the standpoint of dogmatic history' (I/1: 300). By way of precedent he could unearth only Lombard and Bonaventure. He considered it strange that Christian theology should so often have begun by developing a principle of knowledge (*principium cognoscendi*) divorced from the triune God as the actual content of faith. This approach could only mean that 'God's existence, nature and attributes' were dealt with 'apart from the concrete givenness of what Christians call "God"' (I/1: 300).

Barth proposed the following axiom: 'The doctrine of the Trinity is what basically distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian, and therefore what already distinguishes the Christian concept of revelation as Christian, in contrast to all other possible doctrines of God or concepts of revelation' (I/1: 301). This proposition, which yoked the Trinity with revelation, would be of seminal importance for everything Barth went on to say.

How was the doctrine of the Trinity related to the concept of revelation? Barth's answer was deceptively simple. Many interpreters have been misled by it. They have assumed that he intended to derive his doctrine of the Trinity from his idea of revelation. Although not entirely wrong, this assumption misses the central point. It must be admitted, however, that Barth could have been clearer about what he was trying to accomplish.

Take, for example, the centrepiece of his opening section: '*God* reveals himself. He *reveals* himself through himself. He reveals *himself*' (I/1: 296). One and the same God reiterated himself in a threefold way as the Revealer, the act of revelation (objectively), and the perpetual impartation of that revelation (subjectively). The point of these formulations was not primarily that the doctrine of the Trinity derives from revelation. The point was rather that revelation has a Trinitarian structure. The first statement alluded to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Spirit. Barth was unpacking the idea that the Father reveals himself through the Son and in the Spirit. Apart from his act of revelation, God would remain hidden to us. But the hidden God who reveals himself is none other than the triune God. The acting Subject in the event of revelation is the Holy Trinity.

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Barth was not attempting to derive the dogma of the Trinity from these observations. The force of his argument was not so much epistemological as logical or analytical. He was not trying to explain how the dogma of the Trinity is acquired. He was presupposing the dogma and using it to interpret revelation. Of course he also believed that it is only (p. 296) through revelation that the dogma arises. Nevertheless, the question of derivation was secondary to his concerns. He was not deriving the dogma, but explaining revelation by making explicit its Trinitarian grammar.

A weakness in Barth's presentation may be mentioned at this point. When discussing the doctrine of the Trinity, he never paid sufficient attention (arguably) to the question of derivation. Had he done so, he would have been required to place more emphasis on at least two other matters, namely, reconciliation and worship. The doctrine of the Trinity arises for the Church, because it confesses the full deity of Jesus Christ. Along with its biblical attestation, the mystery of Christ's deity is indispensable to the doctrines of revelation, reconciliation, and worship. Barth's relative neglect of reconciliation and worship in this context, alongside his heavy emphasis on revelation, left his Trinitarian doctrine with a certain imbalance.

God in His Revelation: The Root of the Doctrine of the Trinity (I/1: 304-33)

Barth was not only presupposing the dogma of the Trinity, he was also testing and confirming it. Was it just a hoary museum piece from the past, as much modern theology had presupposed, or was it essential to the faith of the Church? Despite the objection that the dogma as such could not be found in the Bible, Barth wanted to show that it was materially valid and legitimate—that it was a good interpretation of the Bible (I/1: 310). His strategy for demonstrating this point was both biblical and theological. Along with several lengthy and ingenious excursions of biblical exegesis, he turned again, theologically, to the concept of revelation. 'The basis or root of the doctrine of the Trinity, if it has one and is thus legitimate dogma—and it does have one and is thus legitimate dogma—lies in revelation' (I/1: 311).

The question of legitimacy, as Barth tackled it, was, once again, more nearly logical than epistemological. Analysis would show that the dogma of the Trinity was rooted in revelation, because revelation could not be understood apart from it. Although it was the Trinity's epistemological source, revelation was here set forth from the standpoint of being its conceptual basis. (The word 'root', by the way, was misleading in so far as it pointed interpreters in an epistemological direction. 'Root' as used by Barth in this context meant primarily 'logical or conceptual basis'.) Revelation presupposed the doctrine of the Trinity, even as the Trinity interpreted the concept of revelation. Barth's argument was essentially coherentist. It made a case that the doctrine of the Trinity was logically necessary to the concept of revelation.

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Barth presented the doctrine as 'an interpretation of revelation' (I/1: 312). 'We arrive at the doctrine of the Trinity by no other way than that of *an analysis of the concept of revelation*. Conversely, if revelation is to be interpreted aright, it must be interpreted as the *basis* of the doctrine of the Trinity' (I/1: 312, italics added). The doctrine and the concept, (p. 297) Trinity and revelation, were mutually implicated in one another but were not to be seen as identical. Revelation was not to be 'confused or equated' with the doctrine of the Trinity (I/1: 310), nor could the doctrine be seen as an 'exhaustive interpretation' of the concept (I/1: 312). Barth was offering a Trinitarian interpretation of revelation, not a revelational doctrine of the Trinity. In conclusion Barth stated:

We have been asking about the root of the doctrine of the Trinity, its root in revelation, not in any revelation, not in a general concept of revelation, but in *the concept of revelation* taken from the Bible. We have been asking whether revelation must be understood as the *ground* of the doctrine of the Trinity, whether the doctrine of the Trinity must be understood as having grown out of this soil. (I/1: 332, italics added)

Barth had subjected the idea of revelation to a detailed conceptual analysis. He had found that the biblical witness to revelation, when examined from several different standpoints, regularly involved three elements, which always 'say the same thing three times in three indissolubly different ways' (I/1: 332). Various triadic formulae were set forth: 'unveiling, veiling and impartation', or 'form, freedom and historicity', or 'Easter, Good Friday and Pentecost' (I/1: 332). From each standpoint, God was God three times as the objective act of Revelation, the Revealer, and the subjective imparter of Revelation ('Son, Father and Spirit'). As these varied triads confirm, Barth had been asking primarily about a conceptual basis for the doctrine as opposed to its epistemological source. As he would go on to note, the doctrine of the Trinity 'has not yet encountered us directly' (I/1: 333). That would come later.

What Barth had established so far was that, from a logical point of view, assertions of Trinitarian doctrine ought to be regarded as 'indirectly, though not directly, identical with those of the biblical witness to revelation' (I/1: 333). Therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity—being rooted, deeply and inextricably, in revelation—could not be dismissed as 'a non-Church construct, i.e. one which was not necessary as such in the Church, one which did not arise in its day on the basis of Scripture—of the faith in God's revelation to which Scripture gave rise—a doctrine dealing merely with a theme of pagan antiquity' (I/1: 333 rev.). That was the point Barth had set out to prove on dogmatic theological grounds when he asked about the 'root' of the doctrine.

God in His Revelation: *Vestigium Trinitatis* (I/1: 333-47)

The preceding discussion turned on distinguishing between a source of knowledge and a logical or conceptual basis. It was suggested that Barth's metaphor about 'the root of the doctrine' had more to do with the latter than the former. At the same time, however, care was taken not to rule out the idea that 'root' could also mean 'source of knowledge', even though that meaning seemed to be secondary. If so, then a shift now needs to be noted. In discussing 'Vestiges of the Trinity', the 'root' metaphor is employed to mean (p. 298) origin or source, not logical basis. If Barth moved between these two different meanings, as he seems to have done, he may not have been fully aware of it, nor did he clearly signal it to his readers.

Barth's point in the new section is relatively simple. The doctrine of the Trinity, he argued, has only one source, not two. Not even if the two sources were ranked as superior and inferior or as primary and secondary could a second source be permitted. The mystery of the Trinity was unique, and its source of knowledge in revelation was likewise unique. Despite any superficial similarities, the Trinity stood beyond all analogies with anything in the created realm. Apart from God's revelation in Christ, nothing in the created order could function as a source or basis by which God's triune identity could be known. No line of continuity could be traced from any triadic features of worldly phenomena to the transcendent mystery of the Trinity. Therefore, no worldly features could function as a secondary source for knowledge of the triune God, and even illustrations were considered dubious.

Barth stated his point with some precision. There was no 'essential trinitarian disposition supposedly immanent in some creaturely realities', he argued, 'quite apart from their possible conscription by God's revelation' (I/1: 334). That would require an *analogia entis*, whereby traces of the Trinity would be found in 'being as such' (I/1: 334). We would therefore need to assume 'a second root' for the doctrine of the Trinity (I/1: 335). Quite apart from biblical revelation, or alongside it, these worldly traces would function as a root or ground from which to develop the Trinitarian dogma. It would then have to be asked, which of the two roots is primary and which secondary? Does the biblical doctrine simply confirm or supplement a knowledge of God that could be gained apart from biblical revelation? If the Trinity were somehow grounded in natural revelation alongside and independently of biblical revelation, then the worldly reality could easily overtake the transcendent reality, so that Trinitarian ideas would finally be a determination of human existence in the world, and thus we would be back, Barth argued, in the realm of myth. It would be a matter of anthropology and cosmology but not theology (I/1: 335).

Barth dealt with the question of theological knowledge through the Reformation doctrine of grace alone. Grace and grace alone made possible what was otherwise impossible, not only with respect to salvation, but also with respect to knowledge of God. Although God's radical transcendence of all things creaturely had been exacerbated by the abyss of sin, it

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was not sin and the fall but creation that Barth had in view when asking about 'vestiges of the Trinity'. The condition for the possibility of knowing and speaking about God, he argued, resided solely in grace, not in any creaturely realities. When those realities were conscripted by grace, despite their radical incapacity, it could only be explained as a miraculous event grounded in God's transcendent freedom.

In principle, therefore, language about God could not be 'fatally reversed' (I/1: 334). It could not be changed into language about the creature, though in practice that danger would always loom (I/1: 344-6). 'We can only try to point to the fact that the root of the doctrine of the Trinity lies in revelation, and that it can lie only in this if it is not to become at once the doctrine of another and alien god' (I/1: 346). It was always a matter of (p. 299) letting revelation 'speak for itself' (I/1: 347). In adhering to this principle, Barth reasoned, 'we shall not be accepting a second root alongside the first, but just the one root of the doctrine of the Trinity' (I/1: 347).

The Triunity of God: Unity in Trinity (I/1: 348-53)

The word 'unity' as given in the translation is potentially misleading here. 'Unity' can carry the connotation that otherwise diverse elements have been 'unified' or brought into harmony. However, although sharing the same possible connotation, the German word *Einheit* might more literally be translated as 'oneness'. It is God's oneness that Barth had in view.

God is one, for Barth, in three different senses: personal, ontological, and dominical. In the personal sense God is one as a single acting Subject. The God of the biblical witness, he urged, is always 'indissolubly Subject' (I/1: 348). As the divine Thou, this personal, living God encounters the human subject as an I in order to establish with it a relationship of communion or fellowship (I/1: 348). God's oneness as a personal acting Subject is always presupposed by God's threeness and expressed in it. There is no divine threeness without this oneness.

In and with being 'irreducibly personal' (I/1: 351), God's oneness is also ontological. 'It is', wrote Barth, 'as well to note at this early stage that what we today call the "personality" of God belongs to the one unique essence of God which the doctrine of the Trinity does not seek to triple but rather to recognise in its simplicity' (I/1: 350). The notion of divine simplicity is underscored by quoting from the seventeenth-century *Leiden Synopsis*: 'Now the essence of God is absolutely one, undivided and singular, and so to this extent our idea of the three persons cannot in any way be said to be that they are separate individuals' (I/1: 350). God's essence or *ousia*, for Barth (as for the mainstream tradition), is ontologically simple and indivisible. God's oneness is simple as well as personal.

Finally, God's oneness is the oneness of the Lord. His essence is identical with his sovereignty and freedom. 'The essence of God is the being of God as divine being. The essence

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of God is the Godhead of God' (I/1: 349). From the biblical standpoint, it is God's essence that makes him what he is, namely, 'the One He describes Himself to be by this name [*Yahweh*], the name of the Lord' (I/1: 349). To say that God's essence is his Lordship means that his essence is personal, sovereign, and free. Modern naturalism and pantheism treat God as though God's essence were impersonal, or personal only metaphorically in human experience (I/1: 351, 358). Finally, in a way that remains to be explained more fully, God's oneness 'consists in' God's threeness.

It may be said of this essence of God that its oneness is not only not abrogated by the threeness of the 'persons' but rather that its oneness consists in the threeness of the 'persons'. Whatever else we may have to say about this threeness, in no case can it (p. 300) denote a threeness of essence. The triunity of God does not mean threefold deity either in the sense of a plurality of Gods or in the sense of the existence of a plurality of individuals or parts within the one Godhead. (I/1: 349-50 rev.)

What is true of God's self-revelation in time is true antecedently of God's being in eternity (I/1: 350). God is always God in threefold repetition, and not otherwise. The eternal God's personal, ontological, and dominical oneness subsists in and through (and only in and through) his eternal threeness, never above it or behind it. This eternal equality of essence, and the full mutual implication of God's threeness and oneness, rules out both subordinationism and modalism (I/1: 352-3).

The Triunity of God: Trinity in Unity (I/1: 353-68)

The threeness of the eternal God is no less constitutive, for Barth, than his oneness. Without God's eternal threeness God would not be the God that he is. God's oneness is logically but not ontologically prior to his threeness. Although the three cannot be defined without reference to God's indivisible essence, they are nonetheless ontologically intrinsic to that essence. God's essence, on the other hand, in so far as it is 'simple and indivisible', can be defined (provisionally) without reference to his threeness. The abstract logic of definitions is not to be confused with the concreteness of God's essence as intrinsically Trinitarian. The coequality of the three in status, dignity, and majesty depends, by definition, on their individual, mutual, and coeternal identity with God's concrete, indivisible (and non-generic) divine essence. Barth agreed with the Athanasian Creed: 'The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God' (I/1: 349).

The three are not subordinate to the essence, nor is there any 'higher' divine essence apart from or behind the three. The three subsist in and only in the essence, even as the reverse is also true. 'The threeness is grounded in the one essence of the revealed God' (I/1: 360). Therefore, 'in denying the threeness in the oneness of God we should be referring at once to another God than the God revealed in Holy Scripture' (I/1: 360 rev.).

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The three are not just an appearance to human perception with no independent or eternal reality. 'This threeness must be regarded as irremovable, and the distinctiveness of the three modes of being must be regarded as ineffaceable' (I/1: 361).

When it comes to naming what sort of entity the three are, Barth concluded that there is no suitable category. In this respect he was in agreement with the broad tradition, as represented for example by Augustine and Anselm (I/1: 355–6). They all understood that the three are necessarily unique in kind and therefore ineffable. Neither the Latin term *persona* nor the Greek term *hypostasis* is without liabilities (I/1: 355–60, 365). The former can tend toward tritheism (if it suggests three centres of consciousness), and the latter toward modalism (if it cannot distinguish itself from *ousia*). For lack of a better option, (p. 301) Barth finally settled for 'mode of being' as a literal translation of the concept *modus entitativus* (I/1: 359). Nothing could be more superficial than to accuse Barth of 'modalism' for this choice.

No analogies can be found for the mysterious identity of God's threeness with his oneness, and of his oneness with his threeness. 'This is the unique divine threeness in the unique divine oneness' (I/1: 364 rev.). For Barth as for the tradition, the three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are distinguished by their relations of origin (I/1: 363). 'The threeness in God's oneness is grounded in these relations' (I/1: 364), and these relations subsist eternally in the identity of God, not just in his relations to the world (a move that directly blocks modalism) (I/1: 364).

How can a concrete, indivisible essence repeat or reproduce itself eternally as three, while still remaining eternally one? How can relations of origin still be identical with the essence itself? Finally, how can they all be identical with the essence and yet remain indissolubly distinct? These questions, Barth suggested, point to matters that are inconceivable (I/1: 367). 'Theology means rational wrestling with the mystery', he wrote, and good theology will see to it 'that the *mysterium trinitatis* remains a mystery' (I/1: 368).

The Trinity of God: Triunity (I/1: 368–75)

The doctrine of the Trinity pertains to 'oneness in threeness', and 'threeness in oneness' (I/1: 368 rev.). These antithetical formulations, Barth proposed, must be held together in a tension of unity and distinction in their mutual relations. There can be no higher synthesis. Barth explained:

We cannot advance beyond these two obviously one-sided and inadequate formulations. They are both one-sided and inadequate because a slight overemphasis on the oneness is unavoidable in the first and a slight overemphasis on the threeness is unavoidable in the second. The term 'triunity' is to be regarded as a conflation of the two formulae, or rather as an indication of the conflation of the two to which we cannot attain, and for which, then, we have no formula, but which we can know only as the incomprehensible truth of the object itself. (I/1: 368 rev.)

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When he observed that the doctrine requires sharp tensions and peculiar modes of thought, Barth was approaching, in his own way, the stance that the poet Keats had called 'negative capability', the ability to accept that not everything can be resolved. Barth felt that this stance was exemplified, among others, by Gregory of Nazianzus, whom he quoted: 'I do not succeed in contemplating the one without being illumined on all sides by the three; I do not succeed in grasping the three without being led to the one' (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 40.41). 'I am unable to think of the one without being quickly surrounded by the brilliance of the three; nor am I able to discern the three without being immediately referred to the one' (*Oration* 40.41). The significance of statements like (p. 302) these, Barth suggested, is that they display a proper 'dialectic in the knowledge of the triune God' (I/1: 369). They point to something beyond themselves that remains ineffable and utterly beyond speech (I/1: 369).

The idea of 'triunity' was associated, for Barth, with two further ideas. The first involved God's internal relations as described by 'the doctrine of perichoresis'. 'Perichoresis' meant that each of the divine modes of being participated in the others without any of them losing its distinctiveness. It meant their dynamic and eternal coinherence. The distinctions among them led, through mutual interpenetration, to their being in communion. 'The divine modes of being mutually condition and permeate one another so completely that one is always in the other two and the other two in the one' (I/1: 370). The three dwell completely in and with one another 'in concert as modes of being of the one God and Lord who posits Himself from eternity to eternity' (I/1: 370).

The divine triunity also involved God's external relations as described by 'the doctrine of appropriations'. Some of God's works are 'appropriated', for the sake of convenience, to a particular person of the Trinity. Creation, for example, is appropriated to the Father, reconciliation to the Son, and redemption to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is understood that all three persons are involved in each of God's external works, because God himself is totally present in all his external works. In the famous phrase associated with Augustine, which Barth affirmed, 'the external works of the Trinity are indivisible' (*opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*) (I/1: 375).

These two ideas, Barth concluded, should be seen in dialectical contrast. On the one hand, 'perichoresis' signifies God's unity in Trinity (*unitas in trinitate*), while on the other hand, the 'appropriations' show God's Trinity in unity (*trinitas in unitate*). Together they represent a 'dialectical outworking of the concept of triunity' (I/1: 375).

The Meaning of the Doctrine of the Trinity (I/1: 375-83)

Barth summed up his findings with a dialectical flourish. The oneness of God is constituted by his three modes of being as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the same time, God's threefold otherness is constituted by his ineffable oneness. In the doctrine of the Trinity

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the divine mystery must be expounded through 'oneness in threeness' and 'threeness in oneness' (I/1: 375). Dialectic is the technical device by which to set forth the mystery.

God's ontological oneness entails that the persons of the Trinity are coequal. No 'more or less' exists in God's being. Subordinationism must therefore be rejected (I/1: 381). God's ontological threeness, on the other hand, entails that the divine persons are also coeternal. No higher being exists in which God is not Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Modalism must be rejected as well (I/1: 382).

(p. 303) In short, God is eternally God in his three modes of being as Father, Son, and Spirit. As manifest in his self-revelation by which he wills to be ours, his external works of creation, reconciliation, and redemption have their 'basis and prototype' in himself, in his own essence, in his triune being as God (I/1: 383).

God the Father: God as Creator (I/1: 384-90)

Each divine person would now be examined in detail. Barth began by stating his thesis about God the Father. 'The one God', he wrote, 'reveals Himself according to Scripture as the Creator, that is, as the Lord of our existence. As such He is God our Father because he is so antecedently in himself as the Father of the Son' (I/1: 384). On the basis of scriptural revelation, God is disclosed as our Father, Creator, and Lord. What God is for us (historically) is always based on what God is in himself (eternally). God can be the heavenly Father of his historical creatures, because he is eternally the Father of the Son.

God the Father is our Creator and Lord. As Creator, God belongs to a different 'kind and order' than the creature (I/1: 384). He is at once 'absolutely distinct' and yet also 'absolutely related' to the creature (I/1: 389), existing in 'a sphere beyond human history' (by nature) and yet also at history's 'very centre' (by grace) (I/1: 384).

As the beyond in our midst, God the Creator is also our Lord. Although he is 'absolutely superior' to the creature, he does not remain aloof, but claims the creature 'with the same absoluteness' (I/1: 384). God's lordship cannot be reversed, as though the creature could claim lordship over God (as the benighted creature would attempt to do). The creature depends absolutely on the Lord for its existence and on the same Lord for its deliverance from death.

Death in all its severity is the 'radical crisis' of human existence. Yet through it the Lord God intends to lead us by a 'new birth' to eternal life (I/1: 388). This benevolence in all its strangeness shows that the Lord God is also our Father. Human existence, Barth explained, 'has an Author who calls it into existence and sustains it in existence, out of free goodness and according to his own free will and plan' (I/1: 389 rev.). God our Father is the Creator who posits us as well as the Lord who judges us and delivers us from death. 'Our existence', wrote Barth, 'is sustained by him and by him alone above the abyss of non-existence' (I/1: 389).

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That our Creator and Lord is also our Father is a 'truth of revelation' (I/1: 389), disclosed most fully in Jesus Christ. It is in his cross and resurrection that we see both the benevolence and the severity, the sovereignty and the dreadfulness, of God. It is in Jesus that God is revealed as our Father, and it is by the Father that Jesus is unveiled as the Lord of life and death. It is in and through Jesus that 'death is vanquished in death' (I/1: 389). It is in and through him that we learn 'what it means that God is our Father' (I/1: 389).

(p. 304) **God the Father: The Eternal Father (I/1: 390-8)**

In this and later sections Barth proceeded from God's relation to the world (who God is for us) to God's eternal self-relations (who God is in and for himself). In a trademark move he proposed the latter as the ground of the former:

God as the Father of Jesus Christ can be our Father, because—even apart from the fact that he reveals himself as such—he already is the One he reveals himself to be, namely, the Father of Jesus Christ, his Son, who as such is himself God. God can be our Father because he is Father in himself, because fatherhood is an eternal mode of being of the divine essence. (I/1: 390 rev.)

God is Father by virtue of his eternal relation to the Son. 'In this first original possibility he is God the Father in the sense of the dogma of the Trinity: the eternal Father' (I/1: 392). This idea means that God does not first become Father by creating the world, since he is already Father in himself. It follows that his identity as Father is more basic than his identity as Creator. To put it very simply, while he has not always been Creator, he is eternally Father. God's Trinitarian self-relations are more basic than his relations to the world (I/1: 391-2).

The Trinitarian name of God as 'Father', Barth continued, means that 'he is the Author of his other modes of being' (I/1: 393). In support he quoted from the seventh-century Council of Toledo: 'He is the font and source of the whole Godhead'. God the Father, he went on to observe, is described by the ancient Greeks as 'God-in-Himself' (*autotheos*), 'without origin' (*anarchos*), 'unbegotten' (*agenetos*), and 'God over all' (*theos epi panton*). The Latins concurred by employing such terms as 'having no origin' (*a nullo originem habens*), 'existing in and of himself' (*a se ipso existens*), 'unbegotten' (*ingenitus*), 'unborn' (*innascibilis*), and the 'principle without any anterior principle' (*principium sine principio*) (I/1: 393). At this point Barth was content with these citations. The dogmatic complexities involved were deferred until later in the discussion.

Finally, Barth asked about the status of the term 'Father'. Was it improper when used of God? Was it simply transferred from the creature to the Creator? (I/1: 392-4). "This could be said", Barth argued, 'only if the standard of what is proper both here and generally were our language or the created reality to which our language is related. If the Creator is the standard of what is proper for the creature and therefore for our language too, then

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the very reverse must be said' (I/1: 392–3). As Athanasius rightly saw, although God is 'Father' only in some ineffable and indescribable way, the name belongs to him—not only properly but also archetypally: 'For God is not patterned after human beings, but rather human beings after God, who is truly and pre-eminently the one Father of his own Son, and from this human beings are named fathers of their own children (*Oratio contra Arianos* I, 23)' (I/1: 393).

(p. 305) **God the Son: God as Reconciler (I/1: 399–414)**

Although revelation remains the dominant emphasis, attention is now accorded to reconciliation as well. While reconciliation is rightly said to entail the full deity of Jesus Christ, its deep Trinitarian grammar is only hinted at. No full-bodied explication is offered in parallel to Barth's Trinitarian interpretation of revelation. Barth did not write, as he might have: 'God reconciles us to himself. He *reconciles* us to himself through himself. He reconciles us to *himself*'. An explicitly Trinitarian rubric—that the Father reconciles us to himself through the Son and in the Spirit—is not exploited. God is not set forth in three-fold repetition as the Reconciler, the objective Act of reconciliation, and the subjective impartation of reconciliation. Nevertheless, Barth's interrelation of reconciliation and revelation is very interesting and well worth careful attention.

Barth stated his thesis as follows: 'The one God reveals Himself according to Scripture as the Reconciler, i.e. as the Lord in the midst of our enmity towards Him. As such he is the Son of God who has come to us or the Word of God that has been spoken to us, because he is so antecedently in himself as the Son or Word of God the Father' (I/1: 399). This statement focuses more on God's oneness than on his threeness. Jesus Christ is set forth as the Lord who enjoys a differentiated oneness in being with the Father. As with revelation, so with reconciliation, it is his divine identity that serves as the condition for the possibility of his reconciling work. Three lines of argument for Christ's deity are presented: from scripture, from revelation, and from reconciliation.

From scripture, it is shown that Jesus is depicted neither as an idealized human being (the Ebionite tendency) nor as a mythologized idea (the Docetic tendency). Both tendencies miss 'the dialectic present in the New Testament itself' as it bears witness to the mystery of the Incarnation (I/1: 404). One strand focuses on Jesus' humanity and attests that he is God (the Synoptics), while another reverses the procedure by spotlighting his deity and attesting that he is human (the Gospel of John). The divine identity of the human Jesus is presented not by a synthesis of two separate ideas, but by analytical statements in dialectical form (I/1: 404).

From revelation, certain now familiar themes receive a specific, Christological variation. Jesus would not be God's revelation as the Lord unless he were himself the Lord. 'Who can reveal God except God himself?' (I/1: 406).

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From reconciliation, it is shown that sin could not have been removed and death defeated by Christ unless he were God with us in the flesh (I/1: 410–11). Only God incarnate could have reconciled us to God. Reconciliation is the absolute miracle by which fellowship with God is restored, despite human wilfulness and enmity, through the cross and resurrection of the incarnate Son (I/1: 413).

The strong emphasis on revelation as a noetic concept has now been counterbalanced by reconciliation as a theme that is predominantly ontic. In Barth's theology ontic and noetic elements are always dialectically paired, and serious mistakes of interpretation (p. 306) can occur when this pairing is not noticed. Here Barth went so far as to state that 'revelation is itself reconciliation' (I/1: 409), though what he meant is not that they are strictly equivalent but rather that they are mutually entailed by one other. Both are variously identical with the divine-human person of Jesus Christ as the Lord, whose person is always one with his work, for he is never the source, for Barth (as for the whole Reformation), of some benefit other than himself (I/1: 412).

God the Son: The Eternal Son (I/1: 414-47)

The identity of Jesus, as attested in scripture, points to his identity as the eternal Son. It is only because of this divine identity that he can reveal and reconcile us to the Father. He does not first become God's Son in these events. He is antecedently the divine Son in himself. 'Down to the very depths of deity', wrote Barth, 'as the ultimate thing that is to be said about God, God is God the Son as he is God the Father. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God himself as God his Father is God himself' (I/1: 414). Regarding Jesus Christ as God's 'only-begotten Son', three points may be singled out for comment.

First, the uniqueness of Christ's eternal divine identity underscores the uniqueness of his saving work. 'The phrase "only-begotten"', wrote Barth, 'first emphasises the oneness—which means the exclusiveness and uniqueness—of the revelation and reconciliation enacted in Jesus Christ' (I/1: 424 rev.). His work is exclusively unique, because his divine person is exclusively unique (I/1: 425). Second, God's eternal Trinitarian identity is primordial and basic. Nothing is or can be antecedent to it. While God freely affirms who he is, he cannot be other than he is:

God cannot not be God. Therefore—and this is the same thing—he cannot not be Father and cannot be without the Son. His freedom or aseity in respect of himself consists in his freedom, not determined by anything but himself, to be God, and that means to be the Father of the Son. A freedom to be able not to be this would be an abrogation of his freedom. (I/1: 434)

The begetting of the Son therefore differs from the work of creation. The Father's begetting of the Son 'could not not happen just as God could not not be God'. By contrast, if God had chosen not to create the world, he 'would not on that account be any the less God' (I/1: 434). What it means for God to be God, in all divine a-seity and freedom, is that

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God is the Father of the Son. God's identity as God, and therefore as the Holy Trinity, is not discretionary.

Finally, the Father's begetting of the Son is utterly ineffable. This begetting is neither an emanation nor an act of causation. The one would tend toward modalism, the other toward subordinationism. *Homoousios* means that the Father and the Son are not two different subjects but 'twice the same subject in indissoluble twofoldness' (I/1: 439 rev.) They are 'two who are two only in their mutual relations and not in themselves, not in their essence' (I/1: 439). (p. 307)

The one real essence in two real modes of being is God Himself and God alone. He himself and alone is both Father and Son, Speaker and Word, light and light, original and copy. From him the created, sinful creature receives the truth of its relationships by revelation. (I/1: 440)

God as God is the Son begotten by the Father, and the Father who begets the Son, beyond all categories of emanation or causation. There is no oneness without their distinction, and no distinction without their oneness, to all eternity.

God the Holy Spirit: God as Redeemer (I/1: 448-66)

Barth again began by stating his thesis:

The one God reveals himself according to Scripture as the Redeemer, i.e. as the Lord who sets us free. As such he is the Holy Spirit, by receiving whom we become the children of God, because, as the Spirit of the love of God the Father and the Son, he is so antecedently in himself. (I/1: 448)

His general category for presenting the Holy Spirit's work was 'redemption'. The concept of redemption, at this stage of Barth's thinking, seems somewhat elusive. Unlike his concepts of revelation and reconciliation, its features are not easy to make out. The forest, so to speak, is less clear than the trees. Nevertheless, the following outlines may be suggested.

Objectively, as Barth conceives of them, both revelation and reconciliation in Christ are a finished and perfect work. Nothing could possibly be added to their content, nor does anything need to be added (I/1: 451, 452). Subjectively, however, revelation and reconciliation still need to be imparted (I/1: 453). Impartation is what happens in and through the Spirit. Redemption is the future of revelation and reconciliation. In 'the future consummating act of God which is still to come' (I/1: 409), they will both be imparted not only universally to all, but also to each one in particular. This universal and particular impartation, as provisionally under way here and now, is what is meant by redemption.

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The Holy Spirit as God the Redeemer is the eschatological principle of communion (i.e. of active participation in Christ), of universalization, and of particularization. The Spirit operates to bring all things (both individually and as a totality) into union with Christ and his saving work of revelation and reconciliation. All things are in the process of being liberated and set free for union and communion with Christ. Provisionally, this liberation takes place in and through the Church, but is ultimately appointed to embrace the whole creation.

Two terms that Barth borrowed from Quenstedt can help to make this process clear: *opere perfectus* and *operatione perpetuus* (I/1: 427). Just because the work of Christ is a perfect work (*opere perfectus*), it involves a perpetual operation (*operatione perpetuus*) (p. 308) in the Spirit. It does not remain encapsulated in the past but radiates out in the Spirit to encompass, liberate, and transform all things. Redemption in and by the Spirit effects the wondrous transition from a universal *participatio Christi* that is objective, passive, and hidden to one that is subjective, active, and manifest in glory.

Redemption involves the absolute future as it breaks into the present and imparts itself here and now (I/1: 452). It imparts the freedom to receive and participate in revelation, reconciliation, and worship, both now and for ever, as children of God. And it imparts this freedom in a way that is ecclesial and finally cosmic in scope. At this stage in Barth's thinking, however, the emphasis regarding redemption fell mainly on revelation and its reception by the individual (cf. I/1: 456). Reconciliation's subjective actualization by the Spirit here and now, while not unmentioned, was very much spoken *sotto voce* (I/1: 450, 458), while the transcendent theme of worship received almost no mention at all (cf. I/1: 462, 466). The great strengths of this magnificent Trinitarian vision are thus offset by some awkward imbalances.

God the Holy Spirit: The Eternal Spirit (I/1: 466-89)

Barth's discussion of the Trinity has been guided throughout by a basic rule: 'What [God] is in revelation he is antecedently in himself' (I/1: 466). The Father as revealed in Jesus' cross and resurrection was shown to be, antecedently, the eternal Father of the Son. Likewise, it was shown that Jesus could not be the act of revelation and reconciliation, as attested in scripture, if he himself were not antecedently fully God as the eternal Son. It remains only to show that the Holy Spirit who imparts revelation and reconciliation is antecedently the eternal Spirit of the Father and the Son. The point of greatest interest in this final section is how Barth treated the vexed question of the *Filioque* clause. His case rested on applying the basic rule:

Even supporters of the Eastern view do not contest the fact that in the *opus ad extra* ['work outside God'], and therefore in revelation (and then retrospectively in creation), the Holy Spirit is to be understood as the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. But we have consistently followed the rule, which we regard as basic,

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that statements about the divine modes of being antecedently in themselves cannot be different in content from those that are to be made about their reality in revelation. All our statements concerning what is called the immanent Trinity have been reached simply as confirmations or underlinings or, materially, as the indispensable premises of the economic Trinity. (I/1: 479)

Just as the Holy Spirit operates as the principle of communion whereby we are united through the Son to the Father, so also does the Spirit operate antecedently in eternity as the principle of communion between the Father and the Son (I/1: 180). As in time, so in eternity, it is a matter of 'two-sided fellowship' (I/1: 180).

(p. 309) In explaining the Son as the 'only-begotten' of the Father, Barth had side-stepped (without even discussing it) the vexatious Cappadocian idea of the Father's 'monarchy'. This idea held that the Son was 'caused' by the Father so that the Son 'derived' his essence from him, because the divine essence belonged to the Father antecedently 'before' it belonged to the Son. Although it was insisted that the Father's 'causal' role in imparting the divine essence to the Son did not undermine their essential coequality, the lasting suspicion of subordinationism (however unjust) was hard to shake.

Barth, it will be recalled, argued, by contrast, two very different points: first, that the mode of begetting was not causal but ineffable; and second, that the one indivisible divine Subject eternally posited himself as 'twice the same subject in indissoluble twofoldness', namely, as the Father who eternally begets the Son and as the Son eternally begotten of the Father. The two in their mutual relations belong intrinsically, coequally, and irreducibly to the one essence of the Lord God.

Barth's solution to the *Filioque* problem was similar. The idea of 'procession' was ineffable and utterly beyond all categorization. As God is the Father, he begets himself as the Son. As God is the Son, he is begotten of himself as the Father. In this eternal begetting and being begotten, God posits himself a third time as the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. 'He is the Father of the Son in such a way that with the Son he brings forth the Spirit, love, and is in himself the Spirit, love' (I/1: 483). The Spirit has 'not a twofold but a common origin' from the one essence of the Father and the Son in their active, mutual interrelations of communion in love (I/1: 486-7).

In conclusion, it is clear that for Barth the triune God's oneness of essence and threeness of modalities can only be conceived dialectically. The one divine Subject subsists eternally in (and only in) three irreducibly distinct modes of being—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and yet these modes are not three independently acting 'persons' but rather one and the same acting Subject in threefold form. There is only one real Subjectivity in God, which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has, fully and distinctively, in his own way. As such the 'persons' serve as the eternally antecedent ground, premise, and precondition for all God's external works of revelation, reconciliation, and redemption (as well as creation).

Some Protestant Doctrines After Barth

Three Protestant doctrines of the Trinity after Barth will now be sketched: those of Moltmann, Pannenberg, and Jüngel. Perhaps the best way to relate these doctrines to Barth would be through 'Rahner's Rule'. Rahner famously wrote: 'The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity' (Rahner 1970: 22). This Rule, which is systematically ambiguous, has led to a great deal of confusion. Although not necessarily incorrect, much depends on how it is interpreted. It is (p. 310) susceptible to a Barthian interpretation. This interpretation is, in effect, adhered to by Jüngel, at least partially, but not by Moltmann or Pannenberg.

The Barthian interpretation would run as follows. The Rule is correct in so far as there is only one Holy Trinity existing in two distinct forms. It is incorrect, however, in so far as it suggests that the distinction between the forms can be collapsed. If the Trinity's 'immanent' form is eternal, while its 'economic' form is temporal or historical, then to collapse the two forms would be to collapse the distinction between time and eternity, and thus between God and the world. The proper relation between the two forms—eternal and historical—as Barth saw it, is one of 'correspondence'. Together the two forms of the one Holy Trinity comprise a 'unity-in-distinction', but not a 'dialectical identity'—as if when looked at in one way the Trinity was eternal but in another way it was historical, or as if eternity and history were merely two sides of a single process.

For Barth, the Trinity's temporal form is secondary and dependent, while its eternal form is primary and constitutive. The eternal Trinity is distinguished, among other things, by the simplicity, perfection and a-seity (or self-sufficiency) of its essence (*ousia*). For Barth, with the main catholic tradition, East and West, God just is the Holy Trinity. As a self-sufficient communion of love and freedom, joy and peace, God's identity would be triune whether the world had been created or not.

God would be no less God if he had created no world and no human being. The existence of the world and our own existence are in no sense vital to God, not even as the object of his love. The eternal generation of the Son by the Father tells us first and supremely that God is not at all lonely even without the world and us. His love has its object in himself (I/1: 139-40 rev.).

This statement, which dates from the very outset of Barth's dogmatics in 1932, was explicitly reaffirmed by him in 1968, the final year of his life, as well as several times in between.

The two forms of one and the same Trinity coexist, for Barth, in a pattern of unity, distinction, and irreversible asymmetry. It is a relation of correspondence in which the Trinity's eternal form enjoys unqualified precedence over its historical form at every point. The Trinity's eternal form is revealed by way of its historical form, but its historical form is utterly contingent.

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It is this relation of correspondence that Rahner's Rule threatens (unwittingly) to disrupt. Neither Moltmann nor Pannenberg nor Jüngel managed to uphold it.

No such correspondence could be maintained by Moltmann, in part because he attempted to define the divine oneness entirely by means of *perichoresis*. He allotted no place for the idea of a divine *ousia* as something simple, perfect, and sufficient in itself. He suggested (against Rahner) that the three persons of the Trinity should be thought of as three 'subjects' or 'centers of activity' (Moltmann 1981: 145, 156; cf. 175). Against Barth he rejected the idea of a self-identical divine Subject subsisting in (and only in) three modes of being.

We must dispense with both the concept of the one substance and the concept of the identical subject. All that remains is: the unitedness, the at-oneness of the three Persons with one another, or: the unitedness, the at-oneness of the triune God.... This means (p. 311) that the concept of God's unity ... must be perceived in the *perichoresis* of the divine persons. (Moltmann 1981: 150)

Although Moltmann believed that this proposal avoided Arianism and modalism, it was unclear how it could avoid tritheism. Moltmann also rejected any strong distinction between 'God for us' and 'God in himself' (Moltmann 1981: 151). They were two sides of the same coin. God's eternity was not an independent realm over against history. It was rather a transcendent dimension of history. In a broadly Hegelian way, what Moltmann proposed was the 'historicization of eternity'. Time and eternity were objectively constituted by their mutual relations in 'dialectical identity'. The 'economic' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity fitted together as though in a figure-ground drawing. Looked at in one way the Trinity was 'economic' as the object of preaching and practical theology. Looked at in another way, it was the 'immanent' Trinity of doxological theology. 'The two form a continuity and merge into one another' (Moltmann 1981: 152).

Finally, it may be noted that the unity of the triune God was conceived as being 'eschatological' rather than perfectly eternal. God would not be one in and for himself until he was also one with the world and the world with him. 'The unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is then the eschatological question about the consummation of the Trinitarian history of God' (Moltmann 1981: 149). This Trinitarian history was very much a being-in-suffering as well as a being-in-act. 'The pain of the cross determines the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity' (Moltmann 1981: 161). God's co-dependency in suffering with the world meant that God would not finally be God until all imperfections, divine and human, were overcome. 'The doctrine of the immanent Trinity is part of eschatology as well' (Moltmann 1981: 161).

Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity involved a more complex eschatology along with a similar suggestion that in some sense God existed in codependency with the world. Like Moltmann, Pannenberg abandoned the idea of God's absolute perfection and unqualified self-sufficiency. The perfection of God's essence was somehow subsequent, contingent, and teleological rather than (as for Barth) antecedent, necessary, and primordial. At this

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point the difference between the other two theologians and Barth was roughly the difference between a 'Hegelian' and an 'Anselmian' sensibility.

Curiously, for Pannenberg, God's eternal being somehow becomes a function of his historical being; and the immanent Trinity, a function of the economic Trinity. Although Pannenberg was careful not to eliminate all antecedence and a-seity from God, he could affirm them only in a qualified sense. It seems as though the Lord God could not create and enter into the world without becoming impaired by it and dependent upon it. 'Even in his deity', wrote Pannenberg, '[God] has made himself dependent on the course of history' (Pannenberg 1991: 129). Although 'the Trinitarian God is complete in himself prior to his relation to the world' (Pannenberg 1991: 391), that was not the whole story. For 'with the creation of a world God's deity and even his existence become dependent on the fulfillment of their determination in his present lordship' (Pannenberg 1991: 390). Whatever else this startling claim may mean, it implies that after creating the world God (p. 312) was ontologically diminished and could not retrieve himself without retrieving the world. God had subjected his deity and even his existence, if only provisionally, to a nexus of cosmological contingencies, obscurities, and imperfections.

Once again, eternity was historicized and subjected to an eschatological scheme. The results were complicated. The divine essence could already be what it would be (in the absolute future), though it was not yet so in itself, by virtue of a combined principle of prolepsis and simultaneity. The absolute telos toward which God was in the process of guiding himself and all history exercised a kind of boomerang effect in eternity. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, God's essence simultaneously was, and still was not yet, what it would be. From a more historical standpoint, God's essence was under construction by the three persons of the Trinity.

This boomerang effect from history to eternity by way of teleology goes a long way toward clarifying some of Pannenberg's truly cryptic ideas. For example, once God becomes enmeshed in history (by creating the world), the essence of the eternal Trinity is determined, and effectively constituted, by the historical actions of the Trinitarian persons. God's Trinitarian essence (*ousia*) is eternal only by way of its fulfillment in the absolute future (which is indeed the only absolute in this scheme). The unity of God's essence is thus not independent of history (Pannenberg 1991: 365), but is 'realized in relation to the world' (Pannenberg 1991: 445). The essence common to the Trinitarian persons is the content of their actions in history (Pannenberg 1991: 444). The immanent Trinity is determined and effectively constituted by the economic actions of the three persons by virtue of their teleological consequences.

In relating the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity, not even Eberhard Jüngel resisted the slide from 'unity-in-distinction' to 'dialectical identity'. Recall that the pattern of unity-in-distinction had allowed Barth to assert the antecedence of the immanent Trinity as something pure and absolute. God's Trinitarian being was in no sense constituted by a relationship to anything other than himself. The perfection, indivisibility, and self-sufficiency of God's eternal being (*ousia*) was logically and ontologically independent of God's

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relationship to the world or anything in the world. Not even the human Jesus was necessary to God's eternal self-existence as the Holy Trinity. The Lord God's relationship to Jesus, and to the world through Jesus, involved an act of Trinitarian self-repetition, not self-realization. For Barth, the Trinity's self-repetition in history was not necessary but free, not constitutive but gracious, not primordial but subsequent and miraculous. The Trinity's self-repetition and self-manifestation in history corresponded to its prior self-realization in eternity, and together they coexisted in inseparable unity. But their abiding distinction meant that God was and would be the Holy Trinity, eternally, with or without the world.

In his doctrine of the Trinity, Jüngel was able to follow Barth at many points. The main difference, however, was that Jüngel surrendered the Trinity's eternal antecedence as something pure, self-subsisting and absolute. Pure antecedence was replaced by the idea of dialectical identity. For Jüngel, one could not think of God as God without referring at the same time to the human Jesus. The death of Jesus belonged to the concept of God's deity. God's eternal being (*ousia*) was determined by his relation to the Crucified. (p. 313)

A doctrine of God which takes its bearings from the man Jesus must ... have a two-fold emphasis. First, God comes indeed from God and only from God; he is determined by no one and nothing other than by himself alone.... But, second, in his self-determination God comes to be himself precisely in coming to man.... God comes from God; but he does not wish to come to himself without us. God comes to himself—but with man. (Jüngel 1983: 37 rev.)

The idea is explicitly rejected that God could 'come to himself', and so be perfectly God, without also 'coming to man' (Jüngel 1983: 37n). 'Thus, God's humanity belongs to his divinity' (Jüngel 1983: 37). God cannot be thought of as God 'without thinking of him simultaneously as the Crucified' (Jüngel 1983: 39). The Trinity subsists with the Cross in a nexus of mutual ontological implication.

Eternity is seen as an aspect of history, and history as an aspect of eternity. They converge in the human Jesus at the point of his crucifixion—a convergence that gains universal significance through his resurrection. The eternal Trinity is not antecedent to the historical Trinity but coincident with it. They are two distinct but interlocking aspects of Jesus' crucifixion as negated by his resurrection. In this complex interrelationship, 'God's being is in coming' (Jüngel 1983: 380)—in three ways. As the Father, God comes *from* himself as his own origin. As the Son, he comes *to* himself as his own goal through a love that embraces suffering and death. Finally, as the Holy Spirit, he comes as his own mediation *through* himself as the future of that love which brings life from death (Jüngel 1983: 380–9). God's being is nothing other than this event, and this threefold coming is what is meant by eternity (Jüngel 1983: 380). The immanent Trinity is not a doctrine of pure antecedence, but a 'summarizing concept' for the economic Trinity (Jüngel 1983: 346).

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Barth (1975); Hunsinger (2000); Molnar (2002).

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George Hunsinger

George Hunsinger is the Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the president of the Karl Barth Society of North America.

Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Twentieth-Century Catholic Currents on the Trinity 

Vincent Holzer

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines developments in Catholic theology on the Trinity, focusing on the thoughts and works of Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. It argues that Rahner's and von Balthasar's Trinitarian theology arose from a more fully historical theology of grace derived from Maurice Blondel. It explains that Rahner and von Balthasar attempted to reintegrate the more abstract notion of the divine essence into the historical revelation of the Trinity: Rahner through the self-communication of God rooted in the gracious dynamism that is our created spiritual existence and von Balthasar through his Trinitarian dramatics in which the Son undergoes the wrath of the Father for us.

Keywords: Trinity, Catholic theology, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, theology of grace, Maurice Blondel, gracious dynamism, spiritual existence

The Origins and Vicissitudes of Catholic Theology of the Trinity in the twentieth Century: The Theology of Grace and the Supernatural

KARL Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar have acquired a status in contemporary Catholic theology comparable to that which Protestant theology gives to Karl Barth, and in a lesser degree to Wolfhart Pannenberg or Jürgen Moltmann. No major work of contemporary Catholic Trinitarian theology disregards the epistemological orientations or the main theses that the two theologians elaborated in their respective works. If, in terms of decisive influence, Rahner has the advantage on von Balthasar, this is due not to the breadth of his work but to certain methodological and structural motifs that henceforth orient the new treatise on the Trinity. One cannot understand twentieth century Trinitarian theology without reference to the sources of the renewal that profoundly marked it. If the Trinitarian theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar can be considered as one of the most representative of the twentieth century, this is due on the one hand to the unequalled full-

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ness of its 'theodramatic' specificity, and on the other hand to the theological dispute which set it in ever deeper opposition to the fundamental orientations of Rahnerian theology.

(p. 315) This takes us to the complex debates about the supernatural in its relation to human nature which is capable of God, which ended in the formulation of Karl Rahner's fundamental axiom (*Grundaxiom*) according to which 'the Trinity of the economy of salvation is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa' (Rahner 1960 and 1967). This axiom is the direct outcome of a theology of grace which tries to understand grace, not primarily as a participation in the divine nature considered abstractly, but according to the dynamic of a differentiated and immediate relation with each of the divine persons, which is the mark of revealed Trinitarian faith. Trinitarian doctrine and its new architecture are closely bound up with the theology of grace, and derive from it. This articulation of the meaning of grace, often omitted in contemporary histories of Trinitarian thought, is partly attributable to the apologetics of immanence developed in Maurice Blondel's *L'Action* (1893). The question of the desire for God and its possible fulfilment will find in a theology of Trinitarian indwelling, drawn from the concrete expressions of Scripture, the resources that make it possible to get beyond the limits on each side, namely the aporias of extrinsicism and immanentism of grace. By underscoring the distinction of Trinitarian persons acting in the work of salvation, while showing the unity and communion of their undivided action, theologians sought first to recast the mode of knowing proper to Trinitarian faith. It will be economic and more closely connected to the theology of grace (Blondel 1950 (1893): 407 n. 1). From the pen of Blondel there appears what would become the measure of contemporary Trinitarian theology, which Walter Kasper will express in an emblematic formulation, summarizing the complexity of the contemporary Trinitarian movement born in the context of a reform of the theology of grace:

The Trinitarian self-revelation of God (*Die trinitarische Selbstoffenbarung Gottes*) implies as such the transcendent response to the question which humanity does not just *have* (*nicht nur hat*), but which it *is* (*sondern ist*): the question of God.... In the face of the radical questioning of Christian faith, a vague, general, bloodless theism can be of no help to us; the only thing which can help us is the decisive witness of the living God of history (*das entschiedene Zeugnis vom lebendigen Gott der Geschichte*), which is concretely revealed by Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. (Kasper 1982: 381-2)

This project consists in reintegrating the more abstract doctrine of the divine essence into the concrete revelation of God, and thus into Trinitarian doctrine as such.

Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Plan for a Trinitarian Theodramatics

The project of a *theodramatic* of Trinitarian dimension constitutes the major contribution of von Balthasar to Trinitarian theology. It takes up the whole of the last volume of the *Theo-Drama*, which is called *Das Endspiel*, that is, the final act. This 'dramatic' and Trinitarian soteriology is centred on the Pauline doctrine of salvation through the cross. Its leading concept is that of 'mission', with its two terminological variants *Sendung* (sending) and *Auftrag* (task), through which the filial identity of Jesus can be wholly (p. 316) interpreted as obedience (*Gehorsam*) to the Father in the Spirit for the salvation of men. This radically soteriological orientation involves a specific concept of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity, discussed at length in von Balthasar's work and a major point of dispute with his counterpart Karl Rahner. Unlike Rahner, von Balthasar did not confer a revelatory or phenomenological function to this relation so as to set, in the form of an axiom, the identity between the being of God and his manifestation in the incarnate Word. In other words, von Balthasar does not primarily conceive the Rahnerian axiom in terms of simple identity or dynamic correlation, but as a 'paradoxical' relation which is dominated by the central Christological theme of the Son's obedience even unto substitutionary death (*Stellvertretung*), where God's judgement on human sin dissolves itself in love. This act of envelopment (*Unterfassung*), by which the Father reclaims (*übernehmen*) the creation from its subjection to the contradictory power of sin, depends on the modes of relation of the divine persons in the economy (*die ökonomischen Modi der Relationen*), and has its condition of possibility in the intra-Trinitarian exchanges, without adding anything alien to these internal exchanges.

The complexity of this 'dramatic' Trinitarian theology must be preserved with all the nuances that it requires. Its first and quasi-axiomatic component is the Christological motif of 'substitution', the New Testament echo of the Old Testament theology of divine judgement and of its corollary, the 'wrath' of God that confronts in the Son the contradiction of our sin. The purpose of Jesus' mission (*Sendung*) is to reconcile the world with God (2 Cor. 5:18; Rom. 8:3). This mission is directed to a 'task' (*Auftrag*) that includes the charge of vanquishing sin and its ultimate consequences at their root. The meaning of the Son's *pro nobis* cannot henceforth simply signify 'on our behalf'. It goes further than that. This is the reason why the Swiss theologian disjoins sin from its individuation in the human sinner, in order to consider it in itself, as a reality opposed to God, as the conscious and deliberate rejection of God and of his revealed Word (the *mysterium iniquitatis*). It is precisely the confrontation of this 'reality' that governs the central theme of the Father's 'forsaking' (*Verlassenheit*) of the Son in the night of abandonment, even to the supreme ordeal of the 'loss' of the Father. Von Balthasar introduces here an unexpected aspect, but one that is fully consistent with the integral dimensions of this Trinitarian soteriology. It regards the motif of the timelessness (*die Zeitlosigkeit*) experienced by the Son on the cross: "This condition must have sufficient "space" (*Raum*) for the (infernally) experience of sinners abandoned by God, in two aspects: the intensity of the Son's forsakenness (*Verlassenheit*) on the Cross and its worldwide extension' (von Balthasar 1983: 280-1; 1998:

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308). We touch here upon the ultimate consequences that follow from the Christological principle described earlier. For von Balthasar, it is clear that the 'taking over of the loss of God' (*Übernahme des Gottverlustes*), deserved by sinners, is only possible on the foundation of the envelopment (*Unterfassung*) by the Son who, because of his uniqueness, experiences in a unique degree what can be called the possible loss of the presence of the Father. The Son takes on himself the perdition of sinners according to a degree proper to the uniqueness of his filial condition. This 'uniqueness' (*Einmaligkeit*) does not result simply from the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. It should be interpreted not only ontologically, but also relationally. This unique (p. 317) ness is a uniqueness of relationship and mutual dependence between the Father and the Son, a uniqueness of exchange within the Trinity, to which the Spirit contributes according to his property as communicated and received Gift. It is thus necessary to avoid every form of Christomonism in order to appreciate the work of redemption and to measure its true Trinitarian dimensions. The Spirit acts with a 'mobility' that allows him, within the drama of salvation and in accord with the law of the economy, to keep open the 'diastasis' between the Father and the Son. What thus appears on the level of the economy as the sign of separation is only possible because of the unity of the Father and the Son sealed in the Spirit. This 'reversal' (*Umkehrung*) results from the fact that, in the Passion, human sin is placed naked before God and concentrated in the crucified Son (2 Cor. 5:21):

This reversal is not the result of a divine decision coming 'from outside'; it is made possible by the fact that the Son's God-forsakenness is drawn into the love relationship within the Trinity (*die Einbeziehung der Gottverlassenheit in die trinitarische Liebesbeziehung*). The Son takes the estrangement (*Entfernung*) into himself and creates proximity: nearness between God and man on the basis of the union between Father and Son that is held fast through every darkness and forsakenness. The Son experienced separation when he was bearing the world's sin, but this separation was not a remoteness from the Father, for he aligned himself continually to the Father, he looked back to the Father constantly in order to stand in the exact center of his mission (*Sendung*). (von Balthasar 1983: 236; 1998: 261)

Here we see the central concept of 'mission', to which von Balthasar accords a particular status. At the level of the economy, the Son's knowledge of the Father is mediated by the mission, which thereby receives a timeless (*unzeitlich*) status. It is coextensive with the Father's act of generation, included in it, since 'the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ... was foreordained before the foundation of the world' in order to undergo this death for sin (1 Pet. 1:19-20).

The Christological principle that we have termed a 'uniqueness of exchange' flows back upon Trinitarian doctrine as such, not in a simple relationship of continuity, but in a logical paradox which follows from the event of the Incarnation being ordered to the Passion. Thus, the Son on the cross literally experiences the love of the Father in the form of 'wrath', conforming to the Old Testament theology of judgement without which the death of the Son would be incomprehensible. The conciliation, apparently contradictory, between 'wrath' and 'love' comes about in the result of the cross, a conciliation that enables

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one to avoid two insufficient interpretations of the event, one reading the Passion as the unfurling of the divine wrath on the innocent victim, the other regarding the passion simply as an expression of the superabundance of the divine love. If we stay within the perspective of the Old Testament, Christ's suffering on the cross would only be understood as a punishment which proportions retribution according to one's works (Deut. 30:15-19). The New Covenant sealed in Christ subverts this symmetrical relation. There is literally a shift (*Äonwende*), a concept which one could translate as 'change of aeon'. In place of the perfect symmetry between the promise and the threat, the benediction and the curse, comes the asymmetry of a 'taking over' of the sin that merits condemnation in the unique destiny of the Son who takes its ultimate consequences on himself: 'Now there is a fundamental *asymmetry* (*eine grundsätzliche Asymmetrie*) in so far as God's judgement has been pronounced once and for all in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus' (von Balthasar 1983: 251; 1998: 277). The Trinitarian dramatic that von Balthasar deploys requires this Old Testament horizon. The cross of Christ is interpreted in light of the change of the aeons (*Äonwende*), which affects the traditional theology of Judgement. From the Old to the New Covenant, the shift takes place integrally and is resolved in the cross of the mediator which is in itself the sole judgement (Jn 12:31; Rom. 5:15, 21).

We have described, as precisely as possible, what constitutes the heart of von Balthasar's Trinitarian soteriology, by analysing one of the most representative texts in which it is found. It is necessary, however, to take one additional step. This central dimension of the economy of salvation is and can only be the expression of an intra-Trinitarian reality. It owes its existence to a single truth, that of the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son. Von Balthasar defends himself vigorously against the accusation of having promoted a theology of the 'tragic God' (*Prozess Gottes*), just as he rejects a 'dialectical' interpretation of the coincidence of opposites, as if the divine achieved its plenitude by assuming the negativity of sin and of contradiction: 'So we cannot speak of a "process" in God, as if he could attain fullness only through the world's sinful alienation from him and through his Son's Cross' (von Balthasar 1983: 239; 1998: 264). To a dialectical logic, von Balthasar opposes a logic of 'paradox' that finds its source in the undeniable permanence of the substantial unity of the Father and the Son, a unity of gift and of perfect communion.

Karl Rahner and the Trinitarian Theology of God's Self-Revelation ('Selbstmitteilung Gottes')

Karl Rahner's Trinitarian theology is developed in very different directions from that of von Balthasar, and in language that is more conceptual than imagistic. One can set forth its fundamental axes and content in the form of some synthetic propositions. To do this, we will refer to the major texts in which it was developed, especially in the fifteen years between 1950 and 1965. The primary feature of Rahnerian Trinitarian theology is the close connection which it establishes between the theology of grace and Trinitarian theol-

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ogy. For Rahner, this relation of dependence constitutes the proper mode of knowledge of God the Trinity, and this in two ways: on the one hand, that of the immediate presence of God in the soul by an originating communication of grace, and, on the other hand, that of the historical event of the Incarnation of the only Word, which Rahner defines as the victoriously irreversible apex of the self-speaking (*Selbstzusage*) and self-expression (*Selbstaussage*) of God in history. Rahner's verdict on the classical theology (p. 319) of the manuals is rather severe. Following the very erudite works of Théodore de Régnon, published in four volumes between 1892 and 1898, Rahner assumes that the so-called 'Latin' and 'Greek' models of Trinitarian doctrine are quite distinct, with the Greek highlighting the distinction of the hypostases and founding the doctrine of consubstantiality on the divine monarchy identified with the fountal person of the Father. The verdict is apparent in the most successful treatise that Rahner wrote:

If, with Scripture and the Greeks, we mean by *ho Theos* in the first place the Father (not letting the word simply 'suppose' for the Father), then the Trinitarian structure of the Apostles' Creed, in line with Greek theology of the Trinity, would lead us to treat first of the Father.... The Bible and the Greeks would have us start from the one unoriginate God, who is already *Father* even when nothing is known as yet about generation and spiration. He is known as the one unoriginate hypostasis which is not *positively* conceived as 'absolute' even before it is explicitly known as relative. (Rahner 1967: 371; 1970: 16-17)

Deploring the isolation of Trinitarian doctrine, Rahner recommends that Trinitarian theology be rooted in the approach by which the God of revelation manifests himself to men through the mission of the Son and the sanctifying gift of the Spirit. In light of the resources of Scripture and tradition, he explores the relationship established by grace between the three divine persons and the human subject of this gracious communication. By this twofold approach, reducible to the unity of its principle—the freely offered gift of divine life—Rahner suggests that one is freed from a conception of the relationship between God and man that relies on the overly 'extrinsic' model of 'created grace' produced by way of efficient causality. Thus, the keyword of Rahner's Trinitarian theology is the concept of self-communication, which presupposes that the beatifying character of the contemplation of the Trinity requires something of a 'Trinitarian structure' in us. As a result, grace cannot be reduced either to a merely logical relation between the one God and the creature or to a created 'quality' of sanctifying nature whose only connection with 'God' is a bond of causal dependence. As in Pauline theology, the interior sanctification of the human being is first and foremost the communication of the personal Spirit of God, or, in scholastic language, the *donum increatum*, in such a way that any existence under and in the Spirit (*pneumatikos*) appears as the consequence or effect of the possession of this uncreated grace. It is because we have the personal *Pneuma* of God that we have our spiritual existence. Otherwise put, the doctrine of grace should insist less on the created aspect of grace than on what grace is and actually produces, namely the self-communication of God in Christ and the Spirit. In 1959, Karl Rahner wrote in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* a piece titled 'Dreifaltigkeitsmystik'. It sums up the historical, doctrinal, and systematic developments of the *Lexikon*, so as to indicate the fundamental direction in

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which the Trinitarian theology of indwelling should be oriented and developed, based on an economic understanding of the Trinitarian faith culminating in the sanctifying gift of the Spirit. Through reform of the theology of grace, Rahner arrives at the articulation of the fundamental axiom that contains the essence of his Trinitarian doctrine. Before Rahner wrote any systematic text on the Trinity, the (p. 320) axiom that the Trinity of the economy of salvation is the immanent Trinity was treated in similar formulations, beginning in 1939 with the very scholarly study of the scholastic notion of uncreated grace in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* (Rahner 1939), then in 1949 with the work of biblical theology devoted to 'Theos in the New Testament' (Rahner 1954b). The contested question can be formulated as follows: is God's indwelling in the righteous only 'appropriated' to the divine persons, or does grace give the sanctified human being a proper and distinctive relation to them? If one answers that such a union is given to the human by the mediation of *created* grace, then one must apply the principle of the Trinity's unity of efficient causality in creation, without consideration of the distinction of the divine persons. Pius XII refined this principle by stating: 'Omnia esse habenda Sanctissimae Trinitati communia, quatenus eadem Deum ut supremam efficientem causam respiciant' ('all these activities are common to the most Blessed Trinity, in so far as they have God as supreme efficient cause': Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, 1943, no. 78). So it was specifically in 1939 that Rahner gave his first sketch of the axiom which would only be definitively formulated in 1960 and 1967 in two other important texts:

There can be absolutely no objection to maintaining on the basis of the positive data of Revelation that the attribution of determinate relations of the recipient of grace is not merely a matter of appropriation, but is intended to give expression to a proper relationship in each case (*ein je eigentümliches Verhältnis*). In Scripture it is the Father in the Trinity who is our Father, and not the threefold God (*Der Vater in der Trinität ist in der Schrift unser Vater, nicht der dreifaltige Gott*). (Rahner 1954a: 374; 1961a: 345)

The fundamental axiom has as yet to find its full and formally definitive formulation. But it is broadly adumbrated in the innovative and vigorous developments which he devotes to the theology of grace, given interiorly as the most gratuitous and intimate gift. Rahner shows himself to be fully conscious that the theology of grace and Trinitarian theology are mutually dependent. The reduction of the economic Trinity to a kind of 'pre-Christian monotheism' (*vorchristlichen Monotheismus*) does not seem to be curbed or corrected by the doctrine of the appropriations, but rather reinforced. It is therefore fitting, in light of the positive givens of faith, to expose the *proper* relations which each of the divine persons has with the regenerated and saved human person. The balance sought by the theologian consists, in this period, in articulating in an organic manner the 'Trinity of the economy' and the 'inner Trinity' (*innere Trinität*). But in 1939, contrary to later texts, the balance that Rahner seeks between the 'inner Trinity' and the 'Trinity of the economy' still remains prisoner of a question debated in scholastic theology and oriented by the necessity of not infringing on the principle of the unity of the efficient causality of God the Trinity in his operation *ad extra*. Rahner thus seeks to set up the principle of a relationship of the graced human being to the Triune God that would not just be an 'appropriat-

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ed' relation. Progressively, and guided by the renewal of biblical study, Rahner shifts his Trinitarian doctrine's centre of gravity toward the Greek schema for which the Father is the Person-source of the divine life and the principle of Trinitarian consubstantiality. However, this preference does not consist in adopting the characteristic features of the Cappadocian Greek theology. Rather, it aims at averting (p. 321) the ever-present danger of appearing 'tritheist'. In foregrounding the hypostasis of the Father, Rahner presents the Logos and the Spirit as the two internal and mutually opposed elements of the undivided communication through which the *Father* is given to the world without intermediary. It is through the missions of the Son and Spirit that Rahner comes back to the 'immanent' Trinity, by positing the principle that the differentiation which the economy of salvation reveals to us must be found in God himself. Such a relationship could not have an arbitrary foundation. The Incarnation of the only Logos and the mission of the Spirit are not just simple matters of fact. They must be really involved as the internal and mutually opposed elements of the undivided communication by which the Father gives himself to the world. This representation of the Trinity highlights the hypostasis of the Father and interprets the Trinitarian life as an absolute subjectivity, identified with the Father. This is proven by Rahner's qualifying the mode of the intra-Trinitarian processions by reference to the Father as the source. The reality of the distinction between the Trinitarian 'hypostases' is founded on the dual self-communication which the *Father* makes, in so far as he is the One who 'expresses' and the One who 'receives'. The Father establishes a real distinction between himself, and the personal expression he gives of himself, and the gift which is received. One basic text enables us to authenticate our interpretation of Rahner:

Here God is the 'Father', that is, the simply unoriginate God, who is always known as presupposed, who communicates *himself* precisely when and because his self-communication does not simply coincide with him in lifeless identity. In this self-communication, he stays the one who is free, incomprehensible—in a word, unoriginate. (Rahner 1967: 371; 1970: 84)

The Rahnerian model is neither Greek nor Latin. Rahner never in any way adopts the position that the Trinitarian persons are distinguished by incommunicable properties or idioms. Nor does he take up the principle that the distinction between the persons rests on relative opposition. Certainly, he does not deny that the relationship (*Beziehung*) between the One who communicates himself and those who, respectively, are expressed (the Son) and received (the Spirit) in this communication must be understood as a relationship between 'relations'. But Rahner explicitly rules out using the notion of relative opposition to overcome the antinomy between hypostatic diversity and essential unity. Since relation is precisely that which distinguishes the least (*ens debilissimum*), it serves to mitigate the *crux interpretum* of Trinitarian faith, culminating in the affirmation of the irreducible and relational reality of the divine persons that the Trinitarian economy reveals. Rahner himself, however, is reluctant to foreground the distinct hypostasis, above all if doing so tends surreptitiously to confuse the hypostasis with the phenomenological conception of the notion of 'person'. The clearest text we have to account for the reality of the intra-Trinitarian persons hardly goes beyond the formulation Rahner gives in his 1967 treatise:

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There is real difference in God as he is in himself between one and the same God insofar as he is—at once and necessarily—the unoriginate who mediates himself to himself (Father), the one who is in truth uttered for himself (Son), and the one (p. 322) who is received and accepted in love for himself (Spirit)—and insofar as, *as a result of this*, he is the one who can freely communicate himself. (Rahner 1967: 384; 1970: 102)

On all of these points, Rahner's Trinitarian theology does not offer a fixed position. If, on the one hand, he seems to foreground the hypostasis of the Father, on the other hand, he is critical of the common use of the concept of 'person', seen as loaded with ambiguity when it is taken in the phenomenological sense of a free self-consciousness, the source of reflective acts and spiritual autonomy. Liberating our faith from 'mythological' representations of the Trinity demands that we free ourselves from the projection onto God of phenomenological conceptions of the person. One should keep to propositions that do not go beyond the more 'metaphysical' vocabulary of 'Principle', 'truth', and 'love'. In other words, known and grasped as the Being-source who expresses himself and gives himself in a dual communication which is concretized in the economy of salvation, the divine Trinity cannot be seduced or reduced to a nascent form of 'modalism'. The logic of the gift which directs Rahner's Trinitarian theology requires that the dual communication through which God gives himself to us in the Incarnation of the Logos and the gift of the Spirit is anchored in God's very being. Thus, the Father, Son, and Spirit are, simultaneously, under the perspective of their mutual and constitutive relationships, the 'distinct modes of subsisting' (*distinkte Subsistenzweisen*) of the one, single divine essence. But it is clear that Rahner primarily envisages the divine essence as 'realized' in the first concrete mode of subsisting which is the Father, in which it is concretized and personalizes itself as source. Thus, the dominant model of this Trinitarian theology can be expressed by speaking of the *divine self-communication of the Father*, the source of his communication *ad intra* in the two distinct modes of subsistence and the foundation of his communication *ad extra* in the Incarnation of the Logos and the gift of the Spirit. It is also fitting that the creation be understood as a moment of this divine self-communication of the Father which is realized in a prototypical manner in the eternal Trinitarian life. This is why Rahner sets up a correlation between the Trinitarian offer of divine life and the 'Trinitarian structure of the mind'. This final articulation, of anthropo-theological nature, results from the principles of transcendental anthropology developed by Rahner in his philosophy of religion. We cannot give a complete exposition of this transcendental anthropology. To grasp its meaning and Trinitarian implications, one can use the formulation that Rahner gave in one of his best-known works, *Hearer of the Word*, which published his lectures given in 1937 at Salzburg:

We are at the heart of authentic philosophy of religion to the extent that it becomes for us the foundation of the possibility of a revelation of God. If revelation must be the unfolding (*Enthüllung*) of the Absolute itself to the finite mind, it requires two conditions: on the one hand, that every being can express itself in a true word (*wahre Rede*), in a communication (*Mitteilung*) which is addressed to the mind. It is only on this condition that the possibility of the communication of a

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reality (*Sachverhalt*), hidden in God, can be admitted, and it is this which we mean by the term revelation (*Offenbarung*).... On the other hand, the ultimate unity of being and knowledge is the final presupposition of God in his divinity communicating to man by the word (*die Rede*) and through the Word (*das Wort*). It is only if the existence of the entity is at (p. 323) once 'Logos' that the Logos become flesh can say in 'Speech' all that is hidden in the depths of divinity'. (Rahner 1963: 70)

It is in this perspective that Rahner's Trinitarian theology shows its complexity and the breadth of its implications. In the final analysis, as we emphasized at the outset, his Trinitarian theology is integrated with the guiding question that unites all of his theological thought. His Trinitarian doctrine is, as it were, a fundamental variation on the single theme of the free revelation of God addressed to a humanity which is capable of receiving it. Hence, the self-communication of God will be realized in unity and in distinction, under the 'mode' of history (Truth) and the Spirit (love), knowledge and love being understood as the realization, on the human level, of *verum* and of *bonum*, that is, as anthropological transcendental determinations. Rather than calling this a Trinitarian doctrine as such, it is better to speak of the event of self-communication by which God, in manifesting himself at the heart of the spiritual consciousness, manifests himself as Being who is self-differentiated in an act of pure interior donation and of which the Father is the source and the goal.

Major Directions in Contemporary Catholic Trinitarian Theology

Contemporary Catholic Trinitarian theology cannot be summed up in the two great figures of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Karl Rahner, although they profoundly influenced the whole development and renewal of Trinitarian doctrine in the Catholic context. One cannot appreciate the phenomenon of twentieth-century Catholic Trinitarian theology without taking account of the factors that contributed to its substantial renewal. It is undeniable that the primary factor was the renewal of positive theology, freed from the accustomed forms in which the outdated language and conceptuality of scholastic theology had bound it. Positive theology took the form of a historical theology that placed in diachronic perspective the developments of Trinitarian theology in the tradition, without automatically considering earlier formulations as unsatisfactory by comparison with later developments of the tradition. Inspired by the work of Théodore de Régnon in his *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité* (4 vols., Paris: Victor Retaux, 1892-98), the theology of the first decades of the twentieth century was on the path toward a Trinitarian renewal. In its beginnings it owed everything to 'historical theology' and to its methods of investigation, because 'historical theology' was the other word that identified and transformed, during the years 1910-20, the narrowness of positive theology. The appearance in 1910 of Jules Lebreton's *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité* (2 vols., 1910 and 1927) marked a turning point for positive theology. (Among other works of historical theology, a special mention is also due to Hans Joachim Schoeps, who held the chair of history of reli-

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gions and of thought at Erlangen University: *Theologie und Geschichte des* (p. 324) *Judenchristentums*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1949.) It was no longer the condensed doctrinal substance of the faith reduced to its driest explication, but a *history* of the doctrinal formation and objectification of Christian faith. This history neglects no period that is involved in the formation of reflective faith. Jules Lebreton clearly establishes the moments that, in this long history, are to be considered as *progress* in the understanding of the faith received from the Apostles and set down in the inspired Scriptures. He also sketches the beginnings of a renewal that restores to the Trinity its rootedness in the baptismal and ecclesial life of the Christian: 'This intense sociality is a crucial safeguard for Christianity: the Christian does not pursue private speculations; his faith is the faith of the Church; the symbol to which he subscribes at baptism is his rule of faith' (Lebreton 1928: xiii). Today one can smile at the naïveté with which Lebreton interpreted the theology of the great ante-Nicene theologians, the apologists of the second century in particular. He judges that their thought is fraught with gaucheries, ambiguities, or even errors. But they are excusable to the eyes of the historian of dogma who knows, retroactively, that they are steps on the way to more satisfying developments. We can no longer make precisely the same judgement, nor can we regard in the same way the theology of Justin Martyr, or of Theophilus of Antioch or Athenagoras, or more later of Hippolytus and Tertullian. One would certainly shrink from their near alignment of the generation of the Logos with the production of the world, but one can also detect here the speculative expression of a *Christian* and *Trinitarian* theology of creation, which, following the Pauline hymns in Ephesians and Colossians, takes Christ to be the 'firstborn of all creation', a creation on its way to filiation. The high medieval tradition did not denigrate this Trinitarian reading of creation. It is today one of the masterpieces of contemporary Trinitarian theology, as the work of von Balthasar attests, in the last stage of his theological trilogy: 'The more Trinitarian (which is to say, the richer) our picture of God is (*Je trinitarisch-reicher unser Gottesbild ist*), the more we are able to have a positive attitude to the eternal perfecting of the world created and redeemed in God' (von Balthasar 1983: 463; 1998: 506). The relationship between Trinity and creation, Trinity and ontology is one of the paths that contemporary Catholic theology has taken fruitfully, thanks to a re-reading of the high medieval tradition and to new speculative resources, as shown in an emblematic way by the brief and innovative work of Klaus Hemmerle, *Thesen zu einer trinitarischen Ontologie* (1976).

The relationship between Trinity and creation, which has given rise to eminent studies leading to new interpretations of the Tradition, is characterized by a mutual fertilization between the great texts of medieval theology and the renewal of the theology of creation. One should indicate here the magisterial work of Gilles Emery, and the earlier, three-volume work of Louis Bouyer, devoted respectively to the *Eternal Son*, the *Invisible Father*, and the *Consoler* (*Le Fils éternel*, *Le Père invisible*, and *Le Consolateur*, Paris: Cerf, 1973 to 1980). This trilogy is one of the most accomplished works of contemporary Catholic Trinitarian theology, which indirectly inspired the work of François-Xavier Durrwell about the relation of Christ to the Spirit, and about the Father. These two major works would never have been produced without the erudite studies of Yves-Marie Congar and the

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project of pneumatological Christology which he ceaselessly reworked (p. 325) and refined, as can be seen from his many articles on the relation of the Spirit to Christ in the *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*. One of the most notable features of modern Catholic Trinitarian theology has been its openness to the reappropriation of the heritage of Byzantine theology, and of the specific form of its pneumatology. The leading protagonist here was Yves-Marie Congar with his three vast volumes explicitly devoted to the Holy Spirit (Congar 1979–80). Byzantine theology contributed something to the possible future reform of the Latin understanding of the *Filioque*, but far more to the conception of the form which the Triune unity takes. *Communion* models of the Triune unity have advanced step by step, tied to a form of personalism intended to correct the narrowness of the dominant model drawn from the Augustinian analogy of the ‘Trinitarian cogito’. Contemporary theologians often detect in the Augustinian model a possible reduction of the Trinitarian mystery to solipsism, treating the Trinitarian life as a kind of supra-subjectivity. These ‘communion’ models, locating the principle of the unity of nature in the notion of circumincession or perichoresis, try to go beyond the aporias of Rahnerian theology, which reduces the Trinitarian life to its paternal source, conceived as a supra-subjectivity. The erudite and systematic writings of Gisbert Greshake are authoritative in this field (Greshake 1997). This is also the direction of the works of the Spanish theologian Xabier Pikaza, especially his *Dios como Espíritu y Persona* (Pikaza 1989). The progressive and at times unilateral use of ‘communion’ models to think about the intra-Trinitarian relation finds an equally systematic expression in the work of the North American theologian Catherine Mowry LaCugna, which has been received as among the most stimulating theological works of the past few decades (LaCugna 1992). With regard to the status of the notion of person and debates about its relative equivocality, theologians will seek a *via media* by returning to the interpersonal analogy, along with the metaphysical correctives necessary to avoid anthropomorphism. It is a difficult tight-rope to walk, but scholarly and forward-looking syntheses have achieved it, as in the work of Walter Kasper cited above. But it is above all in the ecclesiological domain that Catholic Trinitarian doctrine finds one of its happiest topics, as can already be seen in Michael Schmaus's *Dogmatik* (1953 to 1955). The Trinitarian motif appears beginning in 1937 in the first work of Yves-Marie Congar, *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d'un œcuménisme catholique*, which came out in the *Unam Sanctam* series:

The unity of the Church is an expression and an extension of the unity of God himself. The life which is eternally in the bosom of the Father, after communicating itself within God so as to make up the ‘divine society’ of the Three persons of the blessed Trinity, is graciously communicated to spiritual creatures, first to the angels and then to us. This is the Church: the extension of the divine life to a multiplicity of creatures. (Congar 1937: 59)

The Church is here situated in the framework of the economy of salvation: she proceeds from the Trinity and returns to it.

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The more recent topic of the Christian theology of religions has made vigorous use of the paradigm of the Trinity. Tied to a more 'functional' and strategic approach, rather (p. 326) than to a doctrinal foundation, this paradigm is paradoxically able to create the conditions of a dialogue between the world's religious traditions on the basis of a pneumatology serving at times to correct the limits of an hypothetical insufficiency of Christ's mediation, historically connected to a culture and religious tradition that has seen itself as universal. This route, however fertile, risks functionalizing Trinitarian faith and overdetermining the function of pneumatology, and leading to an acceptance of a 'double' economy. We note in this regard the works of Jacques Dupuis, author of an encyclopaedic work on Christian theology of religious pluralism that is constructed around the Trinitarian 'paradigm'.

(Translated from the French by Francesca A. Murphy.)

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Kasper (1982); Kelly (1989); LaCugna (1992); Greshake (1997).

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Vincent Holzer

Vincent Holzer is Professor of Fundamental and Dogmatic Theology at the Institut Catholique in Paris and a corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology (Rome).

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Aristotle Papanikolaou

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This article explores contemporary Orthodox Trinitarian theology, highlighting the influence of Sergius Bulgakov, Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas. It explains that Bulgakov conceived the Trinity in terms of the actualization, in the Holy Spirit, of the self-revelation of the Father in the Son in which process the tri-hypostatic being of God was revealed as Sophia in eternal communion with humanity. Lossky held that the Trinity was revealed in the Incarnation of Christ, an antinomic truth that requires an apophatic and mystical theology. Zizioulas adopted Lossky's emphasis on the monarchy of the Father and on personhood as freedom from the limitations of nature, but distanced himself from Lossky's apophaticism and neo-Palamite commitment to the essence/energies distinction.

Keywords: Orthodox Trinitarian theology, Sergius Bulgakov, Vladimir Lossky, John Zizioulas, self-revelation, Holy Spirit, Father, Incarnation of Christ, antinomic truth, apophaticism

FOR contemporary Orthodox theology of the Trinity, the fourth century was clearly a definitive moment. It was then that Athanasius of Alexandria, more than any other theologian in the history of Christian thought up to that time, unequivocally declared the full divinity of the Son. The explicit declaration of the divinity of the Holy Spirit soon followed with the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Gregory of Nazianzus. Contemporary Orthodox theology stands within this tradition of thinking on God as Trinity in one significant way: it continues to interpret the doctrine of the Trinity as the Christian affirmation of a God whose being is love and freedom to be in communion with the not-God. The link between the doctrine of the Trinity and the affirmation of divine-human communion stands at the core of the three major trajectories in contemporary Orthodox theology: the sophiology of Sergii Bulgakov, the apophaticism of Vladimir Lossky, and the relational ontology of John Zizioulas.

Sophia! Orthoi!

The key to understanding Sergii Bulgakov's (1871–1945) Trinitarian theology is to decipher (literally) what he means by 'Sophia', which has been the chief stumbling-block to appreciating Bulgakov's work. The question that must be posed to Bulgakov is the following: Why is the concept of Sophia necessary for Trinitarian theology?

On the surface, Bulgakov's Trinitarian theology seems quite ordinary. First, he accepts the categories of *hypostasis* and *ousia* that were hammered out during the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. Second, he gives an Augustine-inspired interpretation of the Trinity as the Father's self-revelation in the Son, with the Holy Spirit being the love that unites the Father and the Son, and, as such, completes the self-revelation of the Father in the Son. The Cappadocians and Augustine made significant contributions (p. 329) toward a theology of the Trinity, but they failed to elaborate further on the implications of the *homoousios*, which was necessary in order to account for conceptualizing the God-world relation in terms of communion. In both the Latin and the Greek forms of Trinitarian theology, the *homoousios* was interpreted in terms of the attributes common to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and as that which constituted the unity of the Godhead. While Bulgakov does not necessarily dispute these understandings of the *homoousios*, they do not fully account for the God-world relation. It is, therefore, a particular understanding of the God-world relation in terms of communion that leads Bulgakov to claim that a further theological unpacking of the *homoousios* is needed (Bulgakov 1993: 25).

The key to understanding the link between *homoousios* and Sophia in Bulgakov lies in his notion of the self-revelation of God. The relation between the Father and the Son is the self-revelation of the Father in the Son. This self-revelation, however, is only complete in the Holy Spirit, who unites the Father and the Son. Bulgakov identifies the Father as 'Divine Depth and Mystery, the Divine Subject of self-revelation' (Bulgakov 2004: 359–93). If one were to bracket the self-revelation of God in the Son and in the Spirit, the Father is, then, the Absolute, which cannot even be called God, since the latter is a relative term. This Absolute is an unknowable, impenetrable mystery. It is in the self-revelation of the Father in the Son that the Father transcends this transcendence, or reveals his transcendence as immanence, and is immanent as revealed.

The Son, therefore, is the Image of the Father, the Word of the Father in which is contained all words; the 'objective self-revelation' (Bulgakov 1993: 43) of the Father, the Truth of the Father, and, as such, the divine content (Bulgakov 2008: 111). Bracketing now the person of the Holy Spirit, the Father knows the Son as the Image of the Father, and the Son knows the Father as that of which he is the perfect image. The relationship is one of mutual mirroring, but this mirroring is not yet the accomplished self-revelation of God.

Such a revelation is not a self-revelation unless it is actualized, and this actualization is accomplished in the person of the Holy Spirit, who is the love that unites the Father and the Son: the Father loves all that is revealed in the Son, and the Son returns this love

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kenotically as the hypostatic image of the Father (Bulgakov 2004: 63). According to Bulgakov, the self-revelation of the Father is not complete until the content that is revealed in the Son is actualized as life by the Holy Spirit. In this sense, the Holy Spirit, for Bulgakov, is the 'spirit of truth' and 'represents the principle of reality. He transforms the world of ideas into a living and real essence' (Bulgakov 1993: 48-9). The Trinity is thus the self-revelation of God to Godself, specifically, the self-revelation of the Father mediated through Godself, the revealing hypostases of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Word and the Glory of God, respectively. In what is a striking affinity with the Karl Barth of volume I, part I of the *Church Dogmatics*, Bulgakov identifies the Father as the revealing hypostasis, the Son as the revealed hypostasis, and the Holy Spirit as the revelation.

Where does Sophia fit into all this? In the end, Sophia is identified in Bulgakov's system with the *ousia* of God hypostatized in the trihypostatic self-revelation of God; but, as such, it is no longer simply *ousia*. Bracketing the self-revelation of the Father in the (p. 330) Son and the Spirit, Bulgakov argues that the Father remains 'in himself undisclosed'; as undisclosed, he adds that 'Sophia so far as the hypostasis of the Father is concerned, connotes predominantly Ousia—prior to its own revelation as Sophia' (Bulgakov 1993: 41). It is only in the self-revelation of God in the Son and the Holy Spirit that all that God *is* is revealed, only in this self-revelation that all that God *is is*; there is an identification in Bulgakov between the self-revelation of God and the fullness of God's existence. In this fullness of God's existence, *ousia* is no longer an apophatic concept indicative of impenetrable mystery and transcendence of the Absolute; *ousia* is Sophia. Sophia, then, for Bulgakov, is God's being as the self-revelation of the Father in the Son and the Holy Spirit. As Bulgakov states, 'Sophia is Ousia as revealed' (Bulgakov 1993: 54), or 'Sophia is the revelation of the Son and the Holy Spirit, without separation and without confusion' (Bulgakov 2004: 189), or 'Divine Sophia is God's *exhaustive* self-revelation, the fullness of divinity, and therefore has absolute content' (Bulgakov 2002: 39).

As the very being of God it must necessarily, Bulgakov argues, refer to God's relation to the world, and not simply to the intra-Trinitarian relations, because, for Bulgakov, the self-revelation of God in the Logos and the Holy Spirit is the revelation of all that God is, and included in all that God *is is* God's relation to creation and humanity. Bulgakov is not arguing for the eternity of a creation that is restricted by time and space. If, however, all theology is grounded in the premise that God has revealed Godself as Creator and Redeemer, it is impossible for Bulgakov to conceive the thinking of God that does not include God existing as eternally relating to creation in some way. Accordingly, God's self-revelation as the revelation of all that God *is is* also God's being as love, and thus, as freedom to create and redeem what is not God, and, thus, as eternally relating to creation. It is for this reason that Bulgakov identifies Sophia with 'the divine world' and links Sophia with that famous Russian theological term *sobornost*; Sophia is the 'cosmic *sobornost* of concrete all-unity in divine love' (Bulgakov 2008: 103-4).

As the all-unity, Sophia is also identified with another famous Russian theological term, *bogochelovechestvo*, which is untranslatable, but has been rendered as God-manhood, the humanity of God, or divine-humanity. The term originates with Vladimir Sergeevich

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Solov'ev (1853–1900), considered the father of Russian sophiology, whose influence on Bulgakov is without dispute (Valliere 2000). *Bogochelovechestvo* signifies in a more concrete way that God's being as Trinitarian is always-already an eternal communion with humanity; and this always-already eternal communion with humanity becomes the foundation for God's creation of the *anthropos* as the image of God, and of the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus. Creation in time and space is essentially a repetition of the being of God, which includes the self-revelation of the Father in the Son through the Holy Spirit. Bulgakov distinguishes between the divine Sophia and the creaturely Sophia, with the divine Sophia being the foundation for the becoming of the world in time and space. As the soul of the world in time and space, it is the creaturely Sophia, the power of the world in its becoming toward union with the divine Sophia, which is divinization for Bulgakov—the unity of the divine and creaturely Sophia. Even though Sophia is about God's relation to the world, it is identified with *bogochelovechestvo* for Bulgakov, because it is in and through humanity that world is divinizable (Bulgakov 1993: 14).

(p. 331) The notion of self-revelation of God is integral to Bulgakov's Trinitarian theology, and it is here that one sees the influence of German Idealism, although it should be made clear that Bulgakov was critical of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, especially what he saw as making creation constitutive of the being of God. The self-revelation of God gives an account of why three in God. He faults both Latin and Greek Christian thinkers for not engaging in a 'theological deduction of the Trinitarian dogma', which means that '[t]he ontological necessity of precisely three, as a trinity, is not shown and not proved' (Bulgakov 2004: 33). Bulgakov adds that 'the trinity in Divinity in unity, as well as in the distinction of the three concrete hypostases, must be shown not only as a divinely revealed *fact*, valid by virtue of its facticity, but also as a *principle* owing to which Divinity is not a dyad, tetrad, etc., in general not a pagan Olympus, but precisely a trinity, exhausting itself in its fullness and self-enclosedness' (Bulgakov 2004: 7).

The proper way for thought to fathom this revealed fact is to begin with the assumption that God is Spirit; and it is here that one sees the more positive appropriation of German Idealism by Bulgakov. According to Bulgakov, '[i]t is proper to spirit to have a personal consciousness, a hypostasis, and a nature as its self-revelation, and the life of spirit consists in the living out of this personal self-revelation in its nature. In spirit are given: I, as personal self-consciousness; nature, as the source of its self-revelation; and revelation itself as the life of the spirit in its nature' (Bulgakov 2004: 61). If the logic of this phenomenology of spirit as personal self-consciousness is self-evident in the created realm, then it must also apply to God, who is Absolute Spirit. Since there are no limits or givens in God, there is no I in opposition to the not-I, as with created spirit; God is for Godself 'simultaneously I, thou, he, and therefore we and you' (Bulgakov 2004: 54). God's Trinitarian being as self-revelation is a perfect communion of persons who, in their three distinct subjectivities, are one subject. In the notion of the dynamism of the 'I' toward the other, Bulgakov was clearly influenced by Pavel Florensky, whose stamp is also evident in the Trinitarian theology of the well-known Romanian theologian, Dumitru Staniloae (Florensky 1997; Staniloae 1998). The communion of persons of the Trinity is thus the self-revelation of the Absolute, which is the Father, and this communion/self-revelation is a kenotic event

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in so far as it is constituted by the mutual *kenosis* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Bulgakov 2004: 179–80, 384).

Although it is no doubt questionable whether German Idealist notions of the self can be appropriated in Trinitarian theology, especially given postmodern criticism and modifications of Idealist notions of the self, the problems with Bulgakov's so-called 'Trinitarian deduction' do not necessarily lead to the jettisoning of his sophiology. What Bulgakov saw most clearly was that the Christian conceptualization of God as Trinity was motivated not simply by a particular understanding of salvation, but was ultimately an attempt to account for how God *is* in such a way so as to be in communion with what is not-God, which is the real point of the Trinity. Bulgakov also saw clearly that, although much important work was done by Greek and Latin Christian thinkers, the categories of *ousia* and *hypostasis* could not, by themselves, do the work of conceptualizing God's being as one of communion with the not-God. Bulgakov introduces a third term, 'Sophia', which he considers an amplification of *homoousios*, to (p. 332) account for God's Trinitarian being as communion with the not-God, but he does so in a way that avoids the pitfalls of social Trinitarianism. One could argue that Bulgakov's Sophia has affinities with the Thomistic notion of *esse*. Bulgakov might argue, however, that *esse*, because arrived at philosophically, can only ground an analogy of being that makes a certain kind of knowledge possible, but not knowledge as communion. In terms of the analogy of being, Bulgakov is closer to Balthasar in attempting to conceptualize a Trinitarian understanding of being that would allow for communion. The real relevance and challenge of Bulgakov's notion of Sophia consists in how to think of the immanent Trinity in such a way that accounts for God's being as communion with the world, but does so without falling into the inevitable problems of social Trinitarianism. Bulgakov's single, retrievable insight is that a third term is needed, and this third term has something to do with Sophia.

An Apophatic Trinity

Vladimir Lossky (1903–58) was also a Russian émigré to Paris, but his theology was self-consciously developed in opposition to that of Bulgakov. Their differences notwithstanding, both theologians saw the doctrine of the Trinity as rooted in the Orthodox axiom of divine–human communion. While Bulgakov understood theology's task as developing the ontological implications of the Orthodox affirmation of divine–human union in Christ, Lossky would argue, beginning with his early work on Dionysius the Areopagite, that the affirmation of divine–human communion demanded an apophatic approach to theology. In addition to Bulgakov, Lossky's other sparring partner, which he shared with the Catholic *nouvelle théologie* movement, was neo-scholasticism, which was not reticent in criticizing Gregory Palamas's understanding of the essence/energies distinction.

For Lossky, the Christian belief in God as Trinity is a fact revealed in the Incarnation of Christ, in whose person the divine and human natures are unified. In so far as this divine–human communion is a paradoxical union of two distinct ontological realities, the uncreated and the created, the uniting of Godself to humanity in the person of Jesus is a truth

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that reason is unable to prove or understand once given as a fact of revelation. The Incarnation is an antinomic truth, by which Lossky means the simultaneous affirmation of statements that are opposite or contradictory, the 'non-opposition of opposites', the opposition 'of contrary but equally true propositions'. Given his emphasis on antinomy, it is not quite accurate to accuse Lossky, as Michel René Barnes does, of appropriating uncritically Théodore de Régnon's interpretation that 'Latin philosophy envisages first the nature in itself and then proceeds to the expression; Greek philosophy envisages first the expression and then penetrates it to find the nature' (Lossky 1974: 26, 51; for a fuller response to Barnes, see Papanikolaou 2006: 181). In revealing the truth of God and the God-world relation as antinomic, the Incarnation demands an apophatic approach to theology. As Lossky puts it, '[t]he existence of an apophatic attitude ... is (p. 333) implied in the paradox of the Christian revelation' (Lossky 1974: 15). Apophaticism, for Lossky, is in one sense an understanding of the truth of God as lying beyond human reason. As we shall see more clearly below, it is not simply a necessary negation of positive statements about God en route to a more analogical naming of God. Apophaticism is equivalent to an ascetical exercise that is necessary if one wants to ascend to a true knowledge of God—the mystical knowledge of unknowing.

Another antinomy revealed in the Incarnation is God's being as Trinity. In approaching the Christian belief in God as Trinity, theology's task is to find the appropriate categories that would preserve the antinomy of God's unity-in-distinction. There is a strict divide, according to Lossky, between *oikonomia* and *theologia*, between the economic and the immanent Trinity, and although we can assert that God is Trinity based on God's economy, we cannot engage in further speculation on God's being *in se*. In fact, in order to affirm God's Trinitarian being as unity-in-distinction, it is necessary for theology to engage in an apophatic negation of the properties attributed to the persons of the Trinity manifested in the economy. According to Lossky, 'what will subsist beyond all negating or positing, is the notion of the absolute hypostatic difference and of the equally absolute essential identity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit' (Lossky 1974: 16). The antinomic categories used to express the doctrine of the Trinity were nature (*ousia*) and person (*hypostasis/prosopon*). Once deconceptualized, *ousia* indicates what is common in God, while *hypostasis* indicates the irreducibility of the three persons. The genius of the Fathers lay in using synonymous words to express the Trinitarian antinomy, thus allowing for the one side of the antinomy, God's unity, always to refer to the irreducibility of the hypostases, and vice versa (Lossky 1976: 51).

Lossky, however, transgresses his own apophatic restrictions on the categories of *ousia* and *hypostasis* in his development of a more positive theology of personhood that is grounded in the theology of the Trinity. Personhood entails two constitutive aspects, for Lossky: irreducibility (*hypostasis*) and freedom (*ekstasis*). A person is irreducible in the sense of not being identified with the common nature, by being irrevocably particular and irreplaceable. A person is free not in the sense of freedom of choice; *ekstatic* freedom, for Lossky, is freedom from the necessity of nature. Human personhood is an *ekstatic* freedom from the limitations and finitude inherent in created nature that can only be given in mystical union with the uncreated. Lossky grounds this notion of *ekstasis* in the pa-

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tristic notion of the monarchy of the Father. He argues that the monarchy of the Father is necessary for the doctrine of the Trinity in order to maintain the antinomy of the unity-in-distinction, since it 'maintains the perfect equilibrium between the nature and the persons, without coming down too heavily on either side.... The one nature and the three hypostases are presented simultaneously to our understanding, with neither prior to the other' (Lossky 1974: 81). The monarchy of the Father also indicates, for Lossky, that the hypostasis of the Father cannot be reduced to God's nature, and this irreducibility is the Father's freedom to 'cause' the Son and the Spirit, to give the divine *ousia* to the Son and the Spirit (Lossky 1978: 46–7).

The monarchy of the Father also guards against the *Filioque*, the assertion that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. Lossky was (in)famous for his virulent (p. 334) critique of the *Filioque*, claiming that 'by the dogma of the *Filioque*, the God of the philosophers and savants is introduced into the heart of the Living God' (Lossky 1974: 88). Although this statement sounds excessive, Lossky viewed the *Filioque* as the result of a neo-scholastic method that he deemed as itself excessively rationalistic. In its understanding of truth as propositional, from which the *Filioque* ultimately derives its justification, Lossky saw neo-scholasticism as undermining the apophatic notion of knowledge of God as mystical union, and thus the Christian affirmation of divine-human communion in Christ. There was, consequently, a practical concern driving Lossky's rejection of the *Filioque*, together with the theological method from which it resulted. For Lossky, theology is necessarily apophatic, and hence, antinomic, so that the human person could never rest complacent in her ascetic ascent toward God. One could say that theology as antinomy exists as an ascetical exercise, allowing for the proper expression of dogma to guide the human ascent toward God, and not allowing anyone to think that this movement toward knowledge of God is ever complete.

As the most widely read Orthodox theologian in the latter half of the twentieth century among Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, Lossky was responsible for popularizing the essence/energies distinction, which became almost synonymous with Orthodox theology. The essence/energies distinction is an antinomic expression for God's transcendence and immanence. God's essence is unknowable; creation is deified through participation in God's energies. In response to neo-scholastic criticism of this distinction, Lossky asserted that the distinction is a necessary antinomy for affirming participation in the uncreated life of God. The neo-scholastic, rationalistic notion of *esse* only yields created grace, which contradicts the logic of divine-human communion. There exists, however, a tension between Lossky's affirmation of participation in the uncreated energies of God and his Trinitarian theology, as it leads to the inevitable question: If participation is in the divine energies, why is it necessary to affirm God as Trinity? To say that each of the persons of the Trinity conveys the divine energies in a distinctive manner is simply to beg the question. The contrast with Bulgakov here is telling: whereas, for Bulgakov, it is God's being as Trinity, and hence, as Sophia, which is the ground for the participation of the created in the life of God, in the Son and by the Holy Spirit, for Lossky, the ground of creation's participation in God is the essence/energies distinction, which leaves one wondering how God's being as Trinity matters for conceptualizing the God-world relation in terms of

communion. Lossky's own theology of personhood indicates that it does matter, but it does not easily coexist with his non-negotiable affirmation of the essence/energies antinomy for expressing divine-human communion.

The Ontological Revolution

In the recent revival of Trinitarian theology, the influence of John Zizioulas (b. 1931) is indisputable, especially his theology of personhood. Both Lossky and Zizioulas considered themselves part of a movement in contemporary Orthodox theology that was (p. 335) engaging in a 'neo-patristic synthesis', a phrase coined by Georges Florovsky in opposition to Bulgakovian sophiology. Though self-identified as part of the neo-patristic trajectory, Zizioulas distanced himself from two important elements that were common to the neo-patristic theologians: apophaticism and the essence/energies distinction. The Christian affirmation of divine-human communion implied a Trinitarian ontology that revolutionized Greek ontological monism, and which located the experience of God not in God's energies, but in the *hypostasis* of Christ.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is, according to Zizioulas, the inevitable result of the Christian experience of God in the Eucharist. Christians from the beginning understood the Eucharist as an event of communion with the Body of Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is this experience that grounds the Christian affirmation of the full divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and hence, the doctrine of the Trinity (Zizioulas 1985: 80-3).

The Eucharistic experience of divine-human communion in Christ constitutes the basis for what Zizioulas labels as the two 'leavenings' of Greek ontology by Christian theology (Zizioulas 1985: 39). The first is the affirmation of creation *ex nihilo*, which grounds the uncreated and created distinction, and which is demanded if the communion between the two is to be one of freedom and love, and not of necessity. This creation out of nothing indicates positively that creation's only hope for existence is a free and loving communion with the uncreated; negatively, it indicates that creation itself is inherently finite and, by itself, tends toward its own annihilation. Creation itself exhibits a longing to be free from the necessity of finitude inherent in its own nature. This longing is especially evident in the human creation of art (Zizioulas 2006: 206-49), in erotic relations (Zizioulas 1985: 49-53), and in the phenomenological analysis of the question, 'Who am I?' (Zizioulas 2006: 99-112), all of which indicate a human drive for particularity and otherness that is ultimately thwarted by finitude and death. This thwarted longing renders human existence ultimately tragic, since the conditions for its fulfilment do not exist within created nature, but only in communion with the uncreated.

The experience of communion in the Eucharist, and thus, of particularity and otherness, reveals that the being of God exists such as to be free to commune with what is not-God. The fact that this communion is realized in Christ by the Holy Spirit reveals that God's being is itself a communion between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is important, however, for Zizioulas that theology not conceptualize this communion in the being of God in terms of necessity. His logic is as follows: since creation itself longs for a free-

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dom from the annihilation that is necessarily inherent to created nature, for God to gift this freedom from necessity, God's very being must exist as this freedom from the necessity of nature (Zizioulas 1985: 43). Divine freedom, for Zizioulas, is already revealed in the communion with God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Theology must find the proper categories to give expression to the Trinitarian being of God as communion.

In order to express faithfully God's being as communion revealed in the Eucharistic experience of God in Christ, the Cappadocian Fathers, according to Zizioulas, made two crucial moves: first, they insisted on the monarchy of the Father, which consisted of the second 'leavening' of Greek ontology. The monarchy of the Father affirms that the 'cause' of God's Trinitarian being is the person of the Father. In grounding the being of (p. 336) God, and thus all being, in the person of the Father, the Cappadocian Fathers affirm that God's Trinitarian being does not result from the necessity of God's nature identified as love, or the diffusive good, or the One, but is an event of freedom. As Zizioulas puts it,

[i]n a more analytical way this means that God, as Father and not as substance, perpetually confirms through 'being' His *free* will to exist. And it is precisely His Trinitarian existence that constitutes this confirmation: the Father out of love—that is, freely—begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. If God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person—as the hypostasis of the Father—makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God. (Zizioulas 1985: 41)

Such an affirmation is an ontological revolution, because for the first time in the history of philosophy, ontology is not associated with sameness and necessity, but with freedom, particularity, otherness, and personhood.

The second crucial move orchestrated by the Cappadocian Fathers was to link the philosophical categories of *hypostasis* and *prosopon* in order to give an adequate account of the Trinitarian being of God (Zizioulas 1985: 27–49). *Hypostasis* by itself would lead to tritheism, while *prosopon* smacks of Sabellianism. Uniting the categories allows for the affirmation of the irreducibility of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, while simultaneously asserting that this hypostatic existence is a relational event. In terms of the monarchy of the Father, the person of the Father is Father as 'cause' of the Son and the Spirit; thus, the person of the Father is constituted as such only in relation to the Son and the Spirit. For Zizioulas, then, personhood, both human and divine, is an event of freedom (*ekstasis*) in a communion that constitutes one as irreducibly particular and irreplaceable (*hypostatic*).

One cannot fail to recognize the general lines of Lossky's theology of personhood, even if Zizioulas never explicitly credits him for these insights (Papanikolaou 2008). Zizioulas' own emphasis on ontology, however, is a clear break with Losskian apophaticism, especially when Zizioulas affirms that the experience of God in the Eucharist is one of the immanent Trinity, which then forms the basis of a Christian Trinitarian ontology. In concep-

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tualizing divine-human communion, Zizioulas also makes central the category of *hypostasis*, specifically the *hypostasis* of Christ, rather than the divine energies.

Zizioulas' interpretation of the Cappadocian Fathers' reworking of the philosophical categories of *hypostasis* and *prosopon* has recently come under attack, especially by patristic scholars (Behr 2004; Ayres 2004). Although there may be some merit to the claim that the Cappadocian Fathers did not explicitly set out to revolutionize ontology, Zizioulas' understanding of personhood as a relational event of freedom and uniqueness is logically implied in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, especially if this doctrine is governed by the grammar of divine-human communion. If the reworking of *hypostasis* and *prosopon* emerges against the background of a grammar of divine-human communion, then *hypostasis* and *prosopon* are appropriated so as to indicate distinctions within God that would allow for communion with the 'true' God in the person of Son; the language of *ousia* simply cannot do that work. Within the context of the (p. 337) grammar of the doctrine itself, *hypostasis* and *prosopon* emerge in order to make sense of the God who in love and freedom is incarnate in Jesus Christ. More problematic for Zizioulas is his grounding the being of God in the freedom of the Father, which raises the question of whether the Son and the Spirit possess the same freedom as the Father, and thus, are persons in the same way as the Father.

Conclusion

In spite of their theological differences, Bulgakov, Lossky, and Zizioulas agree that the doctrine of the Trinity is grounded in the experience of divine-human communion in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Each in his own way highlights a strand within the patristic tradition: Lossky rightly emphasizes that knowledge of God is not propositional but an experience of union, so that Trinitarian theology is inevitably apophatic and is itself an ascetical exercise whose goal is to give expression to the Christian understanding of God in such a way that guides the ascetical struggle to God; both Zizioulas and Bulgakov see clearly the revolutionary ontology Christians were declaring in the doctrine of the Trinity and attempt to advance the implications of early Christian thinking on the Trinity—Zizioulas on *hypostasis*, and Bulgakov with his interpretation of the *homoousios* as Sophia. The way forward for a contemporary Orthodox theology on the Trinity is not to oppose these three trajectories, but to integrate their best insights into a theology of the Trinity that is faithful to the impulse of early Christian thinkers on the Trinity, and that delineates the wider cultural, economic, and political implications of the Christian belief in a God whose being is communion.

Suggested Reading

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Aristotle Papanikolaou

Aristotle Papanikolaou is Associate Professor of Theology and co-founding Director of the Orthodox Christian Studies Program at Fordham University.

Trinitarian Theology in the Light of Analytic Philosophy



Fergus Kerr

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the extent to which the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity has gained intelligibility in the light of the philosophy that has predominated in the English-speaking academy for the last fifty years. It highlights the surprisingly limited interactions of theologians with the analytic philosophy that has dominated English-speaking universities for the past half-century. It suggests that analytic philosophy has had little obvious impact in Christian theology and mentions the emergence of “analytic theology”.

Keywords: Trinity, philosophy, Christian doctrine, God, English-speaking universities, Christian theology, analytic theology

Analytic Theology

To what extent has the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity gained in intelligibility in the light of the philosophy that has predominated in the English-speaking academy for the last fifty years?

Much fine work has been done on religious belief, the problem of evil, and so on, by philosophers trained in the analytic tradition, most of whom have had Christian affiliations (Harris and Insole 2005). Their methods, as well as their conclusions, display considerable variety. Analytic philosophy, after all, has never been a homogenous phenomenon (Martinich and Sosa 2001). Nevertheless, however much they may dissent from them, we may regard philosophers as in the analytic tradition if they take Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and suchlike, as their paradigms.

Analytic philosophy has had little obvious impact in Christian theology. Even where analytic philosophy flourishes, theologians are more likely to engage with ‘Continental’ and ‘postmodernist’ thinkers than with the local philosophers, often to the dismay of the few with religious commitments. Of course, in divinity schools where modern Christian theol-

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ogy is studied, favoured research subjects such as Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar do not attract theologians who are interested in analytic philosophy.

However, the phrase ‘analytic theology’ has recently entered the literature (Crisp and Rea 2009). According to the editors, analytic theology favours clarity, rigour, and brevity. This is less informative than it might seem. From Aristotle to Spinoza, arguably at least, such exemplary virtues are often evident. Moreover, while the Crisp and Rea volume contains no treatment specifically of the Trinity, it is suggested that, in accordance with (p. 340) the ideals of analysis, we might, for example, expect that the problem of God's being both one and three would be dealt with most illuminatingly by breaking it up into parts: considering separately what we mean by such concepts as ‘nature’, ‘person’, ‘relation’, and so on, and then displaying the interconnections. By this measure, one might object, any theologian who analyses the concepts in the doctrine as declared in the Creed, rather than aiming at a critical-historical reconstruction of the New Testament evidence, would count as ‘analytic’—like Thomas Aquinas, for one. Indeed, as Crisp and Rea allow, one likely objection to the very idea of analytic theology, namely that it would favour analysis of concepts over history of doctrine, is, as it happens, a long-standing criticism of analytic philosophy itself, allegedly indifferent to history.

Light from Logicians

While the phrase ‘analytic philosophy’ had not yet become standard, theologians in the 1980s were beginning to appeal to what would then have still been described as ‘linguistic analysis’, ‘ordinary language philosophy’, or perhaps ‘Oxford philosophy’.

David Brown, then at Oxford, was the first to deal with the Trinity, explicitly as an extension of the philosophy of religion into what he called ‘philosophical theology’ (Brown 1985). He distinguished ‘Anglo-Saxon philosophy’ from ‘Continental’. He had no reason to cite Frege or Wittgenstein. He cited Russell twice, though only for his ignorantly anti-Christian polemics.

Russell, however, was cited with approval by E. L. Mascall (Mascall 1986). In order to cast light on Augustine's doctrine of the divine Persons as ‘substantial relations’, Mascall appealed in his last chapter—entitled ‘Light from the Logicians’—to insights about the notion of relations which are to be found in *Principia Mathematica*, the ‘stupendous work’, as he called it, by A. N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, a foundational text in modern philosophy. (Mascall studied mathematics at Cambridge in the 1920s: he had no training in philosophy and sometimes boasted that he had no formal theological qualification either!)

A relation involves two terms: to say that John is uglier than Paul is a statement about John but of course implies a statement about Paul, namely that he is less ugly than John. The ‘bright idea’ (as Mascall calls it) that Whitehead and Russell introduced was to interpret a relation between two terms as a predicate, but a predicate having two subjects rather than the usual one. The statements about John and Paul were taken as specifying

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their functions 'as subjects of the dyadic predicate of comparative ugliness'. Russell later generalized the insight to include relations between more than two terms, and predicates having more than two subjects. He noted relations of three terms, which he called 'triadic'. Moreover, he saw no theoretical limit to the series of kinds of relations. Mascall dwells on Russell's example of a 'pentadic' relation: 'A minds B's love for C more than D's hatred of E'. This sentence has the single grammatical subject A. Its meaning could be expressed in several other ways but each of these will have a single grammatical subject: (p. 341) for example, 'C annoys A more by being loved by B than D does by hating E'. Each element of this pentadic relation can function as subject, yet it exists at all only in virtue of its relation with the other four. Mascall's suggestion is that, with all proper caution, this analogy casts decisive light on our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity: 'we should consider the three divine Persons as the three subjects of a concrete triadic relation by which God exists as supreme reality in Trinitarian being'. In other words: 'In this triadic relation each of the subjects has his own uninterchangeable place, function and contribution, yet each exists and functions only in view of his relation as co-subject with the other two'.

Thus, according to Mascall, this understanding of the triadic relation of the divine Persons excludes both subordinationism and such emphasis on the equality of the Persons that we settle for 'the image of the Trinity as a council of three with equal voting powers'. In short, the age-old temptation to incline either to modalism or to tritheism would be eliminated if we accepted this insight from *Principia Mathematica*.

Wittgensteinian Exchanges

David Brown was trained in ancient philosophy. The two Oxford philosophers to whom he pays tribute in his book were already recognized, one as an Aristotle scholar (David Charles) and the other as an opponent of physicalism (Howard Robinson). Thus, 'Anglo-Saxon philosophy', as Brown knew it, was neither indifferent to ancient philosophy nor dismissive of metaphysical idealism. It was not a residue of logical positivism, let alone 'talk about talk'. Brown placed his book under the patronage of his Oxford predecessors John Henry Newman and Joseph Butler: Butler in particular for inspiring his opposition to 'deism'.

Brown argues against the 'deism', which he finds in the work of his Anglican colleagues, Denis Nineham and Maurice Wiles, and also in that of the Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx. According to these theologians, Brown reports, God should never be said to 'intervene'. While Brown admires Schillebeeckx's emphasis on the key role played by 'experience' in the emergence of Christian faith, he regrets his failure to accord proper recognition to divine initiative: 'revelation as dialogue'. Brown would happily redescribe his 'interventionist' account of God as 'interactionist' (Brown 1986: 264). Over and above God's general ordering of the world, which 'deists' acknowledge, we must allow for certain specific divine actions—'interventions'. The doctrine of the Trinity, in Brown's view, depends for its existence and justification on certain key 'experiences': specifically, what

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happened to the original disciples at the Resurrection and the subsequent gift made to them of the Holy Spirit. For Brown, these two fundamental Christian experiences belong, whatever their uniqueness, to categories of religious experience that are exemplified extensively outside as well as in Scripture.

The appeal to 'experience', in Brown's account of the doctrine of the Trinity, attracted objections by Kenneth Surin (Surin 1986). This argument from religious experience begs (p. 342) the question of 'radical interpretation', according to Surin, who then appeals to claims by Quine, Davidson, and especially Wittgenstein. Brown accepts that we have certain 'raw' experiences, overlaid by an interpretation, which can be peeled off, so the charge runs, whereas of course Wittgenstein's 'private language' argument shows that no such 'experience' exists independently of linguistic practices. Secondly, according to Surin, the divine Trinity in Brown's book turns out to be three 'entities', endowed with 'three distinct centres of consciousness, each with its own mental content', indeed having 'different mental histories', such that the triune Godhead is 'more like a family than an individual'. Brown's 'cognitional positivism' and 'tritheism' are only the first two objections in quite a lengthy series that Surin advances. While granting that Brown's book is 'a first-rate piece of philosophical theology', Surin judges that it does not 'even begin effectively to articulate the very profound and complex problems and paradoxes' that have been confronted over the centuries in regard to the Trinity.

In his response Brown defends the social as against the psychological model for the Trinity. Augustine left the western tradition with a doctrine of divine unity, inherited from his Neo-Platonism. Admission of plurality must entail divisibility and thus imperfection. While Surin brings Wittgenstein's private language argument against Brown's notion of 'experience', Brown counters with Wittgensteinian therapy for this obsession with simplicity. As Wittgenstein reminds us, whether we judge something composite or simple is a matter of context, not determinable absolutely. We use the word 'composite', and therefore the word 'simple', 'in an enormous number of different and differently related ways'. As regards the doctrine of the Trinity, as in a thousand other cases, it all depends on the perspective from which a question is raised. As Brown concludes: 'there is no danger in giving composite answers to certain questions provided that you are prepared to give simple answers to others, for instance in respect of whether a state of conflict ever exists between the three persons or whether the worship of one in isolation could ever be appropriate'.

While Brown's exchange with Surin brings considerations from Wittgenstein into play, his Trinitarian doctrine itself does not seem significantly indebted to 'Anglo-Saxon philosophy'. The tendency towards 'cryptic tritheism' of which Surin accuses him, in his willingness to speak of 'three subjectivities' within the Trinity, is the flip side of his aversion from what he takes to be Augustine's obsession with divine simplicity. Brown's exposition of Trinitarian doctrine itself, though illuminated by the resort to Wittgenstein, negatively and positively, does not differ from a paradigm that would be familiar to theologians unacquainted with analytic philosophy.

Bayesian Probability Theory

Over decades Richard Swinburne has built up an impressive case for Christian theism. His earliest work as a philosopher dealt with Bayesian confirmation theory and the justification of induction. In a culture where the metaphysical certainties that once (p. 343) underwrote Christian faith now seem implausible to many people, yet in which probability theory engages with some of the most vital activities, from statistics to quantum mechanics, it seems appropriate to assess the case for Christianity from a probabilistic perspective.

As Swinburne argues, that God exists is the hypothesis that explains why there is a world at all, why there are the scientific laws that there are, and why animals and then human beings have evolved as we have. It makes better sense of our experience than any other explanation—good grounds for accepting it.

However, Swinburne has taken confirmation theory far beyond natural theology, deep into revealed theology. If the existence of persons like us makes it probable that there is a God, then this God must surely also be a person, in however modified a sense. But a person, on any definition, needs someone to love. Anyone who loves someone will seek the good of that person by finding some third person for him to love and be loved by (Swinburne 2008). Thus, if there is a God, who is a person, the doctrine of the Trinity is what we should expect.

Classically, as in Karl Barth and Thomas Aquinas, the Trinity has been regarded as entirely a matter of divine revelation. Swinburne alludes to Richard of St Victor, who argued in his *De Trinitate* that God must necessarily be triune, precisely on the basis of the nature of love. Bayesian confirmation theory, one of the splendours of reasoning that we have inherited from logical positivism, takes Swinburne much further in Trinitarian theology than traditional theologians would endorse.

Recent Trinitarian Studies

Nobody trained in analytic philosophy has yet published a monograph on the doctrine of the Trinity. Several academic theologians who would not regard themselves as professionally qualified in analytic philosophy have, however, published books that we should notice.

Nicholas Lash, in *Believing Three Ways in One God* (1992), offered a brief meditation on the Trinity for 'people educated in every area of their life and work except theology who say the Creed each Sunday and sometimes wonder what they mean'. Best known for his work on Newman, Lash (it is not surprising to find) writes lucidly and succinctly. He argues strongly in favour of our ceasing to speak of 'persons' in relation to the Trinity: God is not an individual with a nature, which is what the word 'person' naturally means. This observation might point to interest in 'ordinary language' philosophy. In a dozen pages of notes, however, in which Lash draws on an immense range of reading, from Scripture and

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the Fathers through Thomas Aquinas down to G. M. Hopkins and Karl Rahner, not forgetting Newman, he has no reason to mention any analytic philosophers. As other publications show, Lash is well acquainted with developments in philosophy since Wittgenstein. But Karl Barth, long ago and quite independently of linguistic philosophy, wanted us to avoid the word 'person'. Lash's treatment of the doctrine of the (p. 344) Trinity, in this and other respects, would not have been very different if he had never read much analytic philosophy.

Much the same seems true of David S. Cunningham's book *These Three Are One* (1998). As with Lash, the clarity and argumentative rigour with which Cunningham writes need not be credited to the putative impact of analytic philosophy, to which Cunningham is in fact quite hostile. He deplures 'the triumphs of analytic forms of thought in the modern age': 'The deleterious effects of theology's appropriation of certain forms of social science are due, in part, to their excessive embrace of analytical structures'. Theological discourse should resist the 'true/false dichotomies of Boolean logic'. Cunningham lays emphasis more on the harm that analytic philosophy is likely to do in theology than on any possible benefits.

Cunningham severely criticizes Colin Gunton, who studied ancient philosophy at Oxford, accusing him, especially in *The One, the Three and the Many* (1993), of constructing a view of western intellectual history in which a Parmenidean option for the One is played off against Heraclitean plurality, with the aim of showing ultimately that the doctrine of the Trinity is the desirable solution. Gunton's project counts among the few to revisit Trinitarian doctrine by a theologian with philosophical qualifications. The result was surrender to the dichotomous 'either/or' mentality—only what is to be expected, as Cunningham would think, in a climate that favours analytic modes of thought.

Trinitarian Light on Familiar Philosophical Problems

Bruce D. Marshall, in *Trinity and Truth* (2000), combines a 'realist' account of truth with an essentially Barthian theology of the Trinity. He engages more deeply than any other theologian with currently lively debate in analytic philosophy. What is new, however, is not what he says about the Trinity but what he wants us to see about truth. We need not—should not—seek to justify Christian beliefs according to how far they adequately express certain inner experiences (an interiority thesis); or are grounded in self-evident data (foundationalism); or meet criteria not themselves distinctively Christian (epistemic subordination); or are bound up with communal practices (pragmatism); or agree with reality (correspondence). All this would be familiar to analytic philosophers, and amounts to a set of serious criticisms of much recent Trinitarian theology. Marshall, more challengingly, insists, as a Christian, that the doctrine of the Trinity enjoys 'epistemic primacy', which means that any philosophical account of truth, which turns out to be in contradiction with Christian faith, should be discarded.

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A. N. Williams offers an equally challenging thesis (Williams 2005). In analytic philosophy of religion, particularly regarding whether God exists, arguments for and against regularly assume an identity for the one whose existence is in question. Given an orthodox affirmation of the doctrine of the divine Trinity, however, we should be clear (p. 345) about the problems in speaking of 'God'. Since the word 'God' cannot designate only one person of the Trinity, nor the three together, nor divine nature generically conceived, so she argues, drawing on patristic scholarship, it would be best to avoid the word altogether in Christian discourse.

Thus Marshall and Williams show how the doctrine of the Trinity, classically understood, may impact on central questions in analytic philosophy. As regards the impact of analytic philosophy in any substantial way on the doctrine of the Trinity, however, we must await the development of analytic theology.

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Fergus Kerr

Fergus Kerr, O.P., holds an honorary fellowship in the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. He serves as the Director of the Aquinas Institute, Blackfriars, Oxford, and is the editor of *New Blackfriars*.

The Trinity as Christian Teaching

Kathryn Tanner

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This article considers the doctrine of Trinity as Christian teaching. It mentions that the eventual authoritative teaching about the Trinity that developed over the first five centuries or so of the Common Era has often been understood by modern theologians to be the product of arcane theological speculation beyond the biblical witness. It shows that the dogmatic place of the Trinity arose in the early Church from reading the New Testament's testimony to the relationships and activities of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It explains that what came to be authoritative Christian teaching about the Trinity involves the convergence of biblical interpretation and theological pressures fundamental to Christian concerns about salvation in Christ.

Keywords: Trinity, Christian teaching, Common Era, biblical witness, New Testament, Holy Spirit, biblical interpretation, theological pressures, salvation in Christ

THE eventual authoritative teaching about the Trinity that developed over the first five centuries or so of the Common Era has often been understood by modern theologians to be the product of arcane theological speculation beyond the biblical witness. The theological consensus about the Trinity that emerged with great struggle from the early ecumenical councils—that God is made up of three permanently distinct but equally divine persons, inseparably united or one in both being and action—can easily appear to modern Christians to be primarily a way of addressing abstruse theological questions about unity and diversity within the Godhead and therefore to be of only tangential significance to either basic Christian beliefs or a biblically based faith in Christ. By returning to these first few centuries, this chapter shows, to the contrary, how what came to be authoritative Christian teaching about the Trinity involved the convergence of biblical interpretation and theological pressures fundamental to Christian concerns about salvation in Christ.

The New Testament does not itself of course offer the sort of highly elaborated Trinitarian theology worked out by theologians over subsequent centuries. But this should not be taken to mean that these later theologians were engaged in some simply self-contained theological effort to figure out the presuppositions and implications of their post-biblical

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theological starting points—for example, to determine how belief in the full divinity of Christ could be reconciled with monotheism. These theologians were all thoroughly occupied at the same time with New Testament exegesis in particular. Once the divinity of Christ and, later on, of the Holy Spirit were broached as matters for serious concern, theological controversies naturally erupted over what the New Testament suggested about the divinity of what are called there Father, Son, and Spirit—about the way in which they were divine, in and of themselves and in their relationships with one another.

In this biblical interpretation formative of Trinitarian reflection theologians hardly restricted themselves to the bare formulas, quite few in number, that are often the first (p. 350) places modern theologians look for biblical references to the Trinity—for example, Matt. 28:19 calling for baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit. These theologians instead ranged very widely in their biblical interpretation, concentrating on a whole raft of passages in the New Testament where relations among Father, Son, and Spirit seemed to them to be the subject of either direct discussion or narration in some detail.

Sometimes this involved drawing Trinitarian conclusions from what Jesus is reported in the Gospels to have said—about his relations with the Father, for example, in the Farewell Discourses of the Gospel of John. And often this meant lifting such passages out of the story-line and viewing them in the abstract as theological statements with direct Trinitarian import, in ways that might seem peculiarly inattentive, perhaps even distortive of the Gospel narration of Jesus' life and work. Even were one to bring to the Bible a fully developed account of the Trinity, one can, for instance, give a far more obvious theological interpretation of the content of Jesus' Farewell Discourses than a Trinitarian one by attending to the immediate context of the story of which they are a part. When Jesus talks about his disciples being one with one another, and with the Father as he and the Father are one, that could very well simply mean, 'I am carrying on with the mission set for me by the Father no matter how hard the road has become; and you should, too, as my disciples'. The unity of the Trinity is not, in any direct way at least, the obvious subject matter here if one is bothering to attend to the story.

But these theologians also typically made a very careful study of the various narrated story-lines of the Gospels—in all four Gospels and extending from there into Acts and the Pauline Epistles—when drawing conclusions of a Trinitarian sort. So, for example, in the narrated action in which Jesus prays to the Father, in the Farewell Discourses and elsewhere, something is directly suggested, according to these theologians, about the relationship between Son and Father, irrespective of what Jesus is reported to have said. What they view as narrated relationships among Father, Son, and Spirit are indeed central to the way these theologians support in biblical terms the basic affirmations of what becomes the Christian Trinitarian consensus: the persons of the Trinity are distinct from one another, equal to one another, and, in the strongest possible senses, one.

Thus, the Word that becomes flesh in Jesus is taken by these theologians to be clearly distinct from the Father and Spirit because in the Gospel stories Jesus talks to the former and sends the latter. Jesus is not then the mere epiphany of the one he calls Father, a

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mere manifestation of him for certain purposes, but must represent a distinct divine principle in his own right in relation to the Father. Quite a number of scriptural passages suggest to them that Father, Son, and Spirit do not have interchangeable places in relationship to one another and for that reason are clearly distinct from one another. For example, the Son prays to the Father and the Father does not pray to the Son, the Son is sent by the Father and not the Father by the Son; the two cannot therefore be the same.

A host of other New Testament passages, however, suggest an equivalence of power and status among the three. For example, Father, Son, and Spirit are taken to be perfectly equal in power to one another in virtue of the reciprocal relationships that hold among them. By taking on the same roles or functions with respect to one another, their equivalent status is also established.

(p. 351) Their revealing one another is an example of such a reciprocal relationship. On the one hand, in the life of the Son incarnate in Jesus Christ the liberating character of the Spirit's work becomes apparent (Lk. 4:18-21); on the other hand, the Spirit is the one who makes the Son known (1 Cor. 12:3). The same relationship of mutual revelation, as a synopsis of the narrated Gospel, holds for Father and Son: 'No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son' (Lk. 10:22). They also form mutual paths of access to one another: 'No one comes to the Father except through the Son, because we cannot know the Father, unless faith in the Son is active in us, since we cannot approach the Father in worship, unless we first adore the Son, while if we know the Son, the Father draws us' (Hilary 1994: 213). And they glorify one another. The Son glorifies or brings honour and renown to the Father by doing the glorious works of the Father for us but only because the Father has first glorified the Son by handing over to him their performance (Jn 17:1-4). Glorifying the one is therefore the equivalent of glorifying the other. To glorify the Son for what he accomplishes is to glorify the Father since the Son's own glory is from and of him; and the reverse, to glorify the Father for his goodness to us is to glorify the Son who carries it out. Indeed, the Father, Son, and Spirit are inseparable equivalents of one another in power and status in virtue of the way they generally appear 'in' one another, as these theologians like to say, following Jn 17:21. Thus, the love of the Father for us is manifest in what the Son does, in much the way a ray of light makes clear in itself the character of its source.

Father, Son, and Spirit seem to belong to one another and therefore to be nothing without one another. The Son is specifically the Son of this Father—his 'only son, full of grace and truth' (Jn 1:14; see also Heb. 1:5). And the Father is the Father of this particular Son, 'my Father' (Lk. 2:49; Mk 14:36; Matt. 11:25)—and only thereby ours—'my Father and [therefore] your Father' (Jn 20:17). Who Jesus is as Son and who the Father is as Father are determined by their particular relationship with one another. This is no general relationship of sonship which includes both Christ and us, but a unique relationship between the two of them which we come to share in virtue of our connection with this one Son (1 Cor. 1:9; Rom. 8:29) (Athanasius 1957a: 441). In much the same way, the Spirit is specifically the Spirit of this Father (Jn 15:26; 1 Cor. 2:11-12) and as such the Spirit of this particular Son

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also (Gal. 4:6; Jn 14:26); and only thereby ours (Jn 20:22; 1 Jn 3:24). It is in virtue of their relations with one another that they are what they are, in full mutuality of co-implication.

The whole story of the Gospel is taken, moreover, to be their working a single action of salvation together, through equivalently divine capacities; they each act but always jointly by the very same powers for the very same end. Thus, the Father does nothing without the Son; the working and words of the Father appear in what Jesus himself does and says (Jn 6:45–6). ‘The Father teaches through the words of the Son, and though seen of none, speaks in the manifestation of the Son’ (Hilary 1994: 172). And the Son does only the will of his Father—not his own will in any contrast to it (Jn 5:19).

Yet the act of saving us remains each of theirs. In speaking the Father's words, for example, Jesus is not merely speaking the words of another as a mere prophet might, but speaks of himself his own words (Jn 14:10). ‘The Father works in the Son; but the Son (p. 352) also works the works of the Father’ (Hilary 1994: 135). The Son, in other words, is no mere conduit for the activity of the Father, but an active agent himself of the mission upon which the Father sends him, holding in himself the divine capabilities necessary for its achievement: ‘All things have been handed over to me by my Father’ (Lk. 10:22; Matt. 11:27); ‘all that the Father has is mine’ (Jn 17:10); and therefore the Son himself exercises the Father's powers of jurisdiction. The Son carries out what the Father performs, raising us, for example, from the dead, and he is able to do so himself because he has ‘life in himself’ from the Father (Jn 5:26).

In sum, ‘there is from the Father one grace which is fulfilled through the Son in the Holy Spirit’ (Athanasius 1951: 94). Each one works together as the very same one God.

‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all’ (2 Cor. 13:13)... The Apostle does not mean that the things which are given are given ... separately by each Person, but that what is given is given in the Triad, and that all are from the one God. (Athanasius 1951: 142)

In their saving acts, Father, Son, and Spirit do not show up as replacements or stand-ins for one another, but each brings about the very presence and action of the others. Thus, in the actions of the Son one sees the Father; in the Son one has access to the Father. The Son does not replace the Father as his emissary. The Father works where the Son works. ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself’ (2 Cor. 5:19). As Athanasius deduces from Jn 14:10 (‘the Father who dwells in me does his works’), ‘what things the Son then wrought are the Father's works’ (Athanasius 1957a: 396). Rather than being a substitute for the Father, Christ is himself the power of the Father himself, Gregory of Nyssa concludes following 1 Cor. 1:24 (Gregory of Nyssa 1994: 187). Instead of standing between us and the Father as some sort of buffer zone, in Christ we gain access to the Father, enter into the very presence of the Father.

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When we learn to know the Son, God the Father calls us; when we believe the Son, the Father receives us; for our recognition and knowledge of the Father is in the Son, who shows us in himself God the Father, who draws us, if we be devout, by his fatherly love into a mutual bond with his Son. (Hilary 1994: 213)

Even though Jesus seems to send the Spirit to take his place, in his apparent absence,

when we are enlightened by the Spirit, it is Christ who in him enlightens us.... We, receiving the Spirit of Wisdom, have the Son and are made wise in him.... When we are quickened by the Spirit, Christ himself is said to live in us.... So Paul declared that the works he worked by the power of the Spirit were the works of Christ: 'For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me ... in the power of the Holy Spirit'. (Athanasius 1951: 111-13)

The scriptural passages suggesting the irreducible distinctiveness of the persons have to be put together in some way with those suggesting their inseparable unity, and therefore these theologians show special interest in individual passages that seem to model how to do this. Jn 10:30 ('The Father and I are one') is one example. Augustine explains: 'He did not say, I am the Father, or I and the Father *is* one [person]. But ... hear both "one" ... and "are".... If (p. 353) "one" ... then not different; if ... "are" then both the Father and the Son' (Augustine 1993: 91). Jn 14:10 is another. Hilary comments: 'There cannot be one person only, for he speaks not of himself; and conversely, they cannot be separate and divided when the one [the Father] speaks through the voice of the other [the Son]' (Hilary 1994: 135). The persons of the Trinity are, in short, distinct yet inseparable—a very basic claim of Trinitarian theology.

But this putting together of the one set of passages (concerning their non-interchangeable relations of distinction) with the other set (showing their equality and unity) also has rather more sophisticated theological consequences. The messages of both sorts of passage will be true if Father, Son, and Spirit are and do the very same thing through the very same divine powers, but in different, non-interchangeable manners or fashions. For example, the Father appears in the actions of the Son; and the Son, in the Father's mission to and for us. These are reciprocal relations of co-inherence or co-appearance. But for non-interchangeable reasons: the former holds because the Father is the Son's source or sender; the latter because the Son comes from him, is the one sent by him. In short, for the Trinity generally, 'The Father is in the Son, for the Son is from the Father; the Son is in the Father, because the Father is his sole origin' (Hilary 1994: 62-3). As Gregory of Nyssa makes the point:

'I am in the Father and the Father is in me', each of course being in the other in two different senses; the Son being in the Father as the beauty of the image is to be found in the form from which it has been outlined; and the Father in the Son, as that original beauty is to be found in the image of itself. (Gregory of Nyssa 1994: 94)

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By showing how the persons of the Trinity are able to be one and equal while retaining their distinctiveness, remarks like these clarify how to reconcile both sets of passages.

The major problem for this sort of reading of the New Testament in line with an eventual consensus in Christian Trinitarian teaching is the appearance in the Gospel stories of inferiority and subordination in relations between Son and Father: Jesus talks about the Father as one greater than himself (Jn 14:28), he seems to do the Father's will with some reluctance since it involves his own suffering and death (Matt. 26:39; Mk 14:35–6; Lk. 22:42), he obeys the Father in apparent subservience to the will of another (e.g. Jn 5:19), worships and prays to the Father for help, and so on.

The Spirit's influence on Jesus could also suggest the inferiority and subordination of the Son. At the baptism in the Jordan that begins Jesus' public ministry, the Spirit of the Father comes down (Lk. 3:22; Mk 1:10–11) and rests or remains upon Jesus' own humanity (Jn 1:32), to be the operative power of his own ministry. He is apparently called a beloved son in these passages for that reason; and might therefore be thought the son of God in a way comparable to any merely human anointed favourite or minister of God such as a prophet or a king. Only as empowered by the Spirit can Jesus undertake the mission of the Father over the course of his life and death. It is as one 'filled with the power of the Spirit' (Lk. 4:14) that Jesus ministers to the sick, the blind, and the captive (Lk. 4:18; Matt. 12:18, following Isa. 61:1). The Spirit, in short, appears to give Christ the ability to work the mission upon which he has been sent. The Spirit, moreover, seems to be leading (Matt. (p. 354) 4:1) or even driving (Mk 1:12) Jesus where he does not want to go, perhaps ultimately to his own death, but certainly into the wilderness where his trust in the Father and commitment to his mission from the Father are subject to an early testing. Indeed, the total orientation of Jesus' life and death in obedience to the Father is shored up through the Spirit. He does the Father's will completely—his very food is to do the will of the one who sent him and to accomplish his work (Jn 4:34)—as someone empowered by it.

The appearance of the Son's subordination to the Spirit can be countered by a certain degree of reciprocity in their relationship. If Jesus' ministry is dependent upon the power of the Spirit, the efficacy of the Spirit in our lives at least seems equally dependent on the Son's agency: the Son is the one who sends the Spirit to us (e.g. Lk. 11:11–13). If the Son is led by the Spirit, where the Spirit leads is back to the Son: empowered by the Spirit we are to lead a life like Christ's. The Spirit makes Christ present within us (1 Jn 3:24) and conforms us to Christ's own mind and manner of living (1 Cor. 2:10–16). The Spirit could be itself viewed as subordinate to the Son, in short, in that the Spirit enters the world for the sake of furthering the Son's own mission from the Father of making us like the Son.

Without a similar ability to appeal to reciprocity in the New Testament narration of relations between Son and Father, early Church theologians commonly avoid conflict with the equality of the persons of the Trinity by explaining the Son's subordination to the Father in terms of Jesus' humanity. Jesus obeys and worships the Father in so far as he is a man. Obedience and worship are appropriate stances for a human being to take and reflect the disparity of status between a creature and its God. Jesus is of course also the Son of God

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but divinity and humanity remain distinct in him, and therefore what is appropriately said of him in virtue of his humanity should not be confused with what is said about him in virtue of his divinity (Athanasius 1957a: 409; 1951: 164). Relations of subservience are in this way simply consequences of Jesus' humanity and indicate nothing about the fundamental character of the relationship between Father and Son.

A similar effort to distinguish the divinity and humanity of Christ helps allay the impression of the Son's subordination to the Spirit. In so far as Jesus is divine, Jesus has the Spirit by rights; he has the Spirit for his own as a consequence of his divine nature. Because Jesus is divine, Jesus does not merely act by way of the Spirit and under its direction; the Spirit is in him as his own power. Indeed, only because the Son has the Spirit for his own by nature is he able to give it to humanity—to his own humanity first and then to other simply human beings. As Cyril of Alexandria says, 'the Only-Begotten Word of God imparts to the saints as it were an affinity to his own nature ... by giving them the Spirit' (Cyril of Alexandria 1874: Bk. 10, 363). And Jesus' own humanity is at issue when he comes to have the Spirit at a particular point in his life—at the Jordan as a condition for his public ministry. Commenting on Jn 17:19 ('I sanctify myself'), Cyril of Alexandria makes the point relevant to Jesus' baptism: 'And being holy by nature ... he is sanctified on our account in the Holy Spirit, not with another sanctifying him, but rather he himself working for himself the sanctification of his own flesh. For he receives his own Spirit, and partakes of it, in so far as he was a man, but he gives it to himself, as God' (Cyril of Alexandria 1874: Bk. 10, 540).

A few theologians in the early Church affirm in addition that something in the Trinitarian relations between Father and Son corresponds to that of inferior to superior (p. 355) in Jesus' relations with the Father—but without being properly characterized in those terms. Corresponding to the apparent subservience of the incarnate Son's mission from the Father is the fact that the Son arises from and out of the Father's own substance, a relationship that, apart from the Son's incarnation in human flesh, is one of strict equality; the Son is no less divine, no inferior, because of it. So Hilary explains what it is about the relations between Father and Son that both accounts for the subservience of the Son on the mission and implies no essential inequality of status between them:

The Father is therefore greater than the Son: for manifestly he is greater, who makes another to be all that he himself is, who imparts to the Son ... the image of his own unbegotten nature.... The Father therefore is greater, because he is Father: but the Son, because he is Son, is not less. (Hilary 1994: 174, 175; see also Gregory Nazianzen 1983: 312)

The Trinitarian account of the relationship between Son and Father in this way remains in correspondence with the Gospel narration of the way Jesus relates to the one he calls Father. Indeed, these theologians make every effort to interpret the latter relations in light of the strict equality between Father and Son, so as to highlight the equality of the two even there (Hilary 1994: 206–7). Passages such as 'the Son can do nothing on his own' (Jn 5:19), 'I do as the Father has commanded me' (Jn 14:31), 'the Father has given me a com-

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mandment about what to say and what to speak' (Jn 12:49), 'I speak just as the Father has told me' (Jn 12:50), and 'I have not spoken on my own' (Jn 12:49) do not, in short, suggest the submission of Jesus' will to an external command. They indicate, instead, simply that the Son's work is the Father's work, that the Father's work is the very work that Jesus does. Jesus is not trying in them to downplay his own role, by humbly indicating his inferiority to the Father, but trying to suggest his exceptional character among men—that what he is doing is by the Father's own charge. It is 'as if the radiance should say "All places the light has given me to enlighten and I do not enlighten from myself but as the light wills"'. The obedience of a subordinate is not being expressed here; it is as much as to say, 'I am proper to the light and all things of the light are mine' (Athanasius 1957a: 414).

While these theologians, as I have shown, are quite clearly preoccupied with the New Testament narratives concerning Jesus' life and works, the New Testament certainly does not itself require interpretations like this; these interpretations result from reading scripture through the lens of a developing sense of the soteriological stakes of belief in Christ. Certainly the main theological presupposition for such a reading is a firm belief in the divinity of Christ and indeed of all the agents involved in our salvation. If Jesus, and the Holy Spirit too for that matter, are not divine it makes little sense to read the New Testament narratives as fundamentally explicating the character of their divinity and the character of their relationships. Prompting at root a Trinitarian reading of scriptures is therefore the sense that our salvation is explicable only on such an assumption: given what our salvation entails, Jesus must be divine in order to bring it about. What is achieved for us by him has to be of such great moment that divine agency throughout is necessary to explain it. For example, Jesus' life and death bring about for us the enjoyment of divine properties such as incorruptibility and eternal life. A proof of divinity (p. 356) through works is indeed the near constant refrain of early Church theology; Jesus and his Spirit must be divine because of the character of the salvation they bring (see, for example, Athanasius 1957a: 352, 355, 386, 411; 1951: 125-6).

But the mere fact of the divinity of Christ (and the Holy Spirit) is insufficient to fuel the more specific trajectories taken by Christian Trinitarian thinking as that works itself out in the course of the sort of biblical interpretation I have summarized above. The simple claim that Jesus is divine need not, for example, pose any special problem for monotheism requiring a specifically Trinitarian fix. Most religious viewpoints contemporary with the development of Christian Trinitarianism that one might label monotheistic (for example, Hellenistic Judaism or Neo-Platonism) already included discussion of multiple, at least quasi-divine principles (for instance, angels, divine emanations, powers in heaven, or deified heroes) under the sway of a supreme deity (Boyarin 2004; Hurtado 1988; Segal 1977). Either no particular tension with monotheism was felt, that tension being in great part the result of political or juridical efforts to distinguish Christianity more sharply than warranted on simply theological grounds from both Judaism and Greco-Roman religious traditions (Boyarin 2004). Or there were other theological ways of resolving it. Apparently multiple divine principles, for example, might not be really distinct from God but mere ways of talking about God's own attributes or manners of appearance within the world, or be mere parts of God, included, for example, within God as extensions of God's own being

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through emanation (Abrams 1994; Boyarin 2004: 134–9; Hurtado 1988: 41–50). If divine principles did have their own distinct existence, any appearance of conflict with monotheism could yet be resolved by making them strictly subordinate in being or function to the highest God—that is, clearly lesser divinities or mere minions or servants of the high God lacking all capacity for independent agency (Hurtado 1988: 25–7, 83, 90–1).

Christian Trinitarianism seems distinctive in refusing those options under Christological pressure. The divine principle identified with Jesus is believed to be genuinely distinct from Father and Spirit and in no way collapsible into them, at least in part because of the way the New Testament narrates their relationships over the course of Jesus' life and death. That narrated distinction is indeed taken with full seriousness: the divine principles that appear distinct in the narration are not simply distinct for the purpose of engaging in their saving work but permanently so. As the New Testament narratives also themselves suggest to these theologians, in his identification with a divine principle Jesus has his own agency and is therefore not simply the empty conduit for the agency of some other one, whether that be Father or Spirit. The divine power and will by which Jesus saves are his own, even if they are nothing other than the power and will that Spirit and Father display, indeed, even if as a matter of fundamental Trinitarian affirmation his divine power and will are perfectly one with theirs.

Nor is the divinity identified with Jesus of any lesser sort. Maximal claims made for salvation wrought in Christ are matched by maximal claims for his divinity. Because of the sort of salvation Jesus works, his divinity must be of the highest sort; Jesus is no mere creature elevated to a divine level, nor divine principle of a lesser sort. Monotheism comes to mean, then, that divinity is not a class term; divinity is not a kind of thing (p. 357) whose defining characteristics might be displayed by many things to greater or lesser degree. There is simply nothing in between God and creatures—no lesser divinities on the way to being creatures, no creatures that are themselves something approaching God. One has to be either one or the other, because creatures and God are all that the world divides into (Gregory of Nyssa 1994: 172–3). Everything responsible for the grace that only divine agency explains is therefore just God—the Father who sends the Son and Spirit, along with the Son and Spirit sent. They must all be of the same divine rank, since God is a being without ranks, and the very same thing, if God is not a class term. If the divine principles at work in God's saving action in Christ are distinct from one another—as they clearly appear to be from the narration of that action—they are strictly one with and equal to one another.

The character of Jesus' human life could easily suggest that only a lesser divinity is to be identified with him. The unusual claim, for the time, is that here the highest God has been made immediately accessible to us in the dire straits we find ourselves in. No buffer of intermediary semi-divine or more-than-human principles is necessary for God to be in contact with our suffering and sin. The very life of God is instead directly mixed up with suffering, conflict, death, and disease in the saving action of Christ. Divinity need not fear its

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own contamination or loss of honour in coming into direct contact with corruption and death in Christ.

If the sun ... is not defiled by touching the bodies upon the earth, nor is it put out by darkness, but on the contrary itself illuminates and cleanses them ... much less was the all-holy Word of God, maker and lord also of the sun, defiled by being made known in the body; on the contrary, being incorruptible, he quickened and cleansed the body also, which was in itself mortal. (Athanasius 1957b: 45)

Divinity, in short, cannot be pollute (Cyril of Alexandria 1874: Bk, 12, 657). There is no impetus, then, to say that Trinitarian persons substitute for one another—the one doing the dirty work for another. And no reason, for that matter, to think they could take the credit from one another; they are not rivals for divine honours but glorify one another in reciprocal ways, as we have seen these theologians so strongly affirm in their reading of New Testament passages. As strictly equal beings they are present with one another as the one God, perfectly united in their saving work.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Tanner (2001 and 2010); Boyarin (2004).

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Kathryn Tanner

Kathryn Tanner is the Frederick Marquard Professor of Systematic Theology at Yale Divinity School. She obtained her doctorate from the Religious Studies Department of Yale University, where she taught for ten years before joining the University of Chicago faculty in 1994. Her work employs interdisciplinary methods for rethinking the character of Christian belief and practice. She is the author of six books, including *The Politics of God* (1992), *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (1997), and *Economy of Grace* (2005).

The Divine Person(s): Trinity, Person, and Analogous Naming

Rudi te Velde

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Abstract and Keywords

This article focuses on the analogous naming of divine persons and the notion of God as a personal being in the context of the doctrine of Trinity. It explores what it means to apply the notion of a person analogously to God, with particular attention to intra-Trinitarian relationship and to the creation of persons made for a relationship with each other and God. It cites the work of Thomas Aquinas to provide a better understanding of some of the worries around a personal God and to clarify how we can speak meaningfully of God being personal without necessarily succumbing to an anthropological projection.

Keywords: divine persons, Trinity, personal God, intra-Trinitarian relationship, Thomas Aquinas

Introduction

Christian theology feels justified in using the term ‘person’ for God; and this in two ways actually: first, by conceiving of the name ‘God’ as a proper name standing for the personal being of God, and second, by using the term ‘persons’ for the Trinitarian hypostases in God. So God is said to be a personal being, a concrete spiritual reality, and, moreover, the Christian religion is accustomed to speak of the *person* of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Both these accepted usages of the term person *in divinis* seem to differ from what one has in mind nowadays in speaking of a *personal* God, in contrast to, for instance, the impersonal God of Spinoza. The personal God of religion is a God with whom we can have a personal relationship, a God in whom we can trust, who is supposed to care for us and to listen to our prayers, etc. For many people in western religious traditions, the idea that God is a ‘person’ is a necessary and fundamental part of their beliefs. If God were not a person, it would be difficult to think of God as intelligent, creative, moral, or loving; and if God were none of those things, how could God be worthy of worship? To have a personal relationship with God seems to require that God is a *person*.

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However, the theistic notion of a personal God, endowed with personal attributes such as knowledge, will, purposeful action, is not uncontested or unproblematic. Outside the western religious tradition, impersonal gods are quite common. In Hinduism, Brahman is conceived of as the ultimate and absolutely impersonal 'reality' which lies behind the illusion we typically think of as reality. Even within the Christian tradition a growing number of people feel uncomfortable with the anthropomorphic and personalized language of the Christian religion. We hear of theologians who dismiss (p. 360) what they call the 'supernaturalistic' God of traditional theism who 'intervenes' in our natural world from outside. For many, the theistic picture of a personal God—a God who is thought of as an idealized human person—has lost its plausibility. One of the reasons might be the dominance of a naturalistic world-view, in which reality is regarded as impersonal in character and indifferent to our anthropological-symbolic categories. The modern experience of nature as impersonal makes us acutely aware that the anthropomorphic imagination of traditional religion is of our own making, in which we can no longer naively and unquestioningly believe. It is as if the traditional personal God of Christianity has become 'too personal' or 'too human' to fit into the impersonal and neutral reality of modern science. The personal (moral, benevolent) God clashes not only, in the view of many, with the experience of evil and suffering, but even more with the Darwinian message of natural evolution without purpose or intention. Creationism and its more sophisticated variant of Intelligent Design can be regarded as a—in my view misguided—attempt to restore something of the traditional picture of a personal God under the primacy of the scientific world-view. The fact remains that the whole idea of a 'personal God' is in crisis nowadays.

But what has this cultural experience, one might ask, to do with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the use of the term 'person' within the context of this doctrine? Should it not be stressed that the classical notion of person, as applied to the Triune God of Christianity, is fundamentally different from the modern subjectivist meaning of 'person', which is more exclusively human? The Christian discourse on the three 'persons' in God should not be taken in the sense that there are three distinct centres of self-consciousness in God. The famous and influential definition by Locke, according to which a person is characterized by the consciousness of his/her identity as an enduring self (Locke 1979), is not very useful for the purpose of a theological clarification of the Trinity.

This is of course true, but one might point out that it is precisely the Trinitarian idea of God which has made a 'personal God' possible in the modern sense. Underlying the dogma of the Trinity is, in some way or another, the experience through faith of a God who wants to be accessible to humans by bridging the distance between man and God Himself. In Christ we encounter God in a human face as it were, a God who is nearby and 'with us'. At the centre of Christian faith stands the conviction that the inaccessible mystery of God has opened itself for us, that we somehow, through his incarnate Son, are called to share the divine life of eternal bliss. This remarkable fact is peculiar to Christianity. It has facilitated the genesis of a more intimate and personal discourse of faith in which the believer communicates with God as if God is 'somebody' who shares the anthropological-symbolic form of human communication and interaction. The risk of this development of 'humanizing the divine' is, in my view, that the analogy, that is, the dissimi-

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larity in the heart of the similarity between God and man, might be overlooked and neglected. By being represented in the language of religious worship as a person, not wholly unlike human persons, and by forgetting the analogy which permeates any representation of the divine, God is in danger of becoming 'too human', a person whose intentions and actions are in principle understandable by us. The consequence would be a fundamental loss of mystery, of the otherness of God.

(p. 361) In this contribution I want to reflect first on what it means, in the classical theology of the Trinity, to say that God is a 'personal being' and how, in this respect, the notion of analogy must be understood. The next issue which will demand our attention is the question of whether 'person' as applied to God signifies a *relationship* and how this could be reconciled with the view of person as an individual *substance*. Finally, in the last section we will make some remarks on the relationship between the Trinity and the theme of creation: in which sense does the Christian view of creation require a distinctive Trinitarian God? My guide in elaborating these questions will be Thomas Aquinas, whose view on these matters can help us to understand some of the worries around a 'personal God' and to clarify how we can speak meaningfully of God being personal without necessarily succumbing to an anthropological projection.

The Name 'Person' and Analogy

When Christian doctrine speaks of the Trinity as consisting of three 'persons', *person* does not have quite the same meaning as that intended by our current use of the term. The specifically theological use of 'person' may rather impress us as quite abstract and even 'impersonal' in so far as we usually perceive the meaning of 'person' from the perspective of the ability to share in the human symbolic framework of communication and mutual recognition. In classical theology the name 'person' as applied *in divinis* is in the first place a Trinitarian name by which the three divine 'persons' in God are signified: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This fact reflects the history of the name 'person' in the early Christian debate on the dogma of the Trinity. The Latin *persona* was introduced as the equivalent of the Greek *prosopon* (identified as referring to the same reality as *hypostasis*, once the meaning of these terms was clarified), used in the Trinitarian debate by way of contrast to the term *ousia*, which refers to the one and undivided *essence* of God. Thus God is one in essence, three in *persona*. The assumption is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have a certain distinction among them, albeit not in the sense of separate individuals. But they are more than just different ways in which God works with us. Rather, each seems to have a distinct personal existence. In effect the persons are constituted by their relationship to each other. In the context of the Trinity 'person' refers to a centre of relationship.

Granted that in the context of the Trinity 'person' has a peculiar meaning which differs from the way in which human beings are said to be persons, the basic assumption of many theological accounts of the Trinity is that the personal life of God is such that human persons are thought to be able—by grace—to share in that personal life of eternal

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bliss. Thus it seems that the sense in which God's inner life is said to be 'personal' is not completely different from the human mode of being a person with its implications of subjectivity and interiority. To have a personal relationship with another human being implies, at least, that the other is willing to disclose his/her inner feelings and thoughts to me. The model of intersubjectivity can be rightly applied to our relationship with God (p. 362) in faith in response to God's disclosing himself to us in his revelation, although, I would say, without the typical modern romantic *experience* of the inner life of the other. In so far as we are all romantics, the notion of an inner personal life of God must be treated with utmost care. God is God, with a nature altogether different from that of human beings.

One might say, with Thomas Aquinas, that 'person' applies to God in a distinctively divine sense. God is everything He is in a distinctively divine way. What it is to be divine is, first of all, to be radically *distinct* from the whole order of creatures. God is unique, not of the same kind as others: *extra omne genus*. Thus if we name God a 'person', it cannot be in the sense of one of the class (*genus*) of objects which are signified by our concept of person. But secondly, as God is distinct from the whole order of creatures as *cause* of all creatures, He must contain within himself the perfections of all things in an eminent way. Because of the distinction, univocity between creatures and God must be excluded; but insofar as the distinction is the consequence of a causal connection, pure equivocation must be excluded as well. The alternative is called *analogy*: 'whatever is said of God and creatures is said according to some relationship of the creature to God as to its principle and cause, wherein all the perfections of things pre-exist excellently' (Aquinas, *ST I*, q.13, a.5). One must assume an intelligible connection between the (human) world and God as its cause, and this connection underlies the possibility of an intelligible human discourse on God. God cannot be the 'totally other', since the world would then no longer be understandable as God's creation, as something which has received what it is from God.

In what follows I want to give a general characterization of what—according to Thomas Aquinas—it means to say that we can name God a 'person' in an analogous sense. First of all a warning is appropriate against a popular misunderstanding of analogy: analogy has nothing to do with the idea that God is *like* human persons but only much more perfect, thus a sort of idealizing projection of human perfections into infinity. Analogy is not a matter of 'more of the same', but rather 'the same in a different way'.

Aquinas formulates the question as an issue of the *name* of person, thus presupposing its actual use in the religious language of Christian faith. The issue is not whether God is represented by us, through the anthropomorphic images of religious language, as some sort of a 'personal being' who speaks and listens, and carries out his intentions and purposes with regard to our world. The question is that of whether we may rightly attribute the name 'person' to God, thus whether the reality (the perfection of being a person) signified by the name 'person' is present in God. In contrast to the symbolic form of analogy according to which God is portrayed on the basis of analogies with human 'personal' agents, the kind of analogy Thomas has in mind is founded in the ontological perfection of what the name signifies (*res significata*). For him, 'person' is in the first place an ontologi-

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cal category, referring to a certain mode of existence. In discussing whether and in what sense God can be named a person, Thomas will appeal to analogy in order to distinguish the divine mode of personhood from the familiar human way of being a person, which corresponds to how we are used to understanding personhood (whatever definition we may formulate). The consequence is that 'person' as it is applied (p. 363) to God has a more formal sense, not yet filled in with anthropomorphic associations and evaluations. God might be said to be a 'person', but not in the way we normally think of a person with its characteristic behaviour, inner feelings, moral responsibility, etc. The point, thus, is not that any proposed definition of 'person' will be unsatisfactory with respect to God, and that many conceptual refinements and adjustments will be required in order to more or less overcome the inadequacy of our concepts. For Aquinas, any acceptable definition of person, in which we express how we understand persons, cannot be applied as such to God.

Because of the rule of analogy, Aquinas did not have an urgent reason to avoid the term 'person', adopted by Latin Christianity, and to look for a less unsuitable alternative, as theologians such as Barth and Rahner feel compelled to do. To avoid the misleading subjectivist understanding of 'person' Barth prefers to speak of three distinct 'modes of being' (*Seinsweisen*); in a similar way Rahner speaks of three 'distinct modes of subsisting' (*distinkte Subsistenzweisen*) (Kasper 1984: 287-9). In both cases the term 'person' is replaced by a technical rephrasing which one can hardly imagine being used in the language of faith and liturgy. One has to accept that by becoming part of a specific religious vocabulary terms are set apart and, in the new context, lose the linguistic transparency of their normal daily use.

Aquinas argues that the name 'person', because of what it objectively signifies, can be attributed to God. What it is to be a person, the kind of reality we are accustomed to signify with the term 'person', must be posited of God. Why is this? The main reason is that 'person' is an ontological perfection, which as such cannot be absent in God who is the first principle of all being and, as such, the summit of perfection. For Aquinas, 'person' signifies 'what is most perfect in the whole of nature' (*id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura*: ST I, q.29, a.3). Therefore, one cannot deny God the perfection of being a person.

This argument is hardly understandable without realizing that, for Aquinas, 'person' is an ontological category. There are 'things' which have the mode of being of a person; and 'persons', such as human individuals, are a more perfect kind of thing than non-persons, such as stones, plants, animals. Why are they more perfect? Because their mode of subsistence is more perfect, since persons subsist in a rational nature. 'Person' is the name of those kinds of individuals who exist in their own right and who, by reason of their rational nature, act freely and by themselves (*per se agere*). So personal beings form the summit of the whole of nature.

That we are justified in attributing the term 'person' to God, who as principle of all being cannot lack any perfection of being, does not mean that the manner in which God is a person is adequately expressed by our concept or understanding of person. At this point we

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must make a distinction between, on the one hand, the claim that God is a person, and, on the other hand, the fact that God, in the traditions of the theistic religions, is represented (symbolically) as a person. For Aquinas, the issue under discussion is not whether God is represented in our religious language more or less like a (human) person, or whether the way God is represented more or less corresponds with how he is; the issue is whether the name 'person' can be attributed to God. This is not a matter of (p. 364) representation but of being. From the perspective of Aquinas one must say that the way in which God is represented in our language by means of concepts, metaphors, symbols, etc. necessarily falls short of how God is in himself. What God is we cannot know and neither, therefore, do the concepts we attribute to God determine objectively what God is. God does not fall under a concept in the sense that the predicate determines adequately what He is. This radical claim underlies Aquinas' notion of analogy.

Like any other name, the name 'person' is said of God according to a certain analogy. The general idea behind analogy is the following: we can name God only indirectly from his effects, *ex creaturis*. The concepts linked to those names correspond with how the signified content is present in the finite objects of human experience. We signify things according to how they are known and conceived of by us. Now, when God is named with names derived from our world, the intention cannot be to treat God as if he is a finite object existing next to other finite objects and as in some sense comparable to them. Such names signify God according to the relationship (*proportio* = analogy) in which creatures stand to God as their Creator. What the names signify, the perfection itself, is thought to be present in God, who is the eminent cause of all perfection, but not according to the way the perfection is conceived of and signified by us, since the perfection is conceived of by us according to the finite mode which it has in creatures. Thus God may be said to be a person, not according to our conception of person but in a much more eminent way.

The crucial thing is that Aquinas denies us a positive and direct insight into what it means for God to be a person. The personal character of God's being will necessarily escape our conceptual grasp and thus our capacity for symbolic signification as well. On the basis of the insight into what it is to be a person, that is, to subsist in a rational (intellectual) nature, we are led to affirm the presence of personhood in God, as something which is necessarily implied by his absolute perfection, but without having access to the divine mode of personhood. There is no question of theological 'realism' here, in the sense that our representations of God, among which the notion of person figures prominently, correspond with the independent reality of God.

The present debate about the theistic conception of God focuses in particular, it seems to me, on the question of whether the description of God as a personal being (who cares for us, who listens to and sometimes grants us our prayers) must be interpreted symbolically or as a coherent description of how God really is (Byrne 2003). For Aquinas, however, the issue is not so much concerned with our human representations of God, symbolic or not, or whether we may describe God according to an analogy with rational agents (what we call 'persons') in our world. His approach is more like this: given the fact that in the Christian discourse on the Trinity we use the name 'person', how can we argue that being

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a person somehow befits God, even if the divine mode of personhood necessarily remains a mystery to us? Showing that we are justified in attributing the name 'person' to God does not necessarily imply that God is objectively determined in accordance with any concept of personhood. Even if the definition of 'person' includes as main elements 'subsistence' and 'intelligence', and God is said to be subsistent as well as intelligent, this does not mean that the very *concept* of person applies to God. The concept—our concept by means of which we conceive of what a person is—necessarily falls short (p. 365) in representing the way in which God is a person, and thus also the way in which He is said to be 'subsistent' and 'intelligent'.

Aquinas can avoid this conceptualistic realism by arguing that the very reality of being a person is included in the universal perfection of being. Where 'being' is found in the highest degree, entailing subsistence and intelligence, there must be 'person' as well. This allows him to treat the definition of person in a loose and flexible way. 'Person' is defined, according to Boethius' classical definition, as an 'individual substance of a rational nature' (*naturae rationabilis individua substantia*). Both elements of this definition are, in a certain way, applicable to God. God is, in the first place, a subsisting reality, a concrete individual and, secondly, He is endowed with intelligence. But again: the divine mode of that 'subsisting' and 'intelligence' in God necessarily escapes our conceptual grasp. What we know is that these features must necessarily be attributed to God, 'being the first cause of all things and exceeding all things caused by him' (*ST I*, q.12, a.12).

For Aquinas, the name 'person' applies to God analogically, that is to say, God is person in a divine sense, which as such exceeds what we normally signify as persons. God is not like a (human) person but greater, more perfect, without a body and without bodily restrictions. We are justified in speaking of 'persons' in the discourse on the Trinitarian faith, but this fact as such will nevertheless not make God into a personal God, that is, 'personal' in the sense of being part of the human symbolic order of communication.

The Term 'Person': Absolute or Relative

In the scholastic doctrine of the divine names the distinction is commonly made between names which are said *essentialiter* of God and names which are said *personaliter*, that is to say, names which pertain to one of the persons in God. The name 'good', for instance, is said *essentialiter* of God, because it signifies the single undivided essence. In contrast, the name 'Word' is said *personaliter* because 'word' signifies a relationship ('word' is related to the knower who says the word) and is predicated in particular of the second Person, who proceeds in the manner of a word from the divine intellect. Names which pertain to the divine persons signify a relationship, since each of the persons is distinct from another through a relationship of origin.

Now, the question arises of how one should think of the name 'person' itself. Is the name 'person' said *personaliter* of God? Thus is it the name of an exclusively Trinitarian application, or does it primarily signify the concrete essence of God? In other words, is the term 'person' in virtue of its signification an appropriate name for designating the 'three' in

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God, or was it just a matter of an arbitrary decision that the name person became used in a relative manner, being found opportune for signifying the personal relations in God? These questions are still relevant for us, and are addressed by Thomas Aquinas in article 4 of question 29 of the *Summa theologiae* ('whether the name person signifies a relation?'). There is, Thomas says, a particular difficulty with regard to the (p. 366) name 'person' as said of God: according to Christian usage the name 'person' is predicated in the plural of the three in God in contrast to names which signify absolutely and belong to the essence, while at the same time the meaning of 'person' does not appear to refer in itself to another. One might think that the name 'person' is in itself an absolute name, signifying the essence, such as the name 'God' or the name 'wise', except that after the ecclesiastical debate on the Trinity it was ordained that the name 'person' was to be used in a relative sense in the plural, as when we say 'three persons'. According to this view, which Thomas attributes to Peter Lombard, 'person' expresses by virtue of its signification the essence only, but, as consequence of a conciliar decree, the name person was to be used in a relative way to designate the persons in plural, although this relativity is not part of its proper meaning.

For Thomas this view is unsatisfactory. It must be rejected, he thinks, because on the basis of this interpretation the Trinitarian discourse of 'three persons' in God would be quite defenceless against the possible accusation of tritheism. If 'person' is a substantive name, then the talk of 'three persons' would lead to the heretical position of 'three gods'. The relative use of 'person' as a name said in plural of the three divine persons cannot be just a matter of arbitrary decision. This relative use must be justified, Thomas thinks, by showing that the relational aspect was already part of the notion of person as said of God from the start, not something which is added to the notion of person afterwards. In speaking of God as 'three persons', we must avoid the suggestion that it concerns three Gods. In order to avoid this Thomas argues that the term 'person' signifies a relationship *in a certain way* and that, therefore, the term is especially suited to be used for the relational 'three' in God.

What is presupposed in this discussion is the legitimacy of the Christian discourse about the Triune God, three persons, not three Gods, but one God in three persons, distinguished from each other in virtue of their personal properties (mutual relationships). Thomas wanted to show that this discourse is as such intelligible; the specific theological use of 'person' cannot be accused of being a violation or abuse of the accepted meaning of person.

Thomas begins to analyse the meaning of 'person' by distinguishing the general term of 'person' from the term 'person' as specifically applied to God. The meaning of 'person' as applied to God may include something which is not included in the common term. The term 'person' in general signifies 'the individual substance of a rational nature'. The term 'person' refers to the individual. Thomas goes on by arguing that the individual in the case of God includes a relationship. If the term 'person', as applied to God, signifies the individual, it will necessarily include a relational aspect. This can be explained as follows: 'person' signifies the individual in a determined nature, for instance, this man or that

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man, Peter or John. It is not man in general who is a person, but 'this' man. What does it mean to be individual in this way? An individual is undivided in itself and distinct from others (*in se distinctum, ab aliis vero distinctum*). 'This man' signifies what is distinct from 'that man'. Thus if 'person' in any nature signifies what is distinct in that nature, then in the case of human nature it signifies a concrete individual who is made up of 'this flesh, these bones, and this soul'; that is, the individualizing features which (p. 367) mark this man as something distinct from that man. So if one speaks of 'person' in a general sense, it signifies an individual who is distinct from others; but the meaning of 'person' as applied to human nature will include 'this flesh, etc.' because it is in virtue of these individualizing factors that this man is distinct from others.

Next we have to consider what is constitutive for the distinction in God. Without distinction there is no 'individuality' in God and thus no reason to apply the notion of 'person' to him. Is there distinction in God? In the sense of many individuals sharing the same nature, so that one can speak of 'this God' as distinct from 'that God', there is not. In God the duo *suppositum* (that which exists) and *natura* (that according to which something exists) are one and the same. In the case of God it is the divine essence (nature) itself which subsists. Now, Thomas goes on, there is distinction in God in virtue of the relationship of origin. The three persons are distinct from each other by reason of their origin. The Father is, so to say, the source, the Son is begotten from Him, and the Spirit proceeds from both. They are distinguished from each other by their relationship of origin. They are nothing apart from this relationship. This relationship in God is identical with the divine essence itself, and thus, Thomas says, it is subsistent, for the divine essence has the character of subsistence. Each of the three relationships in God are subsistent, thus having a distinct 'personal' existence, although there is but one essence.

Let us bring this difficult and complex reasoning to its conclusion. There is distinction in God in virtue of the relationship of origin. The relationship in God is not an accident, inhering in a subject, but it is the essence itself. And it is the essence which subsists. So if we speak of person in the special sense of divine person, the term 'person' signifies a relationship as subsisting, since this is how there is distinction in God. The crucial formula appears to be: '*a relationship as subsisting*'.

Aquinas summarizes his position as follows. It is true to say that 'person' signifies a relation directly (*in recto*) and the essence indirectly (*in obliquo*). But it signifies the relationship, not *as* relationship but by way of *hypostasis* or substance. In contrast to terms like 'father', 'son', etc., the mode of signifying of the term 'person' itself is not relative. So it is likewise true to say that it signifies the essence directly and the relationship indirectly, inasmuch as the essence is the same as the hypostasis, and the hypostasis in God is signified as distinct by relationship. (Which hypostasis? For instance, the hypostasis of the Father, thus signified as distinct by the relationship of paternity.) Thus the relationship enters into the notion of person only indirectly.

The relational aspect, Aquinas argues, is part of the meaning of person as applied to God. The term 'person', therefore, can be legitimately used of God *personaliter*, and this in

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virtue of its proper meaning. However, initially the term 'person' was used of God in such a way that the indirectly signified aspect of relationship was not yet perceived clearly. Only later, as a consequence of heresies, Catholic theologians began to emphasize the relational dimension of the meaning of 'person' as applied to God. This emphasis on the relational aspect of 'person' must not be understood merely as a linguistic accommodation of the use of 'person' in order to deal politically with the heresy resulting from the fact that the term 'person' has an absolute signification; on the contrary, Aquinas claims that the term lent itself, in virtue of what it properly signifies, to express (p. 368) relationship. It was, thus, a matter of making explicit what was already implicitly present in the meaning of 'person'.

Trinity and Creation

Traditionally the themes of creation and Trinity are treated separately from each other. The doctrine of the Trinity is thought to be restricted to the 'inner life' of God while creation concerns God's operation *ad extra*. And a classical Augustinian principle says that in his operation *ad extra* God acts according to the unity of his essence. The act of creation is thus to be attributed to God in his essential unity, not to one of the divine persons. For Aquinas this is the principal reason why the Trinity in God cannot be demonstrated by natural reason. The divine 'persons' possess the one and undivided creative power of God, which is common to the whole Trinity. As it proceeds from the world to the knowledge of the first cause of all things, natural reason (philosophy, natural theology) cannot reach God in his inner Trinitarian life.

However, in the Christian tradition creation is usually conceived of in such a way that it definitely requires a 'personal' God. In the Christian view the world must be understood to have its origin in a *free* and *intelligent* act of creation. God has made all things through his intellect and by a free decision of his will. The question which can be raised is to what extent the doctrine of the Trinity sheds light on the 'personal' character of the act of creation. What is the link between the 'personal' character of God in his operation *ad extra* and the inner 'personal' life of the Trinity?

In an interesting passage in his *Summa theologiae* (ST I, q.32, a.1, ad3) we see Aquinas explicitly connecting the teaching of the Trinity with the Christian view of creation as a free and intelligent act of God. The knowledge of the divine persons, he says, is necessary for us in order to think rightly about creation. Without the Christian teaching of the Trinity one might easily fall into error as to how things come forth from the first cause. First, Christian doctrine teaches that God made all things by his Word. This excludes the error of those philosophers (Avicenna) who say that God produced things by natural necessity as if creation were a natural process of emanation. Second, Christian doctrine teaches that in God there is a procession of Love and that this Love in God constitutes the motive for creation. God produced creatures not because He needed them nor because of any extrinsic reason but on account of the love of his own goodness.

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What is the right way to think about the origin of the world? Thomas reminds his readers of the presence in God of a Word and of Love. God is a spiritual being: what he does, he does according to his intellect, through his Word, and out of Love. There is no natural necessity in God's operation with respect to the world. Not 'nature' but 'spirit' (freedom, word, personality) characterizes the way the world comes into existence through the divine cause. Why is this important? For Thomas, the thesis of creation through natural necessity would have as a consequence that plurality and diversity in the world could not be understood as having its immediate origin in God's own Wisdom. (p. 369) As 'natural cause' God would only produce one single reality (*natura determinata est ad unum*), not a differentiated whole of many and diverse creatures (cf. Aquinas, *De Potentia* q.3, a.15 and a.16). Thus God would not be present *immediately* to each creature in its particular character of being. The view that each creature in its proper character is intended by God is best upheld if one assumes a principle of multiplicity in God. And such a principle is the Word, in which the 'ideas' of all things are contained. It is a fundamental insight of Christian theology that only a God who acts through his 'Word' (instead of by way of natural emanation) can be thought of as a transcendent and free creator, distinct from the whole of creation and immediately present to all his creatures, from the greatest to the least.

God created the world out of love for his goodness, not because of any need. 'Need' would mean that God needs the existence of other things than himself in order to reach his perfect goodness. The existence of creatures fulfils then a divine need. According to the Christian view this is not the way we should think of creation and of the world in which we exist. On the contrary, we should see creation as a gratuitous act, motivated by God's love for his goodness. The meaning of creatures does not consist in playing an instrumental role in the divine project of self-realization. Creatures exist because God wants to share his goodness with others. The world exists as the expression of divine love. Only in such a world, in which creatures exist as the expression of divine love and goodness, thus not by chance or necessity, but because they are loved in themselves and for themselves, only such a world can be imagined as a good and proper place for 'persons'.

In Christian theology, the teaching of the Triune God helps us to acknowledge that the world must be seen as a free expression of God's goodness, intended as such in its diversity and plurality (thus in its otherness with respect to God), and not as a deterministic effect of a natural power. The good power of the divine being is qualified by personalistic attributes of intelligence and freedom: God must be understood as a spiritual being who creates through his intellect (Word) by a free decision of his will (Love). The personalistic qualification of the divine principle has indeed important consequences for what it means to be a creature. To be a creature implies more than total dependency; each creature is constituted in its own being, is a concrete subsistent thing with a proper nature, existing in its own right. To be a creature must be understood therefore as the unity of total dependency and substantiality (Te Velde 1995). And when the act of creation results in a true personal being, a free rational agent, the unity of dependency and substantiality manifests itself by way of 'image': man made in the image of God, that is a person who acts through itself on the basis of knowledge and free decision of his will. Compare in this

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connection Thomas's remarkable 'personalistic' interpretation of the 'imago Dei' in the prologue of the second part of the *Summa theologiae*: in this sense one may—tentatively—formulate the thought that, seen in the light of the doctrine of the Trinity, creation fulfills the preconditions under which the world can be understood as a suitable place for (human) persons, rational beings which can freely affirm their radical dependency on God in whose image they are created.

(p. 370) Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Te Velde (2005a), 95–121; Seidl (1987); Ratzinger (1990); Kasper (1984, especially part III, ch. 2).

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Rudi te Velde

Rudi A. Te Velde is Lecturer in Philosophy at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Tilburg; he also holds the Catholic Radboud Foundation Chair of Philosophy and Christianity in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Amsterdam.

A Theology of God the Father

Emmanuel Durand

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Abstract and Keywords

This article offers a theological treatment of the mystery of God the Father. It considers the real but partial revelation of the Father in the economy of salvation and reflects on two ways of knowing the Father: by way of negation and of analogy. It underscores the eschatological ultimacy of the Father, fecund source of the Son and Holy Spirit and the first principle of all Trinitarian action *ad extra*. This resituates the theology of Christ and of the Holy Spirit within the context of a Trinitarian and paternal theocentrism.

Keywords: God the Father, economy of salvation, negation, analogy, eschatological ultimacy, theology of Christ, Holy Spirit, theocentrism

(Translation from the French by Thomas Joseph White, O.P.)

This theological treatment of the mystery of God the Father begins from a consideration of the real but partial revelation of the Father in the economy of salvation. My essay then proceeds to a reflection on two ways of knowing the Father: by way of negation and of analogy. The divine paternity is then contrasted analogically with all human parenthood; finally my essay centres on the relational character of the paternity of the Father, his primacy in respect to his relational identity, and then focuses on the use of his relational primacy for a treatment of concepts that are central to Trinitarian theology: inner-divine fecundity, *perichoresis*, and eschatological primacy of the Father.

The Indirect Revelation of the Father

A systematic consideration of the person of the Father presupposes the concrete form that the Trinitarian epiphany takes on in the history of salvation. The Trinity is revealed through the relation of Jesus Christ to the Father who sends him and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The mystery of the Father as such is indissociable from an eschatological orientation toward him that animates the entire mission of Christ as well as that of his disciples. Divine revelation does not offer its recipients an immediate percep-

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tion of the Father, but places them face to face with Christ, the mediator and plenitude of revelation. The Father remains in some real sense transcendent of the mission of the Son. Through him, the Father truly makes himself known, even while remaining radically hidden on account of his primacy. There is no other visage of the Father than the face of Christ. The unique pathway to the knowledge of the Father, then, is Jesus himself, the exegete and the way. He constantly designates the Father as both his own origin and as his ultimate destination. He comes forth from him, and he is going toward him (*cf.* Jn 13:1; 14:12; 16:28).

(p. 372) The ultimacy of the Father in divine revelation prohibits the disciples from remaining fixed exclusively on Christ. Christ's departure to be with the Father is an integral part of his mission in respect to us. In theological terms one could say that the irreducibly Christocentric character of revelation is simultaneously ordered toward a paternal teleology. If Christ is truly the central and decisive figure of the entire historical economy of revelation, he is nevertheless not its ultimate end. Because of his divine nature, wholly received from the Father, Christ shares with the Father in being the final end of all things, but, in virtue of his relation of origin, he also always designates the Father as his ultimate source. Christ cannot retain his disciples uniquely for himself, then, since, in accord with his origin, he has the mission to send them ultimately to the Father. By Christ and the Spirit, we have at last an access to the Father.

The person of the Father is not easily accessible to our theological consideration. As Christ says in Matt. 11:25–7, the Father is 'hidden from the wise and learned', and it is the Son who reveals the Father to whom he wills, especially to the 'little ones' of faith. Nevertheless, theological investigation can build upon an enquiry we find in the New Testament itself, where the Apostles, who through listening to Christ and living alongside him, asked about the deepest identity of the one who sent him. To Philip who requests, 'Show us the Father and we will be satisfied', Jesus responds, 'He who has seen me has seen the Father ... Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?' (Jn 14:8–10). The words, gestures, and works of Christ in his earthly life are all ultimately founded in and indicative of the mutual reciprocity between Jesus and the Father. The preaching and ministry of Jesus intentionally provokes a kind of Christian searching for the Father, and simultaneously makes this search possible for the first time. Conjointly, Christ firmly condemns forms of false paternalism that would impede a true recognition and acceptance of the one who sent him (*cf.* Jn 4:12; 6:31; 7:22; 8:39, 44; Lk. 2:48–9; Matt. 23:9). The New Testament claims that there is something fundamental at stake in whether or not we come to truly know the Father. Consequently, theology has a contribution to make to this process, to the extent that it seeks to acquire an integral understanding of the mystery of God within faith.

How is God to be understood as Father? The error of Arius and Eunomius was to respond too short-sightedly to this question. One cannot invoke a magic formula in order to treat such a question, such as the term 'unbegotten'. In order to avoid facile and misleading solutions, it is helpful to reformulate the question in a negative fashion: How is God the Father not to be understood? The negative formulation better respects the limits of our

knowledge of God. It also better emphasizes the requirement that we purify our images and reformulate our ordinary concepts when speaking of God. In order to formulate a systematic set of propositions about the person of the Father, we should begin by identifying the most effective ways of access to theological reflection concerning who he is. Our principle resources can be found in the way of negation and of analogy, through which we can come to envisage the properties of the Father.

(p. 373) **The Negative Way: The Incomprehensible Father**

The first characteristic of the Father is divine incomprehensibility. Contemporary theology became resensitized to the apophatic dimensions of Trinitarian theology in the twentieth century. Karl Barth emphasized this characteristic trait of the first person of the Trinity, even while developing a robust theology of divine paternity (Barth 1987). Even when he takes the initiative to reveal himself freely, God the Father always remains in some sense truly hidden, and this important twofold truth reaches its summit in the divine economy in the resurrection of Christ. Simultaneously, however, the relation of the Father to the eternal Son is revealed in the economy as the intra-divine presupposition that stands behind the paternal relation of God toward creatures. The title 'Father' does not pertain to the first person most properly speaking except by virtue of his eternal paternity, while paternity with regard to creatures is attributed to him simply by appropriation. Likewise, our new birth by grace also finds its primal foundation in the paternity of God with respect to the eternal Son. In developing these themes, Barth limits himself almost exclusively to a theology of the works of the Father (*ad extra*). He does not develop any real theological proposals about the Father in himself, in the heart of Trinitarian life. Outside of two or three allusions, the properties of the first person are not treated. We can nonetheless identify two ideas that are accentuated by Barth: incomprehensibility and paternity (with the latter as defined intrinsically in relation to the eternal Sonship). Both of these ideas should be retained in contemporary theology as determinate properties for a theology of God the Father.

The theological affirmation of the incomprehensibility of the Father calls for a clarification. Strictly speaking, it is not a property of the first person alone. Rather, a common attribute (i.e. one that remains attributable to each of the persons of the Trinity) is appropriated to one of the three in a particular way. In effect, if the eternal Son was not just as incomprehensible as his Father, if he did not remain always in himself invisible with the Father (see St Augustine, *De Trinitate* II.5.9; St Thomas Aquinas, *Super evangelium S. Ioannis lectura* 1:18 (Marietti edition, no. 220)), he would not be the perfect image and revelation of the Father. The Holy Spirit also partakes naturally of this characteristic of the deity. However, the Father is incomprehensible in a primary and unoriginate fashion; the common incomprehensibility of the three persons finds its origin in the personal primacy of the Father, for he communicates to the Son and the Spirit his own incomprehensible nature. As such, incomprehensibility designates one dimension of the exclusive

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property of the Father as the first divine hypostasis. The appropriation of the incomprehensibility of the divine nature to the Father is therefore not insignificant.

Such an approach to the person of the Father through the medium of divine incomprehensibility pertains to a theological *via negativa*. It emphasizes the final inadequacy of our images and our concepts with regard to the first divine person. In Christian theology, such negative reflection always presupposes for its warrant a more fundamental positive knowledge of God, derived from the events of revelation. To affirm that God the Father is utterly incomprehensible requires in effect that one has previously recognized him as 'Father', through an economy of divine initiatives of grace, and finally by the revelation of his paternity with regard to his only-begotten Son. Basically, then, to construct a theology of the Father that is truly Christian, the 'negative way' must always carefully be articulated in reference to the economic revelation of God. (p. 374)

The Analogical Way: The Gifts of the Father

Once we have recognized that the Father is incomprehensible, it is fitting to try to understand the person of the Father based upon his free and uncompelled initiatives in the divine economy: the design of filial adoption, election, the call to sanctification, creation, redemption, the incarnation of the Word, the resurrection of Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, reconciliation, the recapitulation of all things in Christ, and so on. All of these 'effects' of God refer us back to their origin, to a plenitude without limits, to a source that is superabundant. Recognition of such a source is implicit in the hymn in Eph. 1:3-14, where 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' is invoked and blessed in thanksgiving for all the gifts that he has bestowed upon us, due to his Christological election and recapitulation of creatures. The Father is at the origin of every grace. Likewise, all of the free divine actions of creative giving and of salvation lead back in particular to his personal mystery. Spontaneously, 'it is due to the benefits we receive that we come to know the benefactor; in effect, it is in taking into account that which occurs to us that we know imperfectly by analogy the nature of the benefactor' (Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica* XV; Gregory of Nyssa 2000: 217; English translation by T. J. White). Knowledge of the person of the Father arises, therefore, from the economy, in which the Word and the Holy Spirit are like the two 'hands' of the Father, through whom he acts to our benefit.

This process of ascending from the good gifts to the divine benefactor, and from the works to the person, bears within it a real limitation. It inevitably proceeds by appropriation, that is, by attributing a common Trinitarian operation to one of the persons in a particular way. Appropriation is a conceptual accommodation that is not only legitimate but most welcome. It is a practice found in the Scriptures themselves which helps a true affinity (*convenientia*) to become manifest, between what is *commonly* known of the three persons and what is *proper* to one person that we are seeking to know better (Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q.45, a.6, ad3). Appropriation is based upon both the limits and the true resources of our knowledge of God that the revelation itself makes possible. Its usefulness is real, but remains limited, and merits to be completed by way of other approaches, no-

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tably by an analogical reflection on the Trinitarian properties of the persons, and by the regulative reflection of a robust negative theology.

The only rigorously proper knowledge of the Father is developed, then, either in a *negative* fashion, or in a *relative* fashion. On the one hand, the first person is the only origin without origin, the only principle without principle; on the other hand, the Father (p. 375) is only Father in virtue of his relation to the Son. Here we find the two essential ways toward the knowledge of the Father in himself: the *negative way* (centred upon his incomprehensibility and his absence of origin) and the *economic way* (centred on the relational character of his paternity). The economic way gives rise to an analogical reflection on the eternal relations of the Father and the Son.

In the Old Testament the images of paternity are rather rare and are usually employed in an 'ascendant' fashion: the text employs human images of fatherhood and motherhood to signify the dispositions and pedagogy of God with respect to his creatures. In light of the complete revelation given in Jesus Christ, however, the revelation of divine fatherhood takes on another dimension that is analogical in the proper sense and that is more clearly transcendent (pertaining to the immanent life of God as such). From this point onward, even while presupposing this ascent from creatures to their God, analogy functions also in a descending way: the paternity of God with respect to Jesus as his eternal Son is the transcendent source of all human paternity and maternity. Now we are no longer limited to understanding what is greater by comparison with what is lesser (God seen in light of creatures), but we also understand what is lesser by comparison with what is greater (creatures seen in light of God). This is why Paul can address the Ephesians in the following way: 'I bow my knees before the Father, whom every family (*patria*) in heaven and on earth is named' (Eph. 3:14; RSV).

When the analogical concept for paternity is employed in view of a transcendent signification in God, its use must be qualified negatively. In the Old Testament, the dissimilarity that is established between human and divine paternity is also accompanied by a multitude of complementary images, and these express other modes of human love, and other human sentiments: the love of a mother toward her child, the passion of a young bridegroom for his fiancée, the care of a wine-grower for his vine, but also the sense of disappointment, distress, anger, and so forth. In the New Testament, the multiplicity of images remains, but that of the paternity of God is affirmed in a more decisive and recurrent manner, based upon the very words of Jesus concerning his mission, and his 'coming forth' from and 'being sent' by the Father. The theological sense of the pre-eminence of intra-divine fatherhood must be preserved, then, by the use of a strong negative theology, since the dissimilitude between natural human fatherhood and the eternal fatherhood of God with regard to his only-begotten Son is much greater than the dissimilitude between human fatherhood and the fatherhood of God with regard to his creatures.

Divine Paternity and Human Paternity and Maternity

In an effort to deepen our sense of the relation between analogy and negative theology in speaking of the Father, we can profitably compare and contrast the personal Fatherhood of God with regard to the Son with human fatherhood and motherhood. In the context of the Arian crisis, the Fathers of the Church had to emphasize the difference (p. 376) between human generation and divine generation, in order to steer clear of inappropriate projections onto the divine. They saw that the latter could, in the end, lead to an exclusion of the very notion of an eternal generation of divine life. While Origen had already interpreted the notions of emanation and generation in a sufficiently spiritual sense, Athanasius of Alexandria expressed in a thematic way the absolutely unique character of the generation and paternity that are in God:

‘For God is not like man’ (cf. Num. 23:19; Judith 8:16): for the Father is not from a father and therefore does not beget someone who will in turn himself become a father. The Son does not come forth as an effusion of the Father and is not begotten of a father who was himself begotten. Therefore, neither is he begotten so as to beget. The result of this is that only in the deity is the Father truly father in the proper sense and the Son truly son. For in them and only in them is the Father ever Father, and the Son ever Son. (Athanasius of Alexandria, *First Discourse Against the Arians*, 21; English translation by T. J. White)

Generation, paternity, and filiation are all present in God, then, in modes that are absolutely unique and pre-eminent. This implies that it is not possible to speak of God in terms that correlate directly with what we ordinarily see and experience in a cyclical fashion: a son who becomes a father once he in turn reaches biological maturity. The relations between generation and paternity, and paternity and filiation, must become the object of a new consideration and of a reconfiguration of concepts, once we apply such terms theologically to God. How is it fitting to conceptualize in God, then, the relationship between the persons, the act of generation, and the entirely relational character of divine paternity?

Thomas Aquinas articulates a theological contemplation of the eternal generation of the Son based upon a comparison with degrees of immanence that one encounters in created realities. He shows diverse forms of perfect activity that remain distinct in human experience can be said analogically to converge in the eternal generation of the Son. So while conception, birth and eventual manifest, personal presence (*adesse*) are three different moments in the event of human birth, their mutual perfections are ‘superimposed’ or simultaneously identical in the eternal nativity of the Son (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Bk. IV, ch. 11, *in fine*). The Son simultaneously is *conceived* in the bosom of the Father, *begotten* as one who is distinct from the Father, and manifestly *personally present to* or ‘returning’ toward the Father. We may employ a diverse palette of images to describe how a child comes into the world: he is begotten by his father, conceived by his

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mother, who also gives birth to him; we can also ascribe birth directly to him as a subject—he is born. These different terms are employed by the genealogies and birth narratives of the New Testament as well as in conventional modern speech. They designate both the diverse moments of the process, and the diverse agents involved who take part in human generation. Analogically, then, these multiple words can be used in convergent fashion to denote the simple act that is unique and eternal, which constitutes divine generation.

The ascription to *divine paternity* of various actions and moments that one finds distinctly in the process of *human maternity* denotes a difference between God's paternity and the human couple. In addition, in human reproduction, the child receives the human nature of the father and mother (common to each of them) but not their individual personhood (proper to each of them). Therefore, the child has a limited degree of personal resemblance to either of the parents. Rather, the parents experience in the child a new being who has the same nature as they do, but who is very different to the extent that the child develops in his or her proper personality. In God, there is no duality of sexes, but there is also no real distinction between nature and person, such that the Son is—in all that he is (person and nature)—generated from the *person* of the Father. The likeness between the divine persons, therefore, is infinitely greater than that which exists between any two human persons.

In the Trinitarian life, the acts of the begetting of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit stand at the origin of the relations of person to person, so that each of the hypostases is constituted by a relation with the two others. Here we encounter a unity of being greater than any other that could be envisaged, and a distinction of persons in which each is singularly unique. Paternity and filiation as such are found first and foremost in the heart of the Trinity, and the human correspondents (paternity—maternity and filiation) are participations in these perfect modes of existence that are proper to God alone. Finally, divine paternity and filiation are both inseparable from the Holy Spirit, who originates eternally from the mutual *affability* of the Father and the Son and from the *gratitude* of the Son toward the Father. The Spirit manifests the perfection of the divine paternity and filiation, since love is indissociable from each of these persons. By contrast, we know all too well that in human experience, paternity and filiation need not always imply balanced and loving relations.

The Mystery of the Father: Original Plenitude, Distinctive Relations, and Eschatological Ultimacy

Our systematic reflection can proceed beginning from a question that is not resolved, centred upon a medieval theological dispute that is of great importance: Is God a Father based upon his pure and simple primacy, or based upon his relation to the begotten Son? There are two contrasting theological answers in the western theological tradition. The desire to identify how the unbegotten character of the Father is to be understood with re-

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spect to his relational character is also discussed by certain authors in the eastern tradition, especially in the Cappadocian Fathers (see Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius* I.5 and I.15–16 (Basil of Caesarea 1982: 174–7, 225–9); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 29.16 (Gregory of Nazianzus 1978: 210–13)).

The Trinitarian theology of Bonaventure is centred upon the notion of a plenitude of source or origin (*fontalis plenitudo*), and the innascibility (or ‘unbegottenness’) of the Father is portrayed as something primary with respect to every secondary emanation, both those that are intra-divine as well as those that are created. By contrast, in the (p. 378) Trinitarian theology of Thomas Aquinas there is not a positive content accorded to the innascibility of the Father, and his person is positively envisaged principally in relation to the Son and the Spirit. The starting points of this medieval discussion are taken from Hilary of Poitiers and Augustine. In effect, re-read by the scholastics of the thirteenth century, Hilary witnesses to a positive conception of the unbegotten character of the Father (*innascibilitas*), which includes the Father's primacy as source of all else (*auctoritas*) (see Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* IV.32–5). Augustine, meanwhile, sees in the Father's innascibility simply a negative exclusion of any origin: the Father is he who does not proceed from another (*ingenitus*) (see Augustine, *De Trinitate* V.6.7 to V.7.8).

For Bonaventure, then, the Father can be conceived of as a person in virtue of his primacy alone, the fact that he is not begotten by another. Like pagan monotheists then, ‘we can conceive of the divine nature and he who possesses it [that is to say God as a subject], even if we do not conceive of a plurality of persons’ (Bonaventure, *In I Sent.*, dist. 27, pars 1, a.unicus, q.2, ad3). This affects our Trinitarian theology, however, when we attempt to understand the Father in relation to the divine generation of the Son. To conceive of the Father as Father (eternally able to beget a consubstantial Son) no other property is available than that of innascibility, the fact that God does not receive his nature from another. This perspective leads to a trend that is prevalent in contemporary theology: the tendency to treat the person of the Father and the divine essence as coextensive notions, and to overlook thereby that the relation to the Son is itself *constitutive* of the primary hypostasis of the Father (*cf.* Kasper 1982). The theory of Bonaventure then poses a serious problem: if the simple fact that God possesses a nature that he does not receive from another suffices to give intelligibility to a notion of divine generation (unbegottenness implies fecundity), then knowledge of the existence of the Trinity could seemingly be deduced simply from a property of the divine essence, one accessible to philosophers and pagan monotheists. In any case, Bonaventure estimates that the primacy and innascibility render sufficient intelligibility to a concept of divine generation, which is subordinate to the notion of paternity. According to our manner of knowing, the Father is posited as first by virtue of his primacy (*primitas*); primacy is then qualified by reference to emanations (including generation and spiration). The relations of paternity and spiration are then subordinated to primacy and emanation. The *primitas* signals the inexhaustible plenitude of the divine mystery in its paternal origin, an origin that is superior to any emanation, divine or created.

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By contrast, when Thomas Aquinas treats of the divine persons, he envisages a reciprocal primacy of processions and relations as characterizing the very root intelligibility of the persons. His theory has recourse to a conceptual distinction between the formal principle of a distinction of persons versus the way the distinction of persons comes to be known (Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q.8, a.3; *ST I*, q.40, a.2). Processional origins are the way to understand persons, but the intra-divine relations (which are themselves founded upon the actions of procession) are in reality the formal principle of the distinction of persons. Consequently, the negation of any origin in the Father, and his simple position as primary, does not characterize his person as such, properly speaking. Innascibility is a pure negation: it designates the fact that the Father is a principle who (p. 379) does not originate from another principle (Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, dist. 28, q.1, a.1, ad1; *ST I*, q.33, a.4). For us to conceive of the Father's innascibility, then, we must presuppose some prior, positive understanding of the Father as a principle, and this prior understanding is given in the notion of paternity. Innascibility is a strictly negative knowledge that must qualify our understanding of the Father as a principle, but this notion is not formally constitutive of the fatherhood of God as such (Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, dist. 28, q.1, a.1, ad4). Nevertheless, it remains a secondary property. Negation alone cannot express the characteristic dignity of a property since every negation is founded upon a prior positive affirmation (Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, dist. 28, q.1, a.1, ad2). Innascibility presupposes, then, paternity. Innascibility can seem more perfect than paternity, to the extent that it signifies something that is entirely incommunicable, while paternity is given in analogical fashion to creatures. But innascibility manifests in reality the incommunicable character of the divine paternity as such: it is entirely unique and transcendent. Only God the Father is perfectly and uniquely Father.

Taking account of the medieval tradition, there are multiple ways in which we might further qualify our understanding of the first hypostasis of the Trinity. Four distinct strands of analysis can be distinguished.

- (1)** With regard to the divine economy, the Father takes the initiative in the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- (2)** With regard to the intra-Trinitarian life of God, the Father is the first person and is innascible.
- (3)** The Father eternally begets the Son and spirates the Holy Spirit.
- (4)** He therefore maintains two original relations that are constitutive of his very identity.

If one takes into account the perichoresis, or mutual indwelling, of the three persons, it is impossible to understand the Father as holding the 'first place' in the Trinitarian life in a purely solitary fashion, independent of his relation to the Son and his relation to the Spirit. Rather, one must adopt from the beginning a relational conception of the person, in conformity with the Thomistic conception of the divine persons as 'subsistent relations'. If we proceed in this way, then once the relational identity of the Father is acknowledged,

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one must also re-accentuate the profound meaning of his innascibility as signifying a plenitude as the source of divine life in God.

In every divine work, the Father is he from whom divine initiatives originally proceed, including all that pertains to the divine welfare for creation and original plan of divine adoption by grace. This is fitting, due to who the Father is: the origin of the Son and the Spirit, and the first principle of the Trinitarian mystery of God, who alone has existence without origin. This unoriginate status can only be envisaged in a rigorous fashion if one accepts to refine analogically two complex notions: that of an 'order of nature' and that of an 'origin'. It is necessary to purify these notions of any connotation of compositional complexity, in order to apply them to the inner life of the Trinity without projecting on to that life (falsely) any notion of anteriority and posteriority, or of supremacy and subordination. In effect, it is necessary to conceive of the primacy of the Father without (p. 380) disfiguring his completely unique expression of primacy; that is to say, without wedding to this an erroneous notion of the subordination of the Son and the Spirit.

On a first approach, in order to correctly consider the primacy of the Father, it is sufficient simply to begin from the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit sent into the world and to 'ascend' from these back up to the Father, at whose initiative they are sent. This starting point is both intuitive and theologically sound. It follows from the common Biblical motifs of 'sending' and 'mission', by which the New Testament revelation turns our view from the mission of the Word and Son who is filled with the Spirit back to the Father who sent him.

If the Father is assuredly first in the order of origin that exists between the three divine persons, nonetheless, he is not anterior to the two other persons, in such a way that they would come to be after him, either temporally or by means of an ontological degradation, nor even simply according to a logical posteriority (see Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius* I.20 and III.1 (Basil of Caesarea 1982: 244-7; Basil of Caesarea 1983: 146-9); Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.42, a.3). In our ordinary range of experience, an order that is based upon one thing originating from another usually implies a temporal sequence: it is necessary that A progressively attains to a certain state in order to then produce B. Furthermore, that which issues from a reality distinct from itself does not always possess the same perfection of being as the first reality, that is to say, its maturity and stability. In this way, we spontaneously think of the concept of 'origin' as implying logical anteriority in a reality with respect to that which proceeds from the original source. In so doing, we spontaneously conceive the origin as being logically anterior to that which stems from it, failing to see that both may also be inseparable and intrinsically logically connected. This is why in the case of purely relations, such as 'double' and 'half', 'neighbour' to 'neighbour', 'father' and 'son', the one term of the relation cannot exist without the other, even if, in reality, man becomes a father at a certain moment in time, and is never simply identical in all that he is with his paternity. He was himself a son before he became a father, and if his own son dies before he does, he will no longer truly be a father, in relation to an actually coexistent son.

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To consider the Trinity according to an order of origin without this implying any temporal development requires a sort of conceptual passage toward the limits of human thinking. From notions of local movement, or qualitative change, or the generation of a new being, we can retain only the notion of a relation of the origin to the term that originates, that is to say, of the principle and that which proceeds from the principle. This notion should in no way imply subordination, dependence, diminishment or ontological posteriority. Here we must distinguish then between 'dependence' and 'relation': dependence implies an imperfection on the part of the one who depends on what is prior to itself, while relation in itself implies no imperfection. It allows one to think of the mutual constitution of two correlative terms, yet without negating the order of origin that exists between them. Thus the Father and the Son are mutually self-constituting, even while the Son proceeds from the Father. While proceeding from the Father, and in fact *precisely due to this proceeding*, the Son constitutes the Father as Father.

(p. 381) After having considered the uniqueness of the relative primacy of the Father, we can consider the two immanent acts of the Father. God the Father eternally begets his Son who is also his Word (according to the language of the Johannine prologue), truly distinct from the Father (Jn 1:1; 1:14, and 1:17). The eternal Word who is the principle of creation (Jn 1:3) has become manifest in the flesh of Christ, in such a way as to reveal to us his glory, the glory of an only-begotten Son, that is to say, who is the unique Son of the Father (Jn 1:14). When these two revealed names for Jesus Christ (Word/Logos and only-begotten Son) are considered theologically, they permit one to consider two complementary analogies for the mystery of divine generation: one derived from human generation, and another from the conception of an inner word, a Logos that in God is efficient, loving, and creative.

Our understanding of divine generation would be incomplete if we did not take into account an analogy from love as well, based upon a comparison to the love that accompanies any human father that is worthy of the title. In the generation of the Son, like the procession of the Spirit, the Father acts by virtue of a formal principle which is the divine nature, and in doing so communicates the fullness of his nature to the Son. Against the Arians, who attempted to subordinate the Son to the Father in arguing that the Son was created through an act of the will of the Father, the Church Fathers distinguished between the 'nature' of God and his 'will', such that the Father generates the Son naturally. However, in doing so they did not simply exclude willing from the eternal generation: even though he begets by nature, the Father also wills the act of begetting and loves his begotten Son. Subsequently we can say that love is not something foreign to this preeminently paternal act. The medieval theologians further reflected upon this truth. That the loving will of the Father is concomitant with the act of divine generation denotes the following: that the procession of the Word is correlative to the procession of the Spirit, who is the love that proceeds from the Father through the Son. In a pre-eminent way, then, the eternal Word must be seen as the perfect Word, that is to say, as the Logos who is generated in the heart of the Father, spirating love, and efficient in the loving acts of God: 'Ver-

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bum spirans amorem' (Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.43, a.5, ad2; *Super evangelium S. Ioannis lectura* 6:45 (Marietti edition, no. 946)).

Just as the Son is generated eternally as the *beloved* of the Father, so likewise the Spirit proceeds eternally as the Love of the Father for the Son. One must, however, carefully distinguish between love as an 'operation' and love as a personal 'term'. The paternal operation of love that is present in the divine generation of the Son by the Father is not really distinct from the person of the Father, who exists in and as this very act of generating. By contrast, the person of the Spirit *proceeds from* this same paternal operation of love, and is himself a person who is love, distinct from the Father and the Son. The Spirit therefore proceeds eternally from the Father in order to 'rest upon' the beloved Son. In virtue of his irreducible uniqueness as a person, the Spirit cannot be understood merely as the power of generation residing in the Father, nor as the paternal operation of love with which the Father acts in his divine generation of the Son. The Spirit must not be conceived of in uniquely functional terms or as a mere 'indicator' of eternal filiation, both of which constitute a form of reductivist pneumatology.

(p. 382) At the heart of Trinitarian life, the Son fully assumes his filial identity because he responds to the Father. In an act of eternal gratitude, he returns the love that he receives from the Father in his own generation. This return of the Son toward the Father by way of filial love includes the return to the Father of the Spirit who is love. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and reposes eternally upon the Son, as the loving affability of the Father for the Son. However, he proceeds also in concomitant fashion from the loving response of the Son to the Father. The relation of origin of the Spirit necessarily implies, then, a movement of return to the Father, in which the Son is the principle agent of the Spirit's proceeding. The Spirit is thereby constituted as much by his return toward the Father (from the Son) as by his procession from the Father. In this sense, the Father is revealed in his primacy as *both* the principle *and* the end of the eternal rhythm of the divine life, through the 'going out' of the Son from the Father, and through the procession of the Spirit who rests upon the Son and returns from the Son to the Father. The Father is the source or *alpha* of the divine life of the Son and Spirit, but this return of the Spirit toward the Father in the Son designates the Father as the *omega* of intra-divine life as well.

This plenitude as source that characterizes the Father as a person also serves as the primary basis for the Trinitarian mystery, and is expressed in the twofold fruitfulness of divine generation and the procession of the Spirit. These two eternal acts are the only acts of the Father that perfectly express the riches of his divine goodness and power. All the vital plenitude of the Father is invested in the gift by which he begets the Son as his perfect image and loves him in communicating to him his Spirit. As principle and source, this paternal plenitude gives intelligibility to the notion of intra-divine fruitfulness, but this being said, this plenitude only exists in and as the act of self-communication. It is always understood entirely in relation to the Son and the Spirit. Divine fruitfulness is not simply an attribute of the divine essence, which could be inferred independently of one's knowledge of the divine processions. On the contrary, it is attributed properly to the person of the Father, and signifies precisely these two eternal acts of the Father: that is to say, the gen-

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eration of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit. These two immanent operations constitute the proper expression of the original plenitude of the Father, such that this notion of 'plenitude' in the Father cannot be treated apart from them, except in an equivocal sense of the term. We must be careful, then, to avoid conceiving of the unoriginate singularity of the Father *within the immanent Trinity* as if the innascibility and primacy of the Father contained *something more* than that which is engaged in his twofold effective fruitfulness (as *Source* of the Son and Spirit). The fontal plenitude cannot be envisaged as something outside of or more than the relation of the Father to the two processions that issue from him. This kind of superiority or transcendence of the Father does not exist within the divine life itself. The original plenitude of the Father is not a potentiality of the divine essence that would find some kind of partial actuation through the generation of the Son and in the procession of the Spirit. The plenitude and fruitfulness of the Father are perfectly actualized and are entirely manifested in these two eternal acts of the Father.

Nevertheless, the theological motif of the 'eschatological reserve' of the Father *with regard to man* is an important dimension of revelation, and is essential to a proper (p. 383) understanding of the economy of salvation. The original plenitude of the Father unfolds from eternity in the twofold intra-Trinitarian processions of the Word and the Spirit, but this spiritual fecundity of the Father is in turn prolonged otherwise or echoed analogously in the act of creation and the gracious gift of salvation. This new activity of giving *ad extra* is not the result of any divine need for the creation, and does not actuate in God some unexploited potentiality that was not realized through the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. Rather, this divine communication *ad extra* proceeds from a completely free will that gives being to spiritual creatures in order to invite them into covenant with God, and in order to lead them into the sharing of the life of the Trinity. But this unveiling of the Trinity remains partial *in via*, for the duration of earthly existence, filtered through the light of faith, and mediated by the resurrected flesh of Christ. Thus we await the fullness of the eschatological revelation, in which the Father will allow us to see him face to face, in his Word and by his Spirit, by an eternal participation of creatures in the intra-Trinitarian life of God. A twofold eschatological distance of the Father can be spoken of, then, one that is *in via* and one that is *in patria*. While we are pilgrims subject to the life of ecclesial faith, we await the final *parousia* of Christ and the eschatological revelation of the Father. But even in the state of eschatological beatitude, the Father will always exist beyond that which we are given to see and receive of him in glory. The immediacy of the vision does not entail an exhaustive knowledge or total comprehension of the Father.

It remains to underscore the originality of the Holy Spirit in the manifestation of the Father. God the Father cannot be designated as such uniquely in reference to the Son. Generation and paternity do not suffice in order to characterize his identity completely. A balanced expression of faith in the Trinity requires that one take account of the uniqueness of the relation of the Father to the Spirit as one of the decisive properties of any theology of the Father. The relation of the Father to the Spirit must not be subordinated to that which exists between the Father and the Son. The Father is just as much he from whom the Spirit proceeds as he by whom the Son is begotten. The procession of the Spirit as

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love cannot be separated, either, from the eternal generation of the Son, and is in fact intimately connected to it. In the Trinitarian mystery, then, the Father is in relation to the Son *in the very act* in which he spirates the Spirit. And reciprocally, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, who is always the Father of the Son by virtue of the ever present act of divine generation. The Son is thus inseparable from the Father even when the Father is the origin of the Spirit, and yet the inner fecundity of God pertains *principally* to the Father, because he is the source of the divine life. This perspective concerning the primacy of the Father, and the simultaneous indissociability of the processions, allows for a more robust understanding of the mystery of the perichoresis of the persons, and thereby facilitates a renewed treatment of the problem of the origin of the Holy Spirit: he proceeds from the Father who is always the Father *of the Son*.

However important a consideration of the perichoresis of the immanent acts of the Trinitarian life might be, the procession of the Spirit cannot be treated only due to its relation with the divine generation. The Spirit manifests a unique dimension of the person of the Father, distinct from his paternity with respect to the Son. This second (p. 384) fecundity of the Father is irreducible to the first, even though it is intrinsically related to it. The mysterious identity of the Spirit therefore manifests something of the original plenitude of the Father that is not exhaustively expressed in the generation of the Son. The first person of the Trinity cannot be understood as Father uniquely by consideration of his constitutive, reciprocal relation with the Son.

How then can we characterize this novel 'visage' of the uncircumscribed Father that is manifested uniquely by his relation to the Spirit? Here we must consider the pneumatic dimension of the economy of salvation. The procession of the Spirit is accessible to us as the agent acting behind the scenes in multiple settings within the economy: in the inspiration of the prophets, in the decisive stages of the life and ministry of Jesus, in the unfolding of the drama of the Passion, and finally in the new order that issues from the Resurrection, and which is fully unfurled at Pentecost. Through these historical moments in the economy, one can perceive more explicitly the universal extension of filial grace. In keeping with the universal influence of the resurrected Lord, the Spirit reveals himself as the one who causes creatures to participate in the unique eternal filiation of the Son in a multiplicity of ways. The identity of the person of the Father is not limited to his relation toward the Son, for he is open to new relations of Fatherhood, in the person of the Spirit.

In the Trinitarian mystery, the eternal relation of the paternity toward the Son is conjoined to another that is more difficult to name: the relation of origin of the Spirit with regard to the Father. The paternal fruitfulness of God is realized in a properly Trinitarian communion, by the eternal interplay of these two relations. In fact, the Spirit is indispensable to the *perfection* of the Trinitarian communion of the Father and the Son. In Trinitarian theology, then, the mysterious richness of the procession of the Spirit manifests that the inexhaustible plenitude of the Father is both the source of filiation and of communion. The communion in God is not restricted to the Father and the Son alone, even if this procession does provide the most fundamental or structural dimension of the inner life of God. There are other modes of relationality, love, and personal exchange in human exis-

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tence that may be attributed analogically to the interior life of God, and which find better expression in a theology of the Holy Spirit. They nourish our hope to one day obtain to the Trinitarian communion of God, which is multiform but integrated, and which is perfect and unfractured, in a way that mere human solidarity and human communion are not. The ungraspable procession of the Spirit constitutes, in a certain sense, the ultimate eternal opening to the Father, and proceeds by mission toward all the creatures of God called to inclusion within the unique filiation of the Son, who are thus invited to partake without measure in the ineffable communion of the Trinity.

Conclusion

At the term of these systematic proposals, let us consider briefly the conclusions at which we have arrived. Despite the conjectures of Bonaventure, it is not possible to maintain theologically that the hypostasis of the Father is 'posited' in virtue of his primacy alone, (p. 385) nor that his plenitude as the source of all else potentially surpasses the two divine processions of the Son and the Spirit. Such a conception of God does not correspond to the God revealed in Jesus Christ. The idea of a primacy that exists outside of the effective fecundity of the Father is only a vain projection without name or personal identity. This 'unknown God', postulated under the influence of an undue philosophical influence of Neoplatonic provenance, is not the Father-God who has personally and mysteriously made himself known by way of Christian revelation.

By contrast, however, the primacy of the Father can play a decisive role in Trinitarian theology, in order to denote something in the first person other than his relation to the Son. The plenitude of the Father as an unbegotten source of divine life is not expressed effectively only through the generation of the Word, but also in the procession of the Spirit. These two acts are 'ontologically adequate' to the paternal source from which they proceed. These immanent acts in God are in turn extended by emanation to the economy of filial adoption, in which creatures become the children of God, configured to the Son by the Spirit. Consideration of the primacy of the Father helps us recover a sense of the unfathomable depths of love that the Father disposes of in a superabundant way. The Spirit is the ineffable, eternal expression of the spiritual fecundity of the Father, a distinct reflection of his original plenitude. He is also the ultimate source of offering of God's divine life to the world. He completes and accomplishes the relational unfolding in God of the uncircumscribed life of the Father.

In light of this consideration of the mystery of the Father, we can conclude that Christocentrism cannot have the final word in the interpretation of revelation, nor in theology. The Apocalypse of St John states things clearly: it is the eschatological paternity of the One who sits upon the throne and makes all things new that gives final meaning to the mediation provided by the Lamb, even while the Lamb also partakes fully of the divine sovereignty (Rev. 5:6; 7:9-12; 21:5-7; 21:22-3; 22:1; Bauckham 1993). This is the endpoint of the revelation: the Father whom we anticipate seeing. Theology then is ultimately submitted to a Trinitarian theocentrism that is eschatological. By the Word and the Spir-

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it all spiritual creatures are led toward personal union with the Father (*cf.* Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, dist. 14, q.2, a.2; dist. 15, q.4, a.1; *ST I*, q.43, a.4, ad1). The interrelated missions of Christ and of the Spirit will only be fully accomplished in the *eschaton* when the Son and the Spirit will introduce all of the redeemed into the eschatological presence of the Father. Already their missions attract and lead all things toward him. In our state here below as pilgrims in faith, theology must acknowledge the perennial transcendence of the Father, and, by its eschatological aspiration toward him, it must remain open to a paternal theocentrism.

Suggested Reading

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Emmanuel Durand

Emmanuel Durand, O.P., teaches systematic theology at the Institut Catholique in Paris. He specializes in the study of Trinitarian theology and Christology.

Trinitarian Christology: The Eternal Son

Thomas G. Weinandy OFM Cap.

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This article examines Trinitarian Christology and the doctrine about the Eternal Son. It establishes the foundational dogmatic truths concerning the Son's existence as God and as man and analyzes a number of theological topics that flow from these truths. It discusses the Nicene affirmations that are central to all further teaching about the Son and explores the relationship between the divine Son and all those who are created and recreated in the image and likeness of the Son.

Keywords: Trinitarian Christology, Eternal Son, divine Son, dogmatic truths, God

Doctrinal Foundation: The Nicene Creed

The ancient Christian creeds are the foundation for a contemporary doctrinal or systematic study of God the Son. These creeds provide an authoritative organic synthesis of scriptural revelation—the faith that all members of the Church profess. They were often formulated to refute erroneous interpretations of scripture and false expressions of the faith and so they clarify what precisely the Church believes and teaches. Here we begin our doctrinal study of God the Son by briefly examining the Nicene Creed (ad 325).

Arius, a priest from Alexandria, held that it was impossible for God to be one if the Son is truly God. If the Son were God, there would be two divine beings brought about by change and division, all of which is incompatible with the divine nature. Arius concluded that the Son must be created as the first and highest of all creatures and so the most divine-like of all beings. Thus, God is not eternally the Father and there was, according to Arius, 'a time when the Son was not'.

In response to Arius, the Council of Nicaea declared that the Son of God is 'the only-begotten begotten from the Father, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial (∞ loo≤sior)

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with the Father' (Tanner 1990: 5). The Council expressed seven dogmatic truths that are essential for all subsequent systematic theology concerning the Son.

First, the Council specified that the Son is 'the only-begotten begotten from the Father', that is, as 'only begotten' he is singular in his manner of existence from the Father. Authentic doctrinal development and theological speculation must uphold this unique existence and specific relationship with the Father.

Second, the Council clarified the difference between 'begotten' and 'made'. What is made is necessarily different in kind from the maker. What is begotten is always of the same nature as the begetter. Ants make anthills but beget other ants. Human beings make

(p. 388) houses, but beget other human beings. God made the world but begot his Son. It is precisely because the Son is begotten and not made that he is 'from the substance of the Father' and so 'God from God, light from light, true God from true God'. The Son is God, then, as the Father is God. The Son's existence differs in kind and not just in degree from all else that exists, and all theological enquiry must acknowledge this radical difference.

Third, in declaring that the Son is consubstantial (of the same substance or being) with the Father, the Council professed that God is one not in the sense of being a solitary being, but rather that the Father's begetting of the Son is of the very nature of what the one God is, and so the one God is the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit). The Council, therefore, in clarifying the mystery of God's nature refuted Arius' claim that God could not be one if the Son is God, for the one God is not simply the Father, but rather, the one God is the Father and the Son, for from all eternity the Father begets his consubstantial Son. The consubstantiality of the Son affirms the equality and oneness of the divine persons thus rendering void any future attempt to subordinate the Son to the Father or to conceive them as different beings in their own right.

Fourth, while the Council specified that both the Father and the Son are equally the one God, yet it also acknowledged them to be distinct persons or subjects—distinct 'who's'—each with his own unique identity. This demands, doctrinally, that, while all actions of God are done as one, yet each person, nonetheless, acts in a manner that is in keeping with who he is. This is theologically important when addressing the Son's mission within the economy of salvation as the incarnate Son (as well as that of the Holy Spirit).

Fifth, their personal designations as 'Father' and 'Son' specify both their irreducible identities and their oneness of being. God the Father is distinct from God the Son and yet God the Father is the Father only because he eternally begets God the Son as he who is one in being with him, and God the Son is the Son only because he is eternally begotten of the Father as he who is one in being with the Father. The Father and Son are, then, ontologically and intrinsically related to one and another as the one God. This will be of the utmost significance in subsequent doctrinal development concerning the divine persons being subsistent relations.

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Sixth, in employing the biblical designations of 'Father' and 'Son' the Council of Nicaea implicitly affirmed that such names are dogmatically authoritative in that they define God's immanent being. Other names or titles attributed to the Father, such as Creator, or to the Son, such as Redeemer, specify actions that are within the economy and as such these names or titles do not intrinsically define their eternal being as do the names 'Father' and 'Son' (and 'Holy Spirit').

Lastly, having dogmatically defined the full divinity of the Son, the Council immediately professes that the divine Son 'for us men and for our salvation came down and became incarnate, became man, suffered and rose on the third day' (Tanner 1990, slightly altered). The Nicene Creed, thus, intrinsically and doctrinally unites the proclamation of the Son's divinity with his incarnate humanity. Nicaea establishes, as the Council of Chalcedon (ad 451) will confirm, that the Son who is fully divine is the same Son who is fully human.

(p. 389) Having established the foundational dogmatic truths concerning the Son's existence as God and as man, we will now examine a number of theological topics that flow from these truths.

The Son: A Subsistent Relation Fully in Act

Because the Father and the Son are ontologically related to one another in that the Father is only the Father in relation to the Son and the Son is only the Son in relation to the Father, Aquinas, building upon the Greek Fathers and adding metaphysical depth to Augustine's understanding, conceived the persons of the Trinity as subsistent relations, that is, they subsist or exist as who they are only in relation to one another. In articulating this concept of subsistent relation, I want to offer an active role to the Holy Spirit, something Augustine, Aquinas, and the subsequent tradition did not do, for it bears upon the identity of the Son within the Trinity as well as his activity within the economy of salvation.

The Father only subsists eternally as Father by giving himself wholly as Father in the begetting of his Son. Moreover, and significantly, the Father simultaneously spirates or breathes forth the Spirit in the begetting of the Son for it is in the love of the Holy Spirit that the Father begets the Son thus conforming him to be the loving Father of the Son. It is precisely by this begetting of the Son in the love of the Holy Spirit that the Father actualizes his identity as Father. The Son subsists eternally as Son only in relation to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, for his very identity is predicated upon his being begotten of the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit who conforms him to be the loving Son of the Father. Thus, there is within the Trinity a *spirituque*, in that the Son is begotten by the Father in the love of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit subsists eternally as the Holy Spirit only in relation to the Father and to the Son, for his identity as the Holy Spirit is predicated upon his coming forth from the Father as the one in whom the Father begets the Son in love and as the one in whom the Son, having been begotten in the love of the Spirit, in turn completely gives himself, in the Spirit of love, to the Father as his Son. This is ultimately the basis of the *Filioque*. Not only does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father as the one

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in whom the Father begets the Son in love, but the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son as the one in whom the Son loves the Father who has begotten him. In proceeding from the Father and the Son the Holy Spirit reciprocally conforms them to love one another in the Spirit of love that he is.

Here we perceive the dynamic ontological nature of the persons of the Trinity being subsistent relations. Not only do the persons of the Trinity acquire their unique personal identities in relation to one another, but these relations also specify the very act that identifies who each person is. The Father is Father precisely because he is the act which begets the Son in the love of the Spirit. The Father is the act of loving paternity, fatherhood fully in act. The Son is the Son because, being begotten by the Father in the Spirit of (p. 390) love, he is the act of giving himself to the Father as Son in the Spirit of love. The Son is the act of filial love, sonship fully in act. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the act by which they give themselves lovingly to one another. The Holy Spirit is love fully in act. While the terms 'Father', 'Son', and 'Holy Spirit' are nouns, they are employed to specify the act by which each person is defined. Thus, the persons of the Trinity are not nouns; they subsist as verbs, as acts, and the names which designate them—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—designate the acts by which they subsist in relation to one another. I have emphasized this conception and articulation of the persons of the Trinity as being subsistent relations fully in act because this understanding was not adequately developed or clearly stated within either Augustine or Aquinas.

The relations, then, among the persons of the Trinity not only specify their singular ontological personal identity, what makes them three distinct subjects, but these relations also specify their ontological unity as the one God. As a man and a woman are mutually defined as husband and wife by their relationship, so this same relationship makes them one married couple. Similarly, the relationships that define the singular identities of the three divine persons are so the very relationships that ontologically constitute their unity. The one God is the persons of the Trinity ontologically subsisting in relationship to one another.

While the above may appear to focus more on the Trinity as such rather than specifically on the Son, it is only in conceiving the Trinity properly that one is able to articulate clearly and accurately the person of the Son, not only within the immanent Trinity, but also his role within the economy of salvation. This will become clear in what follows.

The Son as Word and Image

Since the Son is truly God, how are the New Testament designations 'Word' and 'Image' of the Father interpreted and understood? Moreover, do these names likewise bear the same dynamism as that of 'Son'?

Thomas Aquinas, following Augustine, teaches that the two processions within God are by way of intellection (the generation of the Son) and by way of will (the spiration of the Holy Spirit). As the human intellect first conceives within itself an inner word prior to

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speaking that word, so the Father eternally conceives the Word. Thus, the Word 'is to be understood by way of an intelligible emanation, that is, of the intelligible word which proceeds from the speaker, yet remains in him' (*ST I*, q.27, a.1; see also q.34, a.1). Furthermore, while human inner words do contain the truth known, no one human word embraces the truth of all possible knowledge. In contrast, the Son, being consubstantial with Father, is designated Word in that he does possess and express fully the entire truth of who the Father is. It is precisely because the Word is the full truth of the Father that this Word is designated the Son of the Father for he replicates as Son all the truth that the Father is.

(p. 391) Since the Father is fully in act as Father, the Word that emanates from within him is also fully in act, that is, the Son as Word is the Father's knowledge and truth fully in act—the fullness of the Father's knowledge of himself and all that is and could be. It is as the dynamic Word of the Father that the Son is then the creative and life-giving bearer of all truth.

Moreover, because the Son, as Word, contains the entire living truth of the Father, all that the Father is, he is the perfect image of the Father. Aquinas states that the term image has to do with similitude and that the greatest similitude is to proceed 'from another like to it in species' (*ST I*, q.35, a.1). Human beings, for example, are of the same image, possessing the greatest similitude, for they belong to the same species. While God is not contained within a species, yet, since the Son is begotten of the Father and consubstantial with him, possessing the entire truth of the Father as Word, he is the perfect image of the Father. However, for the Son to be the image of the Father is not to be static or inert as a statue or portrait is a static and inert image of a king. Rather, the Son is the image of the Father fully in act for the Father is fully in act and so the Son perfectly reflects the fullness of the Father's life and truth.

The Son is designated by these various names because no one name contains the totality of who the Son is. 'To show that he is of the same nature as the Father, he is called Son; to show that he is co-eternal, he is called Splendour; to show that he is altogether like, he is called Image; to show that he is begotten immaterially, he is called the Word' (*ST I*, q. 34, a.2, ad3).

While all of these names are proper to the being of the Son, do they have an inherent relationship to the created order? Again following Augustine, Aquinas teaches that the Word 'implies relation to creatures. For God by knowing himself, knows every creature'. Unlike human beings who must use multiple words to express multiple truths, 'God by one act understands himself and all things, his one only Word is expressive not only of the Father, but of all creatures' (*ST I*, q.34, a.3). It is precisely because the Word expresses the truth of all creatures that the Father creates through his Word (Gen. 1:3; Jn 1:3, 10; Ps. 33:6; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). Thus the whole of creation is deemed to be good because it conforms to the truth contained within the Word and so, in some manner, bears the image of the Word (Ps. 19; Rom. 1:19–20). This is especially the case with human beings who are created in the image and likeness of God.

Being Created and Recreated in the Image and Likeness of the Son

On the basis of Gen. 1:27 Aquinas teaches that human beings, as ‘intellectual creatures alone, properly speaking, are made to God's image’ (*ST I*, q.93, a.2). He further sees this image in that man's ‘intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves himself’. This imaging of God is threefold: (1) man's ‘aptitude for understand (p. 392) ing and loving God’; (2) man ‘actually and habitually knows and loves God, though imperfectly’ through ‘conformity of grace’; (3) man ‘knows and loves God perfectly’ in ‘the likeness of glory’ (*ST I*, q.93, a.4). While Aquinas acknowledges that there are traces of God's image in the human body, yet strictly speaking the true image of God lies solely within man's intellect. Only in rational creatures do ‘we find a procession of the word in the intellect, and a procession of the love in the will’ which mirrors ‘an image of the un-created Trinity’ (*ST I*, q.93, a.6). Thus, the image of the Trinity ‘is found in the acts of the soul, that is, inasmuch as from the knowledge which we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love’ (*ST I*, q.93, a.7).

What Aquinas teaches is insightful, yet I want to argue, in keeping with the Patristic tradition exemplified in Irenaeus (*Haer.* V,6,1) and Athanasius of Alexandria (*Contra Gentes* 2,2), that human beings are created in the image and likeness of the God in that they are created in the image and likeness of the Son. The Father creates through the Son and, in creating man in his own image, the Father creates him in the likeness of the Son, for the Son is his perfect image and likeness. To be created in the image of the Son means that the Father intended that human beings, like the Son, would be able to know and live the truth and so reflect the Son as Word of the Father. So, as Aquinas stated above, human beings have the natural aptitude for knowing and loving God as well as other human persons and all else that is good, but now this is specifically so because they are modelled after the Son.

At this juncture I want to argue, contrary to Augustine and Aquinas, and the received Christian theological tradition, that it is not only man's intellectual ability (his soul) that bears the image of God, but rather the whole of who he is as a human being. The Son is the perfect image of the Father for, as Son, he is fully in act as the Father is fully in act. For human beings to be the image of the Son demands that they be fully in act as well, but human beings are only fully in act when both their souls and bodies are fully in act and not simply their intellects and wills. The human act of intellection requires that the bodily senses and brain as well as the immaterial intellect be in act. Moreover, human beings can only speak the truth and act lovingly upon the truth through bodily spoken words and by bodily human actions—bodily actions of love, justice, courage, etc. Thus, the whole human person, body and soul, is in the likeness of the Son, for only when the whole human person is fully in act does he or she properly reflect the image of the Son who is fully in act.

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Now, in the light of sin which disfigured the image of the Son within human beings by undermining their ability to know and love the truth as does the Son, especially in knowing and loving God, the Father sent his Son into the world as man in order to recreate human beings in his image, that is, in the Son who is his perfect image. Does this imply that only the Son could have become man and as man recreate human beings in his image?

We observed previously that Aquinas held that the Son as Word implies a relationship to creation in that the Father knows himself and all else through the Word. Nonetheless, Aquinas argued that, while it is most fitting for the Son to become man, any one of the three divine persons could have become incarnate (*ST III*, q.3, a.5). However, I want to argue, again in keeping with Irenaeus (*Haer.* III,23,1 and V,16,1) and Athanasius (*De Incarnatione* 13,7 and 9,14.2), that it was right and proper that only the Son could become man.

(p. 393) Karl Rahner, in arguing that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, that is, the manner in which the Trinity reveals itself within the economy of salvation is the manner in which it actually exists in itself, gives as his primary example the incarnation of the Son.

In one way this statement [the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity] is a defined doctrine of the faith. Jesus is not simply God in general, but the Son. The second divine person, God's Logos, is man, and only he is man. Hence there is a least *one* 'mission,' *one* presence in the world, *one* reality of salvation history which is not merely appropriated to some divine person, but which is proper to him. (Rahner 1970: 23)

Long before Rahner articulated his now famous axiom, the Fathers of the Church as well as the Scholastics always argued that God revealed himself to be a Trinity of persons through the specific individual missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. These missions within the economy provide a window through which the immanent Trinity can be properly discerned. The fact that only the Son could become man is significant, then, not only for the sake of obtaining a proper understanding of the Son within the Trinity and his salvific work within the economy, but also of conceiving and articulating a proper understanding of the Father and the Holy Spirit—both as they too exist within the Trinity and act within the economy.

Aquinas gives as an objection to the premise that any one of the divine persons other than the Son could have become man that such an actuality 'would tend to confusion of the divine persons' (*ST III*, q.3, a.5, objection 1). He should have taken this objection more seriously, for this objection is crucial for obtaining not only a proper understanding of the Trinity but also of the Son. If the Father or the Holy Spirit became man, not only would this not be in keeping with who they are as divine persons, but it would undermine the very identity of the Son as Word and Image of the Father. Moreover, it would render unintelligible the fact that the work of redemption was precisely that of recreating human beings in the likeness of the Son. For any person other than the Son to become man would destroy the ontological order within the Trinity, that is, that the Father is Father precisely

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because he begets the Son in his Spirit of love as his singular Word of truth and perfect Image. Equally, the work of redemption would not truly reveal the Trinity as the Trinity is. This is ultimately how Aquinas argues when he taught that it is 'more fitting' for the Son to become man rather than the Father or the Holy Spirit.

Aquinas first argues that the Son, as Word of the Father, possesses an inherent affinity with the created order since as Word he contains, as exemplar, the whole of the created order. Thus, it would only be proper that the one through whom the universe was created and in whom the created order finds its exemplar be the one who restores creation—freeing it from evil and making it new (*ST III, q.3, a.8*). 'The first creation of things was made by the power of God the Father through the Word; hence the second creation ought to have been brought about through the Word, by the power of God the Father, in order that the restoration should correspond to creation' (*ST III, q.3, a.8, ad2*).

(p. 394) Second, Aquinas provides two further arguments, both pertaining to human beings, as to why it is proper for the Son, specifically as Word of the Father, to become man. The Word has 'a particular agreement with human nature' in that the Word embraces the fullness of divine Wisdom. Since human beings are perfected through the obtaining of such wisdom, it is only proper and fitting that such wisdom be obtained through the Word incarnate, the fount of all wisdom. Moreover, since sin entered the world through a misconceived desire to obtain knowledge and since this was precipitated through the lies of Satan, 'it is only fitting that by the Word of true knowledge man might be led back to God, having wandered from God through an inordinate thirst for knowledge' (*ST III, q.3, a.8*). However, it would seem more than fitting that the Son, as Word of the Father, should, as man, be the bearer of wisdom and truth since, ontologically within the Trinity, he is the divine person whose very divine identity, who he is as a divine person, is defined as the Word of wisdom and truth. While the Father begets his Son as the Word and Wisdom of truth and while the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth in that the Spirit fosters and confirms the truth of the Word within believers, yet only the Son, as Word, bears the wisdom and truth of the Father that the Spirit will engender and affirm within believers.

Lastly, Aquinas argues that since the end of human beings is to be adopted children of the Father, so 'it was fitting that by him who is the natural Son, men should share this likeness of sonship by adoption' (*ST III, q.3, a.8*). This is the heart of the issue. It would appear that obtaining such sonship through and in the Father or the Holy Spirit would not only be inappropriate but also ontologically impossible given that only the divine Son is ontologically the Son of the Father and thus only he could obtain humankind's adopted sonship. As the Father created man through his Son and in the image of his Son, so the Father recreates man in the image of his Son through the salvific work of his Son.

Given that only the Son is able to become man, how did the Son as man restore human beings to the wisdom and truth of the Father and recreate them in his divine image so that, in him and through the Holy Spirit, they become adopted children of the Father?

The Salvific Work of the Son Incarnate

As the Father eternally begets his Son in the love of the Spirit, so the Father in time sent his Son into the world and he becomes incarnate, Son of God as man, of the virgin Mary by that same power and love of the Holy Spirit. The Son, in whose image man was first created, assumed his own image so as to restore and elevate that image to his own divine likeness. However, the image that the Son assumed in becoming man was the sin-scarred humanity of the fallen race of Adam. He is a son of Adam born in the likeness of sinful flesh (Lk. 3:38; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). Only by assuming humankind's fallen humanity could he, within that humanity, recreate it and make it new.

In becoming one with humankind, the Son, as the divine Word, revealed as man the truth of his Father as well as providing the wisdom to live an authentic human life. Thus, (p. 395) in accordance with the Council of Chalcedon (ad 451), which professed that the Son of God actually existed as man, the manner in which he taught was as man. To hear the human voice of Jesus was, literally, to hear the human voice of the Son—the word of the Word. Moreover, the actions that Jesus performed, whether they were the routine human actions of eating, walking, sleeping, etc., or the divine actions of healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, or other miracles, all such actions were done by the Son in a human manner. These latter actions are termed theandric actions—divine acts done humanly for the divine Son performed them as man. As the Son revealed his divine identity through his human words, so he equally revealed his divine identity through his human actions. Thus, in the Incarnation, the Son actively interrelated and was personally engaged, on an equal human level, with other human beings and with his environment. The singular difference was, for example, that when Jesus touched someone or when someone touched him, who was doing the human touching and who was being humanly touched was none other than the eternal divine Son equal to the Father. What is significant here is that the healing, restoration, and elevation of humankind was accomplished by the divine Son, not in a divine manner, but in a human manner for the Son of God existed and acted as man.

From a Trinitarian perspective, it must also be acknowledged that, while the Son as man taught, healed, etc., he did so through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwelt within his humanity. This follows the established Trinitarian paradigm. The Father begets the Son in the love of the Spirit who conforms him to be the loving Son of the Father. Moreover, the Son of the Father is conceived in the womb of Mary through the same Spirit in whom he was eternally begotten. Similarly, at Jesus' baptism the Father declares, in the descent of the Holy Spirit, that this truly is his Son. The overshadowing of the Holy Spirit manifested that the incarnate Son is indeed the loving Son of the Father on earth and that, as the loving Son existing as man, he will now lovingly, in the Holy Spirit, teach and restore humankind. The interior life of the immanent Trinity is now played out on earth through the visible, historical life of Jesus, the Son of God incarnate.

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Ultimately, it was through his life of obedience to the Father that, as a member of the fallen race of Adam, the Son brought about humankind's salvation. As the Son was eternally the loyal and faithful Son of the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit so, now, as man the Son is the obedient Son, in the love of the Holy Spirit, and in so doing he reverses the disobedience of Adam and his posterity (Rom. 5:12-21). While the Son's whole earthly life was marked by obedience, this obedience finds its culmination in the cross (Phil. 2:8). The cross becomes the definitive revelation that Jesus is truly the faithful and loyal Son of the Father begotten by him in the love of the Spirit (Mk 15:39; Jn 8:28). Moreover, it is in this definitive revelation that the Son also humanly achieved humankind's salvation.

Jesus' death on the cross contains many facets. First, his sacrificial death was a twofold act of love. It was an act of filial obedient sacrificial love offered to the Father, for, in the love of the Spirit, the Son freely offered his own human life to the Father to atone for and so offset or, literally, counteract, all humankind's ungodly sinful acts. Moreover, it was an act of sacrificial love performed out of love for humankind, for the incarnate Son did, out of love for those who had been created in his own image, what they could not do on (p. 396) their own behalf having been rendered spiritually impotent due to sin. It was this human twofold act of free sacrificial love, rendered in the Spirit, which made the Son's sacrifice meritorious and efficacious.

Second, in offering himself out of love for humankind, the incarnate Son freely offered a sinless, perfect, and holy sacrifice to the Father, one that would fully and adequately express humankind's reparational or atoning love in the face of sin, thus reconciling humankind to the Father. It is in the Son's human blood, suffused with the love and holiness of the Spirit, that this perfect, all-loving, sinless, and all-holy sacrifice established the new and everlasting covenant with the Father.

Third, as evident from the above, while it was truly the person of the Son who offered the sacrifice, he did so, in accordance with the truth of the Incarnation, as man. The merit of the sacrifice, which expiated humankind's guilt and condemnation thus reconciling it to the Father, was precisely located in the Son's human love for the Father and for the whole of humankind—again, a love born of the Spirit.

Fourth, while Jesus experienced our condemnation on the cross, yet, in the very same act of assuming our condemnation, he simultaneously and equally offered in love his human life to the Father as an atoning sacrifice on humankind's behalf. The Son's loving sacrificial offering of his life to the Father on humankind's behalf transformed the suffering of humankind's condemnation into an act of freeing humankind from such condemnation.

Fifth, on the cross the Son of God put to death humankind's sinful humanity. Because the Son of God lived a pure and holy life of obedience to the Father as a member of the sinful race of Adam, within his own sin-marred humanity, the loving offering of that humanity on the cross brought about its demise. Our sinful human nature was put to death for the Son transformed it into a pure, holy, and loving sacrifice to the Father on behalf of all.

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The drama of the cross, then, mirrors the life within the Trinity. The Father eternally begets his Son in the Spirit of love and the Son, in the same Spirit of love, loves the Father. On earth, as man, in the Spirit of love, the Son, by his filial obedience to the Father, offered his human life to the Father on behalf of humankind. As the Father is eternally pleased with his Son so now he is equally pleased with his Son on earth, and as the Father eternally begot the Son in the love of the Spirit so now he exalts his Son, in the Spirit of love, as the risen and glorious Son incarnate.

The Resurrected Incarnate Son

The bodily resurrection of Jesus is of the utmost significance both for himself and for the whole of humankind. First, as pertains to Jesus himself, by raising him from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Father confirmed that he was indeed his eternal Son. If the Father had not raised him from the dead, it would have corroborated the accusations levelled against him that he had falsely made himself out to be the Son of God.

(p. 397) Second, in the resurrection the Father validated and manifested the efficacy of his Son's sacrifice on the cross. Actually, the resurrection is the direct fruit of the cross, and the Father ensured that Jesus, his Son, was the first to experience the inherent worth of his own salvific work. Thus, the Son of God, who had assumed in the Incarnation humankind's fallen nature, the sin-marred image of himself, now, in the resurrection, is the first, through the Holy Spirit, to assume the restored and recreated image of himself. The Son, who as God is the perfect image of the Father, and in whose image man was first created, now bears the perfect likeness of himself, and so of the Father, as a risen man. The Son is now the perfect image of the Perfect Image.

Lastly, as the risen Lord and Saviour, the glorious incarnate Son rightly possesses the authority to send forth the new life of the Holy Spirit, the divine endowment of his sacrificial death. Through this Spirit humankind can once more be recreated in the Son's own divine image and likeness. Thus, Jesus became, as the risen incarnate Son, the new Adam—the father of a new human race (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45).

A New Creation in Christ

How, then, do human beings appropriate the saving work of Jesus and so be recreated in his divine image? First, by dying and rising with Christ. The Son of God assumed the fallen nature of Adam, his own sin-marred image, and through his death and resurrection acquired a new glorious humanity, the perfect image of his own image. Through faith and baptism, Christians, likewise, shed their fallen humanity and become a new creation in him sharing in his new risen humanity (Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17). Humankind's fallen humanity is not only restored in Christ, but it is also elevated to share in the divine risen image—the image that it was to possess from the foundation of the world.

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Second, because Christians are a new creation in Christ, they are freed from sin and its condemnation. As they were in the bondage of Adam's sin, bearing his enslaved image, so now Christians share in the freedom of the children of the new Adam, bearing his unfettered image.

Third, more positively, Christians, through the Holy Spirit, are made righteous and holy sharing in the righteousness and holiness of the risen Son. No longer do Christians do the deeds of the flesh after the manner of the old Adam, but they now do the deeds of the Spirit after the manner of the new Adam (Rom. 8). These virtuous deeds of the Spirit are not merely mental deeds, but rather they are done bodily—done by entire Spirit-filled persons. Thus Jesus, as the Son incarnate, performed his holy human salvific deeds through power of the Spirit to the glory of his Father, so now Christians, recreated in the Spirit, reflect his image through their holy deeds and so too glorify the Father.

Fourth, having been recreated in the likeness of the Son, Christians, as adopted children, share in a new intimacy with the Father after the manner of Jesus, the Son. This transformation once again follows the Trinitarian paradigm and so corroborates the necessity for the Son to be the incarnate means of humankind's salvation. The Father (p. 398) eternally begets his Son in the Spirit so that, in that Spirit, the Father and Son eternally love one another. Likewise, the Holy Spirit transforms Christians into the likeness of Jesus the Son so that they too can experience the love of the Father through the same Spirit and in turn love the Father in their newly acquired Spirit of sonship. In Christ, through the Spirit, Christians possess a new kind of relationship with the Father, that is, being his adopted children, a relationship that those who are not Christian do not share.

Fifth, not only do Christians, as his children, possess a unique relationship with the Father, they equally possess, as brothers and sisters in Christ, a unique relationship with one another, a relationship that they do not share with those who are not Christians, for they become one in him through the bond and love of the Spirit. By sharing in the common life of the Spirit, Christians become members of the living body of Christ, the Church, of which he is the head.

Sixth, in the light of becoming a new creation in Christ through the indwelling Spirit, Christians live in anticipation both of Jesus' return in glory and of their own bodily resurrection. At present Christians and the whole of creation are groaning to share in the fullness of Jesus' divine Sonship (Rom. 8:18–25). Yet, it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that dwells within them, who is the guarantee and first down payment assuring Christians that they will indeed assume fully the divine likeness of the risen incarnate Son (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14 and 4:30). At the coming of the Son of God, bearing his glorious humanity, every Christian will rejoice in the Spirit. This gladness is not simply because of their own resurrection, but in participating and witnessing the supreme event of all history when every knee will bend and every tongue proclaim, to the glory of God the Father, that Jesus, the incarnate Son, is indeed Lord of heaven and earth (Phil. 2:11).

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All of the above has been predicated on one truth that may have already become obvious. This truth finds its origin within the Trinity itself. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit share their one common life because they are all ontologically united to one another. Christians come to share the very life of the Trinity because they are in the Holy Spirit united to Jesus, the Son, and so become children of the Father. This personal relationship with Jesus, the Son, both on earth and in heaven gives Christians access to and allows them to live within the very life of the Trinity itself. This radically makes Christianity distinct from all other religions (excepting Judaism) where the religious founder merely imparts 'saving' knowledge that is to be followed by his adherents. Within Christianity, it is the person of the Son, who took on our flesh, who is himself of the utmost importance, for in order to share in the fruit of his redemption—forgiveness of sins and the new life in the Spirit—one must be personally united to him. At the end of time all of the just will be one in Jesus, the incarnate Son, and so share fully in the life of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Father (Eph. 1:10).

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Kasper (1996); Rahner (1970); Thomas Aquinas (1947); Weinandy (1995).

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Thomas G. Weinandy OFM Cap.

Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap., is currently the Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC.

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Colleen M. Conway

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Abstract and Keywords

This article presents commentaries on Trinitarian pneumatology. It explains that scriptural teachings about the Holy Spirit suggest that a Trinitarian theology of the Spirit faces two primary tasks: an account of the Spirit's mysterious personal being, and of his immediate personal action. It emphasizes that a Trinitarian pneumatology treats primarily the identity of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's distinctive work in creation and redemption. It discusses the relevant views of Thomas Aquinas who found the identity of the Spirit in his relation of origin to the Father and Son, and John Duns Scotus who found the Spirit's identity in his unique way of originating from the Father.

Keywords: Trinitarian pneumatology, Holy Spirit, Trinitarian theology, personal being, redemption, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus

Instructing the Corinthians, St Paul teaches that though the world holds it in contempt, the word of the cross is in reality the supreme wisdom, because it has been revealed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit alone can teach the wisdom of God, which exceeds beyond measure 'what eye has seen or ear has heard', because the Spirit 'searches everything, even the deep things of God' (1 Cor. 2:9-10). With the Holy Spirit is bound up the most intimate mystery of God, the interior depths utterly closed to even the highest creaturely wisdom. Yet these secret and hidden recesses of God himself (1 Cor. 2:7) have been opened up to us, by the very Spirit who searches them. 'We have received ... the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God' (1 Cor. 2:12).

This teaching of the apostle indicates that in our present condition, living between Jesus' ascension to the Father and his return in glory, the Holy Spirit is the most mysterious of the persons of the Trinity, and yet the one with whom we have the most immediate contact. Only by intimacy with the Holy Spirit are we given access to Jesus the Son, and in the Son to the depths of the Father. Yet the Spirit is self-effacing, even elusive. It is the Holy Spirit who works directly upon us to unite us with Jesus Christ and his Father, but the Spirit does this by teaching us to know who Jesus is, and not to know who he is. Jesus'

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own teaching about the Holy Spirit highlights this intersection of intimacy and mystery, availability and unfathomable depth. Jesus promises his disciples the Holy Spirit as their ever-present comforter and advocate, who will be with them forever once Jesus goes to the Father. The world will not know or receive this promised Spirit, he tells them, but 'you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you' (Jn 14:17). Yet the Spirit, Jesus continues, 'will bear witness to me', and not to himself (Jn 15:26), 'he will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you' (Jn 16:14).

(p. 401) These basic scriptural teachings about the Holy Spirit suggest that a Trinitarian theology of the Spirit faces two primary tasks. We need an account of the Spirit's mysterious personal being, and of his immediate personal action. Differently put, Trinitarian pneumatology has to get a fix on the Spirit's *identity*, on who the Spirit is, especially as his own identity distinguishes him from, and relates him to, the Father and the Son. And it will have to grasp the essential features of the Spirit's *work*, of his distinctive place in the creation, redemption, and final perfection of all things by the triune God. Here we will focus on the Spirit's identity, limiting our consideration of the Spirit's work to his personal indwelling, promised by Jesus to those whom he has called out of the world.

1. The Identity of the Spirit

The identity of a person consists in whatever is most necessary for him to be an irreducible individual—in classical terms, a hypostasis. Thus a person's identity is also what distinguishes him from other persons in the most basic way, and *a fortiori* from individuals or hypostases which are not persons. What makes for personal identity remains a matter of philosophical dispute. When it comes to the identity of divine persons, however, the intense debates of the fourth century had already led Trinitarian theologians to some very basic conclusions.

First, it became clear by the end of this period that as the Son and the Holy Spirit are not creatures, but are true God just as the Father is, so also their identities cannot be contingent. The one God is not contingently Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Rather these three persons or hypostases just are the one God, and the one God just is each of these three persons, and all three together (thus, e.g. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, V.8.9 (Augustine 1991: 195)). Whatever belongs to the identity of each person therefore belongs necessarily to the one God. The identity of each of the three persons can no more be contingent than can God himself, or the divine essence fully possessed by each person.

From this it follows, crucially, that no action of the divine persons in the entire sphere of creation and redemption can be constitutive of the identity of any one of them. Or, as it is sometimes put, no action of the three persons *ad extra*, no action terminating in an effect which is itself not divine but created, can belong to the identity of a divine person. The reason is straightforward. The entire sphere of creation and redemption, as a whole and in all of its parts, is contingent. It is the free action of the triune God, and as such could be other than it is, or could never have existed at all. But who and what the triune God is, the identity of the three as distinct persons and as God, is not contingent, but can be only

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as it actually is. Since the divine persons have their identities necessarily, and the works of the persons *ad extra* are all contingent, no such work can enter into the identity of a divine person, making that person who he unalterably is.

The ancient distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia* enshrines this basic difference between who the triune God is and what the triune God does, between necessary identity and contingent action (see, e.g. St Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 29.18; 31.3 (p. 402) (Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 86, 118); St John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* I.2; III.1 (John of Damascus 1958: 166–7, 267–9)). The economy of the triune God, his saving stewardship of his creation, makes *known* to us the truths of *theologia*, including the unchanging identity of each divine person, but the revealing economy does not make any person to *be* the one he necessarily is. In this the identity of the divine persons clearly differs from that of human persons. Human identity is contingent, and as such is shaped, perhaps quite deeply, by free actions. Deciding to prosecute a war against the Confederate states, we are inclined to say, is not simply a free action Abraham Lincoln took (though it is that), but a deed that formed his identity, helping to make him who he was. In Trinitarian pneumatology, by contrast, the work of the Holy Spirit, while it may be the Spirit's way of teaching us who he is, cannot enter into his identity itself.

Second, the fourth-century debates brought to light that when it comes to the identity of persons in God, origin and relation must be basic.

Since the Son and the Holy Spirit are not creatures, any more than the Father is, the resources for understanding what it is to be the Father, the Son, or the Spirit are limited to what can rightly be said of God, and said in a way which captures the distinction of the persons without making them more than one God. Not only overt personal action, but various other elements which seem important to personal identity among human beings, cannot apply to identity in God. I am a person irreducibly distinct from my father at least in part because my flesh and bones are discrete from his. My body is one, his another, we count them as two, as numerically distinct from one another. But in God there is no matter, so we cannot say one divine person differs from another by being linked to a different chunk of matter.

With my body goes, we are apt to say, a unique soul, or perhaps a unique subjectivity or stream of conscious events. This soul, subject, or consciousness is different from my father's, and is fundamental to making me a person distinct from him. We rightly count discrete souls, however, not only as multiple persons, but as multiple human beings. But there are not multiple gods, so the identity and distinction of persons in God—for the moment, that of the Holy Spirit in particular—cannot be quite like that of different souls or streams of consciousness. It must somehow consist simply in the origination of one divine person from another, and in the resulting relation of one to another.

To creatures belong countless relations that do not involve origination, but in God the two are mutually implicative: not only do specific relations result when one person originates from another, but all relations among the persons are tied to the way in which they originate. With the Father's generation of the Son go two relations, paternity or fatherhood

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and filiation or sonship. To be the subject of one of these relations is necessarily to be the term of the other (they are what scholastic theology would later call ‘opposed’ relations; see below). The Father is the subject and the Son the term of paternity, while the Son is the subject and the Father the term of filiation. These relations are basic to the identity of the Father and the Son respectively, that is, to the person who is the subject of each. By the same token they serve to distinguish the Father and the Son irreducibly. Since he is related to the Father by filiation, the Son cannot possess the relation of paternity to the Father, and so he cannot *be* the Father. Other relations between the two, such as (p. 403) as their love for one another, not only presuppose the relations and personal distinctions arising directly from the Father's generation of the Son, but are possessed by each in a fashion determined by the basic relations of origin. Thus the Father's love for the Son is irreducibly paternal, and the Son's love for the Father is irreducibly filial.

Among the unique characteristics of the Father, of course, is not only his relationship of paternity to the Son, but the property of having no origin, of being unoriginate (more precisely, in scholastic terms, *innascibilis*—not *possibly* originate or generated). Similarly a unique mode of origin distinguishes the Son from the Father. The Son exists as generated, or as originated by way of generation. By the time of the Cappadocians and Augustine, the personal identity of the Father and the Son was thought of both in terms of the irreducible relations of one to the other and in terms of the unique mode of origin belonging to each (with the Father's mode of origin precisely that of being from no other). At this stage these two ways of thinking about personal identity in God were used more or less interchangeably. St Gregory Nazianzen influentially says, for example, that ‘“Father” ... designates the relation and manner of being the Father has with respect to the Son’ (*Oration* 29.16 (Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 84; translation altered)), suggesting that paternity is at the root of the Father's personal identity. At the same time he regularly indicates that being ‘unoriginate’ or ‘without source’ is the fundamental distinguishing characteristic of the Father (*Oration* 30.19; 31.9 (Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 109, 123)), suggesting that a distinctive mode of origin (that of having none) is at the root of the Father's identity (*cf.* *Oration* 25.16, which combines both ideas).

How may we apply these principles, hard-won in reflection on the *homoousia* of the Son with the Father, to the Holy Spirit? One clear scriptural teaching anchors reflection on this question. The Holy Spirit whom Jesus promises to send is, he says, ‘the one who proceeds from the Father’ (Jn 15:26: $\text{\AA} \text{paq}^1 \text{to}\alpha \text{patq}^{1/2} \text{r} \text{\textcircled{J}} \text{poqe}\leq \text{etai}$). The Creed of 381 follows this language closely, describing the Holy Spirit as $\text{t}^{1/2} \text{\textcircled{J}} \text{to}\alpha \text{patq}^{1/2} \text{r} \text{\textcircled{J}} \text{poqeu}\ddot{\text{O}} \text{le-}$ *mom* (Tanner 1990: vol. 1, 24). ‘Proceeding’ or ‘procession’ presumably names a distinct mode of origin, a unique relation arising from origin, or both. If so, grasping this type of origination or this relation will give us what is basic to the identity of the Holy Spirit.

As Augustine observes, however, understanding the Spirit's procession, and distinguishing it from the generation of the Son, is no small question (*De Trinitate* V.14.15 (Augustine 1991: 199)). The Son is true God because he receives the one divine nature from the Father. If the Holy Spirit is also true God, as the Son is, then he too must receive the divine nature from the Father, as the Son does. No created reality provides us with an ade-

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quate analogy for the timeless coming forth of the Son and the Holy Spirit from the Father in the innermost depths of God. The best conceptual tool we have, feeble though it is, for grasping the Father's communication of his nature to another divine person is evidently animal (and especially human) generation. As we know, certain kinds of creatures impart their own nature to a new creature, their offspring. This process of generation among creatures fits with the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father, and helps us understand to some extent how God the Son can receive the divine nature from the Father.

Creatures, though, have only a single way of communicating their own nature from one individual to another, namely the form of generation or reproduction which belongs (p. 404) to that nature. When we apply this creaturely analogue to the inner-divine origination of the Son and the Spirit from the Father, generation as we know it from creatures has been pre-empted, as it were, by the person of the Son. Our best creaturely analogy thus leaves us puzzled as to how we should understand the Spirit's procession from the Father, the Spirit's own way of receiving the divine nature. If the Spirit's procession is also an act of generation or begetting by the Father, then, as opponents of the Spirit's divinity in the fourth century derisively observed, the Holy Spirit will be the Son's brother, or perhaps the Father's grandson. Evidently the Spirit's procession must simply be a different kind of origination from the Son's begetting, an irreducibly different way in which the Father imparts his own nature to another. But what would this be?

Here Trinitarian pneumatology persistently senses the mystery of the Spirit. Theological attempts to search out what exactly distinguishes the Spirit's procession from the Son's generation are, accordingly, sometimes met with considerable apophatic reserve. God is not a creature, and so, unlike creatures, can surely have more than one way to impart his nature to another person. More than this we need not know. This view was common among the Greek Fathers, as John of Damascus explains: 'We have learned that there is a difference between begetting and procession, but what the manner of this difference is we have not learned at all' (*De fide orthodoxa* I.8 (John of Damascus 1958: 184; cf. 181); cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 31.8 (Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 122)).

The deep things of God are indeed inaccessible to us apart from the gift of the Spirit himself, but at the same time we have received the Spirit 'who searches everything ... that we might understand' what would otherwise be wholly beyond us (1 Cor. 2:9, 12). Seized by both sides of Paul's teaching on this subject, Trinitarian pneumatology has often been unwilling to halt at a purely negative statement about the distinctive character of the Spirit's procession (that it is not generation).

Following some scriptural indications (e.g. Jn 4:10 and Jn 7:37-9; Acts 8:20; Rom. 5:5), St Augustine already proposes that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father 'not in the manner of one born, but in the manner of one given' (*De Trinitate* V.14.15; cf. XV.19.33-6 (Augustine 1991: 199, 421-6)). 'Being given', this suggests, is a way of receiving the divine nature discrete from 'being born', and thus points to a positive way we might distinguish the Spirit's manner of originating from the Father (procession) from the Son's (generation). If the Spirit is perfect gift from perfect giver, it makes sense to go a bit further,

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and think of the Spirit as ‘a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son’ (*De Trinitate* V.11.12 (Augustine 1991: 197)), or as the one who originates in God as the sole fully adequate pledge or expression of the love of the Father and the Son for one another, ‘the outpouring of their mutual love’ (Scheeben 1946: 107).

This suggests, moreover, that the Spirit has love as a property marking his personal distinction from the Father and the Son. Originating precisely as the fruit or seal of the love of the Father and the Son for one another, the Spirit in some deep sense seems to be, as person, love, and therefore himself to be, in his very distinction from the two, the mutual love or communion of the Father and the Son (see Augustine, *De Trinitate* VI.5.7; XV.17.27–XV.18.32 (Augustine 1991: 209–10, 418–21)). Augustine's scriptural intuitions here generate much subsequent reflection over how to understand ‘love’ and ‘gift’ as unique (p. 405) characteristics of the Holy Spirit, yet without supposing that the Father and the Son receive the capacity to love and to give from the Spirit. Since both come forth from the unoriginate Father, the Son and the Spirit can have no capacity, as they can have no nature, which they do not receive from the Father (Marshall 2004b). ‘Love’ (and in a different way ‘gift’) must therefore be, in some manner, both common to the three persons *and* unique to the Holy Spirit.

Understanding the Spirit as the one who comes forth as gift and love in person gives some purchase on what is distinctive about the Spirit's procession, and to that extent on the Spirit's unique personal identity. The Son cannot originate as the fruit of his own love for the Father, or as the pledge of the Father's love to him; only a third person can originate in this way. And this distinctive feature of the Spirit's identity, that only he originates as gift, helps explain why the Spirit alone, among the persons of the Trinity, is spoken of in Scripture as ‘gift’, just as the Son alone is spoken of as ‘word’ (*De Trinitate* XV.17.29 (Augustine 1991: 419)). Among the three only he is spoken of as ‘gift’ to *us* because to him alone does it personally belong to *be* gift. Similarly the Spirit's origination as love helps explain the special association in the New Testament between love in God and the indwelling person of the Spirit (e.g. Rom. 5:5; 1 Jn 4:7–16). Only his eternal origination as gift and love, in other words, is enough to ground his scripturally described temporal mission as gift of the Father and the Son to creatures, and as their love for creatures.

2. The *Filioque* and the Identity of the Spirit

The long and still unresolved conflict about the *Filioque*, despite its many unhappy consequences, has yielded considerable further insight into the personal identity of the Spirit—or, at least, into the precise shape of the question and the ramifications of the different answers one might give. The *Filioque* is not, as is often supposed, simply a matter of disagreement between East and West. The Spirit's procession was the subject of intense debate within the medieval West itself.

At issue in this discussion was not the bare fact of the matter. All in the medieval West were agreed that the addition of ‘and the Son’ to the Creedal confession of the Spirit's procession was correct and legitimate, and thus that the procession of the Holy Spirit

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from the Father and the Son was authoritative Christian teaching. So St Bonaventure observes, in response to objections from the East, that by adding the *Filioque* ‘we have not corrupted [the Creed], rather we have completed it’ (*In I Sent.*, dist. 11, a.1, q.1, corp. (Bonaventure 1882: 212b)).

The issue, rather, was whether the Holy Spirit would still be a person distinct from the Son—would still have his unique personal identity—even if he did not proceed from the Son. There are only two possibilities: (p. 406)

(A) If not, then the *Filioque* is not only true, but required by faith in the Trinity. To deny the *Filioque* would then, at least by implication, be to deny the Trinity.

(B) If so, then the *Filioque*, while true, is not necessary for faith in the Trinity, and those who deny the *Filioque* (the Christian East, as the medieval West well knew) do not thereby deny the Trinity.

(To be sure, eastern theology, especially in the last century or so, has often suggested that affirming the *Filioque* denies the Trinity, but this claim is not usually based on any clear understanding of what the *Filioque* means and entails; see Marshall 2004b.) Reflecting extensively on this question, medieval scholastic theologians clearly saw that relying on the ideas of relation and origin in order to grasp the three distinct persons in God is more difficult than had once been supposed. Both ideas are necessary, but they cannot be used interchangeably. And it makes a great deal of difference which one is truly basic, and has priority over the other (see especially Friedman 2010).

St Thomas: The Identity of the Spirit Requires Opposed Relations and the *Filioque*

Thomas Aquinas is the most influential advocate of the view that relation has priority over mode of origination in making each of the divine three a unique person, distinct from the other two—in particular the Holy Spirit. His main source for this idea is Augustine, who regularly says that we must distinguish strictly between what is said of God by way of substance and what is said by way of relation; only relation, not substance, makes for personal distinction in God (e.g. *De Trinitate* V.5.6; V.11.12 (Augustine 1991: 192, 197)). Aquinas, however, develops the Trinitarian application of the concept of relation well beyond what Augustine had done, arguing that the divine persons are ‘subsistent relations’ (see Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q.29, a.4, *resp.*; q.30, a.2, *resp.*; q.39, a.1, *resp.*; Marshall 2007).

Aquinas holds, more exactly, that each of the persons in God can have his unique personal identity, and be distinct from the other two, only on account of an ‘opposed’ relation. Relations, as we have seen, are ‘opposed’ when it is impossible for the same individual to possess both of them. Between any two individuals, for example, fatherhood and sonship are opposed. If Albert has the relation of fatherhood to Boniface, then Boniface has the relation of sonship to Albert. Each is thereby the subject of a relation the other cannot

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possess to him. Albert cannot be son to Boniface, or Boniface father to Albert. Albert and Boniface must, therefore, be distinct individuals.

In just this way, Aquinas argues, the three divine persons are unique individuals, distinct from each other. We know this most clearly by looking at the person of the Father. As the Creed indicates, the Father is the subject of two different relations within the unity of the divine nature: the relation of paternity to the Son, and the relation of spiration (literally, 'breathing') or active procession to the Holy Spirit (see Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.27, (p. 407) a.4, ad3; q.28, a.4, *resp.*). These relations are irreducibly different from one another (or 'disparate', as the scholastics liked to say), and indicate different modes of production or emanation, but they are not *opposed* to each other. The relation opposed to paternity is not spiration, but filiation; the relation opposed to spiration or active procession is not paternity, but passive procession. Just because the relations are not opposed, one and the same person—the Father—can be the subject of both, and as such the source of both the Son and the Spirit. If merely disparate relations were sufficient to distinguish persons, then the Father, since he is the subject of two different relations, would be two different persons. It is basic to the faith, of course, that the Father is one. And so we know that opposed relations are required to distinguish the divine persons from one another.

This has important consequences for the way we understand the personal identity of the Holy Spirit. In general, opposed relations can arise in only two ways: from quantity (A is greater than B; B is less than A) or from action (A moves B; B is moved by A). Since there can be no quantitative oppositions among the divine persons, opposed relations in God can only be relations of origin, and on these relations the real distinction of persons depends (see *Summa contra Gentiles*, Bk. IV, ch. 24, §7 (Thomas Aquinas 1975: 136-7)). Thus the Son is a person distinct from the Father by having a relation of origin to the Father (filiation), opposed to the Father's originating relation to him (paternity), and the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father by having a different relation of origin to the Father (procession), opposed to the Father's originating relation to him (spiration).

What, though, makes the Holy Spirit a person distinct from *the Son*? It cannot simply be that he has a different relationship of origin to the Father than the Son does. Since these two relations are not opposed, they are not enough to bring about a distinction of persons in God. That requires an opposed relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son, and not only to the Father. Since opposed relations can arise in God only where one person originates from another, either the Holy Spirit must originate from the Son, or the Son must originate from him.

The suggestion that the Son in some way originates from the Spirit has found defenders in recent theology, but it has no clear roots in either eastern or western Christian tradition, and raises considerable theological problems of its own. Perhaps the most far-reaching of these is the disharmony it would create between the scriptural pattern of divine redemptive action in the world, where the Father sends the Son and the Father and the Son both send the Holy Spirit, and the pattern of eternal divine processions, about which—if

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the Son in any sense originated from the Holy Spirit—the redemptive missions, following a contrary pattern, would fail to teach us (Marshall 2004a; Emery 2007: 360–412). The only alternative is that the Holy Spirit originates from the Son, and not from the Father alone. In other words, the Son, and not the Father alone, must be the term of the relationship of (passive) procession which makes the Holy Spirit a divine person distinct from his source, and the Son, as well as the Father, must be the subject of the opposed relation of spiration.

On Aquinas' account, then, a relation of origin to the Son as well as to the Father is constitutive of the personal identity of the Holy Spirit, making him the unique divine person he is. Unless he originates from the Son, and not only from the Father, the Spirit will fail to (p. 408) be a person distinct from the Son. The *Filioque* is therefore necessary for the personal identity and integrity of the Holy Spirit. Where (opposed) relations take priority over modes of origin in constituting the identity of each divine person, the *Filioque* is not only a dogmatic fact or a defensible theological opinion, but is logically necessary if we are to have faith in the Trinity at all. Without it, a binity is the best we could do (for Aquinas' argument here, see especially *ST I*, q.36, a.2; *Summa contra Gentiles*, Bk. IV, ch. 24; Emery 2007: 269–97).

Duns Scotus: The Identity of the Spirit Requires Diverse Relations, but not the *Filioque*

An alternative way of thinking about the personal identity of the Holy Spirit takes the difference between the way the Spirit originates from the Father and the way the Son originates as basic to the Spirit's personal uniqueness. Augustine had already pointed in this direction, with his insistence that the Spirit is a different person from the Son because he comes forth from the Father as one given, rather than as one born (*De Trinitate* V.14.15; *cf.* above). Advocates of this alternative did not fail to note that Augustine supports them, and cannot simply be cited on behalf of opposed relations (see Scotus, *Reportatio* I-A, dist. 11, q.2, §24 (John Duns Scotus 2004: 412)). Anselm, Richard of St Victor, and especially Bonaventure make further observations suggesting that mode of origin is most basic to the identity and distinction of the divine persons.

Only in the late thirteenth century, however, does this idea emerge as an explicit alternative to seeing opposed relations as basic, particularly regarding the person of the Holy Spirit. Henry of Ghent, John Duns Scotus, and many after them (especially Franciscans) argue that the Holy Spirit, while he does in fact originate from the Son as well as from the Father, would be just the same divine person even if he originated from the Father alone. The Holy Spirit's origination from the Son therefore has no bearing on his personal identity or his distinction from the Son. His unique way of originating from the Father would suffice to account for his personal identity even if the Son did not share in the act by which the Spirit originates. Thus the *Filioque*, while true, is not necessary for faith in the Trinity or a coherent Trinitarian theology.

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Every actually existing individual, Scotus observes, must be distinct from all others by the possession of at least one property which no other individual has, and which is basic enough to give the possessor of that property a unique individual identity. When the individual is a being with reason, this 'formal' and 'primary' property will make the possessor a unique person (see *Ordinatio* I, dist. 11, q.2, §43 (John Duns Scotus 1959: 19)).

In God, both sides agree, the property constitutive of each person must be both relational and tied to origin. The two different ways in which origination can take place in God, namely generation and spiration, or procession according to intellect and procession according to will, give rise to several distinct or 'disparate' relations. Among these are paternity, filiation, and passive spiration (relations unique to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit respectively). All are agreed, moreover, that these relational properties *in* (p. 409) *divinis*, like the two kinds of procession or origination which give rise to them, must in some way be irreducibly distinct from each other, or else there can be no Trinity—no real distinction of persons in God (though there is much disagreement about how to understand these distinctions among relations and processions in a way that comports with God's transcendence and simplicity). The various relations among the divine persons get their distinctive content or character from the different modes of origin which give rise to them; thus origin by generation gives rise to paternity and filiation, and origin by spiration gives rise to active and passive procession.

Given these shared assumptions, Scotus argues, the mere possession of the relational property of sonship or filiation suffices to distinguish the Son from all who do not possess this property—in particular from the Father and the Holy Spirit, with whom the Son shares one and the same divine nature, and all that goes with having that nature. Filiation is of course a relation, and the Son, as the subject of filiation, is constituted as a unique person by his possession of this relational property. As it happens filiation is opposed to the relation of paternity, which in God is constitutive of the person of the Father. But the fact that filiation is opposed to paternity, while obviously true, is *not* what makes the Son a person distinct from the Father. Not the opposition of his filiation to paternity, but simply his possession of a basic (relational) property the Father does not have, makes the Son a unique person.

All this applies in a more obvious way to the Son's distinction from the Holy Spirit. As long as filiation, being the Son of this Father, is a relational property no one else possesses (obviously including the Spirit), it is sufficient to make the Son a person distinct from all others. Filiation, moreover, is constitutive of the Son as an individual person, while active procession or spiration, the relation of origin he has with the Holy Spirit, is not. As all parties to the medieval debate recognized, the Son's relation of origin to the Holy Spirit cannot be constitutive of the Son's personal identity, since it is not unique to him. The Father has this same property or characteristic, and the Son has it from the Father. The fact that the Son too eternally brings forth the Holy Spirit does not affect his personal identity. He would be the same unique Son if, contrary to fact, the Holy Spirit did not proceed

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from him (see Scotus, *Reportatio* I-A, dist. 11, q.2, §§38–9, 41 (John Duns Scotus 2004: 416–17)).

If the relations they possess need only be different in content, and thus diverse, in order to constitute and distinguish the divine persons, the way is clear for seeing the Spirit as a person distinct from the Son apart from any opposed relations between them. While the Holy Spirit in fact exists in an opposed relation to the Son as well as to the Father (passive procession or spiration), this opposition—the *Filioque*—is not what makes him the unique person he is. Even though passive spiration is not opposed to filiation, the Holy Spirit's unique possession of this relational property suffices to make him a person distinct from the Son. His personal identity would be unaltered—he would be just the same Spirit—if, contrary to fact, he did not proceed from the Son. Scotus summarizes:

If the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, the Son would be distinguished from him in the same way in which he actually is distinct from him, namely by (p. 410) filiation. Thus even if the Holy Spirit did not proceed from him, the Son would still be distinguished from the Spirit by a disparate relation, without relative opposition. (*Reportatio* I-A, dist. 11, q.2, §46 (John Duns Scotus 2004: 419; my translation))

To the objection that disparate relations alone cannot suffice to distinguish divine persons, since the Father possesses two such relations (paternity and active spiration) yet is only a single person, Scotus responds by arguing that relations multiply persons in God only when they are identity-constituting. Not all disparate relations in God are. Paternity, for example, constitutes the Father's personal uniqueness, not active spiration. Therefore one person can be the subject of several different relations of origin, though for each such relation there must be a different term. Thus the one Father can be the subject of both paternity and active spiration, but two different persons must terminate these two distinct relations, namely the Son and the Spirit (*cf. Reportatio* I-A, dist. 11, q.2, §48 (John Duns Scotus 2004: 419)).

The ecumenical significance of this position is not lost on Scotus. It allows us to affirm the *Filioque*, yet not regard 'the Greeks' as implicit deniers of the Trinity, despite their (mistaken) rejection of the western teaching on the Spirit's procession. If Aquinas' position were right, Scotus observes, the 'today's Greek [Christians] would be heretics, since a denial of the Trinity could obviously be inferred against them' (*Reportatio* I-A, dist. 11, q.2, §46 (John Duns Scotus 2004: 418–19; my translation)). This is a conclusion we should avoid if we can. Like others after him, Scotus regards ecumenical fruitfulness as one reason to prefer his view that the divine persons are constituted by different modes of emanation and diverse relations to St Thomas's idea that opposed relations, and therefore the *Filioque*, are necessary for coherent belief in the Trinity. (St Thomas, to be sure, thinks the eastern rejection of the *Filioque* stems from confusion rather than heresy; see Thomas, *De Potentia*, q.10, a.4, *resp.*; a.5, *resp.* and ad14 (Thomas Aquinas 1934: 203–4, 218–19, 228)).

Important as they are, the theological status of the *Filioque*, and the quite basic question as to how we should conceive the personal identity of the Holy Spirit, are not the only factors involved in a decision between these two different ways of thinking about the Trinity. Many other factors will also play a role, including how each view allows us to conceive the personal identity of the Father, the way we understand the applicability of logic and metaphysics to Trinitarian questions, and, as usual with basic theological decisions, which view's ongoing problems we are more willing to accept. Despite occasional claims to the contrary, neither view can claim to be required by normative Catholic doctrine (including the use by the Council of Florence (1442) of the formula, originating with Anselm, that in God 'all things are one where an opposition of relation does not intervene' (Tanner 1990: vol. 1, 570-1; translation altered; see Scotus, *Reportatio* I-A, dist. 11, q.2, §48 (John Duns 2004: 419)). Which approach to the Trinity, and in particular to the identity of the Spirit, we ought to take remains a matter for theological dispute. In fact only a very fully worked-out Trinitarian theology, of a sort rarely seen for the last hundred years or more, could really constitute an adequate answer to this basic theological question.

(p. 411) 3. The Indwelling Spirit

Following numerous scriptural pointers, Christian theology has long tended to see a basic pattern in the saving work of the Trinity. Only the Holy Spirit, invisibly dwelling within the faithful through baptism, can lead human beings to the knowledge and love of the incarnate Son, just as the incarnate Son alone can lead us to the knowledge and love of the Father who is the generous source of all (e.g. in addition to the Johannine passages mentioned at the outset, Rom. 8:9-17, 26-30; 1 Cor. 12:3-6, 12-13; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:13-14). St Irenaeus already makes this plain: '[T]hose who bear the Spirit of God are led to the Word, that is to the Son, while the Son presents [them] to the Father, and the Father furnishes incorruptibility' (*Demonstration* 7 (Irenaeus 1997: 44)). The pattern of the Trinity's temporal action thus reverses the pattern of the non-temporal origination of the persons. The Son originates eternally from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (or, bracketing the *Filioque*, from the Father of the Son). When the Spirit comes in time, sent by the Father and the Son, he makes us those who 'bear' him, and so shows us the way back to the Father—that is, he shows us Christ.

In addition to his indwelling, or 'invisible mission', the Spirit also has a visible mission, wherein certain perceptible signs uniquely indicate his temporal presence. Of these the most obvious scriptural cases are the baptism of Jesus, where the Spirit descends and rests upon Jesus 'in bodily form like a dove' when he rises up from the waters of the Jordan (Lk. 3:22; cf. Matt. 3:16), and the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit, poured out by the exalted Jesus from the Father, descends upon the apostles in tongues of fire (cf. Acts 2:3-4). While these signs publicly manifest the Spirit in his personal distinction from the Father and the Son, and so are indispensable to our knowledge of the Spirit's personal uniqueness (note the regular iconographic depiction of the Spirit as a bird in flight), they are nonetheless transitory. These signs are, moreover, exterior not only to us, but to the Spirit himself. In this they differ fundamentally from the humanity of Jesus in its relation

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to the person of the Son. The union of the eternal Son with his humanity is contingent, but once accomplished is irreversible, and, as it were, interior to the person of the Son. The Spirit is not the dove or the tongue of fire, though they point to him, but God the Son is the human being Jesus; he has made Mary's human nature his own, and not simply a pointer to himself.

The deepest acquaintance we have with the person of the Spirit comes not through these visible signs, but through the Spirit's personal indwelling, which, though invisible, is immediate and aims to be permanent. By being closer to us than we are to ourselves (*cf.* Augustine, *Confessions* III.6.11) the Spirit first of all leads us to Jesus Christ rather than teaching us about himself, yet this intimate indwelling is also, if indirectly, the chief way he instructs us concerning who he is. A frequently cited remark of Gregory Nazianzen regarding the gradual revelation of the Trinity makes just this point. While the old covenant chiefly manifested the Father, and the new covenant the Son, 'at the present time', St Gregory argues, 'the Spirit resides amongst us, giving us a clearer manifestation of himself than before' (*Oration* 31.26 (Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 137)). The (p. 412) Son's most intimate relation with a creature, his personal union with the fruit of the Virgin's womb, is external to us. The Holy Spirit's most intimate relation with a creature, by contrast, is interior to us—or more precisely, interior to the human being Jesus, who sends the promised Advocate and Comforter by giving us a share in his own full possession of the Spirit. This indwelling of the Spirit is not the greatest possible unity of a divine person with a creature, namely the personal or hypostatic union in virtue of which the human being Jesus just is God the eternal Son, and conversely. The faithful are not the same person as the Spirit who by grace indwells them, but the Spirit's indwelling joins creatures to him in the closest way there can be short of this hypostatic union.

The Holy Spirit's indwelling is fully personal. The Spirit brings about in us an intimacy with himself which, while inseparable from that which we enjoy with the Son and the Father, is unique to the Spirit himself. More than simply the agent of our union with the Son and the Father, the Spirit impresses his own personal character upon us, so that we rejoice, with Jesus, in him (*cf.* Lk. 10:21). In sanctifying grace he gives himself to be enjoyed by us as our own possession. At the same time the Spirit himself takes possession of us, making us the temple in which he dwells: 'You are not your own' (1 Cor. 6:19; *cf.* 3:16 and Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.43, a.3). In the theological terms traditionally used to make this point, there is a 'proper' relation of the Spirit to the justified in grace, and not only an 'appropriated' relation.

This has been a controversial claim, especially in modern Catholic theology, since it may seem to fall afoul of the important principle that with respect to creatures, 'the works of the Trinity are undivided' (*cf.* Augustine, *De Trinitate* I.5.8 (Augustine 1991: 70)). But there need be no conflict here. Just as the one action of all three persons brings about a relation of the Son to human nature which is unique or proper to him, namely hypostatic union (*cf.* Thomas Aquinas, *ST III*, q.3, a.4), so also the one action of the three, the Father and the Son as sending and the Spirit as being sent, brings about the 'proper' indwelling of the Spirit, configuring us to the one sent in his personal uniqueness. 'As each individ-

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ual person possesses the divine nature in a particular way, so each can also possess a created nature in his own personal way, and to that extent exclusively' (Scheeben 1946: 166; translation altered; cf. Thomas Aquinas, ST I, q.42, a.6, ad3).

Love—more exactly *caritas*, the perfection of self-donation—is the chief personal characteristic the Holy Spirit impresses upon us by dwelling within us. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally as love in person, the fruit and seal of the Father's infinite donation of himself to the Son, infinitely returned by the Son. By coming to dwell personally in us, being shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5; cf. 8:9–17), the Holy Spirit makes us also into selfless lovers of God, temples of charity. Or more precisely, his indwelling begins this reformation of the rational creature now, and perfects it in eternity. In the end, the love with which we love God is simply the fullest possible creaturely share in the love with which the Father and the Son love one another from before the foundation of the world—the person of the Holy Spirit himself. In this way Trinitarian pneumatology understands the prayer of Jesus to be verified in the very being of Christians: 'that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them' (Jn 17:26).

(p. 413) Suggested Reading

Thomas Aquinas (1975), especially chapters 20–2; Bobrinskoy (1999); Congar (1983); Emery (2007); Friedman (2010); Heubach (1996); Scheeben (1946), especially §§22–31.

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Colleen M. Conway

Colleen Conway, Professor of Religious Studies at Seton Hall University.

The Trinity, Creation, and Christian Anthropology

Risto Saarinen

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the relationship between the Trinity and creation, which belongs to the broader dogmatic framework of God's interaction with the world. It outlines some traditional and contemporary views of the human being as an image of God and discusses the analogical relationships between the triune God and creation. It explores the problem of avoiding anthropomorphism and examines contemporary theologies that seek to affirm ontological links between the Trinity and created realities.

Keywords: Trinity, creation, God, human being, anthropomorphism, contemporary theologies

The relationship between the Trinity and creation belongs to the broader dogmatic framework of God's interaction with the world. The following discussion focuses on theological anthropology, leaving out other important issues regarding the broader framework, for instance, the nature of revelation, divine attributes, and theological ontology. First, some traditional views of the human being as an image of God are outlined. Then the analogical relationships between the triune God and creation are discussed, focusing on the problem of avoiding anthropomorphism. In the third section some contemporary accounts are evaluated from the perspective of Trinitarian anthropology.

Image and Likeness

The creation of human beings to the 'image and likeness' (Gen. 1:26) of God has, since patristic times, prompted theological discussion on the relationship between God and human beings. Although sin has, according to Catholic doctrine, deformed the divine likeness of humans, Christian anthropology states that the basic theological definition of human being as an image of God has not been completely destroyed by sin. Even when it is maintained that the divine image in us is lost due to sin, the authors normally also presume that some other level or aspect of this 'being an image' is preserved (*Gaudium et spes* no. 22; Crouzel 1980). Therefore, created human beings continue to reflect aspects of their Creator and they continue to have the dignity of being a person. But this doctrine

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does not necessarily imply that the image of God in the human being is recognized as a Trinitarian image. Some theologians, most notably Augustine (1991), develop a psychological Trinitarian imagery, whereas others, for instance, the authors of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§§356-68, 370), discuss the normative doctrine of image without Trinitarian differentiation, noting that 'in no way is God a man's image'.

(p. 415) Eastern theology in particular attempts to define the relationship between God and created human nature through employing a consistent distinction between image and likeness. In terms of this distinction, our being an image reflects our human nature, whereas the attribute of likeness refers to a category of perfection which is accomplished by grace or other supernatural reality. This distinction is present already in Irenaeus, Clemens of Alexandria, and Origen. In Greek theology it is often connected with the dynamics of deification, in which the likeness to God grows gradually in the process of salvation. In Christian initiation and subsequent progress of Christian life, human nature as image is thus complemented with the increasing presence of divine likeness. The goal of salvific process, theosis or deification, thus comprises the Christian's being as both image and perfect likeness. Likeness does not mean, however, identity with God (Crouzel 1980; Saarinen 2002; Christensen and Wittung 2007).

Although western theology sometimes employs the distinction between image and likeness (*similitudo*) and can affirm the ideal of theosis, it does not normally focus on this distinction as a major theme of Christian progress and salvation. This historical observation has provoked debate regarding the different relationship between God and creation in eastern and western theology. It has been suggested that while the eastern theology operates with the concept of Platonic participation in God, the western theology prefers to speak of God's interaction with the world in terms of efficient causality (Hallonsten 2007: 286). This might, however, be an oversimplification, as the individual Church Fathers in East and West apply the ideas of causation and participation in different and complementary ways.

At the same time it is heuristically fruitful to treat the eastern and western discussions separately. The western discussion normally presupposes a fundamental difference between God and creation; this fundamental difference is not overcome by means of participation and Christian progress, but the concept of analogy as well as elaborate linguistic reflections are needed in order to formulate God's interaction with creation. Although the final goal and fulfilment of this interaction may also in the West be conceived as a participation in God, the elaboration of this fundamental difference employs technical vocabularies which stem from the western institutions of rational learning and education.

Augustine's discussion of the so-called psychological Trinity in books VIII-XV of his *De Trinitate* (1991) exemplifies this intellectual tendency of western theology. As it is treated in more detail elsewhere in this volume, we outline it only in so far as it is relevant for our theme. Because this discussion also appears, in a somewhat abridged and modified fashion, in Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (Peter Lombard 1971: Bk. 1, dist. 3, ch. 2), for centuries it had a formative significance for the Latin reflection on Christian anthropology. In

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Book VIII, Augustine establishes an ontological link between God and human self with the concepts of goodness and truth. The highest level of human inner self, the mind (*mens*), contains an image of the Trinity. When the human mind knows itself and loves itself, a triad of mind, self-knowledge and self-love emerges in which the three constituents are co-equal, mutually related but unconfused.

(p. 416) This triad does not refer to the different faculties of the human soul in its totality, but the mind also contains lower cognitive and affective functions. Augustine further teaches that when the mind does not consider itself, but another, it becomes memory. Likewise, the concepts of understanding and will are so called with reference to another (Augustine, *De Trinitate* X.11.18). Given this, there are two Trinitarian images in the human mind: while the mind as created and the natural image of God remembers, understands, and loves itself, the final and perfect image of God consists in the mind's remembering, understanding, and loving another, namely God. The emergence of this final image is a lifelong process of grace working in humans. When Augustine describes this final perfection he refers to Gen. 1:26 and 1 Jn 3:2: 'We shall be like him because we shall see him as he is' (Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIV.12.15 and XIV.19.25). After this conclusion, however, Augustine warns in Book XV that the mental image of the Trinity remains enigmatic and mysterious; its dissimilarity and unlikeness to the original should also be remembered.

Augustine's elaboration of the psychological Trinity reveals an intellectual striving for theological understanding. God is fundamentally different from creation, but a thorough analysis of the inner structure of the human mind reveals Trinitarian structures. The end result of this analysis is not, however, radically different from Greek theology, as Augustine also sees the perfection to consist in a participation in God and in increasing likeness to God. In this process of growing participation, the mental image turns away from itself and begins to remember, understand, and love God. On the one hand, Augustine conceives this process as knowing, recognizing, and seeing, either from a mirror or face to face. But it is also a process of restoration, growing conformity to God, and receiving of divine gifts. The intellectual emphasis does not rule out the ontological process but rather supports and illuminates it. The emerging 'super-image' is likeness to the Trinitarian God.

Although the mental image cannot be used for the closer explanation of Trinitarian persons, Augustine's psychological Trinity in many ways focuses on the primacy of persons. As memory and mind, the first person is the source of everything else; as knowledge and understanding, the second person is born from the first; as love, the third person connects the first with the second, enabling coherent external action. As the three instances are not faculties but simply represent the mind in its different activities, the essence or nature of the mind is not to be discussed apart from its three representations.

The relationship between essence and persons was discussed in the fourth Lateran Council (1215) in which Joachim de Fiore's view was condemned. This condemnation formulates some classical principles regarding the similarity between the Creator and creation, reiterating the cautions expressed by Augustine in Book XV of *De Trinitate*. Joachim op-

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posed Peter Lombard's view, according to which the divine essence neither generates nor is generated nor proceeds, being thus distinct from all three persons. For Joachim, Lombard's view adds a fourth agent into divinity. The council confirmed Peter Lombard's teaching, concluding that the divine nature is not a fourth agent but (p. 417) the three persons together and each one of them separately (Tanner and Alberigo 1990: 231-2).

This decision is important already in itself, since it contributes to the alleged western development in which the unity of divine nature in some sense precedes the Trinitarian persons (Hennessy 2007). For our topic, the condemnation of Joachim is also significant for other reasons. Joachim had argued that the ecumenical prayer of Jesus in Jn 17:22, 'that they may be one, as we are one', denies the postulate of additional essence. If the Father and the Son are one in the same sense as the faithful are one, then the unity at stake here is one among persons. It cannot be understood 'in the sense of a single reality which is common to all'.

The council, however, decided that Jn 17:22 should not be read in this manner. The faithful constitute 'a union of love in grace', whereas the Father and the Son form 'a unity of identity in nature'. In this manner the analogy from God to created reality is no strict correspondence: the divine unity of persons is significantly different from the ecclesiastical unity in the created reality. To point this out, the council formulates its famous hermeneutical rule: 'For between creator and creature there can be noted no likeness (*similitudo*) so great that a greater dissimilarity (*dissimilitudo*) cannot be seen between them'.

The decisions of 1215 have been contested from various angles. Martin Luther, for instance, claimed that one should affirm the sentence 'the essence generates' in order to avoid the problematic separation of essence from persons (Helmer 1999: 107-113). Although the condemnation does not address Augustine's psychological Trinity, it can also be argued that the hermeneutical rule weakens Augustine's argument in *De Trinitate*. A third angle concerns the general relationship between God and creation. If even Trinitarian analogies stated in a biblical text need to be read with a view to the dissimilarity rather than likeness, then most attempts to argue that a created structure reflects Trinitarian realities are to be regarded with suspicion. At the same time, the likeness between Creator and created reason postulated in the decisions of 1215 remains a real analogy, as Benedict XVI emphasizes in his recent Regensburg lecture (Benedict XVI: 2006).

The Council of Florence (1441) continued to emphasize the priority of divine essence, saying that in God and divine persons 'everything is one where the difference of a relation does not prevent this' (Tanner and Alberigo 1990: 570-1). Given this unity, the possibility to establish created Trinitarian analogies on the basis of divine persons becomes more difficult. Medieval Trinitarian theology is characterized by the scholastic attempts to formulate specific rules of Trinitarian speech. These rules often focus on the differences between Trinitarian speech and ordinary, Aristotelian syllogistics (Kärkkäinen 2007). The uniqueness of the Trinity is thus emphasized, while analogies with creation are downgraded. The nature of Trinitarian language and its ability to shed light on the divine mystery has, however, remained a vital discussion topic of western dogmatics. In contempo-

rary discussions this has again become a topic of interest between eastern and western Trinitarian theologians.

(p. 418) **Avoiding Anthropomorphism: Trinitarian Language and the Created World**

The theological relationship between the Trinity and created, anthropological reality has often been discussed as a problem of language and semantics: what do we mean when we speak of the Trinity? Philosophical theories of language offer points of comparison when this problem is addressed. A traditional way of constructing a theory of language is to state that words and sentences have their proper or literal meanings. Literal meanings express correspondences to the external objects of the world. In theology, as well as in many other abstract contexts, this concrete view of language easily leads to anthropomorphisms and other failures to grasp ideas which are not represented as concrete objects. One strategy of alleviating the problem of anthropomorphism consists in making a distinction between the proper and improper, that is, metaphorical or analogical, use of words and expressions. With the help of this distinction it could be claimed, for instance, that theological sentences are to be read as metaphors: although their terms and descriptions bear certain resemblance to the ordinary meanings, they should not be read in their proper literal sense.

Another theory of language claims that our ordinary language does not primarily consist of correspondences between words and objects, but of rules and usages which guide our communication. Medieval Trinitarian theology sometimes employs a fairly consistent rule theory of language in which the internal 'rules of faith' define the way to construct orthodox Trinitarian sentences. The danger or poverty of this approach consists in the lack of external relevance of rule-based sentences. If their terms and descriptions do not have anything in common with ordinary language, no analogy with the created realm illuminates our understanding. A consistent rule theory of doctrine may thus degenerate into an idiosyncratic language-game.

The agreed statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *The Church of the Triune God* (2008), pays detailed attention to the nature of Trinitarian language and its relationship to anthropological realities. The statement acknowledges that 'analogies, metaphors and symbols are among the common tools of theology'. At the same time the statement distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate uses of metaphors, especially when they aim at illustrating divine reality. According to the statement, the risk of dogmatic misunderstanding is smaller when God is compared to an inanimate object (rock) or to an animal (flock of birds). Symbols taken from human activities, on the other hand, carry a greater risk of mediating a mistaken insight into God's life. The provisional character of metaphors should always be remembered (International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2008: §§34, 35, 38).

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To avoid misunderstandings, the statement distinguishes between illustrative metaphors and iconic language. Trinitarian language is not metaphorical: 'When God is called Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Christian theology is not using illustrative metaphor'. (p. 419) Although these terms are borrowed from human life, they do not convey the image of natural parenthood. Arius falsely took 'Father' and 'Son' as anthropological metaphors and misunderstood them, teaching, for instance, that a son must be younger than his father. In our times, these terms have been understood as gender-specific language which supports patriarchal structures in a problematic manner. The Church Fathers, however, 'deny that the earthly meaning of fatherhood, or any gender-specific language, has any application to God' (International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2008: §§39, 40). This is because these terms are no illustrative metaphors and thus do not have their foundation in the ordinary meanings of what it is to be human.

Instead, the significant matter in these terms is 'the ontological derivation of the Three Persons and the total personal mutuality thus designated'. The names of the three persons are iconic because 'they are transparent to the reality of God'. Iconic language is not rooted in human experience; it is given by revelation as it is expressed in the Bible and ecclesial tradition. Iconic language 'is not based on the distinction between subject and object, like analogies and metaphors'. Instead, it is 'based on the fact that theology can attain its fullness only within the ecclesial body'. The names of the three divine persons 'properly express their personal identity and cannot be changed'. How these words are understood is controlled by 'theology and worship alike' (International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2008: §§36, 39, 41).

This ambitious outline of Trinitarian language, which employs many insights of John of Pergamon, the Orthodox co-chair of the dialogue (Zizioulas 1997 and 2007), is critical of the philosophical solutions described above. The statement argues consistently that the names of the Trinitarian persons cannot be understood as anthropological metaphors. At the same time the criticism also pertains to the options of correspondence theory and rule theory of language. Rule theory is not iconic, for it does not claim anything with regard to divine transparency. A simple correspondence theory would be even more Arian than the metaphorical view of Trinitarian language.

The 'iconic language' described in the statement probably does not aim to be a theory of language at all: it is only applied to the three divine names which function as pictures or icons in particular doctrinal sentences. As icon the personal name does not allow for a distinction between subject and object, but the divine identity is 'expressed' or mediated through the use of the name. The iconic name may preserve some aspects of correspondence, because it 'expresses' something, as well as some aspects of a rule of faith, in so far as its usage is safeguarded by ecclesial theology and liturgical language. In this manner the iconic name enables participation in divine reality through being itself a non-experiential channel of transparency. The iconic word mediates without distinguishing between the name and its divine reference, which remains a mystery.

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Another ecumenical document, *Confessing the One Faith* (1991), drafted by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, does call 'Father' a symbol and even a metaphor. The name 'Father' is a distinctive term which cannot be replaced and which does not attribute maleness to God. But Jesus did use some of the characteristics of human fatherhood in speaking of God, the document maintains (Faith and Order Commission 1991: §§49–52).

(p. 420) Western theology probably finds it less difficult to state that 'Father' and 'Son' are metaphors or symbols in the sense that, in addition to being divine names, they also express some likeness by means of ordinary language. The western understanding of theological analogy proceeds from the assumption that 'a greater dissimilarity' is always also presupposed; thus the fundamental difference between the Creator and creature is safeguarded and the claim of metaphorical likeness is relatively unproblematic. In the eastern understanding of 'likeness', however, a grace-based progress towards divinity is already presupposed. Theological analogies based on anthropological likeness may therefore become regarded with suspicion. The person of the Father, for instance, is not theologically transparent by means of natural likeness to human fathers, but through the iconic representation of the personal name.

Although the eastern understanding of iconic language may thus differ from the Latin doctrine of analogy, the western approaches also aim at safeguarding the mystery of Trinitarian persons in God's revelation to the world. Eberhard Jüngel's elaboration of metaphorical language in his *God as the Mystery of the World* (1986) offers a prominent example of such an approach. Jüngel follows the more recent understandings of metaphor which do not consider metaphors as simply improper or decorative use of language. Instead, metaphors exemplify the semantically expansive uses of language: when we want to speak about new phenomena, for instance, technological innovations or new ideologies, we apply our traditional concepts to cover new areas.

Jüngel sometimes calls theological language a 'catachrestic' speech (Jüngel 1986: 401): catachresis is a misapplication of a word, but in this case the misuse is intended and the speaker has no other adequate options. Through the expansion of traditional semantics theology can capture something of its transcendent object. Metaphor and catachresis thus do not express an improper meaning, but they reach out beyond the old literal meaning. At the same time Jüngel wants to follow Karl Barth (Barth 1946: 82–92) and that line of Protestant theology which is critical of 'analogy of being' and wants to replace it with an 'analogy of faith'. Protestant reservations regarding the analogy of being have often been similar to the criticism of 'illustrative metaphor' in *The Church of the Triune God*: the analogical illustrations of theological truth by means of anthropological and other worldly relationships may distort the Christian concept of God. Many versions of the analogy of faith are, therefore, closer to a rule theory of language than to a correspondence theory. Jüngel, however, does not want to give up the idea of correspondence (*Entsprechung*).

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For Jüngel, theology is centred on God's coming into the world. Analogies should not be designed to describe everything about God, but they can to an extent illustrate the event of divine coming. Jüngel calls this theological strategy the 'analogy of advent' (Jüngel 1986: 389–91, 402–4). This analogy says that 'x's coming to a corresponds to how b is related to c'. In this analogy, x stands for God's activity and a stands for the object of God's coming. For instance, we can say that the kingdom of heaven (x), coming into the world (a), is like treasure (b) hidden in the field (c). The figure of treasure hidden in the field can give meaning to the coming of God's kingdom: it resembles the event of discovering a hidden treasure. At the same time the treasure hidden in the field, in itself, says (p. 421) nothing of the Christian God. There is no *a priori* ontological resemblance, but the figure of the analogy of advent equips the human being to speak about God in ways which require semantic expansion. The analogy of advent is in this sense a linguistic tool, a sort of necessary metaphor.

For Trinitarian theology it is important to see that 'coming' is a one-way relation in which God comes to the world, not vice versa. The analogy does not provide a view to divine immanence; one may also say that no such semantic ascent is presupposed in which the worldly phenomenon becomes a metaphor for heavenly things. Both sides of the analogy are limited to the created realm: the illustration depicts a worldly phenomenon *per se*, while the object of this illustration depicts God's coming to the world in the economy of salvation. God is thus the mystery of the *world*, because the analogy of advent takes its explanatory force from the worldly phenomena. God also remains the *mystery* of the world, because the analogy does not reveal 'x', the unknown agent behind the event of coming. The analogy reveals the event, not the mystery behind it.

Trinitarian theology has a central importance for Jüngel's analogy of advent. The crucifixion of Jesus is a deeply Trinitarian event because the Father then reveals himself in distinction and even 'absolute opposition' to the Son, as Webster points out (Webster 1986: 72). At the same time, this distinction formulates a unity of life and death. The bond of love, the Spirit, is needed not only to connect the ends of this distinction, but to show how God is love and how the unity of life and death is, finally, in favour of life. Jüngel does not, however, present an account of the immanent Trinity, for he basically aims at showing how the event of crucifixion reveals the coming of God to us and for us in its Trinitarian totality. The crucified Christ is for Jüngel nothing less than a trace or vestige of the Trinity (*vestigium Trinitatis*; Jüngel 1986: 470–505).

The event of the crucifixion finds a broader application in how God 'comes' in three persons. The Father is the absolute origin. As Son, God comes to God through the history of incarnation. As Holy Spirit, God's being remains in coming from God to God as bond of love (Jüngel 1986: 522–34). Although these three modes of coming are in some sense immanent to God, Jüngel wants to say that God's Trinitarian immanence can only be grasped through God's coming to the world in Jesus Christ, in particular through the cross. The analogy of advent prevents a semantical ascent from earthly to heavenly; but it affirms a sort of expansive and explanatory descent: divine coming or descent gives meaning to the theological language which, in turn, can illustrate this descent in its dif-

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ferentiated unity. Anthropology thus needs to be seen in the light of this theological perspective revealed in the advent of Jesus Christ.

Jüngel's account shows how human language can both reveal and conceal the divine mystery in western thought. Without denying the theological adequacy of analogy and metaphor it manages to avoid the anthropomorphic exaggerations of ontological similarity in speaking about the Trinity. Jüngel also takes a definite stance in the broader discussion on the relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity. This relationship is in some ways similar to the Greek distinction between 'theology' and 'economy' in which economy pertains to the imperfect phenomenal world. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between God's immanent and transient activity (Thomas Aquinas 1888-1906: *ST I*, q. 27, a.1 and a.5). In the West it has been common to think that while God's immanent (*ad intra*) actions pertain to one person, God's activities in creation (*ad extra*) are common to all three persons. In contemporary theology, the discussion has centred on Karl Rahner's thesis (Rahner 1967: 328) according to which 'the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa'.

Jüngel affirms Rahner's thesis and considers that it opens a new way of establishing the doctrine of the Trinity as a theology of the crucifixion (Jüngel 1986: 507). Although Jüngel does not proceed from anthropology, his analogy of advent thus builds upon the 'economy', that is, the worldly realities on which our language is fundamentally dependent. In the analogy of advent, God's reality is expressed in terms of 'coming'. This coming is fundamentally an aspect of God's work *ad extra*; at the same time it also reveals something of God's inner differentiation.

Rahner's thesis has its problems, as its straightforward application may lead to a reduction of Trinitarian immanence towards the economy of salvation (Kasper 1982: 215). While the thesis succeeds in defending the unity of the Trinitarian God, it also needs to be further elaborated with a view of how the individual divine persons are constituted in divine immanence (Pannenberg 1988: 355-64). For our topic, the most relevant aspect of Rahner's thesis concerns the anthropological elaboration of the economy of salvation. When contemporary theologians affirm the identity of immanent and economic Trinity, they often ascribe Trinitarian structures to human institutions instead of merely stating that God's work *ad extra* is indivisible.

Trinitarian Anthropology in the Context of Society, Church, and Religions

In contemporary theology it is common to combine Trinitarian theology with the analysis of society, Church, and even different religions. While other chapters of this book deal more extensively with these issues, we need to discuss briefly the anthropological foundations of these aspects of Trinitarian theology and their relationship to the doctrine of analogy. We will focus on three examples.

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In his *Trinity and Society* (1988) Leonardo Boff uses Trinitarian theology for the purpose of reforming and liberating human society. He emphasizes the role of divine persons and their mutual interpenetration (*perichoresis*). For Boff, this perichoresis establishes a strongly inclusive communion in which 'each Person receives everything from others and at the same time gives everything to others'. Boff affirms Rahner's thesis which for him also manifests the inclusive sharing in our history (Boff 1988: 147, 214-15).

Human beings 'find the roots of their being in the superabundance of life, love and communion that comes from the Father, is filtered through the Son and poured out in the Holy Spirit'. Calling God the Father includes for Boff also calling God the Mother; in this sense the first person is inclusive. Also the Son has a feminine dimension. Being the (p. 423) Son means opposition to slavery: in this sense the second person expresses freedom and liberation from oppressive structures. Being the Son entails both obedience to the Father and resistance which may provoke conflict. Through the Son human beings are liberated from the slavery of sin and they are given back the freedom of sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit is the 'driving force of integral liberation': the Spirit transforms the old world and leads it to a new creation. The Spirit is at work when the poor become conscious of their oppression, organize their forces, and denounce those who keep them in chains (Boff 1988: 168-71, 181-3, 208).

Boff also applies Trinitarian structures to historical time, saying that, in history, one can detect a simultaneity of the ages of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The age of the Father means that a heavenly 'Father-Mother' makes up eternal goodness in governing the world. The age of the Son means the liberation of humanity from powers of oppression to a new life. The age of the Holy Spirit continues and interiorizes this new life in individuals and social movements. The course of history thus reflects and unfolds the inclusive communion of the divine persons (Boff 1988: 228-30). In this manner a comprehensive analogy between the Trinity and the history of human society emerges.

Boff's view is vulnerable to criticism because its use of anthropological analogy is so strong and concrete. Proceeding from the created nature of being a son or being a parent, he draws conclusions regarding what it means to be a divine person. The danger of anthropomorphism is thus apparent. While it is obvious that Boff's strategy may downgrade Trinitarian theology to become a means towards some political end, one also needs to see that the western tradition of using analogies allows for a great variety of superficial correspondences between God and creation. It is theoretically possible to claim an analogy while also maintaining that 'a greater dissimilarity' needs to be presupposed. A more restricted and rigorous use of correspondence, of which Jüngel's analogy of advent is an example, counteracts this superficial tendency.

A fundamental issue of Trinitarian anthropology concerns the analogy between Trinitarian communion and a larger group of human persons, such as the society or the Church. Is it theologically legitimate to see Trinitarian features in a group of humans, given that the classical doctrine of 'image and likeness' focuses on the nature of an individual human

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person? If yes, then a sort of 'theological social anthropology' could emerge. Boff's theology exemplifies, however, the risks of such an approach.

In today's doctrinal documents it is common to compare the Trinitarian communion and the Church; this strategy is used in *Unitatis redintegratio* (ch. 1, no. 2) which is quoted in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§813). This language is rooted in many biblical passages, for instance, Jn 17:21-2, Eph. 1:18-22 and 4:4-6. While one can thus present analogies between the Trinity and the Church, one also needs to think about the criteria of legitimate analogies. For instance, a straightforward argument claiming that the Church can be pluralistic because the divine communion also consists of a plurality of persons violates the central tenet of unity present in the biblical passages and other normative theological texts.

Miroslav Volf's book *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of Trinity* (1998) is one of many contemporary attempts to formulate an ecclesiology based on a (p. 424) theologically adequate use of Trinitarian language. In Volf's view, the western preference for psychological analogies derives from the primacy of essence, while the eastern primacy of persons favours social analogies (Volf 1998: 200). Our discussion of Augustine's psychological Trinity has yielded a slightly different result, but later medieval development in the West may also offer support to Volf's view.

Volf sees the potential problems of psychological and social ideals and discusses Immanuel Kant's view, according to which 'absolutely nothing can be acquired for practical life from the doctrine of Trinity' (Volf 1998: 198; Kant 1964: 50). His own view differs from Kant, since he believes that the 'this-worldly character of God's self-revelation makes it possible to convert Trinitarian ideas into ecclesiological ideas'. But Volf also wants to define clear limits to the use of analogy, emphasizing that in addition to postulating analogies one needs to know 'how the church is to correspond concretely to the divine communion' in its historical reality (Volf 1998: 199-200). This means many different things which need to be discussed in detail. The leadership of the Church, for instance, must occur as a collegial exercise of office. The various gifts of Christians in the Church likewise correspond to the divine multiplicity. In these 'trinitarianizations' of the Church structure Volf recommends an understanding of catholicity as 'differentiated unity' which is sufficient to counteract the dangers of pluralism (Volf 1998: 218, 262-4).

Volf affirms a correspondence between the Trinity and the Church, but he also sees the great variety of analogical options which this affirmation implies. It is therefore not sufficient merely to state the existence of a given correspondence, but its dynamics needs to be worked out in detail. In comparing Volf with Boff one also needs to pay attention to their different points of departure: while analogies between the Trinity and the Church are widely accepted and can be biblically grounded, the postulate of an analogy between the Trinity and society involves several difficulties and risks. Although both the Church and the society are created realities, they reveal—and conceal—the mystery of their Creator in different fashion. The postulate of an anthropological analogy between the Trinity

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and a group of human persons may thus yield very different theologies which need to be judged differently.

Mark Heim's study *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (2001) elevates the doctrine of analogy to a new level. Heim wants to interpret the plurality of religions with the help of Trinitarian considerations. In Christian theology, the Trinity is 'a non-reductive religious ultimate'. It functions 'like a musical polyphony, a simultaneous, non-excluding harmony of difference that constitutes one unique reality'. Because human interaction with the triune God can take different forms, and because some of these forms are present in other religions, it is impossible simply 'to believe in the Trinity instead of the distinctive claims of all other religions' (Heim 2001: 167). In other words, the riches and the depth (Rom. 11:33) of the triune God contain some aspects present in the truth-claims of other religions.

Heim does not, however, advocate open-ended pluralism. While Heim emphasizes that the different religious ends are genuinely different, he also maintains that the Trinitarian concept of the Christian God involves an overflow of meanings. Heim (p. 425) argues with the help of anthropology, claiming that two persons can meet each other in three fundamentally different ways. First, in terms of an impersonal and universally valid encounter. Second, I can become acquainted with you so that your distinctive personality comes into focus. Third, we can meet in order to share the same experience. These three ways of encounter express a correspondence to the Trinitarian persons; in this manner the Christian doctrine of God contains the overflow of meanings based on the different personal modes of encounter. At the same time Heim claims that these three ways of personal contact are important channels of divine encounter in other religions. The relational anthropology of human encounter thus connects Trinitarian Christianity with other religions. Often the 'relation with God can be tuned or concentrated in one of these channels, with distinctive religious results' (Heim 2001: 184-5).

Heim is not claiming that all religions reflect a Trinitarian God or that all religions promote similar ends. He wants to show that the different ends of different religions in their particular ways contain aspects which are also present in the 'depth of the riches' of the Trinitarian mystery. This bold strategy opens a new field of discussion regarding the relationship between the Trinity and theological anthropology, in particular since the analogy is built upon the different modes of interpersonal encounter. The fruitfulness of this approach depends on the general evaluation of other religions. If they are considered to resemble the secular ideals and ideologies of human society, then Heim's approach faces problems of anthropomorphism similar to Boff's account. But if other religions are seen as containing some seeds of divine truth and goodness, then the relevant point of comparison is the Church and its correspondence with the Trinity.

We saw that in Augustine's Trinitarian theology truth and goodness establish the ontological links between the Trinity and created realities. Heim also emphasizes God's goodness and the religious search for truth, stating that one religious tradition cannot claim a monopoly on these basic constituents of all creation (Heim 2001: 30-1, 295-6). If he is right,

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then the analogy between the Trinity and all religions resembles Augustine's psychological analogy as well as the correspondence between the Trinity and the Church. Obviously, Heim's bold proposal of an interreligious social anthropology needs careful discussion before it can be properly evaluated.

Throughout this chapter I have focused on the nature of analogy between the Trinity and creation. This strategy is proper in western Christianity in which a fundamental difference between God and creation is assumed. But it may not be applied to the eastern view of participation in the same manner, since this view maintains that the human likeness to God increases in the process of grace and deification. In this process, the subject and object of human-divine correspondence do not remain separated by the fundamental difference but they are themselves relative to the broader salvific process. The postulate of 'iconic language' may avoid some difficulties related to this phenomenon, if we assume that the iconic word can provide a short cut to the divine name and mystery. Western doctrines of analogy, however, normally presuppose a fundamental difference between the triune God and creation. To bridge this difference, linguistic analogies and metaphors are employed. At the same time, they necessarily remain imperfect and one-dimensional portrayals of the divine mystery. (p. 426)

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Christensen and Wittung (2007); Faith and Order Commission (1991); Jüngel (1986); Kärkkäinen (2007).

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Risto Saarinen

Risto Saarinen is Professor of Ecumenics at the University of Helsinki and Guest Professor at the Catholic University of Leuven. He is the author of *Weakness of Will in Renaissance and Reformation Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

The Trinity, the Church, and the Sacraments

Charles Morerod

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This article analyzes the interrelation among the doctrine of Trinity, the Church, and the Sacraments. It explains that the Trinity, the Church and the Sacraments are inseparably linked in Christian faith because the Church sees her faith in her sacramental practice, which in turn is based on Trinitarian faith. It argues that the theology of the Church requires first not an account of its visible structures but an account of how humans, through the missions of Christ and the Holy Spirit, come to share in the relationships of the divine Persons.

Keywords: Trinity, Church, Sacraments, Christian faith, sacramental practice, Trinitarian faith, Christ, Holy Spirit, divine Persons

The Interconnection Trinity—Church—Sacraments

The most explicitly Trinitarian text of the New Testament has a sacramental—ecclesial content: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matt. 28:19). In the name of the Trinity, nations are being made a community through baptism. This is a community that shares in divine life by adoption. The members of the Church are the adopted sons of the Father, thanks to the missions of the Son and of the Spirit:

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal. 4:4-7)

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The Trinity, the Church, and the Sacraments are inseparably linked in Christian faith. The Church sees her faith in her sacramental practice, which in turn is based on Trinitarian faith. St Irenaeus (c.180) explains that the rule of faith is organized around the confession of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and ‘for this reason the baptism of our regeneration takes place through these three articles, granting us regeneration unto God the Father through His Son by the Holy Spirit’ (Irenaeus 1997: 44). St Basil of Caesarea, in his treatise *On the Holy Spirit* (c.374–5), relates our faith and salvation to our baptism and our liturgical proclamation of the glory of the Trinity: (p. 429)

Whence is it that we are Christians? Through our faith, would be the universal answer. And in what way are we saved? Plainly because we were regenerated through the grace given in our baptism. How else could we be? And after recognising that this salvation is established through the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, shall we fling away ‘that form of doctrine’ which we received? ... For myself, I pray that with this confession I may depart hence to the Lord, and then I charge to preserve the faith secure until the day of Christ, and to keep the Spirit undivided from the Father and the Son, preserving, both in the confession of faith and in the doxology [literally: ‘in the proclamation of the glory’], the doctrine taught them at their baptism. (*On the Holy Spirit* X.26; Basil of Caesarea 1983: 17)

As Gregory of Nazianzus wrote a few years later (c.380): ‘Were the Spirit not to be worshipped, how could he deify me through baptism? If he is to be worshipped, why not adored? And if to be adored, how can he fail to be God? One links with the other, a truly golden chain of salvation’ (*Oration* 31.28; Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 139). Generally speaking, the action of the divine Persons in our life indicates their divinity: ‘To sanctify men is the proper work of God, for Leviticus (22:32) says: “I am the Lord who sanctifies you”. It is, of course, the Holy Spirit who sanctifies, as the Apostle says: “You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11)’ (Thomas Aquinas 1957: ch. 17, 108).

Trinitarian faith, baptism, and membership in the Church go together, as one can notice in the Creeds. Some summaries of faith appeared quite naturally in the early Church (the movement towards formulation is under way in the New Testament) because of the necessity to explain faith to persons interested or hostile. The various elements of the early formulas then led to the Trinitarian structure of Creeds such as the ‘Symbol of the Apostles’ or the Creed of Nicaea (Kelly 1972). Especially in the context of baptism, the profession of faith expresses a double move: the individual goes to the Church, and faith comes from the Church to the believer. This dynamic interconnection is the object of a wide ecumenical agreement, and includes other sacraments: ‘In baptism a profession of faith is given according to the Trinitarian content of the faith of the community (*regula fidei*) which is at the same time recognized by the community. The profession of faith occurs also in those churches which do not formally use the words of the Nicene Creed when baptismal confession uses other formulas authorized by the Church. Here, likewise, baptismal confession joins the faith of the baptized to the common faith of the Church through the

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ages. The same faith is also expressed in the eucharistic liturgy by the confession of creeds' (Faith and Order 1991: §15, 5).

What Boris Bobrinsky says about the connection Trinity—Church—Sacraments is therefore true not only of the Orthodox: 'In the Orthodox understanding, it is not possible to comprehend the nature of liturgical action without constant reference to the Trinitarian mystery into which worship introduces the Christian. All worship is an ecclesial, and personal, celebration addressed to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit' (Bobrinsky 2008: 52).

(p. 430) **The Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ**

Jesus Christ came to give life to his disciples. The gift of the life of the Head makes the community become the Body of Christ, and this can happen only through the sending of the Holy Spirit.

The understanding of the relationship between the divine persons is a key to the understanding of the Church. More precisely: is there an order in the Trinity, and is that order reflected in the actions of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the 'economy', that is, in this world? Two examples illustrate such a connection. Some contemporary Orthodox theologians accuse both Catholics and Protestants of separating the action of the Holy Spirit from the action of Christ, by suggesting that the Holy Spirit can be present outside of the Body of Christ (Phidas 1993). In a 'Notification' on the interreligious theology of the Belgian Jesuit Jacques Dupuis, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith affirmed that 'The Church's faith teaches that the Holy Spirit, working after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is always the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father, who works in a salvific way in Christians as well as non-Christians' (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2001, §5).

The theological views on the Trinity have therefore an immediate impact on the understanding of what the Church is, above all in ecumenical and interreligious questions. It is crucial to assess such a question in a non-polemical way. In the western Christianity, the influence of the controversies of the sixteenth century is a somehow hidden factor in this context, because the implicit ecclesiology of many theologians still presupposes views similar to that of St Robert Bellarmine. In order to react against what he perceived as a Calvinist insistence on the invisible aspect of the Church and a parallel underestimation of her visible aspect, the Jesuit Doctor tried to coin a minimal definition of the Church. His main purpose was to provide a way of recognizing who does belong to the Church and who does not: 'For anyone to be called in some sense a part of the true Church, of which the Scriptures speak, we do not think that any internal virtue is required, but only an external profession of faith and communication of the Sacraments, which can be perceived by the senses themselves. For the Church is an assembly of men, as visible and palpable as the assembly of the Roman people, or the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of the Venetians' (Bellarmine 1857: 75). Writing before the polemical context of the Counter Reformation, Aquinas had a widely different view on the Church: 'We must say that if we

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take the whole time of the world in general, Christ is the Head of all human beings, but diversely' (*ST III*, q.8, a.3). To say that Christ is 'the Head of all human beings' means that, in different ways, all human beings are members of the Church: for him, to be a member of the Church means to receive salvation. Christ the Head builds his Body (the Church) by offering the salvific grace to all human beings, although some do not accept it and are 'members of the Church' only in the sense that they are called to become members.

Although Catholic Counter-Reformation theology seems outdated in an ecumenical age, some of its popular presuppositions are present within ecumenical views. An explicit rejection of the patristic-medieval ecclesiology (of which I took Aquinas as an [\(p. 431\)](#) example) for the sake of dialogue can unwittingly hide Bellarminian views: 'In recent decades, there has been a shift away from the patristic and scholastic custom of giving the word "church" such a wide meaning that it included all who are being saved. The more restricted use of the term does not seek to deny the insights which the earlier usage conveyed, but rather to better serve the Church of today, with its keen awareness of the values inherent in other religions and in the world at large and its effort to work together with these others in order to realize more fully God's Kingdom' (Henn 1997: 146). In this seemingly necessary view of dialogue with other religions, a Bellarminian definition of the Church is implicitly assumed as the only possible ecclesiology: 'Church' means a well-identified visible group and cannot mean anything else, although it did in the past.

The same question has a more Christological form in Jacques Dupuis' theology of religions. He suggests in careful terms a hypothesis about the role of the incarnation in the salvific work of the Son: 'Admittedly, in the mystery of Jesus-the-Christ, the Word cannot be separated from the flesh it has assumed. But, inseparable as the divine Word and Jesus' human existence may be, they nevertheless remain distinct. While, then, the human action of the Logos ensarkos is the universal sacrament of God's saving action, it does not exhaust the action of the Logos. A distinct action of the Logos asarkos endures—not, to be sure, as constituting a distinct economy of salvation, parallel to that realized in the flesh of Christ, but as the expression of God's superabundant graciousness and absolute freedom' (Dupuis 1997: 299). Here again, Aquinas had a different view: 'To give grace or the Holy Spirit belongs to Christ as He is God, authoritatively; but instrumentally it belongs also to Him as man, inasmuch as His manhood is the instrument of His Godhead. And hence by the power of the Godhead His actions were beneficial, i.e. by causing grace in us' (*ST III*, q.8, a.1, ad1). For Thomas, the assumed humanity cannot be an obstacle to the Son's granting of grace. Both positions want to take into account the Christological definition of Chalcedon, in a particular way that 'at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person' (Council of Chalcedon (451), in Tanner 1990: vol. 1, *86). Certainly the human nature of Christ implies a limitation, but is it such that the Son would have to act in part as if he would not have assumed that nature? It seems that Dupuis replies yes, and Thomas no.

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In other words, the question raised by ‘the patristic and scholastic custom’ to—especially—our theories of interreligious dialogue is: does the Incarnation limit the action of the Son of God in such a way that He would be able to build his Body within only part of humanity? For the other human beings, the Holy Spirit—or the Son, but not as incarnate—would have a salvific role more or less distinct from the one of the incarnate Son. If the Son needs to put his Incarnation aside in order to take seriously all of us, then was the incarnation a divine mistake? If the Holy Spirit acts outside the Body of Christ, is it true that ‘When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me’ (Jn 15:26), or that ‘He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you’ (Jn 16:14)?

(p. 432) In broader terms, the understanding of the relationship between the action of the Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ leads—more or less consciously—to different ecclesiologies.

The ninth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) issued an ecclesiological Statement with explicit Trinitarian and sacramental content:

Our common belonging to Christ through baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit enables and calls churches to walk together, even when they are in disagreement. We affirm that there is one baptism, just as there is one body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of us all. (World Council of Churches 2006: §III.9, 115)

The Holy Spirit helps our discernment in cases of differences:

Some differences express God's grace and goodness; they must be discerned in God's grace through the Holy Spirit. Other differences divide the Church; these must be overcome through the Spirit's gifts of faith, hope, and love. (World Council of Churches 2006: §II.5, 114)

The relationship between each member church of the WCC and the one Church confessed in the Creed is also mentioned: ‘Each church is the Church catholic and not simply a part of it. Each church is the Church catholic, but not the whole of it. Each church fulfils its catholicity when it is in communion with the other churches’ (World Council of Churches 2006: §II.6, 114). But the question of the relationship between the action of the incarnate Son and the action of the Holy Spirit in the context of Church membership is not developed.

Within the WCC, that question has been raised by the Orthodox members of the World Council of Churches, taking into consideration Orthodox and Protestant views:

Within the two basic ecclesiological starting points there is in fact a certain range of views on the relation of the Church to the churches. This existing range invites us to pose to one another the following questions. To the Orthodox: ‘Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology? How would this space and its limits be described?’ To the churches within the tradition of the Reformation: ‘How does

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your church understand, maintain and express your belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church?’ (‘Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC’ 2003: §16, 7)

The possibility for other churches to have a space in Orthodox ecclesiology depends on (1) the impossibility for the Holy Spirit to act outside of the Body of Christ; (2) a tendency to identify the Body of Christ and the Orthodox Church. The parallel question is asked by the Orthodox to the Protestants, in terms that could be rephrased to become: you disagree with our ‘exclusive’ ecclesiology, but then, what does ‘Church unity’ mean in your broad understanding of the Church? Some space might be opened in relation to the exclusiveness because of the Orthodox insistence on the *lex orandi, lex credendi* principle. The 7th Canon of the first Council of Constantinople (accepted in the East) does not require the baptism of all heretics who become Orthodox, but of some only: (p. 433)

Those who embrace orthodoxy and join the number of those who are being saved from the heretics, we receive in the following regular and customary manner: Arians, Macedonians, Sabbatians, Novatians ... These we receive when they hand in statements and anathematise every heresy ... They are first sealed or anointed with holy chrism on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth and ears. As we seal them we say: ‘Seal of the gift of the holy Spirit’. But Eunomians ..., Montanists ..., Sabelians ... On the first day we make Christians of them, on the second catechumens, on the third we exorcise them ... and then we baptise them’. (Tanner 1990: vol. 1, *35).

As a matter of fact, most Orthodox churches affirm that the Church is the Orthodox Church, that sacraments are administered only in the Church, and that some non-Orthodox Christians do not have to be baptized again, if they become Orthodox. The Great Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky commented on that practice: ‘Nobody would dare to receive a Moslem into the Church without baptism “by economy”. Why should we receive non-Orthodox by a more lenient way, if they were really just like “heathen men”?’ (Florovsky 1950: 150–60). He interprets this situation with an explicit reference to the Catholic Church, in a partial anticipation of Vatican II: ‘The Church of Rome would not recognise any separated Christian body as a “church”, but does regard the separated as Christians—they are somehow and really related to and connected with the Church. There are degrees of Church membership’ (Florovsky 1950: 160; see also Arjakovsky 2006: 276). Nevertheless, Florovsky had a strong view on the unity between divine action and the Church:

The work of the Spirit in believers is precisely their incorporation into Christ, their baptism into one body ... By the Spirit Christians are united with Christ, are united in Him, are constituted into His Body. *One body*, that of Christ ... The incarnation is being completed in the Church. And, in a certain sense, the Church is Christ Himself, in His all-embracing plenitude. (Florovsky 1972: 63–4)

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Even if baptism is considered to be valid only in the case of the ones who become Orthodox (as in Phidas 1993), it would still mean that some divine action happens outside the recognized boundaries of the Orthodox Church. Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus used the argument of mixed weddings in a similar way, when he received the Commission of dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics, 18 October 2009: if the Orthodox Church accepts common prayer during mixed weddings, it means that the non-Orthodox member of the couple can be part in an Orthodox liturgy (non-published text, personal witness of the author of this contribution). To be part in an Orthodox liturgy means some sharing in the Church's life. The challenge is then to explain how some spiritual membership is related to the visible Church.

In the Catholic Church, one of the main tasks of Vatican II was to understand how baptized non-Catholics were members of the Church. The solution found in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) of that Council is the famous *subsistit in*:

This is the unique church of Christ, which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic. After his resurrection our saviour gave the church to Peter to (p. 434) feed ..., and to him and the other apostles he committed the church to be governed and spread ..., and he set it up for all time as the pillar and foundation of the truth.... This church, set up and organized in this world as a society, subsists in the catholic church, governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him, although outside its structure many elements of sanctification and of truth are to be found which, as proper gifts to the church of Christ, impel towards catholic unity. (*Lumen Gentium* §8, in Tanner 1990: vol. 2, *854)

This teaching has been reasserted and explained by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2007 (see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2007). Although this seems to be a purely ecclesiological question, it involves a theology of the Trinity, since 'the Church appears as "a people made one by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (*Lumen Gentium* §2; in Tanner 1990: vol. 2, *851). The unity of the Church implies that the actions of Christ and of the Spirit are 'co-ordinated':

Christ is the Head of this body.... In order that we may be continually renewed in him ..., he gave us a share in his Spirit, who is one and the same in head and members. This Spirit gives life, unity and movement to the whole body, so that the fathers of the church could compare his task to that which is exercised by the life-principle, the soul, in the human body'. (*Lumen Gentium* §7; in Tanner 1990: vol. 2, *853-4)

It is possible in such a perspective to say that the Holy Spirit acts without the boundaries of the Catholic Church (understood in 'Bellarminian' terms), while asserting at the same time that what is outside these boundaries is somehow within, because of the unifying action of the Holy Spirit:

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The separated churches and communities as such, though we believe them to be deficient in some respects, have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation whose efficacy comes from that fullness of grace and truth which has been entrusted to the catholic church. (Council Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* on ecumenism, §3; in Tanner 1990: *910)

Not too surprisingly, such texts lead to different interpretations, insisting rather on ‘the “others” are within the Church’ or on ‘the Holy Spirit also acts elsewhere’.

A solution to the ‘without but within’ question has been proposed by Swiss cardinal Charles Journet and his ‘principle of coextensivity’ of body and soul (Morerod 2008: 96–103). Taking the Holy Spirit as the soul of the Church, Journet explains that wherever the Spirit acts and is received, the body of the Church at least starts being present: ‘Where appears something of the soul of the Church, there appears something of the body of the Church’ (Journet 2000: 1557). This is the case even when people do not realize (or do not realize yet) that they are acting under the motion of the Holy Spirit. Such people have at least an implicit desire, an initial love of God, and ‘tend, without even noticing it, to exteriorise their desire.... It will be possible to speak, about these just, of an invisible membership in the visible Church’ (Journet 2000: 1558). They would be, in an incomplete way, members of the Church, because the action of the Holy Spirit builds the Body of Christ: the impact of the Spirit produces an effect in the life of the persons, and in this sense the Church is already (p. 435) visible. But since this is not conscious, such a membership is both visible (in itself) and invisible (to the persons involved). This is only one first step. For Journet, in the case of people who do not know that they are replying to the Holy Spirit, ‘the Church can exist, not of course in its normal and completed state, but in a rudimentary or, rather, abnormal and restricted state’ (Journet 1960: 118). The good already received, the initial love of God—because it is love—asks for more. If the initial membership would become explicit—through the confession of faith and the reception of the sacraments—then these persons ‘would be like a rose-tree kept for a long time in an unsuitable climate which, suddenly transplanted to a sunny region, can show of what it is capable and blossom to the full’ (Journet 1960: 124).

Besides the ‘within but without’ question, the Catholic teaching expressed in the expression ‘*subsistit in*’ raises an ecumenical question sharply summarized by the German Protestant theologian Eberhard Jüngel: ‘Why must the Church of Jesus Christ subsist in this world in a precise way [*ausgerechnet*]?’ (Jüngel 2001: 60). Debates about this question usually focus on ministry or ecclesial structures, and this is useful, because the sacraments must be identified in a rather precise way. But it would be good to add to the studies on ‘structures’ some consideration about the relationship between the action of the Holy Spirit and the action of the incarnate Son edifying his Body. In other words, one of the most delicate ecclesiological questions is also and perhaps above all a question of Trinitarian theology.

Communion of the Trinity and Communion of the Church

The origin of the unity of the Church is commonly placed in the communion of the Trinity. There is a clear example of this in the Decree on Ecumenism of the second Vatican Council:

This is the sacred mystery of the unity of the church, in Christ and through Christ, while the action of the Holy Spirit produces a variety of gifts. It is a mystery that finds its highest model and source in the unity of the persons of the Trinity: the unity of the one God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Council Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* §2; in Tanner 1990: *909)

The parallel between a human community and the Trinity is used to speak of different types of human communion:

God is love and in Himself He lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in His own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capability and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. (John Paul II 1981 (§11): 3)

The comparison between the unity of the Trinity and the unity of the Church (or another human community) may be approached from both ends of the comparison. If we (p. 436) approach it from the Church's end, we run the risk (although this is not the aim of texts such as we have just quoted) of promoting an unconscious tritheism. St Augustine was well aware of the danger:

They do not seem to me to offer a probable opinion, who believe that, with regard to human nature, a trinity of the image of God in three persons can be so found, so as to be completed in the marriage of the man and woman with their offspring. (*On the Trinity* XII.5; Augustine 1963: 346)

He explains that the theologian 'may not take with him to the highest things that which he loathes in the lowest things' (*On the Trinity* XII.5; Augustine 1963: 347). 'We ought, therefore, not to understand man as made to the image of the exalted Trinity, that is, to the image of God, in such a way that the same image is understood to be in three human beings' (*On the Trinity* XII.7; Augustine 1963: 351).

Given the risk involved in the approach that speaks of God starting with this world, we should try to see not only the Trinity from our experience of the Church, but also the Church from the perspective of the Trinity: this is actually the correct order, although it is not the first one in the order of our discovery. St Thomas Aquinas does exactly that, if one considers the consequences of what he says about divine love and divine knowledge: 'The Father with the same love, which is the Holy Spirit, loves himself, the Son, the Holy Spirit and all creatures. Even so by the same Word, which is the Son, he utters himself, the Son,

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the Holy Spirit and all creatures' (*De Potentia*, q.9, a.9, ad13; Thomas Aquinas 1934: 163). What is the relation of the Father to the Church? The Father sees the Son with the Church (his Body), the *Christus totus*. See, for instance, Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 74.4: 'totus Christus, caput, et corpus' (Augustine 1956: 1027). The same teaching is found in Aquinas: 'totus Christus, idest ecclesia et caput ejus' (Aquinas, *Commentary on Psalm 3*, no. 5; Thomas Aquinas 1813: 157). And the Spirit, common love of the Father and the Son, unites the Church to the Father and the Son, and the members are united among them 'through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who unites the Church together, and communicates the goods of one member to another' (Thomas Aquinas, *ST III*, q.68, a.9, ad2). The communication of the goods is the work of charity, which 'can be in us neither naturally, nor through acquisition by the natural powers, but by the infusion of the Holy Spirit, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the participation of Whom in us is created charity' (Thomas Aquinas, *ST II-II*, q.24, a.2).

Such a view is in no way surprising if one considers that for Aquinas Church membership is conferred by grace. And sanctifying grace, participation in divine life, comes from the Head of the Body (Christ) through the Holy Spirit. Grace and Church membership are by nature Trinitarian. Emery summarizes this:

Adoptive sonship makes human beings kin to the Word from within the oneness which he has with the Father.... Brought about by assimilation to the Son, the oneness of the Church is thus seen as a participation in the oneness of the Trinity.... The 'participation' in which filial adoption consists is a divinization or deification, for Thomas conceives grace as precisely an 'assimilation' or 'participation in the divine nature', a (p. 437) new creation which God alone can bring about. By affiliating human beings to the Son, adoptive Sonship affiliates them to his divine Sonship of the Father. Grace is thus a 'participation of the divine nature'.... This rebirth is brought about by the gift of the Holy Spirit From this gift, rooted in the eternal filiation of the Son of God, the whole Christian life is projected. (Emery 2007: 207-8)

In other words: 'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me' (Jn 17:22-3).

Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments

Baptism is the most explicitly 'Trinitarian' sacrament, already in the New Testament itself (Matt. 28:19), but all sacraments provide good opportunities to look at the relationship between the actions of the divine Persons.

The ministers of the sacraments are not always saints. And even when they are, they still cannot give grace—divinization—thanks to their own moral standards. Sacraments exist only because Christ acts in them through his ministers, and this happens thanks to the ac-

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tion in the ministers of the Holy Spirit who first descended on Christ and then was sent by him to his disciples. This is what St Augustine summarizes:

Although many ministers, be they righteous or unrighteous, should baptize, the virtue of baptism would be attributed to Him alone on whom the dove descended, and of whom it was said, ‘This is He that baptizes with the Holy Spirit’? Peter may baptize, but this is He [Christ] that baptizes (*Petrus baptizet, hic est qui baptizat*); Paul may baptize, yet this is He that baptizes; Judas may baptize, still this is He that baptizes. (*Tractatus in Johannis Evangelium* VI.7; Augustine 1954: 57)

This teaching was widely accepted by different Christian denominations, such as the Church of England:

Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness [of the ministers], nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men. (Article XXVI in *The Book of Common Prayer* 1815: 401)

The sacraments do not exist without the Holy Spirit: ‘The water of Baptism does not cause any spiritual effect by reason of the water, but by reason of the power of the Holy Spirit, which power is in the water’ (Aquinas, *ST* III, q.73, a.1, ad2).

The relationship between the roles of the incarnate Son and of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist has been a matter of ecumenical debate. In the western Christianity, the (p. 438) accent has been put on the words of institution of Jesus Christ, using elements of 1 Cor. 11:23–5, Matt. 26:26–9, Mk 14:22–5, and Lk. 22:14–20. In the eastern Christianity, the accent has been put on the invocation of the Holy Spirit. It is clear to most theologians that both elements should be somehow present, together with some human action. What will probably be remembered as the most important twentieth-century ecumenical document on the sacraments—*Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* (known as *BEM*, Faith and Order document 1982)—showed in a balanced way the Trinitarian dimension of the Eucharistic celebration:

The Spirit makes the crucified and risen Christ really present to us in the eucharistic meal, fulfilling the promise contained in the words of institution. The presence of Christ is clearly the centre of the eucharist, and the promise contained in the words of institution is therefore fundamental to the celebration. Yet it is the Father who is the primary origin and final fulfilment of the eucharistic event. The incarnate Son of God by and in whom it is accomplished is its living centre. The Holy Spirit is the immeasurable strength of love which makes it possible and continues to make it effective. The bond between the eucharistic celebration and the mystery of the Triune God reveals the role of the Holy Spirit as that of the One who makes the historical words of Jesus present and alive. Being assured by Jesus’ promise in the words of institution that it will be answered, the Church prays to the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit in order that the eucharistic

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event may be a reality: the real presence of the crucified and risen Christ giving his life for all humanity. (*BEM* 1982: part on the Eucharist, §14)

The balanced character of *BEM*'s summary is useful, as even some misunderstandings in the reception show. The Lutheran Church of the Netherlands officially replied to that part of *BEM*:

Our main objection is to §14. In it the Holy Spirit's office is elevated to that of a mediating agent; as being someone necessary for the 'realis presentia Christi' and the fulfilment of the 'promise in the words of institution'.... In the outline of the liturgy also the Holy Spirit is a 'conditio sine qua non'. In our view, however, the sacrament is governed neither by the ministry nor the Spirit, but solely by the word. (Thurian 1988: 21)

The importance of the reply of a Church that has a limited number of theologians (the Lutherans are a small minority in Holland) should not be overestimated, but it shows the lasting impact of different historical accents on different aspects of Trinitarian theology in the theology of the sacraments.

BEM actually provides a synthesis of the action and presence of God in the Church and in the sacraments:

- (1)** the Father is the primary origin and final fulfilment;
- (2)** the presence of Christ is the centre: this applies in a specific way to the Eucharist, but also to any sacrament, and to the Church as Body of Christ;
- (3)** the Holy Spirit makes the presence of the crucified and risen Christ possible and effective.

(p. 439) The sacrament of confirmation is historically complex. Aquinas himself mentions 'contemporary' questions about its institution (*ST* III, q.72, a.1, ad1). The Reformers did not count it as a sacrament strictly speaking. Contemporary research, when it tries to understand confirmation as a sacrament, provides interesting hints about the action of the Holy Spirit in Christian life:

We must be empowered by the Spirit for this maturation in the faith, for this living out of our baptismal vows. Insofar as it is a sacramental rite, confirmation reminds us that, here as elsewhere, our acts are never simply ours independently of God's acts for us. We must seek comfort and succour from the Spirit in the difficult effort to be what baptism has already made us. (Tanner 2006: 89)

Confirmation can show the link between the 'immanent' and the 'economical' roles of the Holy Spirit: 'The Spirit is the one who binds us to Christ just as the Spirit joins Father and Son by bonds of affection. But the Spirit is also the one who brings to fruition or completion what the Father starts and the Son takes up' (Tanner 2006: 90).

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Morerod (2008); Emery (2007); Florovsky (1972).

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Charles Morerod

Charles Morerod, O.P., Dominican priest from Switzerland, is Professor at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome. He is also the General Secretary of the International Theological Commission (Rome).

Trinity and Salvation: Christian Life as an Existence in the Trinity

Daniel A. Keating

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This article examines the relation between Trinity and salvation. It analyzes the issue of Christian life as an existence in the Trinity through a close reading of selected biblical texts that touch directly on our relationship with the Father, the Son, and/or the Spirit. The analysis indicates that the doctrine of the Trinity has everything to do with the topic of salvation and with the way of life that Christians are summoned to. It argues that faith and the sacraments bring about real transformation through the indwelling of the Spirit and adoptive sonship in the Son, so that Christians already live in the Trinity.

Keywords: Trinity, salvation, Christian life, biblical texts, sacraments, indwelling of the Spirit

Therefore since we are made lovers of God by the Holy Spirit, and every beloved is in the lover as such, by the Holy Spirit necessarily the Father and the Son dwell in us also (Jn 14:23; 1 Jn 3:24)... Therefore, by the Holy Spirit not only is God in us, but we are also in God (1 Jn 4:13, 16).

(Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Bk. IV, ch. 21; Thomas Aquinas 1975: 122)

1. Introduction

When faced with the topic, 'Christian life as an existence in the Trinity', it is difficult to know where to begin. Given the eruption of attempts in recent decades to relate the doctrine of the Trinity to all facets of human life and endeavour, the potential field for exploration is immensely broad. Karl Barth's praiseworthy determination to make the reality of the Trinitarian God the centre of his exposition of the Christian faith has provoked an impressive response in the generations of scholars and theologians who followed him—though it is doubtful that he would have been pleased with many of their claims and conclusions. Karl Rahner's call to make Christian faith and life truly Trinitarian has found an

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enthusiastic response from authors determined to ensure that all discussion of Christian life bear a Trinitarian shape (Grentz 2004: 33–71; Letham 2004).

But one wonders—when surveying these efforts—if many of them have not become unmoored from the very reality they so ardently labour to apply. Caught up in the enthusiasm to make the Trinity applicable and relevant to any and every aspect of Christian life, they sometimes too readily select and appropriate one aspect of (p. 443) Trinitarian doctrine to the detriment of others, thus diminishing or deforming the doctrine of the Trinity itself (Johnson 2007: 332). Moreover, some Christian theologians have uncritically accepted caricatures of patristic or medieval Trinitarian theology, and readily make use of these caricatures to build up their own accounts (Ayres 2004: 384). Sometimes it is the entire patristic era that comes under fire for its presumed Hellenistic-substantialist deformation of the biblical revelation (Alston 2004), but more commonly it is the line of western Trinitarian thought running from Augustine through Aquinas to the present that receives the sharpest critique. Trinitarian scholarship in the past decade has persuasively argued that the commonly-held assumptions about western and eastern Trinitarian theologies are seriously flawed, and that a reassessment of how the history of Trinitarian theology is typically understood and taught is needed (Barnes 2004; Ayres 2004: 384–435). Judging that much Trinitarian speculation has lost its moorings in the Scripture and is prone to overstatement, Alister McGrath makes a plea for ‘a trinitarian modesty’ (McGrath 2006: 26, 32). Similarly, Lewis Ayres commends a return to the ‘great austerity’ practised in the fourth century when describing the divine persons or making use of Trinitarian analogies (Ayres 2004: 418).

Efforts to make the Trinitarian God of revelation central to all Christian faith and practice are to be applauded. And it would seem entirely fitting that Christian thinkers ‘search and enquire carefully’ into how Christian life in this age may more fully reflect the Trinitarian God whose life we have come to share. Augustine himself would approve (in principle) on the basis of ‘faith seeking understanding’. But great care must be taken to ensure that we don’t distort the revelation of the Trinitarian God in the very efforts to appropriate and apply that doctrine. Deeply aware of the inherent limitations of human words and created analogies, Trinitarian theology should seek to articulate and engage the full revelation of Father, Son, and Spirit, firmly grounded in the Scriptures that reveal this triune God.

Convinced of this, I will address the topic of ‘Christian life as an existence in the Trinity’ by means of a close reading of selected biblical texts—coming principally from Paul and John—that touch directly on our relationship with the Father, the Son, and/or the Spirit. This reading, however, makes no pretence to be pre-theological or pre-dogmatic. Any attempt to display the work of the ‘economic Trinity’ is the end-result of a process that has already taken in and meditated upon the biblical texts, and come to an understanding (even preliminary) about the ‘immanent Trinity’ (God in himself, *in se*). Gilles Emery makes this point with great clarity:

The doctrine of the economic Trinity is no less speculative than that of the immanent Trinity. The revelation of the Trinity by its works is admittedly first in the or-

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der of our discovery of the mystery. But the doctrine of the economic Trinity is not only the starting point of a theological reflection: it is rather the last fruit of a reflection founded in the speculative reading of the documents of revelation, when doctrinal speculative principles are applied to the agency of the persons as taught by Scriptures.... In this way Trinitarian theology moves from Scripture to Scripture (Emery 2006: 294).

(p. 444) By moving from 'Scripture to Scripture' I hope to draw out some of the implications for 'Christian life as an existence in the Trinity' that pertain to our destiny as creatures who live by participation in the one divine life of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Before moving to an investigation of the biblical texts, some mention should be made about the relationship between the primary terms of the title, 'Trinity' and 'salvation'. It is quite common to hear the claim that the early Church debates over the Trinity and the Incarnation were largely detached from the central issue of Christian salvation. On this account, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed and the Chalcedonian Definition had little correlation to soteriology as such. This view is normally buttressed by the further assertion that the early Church councils simply did not dogmatize any doctrine of salvation, and so left this topic 'undefined'.

It is true that the early Church offered no defined theory of the atonement (how exactly Christ saved us). But to conclude from this that the debates over the full divinity and full humanity of the Son (and the full divinity of the Spirit) were only tangential to an understanding of salvation is profoundly mistaken. These debates were heated and prolonged precisely because the issue of salvation was seen to be at stake (Young 1991: 80). For those engaged in these debates, if Jesus was not truly and fully God, then we are not saved. If he did not assume our full humanity, then our humanity has not been fully redeemed. If the Spirit of God is not fully divine then we are not brought into real participation with the divine life—and our salvation is endangered. This inherent connection between Trinity and salvation also marks the approach of Thomas Aquinas, who states that the principle reason why knowledge of the divine persons is necessary 'is to give us a true notion of the salvation of mankind, a salvation accomplished by the Son who became flesh and by the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.32, a.1, ad3). The doctrine of the Trinity, then, has everything to do with the topic of salvation and with the way of life that Christians are summoned to. Given that I cannot hope to address even a fraction of the ways in which the Trinity relates to salvation, I will limit myself to consider how Christian salvation includes and is ordered to 'life in the Trinity'.

2. The Biblical Witness to Life in the Trinity

Matthew 28:19-20 and Christian Baptism

The obvious biblical starting point is the section that closes Matthew's gospel: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

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Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matt. 28:19-20, NRSV). This text was not only decisive in the early Church for ensuring that the Christian understanding of God would be Trinitarian, it also confirmed that incorporation into the Christian community was to be in terms of the Father, Son, and Spirit. In this text the three persons are governed, as it were, by one instance of the word, 'name'. There are not three names, but one name—and that one name is 'the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'. It is as if the one name of God has been expanded to include the three persons without losing its oneness.

According to Christ's final commission in Matthew, all nations are to be evangelized and disciplined—the inclusion of the Gentiles is quite clear in this context. And a key part of this process is their baptism into the one name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Matthew does not develop here what it means to be baptized into the three persons. Yet it is clear that disciples of Christ—Jew and Gentile alike—are to live their lives 'within' the Trinity in some sense. Becoming a Christian is marked by inclusion through baptism into the Father, Son, and Spirit.

In Paul, Acts, and 1 Peter new features of Christian baptism are displayed, tied more directly to the work of the Son and the Spirit. For Paul, to be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27) means that we are spiritually joined to Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). We pass through the process of dying and rising spiritually with Christ in order 'to walk in newness of life'. For its part, Acts testifies with special emphasis to the gift of the Spirit given in baptism (Acts 1:5; 2:38). Christ is the one who baptizes, not with water only, but with the Holy Spirit—this is the distinctive mark of Christian baptism. Paul too speaks of being baptized 'in one Spirit' and 'made to drink of one Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:13). Peter explicitly ties baptism to our salvation: 'And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 3:21).

What these witnesses make clear is that Christian baptism—joined with repentance, faith, and confession—into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit is not merely a cultic formula and rite but a genuine transformation through living contact with God himself. Christians experience 'salvation' through the saving work of the Father, Son, and Spirit, dying and rising with Christ and receiving the dynamic presence of the Spirit within.

The Witness of Paul

It is clear that for Paul (and here I am including all the Pauline letters) the Christian life can be understood only in terms of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Sometimes he accents the work of just one person (Father, Son, or Spirit), at other times he includes all three. But he is never far from presenting salvation and the Christian life as a participation in God (Father, Son, and Spirit). The doxology that closes 2 Corinthians demonstrates the distinct yet united activity of the three persons in the Christian community: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of

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you' (2 Cor. 13:14). A brief line from Ephesians shows that access to God has a distinctively Trinitarian shape: 'For through him [Christ] both of us [Jew and Gentile] have access in one Spirit to the Father' (Eph. 2:18). This highly compressed sentence shows the distinctive yet united work of the three persons. It is through the work of Christ, (p. 446) redeeming and uniting both Jew and Gentile in his one body, and in the Spirit who sanctifies and empowers us, that we now have access to the presence of God the Father.

Turning to Paul's treatment of the Holy Spirit, it is plain that Christian salvation includes the effective indwelling of the Spirit in the believer. Paul makes use of the term 'pour out'—commonly found to express the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:17–18, 33; 10:45; 22:20; Titus 3:5–6)—to state how the love of God has been imparted to us through the personal gift of the Spirit: 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us' (Rom. 5:5). The giver is given along with the gift. The bodily location of this indwelling is underlined in 1 Corinthians when Paul argues for the importance of holiness and purity in Christian practice:

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ... For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.... Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19)

Paul's statement of mutual indwelling is quite striking. It is the Spirit who comes to dwell 'in us', but at the same time we also come to live 'in the Spirit': 'But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you' (Rom. 8:9; see also Eph. 2:22). For Paul, the life and activity of the Christian community is so clearly located 'in the Spirit' that he can warn the Thessalonians not to 'quench the Spirit' (1 Thess. 5:19), and can exhort the Ephesians not to 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God' through destructive patterns of speech (Eph. 4:30). Since the Spirit of God lives in them (and they live 'in the Spirit'), offences against one another 'grieve' the Spirit of God and diminish the Spirit's governing influence among them.

It is equally clear that, for Paul, the Christian life (and its final end) is defined in terms of the person of Christ, the Son. The Father's purpose in creating and redeeming the human race was so that we might be conformed to the Son himself: 'For those whom he [the Father] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29, RSV). The Son is not just the one who 'saves' us from our enemies or who is the model that we follow—he is also the 'image' to which we are to be conformed. In a similar vein Paul writes to the Corinthians that they 'are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another' (2 Cor. 3:18). What Paul means by this becomes clearer in his personal statement of adherence to Christ when addressing the Galatians: 'It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me' (Gal. 2:20).

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Once again we encounter here the language of mutual indwelling, this time in reference to the person of the Son. Paul can claim that Christ lives 'in him', but also that we—on the far side of baptism—should consider ourselves 'dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 6:11), and that 'there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:1). He goes so far as to say that 'if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5:17, RSV). From these texts we can see that, for Paul, indwelling grounds ethics. It is because Christ (p. 447) has come to live in us (and we in Christ)—and because the Spirit has come to dwell in us (and we in the Spirit)—that we are called and enabled to live a peaceful, holy life.

It is not only ethics that are grounded by the indwelling of God, but also mission. Paul consistently speaks of his ministry in terms of the power of the Spirit (Rom. 15:8-9; 1 Cor. 2:4) and a sharing in the sufferings of Christ. In a text admittedly difficult to untangle, Paul presents his apostolic ministry as a kind of participation in the suffering and dying and rising of Christ:

[we are] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. (2 Cor. 4:10-12)

It would not be too bold to see in this an application by Paul of baptism into Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4), now applied to the work of ministry.

In two final texts under consideration, Paul brings all three persons into view together and displays their distinct yet united work. Recounting to the Christians in Rome the new life in the Spirit that Christians have attained, he writes:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom. 8:14-17)

The Spirit now living within us is a spirit of 'sonship' (adoption)—it witnesses within us that we have now become the sons and daughters of the Father. But this is not without reference to Christ, the true Son. We are 'joint heirs' with him and share in his sonship—and are called to conform ourselves to his suffering. The climax of this work of the Spirit is the cry (and prayer) produced within us, 'Abba, Father'. For Paul, the hope in which 'we were saved' (Rom. 8:24) includes at its centre our adoption through the Spirit as the children of the Father, as joint heirs with Christ the Son, enabling us to call upon the Father freely in respectful yet intimate terms, destined for conformity to Christ and the full redemption of our bodies in the resurrection (Rom. 8:22-4).

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In Ephesians 3, the doxology that closes the chapter offers prayer directly to the Father, asking that the Spirit may strengthen our 'inner being' with power, and that Christ may dwell in our hearts, yielding a knowledge of the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ... and [that you may] know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:14-17a, 19)

(p. 448) In this prayer, the three persons are both the means and the end. It is the Father working through the Spirit that produces the full 'dwelling' of Christ in us. And the goal: to be 'filled with the fullness of God'. Here in short is the Christian doctrine of deification. What Paul's prayer makes plain is that this call to be filled with God himself possesses a clear Trinitarian shape.

The Witness of John

For John's account of 'Christian life as an existence in the Trinity', we will look primarily at selections from the Final Discourse (Jn 14-17), and then examine a few key texts from the First Letter of John. Given that the selections directly pertaining to the Trinity are interwoven into the whole fabric of the Final Discourse, I will attempt to explain them with an eye to their wider context (though without being able to do full justice either to the selections themselves or the wider context).

Philip's question to Jesus, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied' (Jn 14:8), provides the opening for Jesus' description of his relationship to the Father:

Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father?" Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves'. (Jn 14:9-11)

The central truth present here is the mutual indwelling of Jesus and the Father. Each is 'in' the other in such a way that when we 'see' Jesus we are also seeing the Father. Plainly for John to 'see' Jesus is not just a matter of natural human vision—it is to see him with eyes of faith, and to recognize him as the very Word and Son of God made flesh. But we should note the place of 'works' in this recognition. Jesus seems to be saying to Philip that Jesus' own testimony to this mutual indwelling should suffice, but he recognizes that it may not be enough to convince Philip and the others. The works Jesus does provide the added testimony that should bring conviction. The result of the Father dwelling in Jesus is that he will do divine works that testify to their mutual interrelationship and indwelling.

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This will be significant for human participation in the Trinity as well—it is through the works we do and the fruit we bear that we demonstrate our ‘existence in the Trinity’.

As the Discourse proceeds, Jesus astonishingly expands his statement on mutual indwelling to include the disciples themselves: ‘On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him’ (Jn 14:20, 23). The natural implication of this chain of relationships—‘I am in the Father, you in me, I in you’—is that the disciples are also ‘in’ the Father as a consequence of being ‘in’ the Son. The corollary of this is then made explicit in v. 23, where Jesus says that by virtue of the (p. 449) disciple loving him and keeping his word, both the Father and the Son will come and make their home in that disciple. Once again, the statement on mutual indwelling is striking—but now the disciples are brought fully within this mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son.

Though the Spirit is not mentioned explicitly here, the disciples have already been told in the same discourse that the Spirit would be given to dwell within them: ‘And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you’ (Jn 14:16–17). It is this Spirit who, through this abiding presence, ‘will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you’ (Jn 14:26). It is not unreasonable to conclude that it is precisely through this gift of the abiding Spirit that the Father and Son will come to make their home in the disciples. Though not stated explicitly here, confirmation that the indwelling Spirit is directly related to the indwelling of the Father and Son comes from 1 John: ‘And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us’ (1 Jn 3:24); ‘By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit’ (1 Jn 4:13).

What John 14 yields is a remarkable picture of the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Spirit with the disciples of Christ. In answer to the question, ‘show us the Father’, Jesus unveils a revelation, not just of ‘seeing’ the Father, but of a vital and mutual indwelling relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. All this comes in a context concerned with loving the Son, with keeping the commandments, and with doing the works of the Father. It is not just sheer relationship that is announced here, but a new way of living human life (commandments and works) marked by the three persons dwelling in the disciples (and the disciples in them).

What does John 15 add to this picture? First, that abiding in Christ (the branches in the vine) is intended for a fruitfulness pleasing to the Father (Jn 15:2–8). The image of Christ as the vine is rich with Old Testament echoes. In short, John is showing Jesus here to be the true vine, the true Israel, in whom all the promises to Abraham are fulfilled (see Isaiah 5). The abiding of the disciples in Jesus is not just for their personal delight alone—it is intended by the Father to yield a harvest for the kingdom of God manifest in the works of love (and once again 1 John confirms that the works of fraternal love are to mark the

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one who truly abides in God). Second, Jesus calls the disciples his 'friends', for he now will include them in his counsels and his work (Jn 15:15). Divine friendship marked by participation in the work and counsel of the Son himself is one important consequence of the 'abiding' that John speaks of.

In John 17 the statement of mutual indwelling reaches a kind of crescendo. The specific qualities of unity and love are now added to the earlier testimony to mutual indwelling. Jesus prays:

That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me ... I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me (p. 450) and loved them even as you loved me ... I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. (Jn 17:21, 23, 26)

The mutual indwelling and unity are ordered to witness, 'so that the world may believe'. In the unity of the disciples with the Son and with each other, the love of the Father for the Son and the disciples is made manifest—and this love is the primary witness to those outside this fellowship of mutual love, inviting them to enter it and find life.

The opening verses of 1 John reformulate the mutual indwelling by speaking of the fellowship (or communion) of the Father and Son that the disciples are called to enter: 'That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (1 Jn 1:3). Just what this fellowship (κοινωνία) implies bears further investigation, but at the very least for 1 John it includes adherence to the truth of what has been revealed about the Son and a life of mutual love in the Christian community:

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 Jn 4:14-16)

The link between salvation and mutual indwelling (or abiding) is particularly evident here. The end result of Jesus' work as the 'saviour of the world' is that 'God abides' in us, and we 'in God'. Because God is love, the end or goal of salvation is that by loving we 'abide in God' and God 'abides in us'.

3. Christian Life as an Existence in the Trinity

What does this brief survey of some of the main biblical texts enable and allow us to say about 'Christian life as an existence in the Trinity'? The most basic conclusion is that Christian salvation entails a mutual indwelling of the believer (and the believing community) and the Triune God. Christian existence begins with baptism in the name of the Fa-

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ther, Son, and Spirit—and this includes a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the indwelling Spirit. In Paul and John we find striking statements of how we are ‘in God’, ‘in Christ’, and ‘in the Spirit’, and even more remarkable, how the Father, Son, and Spirit live in us, dwell in us, and make their home in us.

These assertions of mutual indwelling, however, are not mostly concerned with states of prayer and contemplation (though these are obviously not to be excluded), but are found in contexts where the concern is rather with unity in the body, the love of the brothers and sisters, and the witness of the truth of the Gospel to the world. In other (p. 451) words, it is ‘normal’ Christian life and practice—ethics, corporate worship, and mission—that is governed and informed by the mutual indwelling of the Trinitarian persons and the disciples. This is a crucial insight for correcting the view that the biblical texts we have examined on indwelling really concern only higher states of prayer and mysticism. Rather, *everything* in the Christian life, if it is truly Christian, is characterized by the dwelling of God in us and our abiding in God. The whole of the Christian life is premised on the Father and Son making their home in us through the Spirit.

To specify further, the Christian disciple is made capable of, and called to pursue, transformation into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). *Because* God has come to dwell in us effectively, we can and must become like Christ, living and acting in imitation of him. In this case the Trinity serves less as an abstract model or principle, and much more as an interpersonal life that we actually participate in, so that we may be changed and may act in a way befitting to God himself. Jesus’ demand that ‘you must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matt. 5:48) is a counsel of despair unless there is a ‘power at work within us’ (Eph. 3:20) enabling us to live in imitation of the Father. Marked by a transformed mind (Rom. 12:1) and a love that is willing to go to death (Jn 15:13), Christian life in the Trinity also entails a share in advancing the kingdom of God through the Gospel, in all the various ways that this can occur. Living in the Trinity is not a holiday from the tasks of the kingdom, but is a commission to be co-workers in the reconciling work of the Father through the Son and in the Spirit.

There is debate over what mutual indwelling implies and entails. Just what does John mean when he says that ‘our *κοινωνία* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ (1 Jn 1:3), or what does Paul understand when he prays for the ‘*joimymía* of the Holy Spirit’ (2 Cor. 13:13)? John Webster eschews the term ‘communion’ for *joimymía* because ‘the communication [of God’s absolute life] does not mean that creatures participate in the life proper to the Holy Trinity, for then God would be not only the giver of life *to* creatures but also the receiver of life *from* creatures; and so his life would no longer be absolute’. Instead he prefers the term ‘fellowship’ to describe this reality because it communicates intimacy while still upholding the unbridgeable gap between God and creatures: ‘Fellowship indicates the mutuality of grace, not of shared being’ (Webster 2006: 150).

Robert Letham, to the contrary, believes that ‘fellowship’ is too weak a term to describe the divine indwelling witnessed to in the biblical texts:

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We are called to partake of what God is. This is more than mere fellowship. Fellowship entails intimate interaction, but no participation in the nature of the one with whom such interaction takes place. Peter's language [2 Pet. 1:4] means that this goes far beyond external relations. There is an actual participation in the divine nature. (Letham 2004: 469)

In a similar vein, Avery Dulles maintains that 'fellowship in the Trinity, then, makes the Church much more than a society of friends, in the ordinary sense of the word. It is also a participation in the communion of the divine persons' (Dulles 2006: 74).

Webster is certainly justified in his desire to rule out any sense of 'shared being' between God and the creature, such that God becomes dependent on creatures for his (p. 452) being and happiness—or that we somehow 'become God' by nature in a pantheistic sense. But do the terms 'communion' and 'participation' necessarily entail the kind of breach of the creator-creature divide that Webster is rightly wary of? It is noteworthy that the common terms for 'participation' and 'sharing' are variously employed in the New Testament itself to depict the creature's relationship to the Triune God (Keating 2004: 148–50). And the testimony of Paul and John—as we have seen—speaks in the strongest language about the real indwelling of God (Father, Son, and Spirit) in the believer (and the believer in God).

The Fathers of the Church laboured in the effort to join together these two paradoxical truths: that the persons of the Triune God genuinely come to dwell effectively in us, such that we can speak of communion, participation, and even deification, but that at the same time the creator-creature divide must be sharply maintained, and that none of this produces any change in God himself. Rather, human participation and deification through the effective indwelling of the divine persons is a fruit of the love of God who has fitted us (in creation and by means of redemption) for this very share in his own life. The classic formulation, found throughout the Christian tradition, is that we come to share in the divine life (and so are deified), not by nature, but by grace. Athanasius speaks in these terms: 'Wherefore [the Word] is very God, existing one in essence with the very Father; while other beings, to whom he said, "I said you are gods" (Ps. 82:6), had this grace from the Father, only by participation of the Word, through the Spirit' (Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* I.9; Athanasius 1994: 311). Augustine draws this conclusion with even greater contrast: 'It is evident, then, as he has called men gods, that they are deified by his grace, not born of his substance.... If we have been made sons of God, we have also been made gods: but this is the effect of grace adopting, not of nature generating' (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 49.2; Russell 2004: 331).

Christian life as an existence in the Trinity does not remove us from the sphere of being and remaining creatures. Our glorification (Rom. 8:29) is not a metaphysical promotion. Ours is a 'participation' in the divine nature, but this participation is dependent on the utter difference between Creator and creature remaining intact. We remain the human beings we are, sharing in the divine life of the Father, Son, and Spirit as creaturely sons and daughters. This leads, finally, to the conclusion that it is *human* life in this material, tem-

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poral world that is governed and empowered by the indwelling with the Father, Son, and Spirit. It is not a life apart from our human existence, or leading us to a plane of existence beyond that of our creaturely calling. It is precisely our human life, now redeemed in Christ, with all its created limitations that is to be infused with and 'lived in' by the Father and the Son through the Spirit making their home in us.

Suggested Reading

Ayres (2004); Davis et al. (2004); Emery (2006); George (2006); Grentz (2004).

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Daniel A. Keating

Daniel A. Keating is Associate Professor of Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, and the author of *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*.

The Trinity in Liturgy and Preaching

Geoffrey Wainwright

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This article considers the doctrine of the Trinity in relation to liturgy and preaching. It discusses Basil the Great's Trinitarian doxology and shows how doxologies, preaching, and hymnody developed to foster Christians' worship in accordance with the Trinitarian and mediatorial patterns found in the New Testament. It explains that Basil's work helped to solidify the full Trinitarianism that would receive conciliar statement in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 and suggests that the most significant liturgical legacy of Basil's treatise was the continuance throughout corporate Christian worship of both types of address to God: the coordinate address to all three persons of the Trinity in high doxological moments and the mediatorial formulation of particular praise and prayer.

Keywords: Trinity, liturgy, preaching, Basil the Great, Trinitarian doxology, hymnody, New Testament, Christian worship, praise, prayer

DETAILED theological reflection on worship or liturgy, on the one hand, and the doctrine and reality of the Trinity, on the other, reaches back at least as far as the treatise of St Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, which was composed c.373 during perhaps the third generation of the Arian controversies. Bishop Basil was accused by Arianizers of innovation when he concluded his church's prayers with a 'co-ordinated' doxology in terms of an address to the Father 'with' (*meta*) the Son 'together with' (*sun*) the Holy Spirit. Part of his reply consisted in citing examples from his predecessors of similar usage but also, and more importantly for our purposes, in demonstrating the propriety of addressing worship to the second and third persons on account of their divine status as proven by delicate exegesis from Scripture. Basil also needed to show that the more usual practice of concluding praise and prayer to the Father 'through' (*dia*) Christ 'in' (*en*) the Spirit did not entail any subordination of the latter two. Basil's work, together with that of the two Cappadocian Gregories, helped to solidify the full Trinitarianism that would receive conciliar statement in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. The most significant 'liturgical' legacy of Basil's treatise was the continuance throughout corporate Christian worship of *both* types of address to God: the co-ordinate address to all three persons of the Trinity in

high doxological moments, and the 'mediatorial' formulation of particular praise and prayer. Basil's underlying 'systematic' achievement was to justify the two types by making the one appropriate to God 'contemplated in himself', where the three persons are 'co-inherent', and the other appropriate to that same God when considered in his 'economy' where the three persons 'co-operate' for the sake of the creatures: all good gifts originate with the Father and reach us through the Son in the Spirit; correspondingly, thanks and petition arise in the Spirit and are transported by the Son to the Father as the ultimate source and goal of salvation.¹

(p. 458) **The Lesser and the Greater Doxologies**

We already find in Basil testimony to a strictly conjunctive form of doxology. Anecdotally, he recounts having heard from 'a certain Mesopotamian, a man experienced both in language and accurate knowledge', that in the formulation of doxology 'the grammatical rules of their language force them to use their equivalent of the conjunction "and" '— which is matched by other Syrian evidence. Basil continues: 'What about the entire West, almost from Illyrium to the boundaries of the empire? Does it not prefer this word?' (*On the Holy Spirit*, 74). It may indeed be from Syria that the Greek and Latin churches acquired what became known as 'the lesser gloria' ('lesser' only on account of its brevity), familiar in English as 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'²

The lesser gloria (*'Doxa to patri ...'*; *'Gloria patri ...'*) is characteristically used in worship to conclude the recitation of the Psalms. The practice is found not only in the offices of the 'liturgical' churches but also in churches of the Reformed tradition. To match the 'metrical psalms', typically Trinitarian doxologies were composed according to the rhythms of the vernacular poetic versions of the biblical texts. Perhaps the most enduring metrical doxology in English is Thomas Ken's:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The theological import of this usage is that the whole history of salvation and the entire life and destiny of the worshippers is enfolded in the reality of the Triune God. A similar effect is often achieved by the 'psalm prayers' or 'psalter collects' appended to the liturgical recitation. A fine and quite intricate example is that formulated by Dionysius the Netherlandish Carthusian in the fifteenth century for Psalm 33, reflecting as it does a traditional Trinitarian interpretation of verse 6:

O Christ, Word of the Eternal Father, by whom the heavens were made: enlighten us with the gift of thy Spirit and stablish us in good works, that we may be justified through faith in the Trinity and through working that which is pleasing to thee, and may, together with the people thou hast chosen for thine inheritance, be

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glorified for ever; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.³

(p. 459) Another example of a short Trinitarian doxology appended to a liturgical feature is the Orthodox expansion of the Lord's Prayer itself: 'For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, the Father's, the Son's, and the Holy Spirit's.'⁴ A concise Trinitarian invocation is used to begin the eucharistic service in the Orthodox churches (imitated by some others in recent liturgical revisions): 'Blessed be the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit now and for ever and unto the ages of ages.' In many churches, the solemn blessing of departing worshippers at the conclusion of the liturgy is pronounced as from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

East and West share the so-called 'greater gloria' or *Gloria in excelsis*, which serves as the climax of Byzantine matins and finds a place in the eucharistic rites of the West.⁵ Dating from the fourth century and bearing perhaps marks of Trinitarian controversies, the hymn is developed from the angelic chorus at the birth of Christ (Lk. 2:13-14). Directed principally towards the Father, the address shifts to 'the only-begotten Son', with the Holy Spirit finally being mentioned in fully Trinitarian form:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Similar manoeuvres occur in the canticle *Te Deum laudamus*, which is traditionally attributed to St Ambrose of Milan (here cited in the English form familiar from the *Book of Common Prayer*):

We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.

(p. 460) To thee all angels cry aloud,
the heavens and all the powers therein.
To thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;

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Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.
The glorious company of the apostles praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise thee.
The noble army of martyrs praise thee.
The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee,
the Father, of an infinite majesty,
thine adorable, true, and only Son,
also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father ...

Trinitarian Baptism

Admission into the worshipping company takes place by way of baptism. According to Matt. 28:16-20, the baptism of disciples from among the nations is to be administered 'in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. Against the Arianizers, Athanasius and the Cappadocians advanced the threefold profession of faith at baptism, arguing that salvation was at stake, since none but the Triune God could save.⁶ The minister's pronouncement of the threefold name constituted, in later terminology, the 'form' of the sacrament: 'N., I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (in the Latin West); 'The servant of God, N., is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (in the Greek East). Together with the 'performative act' of applying the water, it functions—in the terminology of twentieth-century linguistic philosophy—as a 'performative word'.

The performative Trinitarian word occurs again in the administration of penance, which may be seen as a renewal of baptism. At baptism, the questions put to the candidate and/or the recitation of the creed had set the scene in the history of salvation:

Do you believe in God the Father?
I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

(p. 461) He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?
I believe in the Holy Spirit,

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the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

So also in the sacrament of penance, the prologue to the absolution in the Catholic rite recalls the purpose and operation of the Triune God:

God the Father of mercies through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Provided the 'conjunctive' banner is held firmly aloft, there is no threat to the Trinity in the 'mediatorial' pattern of worship, or indeed in the highlighting of one divine person at particular points of the liturgy, so that now a patrological, now a Christological, now a pneumatological accent may be encountered.⁷

The Mediatorial Pattern of Worship as Grounded in the New Testament

The mediatorial pattern, in fact, predominates in the New Testament. It is epitomized in Eph. 2:18: 'through him [Christ] we both [Jewish and Gentile Christians] have access in one Spirit to the Father'. The passage develops into a picture of the Church as itself what might be considered a trinitarianly structured temple (Eph. 2:19-22). In the following chapter, the writer voices both a prayer of petition and an ascription of glory such as can be construed along Trinitarian lines (Eph. 3:14-21).

Most characteristically, the Letter to the Hebrews presents Christ as the great high priest: his earthly mission has been accomplished, and now he is seated at the right hand (p. 462) of the Father, from whom as Son and Word he had his origin (Heb. 1:1-14; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). There Christ 'makes intercession' for his followers, and it is 'through' Christ that we are able to 'draw near' to God (Heb. 7:25; 10:19-22; 13:15; cf. Rom. 8:34). The New Testament epistles show our worship as thus offered to God not only on account of what Christ has already done but also by his present mediation, linguistically signified by the preposition 'through' with the genitive case: '*dia tou Christou*' (Rom. 1:8; 16:27; 2 Cor. 1:20; 1 Pet. 2:5). Behind that pattern may stand a word of Jesus during his ministry: 'If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:19-20).

There are, however, places in the New Testament where Christ is mentioned as the recipient of worship, in close proximity to the Father. Particularly significant is what is proba-

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bly a pre-Pauline hymn cited in Phil. 2:5–11, at whose conclusion the application to Christ of the name or title ‘Lord’ is strikingly brought into connection with Isa. 45:18–25:

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9–11)⁸

In the book of Revelation, Christ figures as ‘the Lamb’ on the throne of heaven with God, to whom songs of praise are addressed (6:6–14; 7:9–12; 21:22; 22:1–5). In the fourth century, the worship of Christ is advanced by Athanasius and the Cappadocians as witness to his divinity, for otherwise Christians would (unthinkably!) be guilty of idolatry.⁹

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit figures most clearly as teaching, inspiring, helping or enabling prayer, as for instance in Romans 8:

When we cry ‘Abba! Father!’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.... (vv. 15–16)

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (vv. 26–7)

Or take again 1 Cor. 2:9–13, which has implications also for apostolic preaching and teaching.

Only in two possible cases in the New Testament is worship addressed to the Holy Spirit more or less by name. At Phil. 3:3, it is possible to take *hoi Pneumati Theou latreontes* as ‘who worship the Spirit of God’, since in Greek the object of the verb *latreuein* is expressed in the dative case, and that is how St Augustine interpreted the text in *De Trinitate* I.13; but the context, where the Apostle is making a contrast with ‘the flesh’, favours construing a dative of instrument: ‘those who worship by the Spirit of God’. The other passage is 1 Cor. 6:19–20: (p. 463)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

St Augustine's Latin text reads ‘*glorificate ergo Deum in corpore vestro*’, where the Latin allows ‘in your body’ to be taken as adjectival to God: glorify ‘(the) God (which is) in your body’; but the Greek—*doxasate de ton Theon en toi somati humon*—will in fact support only an adverbial sense of instrument or location: glorify God ‘with your body’ or ‘in your body’.

The most complex case of a possibly Trinitarian doxology in the New Testament occurs at the end of the eleventh chapter of the Letter to the Romans, particularly as interpreted

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along the line of the western tradition from Augustine onwards. Having earlier in the epistle established the universal solidarity of Gentiles with Jews in sin and guilt and the inclusion of both in salvation through Christ, the Apostle in chapters 9–11 again surveys their relationship in the eyes of God and in history, finally inferring that ‘God has concluded all men in unbelief, in order that he might have mercy upon all’. This resolution prompts the Apostle to an outburst of praise, which St Thomas Aquinas, for instance, interprets in Trinitarian fashion.

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgements and how unsearchable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?’ [Isa. 40:13]. ‘Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?’ [Job 41:11]. For from him and through him and in him are all things. To him be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen. (Rom. 11:33–6)

The Apostle, says Thomas, ‘exclaims his admiration of the divine excellence’ in all the mentioned respects. Particularly interesting for our subject is the commentator’s exposition of the three Pauline prepositions—‘*ex*’, ‘*per*’, and ‘*in*’—that relate ‘all things’ (except sin) to God:

All things are *from* him, i.e., God as from the first operating power. All things are *through* him, inasmuch as he makes all things through his wisdom. All things are *in* him as kept in his goodness which preserves them (*in bonitate conservante*).

Now these three things, namely, power, wisdom and goodness, are common to the three persons [of the Godhead]. Hence, the statement that ‘from him and through him and in him are all things’ can be applied to each of the three persons. Nevertheless, the power, which involves the notion of principle, is appropriated to the Father, who is the principle of the entire Godhead; wisdom to the Son, who proceeds as Word, which is nothing else than wisdom begotten; goodness is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, who proceeds as love, whose object is goodness.

Therefore, by appropriation we can say: *from him*, namely from the Father, *through him*, namely through the Son, *in him*, namely in the Holy Spirit, are all things.

Thus when Thomas moves with Paul to the ascription of worship (both ‘honour’ and ‘glory’), he envisages the sovereign and all-sufficient Triune God:

When he [the Apostle] says, *To him be honour and glory forever*, he allows God’s dignity, which consists in the two things previously mentioned. For from the fact that all (p. 464) things are from Him and through Him and in Him, honour and reverence and subjection are owed Him by every creature: ‘If I am a father, where is my honour?’ (Mal. 1:6). But from the fact that He has not received either counsel or gifts from anyone, glory is owed Him; just as on the contrary it is said of man: ‘If then you received it, why do you boast as though it were not a gift?’ (1 Cor.

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4:7). And because this is proper to God, it says in Isaiah (42:8): 'I am the Lord; my glory I give to no other.'¹⁰

'Unto the ages of ages' is interpreted by Thomas as referring either to the unpassing nature of God's glory or to God's eternity as—'though one and simple in itself'—'containing' all ages. And 'Amen' means 'May it be so'.

Glory to God in Himself

Beside the greater and the lesser glorias, the boldest textual moves made by the Christian liturgy in pushing through the mediatorial pattern to 'contemplate God as he is in himself' occur on Trinity Sunday, which in the West came into its own as a distinct feast between the tenth and the fourteenth centuries. After following the sequence of Christ's birth, baptism, earthly ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit, the traditional yearly calendar thus culminated theologically in the feast of the Holy Trinity. The story of salvation is there gathered up in the worshippers' closest access to the very mystery of God.

Now the Missal of Paul VI provides two opening prayers for choice on the Sunday after Pentecost:

Let us pray [to the one God, Father, Son and Spirit, that our lives may bear witness to our faith].

Father, you sent your Word to bring us truth, and your Spirit to make us holy. Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.

Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons, by proclaiming and living our faith in you.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Alternatively:

Let us pray [to our God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit].

God, we praise you:

Father all-powerful; Christ Lord and Saviour; Spirit of love.

(p. 465) You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share in your life and your love.

One God, three Persons,

be near to the people formed in your image,

close to the world your love brings to life.

We ask you this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

one God, true and living, for ever and ever. Amen.

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And the preface of the eucharistic prayer for the feast of the Holy Trinity accents the divine glory:

Father, all powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks.
We joyfully proclaim our faith
in the mystery of your Godhead.
You have revealed your glory
as the glory also of your Son
and of the Holy Spirit:
three Persons equal in majesty,
undivided in splendour,
yet one Lord, one God,
ever to be adored in your everlasting glory.
And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven
we proclaim your glory
and join in their unending hymn of praise:
Holy, holy, holy ...

Traditionally, Trinity Sunday was a standard occasion for reciting in the office the so-called Athanasian Creed, the *Quicumque vult* of the Book of Common Prayer.

In the Eastern Orthodox traditions, the 'contemplation' of God comes to visual exercise in the icons of the Trinity, where the three heavenly visitors to Abraham and Sarah are 're-worked' into a 'representation' of the Trinity. The most celebrated example of such an 'insight into God' is the icon by Andrei Rublev, where 'inverse perspective' draws the contemplative viewer into a scene that lacks for nothing in significant postures, gestures, colours, and compositional 'rhythm' as a 'window' into the interrelated Trinity.¹¹

Prosopological Accentuation

As already hinted: within the general Trinitarian pattern, the accent may fall now on one person of the Trinity, now on another, now on a third, as the moments of the liturgy unfold.

(p. 466) Corresponding to 'the Word made flesh', it is appropriate that a Christological emphasis mark both the reading of the Scriptures and holy communion. It is in the reading from the Gospels that the churches have most acutely sensed the presence of Christ. Byzantine commentators take the 'Little Entry' of the priest with the gospel-book to represent the entrance of Christ upon the world at his incarnation. Lights, incense, and kisses are the Gospel's ceremonial accompaniment. The reading of the Gospel is traditionally preceded in many rites by the singing of Alleluia. At the announcement of the Gospel, the characteristically terse acclamation of the Roman people is 'Gloria tibi, Domine'; and at its conclusion, 'Laus tibi, Christe'. The West Syrian greeting is the same as recurs in the eucharistic anaphora: 'Blessed is he who came and is to come', with the addition 'Praise be to him who sent him for our salvation'.¹² Coming to the moment of communion, the

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Byzantine rite hails the sacramental Christ in the *'Ta hagia tois hagiois'*: 'One is Holy. One is the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.' In the Roman rite, Christ is addressed as the 'Agnus Dei'.

If, given the unique location of Jesus in salvation history, the Christological accent may be considered, in liturgical terms, as 'anamnetic', the pneumatological accent is appropriately 'epicletic': the Holy Spirit is 'called upon' to enable faith and prayer. Coming after the proclamation of the Gospel, the creedal confession—itsself Trinitarian in structure—is a rehearsal of the faith that was first professed at baptism; and 'the prayers of the faithful' seek for progress in the Christian life by those who already believe, and the extension of God's saving purpose among all.

The great eucharistic prayer or 'anaphora' is offered up principally to the Father, as the classical 'prefaces' make clear. The patrological accent corresponds to the sacrifice whereby Christ 'through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God' (Heb. 9:14). As the prayer continues, commemoration is made of all Christ's work, and the Holy Spirit is invoked to bring the fruits of that work to bear. In one way or another, the closing doxology brings co-ordinate praise to the Trinity, such as was presaged already in the Sanctus, where the thrice-holy of Isa. 6:3 and Rev. 4:8 resounds with Trinitarian intent.

Trinitarian Preaching

The second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, restated what had always been in principle true: the homily is 'part of the liturgy itself' (*pars ipsius liturgiae*).¹³ Historically, Protestant churches have sometimes confronted the opposite 'problem' to what was there being corrected among Catholics: how to find a liturgy into which the all-important sermon could be fitted.¹⁴

In his modern classic, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, C. H. Dodd reconstructed from the summary speeches in Acts and from stereotyped passages in the New Testament epistles a 'kerygma' that was clearly proto-Trinitarian in content and shape:

God's prophecies of old are fulfilled, and the new age is inaugurated by the coming of Christ.

He was born of the seed of David.

He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the present evil age.

He was buried.

He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.

He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and Lord of quick and dead.

He will come again as Judge and Saviour of men.

Moreover, 'the *kerygma* always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of "salvation," that is, of "the life of the age to come," to those who [by baptism] enter the elect community' (Acts 2:38-9; 3:19, 25-6).¹⁵

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The 'developments' can be found, as the second century progressed, in the 'rule of faith' or 'canon of truth' to which Irenaeus and Tertullian bore witness.¹⁶

Matching the Trinitarian content of the Christian message, the act, event, and result of preaching may appropriately be considered in Trinitarian terms, and the liturgical dimension is not far to seek.¹⁷

Given the perennial need for the proclamation of the Gospel both within and beyond the Christian community, we may take our hints from St Paul's Letter to the Romans. Immediately after the opening salutation, the Apostle speaks of such preaching in liturgical terms:

I thank (*eucharistô*) my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son (*hô latreuô en tôi pneumati mou en tôi euangeliô tou huiou autou*), that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers (*pantote epi tôn proseuchôn mou*).... I am eager to preach the gospel (*euangelisasthai*) to you also who are in Rome. (Rom. 1:8-15)

(p. 468) And then in chapter 15, he speaks of 'the grace given me by God to be a minister (*leitourgos*) of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God (*hierourgountos to euangelion tou theou*), so that the offering (*prosphora*) of the Gentiles may be acceptable (*euprosdektos*), sanctified (*hêgiasmenê*) by the Holy Spirit': 'I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit ... I know that when I come to you I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ' (vv. 15-29).¹⁸ There we find preaching paradigmatically displayed as the 'anamnesis' of Christ, under the 'epiclesis' of the Holy Spirit, an 'anaphora' to the Father in its own expression and in the fruit that it bears among those who respond in faith; and so it has properly remained in the practice of the Church.

The fact that the already evangelized needed exhortation to live by the Gospel comes to light in the intervening chapters, and the goal is again set in Trinitarian and liturgical terms. In Rom. 15:5-6, the Apostle prays thus for the Roman congregation:

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to be of one mind among yourselves, according to the will of Christ Jesus, that you may with one heart and one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, steadfastness (*hupomonê*) is often mentioned in a pneumatic context, almost as though it were a gift of the Spirit (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:23-7; 2 Cor. 6:1-10; 12:12; 1 Thess. 1:2-7); and encouragement (*paraklêsis*; cf. 1 Cor. 14:3, 31; Phil. 2:1) suggests the Paraclete (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7); so that the Holy Spirit may appropriately be considered the divine source to which Paul looks in asking on behalf of the Romans that, as obedient followers of Christ, they be of one mind (*to auto phronein*), one heart or will (*homothu-*

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madon), and one mouth or voice (*en heni stomati*), in their glorification of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hymnody

It has recently been argued that the generally weak Trinitarianism of much modern English Protestant theology was due to a shift in the use of the 'rule of faith' from 'invocation' to 'assent'.¹⁹ Rather than being the 'name' of the divine reality encountered in the economy of salvation, 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit' became a 'doctrine' needing (p. 469) speculative proof in regard to the inner constitution of the Godhead and thereby forfeited practical interest, betokened in the legacy of John Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695). The contrasts should not be overplayed that Jason Vickers draws between early Christian and post-Reformational usage, or between liturgical invocation and intellectual assent, or indeed between the 'economic' and the 'immanent' Trinity. On the positive side, Vickers pays appropriate tribute to the hymnody of Charles Wesley as a vehicle of preserving the Trinitarian experience in the believing and worshipping community. That Wesley was well aware of the dogmatic issues at stake is clear from the fact that he structured his 1767 collection *Hymns on the Trinity* according to the treatise of William Jones of Nayland, *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, proved by above an hundred short and clear arguments, expressed in terms of the Holy Scripture* (1756), which was written precisely to combat resurgent Arianism and emergent Unitarianism. The four main sections in the arrangement of 136 Wesleyan hymn-texts are headed 'The Divinity of Christ', 'The Divinity of the Holy Ghost', 'The Plurality and Trinity of Persons', 'The Trinity in Unity'.²⁰

A single example of a Trinitarian hymn by Charles Wesley must suffice: included in the definitive *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists* of 1780, this hymn kept its place—admittedly abbreviated as here—in successive British Methodist hymnals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

Father of everlasting grace,
Thy goodness and thy truth we praise,
The goodness and thy truth we prove;
Thou hast, in honour of thy Son,
The gift unspeakable sent down,
The Spirit of life, and power, and love.

Send us the Spirit of thy Son,
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine.
Send him the sprinkled blood to apply,
Send him our souls to sanctify,
And show and seal us ever thine.

So shall we pray, and never cease,
So shall we thankfully confess
Thy wisdom, truth, and power, and love;

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With joy unspeakable adore,
And bless and praise thee evermore,
And serve thee as thy hosts above:

(p. 470) Till, added to that heavenly choir,
We raise our songs of triumph higher,
And praise thee in a bolder strain,
Out-soar the first-born seraph's flight,
And sing, with all our friends in light,
Thy everlasting love to man.²¹

That Wesleyan hymn seems to match what the Benedictine theologian and liturgist Cipriano Vagaggini calls a 'way of communion between God and humankind' that can be described in the following circulatory fashion:

Every good gift comes to us from the Father, through the medium of Jesus Christ his incarnate Son, in the presence of the Holy Spirit; and likewise, it is in the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the medium of Jesus Christ the incarnate Son, that everything must return to the Father and be reunited to its end, the most blessed Trinity. This is the Christological-Trinitarian activity of the sacred history of salvation, the plan of God in the world. The whole structure of the liturgy presupposes this activity, without which the liturgy would be incomprehensible.²²

Not to mention the treatise of St Basil, with which this chapter began ...²³

Suggested Reading

Ayo (2007); Bobrinsky (1999); Highfield (2008).

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Notes:

- (1) St Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980). See especially chs. 1 (3), 7 (16), 10 (24-6), 25 (58-60), 26 (63-4), 27 (68).
- (2) Theodore of Mopsuestia testifies that Diodore and Flavian introduced a translation of the Syriac formula 'Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' into the Greek psalmody of Antioch about the year 350 (recorded in Nicetas, *Thesaurus* V.30, found in PG 139: 1390). John Cassian mentions the same psalmodic practice of the *Gloria Patri* also for the Latin West (*De institutis coenobiorum* II.8; found in PL 49: 94-5); and the *Rule of St Benedict* gives precise instructions, chs. 8-19.
- (3) See Geoffrey Wainwright, 'Psalm 33 Interpreted of the Triune God', *Ex Auditu*, 16 (2000): 101-20; repeated in idem, *Embracing Purpose: Essays on God, the World and the Church* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2007), ch. 6.
- (4) See Geoffrey Wainwright, 'Whose is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory? The Lord's Prayer as an Act of Trinitarian Worship', *Ecclesia Orans*, 23 (2006): 221-48; repeated in idem, *Embracing Purpose*, ch. 7.
- (5) On the formulations and placements of the *Gloria in excelsis*, see J. A. Jungmann, *The MA of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, vol. 1, trans. F. A. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1951), 346-59.
- (6) Athanasius, *First Letter to Serapion*, 29-30 (PG 26: 596-600); Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 24-6; Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermon on the Baptism of Christ* (PG 46: 577-600); cf. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homily XIV*.14-21; Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* V.28.
- (7) For systematic argument in favour of the liturgy as the place where the persons of the Trinity are 'identified' and 'the triune God' is epistemically encountered as 'the centre of Christian belief', see Bruce D. Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17-49.
- (8) Jesus is confessed or invoked as Lord in many and varied contexts (for instance, Jn 20:28; Acts 7:59-60; Rom. 10:8-13; 1 Cor. 12:3). See Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
- (9) Athanasius, *Letter to Adelphius*, 3-4 (PG 26: 1074-7); Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration 40, On Holy Baptism*, 41-2 (PG 36: 417-20).
- (10) Thomas Aquinas, in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis super Epistolas Sancti Pauli lectura*, ed. Raffaele Cai, O.P., 8th edn. (Turin: Marietti, 1953), vol. 1, 1-230, here paragraphs 933-52. Commenting on Rom. 1:9 ('I thank my God through Jesus Christ'), Thomas declares that 'thanks should be returned to God in the same order in which graces come to us, namely, through Jesus Christ' (citing Rom. 5:2 for the 'from God' direction). Commenting on Rom. 8:34, Thomas states the twofold manner of Christ's heavenly intercession: he 'prays for

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us' (citing Jn 17:20, 24); and he 'presents to his Father's gaze the human nature he assumed for us and the mysteries celebrated in it' (citing Heb. 9:24).

(11) For a thematic history of the scene from Genesis 18, see Gabriel Bunge, *The Rublev Trinity: The Icon of the Trinity by the Monk-Painter Andrei Rublev*, trans. Andrew Louth (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007).

(12) For examples from a wide geographical range of liturgical traditions, see I. H. Dalmais, 'Rites et prières accompagnant les lectures dans la liturgie eucharistique', in Bernard Botte *et alii*, *La Parole dans la Liturgie* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 107-19. Even sedentary Protestants have taken to standing while the Gospel is read.

(13) Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* no. 52; *cf.* no. 35 (2). Already in mid second-century Rome, Justin Martyr knew a regular Sunday service of both 'word' (scriptures, sermon, prayers) and 'table' (a eucharist of 'praise and glory to the Father of all in the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'); see his *First Apology*, 65-7.

(14) See, for instance, the work of the Dutch Reformed liturgical pioneer Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), *Onze Eeredienst* (1911), where an English translation was not considered redundant a century later: *Our Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

(15) Charles Harold Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936), quoted here from the reset edition of 1944 (London: Hodder & Stoughton), ch. 1, 17, 23.

(16) See, for instance, Paul M. Blowers, 'The *regula fidei* and the Narrative Character of Early Christian Faith', *Pro Ecclesia*, 6 (1997): 199-228.

(17) With a grounding in St John Chrysostom, the great preacher of Antioch and Constantinople, see my articles 'Preaching as Worship' and 'The Sermon and the Liturgy', in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 28 (1983): 325-36 and 337-49 respectively.

(18) Commenting on this passage, St John Chrysostom places these words in the Apostle's mouth: 'My priesthood consists in preaching and proclaiming; this is the sacrifice I offer' (Homily 29.1 on the Letter to the Romans; PG 60: 655). See also Heinrich Schlier, 'Die "Liturgie des apostolischen Evangeliums" (Römer 15, 14-21)', in idem, *Das Ende der Zeit: Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge*, vol. 3 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1971), 169-83.

(19) Jason E. Vickers, *Invocation and Assent: The Making and Remaking of Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

(20) The texts may be found in *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, ed. George Osborn (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference Office), vol. 7 (1870), 201-348. To the main collection Wesley appended 52 other texts as 'Hymns and Prayers to the Trinity', and he had already published in 1746 a collection entitled *Gloria Patri, &c., or Hymns to the Trinity*, found in *The Poetical Works*, vol. 3 (1869), 343-54.

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(21) This hymn was first published in Wesley's *Hymns of Petition for the Promise of the Father* (1746), also known as *Hymns for Whit-Sunday*. Full text in *The Poetical Works*, vol. 4 (1869), 163–204, in particular 165–6.

(22) Cipriano Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*, trans. L. J. Doyle and W. A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976), ch. 7, 191–246; here summarized on 191–2.

(23) For ample reference to the technical literature on the liturgical side I may perhaps be allowed to point to my chapter 'Christian Worship: Scriptural Basis and Theological Frame', in Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (eds.) *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1–31.

Geoffrey Wainwright

Geoffrey Wainwright is Robert Earl Cushman Professor Emeritus of Christian Theology at Duke Divinity School, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA.

The Trinity in Christian Visual Arts

François Bœspflug

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the depiction of the Trinity in Christian visual arts. It describes the five distinct periods in Trinitarian iconography and provides a catalog of a vast array of artistic representations whose peak occurs in the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. It suggests that the images of the Trinity in the Christian visual arts are begotten by the expressive dynamic of the life of faith, or, more precisely, by the free and creative encounter of the needs of the prayerful and meditative heart, on the one hand, and the exigencies of the mind which is faithful to Scripture, the liturgy, and doctrine, on the other.

Keywords: Trinity, Christian visual arts, Trinitarian iconography, life of faith, Scripture, liturgy

(Translated from the French by Francesca A. Murphy)

THE images of the Trinity in the Christian visual arts are begotten by the expressive dynamic of the life of faith, or, more precisely, by the free and creative encounter of the needs of the prayerful and meditative heart, on the one hand, and the exigencies of the mind which is faithful to Scripture, the liturgy, and doctrine, on the other. These images make up a rich and varied ensemble, where the best mingles with the not so good, both from a spiritual and an aesthetic perspective, but where often abound an instructive and moving confidence and hope in God. These images can draw their compositional schemes or motifs from Babylonian, Egyptian, Hellenistic, Jewish, or Celtic art, but their subject and essential inspiration come from the Old Testament passages which the Church Fathers interpreted as prefigurations of the mystery of the Triunity of God and from the New Testament theophanies, from the normative formulations of the ecumenical councils and the treatises of the Fathers and later theologians, and from the liturgy, the Creed, prayer, devotion, and mysticism. Their creation and diffusion in the West, beginning with the ninth century and even more the twelfth century (Bœspflug and Zaluska 1994), was encouraged by the appearance of the votive Mass and later the Feast of the Trinity (Cabrol 1931; Klaus, dissertation, 1938; Browe 1950; Close 2000 and 2002), with the steady increase in chapels, churches, and monasteries dedicated to the Trinity (of which there were 287 in England: Bound 1914) and also with the explosive phenomenon of vi-

sions of the Trinity in the West beginning around 1100 (Bøespflug 1993; 1997b; 1998a and 1998b; 2002a and 2002b; Close 2009). But in order properly to understand this iconographic usage, we have to bear in mind what Trinitarian faith means, in relation to the image, to its context, and to its own inner logic.

(p. 473) **Faith in the Trinity and its Iconic Consequences**

Christians believe in the eternal existence of a single God. Jews and Muslims do the same, and hold, like Christians, that God is a perfect, absolutely spiritual, and radically transcendent being. They affirm together that God's transcendence makes it impossible for him to have any resembling representation: the Eternal, as such, has neither appearance nor outline, and offers no foothold for any kind of imitation or *mimesis*. The most one can make of him are symbols and indirect signs (like a hand coming from the sky), which have no mimetic pretensions, but which conventionally designate his word, action, and presence. Such is the doctrine of God common to the three Abrahamic monotheisms, with its consequences for the visual arts.

But faith in the Incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus, affirmed to be 'true God and true man' at the Council of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451), led Christianity to define itself as a Trinitarian monotheism and to affirm that God is One in Three. The Trinity is the mystery of a single God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, recognized as distinct within the unity of one nature, essence, or substance. This mystery cannot be encompassed by reason, for it is only known by revelation. In the Old Covenant God began by revealing himself as a centre of initiatives, a centre including a certain plurality (Griffiths 1996: ch. 11). The use of the plural ('Let us make man in our own image': Gen. 1:26) would be interpreted by Christians as a veiled revelation of the Triunity of God, whence the images of the Trinity creating humanity and creating the universe. Other episodes in the sacred history lent themselves to this interpretation, especially the hospitality of Abraham, when the patriarch saw three visitors approaching, and, when he received them, addressed them as a single interlocutor (Gen. 18). From this passage come, among others, the eastern icons of the Trinity, including the one by Rublev, and a very rich family of western narrative images.

This still veiled Triunity of God would be revealed in the New Covenant. When he was baptized in the Jordan, 'immediately, coming up from the water, he [Jesus] saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" ' (Mk 1:9-10). The story is told in a highly scenic way. Trinitarian doctrine therefore results from, among other sources, a 'vision' of which Jesus was the first recipient, a vision to which John the Baptist acceded (*cf.* Jn 1:32), then the apostles, other Christians (who participate by faith and the sacraments), and also potentially, much later, those who share in it by the mode of art, thanks to museums and books of art. Christian faith and with it the culture inspired by Christianity thus has a structural orientation toward the appropriation of a vision (Tavard 1981),

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such as that of the theophany of baptism, or again that which is displayed in the prologue of John's Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (Jn 1:1), which was pictured many times without ever achieving a single 'formulaic' mode of composition (Böespflug and Zaluska 1995 and 2004).

(p. 474) Trinitarian faith has its first attestation in the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel: 'Go, and make disciples of all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 28:19). But the dogma of the Trinity was only articulated slowly, under the duress of controversies and through a tremendous work of reflection. Tertullian's *Against Praxeas* is the first treatise on the Trinity. It would be followed, in the East, by the writings of Basil of Caesarea, notably in his *Against Eunomius* (363–4), and of Gregory of Nazianzus (around 380) in his *Theological Discourses*, and in the West by those of Novatian (c.250), Hilary of Poitiers (356–60), Faustinus (a priest of the Luciferian sect, around 380), and of Augustine of Hippo (399–419).

None of these treatises raises the question of whether the doctrine of the Trinity can be expressed in images. But Irenaeus of Lyons (c.180–5), in whom one already finds an exposition of Trinitarian faith, provided a turn of phrase which became for artists an illuminating motto: 'The Father is the invisible of the Son, and the Son is the visible of the Father' (*Haer.* IV,6,6; Irenaeus 1965: 450). This phrase did not originally have images in mind, but intended simply to say that, on the one hand, as the Son rendered visible by the Incarnation, Jesus Christ reveals the Father (who is not incarnate and therefore remains invisible), and on the other hand that the visibility of Jesus Christ does not reveal all of himself, nor of the Father. A rule appears to have been set for the domain of art, which was never formulated nor officially promulgated but which would be observed over many centuries, namely that of the Christomorphism of the representation of God: God could be painted, but only God made man, that is, as the 'Christ-God' (an iconographic term, used to designate a figure of God in the form of Christ, just as the term is 'Father-God' when God is painted with the appearance of an old man). Not to respect this rule, and to imagine, for instance, the figure of God the Father as an old man, or the Trinity as three men, each of them with a distinct appearance ('Non-Christomorphic triandric Trinities', which vary the ages of the three persons), is to suppose that the revelation of God in Christ was imperfect and needed to be completed by other figures. Now, precisely: 'the visible of the Father is the Son'. One could even add: 'the Son is the visible of the Trinity'. Erwin Panofsky has explained at some length the significance for the history of Christian art of this element of theology, which implies that, in art, every image of Christ should be seen as an image of God and indeed as an image of the Trinity (Panofsky 1938).

One can nonetheless discern that the histories of the artistic representation of Christ (the 'Christ-God'), of God the Father (the 'Father-God'), of the Holy Spirit, and of the Trinity itself are at the same time distinct and related. Christian churches, beyond all denominational differences, affirm the legitimacy of images of God made man in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Images of Christ as God, or if one prefers of the 'Christ-God', have been numerous. The divinity of Christ is not emphasized in the art of the catacombs, but begins to be so in Constantinian art, especially in the apse mosaics. This is the image of the Christ-

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God, *Pantocrator*, which will be at the centre of the iconoclastic controversy in Byzantium and which will be given a solemn legitimation at the second Council of Nicaea in 787. Henceforth, apart from a few outbreaks of iconophobia (Claudius of Turin, c.820–5), it was hardly ever questioned until the Reformation.

(p. 475) The third person of the Trinity has never had any iconic independence from the other two. The symbol under which the Spirit is manifested at Jesus' baptism, the dove, rapidly became his accredited and almost exclusive symbol. The only exceptions to this generalization are the many triandric Trinities, representing the three persons as three men, and some images of the Holy Spirit by himself, pictured as a young man, which were condemned in an eighteenth-century papal document (Bœspflug 1984).

The images of God the Father as a figure deliberately distinct from that of Christ, after some sporadic appearances in paleo-Christian art, began their career only in the twelfth century, hesitantly at first until the Renaissance, when they became legion and triumphed (for example, with Michelangelo and Raphael), to the point of precipitating the end of the rule of Christomorphism.

History of the Trinity in Art

Regarding images of the Trinity, the historical outline is more complex because the subject is more contentious. One can distinguish five great periods in the history of the theme of the Christian God (thus of God and of the Trinity), or rather four plus one.

(1) From the death of Jesus until the middle of the third century, Christianity propagated itself and spread its message without concerning itself with making images which could serve the liturgy or preaching. One can call this a phase of rigorous abstinence or of resolute aniconism. Belief in images of Christ which were miraculously painted in his lifetime, by the direct impression of his face on a cloth (the veil of Veronica, the Mandylion, the Holy Face of Edessa, the Holy Shroud), rests on ancient legends which historians cannot take up while remaining faithful to their own methods. The first Christian images are connected with funeral practices and are met especially in two kinds of art, the mural paintings of the catacombs and the reliefs of sarcophagi. Here the desire to paint Christ as God seems absent. Christ appears as a hardly individualized philosopher or wonder-worker, not as the Son of God of the Creed. The desire to produce images of the Trinity is non-existent.

(2) The iconic history of the Christian God only really begins with the Edict of Milan (313), the conversion of Constantine, and the end of persecution, when Christianity ceased to be an illegal religion and, with legality and the financial backing of the Emperor, could definitively come out from underground. The first images of Christ as God are no earlier than the fourth century of the Christian era. A good example is the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana in Rome, from around 400. The period of 'the history of God in images' which begins then is characterized by the *indirect evocation* of the Trinitarian mystery. It extends from the fourth to the eighth century. There is a striking gap between the verbal and the plastic expression of the dogma. The Trinity is

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the object of an immense labour of intellectual elucidation while at the same time, in art, it is seldom evoked and practically never represented.

(p. 476) This historical observation, which holds for the first eight centuries, requires a distinction of 'images of the Trinity' from 'Trinitarian images', a distinction which intersects with the one theologians establish between what Karl Rahner called the 'economic Trinity' and the 'immanent Trinity'. 'Images of the Trinity' take the latter as their main subject or motif. These figurations are detached or detachable from biblical illustration, whereas 'Trinitarian images' are narrative images which take a page of sacred history as their main subject and set it in its Trinitarian dimension. 'Trinitarian images' illustrate those theophanies which the Fathers of the Church had taken in a Trinitarian sense. For the Old Testament, the hospitality of Abraham is the key story. Until the fourth century, most of the Fathers, both East and West, had interpreted this episode and the other Old Covenant theophanies Christologically, as a sign of the Incarnation and a manifestation of the Word, here escorted by two angels, to prepare the human race for his Incarnation. Ambrose and Augustine were among the first to take it as a prefiguration of the mystery of the Trinity which would be revealed in the New Testament. The mosaic of Saint Maria Major in Rome, c.432-40, still hesitates between the two interpretations: the higher register, privileging one of the visitors of Abraham, offers a Christological reading of the episode, while the lower register, which stresses the equality of the Three, makes a Trinitarian reading. By contrast, this hesitation is absent from the mosaic of San Vitale in Ravenna (an 'orthodox' church built after the reconquest of the town from the Arian Goths, between 532 and 547), which establishes no hierarchy among the Three. This Old Covenant subject remains rare until the ninth century, even after the Trinitarian interpretation had won through. It later spawned a very rich artistic posterity, up to our own times.

Images taken from the New Testament were largely inspired by the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. Until the middle of the sixth century, representations of this episode were content to depict, in addition to Jesus and the Baptist, the Dove (without specifying that this was a metaphor); the voice of the Father was not rendered; it was only toward the end of the century, especially in the art of Byzantium and the Byzantine sphere of influence (a Palestinian reliquary, *Sancta sanctorum*, in Rome, at the end of the sixth or turn of the seventh century; the *Etchmiadzin Gospel*, seventh century), that images appeared in which the Trinitarian dimension of the baptismal theophany was rendered 'in full', by a Hand of God, a Dove, and Christ, in a vertical line: one can call this a Trinitarian image, but not an image of the Trinity.

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figure 1 *Triple Chrism*. Mosaic, vault of the Albenga Baptistery (Italy), around 500.

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Finally, some attempts were made to evoke the Trinity through non-figurative symbols and signs. Unique in its genre, the vault mosaic which dominates the Baptistery at Albenga (near Genoa, Italy), c.500 (Fig. 1), is decorated with a triple chrismon: the first two Greek letters of the name 'Christ' (X and P), 'triplicated' and superimposed, are each flanked with the letters A and Ω and surrounded by three concentric mandorlas; the symbol thus constructed is clearly Trinitarian, but one could not precisely call it an image of the Trinity. The use of the triangle as a symbol was blocked by the disapproval of Augustine, who saw in it a Manichean symbol—the triangle disappears from art and only re-emerges at the beginning of the eleventh century (Uta Codex). It is only at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in particular in the art of engraving, that one (p. 477) commonly finds the triangle of Trinitarian relations, where the sides and the spokes, moving from the three summits (named 'Pater', 'Filius', 'Spiritus') toward the centre ('Deus'), are bearers of inscriptions (*Pater est Deus, non est Filius; Filius est Deus, non est Pater*, etc.). In Baroque art, finally, the triangle becomes the main symbol of the Trinity, and it remains a key image today.

In sum, during the five centuries of Christian art from the third to the eighth century, images of the Christ-God became ever more numerous, while the first attempts at representing the Trinity (some reliefs on sarcophagi depicting the creation of Adam and Eve and some miniatures) are rare and indirect. During the Patristic era, there is a striking contrast between putting the mystery of God into words and putting it into visual forms: the first received tremendous effort, whereas the second was scarcely attempted. This was not because of the difficulty of the subject, but out of deliberate abstention. The artists of the first centuries of the Christian era were not seeking to depict the Trinity. They were dissuaded from doing so by theology. The second Council of Nicaea, which put an end to the iconoclastic controversy by defending icons, names icons of Christ, the Holy Mother, angels, and saints, but says nothing about icons of God or of the Trinity. This

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(p. 478) was not an oversight: the Fathers of the Council did not admit that one could think of doing it (Boespflug 1998c). For them, God as such, and *a fortiori* his Triunity, remained unrepresentable. The only conceivable and legitimate icon of God is God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Artists had long respected this gold standard regarding the Christian representation of God. A good example of the kind of icon of Christ of which the Council approved is the *Pantocrator* of Saint Catherine of Sinai (Belting 1998: 179–81).

(3) An exploratory period begins in the ninth century. Especially in Carolingian manuscripts, and then in Anglo-Saxon ones (Raw 1997), various efforts to depict the intra-Trinitarian relations and the ‘divine missions’ appear, most notably in the *Utrecht Psalter* and the copies made of it. One of these contains the *Winchester Quinity* (Boespflug 2008: 168), a profound but uncategorizable image without later influence, showing the Father and the Son meeting in the presence of a crowned woman, Mary or the personified Church, holding Jesus and crowned by a haloed Dove. This period comes to completion in beauty in the twelfth century, a key moment in the history of the Trinity in western art. It is then that the five main families of images of the Trinity came to birth.

First, the ‘Throne of grace’ shows God the Father most often sitting, but sometimes standing, and holding before him the Crucified one on the cross, with the Dove occupying a variable position. The miniature in the Cambrai Missal, c.1120 (Fig. 2), is one of the first ‘images of the Trinity’ in the sense defined above: the Trinity is its main subject. The artist, probably a monk, has made it so that the wings of the Dove in horizontal flight join the respective mouths of the Father and the Son, in order to visualize the *Filioque*, the Latin conception of the procession of the third person *ab utroque*. This iconographic type characterizes western art; it is unknown in eastern Christian art. It appears right away in many art forms (frescoes, miniatures, stained glass, liturgical paraphernalia); it is the only type of Trinity that will generate, from the end of the thirteenth century, a group of sculptures in the round (Rouen Cathedral, c.1280; Fritzlar Cathedral, c.1320) of which hundreds of exemplars are still extant in France and across Europe—it is even found in very modest churches, for instance in Brittany (Pearman, dissertation, 1974; Boespflug 2000 and 2009c).

The second family produced in the twelfth century is the ‘Psalter Trinity’, already sketched in the *Utrecht Psalter* and in some frescoes. It shows the Father and the Son seated on the same throne (*synthronoi*, in Greek), with the Spirit as a Dove between them. The formula gets its name from the beginning of Psalm 109 (‘The Lord has said to my lord: “Sit at my right hand while I make your enemies your footstool” ’), the most frequently cited verse—twenty times—in the New Testament (Gourgues 1978). This type will remain for a long time tied to a single artistic genre, the manuscript illustration which gave birth to it. One also finds it in eastern art, but less often than in the West. It will achieve ascendancy during the Renaissance, and finally prevail over the ‘Throne of grace’ in the epoch of Baroque.



figure 2 *Throne of grace*. Miniature, c.1120, Missal of Cambrai, ms. 234, f° 2, Cambrai (France), Médiathèque municipale.

Image taken by CNRS-IRHT.

Thirdly, the ‘Paternity’ is inspired by the prologue of John's Gospel: ‘No one has ever seen God; but the only Son, *who is in the bosom of the Father*, has revealed him’ (Jn 1:18). It shows the Father sitting with the only Son in his ‘bosom’, before his chest or on his (p. 479) knees, a little like the Virgin with Child. The ancestor of this depiction is in a manuscript dated ‘c.1020’ (London, British Library, ms. Harley 603) (Bøespflug 2009a), where the Father holds the Son tightly to his breast, cheek by jowl, like some icons of the Virgin holding the Infant Jesus. The Paternity is attested from the end of the eleventh century in the East (miniature, Vienna, ms. Suppl. Gr. 52, twelfth century, (Bøespflug 2008: 142); icon of Novgorod) and in the West (Ostrov Psalter). This iconographic type will survive until the beginning of the fifteenth century (miniature, *Heures de Rohan*). But it then disappears, though not as a result of any ecclesiastical condemnation.

Fourthly, the ‘Triandric Trinity’ shows the three persons in human form, side by side, sitting or standing. At the beginning, they are identical, like triplets (the creative Trinity, a miniature in the *Hortus deliciarum*, end of the twelfth century; Vallepietra fresco) (D’Achille 1991; Silvestri 2008). Later on, there will be a tendency to free this type from the hieratic ‘face-forward’, and so to allow the Persons to engage with each other and to form a more clearly unified group, often concelebrating at the altar in a supple and familiar way, which will lead also to the differentiating of their attributes and/or their ages (p. 480) (group sculpted in wood, Troyes). The trajectory of these triandric Trinities continues up to the twentieth century.



figure 3 Abraham giving bread and wine to the three angels. Cambridge, St John's College, ms. k 26, f° 9 v°.

By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.

Fifthly, tricephalous depictions in the strict sense are ones which show the Trinity as one person endowed with three separate heads. They first appear in sculpture (capital relief, Alquezar cloister, near Huesca in Aragon), then in illustrated manuscripts (Hospitality of Abraham, Cambridge) (Bœspflug 1998b) (Fig. 3). They are then supplanted by tri-faces, containing a head with three faces, sometimes used in philosophical allegories (of prudence), but more often, from the thirteenth century, in the iconography of the Devil (in the *Bible moralisée*, and in illustrations of the *Divine Comedy*), then in the fourteenth century in pictures of God (miniature, antiphonary, fifteenth century). They enjoy a huge diffusion in popular art (Flanders painting), not only in the West but also in the East, in the art of the icon (Belgrade, 1704), and in the art of the 'mission countries' (Bœspflug 2008: 462).

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(4) The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries constitute a period of flowering, in which the pictorial formulas that had appeared since the twelfth century spread and were differentiated (Fig. 4: *Trinità*, by Nicoletto Semitecolo). The art of the West distanced itself from the art of the icon. At the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, the West had another very inventive phase in the creation of new images: three types of suffering Trinity (the Double Intercession, the Mystical Winepress, and the Compassion of the Father), and a theme of glory, that of the Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity. The first two disappeared during the seventeenth century; the last two have had a widespread diffusion down to our own times.

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figure 4 *Trinità*, by Nicoletto Semitecolo, 1367. Padua (Italy),

Museo Diocesano.

The Intercession shows the Man of Sorrows on his knees before the Father, showing the wound in his side and interceding alone or with Mary showing her bared breast (Bøespflug 1997a). The Mystical Winepress sets the 'pressed' body (standing or lying) of the Redeemer in the vat of the Father, the 'Vine-dresser' (Bøespflug 1990). The (p. 482) Compassion of the Father shows God the Father carrying the dead Christ, brought down from the Cross. In the *tondo* of Jean Malouel, in the Louvre (c.1400; Bøespflug 2008: 247), followed twenty years later by several works of Robert Campin (Bøespflug 2008: 263–7) which gained a following, the 'dead but alive' Christ figure opens out the gap of the wound in his side to present it for the devotion of the faithful as the source of the Eucharist and, more generally, of Redemption: this is shown in one of the panels of the Saint Petersburg Diptych. Unknown before the 1400s, this type of composition was very popular during the second half of the fifteenth century (Bøespflug 1992 and 1999). Emile Mâle saw it as a 'Pietà of the Father'. An engraving by Dürer from 1511 (Bøespflug 2008: 297), which spread across Europe and even to the Americas, inspired many works of art, among which, more than fifty years later, was a painting by El Greco that is installed in Madrid (Bøespflug 2007a).

The Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity likewise appears toward the end of the fourteenth century (in a painting by Pedro Nicolau, a painter from Valencia, c.1410) (Pamplona 1970). Until then, it was Christ alone, or the Father alone, or an angel or two, who crowned the Mother of the Saviour. Henceforth, the Coronation by the Trinity gains a place and becomes known in many formulas: Coronation by Father and Son, or by the Son with the approval of the Father (Panel of Gentile da Fabriano, c.1410, Brera), or by the Son in the presence of the Father and the Spirit (Jean Fouquet's miniature in the *Heures d'Étienne Chevalier*) (Bøespflug 2008: 271), or by the anthropomorphic Three Persons to-

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gether (alabaster panel, London). This subject gives rise to masterpieces (Enguerrand Quarton, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon).

By the end of the Middle Ages, therefore, it was quite common for the Trinity to be depicted. The Father wore the appearance of a venerable man bearing the ensigns of power (royal or imperial, or priestly: God the Father is depicted as pope) (Böespflug 1991). It became normal to depict the Father as a man. The one who until then had been, in art, the 'invisible of the Son' becomes, as regards appearance, the Son's double, his twin brother or look-alike; then, starting from the fifteenth century, his father or grandfather. This spelt the end of the rule of Christomorphism.

(5) The last great period of Trinity-God in art runs from the sixteenth century to our own. It covers a less imaginative phase of diffusion marked by the progressive decline of the Trinitarian theme, at least in the West, which leads in the twentieth century to an eclipse of the theme in 'high art'. The only creation of this period is the image called the 'two Trinities', the earthly and the heavenly (Murillo, 1617-82, painting), which comes from a comparison made by Jean Gerson (*divinissima Trinitas Jesu, Joseph et Mariae*) and then by St Francis de Sales (in his *Spiritual Conferences*): 'Mary, Jesus, Joseph is an earthly Trinity which in some way represents the Holy Trinity'.

One can isolate within this long period a first moment which flowed down to the last decades of the seventeenth century. The idea of the 'Trinity-God' still inspired great artists: even though they did not create new types, some of them continued to revisit the now traditional types. Not without talent: the Compassion, for example, inspired profound works from Rubens (Anvers) and Ribera (Madrid); the Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity, from Velazquez (Madrid). These types were exported to the mission countries and **(p. 483)** became the object, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, of an artistic enculturation, especially in 'New Spain', in the Baroque art of Latin America (Compassion of the Father, Holy Family, Coronation of the Virgin, triandric Trinity)—so much so that a synod of Bogota, in 1775, put a stop to them by forbidding triandric Trinities.

In Europe, by contrast, beginning with the century of the Enlightenment, artists turned away from the theme, which took refuge in 'the art of the Church'. The pictorial image of the Trinity lost its force, was etiolated, academicized, and fossilized. The decline of the theme after that only continued to grow: one can speak of a certain effacement of the Trinity in contemporary art. This has created the setting for the rediscovery and then for the enormous success of the Rublev Trinity in the Catholic world, and in all of western Europe (Böespflug 2007b). From time to time, some original creations see the light of day. But they pass unnoticed and lack connection with the thought of the Church and the history of the theme, and likewise with the experience of their own century.

Theological Appraisal: Regulation, Reception, and Usage of Images of the Trinity

1. Regulation. In the Christian East, where the theology of the image is well developed and robust, images of the Trinity have been the object of solidly argued and ultimately very restrictive ecclesial decisions, especially in the Russian domain, where in Moscow, in 1928, the Rublev icon was finally declared the only acceptable icon of the Trinity, after the Paternity images had been judged inadmissible by the Moscow synods of 1551 and 1666 (Ouspensky 1980). In the West, however, the domain of vision images of God both gained and lost (not mutually exclusive notions in this case) from a profound lack of regulation, despite the effort of Pope Benedict XIV, much too late (1745), to formulate well-supported norms. For lack of anything better, ecclesiastical discipline took the place of a theology of the image, encouraging some images and condemning others, on the basis of deficient criteria, when debates about images arose. Yet at the same time, the West has seen a much more diversified iconographic flowering than has the East.

2. Reception. Western images of the Trinity have been very popular, in the strongest sense of the term, including every level of society. The princes often led by example, with a great confidence in the Trinity, shown without reserve in the images which they commissioned and loved to display. They were often followed and imitated by the bourgeoisie, the clergy, and the simple faithful. Some media (wooden and stone statues, ivory or alabaster reliefs, pages of illuminated manuscripts, easel paintings, engravings, ex-voto, glass painting, medals, pious images, and so on) have given birth to thousands of images of the Trinity, a large quantity of which remain today (Bøespflug 2009c). Some of them have enjoyed a rapid diffusion, both in Europe and in the mission countries. These images have both expressed and nourished the profound faith of believers.

(p. 484) 3. Re-reception. They can still nourish the faith of Christians today, and can do so effectively, by means of their reproductions in Bibles or in illustrated catechisms. These reproductions are legitimate and profitable, so long as discernment is made regarding their theological value. The explosion of new technologies for the digital storage of the iconographic heritage makes opportune, indeed urgent, the contemporary Church's reflection on the opportunity of these 're-receptions' of the images of God from elsewhere or from earlier centuries. But this reflection is in its infancy. All the old images are sincere and touching, and their use was understandable in their times, but one is permitted to think that not all of them are profitable today. Some exhibit an excessive familiarity, to the detriment of the transcendence of God. Others convey or connote an image of a God who is more or less cruel or perverse (Bøespflug 1990).

4. In any event, if each century can reuse the images of earlier times, no one is dispensed from having to reinvent the response of faith to the proclamation of the Gospel, in the language of contemporary images. This is what Vatican II suggested in its constitution on the divine liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), when it taught that

the Church is not bound to any one style, but welcomes the images produced by the sensibility of every age (Bœspflug 2004). One could believe, at first sight, that the Trinity is a theme that has disappeared from the preoccupations of artists. But this is a doubly false impression, to the extent that, on the one hand, this theme has never ceased to stimulate the creation of artists, often ones who have remained unknown (Bœspflug 2010b), and, on the other hand, that many works are produced outside of the western world, of which books published in Europe and Northern America do not speak, but which have no less interest for the life and future of the Church (Maquivar 2006).

Suggested Reading

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François Boespflug

François Boespflug, O.P., is Professor of the History of Religions at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Strasbourg, where he has taught since 1990. He also teaches at the Centre Sèvres (Paris), and he held the Chair of the Louvre (Paris) in 2010.

The Trinitarian Imprint on the Moral Life

Romanus Cessario

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Abstract and Keywords

This article explores the influence of the doctrine of the Trinity on moral life. It explains that the elaboration of all teaching about the Trinity and moral life begins with what is taught about creation and divine exemplar causality. It describes moral life in terms of the creative Trinity and human participation, as the created image of God, in the eternal law—a participation that through grace becomes filial conformity to God the Trinity in truth and charity, whose glorious consummation is sketched in the beatitudes.

Keywords: Trinity, moral life, creation, causality, divine exemplar, human participation, God the Trinity

The Vestige and the Image of the Trinity

THE elaboration of all teaching about the Trinity and the moral life begins with what is taught about creation and divine exemplar causality. Just as one discovers vestiges of the Trinity in all that exists, so traces of the Trinity appear in all that moves. While moral teaching concerns itself with what human persons do, the great authors of the Christian tradition recognized even in the movements of plants and animals certain signs that point toward the three-Person God, the Agent who made all creatures both great and small. The saints illustrate this intuition about the divine governance of the cosmos: for example, St Patrick's shamrock, which grows three leaves on one stem to display the sublime mystery of the Three in One, and St Martin de Porres's choir of mice, which the saint instructed to bow appropriately at the invocation of the Trinity. Throughout the Christian centuries however, theological commentary and reflection centre appropriately on the imprint of the Trinity on the free moral behaviour of human beings.

According to the biblical witness and the received teaching, humans are created in the image of God—*ad imaginem Dei*. Since, in the Christian view of the moral life, the human person stands between God and God, all human conduct participates in what is called the 'image of creation'. This means that the very structure of the human soul reflects the ordering of the Persons within the Trinity. Human love follows human knowledge in the way

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that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (St Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.45, a.7, *resp.*). The imprint of divine truth on all created motion leads theologians to speak of the Eternal Law, which establishes the pattern for the being and movement of all that exists. In rational creatures, the Eternal Law expresses itself as the natural moral law (Hittinger 2003). Because of the connotation *logos* bears with norm, it is customary to associate this divinely ordered pattern for human behaviour (p. 488) with the Second Divine Person, the Logos/Son. Like all things that exist outside of the Trinity however, the natural moral law itself bears the imprint of all three Divine Persons. The appropriation—to use the technical term—to the Second in God signals the practice of theologians to point out the affinity that human conduct is meant to enjoy with the ‘Wisdom of God’ (Wisd. 7:27), the divine *Logos*: ‘Filio autem appropriatur sapientia, per quam agens per intellectum operatur, et ideo dicitur de Filio, per quem omnia facta sunt’ (*ST I*, q.45, a.6, ad2). ‘To the Son is appropriated wisdom, through which the intellectual agent acts; and therefore it is said: “Through Whom all things were made”’. In this place, Aquinas explains a familiar text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (Merriell 1990).

Sound Christian doctrine not only ascribes to God a full exercise of the divine *esse*, which is identical with the divine *agere*, but also allows the human creature the full expression of created freedom all the while respecting the divine transcendence and God's claim on the human person. Within the context of the full revelation of the Blessed Trinity, the moral life finds its origin, flourishing, and fulfilment in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Were a theologian to opine otherwise, one would be left with a God who is not the first and transcendent cause of every being, act, and formal perfection. Such a conclusion stands at deep odds with all that the Christian Church holds and cherishes about the most adorable and blessed Trinity. Not a few modern theories of human liberty leave the human creature outside of any direct influence of the creating Trinity, and so construct an imaginary world of human autonomy that not only contradicts Christian revelation but also runs against the sound philosophical reflection that undergirds theological argument (Long 2002).

The Trinitarian Pattern of Morality

When Christ addresses God as ‘Father’, the Saviour announces a new and unexpected conformity with God (Matt. 6:9); we become sons and daughters in the Incarnate Son. It is axiomatic in Christian theology that grace causes in the soul this filial conformity to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Hütter 2007). One classical authority for such standard Christian teaching is found in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas; for example, ‘anima per gratiam conformatur Deo’ (*ST I*, q.43, a.5, ad2). Since the soul is conformed to God by grace, this gift of divine grace both elevates and perfects human conduct so that what human beings do in accord with this gift readies them for the everlasting gift of perfect communion with the Blessed Trinity. The ‘image of grace’ is found in the person whom God has conformed to Himself. Within the actual order of God's providence, this conformity exists, as far as one knows from divine revelation, because and only because

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of the life-giving death of Jesus Christ and its sacramental mediation within the Church of faith and sacraments.

The Christian tradition prefers to speak about the graced conformity of the human person to God as an indwelling of the Divine Persons in the souls of the just (Hill 1982). (p. 489)

The metaphor of 'indwelling' derives from the many places in the New Testament where Jesus Christ promises his disciples to abide within them. For example:

Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, 'Master, (then) what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him'. (Jn 14: 22-3)

The lives of the saints best reveal the existential significance of the indwelling Trinity. Consider the lesson taught to the French gentlewoman, Élisabeth Catez, who after her entrance into a French Carmelite monastery became known as Elizabeth of the Trinity. One author recounts that

in February of 1900, the young aspirant to the Carmel of Dijon was introduced to a Dominican friar, a friend of the nuns. Elizabeth asked for help in understanding her interior experience—her need for silence and recollection, and her sense of an inexplicable presence in the depth of her soul. This Dominican proceeded to deepen her awareness of the truth of the indwelling of the Trinity in the soul of the baptized: that not just Christ, but that 'all three of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—were present in love in her soul.' This graced meeting greatly reassured Elizabeth and aided her in her spiritual progress. (Ross 2010)

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity's spiritual writings provide a practical way for the inquiring believer to discover what is unique about the proper relations of the indwelling Persons that those conformed to God by grace enjoy. Another saintly woman, the fourteenth-century Dominican mystic and Doctor of the Church, Catherine of Siena, experienced this Trinitarian mystery in a particularly vivid way:

Like two young ecclesiastics saying their office together, the Saviour and Catherine walked up and down the brick floor of the chapel, and with great diligence and unspeakable awe the young woman spoke the Latin words (hardly hearing them, because of the loud beating of her heart), and when, at the end of each psalm, she had to say the doxology: 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son,' etc., she altered the words and making a deep reverence towards the Lord, said in a trembling voice: 'Glory be to the Father and to *Thee* and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen'. (Jorgensen 1938: 56-7, original emphasis; Baldwin 1987: 32)

In a particularly illuminating elucidation of the fourteenth chapter of St John's Gospel, Thomas Aquinas speaks about the divine indwelling in terms of the effects of the missions of the Divine Persons Who are sent: 'Nam, sicut effectus missionis Filii fuit ducere ad Pa-

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trem, ita effectus missionis Spiritus Sancti est ducere fideles ad Filium' (Thomas Aquinas, *Lectura in Iohannis evangelium* 14:26; Marietti edition, no. 1958). 'Just as the effect of the mission of the Son is to lead us to the Father, so also the effect of the mission of the Holy Spirit is to lead the faithful to the Son' (trans. Author). It is commonplace to observe that the ordering of the missions of the divine person, which constitute, as it were, the temporal extension of the divine processions within the Trinity of Persons, is reversed when the work of leading the faithful to the Father unfolds. The two processions of knowledge (filiation) and love (spiration), which stand at the heart of disclosing as much as the human mind can embrace of the mystery of the Three in One, issue in the visible mission of the Son, which is the Incarnation, and the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, which brings the gift of divine charity that constitutes the unique privilege of those whom God justifies. Drawing upon the Ninth Book of St Augustine's *De Trinitate*, Aquinas penned the memorable expression *Verbum spirans Amorem* to capture the originating work of divine charity that configures the soul to the Holy Spirit: 'Filius autem est Verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans Amorem' (*ST I*, q.43, a.5, ad2). 'Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love, as is said (Jn 6:45): "Everyone that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh to Me," and (Ps. 38:4): "In my meditation a fire shall flame forth" '. And in another place, Aquinas further explains this foundational principle of the Christian moral life: 'Filius ergo tradit nobis doctrinam, cum sit Verbum; sed Spiritus Sanctus doctrinae eius nos capaces facit' (*Lectura in Iohannis evangelium* 14:26; Marietti edition, no. 1958). 'Since he is the Word, the Son hands over to us holy teaching; though the Holy Spirit makes us capable of observing his teaching' (trans. Author). In short, Christian life unfolds as an exercise in truth, as an incarnation of *caritas in veritate*, of love in truth—to borrow the title of Pope Benedict XVI's third encyclical.

Moral Conduct

When the earliest teachers of Christian morality set about to explain the gift of divine charity, they did not turn to esotericism. Because of the affinity that exists between the Trinitarian image of creation and the Trinitarian image of grace, the Christian tradition was not loathe to borrow categories of moral thought from classical sources that predated the birth of the Lord. Certain Church Fathers speculated whether Moses had influenced Plato, while others found Athens a rich source for describing the moral life that the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem were expected to follow. One of the best examples of the kind of ethical thinking that finds a home in the Church appears in the adoption of the four cardinal virtues to describe the human content of the moral life. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance provide so many hinges (in Latin, *cardo*) on which the whole of the moral life turns (Pieper 1965). Theologians of genius have recognized that the moral order stipulated by the moral virtues receives a gratuitous elevation when the gift of divine grace imbues them with the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity. These virtues—sometimes called the theologal virtues to indicate that they flow from the godly life—represent the distinctive moral resources that God bestows on those whom he calls

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and justifies (Cessario 1996). Although there are differences of opinion about how the human and Christian virtues interact with each other, it remains common practice to distinguish between the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral and theological virtues (Cessario 2009). (p. 491) With the Trinitarian image of grace operative in human life, the moral agent enjoys the full and complete possession of these infused or Christian virtues. With a breakdown of each of the seven virtues into its proper parts, no aspect of human or divine life is left without a properly theological, and therefore Trinitarian, account. Theologians generally recognize the *secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae* as one masterful presentation of the Christian life based on the seven virtues that accompany the divine indwelling. Aquinas and other Christian authors also discuss the vices that oppose each of the virtues. The overall work of the virtues that perfect the human person is easy to recapitulate: virtues perfect the operational capacities of the human person, whereas vicious defects leave the sinful person in a state of impairment and moral dissipation (Cessario 2002).

Christian theology envisages beatific vision or communion with the Persons of the Blessed Trinity as the term and perfection of human existence. In order to prepare the wayfarer for this transcendent enjoyment, additional gifts or resources are given to those who abide with Christ. Foremost among these are what the theological tradition refers to as the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Cessario 1991). While mentioned in the Old Testament as qualities proper to the Messiah, the earliest Christian theologians immediately grasped the logic of attributing these gifts to those who are incorporated into Christ through baptism. The Trinitarian formula used at baptism announces the start of the divine indwelling; this grace includes not only the infused virtues but also the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are traditionally called wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Theologians have developed spiritual commentaries that relate these gifts to the seven virtues of the Christian life (Brennan 1966). The special feature of the gift of the Holy Spirit emerges within the Christian soul as a sort of spiritual instinct for pursuing divine things. The gifts attune the soul to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, who acts on the stage of life like a prompter in a theatrical production. Through these instinctual gifts, the Christian experiences a special consolation inasmuch as he or she recognizes a felt fulfilment of Christ's promise that he will not leave his followers orphans. Rather, as Christ himself promises: 'The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you' (Jn 14:26). The Christian moral tradition also incorporates the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit into a full account of the Trinitarian dimensions of the moral life. The list is developed from those qualities that St Paul mentions in Gal. 5:22-3 (Vulgate) as especially representative of Christian conduct.

The Trinitarian dimensions of the moral life find their fulfilment in the Beatitudes. The words that Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mount have provided the Christian tradition with a description of the moral life that expresses all that is distinctive about life in Christ (Pinckaers 1995: 134-67). When the Christian wayfarer who has observed the Gospel Beatitudes dies, he or she passes over to the final stage of Trinitarian fulfilment. This moment theologians name the 'image of glory'. Here the faithful soul meets 'What

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eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Cor. 2:9).

(p. 492) Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Cessario (1996, 2002, and 2009); Pinckaers (1995).

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Romanus Cessario

Romanus Cessario, O.P., teaches theology at the Boston seminary, Saint John's in Brighton, and is a Socio Ordinario of the Pontificia Accademia San Tommaso d'Aquino in Rome.

The Trinity and Moral Life: Julian's Trinitarian Logic of Love and Contagion

Amy Laura Hall

The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the relation between the doctrine of Trinity and moral life in the context of Julian of Norwich's Trinitarian logic of love and contagion. It discusses Julian's thoughts about the black plague and her insistence that in the Trinity all things will be well, a vision that inspires moral and physical solidarity with contagious outsiders today. It comments on Julian's odd version of the Trinity as answering the “unreasonable depression and doubtful fear” brought on by a crisis of plague and suggests that it is possible to connect Julian's words of wellness today to ecclesial practices of lived, liturgical solidarity.

Keywords: Julian of Norwich, Trinity, moral life, love, contagion, black plague, unreasonable depression, doubtful fear, liturgical solidarity, ecclesiastical practices

Though the three persons of the Trinity are all equal in themselves, my soul understood love in everything. And this is the knowledge of which we are most ignorant; for some of us believe that God is all mighty and has power to do everything, and that he is all wisdom and knows how to do everything, but that he is all love and is willing to do everything—there we stop.... [F]or just as through his generosity God forgives our sin when we repent, so he wants us to forget our sin of unreasonable depression and doubtful fear.

(Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, Long Text: 73)

Anticipated scenarios of the ravages of [communicable disease] stress the question of survival, turning the undercurrent of fear to an undertow of panic and making it ever more difficult to ask how we want to live.

(Wald 2008: 269)

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IN his introduction to the 1998 Elizabeth Spearing translation of *Revelations* I will be using here, A. C. Spearing repeats Peter Dronke's description of *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*: 'There is, more often than in men's writing, a lack of *apriorism*, of predetermined postures: again and again we encounter attempts to cope with human problems in their singularity' (Julian 1998: xxvi). In the spirit of such writing, I will concentrate on one holy woman's moral-theological coping. As a visionary and author (c.1342–1416) Julian of Norwich, England, is compelling, and perplexing. She detects divine favour within the Trinity when divine discontent seems a more direct explanation of human misery, and she finds such profligate kindness by pulling all questions through the (p. 494) needle's eye of the cross. The crucified Jesus points her to the Trinity, and the Trinity is revealed in the copious blood. Her reading of God's joy is complete, taking in not only the Second Person of the Trinity, but the First and Third Persons as well. The crucifix presents to her the embodiment of God, Spirit, and Son, and also the focal point of all time and space. This 'poynte' is where grace and love are found, and where she seeks greater solidarity with Christ and with her kin. Such a vision of love shapes her sense of sin and safety, granting a unique perspective on the Trinity and the moral life. She reflected on these visions through a Short Text (hereafter ST) and a Long Text (LT). (Notations below indicate text and chapter number.)

Although some essays in this volume may remain above the fray of lived readers, as if outside of merely human time, the entry on 'the moral life' cannot. Ethics is a vivified endeavour for the faithful, and so this essay must not only describe but also connect Julian's Christocentric Trinity to worship and discipleship. Julian's voice testifies to wellbeing in 'Holy Church' over the dissonance of contagion and crisis in her own time. During plague, Julian, paradoxically, saw safety. Rather than seeking well-being through separation from those who suffer, Julian prays to receive a repetition of all human suffering, as it is compressed in Jesus. Through the cross, she receives a kind of redemptive contagion. Inasmuch as anxiety over pandemic still besets Christians, Julian's visions may be read as strong solace. Pulling together the two quotations above, we may see Julian's odd version of the Trinity as answering the 'unreasonable depression and doubtful fear' brought on by a crisis of plague. Playing on Priscilla Wald's note above, this fourteenth-century anchoress addresses an 'undertow of panic', that makes it 'ever more difficult to ask how we want to live'. By attending to several features of her text and her context, readers may connect Julian's words of wellness today to ecclesial practices of lived, liturgical solidarity.

When Adam Fell

Julian sees 'love in everything'. This, she believes, in the 'knowledge of which we are most ignorant'. Through 'generosity', God 'is all love', and this is beyond the usual reckoning. Divine Omniscience, often connected with the Third Person of the Trinity, and Divine Omnipotence, often referenced with the First Person, are both easier to comprehend than full-on Divine Love. However, living into Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* is an invi-

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tation to live out past the 'stop' of sin. Past this barrier, the faithful may 'forget' 'unreasonable depression and doubtful fear' and see the moral life differently (LT: 73).

In this vision of God's goodness, Julian weaves tightly the three persons of the Godhead, threading the entire Trinity through the needle of Christ's Passion. Early in the Short Text, Julian explains that she 'dared not' ... 'look away from the cross', for, apart from the cross, she would perceive only 'the ugliness of fiends'. Through tightly focused vision, she deems she is 'safe and sound' (ST: 10). With prayerful stitching over many (p. 495) years, Julian works on sin in relation to such safety, and she eventually comes to some clarity about a confusing parable of a Servant and a Lord. By the time of her Long Text, Julian is definite that she knows the Trinity through Jesus, and she comes to recognize all of humanity by way of this Jesus-defined Trinity. One salient passage from the parable is worth quoting at length as we begin:

In the servant is comprehended the second person of the Trinity, and in the servant is comprehended Adam, that is to say, all men. And therefore when I say 'the Son', it means the Godhead, which is equal with the Father, and when I say 'the servant', it means Christ's Humanity, which is truly Adam. The servant's nearness represents the Son, and his standing on the left side represents Adam. The lord is the Father, God; the servant is the Son, Christ Jesus. The Holy Ghost is the equal love which is in both of them. When Adam fell, God's son fell; because of the true union made in heaven, God's son could not leave Adam, for by Adam I understand all men. Adam fell from life to death into the valley of this wretched world, and after that into hell. God's son fell with Adam into the valley of the Virgin's womb (and she was the fairest daughter of Adam), in order to free Adam from guilt in heaven and in earth; and with his great power he fetched him out of hell. (LT: 51)

Julian sees the servant as comprehensively two distinct characters: the Second Person of the Trinity, and Adam. She further discerns that God knows all of humanity by way of uniting Adam and the Son. In the decades between the composition of the Short Text and the Long Text, Julian finds that God perceives humanity through this unity of Jesus and Adam, without remainder. There is no aspect of residual anger in God's perception of miserable humanity, fetched out of hell. In his introduction to his translation of Julian's texts, A. C. Spearing reads her parable as allowing her 'to see reality as God sees it':

The orthodox solution to the problem of predestination and free will was that for God, who exists in eternity, past and future coexist in an eternal present to which the 'present of this brief and fleeting moment' is the nearest human equivalent. In the parable Julian apprehends this divine vision of reality not as theory but as experience. (Julian 1998: xxxi)

Thus, in what is arguably the most complicated vision of the text, Julian closely entangles Jesus with Adam so that they can no longer be seen apart from one another. She further identifies the Trinity through the divine sacrifice that accomplishes atonement. The para-

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ble narrates, as if in time, a truth that Julian perceived by compressing time, through prayerful concentration on the cross.

This aspect of Julian's vision has been a scandal. By one reading, the parable reflects Julian's inability to reckon with human responsibility for the horror we inflict upon one another. If I read her correctly, this is how David Aers judges her in his *Salvation and Sin*. By collapsing 'the will to sin, the choices against divine grace are assimilated into the language of "payne", of suffering, for which there is no "blame" '. Aers is concerned 'that the strategy here systematically diminishes human responsibility for evil and, equally systematically, banishes the discourse of divine justice as though this might be in conflict (p. 496) with divine love' (Aers 2009: 161). Julian may seem to be hopelessly and uncritically naive—all shall be well, no worries—but her vision is in fact a full-blooded one, in more than one sense. For if God took within the Trinity not only humanity, but humanity in the form of the fallen servant, then this bleeds people together, blurring blood lines by which the Host was to be parcelled in the Body of Christ, the Holy Church. When Frederick Bauerschmidt astutely observes that Holy Communion in the fourteenth-century Church was 'a complex rite that depended on the participants properly performing their distinct functions' (Bauerschmidt 1999: 18–19)—which included details such as a strictly hierarchical reception of the body and the restriction of the blood to the clergy—he presents us with a medieval picture of a fractured world that Julian would have seen and which her revelations could heal. For instead of shoring up the division within society and among its people, the amity within the Trinity spills out abundant, floor-soaking blood from the brow and side of Christ, marking all without distinction.

Aers, nevertheless, reads *Revelations* as impotent to rectify the misery humans inflict upon one another in an ongoing struggle for power: 'Julian's theology does not, probably cannot, address collective life and its domination by will and power alienated from God and the covenants. It cannot address the stuff of the earthly city' (Aers 2009: 170). Therefore, in Aers' opinion, Julian's view is anaemic, inasmuch as the sins of 'collective life' are driven by 'domination'. Yet sins of 'collective life' may also result from humiliation and shame. Julian may be read as countering the vices that collect on the underside of a society driven by domination. Put in different imagery, there is a gnarled knot of vice that tangles up with anxiety and self-protective conformity. During times of social unrest, the pressure to cohere and conform tightens.

One moral-theological task during the fourteenth century was to give an account for senseless loss during a crisis of plague and the failure of last rites. (We will discuss this further below.) Answers from the topside involved God's wrath and God's reinforced order, but Julian answers with a total game change. By this reading, she radically digs into the root of dread over the state of one's own soul and the souls of those who appear lost. This is one way to read Bauerschmidt's interpretation so that it answers Aers's concern. In Grace Jantzen's words, Julian wishes for 'the passion of Christ and its costly transformation of life, so that her subsequent life would be more closely identified with the values represented by the dying Christ' (Jantzen 1988: 59). Her singular focus on the Second Person of the Trinity, and her identity of God's will with the work of Jesus on the cross,

may be her perceptive, scene-shifting answer to a moral crisis of her time. She compresses time and categories for a reason.

Proper Time

If Julian is known to the general reader, it is likely not so much for her understanding of the Trinity, but for the refrain running through both the Short Text and the Long Text of her *Revelations* that 'All shall be well'. I submit that Julian's vision of 'well' is connected to (p. 497) her tightly woven take on temporality and locality. Early in the Short Text, Julian perceives God 'in an instant' (ST: 8). A footnote in Elizabeth Spearing's translation clarifies, 'the word used by Julian, *poynte*, can mean a point of space or of time' (Julian 1998: 181). The corresponding passage in the Long Text reads:

I saw God in an instant [or *poynte*], that is to say, in my understanding, and in seeing this I saw that he is in everything. I looked attentively, seeing and recognizing what I observed with quiet awe, and I thought, 'What is sin': For I saw truly that God does everything, no matter how small. And I saw that truly nothing happens by accident or luck, but everything by God's wise providence. (LT: 11)

Most of Julian's visions are disconcertingly non-narrative, occurring as if on a *poynte*. As A. C. Spearing puts it, her perspective 'abolishes temporal extension' (Julian 1998: xxxi). In the passage above, 'God's wise providence' is not an affirmation pulled along toward resolution through a series of victories, whether minute or remarkable. 'Accident', from Julian's perspective, is eliminated not through episodes wherein loss (tragic or slight) brings forth blessing (profound or precious). Through this prism of thought, God does not move temporality from time A to B to C. Neither does God move a set of characters from location 1 to 2 to 3. Julian perceives 'God's wise providence' in an eye-blink or, as in another of her visions, compressed into the form of a small nut. Poet Denise Levertov has suggested that Julian 'ask[s] us to turn our gaze inside out', to see 'a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, held safe in God's pierced palm' (Levertov 1988: 75).

Spearing's note and Levertov's images may also guide a reading of Julian on the Trinity, through a reconfiguring of temporality. As Julian receives divine love, the crucified Jesus points her to the Trinity, and the Trinity is revealed in the copious blood of Jesus. This cruciform emphasis on 'the whole Trinity' is formally akin to Julian's explanation that she understands God 'in an instant', or within small completion (as in a hazelnut). Julian writes: 'Jesus wishes us to consider the delight which the Holy Trinity feels in our salvation ... The whole Trinity took part in the Passion of Christ, dispensing an abundance of virtues and fullness of grace to us through him' (LT: 23). The 'dispensing an abundance of virtues' is related to the 'fullness of grace' that allows for a sense of plenty, and this plenty emerges from her concentrated focus on God's will of love. Julian suggests Jesus prompted her, and now prompts her readers, to focus in on the joy of the entire Trinity in the work of salvation wrought through the Passion.

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Why focus so intently on God's joy? What might appear to be a muddled collapse of categories may also be read as Julian's refusal to succumb to despair. Julian suggests readers consider their world not from the vantage point of exacting righteousness—that is, with due judgement and penalty—but from the perspective of a Godhead who perceives humans through the Passion of Christ. Time, space, and the souls who inhabit both, may be rightly regarded only through the Passion, through the work that God performs on time, space, and souls. This may be one way to read Julian's passage on 'two different ways' of envisioning 'things': (p. 498)

We should not on the one hand fall too low, inclining to despair, nor on the other hand be too reckless, as if we did not care, but should recognize our own weakness without concealment, knowing that we cannot stand even for the twinkling of an eye unless we are protected by grace. We should cling reverently to God, trusting in him alone; for man and God regard things in two quite different ways; it is proper for man humbly to accuse himself, and it is proper for God in his natural goodness kindly to excuse man. (LT: 52)

'We' are to perceive that existence is 'protected by grace'. Without such protection, 'we cannot stand even for the twinkling of an eye'. This is connected to Julian's counsel that one 'recognize' ... 'weakness without concealment'. This section is replete with visual metaphors. Perceiving that God regards humans with an intent of gracious protection, Julian suggests that her readers observe themselves 'without concealment', that is, without barring God's view. To put this without Julian's eloquence, a Christian should not fear God's gaze, because God perceives with grace. There is no hidden aspect of Holy Trinity that harbours accusation. The Trinity, perceived through the Passion, invites trust, because Jesus' blood is more than sufficient to allow for open and honest self-accusation. Perceiving oneself with God's perception in mind may allow even the shamed to 'cling reverently to God'.

It may help some readers to gain their bearings by way of Thomas Aquinas here. In his *Summa theologiae*, regarding the effects of grace (ST I-II, q.113), Thomas asks two questions that are apropos to Julian's *Revelations*. In article 7, Thomas asks 'Whether the justification of the ungodly takes place in an instant or successively?' and, in article 8, 'Whether the infusion of grace is naturally the first of the things required for the justification of the ungodly?' Here Thomas considers different ways of perceiving grace, depending on one's position in relation to time. In the reply to objection 5 of article 7, he goes on to explain that 'the succession of opposites in the same subject must be looked at differently in the things that are subject to time and in those that are above time'. For 'those that are above time', there is no 'continuous time', or, 'no continuity of time'. Human understanding is 'subject to time' and therefore 'understands with continuity and time', even though, as 'justified', 'the human mind is, in itself, above time'. As temporal beings, humans perceive even timeless things within time. Thomas's examination of grace and time then continues as he discusses the order of 'the justification of the ungodly'. Using metaphor, he explains that 'the removal of darkness' and 'illumination' are, technically, 'simultaneous in time', as with 'the forgiveness of sin' and the 'obtaining of justice'. The

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question of timing comes into play only in regard to human perception. The sense of sequence depends on whether the perceiver is the person to be justified or the source (or 'agent') of justification:

And since the infusion of grace and the remission of sin regard God Who justifies, hence in the order of nature the infusion of grace is prior to the freeing from sin. But if we look at what is on the part of the man justified, it is the other way about, since in the order of nature the being freed from sin is prior to the obtaining of justifying grace. (*ST I-II, q.113, a.8, ad1*)

Given that God is timeless, God knows the activity of justification as 'simultaneous'. But the person of faith sees herself as forgiven first, and made righteous second. Thomas (p. 499) also suggests here that a person of faith might rightly view God as forgiving subsequent to her movement toward righteousness.

Julian seems to be stitching and unravelling right along the same seam, with a blood-red thread. She is trying to discern what difference it makes for the faithful to know that God perceives humans by way of the cross. Much of the form and content of Julian's texts, both the shorter and the longer, affirm a temporal collapse whereby faithful perception regards each 'small, humble, and simple' little thing through the cross. In this characteristic passage, Julian is concerned about the import of her visions for the apparently insignificant 'things' (or, I shall suggest below, people) who might appear to be 'forgotten':

At one time our good Lord said, 'All manner of things shall be well'; and at another time he said, 'You shall see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well'; and the soul understood these two sayings differently. On the one hand he wants us to know that he does not only concern himself with great and noble things, but also with small, humble, and simple things, with both one and the other; and this is what he means when he says, 'All manner of things shall be well'; for he wants us to know that the smallest things shall not be forgotten. (LT: 32)

She continues, connecting the plight of the apparently lost with the horror of human suffering. When 'our good Lord' affirms that 'all manner of things shall be well', this includes specifically 'deeds' that are 'so evil' that they appear as void. The 'things' that seem to be so small as to be nothing, and the terror that seems to disintegrate all meaning, may be perceived as 'treasured up and hidden in his blessed breast' (LT: 32). And here Julian makes a definitive move: 'for just as the Holy Trinity made all things from nothing, so the Holy Trinity shall make all well that is not well' (LT: 32). The Holy Trinity needed neither time nor matter to create space and temporality. The Holy Trinity has the power again to make goodness out of small things that may appear to us almost invisible and out of events that seem stripped of meaning. God *wills* to make goodness out of human non-sense.

Costly and Precious Redemption

Does Julian lose more than she gains with this idiosyncratic take on the Trinity? By focusing on the cross, and by compressing human history (great events or small people) into a 'poynte' within God's a-temporality, does Julian misplace human meaning? Grace Jantzen suggests that Julian's 'desire for unity with God in Christ is not an escape from social responsibility'. Rather, the 'Christ-centeredness of her spirituality' is a sign of her desire to unite with Jesus' 'self-giving love: a compassion which extended to all of humankind'. Jantzen links this desire to Julian's initial request for wounds, a request that brings forth her visions. By this reading, Julian is seeking 'greater solidarity with suffering humanity, identifying simultaneously with the suffering of Christ and of humankind, and thus able to mediate his compassion' (Jantzen 1988: 61).

(p. 500) I have already suggested in passing that a rich, connective way to read Julian's impulse is in relation to the perils of her time, especially the plague, the inescapable tragedy of fourteenth-century England. As Jantzen explains:

People died, horribly and suddenly and in great numbers. It was so contagious that one contemporary witness describes how anyone who touched the sick or the dead immediately caught the disease and died himself, so that priests who ministered to the dying were flung into the same grave with their penitents. It was impossible for the clergy to keep up with all those who required last rites, and to die unshriven was seen as a catastrophe of eternal proportions. Nor could the people who died be buried with dignity ... The psychological impact on the survivors was incalculable, made worse in subsequent years by the further outbreaks which occurred at unpredictable intervals. (Jantzen 1988: 8)

The estimate is that in Norwich itself 'probably more than a third of the population succumbed', and 'at least fifty per cent of Norwich clergy perished'. Julian's determination to see the Holy Trinity through the bleeding Christ may be her unflinching meditation on the horror of this loss, rather than her escape from it. The body of Christ was to provide liturgical protection against the eternal meaninglessness of human loss, writ in the life of a loved one and in the life of a people. Yet, during this period, there appeared to be not only insufficient earthly food (with repeated, widespread famine) but insufficient access to Jesus' body. MA graves would have signified not only loss of life, but loss of liturgical meaning. This contrast also matters: Julian envisioned the Trinity by way of the Body during a time when the sacrament of the Body appeared to have failed.

It may be useful again to relate Julian to Thomas Aquinas, specifically his discussion of mercy in relation to grief, from the *Summa* (ST II-II, q.30, a.2). He explains, 'one grieves or sorrows for another's distress in so far as one looks upon another's distress as one's own'. This can happen by way of a 'union of the affections, which is the effect of love', or 'through real union, for instance when another's evil comes near to us, so as to pass to us from him'. Thomas goes on to explain that mercy born of wisdom is the contrary to 'false godliness'. False godliness assumes that freedom from suffering is due to virtue. Julian

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may be read, through Thomas, as seeking a veritable godliness. She prays to receive a 'union of the affections', or, to connect several strands of meaning here, Julian prays to receive a redemptive repetition of contagion. As one who has survived human misery, she avoids the sensible path of relief and instead seeks costly, Christ-formed solidarity. Her visions grant her a duplication of suffering, through connection to the cross, which resolves unimaginable suffering with compassion.

I would suggest that Julian's bodily focus on the cross avoids false godliness in favour of wise mercy. She envisions a path away from three versions of vice that attend grave suffering. By perceiving a Triune God who pulls all time and meaning into the cross, Julian avoids despair over the fate of those who seem eternally lost. By envisioning a Triune God who wills to recreate goodness out of horror, Julian avoids insensitivity to the abiding, incarnate goodness of God's creation. By receiving a bodily gift of holy contagion, Julian eschews the false pride that would secure the order of God's goodness by (p. 501) way of a morbid tally of divine justice. And to pull together Julian with the two passages from Thomas (on illumination and on mercy), she perceives that 'by his own gracious light', God 'wants us to understand', even in a time of horror, 'our noble and excellent creation', 'our costly and precious redemption', and the gifts God 'sustains out of love for us' (LT: 42).

His Loved Bride

In order to appreciate the flow of *Revelations*, we should note that Julian's Long Text and her actual life culminate in the Holy Church. Her visions have been read (and celebrated or condemned) as universalist. This universalism is set within God's embodied reassurance that Holy Church is continually bound together, and wound up with Holy Trinity, through the love of Christ. She perceives unity at a time of fractures within the Church, from Lollards and peasants to rulers and papacies. The last sections of her Long Text circle around the at-one-ing work (pardon the conceit) of the Trinity, inasmuch as God is 'a real and true bridegroom', who says to the Church, as to 'a bride with whom he is never displeased', 'I love you and you love me, and our love shall never be divided' (LT: 58).

Layering images of intimate love, Julian also turns to the vocation of mothering. Her maternal language for the Godhead is connected to her sense that Holy Church is the place where one 'find[s] our dearest Mother' and 'the comfort of true understanding with the whole blessed community' (LT: 61). During schism, plague, and famine, the Church is, for Julian, *Home*. Within the Holy Church, 'Jesus can feed us with himself, and he does so most generously and most tenderly with the holy sacrament which is the precious food of life itself' (LT: 60). This revelation connects back to one of her first (and most vibrant) visions:

The beauty and vividness of the blood are like nothing but itself. It is as plentiful as the drops of water which fall from the eaves after a heavy shower of rain, drops which fall so thickly that no human mind can number them ... This showing was alive and vivid, horrifying and awe-inspiring, sweet and lovely. And what comfort-

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ed me most in the vision was that our God and Lord, who is so holy and awe-inspiring, is also so familiar and courteous. And this was what gave me most happiness and the strongest sense of spiritual safety. (LT: 7)

Julian affirms safety in the blood that flows, immeasurable, given to her in God's vision and through the 'holy sacrament' by which God's loved ones are sustained. Note here that God's will for wellness is located in blood, at a time when the body of Jesus was distributed either with stultifying attention to class hierarchy or not given at all, as priests and parishioners were being thrown into the same mass graves. (It is worth noting that the blood is technically not in play, as the laity do not receive.) Further, the outward manifestation of the Body was being torn by violent divisions. Here, in the mix of this mess, Julian affirms that the Church is Mother. Within a swirl of sin and misery, God (p. 502) draws God's people together. Her focus on 'Holy Church' may be an attempt to avoid heresy. But it is also an affirmation that God had not abandoned the body of Christ: 'for a single person may often feel broken, but the whole body of Holy Church has never been broken, nor ever shall be, for all eternity' (LT: 61). This need not, necessarily, mean compliance with the willed sin of the men ostensibly in charge. It may be a call to remain within Holy Church, trusting that the sacrament of Christ's Body, within the Body of Holy Church, is salvific in spite of the men in power.

This reading of Holy Church connects to Julian's sense of an absence of anger within the Trinity. Julian envisions safety in Holy Church at a time when a sensible soul might turn in dismay (or run in fear) from a deity who would allow such suffering. She sees God's love evident in a broken body at a time when broken bodies were strewn, burned, and lost. Read in this way, there is tension in her suggestion that 'if God could even be slightly angry we could never have any life or place or being' (LT: 49). Julian's Christological account of the Trinity is to turn the gaze of the faithful away from what could be read in the fourteenth century as God's rage toward some, and toward what seems impossibly hidden—that is, God's favour for all. Julian thus sorts out God's showing, 'in these gracious words, "I hold you quite safely"' (LT: 61). To those who have apparently survived God's wrath, Julian announces that a theological explanation of plague by way of divine wrath is nonsense. There is no divine wrath, for, if there were, there would be no survivors.

Christianity with Christ

Spearing writes about the puzzle of translating Julian's medieval English, in particular the sections on the Servant and the Lord, as the parable 'has a meaning that stands outside time' (Julian 1998: 185). I recommend a slight variation on Spearing's helpful note. Julian sees in a way that is not so much 'outside time', as it is set within the liturgical time of Holy Church. The vision is a-temporal for a purpose. Sacramental temporality is, seen from one vantage, 'outside time', but Julian's temporality involves a kind of Christological looping, pulling time backward and forward through the central focal point of the cross. This reading creates problems of 'tense' for Julian's readers today, as it is so drastically unlike the default sense of time for Christians in the progressive, Darwinian West. The de-

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fault marking of time for Christians in the one-third world involves the upward movement of progress, from point A to B to C. Time is not only linear, but ascends through human initiative and ingenuity. A liturgical marking of time requires turning one's perspective 'inside out', to use again Denise Levertov's phrase. People whose lives involve cyclical patterns of memory appear, from the vantage point of modernity, 'backward' (to use a colloquialism). Yet Julian's vision of the Trinity loops each individual, generation, and era (even a 'forward' era) *back* through the loving work of Jesus on the cross. She affirms 'that the love of God unites us to such an extent that when we are truly aware of it, no man can separate himself from another' (LT: 65). Her perspective brings together as (p. 503) kin the unshriven and the survivors, peasants and papacy, yesterday and today, compressing space and time.

Such a compressed perspective may re-narrate faith and contagion. The resolution in *Revelations* requires entering into the suffering Jesus, in bodily solidarity with the lost souls in question. Julian's answer to the apparent loss of God's favour in Jesus' body is re-entry, past the 'stop' of 'doubtful fear'. Inasmuch as western Christians remain anxious over liturgical legitimacy in the face of human suffering, this fourteenth-century anchoress is pedagogically powerful. This retelling requires that her readers note a basic contrast. The medieval mechanism of redemptive meaning was liturgical, not medical-scientific. For Julian's modern readers in the West, the default mechanism of human meaning in the midst of bodily chaos is not so much liturgy, as medical science. Arguably, institutions like the World Health Organization have replaced Holy Church as sites for recovering redemptive meaning in times of inexplicable loss. Human ingenuity, combined with increased intelligence, is supposed to allow each generation of westerners to move away from the primordial loss of meaning that haunts deadly contagion. With knowledge and diligence, time is supposed to ascend, away from suffering itself.

Julian's Trinitarian logic is vital for solidarity during contagion. By modern, western logic, otherwise westernized Christians who live into ecclesial kinship with non-western Christians already risk, in non-contagious time, a sort of shame. They appear as if to be slipping down the slope of social evolution and scientific progress, inasmuch as the crucifix attests to a non-progressive logic of time and meaning—seeming not only foolish in a Pauline sense, but atavistic, or even primitive. Pandemic both blurs and accentuates the boundaries between peoples presumed to be at point A and those presumed to be at point C up the arc of social and scientific progress. As disease criss-crossed distinctions of class and of clergy during the fourteenth century, communicable disease today makes our common mortality conspicuous, even while western images present non-western carriers as less socially evolved. Peoples from the two-third world represent social devolution, and for westerners to worship in common a bleeding Jesus is, in multiple ways, an offence.

Here I am drawing on Priscilla Wald's trenchant analysis in *Contagious*, as she explains that immigrants from areas other than western Europe have variously appeared in the North American context (for example) as 'a distinct danger to the reproduction of white America' (Wald 2008: 113–14). Coverage of HIV/AIDS across the US and western Europe played on a register of social-Darwinian shame, suggesting the one-third world was,

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through contagion, at risk of 'thirdworldization'. The rhetorical backdrop involves the risk of 'return' to 'the medical primitivism of the pre-antibiotic world' marking 'the failure of science, civilization, and modernity' (Wald 2008: 238). During 2009, coverage in the United States of H1N1 played repeatedly on such anxieties, depicting Latino-Catholic worshippers as carriers of cultural and actual contagion—as sources of what Harvard historian Samuel Huntington calls 'hispanization'. By his (tragically influential) reading, the Jesus-centred liturgy of Latino-Catholic worship represents an affront to the civic, vaguely (p. 504) deist faith in progress that Huntington terms 'Christianity without Christ' (Huntington 2004: 106).

Julian's Long Text closes with her suggestion that her visions are 'not yet completed', but still to be lived out (LT: 86). Her Catholic perspective on Trinity is a timely source of safety:

And I received no other answer in showing from our Lord God but this: 'What is impossible to you is not impossible to me. I shall keep my word in all things and I shall make all things well'. (LT: 32)

Her showing defies a modern, deist logic of separation in favour of solidarity, even during times of plague. As noted in this modern call by Pope John Paul II, bloody kinship requires no less:

In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the place where illegal immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. (John Paul II 1996)

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Bauerschmidt (1999); Jantzen (1988); Julian of Norwich (1998).

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Amy Laura Hall

Amy Laura Hall is Associate Professor at Duke University Divinity School and an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church.

The Trinity and Prayer

Francesca Murphy

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Abstract and Keywords

This article explores the between prayer and the doctrine of the Trinity, focusing on the insights from such figures as Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, John Henry Newman, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. It explains Augustine argued that the proper use of contemplation is the worship of the Triune God, Aquinas believed that petitionary prayer is mediated through the predestination of Christ, von Balthasar held that contemplative prayer is centred on the humanity of Christ and Newman's "real assent" relates to the liturgical appropriation of individual dogmas of faith. It suggests that prayer require the confluence of invocation and meditation, made possible in various forms by real assent to God revealing himself in the humanity of Christ as the mediator/intercessor/propitiator and inspiring us by his Spirit.

Keywords: prayer, Trinity, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, John Henry Newman, Hans Urs von Balthasar, contemplation, Triune God, convocation, meditation

INVOCATION is one of the commonest forms of prayer, practised by pagans, Jews, Muslims, Christians, and even non-believers. It has a 'unitary' orientation, as contrasted with meditative prayer, which considers the different facets of God. The most typically Christian form of prayer is intercession, because one intercedes *through* the mediatorship of Christ: intercession is specifically Trinitarian. Liturgical intercessions indicate the full deity of each of the three persons. Augustine argued that the proper use of contemplation is the worship of the Triune God. For Aquinas, petitionary prayer is mediated through the predestination of Christ. Newman's 'real assent' relates to the liturgical appropriation of individual dogmas of faith. For von Balthasar, contemplative prayer is centred on the humanity of Christ, as the object of 'real assent' and as the source of our knowledge of how to pray to the Triune God.

Invocation and Meditation

I arise today

The Trinity and Prayer

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through the belief in the threeness,
Through the confession of the oneness
Of the Creator of Creation.

Thus begins St Patrick's Breastplate. Known to scholars as the 'Lorica', Patrick's invocation is an exemplary Trinitarian prayer. The speaker 'puts on' the divine Triunity as a shield and a spell:

I summon today all these powers between me and those evils,
Against every cruel merciless power that may oppose my body and soul,
Against incantations of false prophets,
(p. 506) Against black laws of pagandom,
Against false laws of heretics,
Against craft of idolatry,
Against spells of witches and smiths and wizards,
Against every knowledge that corrupts man's body and soul. (Patrick 1953: 69-72)

'Warding off' belongs to our picture of invocation. The invocation makes an appeal against present danger, but assurance of response is there in Patrick's 'I summon'. The speaker 'puts on' the authority of the Trinity over *all* powers.

Homely Christians used to say, with satisfaction, 'there is no such thing as an atheist in a fox-hole'. Their theoretical brethren took this as evidence of a universal 'religious sense'. Against this, some philosophers of religion question whether people spontaneously *invoke* God. Thus, D. Z. Philips speaks with approval of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's telling a man who was screaming 'God' during an air-raid, 'it will be over in ten minutes'. For Philips, the story shows that the man was no Christian, so he was not *really* praying. Philips thinks we need to discern whether a prayer plays a '*religious* role' in the speaker's life to say whether it deserves to be called prayer (Philips 1965: 115-16). Philips wants to distinguish authentic religious prayer from superstition so as to deny that an innate religious sense will leap out of us in those invocations we make in fox-holes. It does seem circular to include God as a real object, in a definition of prayer.

On the other hand, a good, strong invocation does make an *absolute* appeal. Phenomenologically speaking, invocation is an absolutist act, expressing an absolute need by calling out to one who is *absolutely capable* of answering. Invocation is a suppliant *summoning*. It has the *imperialism* of one who assumes he matters to God. For a moment, Bonhoeffer's companion childishly hoped that someone *cared* that bombs were dropping near him. Invocation assumes a bond between the appellant and the one invoked. When it's a practical emergency, the agnostic homes in on one helper. In this crude sense, some *one* being 'is what all men call God', in invocatory prayer (Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.2, a.3). Still, the agnostic is monolatrous only in the sense that king penguins are monogamous: seasonally.

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The 'Lorica' catalogues the means of assistance against danger. Invocation leads him into *meditation* on the multiple facets of his God. Meditation is at the opposite end of the spectrum of prayer to invocation. Its context is not immediately practical but speculative. This kind of prayer is a loving consideration of the distinct features of God. The Puritan John Owen gave us a near unequalled meditation on the specific characters of the three divine persons, expanding upon the 'electing love of the Father, the purchasing love of the Son, and the operative love of the Spirit' (*Of Communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, Pt. II, ch. VIII (Owen 1965: 182)). Where invocation tends to be synthetic, meditation tends toward analysis. It can drift away from invocation into inference and lose its unitary drive. Its concrete object will then recede from the mind's eye. So Owen sometimes recalls us to the one God: 'By what act soever we hold communion with any person', he says, 'there is an influence from every person to the putting forth of that act'. 'The divine nature is the reason and cause of all worship; so that it is impossible to worship any one person, and not worship the whole Trinity': 'It is denied by the schoolmen, and that not without ground, that the formal reason and object of divine worship is in the persons precisely considered' (*Of Communion*, Pt. I, ch. III; Pt. III, ch. VIII (Owen 1965: 18, 268)). This may sound scholastic, but it is in keeping with the Christian experience of prayer. Christians do not imagine or conceive the recipient of their prayer as three separate beings. They spontaneously invoke God as One. Invocation without meditation tends blindly to settle on any one helper, but meditation without invocation tends toward an empty horizon. Prayer in its fullest sense requires a confluence of meditation and invocation.

In this fullest sense, prayer does not ask, 'is *anyone* out there?' The prayer that unites invocation and mediation *names* the advocate it summons. Like the acts Newman called real assents, such prayers 'realize' the deity in the summoner's mind: as Job said, after his ordeal, 'With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now mine eye seeth Thee' (Newman 1979: 77-80). Christians believe that prayer has a unitary and concrete focus only because God has given it one. Jean Corbon, who wrote the 'Prayer' section of the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 'in beleaguered Beirut ... taking shelter in his basement ... to continue working during the bombardments' (Ratzinger and Schönborn 1994: 23), describes our desire to pray in terms of God's desire for us, coming together in Jesus Christ:

The energy of the holy God, his communion of love, is permeated by ... a passion: to be 'with the children of men' (Prov. 8:31). At the origin ... of each and every human being ... there is this outpouring of love within the Trinity, ... from the gaze of the Father in his beloved Son there springs up God's thirst ... for human beings. Thus too, in the very beginning the human nostalgia for God is born.... The entire drama of history is located in the tension between this gift and this acceptance: God's passion for human beings, and the nostalgia of human beings for God.... When the river of life joins the energy of acceptance it acquires a name; at last there is a name in which the Father utters himself and utters his beloved Son: Jesus.... The river would acquire a name only when it flowed up out of a new fountain. Then the name would ring out like an echo: there would be as it were an en-

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counter of two thirsts that slake each other by giving themselves a name. (Corbon 1988: 18, 22)

At its fullest, prayer is brought about not by an innate religious sense but by the Mediator in whose name it is made, and in whose Spirit it is inspired. This is why prayer is Trinitarian.

Prayer as Intercession

Christians pray to the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. Their prayer is 'mediatorial', as when St Patrick says

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven:
Light of sun,
(p. 508) Radiance of moon,
Splendour of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftness of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.

'Intercession' may be a peculiarly Christian term for prayer. Though 'intercession' seems like just another word for prayer, Muslim, Jewish and Christian prayers are not identically 'intercessory'. Jews pray *for one another*, as Moses prayed for the people, assuming the stance of 'first amongst equals'. Muslims may also pray for one another. Conversely, in the Gospels, 'Jesus does not pray together with the apostles. He cannot, for his relationship to the Father is not the same as theirs' (Balthasar 1986: 182). Jesus' stance reflects his status as divine-human mediator. Christian prayer is intercessory because it is Trinitarian: Christ, the divine-human Mediator, intercedes for us to the Father, to send us his Spirit to enable us to pray.

St Paul asserts that 'we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words' (Rom. 8:26-7). In his *Romans Commentary* (paragraph 693), Thomas Aquinas interprets this to mean, 'the Holy Spirit makes us ask, inasmuch as he causes right desires in us ... aris[ing] from the ardour of love, which he produces in us'. The Dominican Herbert McCabe thinks Rom. 8:26-7 entails that 'it is God who prays. Not just God who answers prayer but God who prays in us in the first place'. 'In prayer', he believes, 'we become the locus of the divine dialogue between Father and Son.... For us to pray is for us to be taken over ... by the Holy Spirit which is the life of love between Father and Son' (McCabe 1987: 220-1). Thomas himself rejects such an interpretation of Romans 8. Remarking that Paul's 'statement' that *the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words* 'seems to support the error of Arius ... who held that the Holy Spirit is a creature and lower than the Father and Son', Thomas argues that 'intercedes' means here, 'makes us ask' (Thomas Aquinas, *Romans Commentary*,

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paragraph 692; and *ST II-II*, q.83, a.10, ad1). He thinks it subordinationist to envisage the Son or Spirit praying to the Father. So he states that it is the 'assumed ... human nature' of the Son which intercedes for us and he thinks Paul in Romans 8 is speaking of how we are 'direct[ed] and incit[ed]' by the Holy Spirit in prayer (Thomas Aquinas, *ST II-II*, q.83, a.10, ad1; and *Romans Commentary*, paragraph 693). For Thomas, it is not the Holy Spirit who 'sighs' but a human being, inspired by the Spirit to 'pray ... longingly' with 'desire' 'for heavenly things which are postponed for the soul' (Thomas Aquinas, *Romans Commentary*, paragraph 693). John Owen interprets Rom. 8:26-7 along the same lines, observing that, 'For a soul to know its wants, its infirmities, is a heavenly discovery'. The Spirit enables us to ask for what would otherwise be unimaginable or inconceivable: 'He that hath this assistance can provide no clothing that is large and broad enough to set forth the desires of his heart.... the more the saints speak, the more they find they have left unspoken' (*Of Communion*, Pt. II, ch. IV (Owen 1965: 123)). Corbon observes that 'The Holy Spirit is our pedagogue in prayer': 'before the Holy Spirit lays hold of us, "we do (p. 509) not know *how* to pray properly" (Rom. 8.26), but once he has brought us into the prayer of Jesus, we will not know *what* we pray *for*: we will simply pray'. This way of interpreting 'intercession' keeps the humanity of Christ at the centre of the picture. This is important because it is Christ's humanity which makes intercessory prayer possible: 'We can receive the Spirit of Jesus only because Jesus assumes our body' (Corbon 1988: 144-5, 63).

The gift of the Spirit to enable our prayer is a result of what Owen calls a 'fruit' of historical events: Christ 'intercedes with his Father, that' the Spirit 'may be bestowed on us as a fruit of his death' (*Of Communion*, Pt. II, ch. IX (Owen 1965: 198)). That's the Trinitarian picture, of how humankind got into a hole and is levered out of it. It is because intercession is offered for us by the *humanity* of Christ that humankind is not just compelled to pray for 'what God knows best'. Rather, when the 'Spirit breaks forth *out of the very core* of the believer's spiritual life, ... stirring him...and praying with him', we are led to pray for what we human beings most desire (Balthasar 1986: 77, my italics).

Liturgical Prayer: Basil of Caesarea (329/30-79)

The 'Breastplate' covers the speaker in the powers known from liturgy:

I arise today
Through the strength of Christ's birth with his baptism,
Through the strength of his crucifixion with his burial,
Through the strength of his resurrection with his ascension,
Through the strength of his descent for the Judgement Day.

'Before there was a "doctrine" of the Trinity, Christian prayers invoked the Holy Trinity' (Wilken 2003: 31). Pre-Constantinopolitan Christians had not yet figured out a notional system to match the reality of their liturgical prayer. They knew what invocation looks like, for the art of the Catacombs depicts the *Orans* in heaven: her opened hands

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are a picture of 'asking'. In Newman's terms, Father, Son, and Spirit were 'real' to the earthly *Orans* of the fourth century, and by that token, 'particular': she knew to invoke the divine persons 'one by one', but had not laid out the 'Dogma of the Holy Trinity' into a 'whole made up of many propositions' (Newman 1979: 122).

Basil of Caesarea uses baptism to draw out the objective implications of the 'real assents' we give in prayer. To confess the Three at baptism is to pronounce what Basil calls 'saving words'. '[H]earing the titles of the Spirit' invoked 'raise[s]' the *Orans* 'to the supreme nature', to the one God (*On the Holy Spirit* IX.22 (Basil of Caesarea 1895: 15)). Basil's argument is often paraphrased as being that, since Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are named as acting in baptism, unless we maintain their unity-in-divinity, we are polytheists. Basil contends that we *cannot* effectively invoke the operation of any one divine person without the others. Baptismal invocation of the Three entails belief that each of the Three equally empowers our salvation.

(p. 510) Basil claims that the Son and Holy Spirit enable us liturgically to worship the Father:

I testify to ... every man who calls upon God but rejects the Son, that his faith is vain; to every man that sets aside the Spirit, that his faith in the Father and the Son will be useless, for he cannot even hold it without the presence of the Spirit. For he who does not believe in the Spirit does not believe in the Son, and he who has not believed in the Son does not believe in the Father.... it is impossible to worship the Son, save by the Holy Ghost; impossible to call upon the Father, save by the Spirit of adoption.

Invocation implies need and that the one addressed can supply the matter: the Spirit, Basil says, 'is called holy, as the Father is holy, and the Son is holy, for to the creature holiness was brought in from without, but to the Spirit holiness is the fulfilment of nature, and it is for this reason that He is described not as being sanctified but as sanctifying'. This liturgically evidenced power creates the 'rule of faith' whereby Basil finds a pattern of divine, sanctifying 'operations' ascribed to the Spirit in Scripture, from 'conferr[ing] grace on creation' to the expulsion of demons and resurrection from the dead (*On the Holy Spirit* XI.27, XIX.49 (Basil of Caesarea 1895: 17-18, 30-1)). The baptismal invocation of the Spirit gives ground for meditation on the Spirit's sanctification within all creating and recreating acts.

Basil observes, 'There is close relationship with God through the Spirit, for "God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father"'. The Spirit's gift of filial intimacy with the Father fulfils our human vocation 'to be made like unto God'. The yearning to 'see truth' which prayer exhibits comes from the design which originated us. As the 'origin of sanctification' the Spirit is 'light perceptible to the mind, supplying ... through itself illumination ... in the search for truth'. As Image, or Son, God is spiritually perceptible. Basil depicts prayer as a beholding which shapes the *Orans*: 'it is impossible to behold the Image of the invisible God except by the enlightenment of the Spirit'. The earthly

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Orans is 'lifted up in soul' by the whole Trinity (*On The Holy Spirit* XIX, I, IX, XXVI (Basil of Caesarea 1895: 31, 2, 15, 40)).

Prayer as Worship: Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

St Patrick asks God to clear the air of demonic powers by teaching him wisdom:

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,

(p. 511) God's host to save me
From snares of demons,
From temptations of vices,
From everyone who shall wish me ill,
Afar and anear,
Alone and in multitude.

Augustine attributed a 'clouded' ... 'intuition' of Trinitarian wisdom to the Neo-Platonist philosophers. The Pythagoreans and Ionians having developed philosophies of nature, and Socrates having taught the ethical life, Plato 'united' the two, creating the 'trio' of 'moral philosophy', relating to 'action', 'natural philosophy, devoted to speculation', and 'rational philosophy'. When Augustine says that Plato's disciples 'may ... have some such a conception of God as to find in him the cause of existence, the principle of reason, and the rule of life', he means that they have in a sense found Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If Augustine says, human beings are 'so created as to attain' to the one true God, 'without whom no being exists' (the Father), 'no teaching instructs' (the Word), 'no experience profits' (the Spirit), 'then we should seek him in whom for us all things are held together' (the Father), 'we should find him in whom for us all things are certain' (the Word), 'we should love him, in whom is found all goodness' (the Spirit). Augustine's common ground with the Platonists stops there. For, as he complains, they 'thought it right to render worship to a plurality of Gods'. He contends that these gods are immoral, indeed, demonic, and it is not intelligent 'to humble yourself before a being whom you would hate to resemble in the conduct of your life and to worship one whom you would refuse to imitate. For ... the supremely important thing in religion is to model oneself on the object of one's worship'. It took Augustine's conscious Christian faith to take the Platonic notion of the 'copy's' imitation of its archetype and redefine it as worship. Hellenistic Platonists practised spiritual exercises, designed to 'immortalize' their souls. Augustine's argument

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is vulgarly intended to show that 'all men desire happiness', that all 'men fear to die', and that exercising oneself on the One will not in fact avert this unhappy fate. Suggesting an analogy between our own existence, and the eternal existing of God, Augustine invites his readers to 'gaze at his image in ourselves, and "returning to ourselves" like the younger son in the Gospel story, ... rise up and go back to him from whom we have departed in our sinning. There our existence will have no death, our knowledge no error, our love no obstacle' (*The City of God* X.29; VIII.2-4; VIII.12, 17; X.1; XI.27-8 (Augustine 1972: 414, 299-304, 316 and 324, 371, 361, 463)). Augustine *proliferates* philosophical meditation. By equating contemplation with worship, he shows it belongs to the everyday *Orans*.

Augustine pictures worship as propitiation, offered 'by our priest, his only-begotten Son'. The 'sacrifice of humility and praise' is given to God 'on the altar of the heart ... and the flame ... is the burning fire of charity'. For Augustine, Christ, in the form of the servant, is the very form of humility. Christian sacrifice is the giving back of the human form to its source: 'By our election of him as our goal—or rather by our re-election (for we had lost him by our neglect)... we direct our course towards him with love' (that is, by the Spirit). Worship 're-forms' the human person in the form of its maker: 'the soul ... become[s] (p. 512) a sacrifice when it offers itself to God, so that it may be kindled by the fire of love, and ... lose the "form" of worldly desire', and may be 're-formed by submission to God as to the unchangeable "form", thus becoming acceptable to God because of what it has received from his beauty'. By his sacrificial reception of our 'form', Christ returns it to God: 'the true Mediator (in so far as he "took the form of a servant" and was made "the mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus") receives the sacrifice "in the form of God", in union with the Father, with whom he is one God' (*The City of God* X.3, 6, (Augustine 1972: 375, 379, 400)).

Augustine argues that it's impossible to catch ourselves out *beginning* to remember, know and love ourselves: the mind 'always remember[s] itself and always ... understand[s] and love[s] itself'. The propulsion to gravitate toward the Trinity has been there 'from the moment this great and wonderful' human 'nature begins to be': the 'image' of the Trinity 'is always there, whether it is so worn away as to be almost nothing ... or clear and beautiful'. Augustine knows by faith that the image needs to invoke God to escape the fox-hole of sin, where death awaits it. When he claims that 'the worship of God is man's wisdom' he means that we attain happiness not by travelling in a circle, back to ourselves, but by returning to our maker. He says that the 'trinity of the mind is not really the image of God because the mind remembers and understands and loves *itself*, but because it is also able to remember and understand and love him by whom it was made. And when it does this, it becomes wise' (*De Trinitate*, X.4.19, XIV.2.6, XIV.1.1, XIV.4.15 (Augustine 1991: 299, 374, 370-1, 383)).

Petitionary Prayer: Thomas Aquinas

St Patrick sets his 'Breastplate' on in the presence of the angels and saints of God:

I arise today

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Through the strength of the love of Cherubim,
In obedience of angels,
In the service of archangels,
In hope of resurrection to meet with reward,
In prayers of patriarchs,
In predictions of prophets,
In preaching of apostles,
In faith of confessors,
In innocence of holy virgins,
In deeds of righteous men.

St Thomas observes that ‘the greater the charity of the saints in heaven, the more they pray for wayfarers ... and the more closely they are united to God, the more are their prayers efficacious’ (Thomas Aquinas, *ST II-II*, q.83, a.11). Commenting on Paul’s statement that he ‘remembers’ his converts before God, Thomas notes that, ‘when the saints (p. 513) pray for certain people, they are somehow presented to His gaze’ (Thomas Aquinas, *Romans Commentary*, paragraph 83): the prayer ‘lays the request on the tabernacle’, before God. As the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in Beijing came to their bloody end, in June 1989, I cut the photograph of the student standing in front of a line of tanks from *The Times* and placed it under the tabernacle. Thomas says that Christ ‘intercede[s] for us in two ways. In one way ... his intercession for us is his will that we be saved [Jn 17:24] ... In another way he intercedes by presenting to his Father’s gaze the human nature assumed for us and the mysteries celebrated in it’ (Thomas Aquinas, *Romans Commentary*, paragraphs 83 and 720, citing Heb. 9:24).

Modern Thomist philosophers have emphasized that Aquinas defined prayer as petition. Thomist philosophers want to show how it makes sense to request things from a God who has from eternity decided all outcomes. Writing against what he calls ‘a loss of nerve about prayer as petition’, Simon Tugwell claims that Thomas successfully produced a ‘demonstration that petition does make sense’. Thomas ‘vindicates the theological and religious seriousness of the ordinary prayers of ordinary Christians’ by categorizing prayers as secondary causes, which God uses to achieve outcomes in the same way as he uses physical events to do so (Tugwell 1987: 47). When Thomas says, ‘our motive in praying is, not that we may change the divine disposition, but that, by our prayers, we may obtain what God has appointed’ (Thomas Aquinas, *ST II-II*, q.83, a.2, *resp.*), he means that God eternally folds our prayers into the divine scheme, giving our prayers the ‘dignity of causality’ (Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.23, a.8, ad2).

A philosophical reading of Thomas’s statement that ‘we pray, ... that, by our prayers we may obtain what God has appointed’ takes it to mean, in general, that prayer is our permission to enter the engine room. This is linked to Thomas’s theology of the Trinity by the *humanity* of Christ. When Thomas says that God allows our prayers to have the ‘dignity of causality’, he is talking about predestination (Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q.23, a.8, ad2). Theologically, Thomas is thinking of the spot in the engine room where our petitioning personalities are forged. He says it is fitting that the person of the Son should become Incarnate because, like a ‘craftsman’s mental word’, the Son is the ‘exemplar for all creation’, and

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especially of the human, as an 'intelligent being', and because the 'purpose' of the Incarnation is to achieve 'the predestination of those who are preordained for a heavenly inheritance.... Through him who is Son by nature men share by adoption in a likeness to his Sonship*Those whom he foreknew he predestined to share the image of his Son*' (Thomas Aquinas, *ST III*, q.3, a.8). Thomas claims it was more beautiful for God to free humanity by means of the Passion than by 'dispossess[ing] the devil by sheer power' because 'in this way a greater dignity accrues to man. Man has been overcome ... by the devil. But it is a man who overcomes the devil' (Thomas Aquinas, *ST III*, q.46, a.3). Through the passion of Christ, a man becomes by grace the cause of our salvation. Christ's human nature is the pattern of our predestination (Thomas Aquinas, *ST III*, q.24, a.1 and a.3). Christ's humanity is the junction between God and the human *Orans*. It is by analogy to the dignity of his predestined humanity that our prayers are taken as 'secondary causes'. The theological basis of Thomas's argument that our prayers are allowed to be causes is Christ's 'election' by the Father: 'the predestination of Christ', he says, 'who was predestined (p. 514) to be the son of God by nature, is the measure and rule of our life, and therefore of our predestination, because we are predestined to adoptive sonship, which is a participation and image of natural sonship' (Thomas Aquinas, *Romans Commentary*, paragraph 48). For Thomas, petitioning God is certainly 'a way of getting things done' (Tugwell 1987: 37), but that is because prayer is how we invoke our adoptive sonship, in Christ. The Spirit 'coaches' us to pray in love, which means to ask for what we need to become God's children.

Trinitarianism without a Prayer

Recent scholars have suggested that the Trinity was first marginalized not with Schleiermacher, but in the era of the Test Acts (Dixon 2003: 208–9). In place of John Owen's meditation on the economic operations of Father, Son, and Spirit came disputations in defence of Trinitarianism. These treatises went down before the Unitarians' counterblasts like wooden ducks. For the 'rule of faith' no longer 'functioned as a *means of grace* to assist people' in coming 'to know, love' and 'interact with ... the triune God'. Instead, Scripture was conceived as 'a source containing clear and intelligible propositions to be consulted' before giving 'intellectual assent'. There was 'a shift from *doxological* to *epistemological* activities' as the way to approach the Trinity (Vickers 2008: 104, 29–30, 37).

Samuel Clarke delivered the Boyle Lectures of 1704, going out to bat for the *Being and Attributes of God* against Spinoza, deism, and atheism. Dividing atheists into three types, the 'ignorant and stupid', the 'debauched', and those who have argued themselves into the condition, Clarke addressed only the latter, as the only group 'capable of being reasoned with'. He argued *a priori* that there must be a self-existent being, which causes all else: for 'to arise out of nothing absolutely without any cause' is 'a plain contradiction'. Clarke deduced that the self-existent being must have necessity, incomprehensibility, eternity (though not in the manner ascribed to it by the 'Schoolmen'), infinity (ditto), unity, intelligence, liberty and choice, and infinite power. God must be a 'free and voluntary agent' because 'intelligence without liberty ... is no intelligence at all'. Clarke set out logi-

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cally to demonstrate that God is one person, and he defines a person as an intelligent and free agent (Clarke 1704, ed. Vailati 1998: 3, 12, 31-3, 46).

This was bad news for the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712), Clarke drew the logical conclusions that 'The Father alone is Self-existent', that 'the Son is not self-existent; but derives his being, and all his attributes, from the Father, as from the supreme cause', and that

Generation, when applied to God, is but a figurative word, signifying ... immediate derivation of being and life from God himself.... Among men, a son does not, properly speaking, derive his being from his father; Father ... signifying ... an instrumental, not an efficient cause: But God, when he is stiled Father, must necessarily be understood to be [αἴτια] a True and Proper cause, really and efficiently giving Life. Which consideration, clearly removes the argument usually drawn from the equality between a Father and Son upon earth. (Clarke 1712: 123, 136-7)

(p. 515) The frontispiece to his book shows how Clarke interprets Trinitarian prayer. Below the title, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, we read 'That you will continually pray to God the Father, by the Mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost' ('Exhortation in the Office for ordaining of Priests'). In interaction with his own copy of the *Book of Common Prayer*, Clarke sedulously effaced any trace of lese-majesty with respect to the Supreme Cause. He turned the doxology ('Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost'), which follows the Psalms, into 'Glory be to God by Jesus Christ through the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost' (Dixon 2003: 33). When Clarke's private version was printed, the redactors divined Clarke's intent, and the doxology following Psalm 95 became 'Glory be to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God' (*The Book of Common Prayer, Revised* (Clarke 1823: 6)).

Clarke was criticized by Christian and Unitarian alike, compelled to foreswear discussing the Trinity, and finally harpooned as a tritheist by the Jesuit Edward Hawarden's question, 'Could the Father annihilate the Son and the Spirit?' (Dixon 2003: 203). His schema is Tritheistic because it effectively accords to the Son and Spirit the 'dignity' of second causality. It is as 'lesser deities' that Son and Spirit 'carry' the prayer to the omnipotent Father. Clarke's defence of the revealed character of Christianity from Christ's miracles was an exercise in 'extreme evidentialism' (Burns 1981: 99-100). But this use of Christ's miracles shows that Christ is a 'sign' of God, not that he is God.

John Owen assumed by faith that the 'Schoolmen' had accurately denoted the metaphysical being which the economic 'offices' of the persons of the Trinity exhibit (Owen, *Of Communion*, Pt. II, chs. 1 and 2). Samuel Clarke contends that, outside the 'personal characters, offices, powers and attributes delivered in Scripture', '[a]ll reasonings ... beyond what is strictly demonstrable by the most evident ... light of nature ... are ... but probable hypotheses' (Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, Pt. II, 4). Commenting on the 'methodical processes of inference' by which Clarke demonstrated the interconnection of the Supreme Cause's attributes, Newman wondered if they would perturb a

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reasonable atheist. Such majuscule 'words' as Perfection, Knowledge, Eternity, and Justice, he says, 'speak to those who understand the speech. To the mere barren intellect they are but the pale ghosts of notions'. In order to be 'personally prepared' for Clarke's demonstration of the logic of theism, Newman claims, one must not only think the abstract terms but imagine their force as concrete nouns. 'We must', he says, 'rest in the thought of the Eternal, Omnipresent, and All-knowing, rather than of Eternity, Omnipresence, and Omniscience' (Newman 1979: 249-50).

John Owen says that 'Everything of Christ is beautiful', and the love of this beauty is evident in his writing. He interprets the Song of Songs Christologically, and there is a sensuality in his description of the divine eros. Owen writes, 'The Father loves us, and ... sheds ... the Holy Spirit richly upon us, through Jesus Christ'. 'In the pouring out of his love, there is not one drop falls besides the Lord Christ.' 'Love in the Father is like honey in the flower;—it must be in the comb before it be for our use' (*Of Communion*, Pt. II, Dig. I; Pt. II, ch. I; Pt. I, ch. III (Owen 1965: 74, 40-1, 27)). Von Balthasar observes that despising beauty is tantamount to being unable to pray (von Balthasar 1992: 18).

(p. 516) **Real or Imaginative Assent: John Henry Newman (1801-93)**

In the 'Breastplate', Patrick imagines the created cosmos as mirroring God's beauty:

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven:
Light of sun,
Radiance of moon,
Splendour of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftness of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.

Each of these singulars can imaginatively represent to us a 'facet' of God's perfections. But, according to Newman, we cannot *notionally* conceive of all God's perfections 'in a single blow'. What 'holds of the Divine Attributes', he says 'holds also of the Holy Trinity in Unity'. So far as we attempt to *think* the unity of the Trinity 'the notion and the thing part company': the unity of the Trinity is a mystery to our generalizing minds. But neither Scripture nor the Creeds call the 'dogma' of the 'Three in One' a 'mystery'. The reason is that the Creeds evoke not intellectual or notional, but *imaginative* assent. Newman says, 'the Creeds have a place in the Ritual; they are devotional acts, and of the nature of prayers addressed to God'. Real or imaginative assent is addressed to singulars, and each of the propositions in the Creeds, like 'the Son is God' or 'the Spirit is God', refers to a concrete singular reality. Feasts like Christmas and Easter are liturgical exegeses of 'the Son is God', The 'breviary offices for Pentecost' create 'a place in the imagination and the

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heart' for 'the Holy Spirit is God'. As Newman sees it, 'theology', the realm of notional assent to truth, 'has to do with the Dogma of the Holy Trinity as a whole made up of many propositions', whilst 'Religion', the domain of real assent, 'has to do with each of these separate propositions ... and lives and thrives in the contemplation of them' (Newman 1979: 117, 56, 121-2).

Contemplative Prayer: Hans Urs von Balthasar

The most sung verse of the 'Breastplate' speaks of the tangible face in whom we pray:

Christ to shield me today
Against poison, against burning,
Against drowning, against wounding,
(p. 517) So that there may come to me abundance of reward.
Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Speaking of meditative contemplation, von Balthasar observes that we 'seek out the Lord's earthly form' ... 'in prayer' ... 'to see, hear and touch' ... 'the love of God' ... 'in the humble form in which it offers itself to man'. The cornerstone of Christian prayer is the figure of Jesus, where history opens into the eternal Trinity. Using Kant's terminology, von Balthasar argues that 'Since concepts are empty apart from perceptual content, we cannot draw near to God and his threefold mystery ... except through the Incarnation of Christ. The concepts of the doctrine of the Trinity, divorced from Jesus' relationships with the Father and the Spirit, ring hollow. They do not foster contemplation of the divine; at most they allow the logical mind to indulge in self-congratulation. Conversely, ... perception apart from concepts is blind, as is evident in that type of contemplation and exegesis of the gospel ... which fails to see, hear and touch, in the historical manifestation ... the manifestation of the truth and the life of God himself' (Balthasar 1986: 129, 271).

The Psalms contain what we could call 'invocations followed by meditations': first an urgent appeal to God, followed by a description of God's saving help. These are the prayers which Jesus prayed. Von Balthasar speaks of how it 'is in the Son that the Father can predestine ... us to be his children, fellow children with the one, eternal Child, who ... intervenes as sponsor'. As we advance in prayer, we learn that 'all' our 'stammering is only an answer to God's speaking' to us: for 'It was God who spoke first.... Just think of the Our Father which we address to him every day: is not this his own word? Were we not taught it by the Son of God, who is God and the Word of God' (Balthasar 1986: 44, 14). Definition

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of Christian prayer is necessarily circular, because our being as praying creatures is given to us by God: it is Trinitarian because God is Trinitarian.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Balthasar (1986); Corbon (1988).

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Francesca Murphy

Francesca Aran Murphy is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Notre Dame. She is the author of numerous books, including *Christ the Form of Beauty* (1995), *God is Not a Story* (2007) and a theological commentary on I Samuel (2010). She is currently editing a new series for Bloomsbury Academic called *Illuminating Modernity*. The first book in the series, of which she is a co-author, is called *Illuminating Faith*.

The Trinity and Feminism

Nonna Verna Harrison

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This article examines the relation between feminism and the doctrine of the Trinity. It highlights feminists' concerns about traditional Trinitarian theology's use of masculine language about God. It argues that the use of feminine metaphors to describe God should not lead to a rejection or replacement of the names for the Trinity given in Scripture and tradition, since divine paternity does not mean that the immaterial Father is male. It suggests that the generation of the Son is a model for both human motherhood and fatherhood.

Keywords: feminism, Trinity, masculine language, Trinitarian theology, Scripture, divine paternity, motherhood, fatherhood

TRADITIONAL Trinitarian theology uses masculine language about God that feminists often find troubling. The Church speaks of the unoriginate *Father* as the eternal source of divinity, the eternal Son who speaks as Word from the Father's silence and becomes incarnate as Jesus Christ, and the Father eternally *begetting* the Son. Such language can make the Trinity appear to feminists, to quote Karen Blixen, as 'the most deadly dull of all male companies' (Svendsen 1974, cited in Ware 1986: 6). In an effort to be more inclusive, the Holy Spirit is often said to be feminine. This ultimately does not solve the problem for feminists. When the Spirit is thought to hide within or behind the Father, Son, and human persons, revealing their excellence, not her/his own (Lossky 1976), the concept of a female Spirit appears to provide divine authorization for human social structures in which women are called to support and enable men but their own voices cannot be heard. Accordingly, feminist theologians have sought, in various ways, to find alternative names for all of the divine persons. Sallie McFague (1987) speaks of God as mother, lover, and friend; Elizabeth Johnson (1994) envisages the Trinity as three kinds of wisdom: Spirit-Sophia, Jesus-Sophia, and Mother-Sophia.

However, in addition to the language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Christian theologians throughout history have spoken of the Trinity in feminine terms. In the second century, Clement of Alexandria speaks of Christ's human body and blood as the milk that

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feeds his faithful children and of the divine Logos as the Father's breast that conveys the milk of life to us. Here, the mother and her breast form a parallel to a better-known second-century metaphor for Father and Son, the mind and its speech. Clement also speaks of Christ's suffering on the Cross as the labour pains in which Christ, as mother, gives birth to the Christian people (Harrison 2003; Wood 1954: 39–46, 277–8). In his *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, the fourth-century theologian Gregory of Nyssa finds feminine images for the three divine persons in the rich metaphorical language of the book he interprets. In the Seventh Homily, he understands the bridegroom's mother as God the Father, since here 'mother' and 'father' have the same meaning because there is no gender in the divine nature. Elsewhere, Gregory also speaks of the Father as the 'life-giving mother' of humanity. In the First Homily on the Song, the Son is identified as (p. 520) Sophia, the female wisdom figure in the book of Proverbs. In the Fifteenth Homily, the Holy Spirit is named as a mother dove giving birth to the bride who is a daughter dove (Harrison 1996: 39–40; McCambley 1987). In the fifteenth century, the English mystic Julian of Norwich returns to some of the themes found in Clement, though a direct influence seems unlikely. She speaks of the second person of the Trinity as Son and Bridegroom but also as Mother. 'And so in our making', she says, 'God almighty is our loving Father, God all wisdom is our loving Mother, with the love and goodness of the Holy Spirit, which is all one God, one Lord' (Julian 1978: 293). She sees the same Creator at work in our redemption: 'Thus in our Father, God almighty, we have our being, and in our Mother of mercy we have our reforming and our restoring, ... and through the rewards and the gifts of grace of the Holy Spirit we are fulfilled' (Julian 1978: 294–5).

Theological Language and the Trinity

In the early Church and in the Middle Ages, a recognition that words and texts have multiple levels of meaning and that religious language is often metaphorical or allegorical was intrinsic to people's ways of thought, writing, and prayer. Because Clement, Gregory, Julian, and their contemporaries recognized these different levels of meaning and saw them in context, they had no difficulties with combining traditional and feminine language for the persons of the Trinity. Julian's medieval readers were not shocked if she called Christ 'Son' and 'Mother' in the same sentence, or named Jesus as 'Mother', then referred back to 'him'. In allegorical or symbolic discourse, traditional concepts for the Trinity and feminine language were not perceived as threatening each other. Feminine language was unusual but provided insights that added to more familiar concepts.

Yet people also weighed carefully the meanings, presuppositions, and implications of all language about God and critiqued what they saw as misleading. It was important to be clear about the distinction between doctrinal language, which had been honed through the debates surrounding the ecumenical councils, and metaphorical language that applied the names of countless created things to the activities of the Creator. Feminists and their theological opponents today can perhaps learn from the example of their forbears to be careful but less anxious as they formulate and utilize 'inclusive' language about God.

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In addressing issues of gender in Orthodox theology, let us recognize that God transcends our human perceptions and concepts of created things. What we know of God, even if our knowledge should exceed our experience of the created universe, forever remains less than what we do not know of God. All theological affirmations are surrounded by mystery and remain open to the presence of what surpasses our understanding. So we can always build upon what we know as we learn more, we can add to traditional language without attempting to replace it.

However, the apophatic character of our reflection must be combined with an unequivocal acceptance of divine revelation and of the doctrinal affirmations that use concepts to express its content. These affirmations follow from the reality of the Incarnation (p. 521) and are indispensable to Christian identity. Orthodox apophaticism must not become an excuse for agnosticism, and it does not justify replacing the concepts of God given to us in Scripture and Tradition with others of our own devising. So as the Fathers of the fourth century affirmed against their Arian and Eunomian opponents who wanted to find different names for God, the Trinity must be confessed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa, who found feminine names for the three divine persons in the Song of Songs, makes this point unequivocally in his *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession*. He says that a replacement of the names Father, Son, and Spirit by others amounts to a denial of God revealed in Christ and a direct challenge to his authority (*Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (henceforth cited as *GNO*) 2: 314). He notes that these names are in no way interchangeable with the many other words and symbols used to speak of God in Scripture. So he adds to these traditional names, but he does not replace them.

A patristic understanding of language about the Trinity can be summarized by distinguishing three things:

- (1) the strict unnameability of the divine *essence*;
- (2) the revealed names of the three *persons*; and
- (3) the many other names taken from the created world, ranging from the sublimity of light, life, and wisdom to the ordinariness of bread and rock.

This third kind of language speaks of God's creative, providential, and saving activity in the world outside his own essence, where he is manifest in and through things he has made, having clothed himself, as the poet and theologian Ephrem the Syrian has said, in a garment of words (Brock 1990: 45–9). Such words, often metaphorical, name the divine energies, to the vast yet limited extent that they are nameable. So the divine essence transcends gender along with everything else created. The divine energies—the manifestations and activities of the three divine persons—can ultimately be named for anything God creates or for anything God does in the creation. Thus, to call God 'Mother' is to say God acts toward us as a mother would. None of this compromises Gregory's strictness regarding the proper names of the persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet it allows in principle for the discovery based on Scripture that God does sometimes act like a mother, and these activities can be described in feminine language. 'Mother' and related feminine terms become tesserae in a mosaic icon of many symbols, but they should be viewed in

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the context of the whole, with all the cautions and qualifications that entails, not given a privileged place by themselves.

Orthodox theologians have only begun the work of reflecting within their tradition about feminist questions and responding with new ways of expressing their theology. This task is best approached slowly and cautiously. Gender concepts and symbols in patristic theology and biblical exegesis and in Orthodox spirituality, liturgy, and iconography are complex and subtly nuanced and often have multiple levels of meaning. We need to consider the presuppositions and consequences of statements we make about gender. A statement in one area can impact theological affirmations in other areas, since all of theology is interconnected. For example, if different genders and attributes or activities corresponding to them were ascribed to different persons in the Trinity, as in (p. 522) the concept of a male Father and Son and a female Spirit, this would compromise our confession of the unity of God and of the divine energy. Similarly, we cannot rename the divine persons as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier because all three of them participate in all of these activities. At the Protestant seminary where I teach, students habitually call the Father 'God' and the Son 'Jesus'. As a result, when introduced to Athanasius and Nicaea they may confuse the whole Trinity with the Father, since both are named 'God'. And they may have difficulty grasping that the divine Logos existed with the Father from all eternity, and only when he became incarnate was he given the human name 'Jesus'. Early Christians struggled to clarify the meanings of these theological terms. To replace them is to lose the clarity of our Christian theological heritage.

Feminists who want to replace the names Father, Son, and Spirit with others or define God's essence as feminine disagree fundamentally with the Orthodox Church. And yet, as I will argue here, traditional Orthodox understandings of God and the human need not be oppressive to women. In this essay, we will seek to explain these understandings more fully in ways that accord with Christ's love for all human persons. We will discuss the three topics in Trinitarian theology that are most apt to concern feminists: the Father and his begetting, the maleness of Christ; and the Trinity as a model for human community.

God the Father

In thinking of God the Father, one is struck by his awesome humility. From eternity to eternity, he gives his own essence, all that he is and has, all his attributes including his sovereign authority and power, to the Son and the Holy Spirit. He does not withhold anything for himself alone but remains unique simply as the Source of the Godhead which he shares with the other two. His essence, his uncreated radiance, and all his activities are theirs also.

In the Trinity there exists unity, equality, and consubstantiality, yet also a certain hierarchical order. The Father is the source of the Son begotten of him and the Spirit proceeding from him. The divine energy is one yet is the presence of the three persons, and it proceeds from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Within their unanimity of mind and will, the Son and Spirit are said to obey the Father but as equals and in a free

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and sovereign way. The Father is truly the origin of everything. When the Son obeys him, offering all that he is back to him, he is imitating and responding to the Father's original generosity, his giving all that he is to the Son in the eternal act of begetting. Given this mutuality, it is inappropriate to overemphasize a contrast between paternal authority and filial obedience in God. Such a Father would not want his own authority affirmed at the expense of his Son's authority, or that of his Spirit. Gregory of Nazianzus makes this clear in his *Oration on Holy Baptism*:

I would like to say the Father is 'greater' [Jn 14:28], from whom indeed equality and being come to those who are equal.... And I fear to call him the origin, lest I make him (p. 523) the origin of inferiors and insult him through this preeminence; for it is not glory to the one from whom they come to abase those who come from him ... For the 'greater' does not apply to the nature but to the cause. For nothing of those who are one in essence is greater or less in essence. (*Oration* 40.43, SC 358: 298; Harrison 2008: 138)

It is difficult to hold the concept of hierarchy together with the concepts of unity of essence and will along with personal freedom, equality, mutual co-inherence and self-giving. This is perhaps why the fourth-century Church had to struggle to affirm clearly and authentically the doctrine of the Trinity. The Fathers laboured to express with integrity the knowledge of God lived and experienced by the Christian community.

So is divine fatherhood a model for human fatherhood, since humans are made in God's image? Eph. 3:15 expresses the idea that a human father is in some very real sense an icon of the first person of the Trinity. This scriptural concept is troubling to feminists, since it seems to suggest that male parenthood enjoys a unique closeness to the divine that is not shared by motherhood. This interpretation could be taken to imply that Christians worship a male deity, though such a crude doctrine of God is incompatible with the apophatic approach of the Greek Fathers. Yet the relationship between divine and human fatherhood calls for further explanation. It is best understood when placed in a broader context.

In the fourth century, the Arians and Eunomians accused their Orthodox opponents of viewing God's fatherhood in a crassly anthropomorphic way. Athanasius and the Cappadocians replied that the language of Father, Son, and divine generation must be understood in a way worthy of the divine. That is, generation within the Trinity does not involve gender or sexuality, which belong to humans and animals, nor is it subject to conditions of time, space, matter, planning, effort, passivity, division, or incompleteness, all of which characterize created modes of existence. Rather, in the divine, 'Father' means the source of Godhead who has no prior origin and the one who generates the Son. Divine 'generation' means that the Son comes directly from the Father's own person and is consubstantial with him. This generation is eternal and immaterial and occurs without passion, in all the senses of the word *πάθος* including passivity and instability as well as sensual pleasure or pain (Athanasius, *On the Decree of the Nicene Council* 11-12, in Opitz 1934: 2.1.9-11; Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 29.4, SC 250: 182-4; *Oration* 29.8, SC 250: 190-2;

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Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 3.1-2, GNO 2: 30-1, 60, 73; *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession*, GNO 2: 348ff.).

Clearly, this fatherhood is not a matter of maleness. Divine generation is unique, and how it occurs remains incomprehensible. It is not a heavenly projection of human fatherhood; rather, human fatherhood is its image. This is the point Athanasius sees as being made in Eph. 3:15, as he says in the *First Discourse against the Arians*, 23: 'For God does not imitate the human, but rather because God properly and alone truly is Father of his Son, humans also are named fathers of their own children. For from him "is every fatherhood in heaven and on earth named"' (PG 26: 60 C). Thus, the name 'Father' and the paradigmatic mode of paternal generation belong originally to God, and human fathers share them by imitating and participating to the extent possible in his manner of fatherhood.

(p. 524) However, the male parent is not the closest human likeness to the divine Father, whose begetting can be seen to differ from both the masculine and feminine modes of human generation in many ways while being like each of them in certain respects. Divine generation is unlike human fatherhood in that the Father does not implant his seed into another being in order to produce an offspring. It is unlike human motherhood in that he does not receive seed from another. As Athanasius says, 'Nothing flows out from the immaterial', that is the Father's divine nature, 'nor does anything flow into him, as with humans' (*On the Decree of the Nicene Council* 11, in Opitz 1934: 2.1.10). Yet like a human father, he is the source of the Son's life, and like a human mother he brings forth the Son from within himself. The Son's divine being comes entirely from him, without the collaboration of another parent.

It is evident that the closest human analogue to this mode of generation is actually the virginal birth-giving of the Theotokos. She brings forth the same Son in time, and his human nature comes entirely from her, without any contribution from a human father. In God the Father and in the Virgin Mother, each of whom brings forth the offspring alone, there is a wholeness, purity, and integrity of parenthood. The patristic concept of virginity includes these characteristics of wholeness, purity, and integrity along with absence of sexual involvement. The fruit of such a mode of parenthood is also wholeness, the absolute completeness and perfection of Christ's two natures, divine and human, which originate in these two virginal generations (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Poem* 1.2.1, PG 37: 523-4; and Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity* 2, GNO 8: 1.253). In several places Gregory of Nazianzus says that the Son is generated in eternity without a mother and in time without a father (*Oration* 29.19, SC 250: 218; *Oration* 38.2, SC 358: 106; *Poem* 1.1.9, PG 37: 459-62). He explains further that the generation of other human children involves division and incompleteness since they are the offspring of a pair, whereas Christ as human comes entirely from the Virgin, and as divine he comes entirely from the Father (*Oration* 29.4-5, SC 250: 184).

In the fifth century, this parallel between the Father and the Virgin officially entered the Church's dogma through its inclusion in the Chalcedonian Definition. In classical and patristic Greek, the same words, *ceμμy* and *coemmsir*, name the engendering of an off-

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spring by either a male or a female parent (Liddell and Scott 1968: s.v; Lampe 1961: s.v.), so that in English they are often translated begetting when a father is the subject and bearing or giving birth in the case of a mother. We have seen that gender was not at issue in the standard patristic concept of divine generation. Accordingly, the Fathers of Chalcedon used a single verb to name both the divine and human generations of our Lord Jesus Christ. The definition says that he is 'generated (cemmghœmta = begotten or born?) before the ages from the Father in his divinity and in the last days ... of Mary the Virgin Theotokos in his humanity' (Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003: 180).

Interestingly, the idea that the divine generation transcends gender was expressed explicitly by a local western council held at Toledo in 675, which issued the following statement: 'For neither from nothing, nor from any other substance, but from the womb of the Father (*de Patris utero*), that is, from his substance, we must believe that the Son was begotten or born (*genitus vel natus*)' (Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003: 716; see (p. 525) Moltmann 1981; Soskice 1992). Although the feminine image of the womb is central to this passage, it goes on to name the Son's generation in language appropriate to both male and female parents. This means that God's fatherhood is a unique mode of generation characterized by a wholeness that includes as well as transcending aspects of both forms of human parenthood. This conciliar text is not authoritative in the Orthodox Church, but it illustrates graphically how the language of motherhood comes closest in human terms to conveying an important aspect of what occurs in the divine generation. The same metaphor of the Father's female anatomy is present in the Church's repeated use of Ps. 109:3 (LXX) in the Byzantine rite Christmas services. When we sing, 'From the womb before the morning star have I begotten (or borne, ©necœmmgs>) thee', to celebrate Christ's Incarnation, this refers to his eternal generation from the Father, his eternally foreordained generation in time from his Mother, and the ontological relationship linking them as two births of a single person. An appreciation of the close analogy between the Father and that human parent whose generation is most like his, the Mother of God, is intrinsic to the faith and worship of the Church.

The sanctity and likeness to God of human motherhood are firmly established through the Theotokos. Her parenthood is the most exact human icon of the divine fatherhood. Because of the way he is begotten from the Father, it was fitting for the Son to become incarnate through virginal conception and birth from a woman rather than in any other human way. So to call God Father is not to make an anthropomorphic assertion of his maleness, since the content of his name 'Father' is understood through the character of his generation of the Son. Divine fatherhood is not a projection of the human; rather all earthly fatherhood is named after the divine Father and thus called to be his icon. Divine fatherhood expresses the Father's generous and respectful relationship to his Son, and human fatherhood is called to become an icon of that manner of parental relationship to offspring. And together with the Theotokos all mothers are called to be icons of the Father in a similar way. Through her, the principle expressed in Eph. 3:15 can be extended to all parents.

Christ as Male

Because there is no gender in the divine nature, the maleness of Christ is located in his humanity, not his divinity. So it is more an issue of Christology and theological anthropology than a Trinitarian issue. I have discussed it in Harrison (1998) but will add a few observations here.

Christ's humanity is more important soteriologically than his maleness, and therefore more important to his person and work. He saves humankind by sharing everyone's humanity and uniting it with the divine, first in himself and then in his mystical body. So a serious question arises: since he did not assume femaleness, how can he save women? The Church's answer is that he dwelt in his mother's womb and was born of her, and thereby he united with God and thus healed and sanctified what is distinctive in woman's biology, namely what belongs to the reproductive process. Cyril of Alexandria explains how the curse that Eve suffered due to the fall is healed by Christ's birth:

Understand that the Only-begotten was made flesh, that he endured to be born of a woman for our sakes, to put away the curse pronounced upon the first woman. For to her it was said, 'In pain you shall bring forth children' [Gen. 3:16]; for it was as bringing forth unto death, that they endured the sting of death. But because a woman has brought forth in the flesh Emmanuel, who is life, the power of the curse is loosed. (Smith 1983: 52)

So both genders are united with God in him, and both, insofar as they differ, are saved. Augustine suggests this in one of his Christmas sermons, which says of Christ, 'Since he had created both sexes, that is, male and female, he wished to honor in his birth both sexes, which he had come to save'. The text adds that he also wished to honour both because both fell, so God has not wronged either men or women: 'In regard to neither sex, then, should we do injury to the Creator; the nativity of the Lord encouraged both to hope for salvation. The glory of the male sex is in the humanity of Christ; the glory of womanhood is in the Mother of Christ' (*Sermon* 190.2, PL 38: 1008; Muldowney 1977: 24-5). So if the Saviour had been born female of a woman, could the male have been left out of the process of incarnation and salvation? He is Saviour of both women and men.

Christ can be called both the Father's voice and the Father's breast, as he brings us both Word and Sacrament. He comes to us both as Bridegroom and as Mother, so we become both his beloved and his children. Symbolic language speaks of Christ in terms of various human family relationships, since he gives us all the kinds of love that come to us from different people in different ways. Our responses can be diverse, too. As his body we can have him acting through us, as we act along with him. Also, as his bride we encounter him as the beloved Other, who sometimes comes to us in the people we meet. The first is symbolically a masculine role, the second is symbolically feminine. Yet as we live in the Church's community, both men and women fulfil both of these roles in different situations. Therefore, Christ's role as Bridegroom does not limit either women or men in their access to him.

The Trinity as Community

Orthodox and western theologians today often believe that the *imago Dei* is located in humankind as a whole, so that human community images the Trinity. Community is thus an important facet of the multidimensional divine image. Since human beings are persons, whose identity is grounded in their relationality with others, they are images of the divine persons. Accordingly, people are inherently equal in their mutuality and are created for a free, loving, and mutually respectful communion and collaboration with each other. This aspect of Trinitarian theology clearly resonates with feminist sensibilities.

Yet could there be a difficulty in reconciling this concept of equality and mutuality with the biblical and patristic idea of God the Father as the principle of unity in the (p. 527) triune Godhead, and as the unoriginate source of the second and third persons and of the common will and activity the three share? Leonardo Boff (1988: 137–45) and Catherine LaCugna (1992: 266–78) have discarded this idea on the grounds that such a Trinity would become a paradigm justifying oppressive human ‘patriarchy’. They would argue that because a human community bearing the image of such a model would be morally abhorrent, this characterization of God must be mistaken.

Meanwhile, Orthodox theologians have reaffirmed the Father's role as source of Godhead and divine unity so as to emphasize that the ultimate principle is a person, not an abstract essence or matrix of relationality. The result appears to be a new impasse between eastern and feminist approaches to Trinitarian theology. Yet the Trinity, as understood by Orthodox Christians, can rightly serve as a model for human community, and the Father in particular can provide a superb model for human leadership. In John's Gospel, we read that the Father has given the key divine attributes of glory and judgement to the Son, and yet the Son seeks only to glorify the Father and defer to his judgement. They turn toward each other in mutual love, self-giving, and humility. Surely this is essential to the life of the Trinity (Staniloae 1980). It is expressed vividly in Andrei Rublev's famous icon, where the three angels look humbly and steadfastly toward each other (Bunge 2007). No one of the divine persons seeks to keep anything for himself alone, apart from the other two.

However, we must also take account of where the analogy between divine and human forms of community breaks down, where humans are unlike the divine persons. God's activity is one; it originates in the Father and is accomplished by all three divine persons together, such that each is willing and doing the same things. Yet even when they collaborate on a single task, people are each choosing and doing different things. When three carpenters build a house together, each hammers different nails. So unity and diversity in humankind and in God function differently. In human community, a choice must be made between different ways of imaging the Trinity, between unanimity rooted in obedience and free co-operation bridging differences. To avoid totalitarianism, we must choose to image the Trinity through a free collaboration that affirms the equality and dignity of all human persons. As Metropolitan Kallistos Ware writes:

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Each social grouping—family, parish, diocese, Church council, school, office, factory, nation—has as its vocation to be transformed by grace into a living icon of [the Holy Trinity], ... to effect a reconciling harmony between diversity and unity, human freedom and mutual solidarity, after the pattern of the Trinity. Our belief in a Trinitarian God, in a God of social inter-relationship and shared love, commits us to opposing all forms of exploitation, injustice and discrimination. (Ware 1986: 17–18)

Elsewhere, he adds that faith in the Trinity commits Christians to fighting for justice and human rights and against poverty, exploitation, oppression, and disease (Ware 1997: 142).

In the Trinity, the Father is the source of hierarchy but is equally the source of conciliarity. He provides origination, unity, and structure to the Trinity, whose life is itself unbounded mutual love and relationality. Dumitru Staniloae (1980) rightly distinguishes between the relations of origin in God and the perichoresis of the persons. The (p. 528) relations of origin have a sequential order and thus a hierarchical structure, so that the persons can be identified as first, second, and third. Yet in begetting the Son and breathing forth the Spirit, the Father constitutes himself and them as completely equal, sovereign, and free, as joined by mutual love in unlimited mutual indwelling and interpenetration. So they give themselves to each other freely and without limit in every direction. This movement of love is not restricted but rather is supported and enabled by the structure of their relations of origin. Thus in the Trinity hierarchy supports and enables conciliarity; it provides the space within which relationships of mutual equality, freedom, and love can occur, flourish, and find their fulfilment. In this way the Trinity provides a good model for human community, where the proper function of hierarchical leadership should be to provide the stable context within which collaborative relationships of mutual love, freedom, equality, and dignity can arise, be preserved, flourish, and attain their full potential.

Human fatherhood—and by extension all forms of human leadership—thus has the vocation to become in a very real sense the image and likeness of the humble, generous divine fatherhood. As William J. Abraham (1997: 120) observes, ‘It is surely obvious that the form of patriarchy we encounter in God could be profoundly subversive of the kinds of patriarchy we encounter in the world’, and further, ‘encounter with the fatherhood of God may totally transpose our understanding of what it is to be a human father’, or a leader of any kind. The divine exemplar shows that the purpose of human hierarchy is not to withhold but to share, not to exclude but to include, not to push people down but to lift them upward, not to create barriers and distances but to establish community.

A Trinitarian model for human community, rightly understood, provides a strong foundation for a feminist vision of the ideal human society. God the Father, who shares all he is with the Son and the Spirit and receives their gifts in return, who uses hierarchy to establish equality, provides a good model for human parenthood and all human leadership. His generation of the Son is a model for both human motherhood and fatherhood. The Son, incarnate in a woman's womb and as a man, redeems and sanctifies all humankind. Like a mother and like a bridegroom, he enters into deep relationships of love with men and

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women alike, unworthy as we are. He bestows on us frail creatures the Holy Spirit and brings us to his humble and generous Father.

Suggested Reading

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Nonna Verna Harrison

Sr. Nonna Verna Harrison is an Orthodox nun and theologian and an experienced patristics scholar.

The Trinity and Politics

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt

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This article explores the relation between politics and the doctrine of the Trinity. It describes the works of twentieth-century theologians who brought together the Trinity and politics in order to show what such a conjunction can and cannot do. It criticizes social Trinitarianism on the grounds that it grants too much to Immanuel Kant's reduction of religion to the sphere of practical reason and shows that the true political relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity consists in the fruitfulness of our participation in the Trinitarian life of God as it is revealed to us.

Keywords: politics, Trinity, social Trinitarianism, Immanuel Kant, reduction of religion, Trinitarian life

Trinity, Politics, And Modernity

There is something peculiarly 'modern' in the question of the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and how one might think about politics. The explicit suggestion that there is a connection between how one thinks about political life and how one understands God as Father, Son, and Spirit is rare, if not entirely unknown, prior to the twentieth century. In this essay, I will focus on twentieth-century theologians who bring together 'Trinity' and 'politics', in an attempt to show what such a conjunction can and cannot do.

Before looking at specific theologians, however, we might ask why modern Christians would suddenly turn to the doctrine of the Trinity as a resource for thinking about politics. This can best be understood if we see it as part of a larger shift in philosophy and theology regarding how we understand the nature of talk about God. If I might take Immanuel Kant as a representative modern figure, one can see in his philosophy the transformation of God from something to be speculatively contemplated into a postulate of practical reason—something of which we can have no knowledge, but which we must posit in order to undergird morality. As Kant puts the matter, 'It concerns us not so much to know what God is in himself (his nature) as what he is for us as moral beings' (Kant

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1960: 130). In the relocation of religion in the realm of practical reason, much Christian doctrine concerning God would seem to vanish, being irrelevant to us as moral beings. Thus, for Kant, once we are no longer concerned to know God *in se* but only *pro nobis*, we can abandon the doctrine of the Trinity, at least as something that says something true about God. As Kant puts it,

the doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, has no practical relevance at all, even if we think we understand it; and it is even more clearly irrelevant if we realize that it transcends all our concepts. Whether we are to worship three or ten persons in the Deity makes no difference (Kant 1979: 67).

(p. 532) Because the Trinity both transcends all our concepts *and* has no practical moral relevance, it cannot even properly be called a ‘mystery’ in the way that creation or atonement or election can (Kant 1960: 133–4). It is, it seems, simply sophistry.

If God in modernity must become a postulate of practical reason, then one possible way to acquit the doctrine of the Trinity of the charge of irrelevance would be to show that it is a valuable *practical* resource for human political and social life. Thus the very topic ‘Trinity and politics’ answers to a modern exigency, and we ought not to be surprised if theologians who deal explicitly with this connection are found almost exclusively in the modern period.

Modern Schematic Approaches

Surveying the last hundred years, we find two approaches to the question of the Trinity and politics that might be characterized as ‘schematic’, by which I mean that they take the Trinity as offering a pattern or paradigm that can be employed in reflection on human social life (I have also discussed these two approaches in Bauerschmidt 2007). The first, which obeys Kant's strictures most faithfully, is the approach exemplified in the American Protestant theologian H. Richard Niebuhr. In this approach, the relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity has nothing to do with what it does or does not say about God; it is an entirely anthropological doctrine. According to Niebuhr, ‘Trinitarianism is by no means as speculative a position and as unimportant for conduct as is often maintained’. Instead, it addresses the quite practical problem of ‘the relation of Jesus Christ to the Creator of nature and Governor of history as well as the Spirit immanent in creation and in the Christian community’ (Niebuhr 1951: 80–1), which for Niebuhr is a problem of knowledge. That is, it is a meta-doctrine that co-ordinates three sources of religious knowledge: nature, history, and experience.

Niebuhr works this out most fully in a 1946 essay entitled ‘The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Unity of the Church’ (in Niebuhr 1996). In this essay, Niebuhr presents the Trinity as a way of holding together the three ‘Unitarianisms’ that are the *de facto* religion of Christians: the Unitarianism of the Father, which focuses on creation, reason, and natural law; the Unitarianism of the Son, which focuses on salvation, revelation, and the Sermon on the Mount; and the Unitarianism of the Spirit, which focuses on contemporary experi-

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ence, both individual and communal. One can say that for Niebuhr the doctrine of the Trinity has the pragmatic value of holding together reason, revelation, and experience and, in terms of ethics, of balancing natural law, the teachings of Christ, and conscience. The doctrine of the Trinity becomes a way of saying that in their practical lives Christians do not need just natural law, which might lead to a staid conventionalism, but also the revealed teachings of Jesus; at the same time, the sometimes impractical teachings of Jesus need to be balanced with the demands of human nature; and both of these need to be in turn balanced with individual conscience and contemporary experience, which have the role of adjudicating conflicts between the demands of nature and the demands of the Gospel.

(p. 533) Niebuhr's concern, at least in part, is to counter the putative 'Christo-monism' of theologians like Karl Barth who, by their strong focus on Christ and their criticisms of appeals to both nature and experience, would seem to restrict the ability of Christians to enter into public discourse with non-Christians. Niebuhr's positive point is that it is a fully Trinitarian faith—with its claim that God reveals himself in nature and experience as well as in history—that allows Christians to enter into civic discourse in a religiously diverse society. Though a secular polity might not allow appeal to the historical revelation of truth in Jesus Christ, appeal can still be made to nature and conscience as a common ground shared by all people.

The problems with this approach are obvious. First, from a doctrinal point of view, the account of the Trinity Niebuhr offers is a modalist one at best: 'Father', 'Son', and 'Spirit' are simply ways of naming the activity of God as eternal creator, historical redeemer, and personal inspirer. Second, the distinctions between reason, history, and interiority seem to be worked out prior to their correlation with the names 'Father', 'Son', and 'Spirit'. Not only does the Trinity not reveal anything about God *in se*, it does not really reveal anything about God *pro nobis*; one can know quite well that God is creator, redeemer, and inspirer—that God is known through reason, history, and interior reflection—without any knowledge of the Trinity. How is the Christian's 'Trinitarian' account of nature, historical revelation, and experience any different from that of a Jew or Muslim? Third, as Niebuhr presents it, the doctrine of the Trinity tells us that an adequate Christian ethics must take account of nature, history, and experience, but says nothing about *how* these three are to be related. Does nature always trump history, such that political positions based on the teachings of Christ (e.g. non-retaliation or the prohibition of divorce) have no place in the public realm? Is it the role of experience to interpret nature and history, or is experience shaped historically, or given naturally, or is it somehow both? Were Niebuhr more inclined toward Trinitarian speculation, he might have claims that there is a *perichoresis* or 'mutual indwelling' of nature, history, and experience, but even this claim does nothing to help sort out the priority given in concrete situations to these different sources of ethical reflection.

As Niebuhr uses it, the Trinity is at best a heuristic device for talking about something that we know on an entirely different basis; at worst, it is simply linguistic decoration. To be fair to Niebuhr, this is something of which he is well aware. At the end of 'The Doc-

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trine of the Trinity and the Unity of the Church' he notes with sincere modesty that what he has said is 'only one approach, and that not the most significant or promising' (Niebuhr 1996: 62). At the same time, I would note that this is the *only* approach to the doctrine that Niebuhr himself took in his writing. James Gustafson notes, 'through and through, his reflections about God were impregnated by his Kantian mentality and his Troeltschian learning, which led him to take statements about God very seriously, without taking them with the seriousness that assumed he or any other man was making literal statements about the One beyond the Many' (Gustafson 1963: 27). In the end, Niebuhr's appeals to the doctrine of the Trinity are less a defence of the doctrine than it is an occupation by a foreign power: God is driven entirely out of the doctrine and its linguistic shell is transformed into a vehicle for anthropological statements.

(p. 534) The second approach, more common today than Niebuhr's approach, is to see in the communion of Father, Son, and Spirit a model of human community. This approach does make a genuine claim about the divine nature and has a respectable, if not lengthy, pedigree. In *Gaudium et Spes* (paragraph 24) we read that there is 'a certain similarity between the union of the divine persons and the union of God's children in truth and love' (Tanner 1990: 1083). Numerous recent examples of this approach can be given. Catherine Mowry LaCugna claims that Gregory of Nyssa's 'idea of a shared divine *arché* ... contained the seeds of a radical social order' (LaCugna 1993: 87). Michael Novak sees in the Trinitarian 'pluralism-in-unity' a 'dark illumination' of democratic capitalism, which is 'a political economy differentiated and yet one' (Novak 1982: 338–9). Leonardo Boff, in contrast, claims that within Trinitarian communion 'mutual acceptance of differences is the vehicle for the plural unity of the three divine Persons', and that 'by their practice and theory, capitalist regimes contradict the challenges and invitations of Trinitarian communion' (Boff 1988: 150).

One could go on at some length multiplying examples of this approach, which is usually characterized as 'social Trinitarianism'. This approach does not employ Trinitarian doctrine in the purely pragmatic and heuristic way that H. Richard Niebuhr does. LaCugna, who in places seems very wary of talk about God as Trinitarian *in se*, clearly maintains that the Trinity truly is how God is *pro nobis*—the God revealed in the economy of salvation is the triune God. Many of these thinkers are also cognizant of possible objections. Miroslav Volf, for example, notes that 'the road from the doctrine of the Trinity to proposals about global or national social arrangements is long, torturous, and fraught with danger' (Volf 1998: 406) and points by way of example to the fact that Novak and Boff use the Trinity to underwrite quite different economic arrangements (Volf 1998: 419, n. 14). Still, Volf, with a host of others, maintains that it is in some sort of 'social' account of the Trinity that the vital future of Trinitarian thought lies.

Amidst their differences, social Trinitarian approaches share some formal features beyond simply recommending the doctrine of the Trinity as a remedy for certain social and political ills. Primarily, they all emphasize the distinctness of the Trinitarian persons and are critical of western theology's purported emphasis on the unity of the divine nature. Social Trinitarianism is 'social' not simply in taking the Trinity as a model for human soci-

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eties, but also in seeing the Trinity itself as a kind of divine society in which the divine persons have priority over the unity of essence. This, of course, makes a certain sense; if the Trinity is supposed to offer us a model for human persons in communion, then the closer the analogy between divine and human persons, the more effective the Trinity is as a model. It is noteworthy that Catherine LaCugna appeals to Andrei Rublev's icon in which the Trinity appears as the three visitors who received the hospitality of Abraham at Mamre as key for understanding the Trinity. This icon depicts a community of which we can see ourselves as part (LaCugna 1993: 83–4). We might say that social Trinitarianism encourages us to look at Rublev's icon and take our place at the table, or perhaps simply to arrange ourselves at our own tables in a similarly egalitarian manner.

Despite the hegemony of what Karen Kilby calls this 'new orthodoxy' in Trinitarian theology, a few critical voices have begun to be raised. Kilby herself argues that what we (p. 535) find in social Trinitarianism is a process by which theologians first identify *perichoresis* as the name of whatever it is that makes the Father, Son, and Spirit one. The meaning of *perichoresis* is then supplied by projecting onto God what we value most in our relations with other human beings (e.g. warmth, love, empathy, equality). Finally, the divine *perichoresis* is offered as the model for human interrelation. Kilby acknowledges that all our human talk about God inevitably involves some projection of human qualities and values onto God, but what she finds so problematic about the projection involved in this case is the way in which what we project onto God is immediately commended to us as what is most significant about the Trinity (Kilby 2000: 442).

Kathryn Tanner also raises several issues with regard to this approach. She points out first that appeal to *perichoresis* yields a very vague politics. As she puts it,

unless one purports to know much more about relations among the Trinitarian persons than is probably warranted, one is still left with very vague recommendations—about the social goods of equality, a diverse community, and mutual relationships of giving and receiving. All the hard, controversial work of figuring out exactly what any of that might mean ... seems left up to the ingenuity of the theologian to argue on other grounds. (Tanner 2004: 325)

Tanner further points out that much of what Trinitarian doctrine says about the persons of the Trinity simply cannot apply to human persons. In particular, human persons are not constituted by their relations, at least not in the same sense that Trinitarian persons are. Further, human relatedness is marked by sin in a way that divine relatedness is not, and any moral theology or politics that ignores this can hardly be relevant. She notes, "To a world of violent, corrupt and selfish people, the Trinity seems to offer only the feeble plaint, "Why can't we all just get along?" ' (Tanner 2004: 326).

One might, of course, argue that the violence, corruption, and selfishness that we find in human political struggles have some sort of analogue in God. Thus Thomas Parker writes that 'The Trinitarian life of God as a *perichoresis* of the "persons" embraces the struggle for community as well as the achievement of communion' (Parker 1980: 179). Yet the risks involved in such a strategy ought to give one pause. Are the Persons of the Trinity

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really involved in a 'struggle for community'? If so, with whom are they struggling? Each other? Would it not be saner to see the human struggle for community as a result of our fallen state, or even our creaturely finitude, and not something that can be projected onto God? Otherwise, the Christian understanding of God lapses into mythology. This seems too high a price to pay for political relevance.

The critiques of both Kilby and Tanner focus on how the attempts of social Trinitarianism to make the Trinity relevant to practical concerns fail because they simply impose on the doctrine a set of ethical positions that are in fact held on other grounds. In this way, social Trinitarianism does not seem all that different from the more 'modalist' approach of H. Richard Niebuhr. Both approaches risk simply applying a theological gloss to a predetermined set of political and ethical concerns and are really more about us than they are about God. Also, both of these approaches might be characterized as 'schematic', in that the doctrine of the Trinity is emptied of its specific content so as to (p. 536) serve as a schema or blueprint for various commendable things—whether the avoidance of Christomonism or the ideal of a peaceful communion of persons. What seems lost is the Trinity itself: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Both of these approaches fail to the extent that they present the doctrine of the Trinity as being about something other than the Father who sends the Son into the world for our redemption in the Spirit. Any political relevance of the Trinity must be found not in abstractions made from the doctrine, but in the actual life of God as this is revealed to us in its threefold fullness.

Reading the Fourth Century

These schematic approaches are not the only modern attempts to think 'Trinity and politics'. A significantly different approach can be found in two twentieth-century interpretations of Trinitarian disputes of the fourth century: the work of the German Catholic patristics scholar Erik Peterson and the American protestant Church historian George Huntston Williams. Their work is significant not only as an interpretation of the fourth century, but also as creative contributions to political theology.

In 'Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem', first published in 1935, Peterson argues that certain early Christian thinkers, most notably Eusebius of Caesarea, developed a 'political theology' based on a dual premise: that the monarchy (*monarchia*) of God was mirrored on earth by the monarchy of the Roman Emperor and that the Roman Empire played a providential role in establishing the peace necessary for the spread of the Gospel. It is the former claim that concerns us here, because it is precisely this claim that Peterson sees as destroyed by orthodox Trinitarian theology (the latter claim, according to Peterson, is destroyed by the eschatological reserve of thinkers like Augustine; see Peterson 1951: 103–4). In the approach outlined by Peterson, the orthodox understanding of God as Trinity is a hedge against any attempt to sacralize politics by claiming its adherence to a divine pattern.

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Peterson argues that there develops in the world of Greek thought a line of argumentation that links divine monarchy with political monarchy. Peterson further argues that in Philo (the first to use the term *monarchia*) we have a fusion of the politically inflected philosophical monotheism of the Greeks with the Biblical monotheism of Judaism. In this fusion, Philo purges the model of divine governance of its polytheistic overtones by an emphasis on a divine monarch who rules by law, rather than through lesser gods (1951: 59-60). Philo's association of monotheism and *monarchia* is taken up by early Christian apologists, such as Justin. Peterson also notes that it is used in attempting to formulate Christian Trinitarian faith by theologians such as Tertullian, who appeals to the idea of the Roman co-principate as a way of arguing against the modalism of Praxeas—that is, Father and Son share their *monarchia* the way rule can be shared by a king and his son (Peterson 1951: 70-1). After the Peace of the Church, this approach to thinking of God in terms of *monarchia* and its association with the Roman Empire becomes even more politically freighted. This is, according to Peterson, particularly the (p. 537) case with Eusebius of Caesarea, for whom 'the *one* monarch on earth—and that is for Eusebius no one other than Constantine—corresponds to the *one* divine monarch in the heavens' (Peterson 1951: 92-3). Peterson concludes his argument with some brief remarks indicating how the orthodox Trinitarian theology developed by the Cappadocians and other pro-Nicene theologians undercut the possibility of using *monarchia* to develop a political theology. Semi-Arians like Eusebius continued to understand the divine monarchy by analogy with the monarchy of the Roman Emperor, in which power derives from a single person (the Father) to the exclusion of all others. Understood in this way, 'monotheism is a political requirement, a piece of Imperial politics'. Peterson contrasts this with a passage from Gregory of Nazianzen's *Third Theological Oration*, in which Gregory, while still affirming the *monarchia* of God, associates it with all three persons of the Trinity, thereby distancing it from any earthly *monarchia* (Peterson 1951: 102-3). Gregory writes:

monarchy is that which we hold in honor. It is, however, a monarchy that is not limited to one person, for it is possible for unity if it is at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality; but one that is made of an equality of nature, and a union of minds, and an identity of motion, and of a convergence of its elements to unity—a thing which is impossible to the created nature. (*Third Theological Oration*, ch. 2, in Handy 1954: 161; cf. Peterson 1951: 103 and 144 n. 164)

What is notable here is the distance Gregory places between the divine *monarchia* and any created *monarchia*. The shared *monarchia* of Father, Son, and Spirit in no way provides a model for earthly rulers, and therefore provides no legitimation for them either. In this way, Peterson forestalls any 'political theology', if one understand by this the claim that particular human political arrangements follow a divine pattern of rule.

Of course, this is not to say that orthodox Trinitarian theologians in the fourth and fifth centuries were never enthusiastic supporters of the Roman Empire and never indulged in the kind of rhetoric associated with Eusebius, for whom Constantine 'provides an example of divine monarchic sovereignty' (*Tricennial Oration*, ch. 3, in Cunningham 1982: 51). Nor is it to say that semi-Arian Trinitarian theology, which was more or less the tradition-

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al subordinationist theology of the third century, was embraced by Eusebius simply because of its utility as a political theology (for a nuanced reappraisal of Eusebius' theological interests, focusing more on his providential reading of history than on his Trinitarian theology, see Hollerich 1990). What Peterson suggests, rather, is that the 'low' Christology of the semi-Arians, for whom the *Logos* serves essentially a mediatorial function between God and the world, is more easily at home with the idea of the emperor as the earthly correlate to the *Logos*. As Eusebius puts it, the *Logos* is 'the light that transcends the universe and surrounds his Father, mediating and keeping the Eternal and Uncreated Form apart from all that is created' and is also the one by and through whom 'the emperor, so favored by God, receives an image of the heavenly kingdom and, in imitation of the greater Master [that is, the *Logos*], pilots and guides the course of the ship of state' (*Triennial Oration*, ch. 1, in Cunningham 1982: 48). Thus, on Peterson's reading, both the Arian emphasis on the sole *monarchia* of the Father, along (p. 538) with the view of the *Logos* as the quasi-divine mediator between the uncreated God and creatures, enabled a political theology in which the monarchy of the emperor was the earthly image of God's monarchy, and his ordering of the Empire was an imitation of the *Logos* ordering creation.

Peterson's suggestion regarding orthodox Trinitarian theology was taken up and developed with great vigour by George Huntston Williams in a lengthy 1951 essay, in which he argued that the high Christology of the pro-Nicene theologians, along with their comparatively high doctrines of the Eucharist and the Church, not only forestalled the political use of theology, but actually pushed these theologians toward a conflictual relationship with the Empire. The root of this conflict was the assertion by pro-Nicene theologians of the authority of Christ over that of the emperor and the insistence that the Spirit-filled Church, rather than the Empire, was the exemplary form of universal human community. As Williams sums up his conclusions:

As a consequence of their high Christology, the Catholics could not so easily see in the emperor a kind of temporal savior, coordinate with Christ, nor could they yield to the God-ordained emperor as a source of authority in matters of faith and order superior to the earthly Christ. Caesar, merely for being a Christian, could not usurp the place of God. The primary loyalty of the Nicene Christian could be to no other than to the historic *and* eternal Christ, fully God, to the tradition embodied in his Church, and to the consubstantial Holy Spirit suffusing this Church with grace, peculiarly present in the apostolic bishops (Williams 1951b: 21-2).

Williams argues that the pro-Nicene party's conviction that the historical Christ was God, *homoousios* with the Father—and that Christ's laws and traditions therefore took precedence over the laws and traditions of the emperor—made them much less supine in the face of imperial interference with the Church. Likewise, Nicene convictions regarding the Spirit led them to assert the rights of the Church over and against the claims of the Empire: it is the Church and not the Empire that is the *oekumene*, and the emperor is a member of and subject to the Church.

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Williams admits that 'the Arianizing view of the divine authority of the Christian emperor' is something that must be reconstructed 'from the meager and disparate remains' (Williams 1951a: 25). While Williams can cite an impressive array of texts to support his views, in the end there are many gaps that must be filled in with supposition and conjecture. We might wonder the degree to which those embroiled in the debates over the Trinity in the early Christian centuries were conscious of the political implications that Peterson and Williams find in their different positions. Perhaps, for example, Constantius' enthusiasm for Arian theology is purely coincidental, and had he been zealously orthodox it would have been the Arians, and not the orthodox, who resisted the claims of the state.

In assessing the work of both Peterson and Williams, it is important to bear in mind the context in which, and the purposes for which, they wrote. Peterson's target is clearly not fourth-century Arianism but the 'political theology' of Carl Schmitt, who wrote in 1922 that 'a continuous thread runs through the metaphysical, political, and sociological conceptions that postulate the sovereign as a personal unit and primeval creator' (Schmitt 1985: 47; on Peterson and Schmitt, see Geréby 2008). Specifically, Schmitt understands the sovereign to be 'he who decides on the exception' (Schmitt 1985: 5), meaning that sovereignty is 'principally unlimited authority, which means the suspension of an entire existing order' (Schmitt 1985: 12). Schmitt later notes that 'the exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology' (Schmitt 1985: 36). In another work, first published in 1932, Schmitt writes, 'The juridic formulas of the omnipotence of the state are, in fact, only superficial secularizations of theological formulas of the omnipotence of God' (Schmitt 1996: 42). He criticizes liberal political orders for creating a social order without the sovereign exception, thus losing 'the decisionistic and personalistic element in the concept of sovereignty' (Schmitt 1985: 48). Liberal Democracy, by eliminating true sovereignty, the sovereign power to make the exception, is the political mirror of Deism or pantheism. Against these liberal political philosophies Schmitt pits 'Catholic political philosophers such as de Maistre, Bonald, and Donoso Cortés' (Schmitt 1985: 53) to whom the elimination of the exception 'must have appeared ... to be a strange pantheistic confusion' (Schmitt 1985: 61-2). In other words, liberalism was not simply an inadequate political philosophy; it was heresy, precisely because it denied the political equivalent of the miracle.

Peterson's opposition to Schmitt was not because he was a liberal stung by the charge of heresy, nor was it because he thought the profession of the Christian faith to be a purely private matter. Indeed, Peterson, a convert from Lutheranism, was quite traditional in his theological views, and in particular he rejected what he took to be the liberal protestant attempt to restrict Christianity to any realm of private interiority (Geréby 2008: 24; Holzerich 1993). The problem with Schmitt's political theology was not its anti-liberal politics *per se*, but its faulty theology. Nothing in Schmitt's account of 'political theology' would ever lead one to think that God is triune: that the Father has sent the Son so that we might live in the Spirit. Indeed, Schmitt's God might be characterized as an extreme form of the depiction of God in certain late-medieval nominalists: a hidden and capricious deity who at any moment might override the order established by God's ordained power (*poten-*

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tia ordinata) through the exercise of the absolute power of God (*potentia absoluta Dei*). The power of God as Schmitt conceives it is that which flashes forth from outside the normal course of things, erupting from behind an opaque veil that is utterly impenetrable to reason. The mystery of sovereignty invoked by Schmitt is something quite different from the 'open mystery' of the triune God, in which human comprehension fails not because God is hidden, but because God is so fully revealed.

Moreover, Schmitt rejects any political relevance to the teachings of Jesus, particularly his teaching with regard to love of enemies. For Schmitt, the concept of the political itself hangs from the distinction between friend and enemy (Schmitt 1996: 26). Political identity is only secured by an 'other' with whom 'we'—those of us who are 'friends'—have a relationship that is essentially conflictual. Christ's command to love our enemies does not, according to Schmitt, apply to the enemy in this political sense: 'in the private sphere only does it make sense to love one's enemy.... It certainly does not mean that one should love and support the enemies of one's own people' (1996: 29). Neither does Schmitt take account of the New Testament notion of friendship with God, which John's Gospel places in an explicitly Trinitarian context: Jesus' disciples are no longer slaves but (p. 540) friends because he reveals to them *everything* that he has heard from his Father (Jn 15:15), and they will be confirmed in this friendship by the Spirit of truth, whom Christ sends from the Father to testify on his behalf (Jn 15:26). This friendship with God established in Christ and the Spirit is able to overcome even the 'otherness' of sin, reconciling those who were formerly enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). Thus the world that hates Jesus and his disciples (Jn 15:18–25) is precisely the enemy that God sent the Son to save and not to condemn (Jn 3:16–17). Thus Peterson rejects Schmitt's political theology not because it is political, but because it enshrines as normative a sub-Christian conception of God: a sovereignty and monarchy more suited to paganism than to the Church. It is this, rather than the theology of Eusebius or other semi-Arians, that is his true target.

Likewise, George Huntston Williams is more concerned about mid twentieth-century mainline Christians in America who lie supine before the State than he is about similarly supine fourth-century Arians (in light of the strong claims he makes for the value of Nicene orthodoxy, it is interesting to note that Williams was, at least by ecclesiastical affiliation, a Unitarian—albeit a 'Trinitarian Unitarian'). Williams's abiding interest in the question of Church and State, and his own opposition to McCarthyism, the Vietnam War, and legalized abortion testify to a life spent pushing Christians in a counter-cultural direction (Church 2007). Though surely not intended as such, his account of the Trinitarianism of the pro-Nicene party of the fourth century might be read as a rejoinder to H. Richard Niebuhr's appeal to Trinitarianism as a cure for 'Christo-monism'. As Williams sees it, and in this he is surely correct, the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity does not in any way mitigate the significance of Jesus Christ (history) by 'balancing' him with the Father (nature) and the Spirit (experience). Rather, 'the authentic Nicenes held tenaciously to the historic Christ who, by his unique and paradoxical act of divine self-sacrifice at once secured the eternal salvation of mankind *and established the ecclesiastical law to which even the Christian sovereign is subject*' (Williams 1951a: 16, emphasis in the original). In claiming that the historical figure Jesus of Nazareth is *homoousios* with the Father, the

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pro-Nicene party commits itself to, if not a Christo-monism, certainly a Christological intensity that is not subjected to any balancing act. The subsequent affirmation of the divinity of the Spirit, and the identification of the apostolic and sacramental Church as the principle (albeit not exclusive) *locus* of the Spirit's activity, makes clear that it is this community, and not any empire, that can claim the status of being God's people (Williams 1951b: 12). The Christological and Pneumatological vigour of the pro-Nicene theologians gave them the theological resources necessary to maintain the ancient Christian conviction that the Church is a distinctive people, set apart from the world for the sake of the world.

A Way Forward?

The Trinitarian reflections of Peterson and Williams are quite different from those either of Niebuhr or of the social Trinitarians. Do they point a different way forward in thinking about the connection of Trinitarian theology and politics? I think that they do. Peterson points out the danger of trying to place the doctrine of the Trinity—or any doctrine of God—into direct service undergirding a particular politics. The example of Carl Schmitt shows us how the Christian understanding of God can be warped when it is expected to answer to the exigencies of a particular political vision. Williams, on the other hand, shows that Trinitarian theology, while not directly applicable to political questions, is still relevant in thinking of how the Church relates to various forms of worldly power. But it is not relevant because the divine life provides an image of human community, nor because it gives us a formula for balancing sources of ethical reflection. It is relevant because it tells us that Jesus of Nazareth is Emmanuel, God with us, and that his Holy Spirit gives life to an ecclesial community that has its own public, 'political' identity. In other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is politically relevant precisely because it is neither more nor less than what Christians have always taken it to be: a way of understanding the claim that in Christ and the Spirit we encounter God directly.

David H. McIlroy, in a recent work that offers an example of a Trinitarian 'political theology' that both avoids the dangers identified by Peterson and has the robust Christological and Pneumatological contours that Williams identifies, helpfully distinguishes between two different ways of thinking about the Trinity and politics. He writes:

On the one hand, there is the model of God standing on one side and human beings on the other. That which is to be found on one side of the divide is to be mirrored on the other side. On the other hand, significance may be drawn from the way in which the triune God invites human beings to participate in God's triune life. On this account, God the Holy Spirit seeks to transform human beings into the likeness of God the Son and to bring them into relationship with God the Father. (McIlroy 2009: 14)

McIlroy later goes on to note, 'the deployment of the Trinity as a bare image is an inadequate and misplaced use of the doctrine' (McIlroy 2009: 208). Rather than a bare image, we need the full-blooded narrative of God's triune identity as revealed in the economy of

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salvation. Thus, if we wish to speak of a Trinitarian political theology, then we ought to eschew any attempt to make the Trinity into a schema or pattern that we are to imitate, and speak instead of how God the Holy Spirit conforms us to Jesus Christ so that we become sons and daughters of God the Father.

The political relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity only reveals itself as Christians attempt to live out their Spirit-given conformity to Christ. If they do so, they will not have to worry about Kantian concerns over the practical import of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Those who rule over others with the power that grows from what Augustine called the *libido dominandi* will quickly recognize that the people who have been marked by baptism in the triune name pose a threat to such power, simply by showing the world that there is another way for human beings to live together, a way that Christ lived with his disciples and which the Spirit makes possible even today in the community of the Church. This is not to say, of course, that the Church as a whole always, or even often, lives in this way. Yet the political relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity remains directly proportional to the faithfulness of the baptized, to their living out of the distinctive way of Christ, the way of friendship with God through the Spirit. It is in such faithfulness that the disruptive insertion of the triune life into human history becomes visible.

(p. 542) Earlier I mentioned the Rublev icon of the Holy Trinity, noting how its three angelic figures seated around a table are sometimes taken to embody what, in social Trinitarianism, seems most important about the Trinity: the model of a community of equals that we humans can mirror. What I am suggesting, in contrast, is that we think instead of an image like Masaccio's fresco of the Trinity in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. This painting takes the form of the traditional medieval representation of the Trinity known as the 'mercy seat', in which the crucified Christ is supported by God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, flying between them. The figure of Christ is flanked by Mary and John, who are in turn flanked by the two kneeling donors of the painting. Through his innovative use of perspective, Masaccio is able to locate the Trinity in its own 'space', seeming to lie in a chamber beyond the walls of the Church, preserving the Trinity as something true of God *in se*. Yet this same use of perspective allows him to depict the crucified one being projected into our space by the figure of the Spirit, so that the form of the crucified is impressed upon the viewer who contemplates this image. We are not invited to imitate the Trinity, but rather to receive the image of the crucified, who receives his formative power from his place within the Trinitarian *axis*. And this formative power is manifested in the saintly figures of the Beloved Disciple and the Blessed Mother who stand on either side of the cross as figures of the Church triumphant, but also in the images of the donors, who kneel on a visual plane between the saints and us as figures of the Church suffering, for whom we are bidden to pray. And ultimately this formative power is manifested in us, the viewers, who are the Church militant, on pilgrimage to the Kingdom.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Bauerschmidt (2007); McIlroy (2009); Tanner (2004); Williams (1951a, 1951b).

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Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt is Associate Professor of Theology at Loyola University Maryland and a deacon of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Ecumenism and the Doctrine of the Trinity Today

David Fergusson

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity for modern ecumenism. It explains that the doctrine of the Trinity has featured prominently in modern ecumenical conversation because theologians and Church leaders have engaged in bilateral and multilateral dialogues have drawn upon the rich seam of Trinitarian thought. It shows how the agreement of Christians regarding the doctrine of the Trinity has stimulated efforts to extend this agreement to other areas of faith and practice informed by Trinitarian reflection. It also evaluates important contributions in this regard by George Lindbeck and Robert Jenson, among others.

Keywords: ecumenism, Trinity, Trinitarian thought, theologians, Church leaders, George Lindbeck, Robert Jenson

THE doctrine of the Trinity has featured prominently in modern ecumenical conversation. This is both a cause and an effect of the twentieth-century revival of interest in the doctrine. Theologians and Church leaders engaged in bilateral and multilateral dialogues have drawn upon the rich seam of Trinitarian thought found in Barth, Rahner, and others. At the same time, however, scholars have been stimulated by the ecumenical consensus surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity and have sought to develop this in almost every area of the subject. In what follows, several foci of important concern will be identified—mission, communion, worship, and the nature of doctrine. Recognition of the gains that have been made in these areas may help to counteract the more negative and pessimistic reception of ecumenism in the early twenty-first century.

The Ecumenical Context

The significance of the doctrine of the Trinity for modern ecumenism is evident in the amended description of the World Council of Churches as a Christian fellowship in 1961. Its earlier founding formula of 1948 referred simply to its confession of 'Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'. This reflected the core commitment of the YMCA in the nineteenth century, and it was supported by theologians such as James Denney around 1900. However, a

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more explicit commitment to the triune identity was introduced with an extended formula. 'The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Although less succinct and even laborious, this addendum succeeded in satisfying (p. 548) various ecumenical concerns that had become pressing in the post-war period. Visser 't Hooft, the first Secretary General of the WCC, later reflected on the process that led to the elaboration of the statement. In its explicit reference to the Trinity, the Council was responding to the concerns of the eastern Church—especially Russian and Greek Orthodox delegates at their meeting in Leningrad in 1959—which insisted that the Christocentric affirmation must be placed in a Trinitarian setting. This did not require an elaborated description of the Trinity, only a clear reference. It seems that the matter was thus resolved quite suddenly. 'So I took the breakfast menu and wrote on it the doxological formula: "to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit". This proved to be acceptable to all who were present' (Visser 't Hooft 1985: 173).

The accentuation of the doctrine of the Trinity was evident in all the main Christian communions during this period. Important influences included Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* which had begun the exposition of the Church's faith with the doctrine of the Trinity, thus almost exactly reversing the order of exposition in Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*. This positioning of the doctrine would later be recognized by Jüngel and others as a hermeneutical decision of the greatest importance, unprecedented since Peter Lombard. It had the effect of securing a Trinitarian determination of all the doctrines of the faith, thus ensuring their distinctive Scriptural and Christian character. On the Roman Catholic side, Karl Rahner complained about the textbook prioritization of *de Deo uno*, over against *de Deo trino*, which had promoted an incipient unitarianism or modalism in Christian thought and action. By identifying the economic with the immanent Trinity, he sought to repair the tradition at this crucial juncture. Important Orthodox influences were also evident in ecumenical circles, these being articulated in John Zizioulas' high-profile study *Being as Communion* (Zizioulas 1985). For Zizioulas, the doctrine of the Trinity, particularly as expounded in Cappadocian theology, is vital for a proper account of ecclesiology and anthropology. His capacity to bring Orthodox insights into the western academy contributed much to a wider ecumenical appreciation of Trinitarian doctrine. Indeed, as Geoffrey Wainwright has pointed out in a significant article on this theme, the flurry of books after 1970 on the doctrine of the Trinity itself represents a concerted ecumenical and international effort to register its significance for Christian life and understanding in the modern world (Wainwright 1998: 96-7).

The doctrine of the Trinity, of course, was strategically advantageous for the ecumenical movement by virtue of its fourth-century Nicene setting. Arianism having been defeated, the dogmatic declaration at the Council of Constantinople in 381 had appeared to settle the shape of the Christian doctrine of God for all subsequent generations. Despite later Socinian and Unitarian scruples, this was confirmed by much Church history; all the mainstream confessional bodies acknowledged the classical doctrine. At the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation, it was a matter of supreme importance for Calvin and oth-

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ers to demonstrate their continuity with the teaching of the ancient Church. Hence the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity could transcend the divisions between the West and the East (the *Filioque* apart), and also those of Roman Catholic and Reformation Church. By returning to this common source and norm, modern ecumenical dialogue could seek (p. 549) to advance on different fronts by exploring the consequences of a shared Trinitarian and incarnational faith for contested issues in, for example, Church, sacraments, and ministry. George Lindbeck, who had been heavily involved in several dialogical bodies, could speak of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as a mighty symbol of the unity of the Church across space and time (Lindbeck 1984: 95). As a doctrinal standard with extensive liturgical usage, it functioned uniquely as an expression of historical and contemporary Christianity. Indeed so overwhelming did this consensus become that some theologians (for example, Maurice Wiles) would eventually complain that critical questions about the Trinity and the Incarnation were difficult to pose. In an ecumenical climate that treated these with such a deferential and determined consensus, there was a reluctance to revisit Enlightenment criticisms about the speculative and historically problematic features of these doctrines.

In securing the Nicene doctrine of God and in particular the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, Athanasius and the Cappadocians had appealed to the common practice of baptism in the threefold name. Already apparent in the words of the risen Jesus in Matt. 28:19, the baptismal formula became an important resource for theological reflection. A parallel phenomenon can also be discerned in modern ecumenism. The shared rite of baptism provided an opportunity for the mutual recognition of different confessional bodies. Even where communion was impaired and imperfect, it was secured by a baptism that could be widely recognized across the mainstream confessional bodies, or at least amongst those that practised infant baptism. This has been a significant gain of the second half of the twentieth century, enabling the recognition of a genuine faith in other churches.

The Faith and Order movement of the World Council of Churches made significant advances throughout the twentieth century, partly through building upon these shared assumptions about the doctrine of the Trinity. Its most significant achievement was the convergence statement on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (*BEM*, widely available online) agreed at Lima in 1982. In each of its three main sections, the text reflects the strong consensus on the Trinitarian faith, by offering an account that is both Christocentric and strongly pneumatological. Baptism is in the threefold name and attests our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ and entry into the fellowship of the Spirit; the eucharist is 'essentially the sacrament of the gift which God makes to us in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit' (*BEM* 1982: EII.2); and the ministry of the Church rests upon the prior ministry of Christ. 'Belonging to the Church means living in communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit' (*BEM* 1982: MI.1).

Following the celebrations of the 1600th anniversary of the 381 Council of Constantinople, the Faith and Order Standing Commission produced an explication of Christian doctrine in the form of a commentary on the Nicene Creed. *Confessing the One Faith* (1991)

was the impressive result of some years of study and discussion, although its labours have generally not received the recognition and attention that they deserve. The exposition of the Creed is here not intended merely to identify a settled consensus regarding how the faith is to be expressed and understood. Instead, it (p. 550) recognizes the need for ongoing doctrinal assessment, and the importance of continual repentance and renewal through a return to the apostolic faith. Seeking a unity in diversity, it acknowledges the different cultural, social, economic, political, and religious contexts in which increasingly the churches are placed. So attention is given to issues raised for and by the doctrine of the Trinity around religious language, feminism, social justice, secularism, and other faiths. The explication of the faith is thus not simply a historical exposition but includes its interpretation amidst fresh challenges and cultural shifts. Much is made of the plural form of the opening verb—‘we believe’ rather than ‘I believe’—as an expression of a shared faith. Jaroslav Pelikan, the historian of dogma, frequently asserted his preference for this over against the Apostles’ Creed with its opening words ‘I believe’. It is the faith of the whole Church that is affirmed and shared. At times when one's own faith falters, he argues, we can repose upon the faith of the community that nurtures and sustains us. We confess the faith within the communion of saints. In explicating the doctrine of the Trinity, the text points to the distinctiveness of the Christian doctrine of God as one being in three persons and what this entails. In particular, it conjoins the power and the love of God, the unity and diversity of divine action, and notions of divine transcendence and immanence so that these are not separated in ways that distort important convictions. Here several unhelpful dualisms and monisms are resisted by reflection upon the proper understanding of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. There is no monotheism of arbitrary divine power and aloofness from creation, nor is there a pantheism of total immanence and absorption in the world process. The Nicene doctrine of God enables the avoidance of these temptations, which remain perennial for Christian thought and action.

The *Filioque* Clause

An obvious focal point of ecumenical discussion of the Trinity has been the *Filioque* clause inserted into the Latin version of the Creed and formally approved in 1014. This describes the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son (*qui ex Patre Filioque procedit*). It has historically divided the eastern and western Churches. The Orthodox complaint is

- (1) that it was unilaterally inserted without ecumenical approval;
- (2) that it confusingly suggests two sources of origin in the Trinity, that is to say, the Father alone as the begetter of the Son, and the Father and the Son as source of the Spirit, thus detracting from the role of the Father as the sole source of origin within the Trinity; and
- (3) that the subordination of the Spirit to the Father-Son nexus tends to depersonalize the Spirit while also obscuring its role in empowering the Son throughout his incarnate life.

In response, western theologians have tended to argue that (p. 551)

- (1) the Spirit's dependence upon the work of the Son and subsequent release in the life of the Church are better captured by the *Filioque* clause; and
- (2) that without it, there is no determination in the Nicene Creed of the relationship of Son to Spirit.

Much ecumenical discussion has attempted to get behind a decision over whether to include or to omit the *Filioque* by exploring the issues at stake (Vischer 1981). Are there concerns on each side which can be met in other ways? To a significant extent, that has proved possible. On the eastern side, it is recognized that the Father is always the Father of the Son. So in the procession of the Spirit, the Father never acts apart from the Son. Similarly, in begetting the Son, the Father never acts apart from the Spirit. In the relation of origins within the Trinity therefore, the acts of begetting and spiration properly belong to the Father whose identity cannot be expressed apart from Son and Spirit. Moreover, there is a recognized need to understand the Son and the Spirit as in a relationship of mutual dependence and empowerment. The action of the Spirit precedes the coming of Jesus (e.g. in his conception), and the Spirit descends upon him (e.g. in his baptism). However, the Spirit is also the one who is sent by Jesus and is subsequent to his ministry, according to John 20 and Acts 2. In acknowledging these shared convictions, many western churches have felt able to dispense with the *Filioque* clause on the first ground that its initial insertion was a unilateral addendum to the original ecumenically agreed text. In its 1995 statement on 'The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit' (widely available online), the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity affirmed that the one source of origin in the Trinity is the Father while also stressing the ways in which the Spirit and the Son are eternally related. The Spirit proceeds from the Father but always by and through the generation of the Son, hence ensuring its fully Trinitarian character. A similar attempt to circumvent historic divisions is found in the Orthodox-Reformed Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity which avoids all mention of the *Filioque*.

This priority of the Father or Monarchy of the Father within the Trinity does not detract from the fact that the Father is not properly Father apart from the Son and the Spirit, that the Son is not properly Son apart from the Father and the Spirit, and that the Spirit is not properly Spirit apart from the Father and the Son. Hence the *Monarchia* of the Father is perfectly what it is in the Father's relation to the Son and the Spirit within the one indivisible Being of God. (Torrance 1993: 223)

The *Missio Dei*

With its roots in the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, the modern ecumenical movement viewed the unity of the Church and the task of mission as closely related. Since unity is a sign of the reconciliation and healing brought to the world by the Gospel, its absence must inevitably impair the mission of the Church. Outside the traditional con-

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fessional divisions of the western Church, there were growing concerns to overcome (p. 552) doctrinal and organizational differences that seemed matters of relative importance alongside the sharing of central convictions, resources, and activities. For many, the model of the Church of South India pointed the way forward. Having successfully integrated Episcopalian, Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches in 1947, it heralded the prospect of other unions in different global contexts. In identifying a common faith, a united Church could draw upon the Nicene tradition of the ancient Church with its commitment to a Trinitarian and incarnational faith. The work of Lesslie Newbigin provides a prominent example of this appropriation of classical theology to express the ecumenical and missiological responsibilities of the contemporary Church. Writing of the Trinitarian action of God, Newbigin stresses the extent to which the Christian community reposes upon the prior work of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Church and its missiological action are thus given a Trinitarian shape. Here Newbigin draws upon the concept of the *missio Dei*, a notion often associated with Karl Barth although its provenance in his writings is now contested. According to this shift of perspective, the Church receives its mission from the prior sending forth of the Son into the world by the Father in the power of the Spirit, a movement that corresponds to the eternal processions in the Godhead. 'The mission is God's, not ours' (Newbigin 1978: 19). As itself a sign of the divine mission, the Church is thus confronted to become what it is, namely, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. In similar vein, Vatican II in its decree *Ad Gentes* (1965) describes the missionary activity of the Church as based upon the eternal missions of the Son and Spirit proceeding from the Father's 'fountain-like love'.

Dependent upon the *missio Dei*, the Church's mission is derivative, partial, and not merely for itself. Instead of understanding it as a programme of ecclesiastical expansion, theologians now described it in relation to the wider purposes of God for the world. This was apparent in the work of the Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952. In writers like Moltmann, the primacy of the divine mission shaped an understanding of subsequent ecclesial mission. The Church neither initiates nor exhausts the mission of God. It participates in that mission but its impetus and scope are other than the Church. 'It is not the Church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil to the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the Church, creating a Church as it goes on its way' (Moltmann 1977: 64). Mission here becomes an activity that is constitutive of the triune God. Its location in the doctrine of God promoted a view in which the Church was an instrument of divine mission rather than itself the source of missionary activity. 'To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love' (Bosch 1991: 390).

The concept of the *missio Dei* was closely related to the idea of the kingdom of God as an eschatological reality to which the Church bears witness. No longer an ark into which people are gathered from a perishing world, the Church is a sign or herald of the coming salvation of the world. With this more universalist thrust, ecclesiology was set in a different relationship to the eschatological kingdom. However, this missiology also risked the danger of evacuating mission of its distinctive reference to Christ and of the Church as his body into which we are baptized. Much of the secular theology of the 1960s moved

(p. 553) in this direction, creating a corresponding unease around the idea of the *missio Dei*. This produced further reflection on the relation between Christ, Church, and the mission of God in Newbigin and others. The tendency to identify the *missio Dei* with a secular struggle for liberation elicited critical comment, particularly through the discussion generated by Latin American liberation theology from the 1970s. In many ways, the holistic strains of this movement were affirmed by missiology—Christian missions had long concerned themselves with education, health provision, social service, and the development of agriculture. The refusal to separate the public from the private, self from society, and body from mind required a commitment to social justice and welfare. There could be no retreat of Christian mission from the secular into a private religious domain. Yet the kingdom of God could not be identified exclusively with any political movement or social process—the capacity of sin to reassert itself required an eschatological reserve. Obedience to the crucified Christ as the eschatological Lord required mission to confess his name in Word and sacrament. The Church might not have monopolistic rights over the mission of God, but it could not ignore its responsibility to bear witness to the name of Jesus. ‘The Church can only represent the righteousness of God in history in the way that Jesus did. It is enabled to do this by being constantly reincorporated into Jesus’ saving action through baptism and the Eucharist and through the preaching and hearing of the Word’ (Newbigin 1978: 125). Nevertheless, the concept of the *missio Dei* continues to be useful in linking the Church's activity to the action of God, and of clarifying the relationship of dependency and derivation of one from the other.

Communion

The concept of *koinonia* (variously translated as communion, fellowship, or community) has proved an important resource in ecumenical conversation for at least fifty years. Its linkage to the doctrine of the Trinity is explicit and frequently rehearsed in the literature. For example, the third Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in New Delhi in 1961 describes the unity of the Church in the following terms. ‘The love of the Father and the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit is the source and goal of the unity which the Triune God wills for all men and creation’ (Kinnamon and Cope 1997: 88). Communion is made possible by the action of God; as such, it does not derive from particular ecclesiastical structures. Hence a federation of institutional churches may express something of that communion that is a gift of the Trinity. An important Scriptural warrant for this is the prayer of Jesus which petitions for the love between Father and Son to be imparted to the disciples ‘that they may all be one’ (Jn 17:20).

The attention to *koinonia* has been repeated in successive bilateral and multilateral dialogues. These include the dialogues between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church and that between the latter and the Orthodox Church. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), as already noted, pays close attention to the notion of communion in its eucharistic theology as does much Roman Catholic theology since Vatican II. On the other hand, (p. 554) this has also yielded closer attention to ways in which communion remains imperfect, particularly in dealing with divisive issues such as the ordination of women, the na-

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ture and function of episcopacy, and the sharing of the sacrament. Nevertheless, *koinonia* can remain genuine even when its expression is impaired. In an important study of its significance, Nick Sagovsky has drawn attention to the ways in which this has been a persistent ecumenical driver since the time of the New Testament (Sagovsky 2000).

Ecumenical scholars, influenced particularly by the contribution of eastern Orthodoxy, have stressed the extent to which the concept of the 'person' as an ontologically irreducible notion emerged through the influence of Trinitarian theology. Its categorial links to notions of freedom, love, and relationality were developed by the Cappadocian theologians and also by later Franciscan theologians such as Richard of St Victor. By stressing that the being of God was constituted by the eternal origination of the Son and the Spirit from the Father, the classical doctrine of the Trinity understood the life of God to include an interpersonal communion. Even when the Father is viewed as the fount and origin of divinity within the Godhead, this does not undermine the essential relationality of the Trinity since the Father is eternally the Father of the Son and the Spirit, and can never be Father except in relation to these other persons. This was not viewed as an epiphenomenon or a temporal manifestation but as essential to the triune identity. The characterization of the person as relational was also set in opposition to more modern notions of the individual as an autonomous centre of consciousness. Human fulfilment is to be realized not in autonomous choice but in the proper expression of personal and social bonds. This has important ethical and political ramifications in much of the literature. The report of the British Council of Churches on 'The Forgotten Trinity' seeks to negotiate a middle way between the errors of individualism and collectivism.

Our particular contribution is to draw upon our understanding of the triune God to call attention to particular and central features of our common humanity: our freedom to be with and for each other; our relations which yet respect the otherness, particularity and uniqueness of every human person; and the communion which may be realised through our free and particular relatedness. (British Council of Churches 1989: 25)

One cautionary note might be sounded in relation to much of this literature. According to some critics, it has become too easy, especially following the fashionable preference for social models of the Trinity, to move swiftly from the Trinitarian *perichoresis* to somewhat bland assertions about anthropology, ethics, and politics (Kilby 2000). The link is at best analogical, especially if tritheism is to be avoided, so that the connections between human communities and the divine life require to be carefully explicated. There is a danger of projecting on to the life of God whatever is desirable for human life; this fails to respect not only the mystery of the Trinity but also the function for which it was first intended in Nicene theology, namely to articulate the unity of God and the reality of Jesus as the self-revelation of the God of Israel. In any case, historical correlations of Trinitarianism with egalitarian democracy on the one side and monotheism with hierarchical and authoritarian styles of government on the other are highly tendentious.

(p. 555) **Worship**

As Geoffrey Wainwright has noted, the most outstanding event of the liturgical movement in the Church has been the recovery of the 'paschal mystery' as a Trinitarian event at the centre of Christian worship (Wainwright 1998: 110). Christ offers himself to God the Father through the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:15). The Father raises the Son from the dead by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:3). Represented in worship, this turning of God towards us is most apparent in the liturgy for the eucharist, particularly the anaphora. Many modern eucharistic prayers adopt a Trinitarian pattern, based originally upon early Syrian models. Addressed initially to the Father, such prayer proceeds to confess Christ crucified, risen, and present, and then to invoke the Holy Spirit. As Bryan Spinks has pointed out, without a proper Trinitarian shaping of the liturgy, western Christians untrained in academic theology can hardly be blamed for harbouring Unitarian or binitarian notions of God (Spinks 1996: 224).

By stressing worship as an action of God into which we are drawn by the Spirit, several scholars have pointed to the way in which this releases us from perceiving worship merely as a human response to what God has already done (Torrance 1996). While there is a danger of generating a theological abstraction that diminishes the local and particular elements of worship, this provides a welcome corrective to somewhat sterile and didactic habits which fail to register the momentous character of Sunday worship. Its dramatic quality is displayed by characterizing worship as an action of God in and for the community of faith, with the dynamics of this event being described in Trinitarian language. As a gracious and liberating event that has its source in the life of God, worship can be delivered from more debilitating notions of contractual obligation and a sense of routine drudgery.

The reception of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* suggests that its most successful section was its second on eucharist. Significantly, the work invested in this material was enabled by a convergence of liturgies, through the efforts of the liturgical reform movement. These resulted in an acceptance of a common style of eucharistic worship that tends to move from thanksgiving offered to the Father, through the remembrance of the work of Christ, to the invocation of the Spirit. The place of the *epiklesis*—the invocation of the Spirit—owes much to the Orthodox influence and has now become a standard element in most western liturgies.

Theological By-Products

One of the most important by-products of modern ecumenical dialogue has been George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine*. Much discussed in the closing stages of the twentieth century, Lindbeck's proposal was that doctrine be viewed as akin to a grammar generating the rules governing theological speech. Important doctrinal decisions reflect rules that were adopted by the Church in the face of tendencies that threatened (p. 556) to subvert core convictions. On this reading, a doctrine is not so much a proposition that mir-

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rors some transcendent reality as a norm that governs the first-order language of confession and creedal commitment. What is often overlooked is that Lindbeck's short treatise was largely the product of many years steeped in bilateral and multilateral dialogue—Lindbeck indeed had been a Lutheran observer at Vatican II. His work has occasioned widespread discussion though there is little consensus yet as to its significance.

The key ecumenical proposal in *The Nature of Doctrine* is that doctrinal disputes be seen as generated by the application of rules in shifting historical contexts. Once consensus can be secured on the appropriate rule, it may be possible to relativize the disagreements surrounding its expression at particular moments in the history of the Church. Doctrines can be both constitutive in terms of defining rules and also illustrative of correct usage, this latter function being more common. In terms of the former, doctrine is akin to a set of grammatical rules governing a language. These rules help to determine the vocabulary of the religion (i.e. its symbols, concepts, rites, injunctions, and stories) and how these are to be interpreted and practised (Lindbeck 1984: 80–1). The rule theory of doctrine is further characterized by a taxonomy of doctrines in Lindbeck. Some doctrines are unconditional (e.g. the law of love) but others are conditional (i.e. dependent for their emergence on a particular context). This latter category admits a further division of irreversible and reversible. Some doctrines (e.g. the prohibition of slavery) may have emerged relatively late in the history of the Church but are now regarded as irreversible. Others that have been widely held (e.g. the immortality of the soul) might be regarded as reversible, given the recent tendency towards more holistic anthropologies. One striking feature of this taxonomy is the way in which it exposes disagreements around Mary, the papacy, justification, etc. as disputes about the content of constitutive rules and whether some of the historical applications of these rules might now be judged reversible. For example, might one view the immaculate conception as generated by rules surrounding the role of Mary in salvation under the conditions of prevailing Augustinian assumptions about sin. Within that context the application is valid, but outside it perhaps not irreversible.

One can say, for example, that it is only in the context of a questionable Western theology and sense of sin that it is necessary to exempt the Mother of our Lord from all natal stain in order to maintain her God-given and God-dependent freedom in saying “yes” to the angel's terrifying announcement (Lindbeck 1984: 97).

With respect to Nicene theology, Lindbeck claims that for Athanasius the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son should be understood as expressing a rule that whatever is said of the Father is said of the Son, except that the Son is not the Father. He goes on to propose that three regulative principles are at work here:

- (1)** there is only one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus;
- (2)** the stories of Jesus refer to a historical individual who lived in a particular time and place; and
- (3)** the principle of ‘Christological maximalism’ is that every possible importance is to be attached to Jesus in a manner consistent with the previous rules (Lindbeck 1984: 94).

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(p. 557) The Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian formula might then be understood as attempts to articulate these rules in terms of the conceptuality available at that time. This leaves open the possibility that the rules may yet be maintained in other contexts but differently formulated. 'There may, on this reading, be complete faithfulness to classical Trinitarianism and Christology even when the imagery and language of Nicaea and Chalcedon have disappeared from the theology and ordinary worship, preaching, and devotion' (Lindbeck 1984: 95).

Whether doctrines can be seen merely as providing second-order grammatical rules as opposed to making first-order confessional truth claims is not altogether clear. Lindbeck acknowledges the importance of the latter, but these are enabled by doctrinal rules rather than identified with them. For many critics, however, this sharp distinction has proved problematic. While the Nicene Creed undoubtedly generates norms about how Jesus is to be understood and attested, it is hard to resist the view that it also appears to be making some strong truth claims about his identity. Its widespread doxological function moreover appears to suggest not just its irreversibility for all Christians but its capacity to make these first-order ontological claims. For this reason, one may need to regard the distinction between rules and truth claims as a fuzzier one, a difference in degree rather than in kind. On the other hand, Lindbeck's work enables us to make sense of the importance of some quite rarified controversies (e.g. the *Filioque*) without assuming that theologians have some privileged access to the interior workings of the divine essence. Significantly, the sorts of resolution to the *Filioque* clause noted above tend not to argue that one side is simply right over against the other (as if a theological X-ray of God's being would settle the matter) but rather to point to the ways in which we have to regulate, for example, what is said about the relationship of Jesus to the Spirit in order better to read the Gospel story.

In all these ways, there is a significant extent to which ecumenical dialogue has both enriched and itself benefited from the renaissance of Trinitarian theology in the twentieth century. It is ironical, therefore, that one of the most trenchant analyses of ecumenical theology has perceived the lack of a full-blown Trinitarian theology to have been the main impediment to overcoming classical doctrinal disagreements between East and West and between Roman Catholic and Protestant. Robert Jenson's *Unbaptized God* is one of the most theologically accomplished assessments of recent ecumenical progress, but his main contention is that the lack of a full Trinitarianism, especially with respect to the Spirit, has vitiated attempts to overcome disputes surrounding justification, the real presence, Scripture and tradition, the *Filioque*, justification, and office and charism (Jenson 1992). His book has not yet received the attention it deserves, perhaps a sign of the recent loss of momentum in ecumenical theology.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Jenson (1992); Newbigin (1978); Wainwright (1998).

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David Fergusson

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David Fergusson is Professor of Divinity and Principal of New College at the University of Edinburgh. He is author of *Faith and Its Critics* (2009) based on the Gifford Lectures (2008).

The Doctrine of God in Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Ellen T. Charry

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Abstract and Keywords

This article explores the Jewish-Christian dialogue regarding the doctrine of God. It examines two encounters that occurred during the patristic and medieval periods and two encounters that occurred in the past thirty years. It explains that while the former two encounters were hampered by Christian inability to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity, the latter two show signs of promise. This is part because both the Jewish and the Christian participants share a debt to Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Abraham Heschel.

Keywords: Jewish-Christian dialogue, doctrine of God, Trinity, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Heschel

INTERRELIGIOUS dialogue is a modern notion. Perhaps its earliest appearance is in Lessing's comedy, *Nathan the Wise* (1779), that promotes respect, communication, and friendship among religions. Previously, the primary stance was contempt, the mode of communication between Judaism and Christianity was polemic. Public disputation was mandated by Christians bent on converting Jews. The Jewish goal was to thwart that design. Polemic is a war of words, and these sometimes spilled over into violence as in the burning of many folio volumes of the Talmud in France in 1242–4 (the exact number of volumes and manuscripts burnt is still subject to discussion among scholars, see Sirat 1999). These are not dialogical conditions.

Dialogue takes place on a level playing field between peers, in which each sets his own terms of participation. For example, the original title for this essay was 'The Trinity in Jewish-Christian Dialogue'. But that title sets the conversation on Christian terms. That puts the burden of proof on Jews, when Christians are the ones pressed to argue that they remain monotheists. A dialogical way of coming at the topic is the current title, the 'Doctrine of God in Jewish-Christian Dialogue'. It recognizes that we are dealing with two theological frameworks and respects both. We shall examine two such dialogues here.

Interreligious dialogue seeks a path to mutual theological acceptance rather than theological hegemony. Further, the hope is to understand one's own theological commitments better through engagement with the other. The possibility of conversion is always possi-

ble, of course, but that is not the goal. Here, one comes to the table to learn from one's interlocutor, not to defeat her. It is an exchange of gifts, not a war of words. Dialogue requires a posture of accompaniment, even mutual encouragement, without a predetermined outcome. The virtue of respect calls for accompanying the other as far as possible in a sincere effort to arrive at improved understanding of the other and a clearer vision (p. 560) of the truth of one's own heritage (Swidler 1981; Swidler 2008). Dialogue, then, is a posture of open listening to the other in an intentional conversation.

On these terms, there has not been much Jewish-Christian dialogue on the Trinity. There have been a good number of Christian and Jewish polemics aimed at one another where the Trinity is sometimes debated (Lasker 2007: 45-104). There has also been Jewish-Christian dialogue where Trinity has not been central (Rosenzweig 2005; van Buren 1980, 1983, 1988). Selecting appropriate material for review here is challenging since a single work may have both polemical and dialogical features or presuppose the differing doctrine of God without directly addressing the topic. Here we look at actual theological encounters or reports of them between Jews and Christians where the doctrine of God is addressed directly or indirectly. They are Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (Justin 2003), the Barcelona disputation of 1263 (Maccoby 1982), a face-to-face dialogue between Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann (Lapide and Moltmann 1981), and a literary exchange between Peter Ochs and David Tracy (in Frymer-Kensky et al. 2000).

1. An Early Encounter: Justin And Trypho

In the mid-second century, Justin of Nablus records a two-day discussion with an urbane and engaging Jew, Trypho, and some of his friends, that purportedly took place in Ephesus at the time of the Bar Kochba revolt against Rome (132-5) (Justin 2003). It is a substantial work. Justin gives long speeches. Trypho and his companions are silent during some of these, but Trypho does make short interventions of his own in which he questions Justin's answers and points the conversation in ways that he wants it to go. The winsomeness of the portrayal of Trypho invites conjecture that it reports a genuine encounter but not a verbatim report (Horner 2001: 12).

While intended to convert the Jews, the encounter is quite cordial and a dialogical tone prevails. Since the Nicene definition of Christ was still two centuries away Justin could not focus explicitly on the Trinity, but he does evidence elements of that later doctrine. He hopes to persuade Trypho that Christianity is true using Christological exegesis of the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the anointed Son of God and even God in the form of an angel apart from and subordinate to God the creator (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56). He organizes his points around what must be an early creedal formulation, a variant of our Apostles' Creed. Doctrinal agreement between the interlocutors that the Father is the creator of all things provides common ground for the debate. The disagreement turns on the second article of the Creed.

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Concatenating seven citations of, or allusions to, a creedal text that he had (36.5; 39.7; 57.3; 85.1, 2; 126.1 and 132.1), we see the Christian faith for which Justin argues. Jesus Christ was predicted by the prophets, assumed human nature, was born of a virgin, became a man, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died, arose from the dead, ascended into (p. 561) heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, opened the gates of heaven, and shall return again in glory to judge everyone who ever lived.

Justin has elements of what would become Trinitarian doctrine. He has a doctrine of the pre-existence of the Son who would become Jesus at the Incarnation. From this he argues that Jesus is not of human origin (68.4), for 'God has begotten of himself a certain rational power as a beginning before all creatures' (61.1), following Prov. 8:22-3.

He has a high logos Christology from which he argues that the incarnate one can be the mediator of creation and revelation (Grillmeier 1974: 89-94), but focuses primarily on Christ as the instrument of salvation. At the general resurrection, Christ will return to vanquish death for all. 'Then, some *will be sent to the judgement and sentence of fire, to be punished eternally*, while others will dwell with [God] free from suffering, corruption, sorrow, and death' (45.4). Justin wants to enjoy that salvation with his Jewish friends.

In addition to or perhaps as part of the logos Christology, Christ is an angel whose activities conflate with those of the Spirit. L. W. Hurtado and A. Briggman judge Justin to be binitarian (Hurtado 2008; Briggman 2009). At other points, Justin seems to offer ditheism as when he says 'I shall attempt to prove my assertion, namely that there exists ... another God and Lord under the Creator of all things, who is also called an Angel because he proclaims to man whatever the Creator of the world ... wishes to reveal to them' (56.4) (Juncker 1994).

From a Nicene perspective, Justin is confused, but to conclude that, as Briggman does, is anachronistic, because at the time there was no Trinitarian norm against which Justin's doctrine could be judged defective (Briggman 2009: 135). Justin has another concern: to persuade his Jewish friends that their teachers are wrong and that they should accept his scriptural exegesis instead.

For his part, Trypho is neither persuaded by Justin's exegesis nor frightened by the eschatological threat of the theistic sanction. He loves to talk theology and shares enough of Justin's presuppositions to have a coherent conversation much of the time. Yet he finds Justin's binitarian or ditheist claims incredulous and astonishing. That an eternal pre-existent God or Son of God was born of a virgin is 'preposterous and incapable of proof' (48.1). Tellingly, Justin admits that he cannot prove this claim but that it is not to be denied: 'even though he apparently is of human origin, [Jesus] evidently became the Christ by the Father's choice' (48.3). Without fear, Trypho finds the incarnational claim irrational and unsupportable (68.1). Justin, unable to prove the point, finally asserts 'nothing is impossible and that God can do all things if he wills it' (84.4).

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Thus, one side of Trypho's objection is rational and another is historical. Although the interlocutors share the messianic expectation of Isa. 9:6-7, and agree that the coming counsellor would be a messenger from God, as in Genesis 18, Justin cannot prove that Jesus is the one anticipated by this and other texts that Justin brings. Even if all the scriptural texts that Justin brings point to a messianic figure and Trypho agreed that they seem to, they do not demonstrate that the Nazarene is that one, let alone that such a messiah would be ontologically connected to God in a special way. Justin addresses neither concern directly. He does not counter that the Christian claims are rational, or that Jesus (p. 562) is the one. His suggestion that Lord in Jewish scripture implies someone of non-human origin is also not persuasive.

We can summarize Trypho's role in the debate as his six objections to Justin's creedal claims:

- (1) Justin cannot prove that Jesus is the one predicted by the prophets and is the anointed Son of God (48).
 - (2) He cannot prove that there is an additional God to the creator or that he condescended to be born of a virgin (50, 55).
 - (3) Using the Septuagint of Isa. 7:14 to support pre-existence of Christ based on the virgin birth is inappropriate because the Hebrew word means 'young woman' (43.8, where Justin acknowledges awareness of the problem; 67.1 and 84.3).
 - (4) He has not proven that the God who appeared to Abraham was born, incarnated, and suffered like all others (57.3).
 - (5) He has not shown that the Son pre-existed eternally (87.2).
 - (6) Claiming crucifixion as a salvific event is impossible because it is a singularly accursed death according to Deut. 21:23. A curse could not be a blessing (89.2).
- Trypho agrees that the anointed one should suffer, but not that shameful death (89-96).

Exegetical debate held the field at that time. The speculative Trinitarian claim that Jesus Christ is *homoousios* with the Father, that there are three hypostases of God, none of which engages time and space, was not yet in focus. Philosophical rationalism lay ahead. The issues argued would become standard and represented.

2. Medieval Polemics And Disputations

The situation was dramatically different in Christendom. The Church vigorously sought the conversion of Jews through polemical treatises, forced sermons pressured by civil disabilities. When these efforts succeeded, the Church enlisted the Jewish converts in the evangelizing effort, enriching the *Adversus Judaeos* literature of earlier ages. This enabled Christians to switch from arguing exegetically to arguing on Jewish home territory: rabbinic literature. While the patristic age tolerated Jews, with the Inquisition and the mendicant orders the situation of Jews deteriorated. Polemics became fiercely defamatory and carried social and political consequences (Cohen 1982). As philosophy filtered into

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European Christian lands, both sides adapted it to their needs so that Jewish scripture, rabbinic literature, and philosophy were all marshalled to convert Jews.

Jewish leaders tried to quell Jewish apostasy by rebutting Christian arguments in Hebrew treatises for Jews (Lasker 2007). Many anti-Christian arguments came from Arabic Muslim anti-Christian polemics. Daniel Lasker lists forty-one anti-Christian Jewish polemics, more than half of which contain philosophical refutations of the Trinity (Lasker 2007: 13-20). Trypho's incredulity resounds in them. Jews continued to find the Trinity and other contested Christian doctrines illogical, nonsensical, and impossible to prove.

(p. 563) Anti-Christian polemics written by Jews for Jews, like the Christian anti-Jewish polemics that trained Christian preachers to evangelize Jews, do not fall strictly within the purview of this essay. However, the issues debated illustrate the state of the Trinitarian debate at the time. For example, presented with the proposal of one God in three Persons, Jews asked, if God is a Trinity of three distinct Persons, is God not a material substance? The idea that God is immaterial seems to be violated.

Further, Christian polemicists, knowing that Jews accepted the notion of divine attributes, attempted to persuade Jews of the acceptability of the Trinity by misrepresenting the doctrine. They argued that the Persons merely instantiate divine attributes. Jews responded asking, if so, why limit interest to three attributes given that God has more than three attributes? This rebuttal of a misrepresentation of the Trinity had a long after-life and is still employed by Jews, as will be noted below.

Under the reigning Aristotelian idea that God is thought thinking itself, eastern Christians forwarded the idea that the Father was the intellect, the Son the intellectually cognizing subject, and the Holy Spirit the intellectually cognized object (Lasker 2007: 77). Trinity means the thinker, thinking, and thought of God that does not compromise the divine unity. Jewish apologists responded that the Aristotelian Christian view corrupted Aristotle's teaching and that there was no confluence between the Trinity and the Jewish appropriation of the Aristotelian teaching (Lasker 2007: 78-9).

Trinitarians argued that the Father generated the Son who later became incarnate. Jews denied the eternal generation of the Son because it implied multiplicity in God but mistakenly took the Arian position that the Incarnation implied that there was a time when he was not the Son (Lasker 2007: 85).

Disputations

There were also three significant face-to-face disputations about the Talmud and Midrashim, spear-headed by Jewish apostates eager to convert other Jews. One, ordered by the Pope at Paris (1240) and held before the Queen of France, was a pretext for burning many folio volumes of the Talmud on the grounds that it blasphemed Jesus the messiah. The most important was at Barcelona, Spain (1263), before the King. A third was at Tortosa, Spain (1413/4), before the Pope. These were not free and open debates among peers, but interrogations of the rabbis present who were commanded to answer the ques-

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tions put to them. Of these three, only the reports of the Barcelona disputation mention the Trinity.

Nachmanides and Friar Paul Christian (1263)

Friar Paul Christian, a converted Spanish Jewish Dominican, had access to the crown (Roos 2003). He persuaded King Jaime I of Aragon to convene a public debate between himself and Rabbi Moses ben Nakhman of Gerona (Nakhmanides, also known as the Ramban), a recognized authority of Catalonian Jewry (Maccoby 1982: 41).

(p. 564) The men faced off on 20–24 July 1263, in the royal court, with noblemen, ecclesiastics, and leading burghers of the town attending (Chazan 1992). We have two latter reconstructions of the event, one from the Ramban in Hebrew and a shorter anonymous one in Latin. The proceeding was dramatic. From the Ramban's account, the terms of the debate were first to discuss whether the messiah had come and then whether he was divine.

In the context of Christological debate, discussion of the Trinity was collateral, but according to both the Jewish and the Christian reports it surfaced in a visit the Dominican paid to the rabbi in Gerona in preparation for the event (Maccoby 1982: 144–5, 148). The friar asked the rabbi whether he believed in the Trinity. He responded, 'What is the Trinity?' and offered a few possible answers. Paul denies that any of these comes close and says that the Trinity is 'Wisdom, will and power', the common attempt to induce Jews to agree to the Trinity on a faulty representation. Nachmanides agrees that God is wise, that he wills and is powerful, but insists that these are all attributes of the divine essence and that the doctrine of the Trinity is an erroneous conclusion to draw from this claim.

The Latin report says that Paul diligently expounded belief in the 'Holy Trinity, both as to the Unity of the Divine essence, and as to the Trinity of the Persons, as held by Christians' (148). He adds that at the disputation, when asked about the Trinity, Nachmanides was silent. From this, the Christians erroneously inferred his assent to the doctrine.

This was not a meaningful Trinitarian debate. It is not clear that any Jewish disputant adequately grasped the Christian doctrine or that the Christians were ingenuous about it, unless they too lacked sophistication on the topic. These three public disputations suggest that the doctrine of God was not a central point of engagement between Jews and Christians at that time. The concern was, as it had been for Justin, for Jews to admit that the messiah had come and that he was Jesus.

3. Modern Dialogues

As noted at the outset, modernity swept in a fresh stance toward interreligious engagement. Here we find two Jewish-Christian dialogues on the doctrine of God. In both cases, each participant can stand in both theological frames of reference, even though Jewish contributors are not steeped in Trinitarian subtleties. Two published encounters are between Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann and between Peter Ochs and David Tracy.

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Lapide-Moltmann Dialogue

On 22 May 1978, in a West German village, three decades after the slaughter of European Jewry, Pinchas Lapide, an orthodox Austrian Jewish theologian who escaped Hitler, and (p. 565) Jürgen Moltmann, a German war veteran and prisoner of war who became a theology professor at Tübingen, held a public dialogue on monotheism and Trinitarianism. It was the first published interchange specifically on the doctrine of God between a Jew and a Christian.

The format differed from all previous encounters. Here, each participant offered a prepared statement, first the Jew, then the Christian. Two rounds of impromptu dialogue followed, beginning with Lapide. The third stage of the event was audience questions. The slender volume concludes with an unprecedented interchange on 'the positive meaning of the Jewish No to the messiahship of Jesus' and an unparalleled 'Common Declaration' in which both prescind from 'any artificial unifying of all paths of faith'. It pledges the signatories to pursue 'a unity in plurality' to replace the 'trench of hostility' that has characterized Jewish-Christian interaction over the millennia (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 91-2) with a 'new dialogue between Christians and Jews'.

The feat is moving. Thirty years earlier the soldier would have sought the death of the Jew. The dialogical model challenges the received paradigm of Jewish-Christian interaction. Here, mutual respect and a desire for understanding prevail.

Pinchas Lapide

In his prepared statement, Lapide is clear that Jewish monotheism developed in staunch opposition to ancient polytheism. It does so, not by employing strictly rationalist forms of argument, but 'from the inextinguishable Thou experience which reveals the Lord of the universe as an unutterable "over-against"' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 27). The Buberian stress on revelation as encounter enables Lapide to view monotheism dynamically, as Moltmann also does. Divine oneness is not an ontological absolute, as Greek philosophy would have it, but an event that occurs through the unification of the hearts of believers under the lordship of the One God. Monotheism is to the scriptural end of the universal conversion of the world to the God of Israel, as Jews understand God. It is a unification of all believers under the lordship of the One God.

Lapide also turns to Martin Buber's friend and colleague, the great early twentieth-century Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig. He interpreted the *echad* of the Shm'a (Deut. 6:4) not as God's 'being one' (*Eins-Sein*), but rather as the "'union" (*Einung*) of God' that occurs 'in the reconciliation of all contradictory dualism, which pressed toward a loving "becoming one"—not only in the believing confession, but also in the realizing deed' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 32). Lapide pursues a dynamic monotheism.

However, rather than develop dynamic monotheism in conversation with the Christian doctrine of God, Lapide retreats into the classic Jewish comfort zone. He faithfully reports that Jews may read Trinitarianism as either a heavenly triumvirate or, worse, as tritheism. The incarnational claim qualifies for the derisive Talmudic term *shittuf*, associ-

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ating elements of different kinds that fit ill together. Rejecting the divinity of Christ, Jews see the worship of Jesus as anthropolatry and so finally not properly monotheist and perhaps even pagan.

(p. 566) To soften the judgement, Lapide turns to Saadia, the ninth-century Gaon of Baghdad, who viewed Trinitarianism as distorted monotheism but not idolatry. Saadia saw the Trinity as 'the hypostatization of the three divine attributes of essence, life, and omniscience' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 34), as was standard for his day. Although this deviates from the Jewish doctrine of God, Christians should not be considered idolaters but 'genuine, if also odd monotheists' (ibid.).

Still, wanting to reach out to his Christian interlocutor as far as possible, Lapide concludes his essay by noting the few instances of Jewish conversation about God that resonate with some Trinitarian expressions. He refers to remarks of Karl Rahner and Rabbi Zalman Shneur of Ladi, the founder of the Lubavitcher dynasty, one of the pillars of modern Hasidism. Rahner, Lapide writes, says that God meets us in three givens—as Creator, Redeemer, and 'the Spirit whose Self gives us our yes to God'—and reciprocally that Rabbi Zalman writes that God 'is the Knowing One, the One Known, and the Knowledge, All these three form in God an indivisible unity' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 37). This derives from medieval Jewish polemic as we have seen.

In conclusion, however, Lapide chastises Christians for a want of shyness in their overboldness to specify God. Trinitarian speculation has obscured the *Deus absconditus* by dragging God out of hiding. Trinitarianism inquires too deeply into 'the inscrutable God of the Bible' in order to fix him in writing (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 42). In an interesting rebuff to both Jewish and Christian rationalism, Judaism, Lapide says, remains content with the ambiguous apophatic bottom line, while Christianity's drive for certain knowledge has led it too far down the cataphatic path. In essence, he asks Christians to give up their renegade doctrine and return home to monotheism.

Jürgen Moltmann

While Lapide dips his toes in the beckoning dialogical waters, Moltmann dives in at their deepest point. He graciously concedes that the burden of truth lies with the Christians, for monotheism is the norm against which Trinitarianism must hold its own. To do that, he arrestingly turns not to Christian but to Jewish theologians. Abraham Joshua Heschel's doctrine of divine pathos, developed in his book *The Prophets*, is Moltmann's starting point for exegeting the Trinity.

Heschel, Moltmann says, was the first to break free from the apathetic god of the philosophers by finding in the prophets God's *shekhina* going into exile with his people and suffering there with them. Clinging to the presence of God among them in exile is certainly the balm and hope of Israel. Yet Moltmann goes further. The divine condescension implies a distinction within God. Not only that, but 'God and Israel together await their redemption. Israel knows that it will be redeemed because God will indeed redeem God's Self

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and thereby also God's people ... The suffering of God is the *means* by which Israel will be redeemed. God's Self is the "ransom" for Israel' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 50).

Moltmann builds on Heschel's notion of divine pathos, elaborating the language of divine self-abasement through A. M. Goldberg and Peter Kuhn. More significantly, he draws on Rosenzweig, as Lapide also had, quoting him at length. The *shekhina* 'is (p. 567) pictured as a dichotomy taking place in God himself. God himself separates himself from himself, he gives himself away to his people, he shares in their sufferings, sets forth with them into the agony of exile, joins their wanderings'. While some would argue that worship of Jesus necessitated Trinitarianism, Moltmann, having established the suffering of God through contemporary Jewish sources, argues that Trinitarianism is the consequence of the story of the crucified Christ. It is 'the conceptual framework needed to understand the story of Jesus as the story of God. The doctrine of the Trinity is the theological short summary of the story of the passion of Christ' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 48).

Heschel, Rosenzweig, and Gershom Scholem's testimony that the Jewish mystical tradition—marginal as it is—speaks to self-distinction within God, emboldened Moltmann to plant his faith in the redemptive meaning of the cross of Christ in Jewish soil. It is a sea change. A Christian theologian grounded the Trinity in Jewish theology! Moltmann dwells on the spiritual power of divine self-giving. The cross is the lodestone for the suffering, not only of Israel, but, through it, the suffering of the world. By abandoning his Son, God 'becomes the Redeemer of all the Godforsaken' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 54). Jesus handed himself to abandonment in the face of divine anger, unifying divine love and anger with his death.

In the God-forsakenness of the cross, the self-distinction of God (begun in God's going into exile with his people) 'embraces here the love of God and its opposite, the anger of God; the grace of God and its opposite, the judgement of God' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 53). The pathos of God, known to Israel's prophets, gathers up all the lost and abandoned in the abandonment of Christ.

Moltmann concludes with a vision. 'After two thousand years of deadly differences [between Jews and Christians], the more profound convergence may and must finally be brought out. In this, the distinctions are to be affirmed as steps along the path to the recognition of one another and along the even broader path of hope with one another' (Lapide and Moltmann 1981: 56).

Ochs-Tracy Dialogue

In September 2000, five liberal-leaning Jews published a declaration in the *New York Times*, 'Dabru Emet' (Speak Truth). It claims that Jews and Christians worship the same God and seek authority from the same Old Testament/Tanah. It asserts that Christians can respect the Jewish claim to the land of Israel. It denies that Nazism was a Christian phenomenon. It claims that theological differences between Jews and Christians will be settled only in the eschaton, that a new relationship with Christians will not harm Judaism,

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and that Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace. It speaks to other Jews for Christians to overhear.

The manifesto was accompanied by a volume of essays by the signatories and invited interlocutors to respond to them (Frymer-Kensky 2000). The chapter on God has three essays. David Tracy responded to the lead essay by Peter Ochs.

(p. 568) Peter Ochs

Ochs speaks to both traditional and theologically sceptical Jews, that Jewish thought must now both respect received tradition and respond to modern Jews who long ago lost faith in God and since the Shoah have lost faith in humanity (Frymer-Kensky 2000: 54). To this end, he wants to form a new generation of Jewish scholars who will view Christianity in Jewish terms. It is noteworthy that the goal is not to study Christianity on its own terms, but to use Jewish terms to interpret it so that it is not quite as alien as it otherwise might be. Jews have often been eager to have Christians understand them in their own (Jewish) terms because the Christian terms for understanding Judaism have been so dangerous for Jews. Yet Ochs's stance is admirable because it seeks to legitimate Christianity on Jewish theological terms.

To begin that work, Ochs exonerates Christianity from the category of idolatry because it meets the Noachide standards, even though Christian doctrines may be incomprehensible. He acknowledges that the Incarnation and the Trinity are unacceptable, incomprehensible, and simply wrong Jewishly speaking, but encourages his students not to walk away from dialogue. He finds Christian beliefs to overlap at points with Jewish ones and add to them for the sake of another tradition that has some similar roots. That Christian beliefs are incompatible with Jewish ones, they retain recognizable elements from Jewish tradition that could be legitimate for Christians (Frymer-Kensky 2000: 60).

Although this is but an essay, it is to this writer's knowledge the first Jewish attempt since Franz Rosenzweig's in the early 1920s to legitimate Christianity theologically. The American experience has been positive for Jews.

David Tracy

David Tracy's response is short and pithy. He aligns himself with anti-supersessionist readings of Judaism. He begins by examining the term 'monotheism', seeking a 'radical monotheism' that grounds Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It claims one God, creator and sustainer of all reality, who has person-like characteristics, is related to history and nature, is transcendent to and immanent in all reality, and is self-disclosive so that in keeping with classic western Christianity the believer's goal is to know the self-disclosing God.

The last point sets the stage, for the rest of the article departs from Jewish and Islamic monotheism because Judaism and Islam claim that God revealed written text, not himself. For Christians, God self-discloses in the narratives of Israel and Jesus Christ, made available in the sacred narratives, doctrines, and liturgy of the church. YHWH funds knowledge of God as Father-Son-Holy Spirit (Frymer-Kensky 2000: 81).

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Eschewing classic supersessionist Christian typology that empties the original scriptural 'type' of meaning and locates it in the 'anti-type', Christ, Tracy admits that God authentically self-discloses in the 'pre-passion actions of YHVH in ancient Israel' as well (Frymer-Kensky 2000: 81). He seeks to dissociate himself from Christianity's deep (p. 569) marcionite inclination while reaffirming the singularly Johannine view that God is love known through the narratives of Israel and Jesus. Tracy grounds the radically relational Trinitarian God in the radically monotheist identity of YHWH. Tracy listens, reflects, and enters the dialogical lists at their most challenging point: the doctrine of the Trinity.

These interlocutors are in dialogically oriented parallel play. Each reaches to the other on his own terms to further respect and understanding. They have advanced the conversation.

4. Conclusions

This consideration of Jewish-Christian theological encounters around the doctrine of God suggests the following. (1) Divisive issues were clear early on. (2) It was not until Islamic scholasticism informed Jewish and Christian philosophical discourse that the 'Trinity'—in the technical sense that Christians discuss the doctrine of God—became the central point of disagreement. (3) The Christian evangelistic motive discouraged Jews from engaging Christians all along the line. (4) Limited access to the doctrinal nuances of the other side has shaped the conversation over time. (5) The modern notion of dialogue sets a new path for Jewish-Christian encounter.

(1) Divisive issues were clear early on. The terms of the perennial disagreement between Jews and Christians on the doctrine of God were set by the mid second century. The presenting problem was whether Jesus was the messiah adumbrated in some scripture passages. The debate happening in the Fourth Gospel endured over time. Behind the messianic claim lay the question of what/who a messiah is. Jews and Christians agreed that the messiah would be sent by God but construed both the office and the identity of its holder quite differently.

Jews never considered that the messiah would be other than a politically astute individual able to rescue Israel from political danger. Christians, by contrast, slowly groped toward the idea that the messiah was divine and that redemption was from ubiquitous and perennial spiritual, not imminent socio-political, problems. This was the breaking point. Most Jews refused Christianity because they could fathom neither a suprahuman messiah nor a pervasive spiritual need for spiritual salvation. Needing immediate social and political relief, Israel had not been redeemed by Jesus from Roman occupation and that sufficed to disqualify him from messiahship.

(2) It was not until Islamic scholasticism informed Jewish and Christian discourse that the 'Trinity'—in the technical sense that Christians discuss the doctrine of God—became the central point of disagreement. Islamic rationalism gave Jews and Christians dialectical debate formats. Here, both sides engaged in formal polemics against the other on the issues of divine unity, multiplicity, and their (p. 570) possible recon-

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cilability. The debates were about what was later called the essential Trinity, the notion that the multiplicity of God resides in the interiority of God. The soteriological mission of the incarnate Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit beyond the purview of the Old Testament led to the notion of the economic Trinity that Jewish-Christian encounter could not navigate.

(3) Evangelistic pressure discouraged Jews from engaging Christians all along the line. David Tracy mentions the 'longed-for dialogue between Christian and Jewish thinkers' (Frymer-Kensky 2000: 77). It is a longing that only Christians could have. Jews often dreaded what modern dialogically persuaded Christians long for. In Christendom, Jews feared that Judaism could be lost. In the Middle Ages, Jews determined to defend the existence of Judaism were forced to combat Christian evangelizing, especially when it was state sponsored. The institutional memory of state-sponsored disabilities has discouraged Jews from engaging Christians.

Jewish apostates were an especially formidable adversary. Christians expected them to outwit or corner Jews. To this day, many Jews have resisted conversation with Christians fearing that the apostates among them would be called to incriminate themselves.

(4) Limited access to the doctrinal nuances of the other side has shaped the conversation over time. In Justin's day, the doctrine of the Trinity was unformulated, so Trypho could not have responded to it. Later, Jewish and Christian scholars often had only indirect access to one another's beliefs so that over time the conversation has been uneven.

Advocates of both sides have been untrained in the nuances of the other's position. Jews, for example, have been attracted to the misled argument that the divine attributes are the basis of Trinitarianism. As recently as 2001, David Blumenthal argued that, based on the theory of divine attributes, there is no reason for Christians to claim only three divine Persons and not more. Since Cabalism claims ten attributes of the divine nature, why should Christians stop at three (Blumenthal 2001)?

(5) The modern notion of dialogue that eschews the evangelistic motive sets a new path for Jewish-Christian encounter. This constraint considerably limits the number of appropriate interlocutors, however, since Jews do not welcome evangelists. In the materials considered here, Lapide and Ochs venture out into the fresh water, trusting that Moltmann and Tracy are among the new breed of Christians who seek mutual acceptance rather than the conversion of the Jews.

Modernity brought the notion of toleration. At first, this meant rescinding civic and economic liabilities for standing outside state-sponsored religion. Later modernity moved beyond toleration to consider pluralism. While Jews embraced pluralism, Christians are challenged by it. Currently, Jewish-Christian dialogue is the domain of advocates of pluralism on both sides of the aisle.

(p. 571) The doctrine of God decisively divides Christians and Jews. Dialogue respects the self-definition of both communities while inviting them to come as near to one another as possible within the constraints of their respective theological boundaries. It may be the province of only a few, but they are charting new ground.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Cohen (1982); Lasker (2007); Swidler (2008).

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Ellen T. Charry

Ellen T. Charry is Margaret W. Harmon Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

The Trinity in Interreligious Dialogues

Gavin D'Costa

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines the relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity for interreligious dialogues. It shows how recent reflection on the religions has been impoverished when the Trinity is not the guiding light and describes some helpful Trinitarian approaches to the religions. It raises concerns about the approaches of Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, and Raimundo Panikkar to the Trinity and non-Christian religions and argues for explicitly Trinitarian and Christological approaches to these religions in terms of *praeparatio evangelica*, *semina Verbi*, and *vestigia Trinitatis*.

Keywords: interreligious dialogues, Trinity, Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, Raimundo Panikkar, *praeparatio evangelica*, *semina Verbi*, *vestigia Trinitatis*

Introduction

The doctrine of the Trinity performs at least two important tasks. It allows us to name God as revealed in Jesus Christ so that our God-talk can refer analogically to the divine mystery. This mystery is disclosed in creation, in the history of Israel's covenant, and through its fulfilment (not abrogation) in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, faith in the Trinity structures and is structured by the liturgy of the Church, and is enacted such that the 'real presence' of the divine Trinity is present in the eucharist. The Church is shaped by the Trinity if the Church is, as Paul calls it, the 'body of Christ' (Acts 9:1, 4; and see also Eph. 1:22-3; 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:6). The threefold name in the baptismal formula (Matt. 28:19) marks a person's dying and rising again into the new *ecclesia*. These Trinitarian markers are important in Christian reflection on the religious life of humankind if the question about that religious life is a question about God's actions.

Reflection on the world religions is often divided into two specific areas. First, there is a general 'theology of religions'. Here various theological questions are explored such as: What if any is the mode of revelation outside Jesus Christ? How is that revelation, if there

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is such, related to salvation? Does the Spirit and does the Son act within the world religions? If so, how is this to be understood? Is the kingdom of God operative outside the visible boundaries of the Church? Is the Trinity and the Church necessary for salvation? These are just some of the questions and their Trinitarian nature is apparent. The second field concerns specific questions related to particular engagements, a 'theology with religions', when for example Christianity meets Hinduism in the nineteenth century in India, or when Hindus ask to buy a redundant church in Birmingham, UK, or in the question, does the Muslim doctrine of God as taught by Al Ghazali correspond to (p. 574) the Christian doctrine of the one God taught by Thomas Aquinas? In so much as the Trinity is an ecclesial doctrine, the two areas cannot be so easily separated, but the distinction is heuristically helpful. I will mainly focus on the first area in this chapter.

In what follows I want to develop an argument in three sections. First, I want to indicate how recent reflection on the religions has been impoverished when the Trinity is not the guiding light. I also want to suggest that the Trinity actually helps secure the goals of many of these theologians who try to avoid Trinitarian reflection. Second, I want to briefly examine some helpful Trinitarian approaches to the religions, and note their strengths and weaknesses. Third, I want to constructively develop the positive elements from these two preparatory sections to indicate the importance of the Trinity for interreligious dialogues. I write as a Roman Catholic theologian in an ecumenical spirit who is engaged in interreligious dialogues. In both instances, ecumenism and interreligious dialogues, the specificity of my theological starting point is not meant as a barrier, but an invitation to engage in conversations and friendship, teaching and learning, and a deeper discovery of God's gifts to humankind.

Avoiding the Trinity?

In theology of religions there have been many trajectories that have seen the Trinity as a problem rather than as a resource and starting point. For some, Karl Barth's Trinitarian emphasis exemplifies the problems. The argument against Barth (summarized) is that if God is Trinity and the Trinity is God, then other religions can never amount to anything other than idolatry or human grasping, for none proclaim Father, Son, and Spirit. Barth's Christocentric focus is also deemed problematic as it means that there can be no authentic 'faith' outside of those who expressly confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Barth is seen to close down interreligious dialogues rather than opening them up. In reaction to this perceived 'closed' circle (along with various other factors such as modernity's impact upon theology, a complex mission history whose contours sometimes overlap too closely with an arrogant European colonialism) non-Trinitarian theologies have been developed. Schematically speaking, they either emphasize the 'Father', the 'Spirit', or 'the kingdom', but not in a Trinitarian balance. Usually they employ a low Christology whereby Jesus is seen as different in degree and is not proclaimed as the unique God-Man. I refer readers to a more detailed outline and critique of such thinkers in their complex diversity (D'Costa 2010). Let me put a little flesh on these bones. Such summaries fail to do justice to careful reflection by the authors mentioned. I would never question their noble inten-

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tions of developing good interreligious relations, although I shall be arguing that their intentions are better met within a Trinitarian orientation.

John Hick's vast corpus exemplifies two of these four trajectories—the Father and the kingdom. During his early period Hick stressed the 'God of love' (the 'Father') at the centre of the 'universe of faiths' (Hick 1977: 168–80). Hick argued that a loving God would not consign the majority of humankind to perdition just because they had never (p. 575) heard about Christianity. He also argued that the doctrine of the Incarnation should be understood 'mythically', not ontologically, expressing the force of poetry and deep existential commitment. This meant that the Buddha, Muhammad, the Dao and other 'mediators' (persons or key texts) could all draw people to the loving God, and thus to salvation, just as Jesus did for Christians. How might we know this? Through their fruits: through the reality of the 'kingdom of God' in actions of love, justice, compassion, and kindness. Liberation-orientated theologians like Aloysius Pieris and Paul Knitter made the 'kingdom' the criterion for discerning God's activity in all religions and, like Hick, were able to discern equally salvific traditions within more than one religion (for full bibliographical references for all authors mentioned here and subsequently, see D'Costa 2010). Knitter and Pieris found this kingdom-centredness especially helpful in dealing with non-theistic Buddhism.

The emphasis on the Father alone led to important questions: What was the basis for such a normative doctrine of a loving God? Did the different religions yield the same 'God of love'? Was such a thin narration of the 'God of love' acceptable to any particular religion in its attempt to privilege no one religion? Could this doctrine commend itself to orthodox Trinitarian belief? And what of religions that held a normative non-theistic 'divine' like Buddhism? Hick eventually had to mythologize 'God' as he had the 'Son' (as well as other religions' normative truths) to try to be fair to all religions. The emphasis on the kingdom also generated complex questions: Could the kingdom be detached from the person of Jesus? Could it be detached from the Church? And was it not ultimately just a privileging of certain values, possibly those exalted by liberal moderns, when detached from the person of Christ? (On this latter see especially Milbank 1990.) I contend that the universal fatherhood of God, who loves all peoples, and the joyful acknowledgement of traces of the kingdom outside the visible boundaries of the Church (and its all too shady presence within the history of the Church) are both quite in keeping with orthodox Trinitarian theology. Indeed, Trinitarian theology better grounds such claims in a robust Christian manner, without having the negative impact upon other religions usually attributed to it—see below.

The pneumatological emphasis has arisen in part because it seems to avoid what has been called the 'Christological impasse' which is the apparent roadblock upon the recognition of other revelations erected by the unique status given to the Son. Writers like Stanley Samartha, George Khodr, and Amos Yong want to argue that the Spirit is present in other religions and, employing a certain reading of Irenaeus, urge that we should see God's works being carried out by both hands: the Son *and* the Spirit. The Barthian subordination of the Spirit to the Son is thereby overturned and the great riches and depths

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found in other persons and their religion can be joyfully acknowledged. Questions arise here as to whether the doctrine of perichoresis and the unity of the 'persons' is thus compromised; whether the Spirit can be biblically other than the Spirit of the Son; and whether this neglect of Christology universalizes the Spirit in a rather gnostic fashion. The most problematic in all these three trajectories is the minimization of the atoning value of Christ's death and the transformation of the human condition through his resurrection and ascension. The heart of Christian truth and the universal mission it (p. 576) generates is minimized by these non-Trinitarian theologians. If all religions were to drop their most fundamental unique insights into the nature of reality so as not to cause offence to those who had different views, interreligious dialogue would cease! Is such a loss of salt necessary for the attainment of the common good, or rather, does it actually undermine the common good by removing the unique Christian contribution? I think the latter is most likely.

The Return of the Trinity

The two most influential Trinitarian theologians of the modern period are arguably the Protestant Karl Barth (1886–1968) and the Catholic Karl Rahner (1904–84). Barth attended to the question of the religions twice and has been deeply misunderstood in part because of the English translation of his first famous essay that was translated 'The Revelation of God as the Abolition [*Aufhebung*] of Religions' (Barth 1970: §17). *Aufhebung* might equally be translated as 'lifting up' or 'sublation'. When Hegel uses the term *Aufhebung*, he emphasizes both a taking up of a concept and its being rendered anew in this process. This I think is more akin to what Barth was implying in this essay: anything worthwhile in a religion was taken up and transformed in the light of Christ, for without Christ it is always incomplete. The early Barth was concerned to establish that revelation is Trinitarian and salvific. To use the term 'revelation' of anything else dangerously invited idolatry. Barth's battle against National Socialism is an important back-drop, although his horror of natural theology cannot be minimized. Barth is keen to establish the uniqueness of Christian revelation in its particular narrative form of Israel's covenant and the coming of Jesus Christ. Natural theology to him seemed to allow fallen humans access to God through corrupt human power. The Roman Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar argued that this misunderstood the doctrine of *analogia entis* that might otherwise free the real potential of Barth's Trinitarian orientation (Balthasar 1952). The *analogia entis* always needs interpretation through the *analogia fidei*. To interpret Barth evenly, one should recall he was an admirer of socialism and this partial positive appreciation of some 'alien' cultural elements emerges in his writings on secular culture ('parables' in secular culture) and on the religions (their many 'lights') (Barth 2003: §69). Barth acknowledges that there are prophetic, truthful, and even revelatory 'lights' to be found outside Christianity, 'lights' which are reflections of the 'Light', Jesus Christ. Balthasar's criticism may have helped with this shift and Barth acknowledged Balthasar's work as most insightful.

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Barth's immense strength was his firm rooting of God as Trinity and a searching and searching critique of culture and religions, including Christianity, from this vantage-point. His relentless concern to concentrate God-language in Trinitarian narrative is a font for post-liberal theology and philosophical forms of Reformation theology. Catholics such as Balthasar also affirmed this precious insight. Barth's weakness is his naturalizing of the *analogia entis* in a way that Balthasar showed was not required by a fully Trinitarian (p. 577) orientation. The human mind, even while fallen, was still capable of displaying what Augustine called 'vestiges' of the Trinity in thinking, feeling, and willing. Medievals developed this idea further, with Bonaventure distinguishing between vestiges, images, and likenesses of the Trinity. At stake is fallen nature's ability to still point to the divine in however defective and inadequate a manner. As Balthasar argued, the *analogia entis* must always be viewed through the *analogia fidei* to see the profound orientation of all creation towards the living God. Hence, the way non-Christians view these actions does not necessarily thwart the way in which God is able to work for the restoration of creation: Cyrus, the non-Israelite, facilitates God's grace for Israel. The same holds true of Christians.

Finally, it is worth noting that Barth's attitude to the religions has to be read alongside his universalism. He is often characterized as a 'restrictive exclusivist' (salvation only comes through explicit faith and confession in Jesus Christ), but in practice his universalism undercuts an alleged necessary implication of restrictivist exclusivism: that non-Christians are damned. This move in Barth is based on his redefining the Reformed tradition of double predestination through a reading of predestination exclusively in the person of Christ. Christ takes on our damnation and brings redemption through this act.

Rahner's theology has been hugely influential in Catholic circles. In *Spirit in the World* (English translation 1968) Rahner argued that the Spirit was present to all humans *qua* humans, such that all nature was always graced nature with an orientation to God. This unthematized (non-explicit) relation to God was fully and most explicitly thematized in the God-Man, Jesus Christ. In history, it is through this revelation that we discover the reality of graced nature, which until then is never properly known. Nevertheless, all history affords the possibility of a person saying yes to the teleological drive of his/her own graced nature in acts of love, trust, and hope—without explicit confrontation with the revelation of Christ. A person can say no to unthematized grace in acts of despair, hatred, and evil, but there is a profound contradiction involved in sin's use of transcendental freedom to foreclose its own freedom. The outcome of Rahner's *Spirit in the World* is that all humans *qua* humans are capable of finding redemption through the Spirit in their concrete actions that teleologically orient them to Christ.

While Jesus exemplified the fullness of this 'yes' of Man to God and God to Man, this 'yes' is to be found in fragmentary form everywhere, including the religions—amidst a 'no'. Rahner thus coined the terms 'anonymous Christian' and 'anonymous Christianity', reflecting the Christological orientation of all grace in terms of final, not efficient, causality. The non-Christian as an anonymous Christian secretly says yes to Jesus when she says yes to hope and love. The non-Christians' religion which cannot be divorced from their

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'yes' may contain elements and practices that support this yes—thus 'anonymous Christianity'.

In this configuration Rahner's great strength is that he manages to hold together both Trinitarian and ecclesial concerns, while being profoundly open to interreligious dialogues at every level (personal, social, spiritual, philosophical, and theological). Rahner also suggests a positive relation to non-Christians. In so much as God may be discovered (p. 578) in the religions then Christians have much to learn in interreligious dialogues while still being under the demand to preach the good news to all people. Rahner suggested that the historian of religion had the job to check the validity of the 'anonymous Christianity' thesis. Here again he was ground-breaking in reconfiguring the history of religions within a theological reading. Rahner's achievement is considerable as is his impact on Catholic theology of religions.

Rahner has been criticized for the chauvinism of the term 'anonymous Christian', but that misses the point: the terminology is entirely intra-Christian theological reflection. The ontological claims are important and there are Trinitarian problems that arise. First, Rahner's deployment of the Spirit seems to take what is traditionally the Spirit's function of upholding and sustaining creation and turns it into a redemptive grace. The converse side of this conflation of supernatural saving grace with nature is the minimizing, if not abandonment, of the atoning significance of Christ's cross. As Rowan Williams nicely puts it (1986) when contrasting Rahner with Balthasar, Rahner tends to see a world full of well-meaning humanists while Balthasar sees instead torture, violence, and institutional greed raping human dignity. The first group simply needs to be led to the teleological fulfilment of the path upon which it treads, while the second needs to be shaken from that path to walk anew. The first has somehow overcome original sin without Christ. Williams rightly warns against pressing these contrasts too rigidly.

Nevertheless, we can pursue this Trinitarian line of questioning by seeing that Rahner develops two economies, an invisible and visible Trinitarian action in the world, which never seems to come together. The invisible Trinity operates for anonymous Christians bringing them to salvation while the visible Trinity operates for explicit Christians bringing them to salvation. But is that in fact the case? To rephrase the problem: how can the anonymous Christian enjoy the beatific vision that on Rahner's own accounting requires an explicit knowledge of the triune God without that implicit grace becoming explicit? Rahner's answer to this question is indirect and is explicitly addressed in his early theology of death developed separately from Rahner's 'anonymous Christian' reflections (Rahner 1965). Here, the after-life provides the place where this implicit knowledge becomes explicit knowledge which is required for salvation. The proper implication thus is that the relationship to Christ that the non-Christian has is more accurately understood as a 'potentiality' rather than an 'actuality', which is what St Thomas teaches when he discusses this question (*ST III*, q.8, a.3, ad1). Rahner conflates potentiality with actuality precisely because he has conflated nature with supernatural saving grace. The universality of the Spirit's action has in Rahner almost overcome the particularity of Christ's action.

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Let me follow Rahner's Trinitarian orientation to flesh out Trinitarian issues through two Catholic theologians deeply influenced by him: Jacques Dupuis (1923–2004) and Raimundo Panikkar (1918–2010). Dupuis develops Rahner's position to make three bold new Trinitarian moves which attend to some of the difficulties I have raised against Rahner. First, he explains the presence of Christ in the non-Christian's inner life and religion in terms of a distinction between the Logos *asarkos* and *ensarkos*, the first being the non-incarnate saving action of the Word, the second being the incarnate saving (p. 579) action in the particularity of Christ (Dupuis 1997: 297–300). This is not unlike the anonymous and explicit Christian. Second, in parallel, Dupuis extends the economy of the Holy Spirit beyond the actions of the incarnate Word (*ensarkos*) to explain the legitimacy of non-Christian religions. Third, he detaches the action of the Trinity from the visible sign of the Church so that, while salvation for the non-Christian always happens through the grace of Christ in the power of his Spirit, it does not require any ecclesial mediation or visible relationship to the Church and also does not require non-Christians to become Christians.

On Trinitarian grounds all three moves have been criticized by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2001) entrusted to safeguard the deposit of the Catholic faith. First, Christologically Dupuis implies that there can be 'separation between the Word and Jesus, or between the Word's salvific activity and that of Jesus, [or] that there is a salvific activity of the Word as such in his divinity, independent of the humanity of the incarnate Word'. This parallels Rahner's explicit and implicit Christological distinction. Second, pneumatologically Dupuis implies that 'the salvific action of the Holy Spirit extends beyond the one universal salvific economy of the Incarnate Word'. Rahner never does this. Dupuis self-consciously does move towards what he calls an 'inclusive pluralism'. Third, ecclesiologically, for while it is right 'to maintain that the Holy Spirit accomplishes salvation in non-Christians also through those elements of truth and goodness present' in them, it is not legitimate to 'hold that these religions, considered as such, are ways of salvation...because they contains omissions, insufficiencies and errors regarding fundamental truths about God, man and the world'. Again, Rahner stops short of this move, although his term 'legitimate religion', drawn from Israel before the coming of Christ and analogically applied to other religions, is a step on this path, but one that Rahner refused to take, as a 'legitimate religion' becomes 'illegitimate' for the person who has heard the Gospel and rejected it, not for other adherents of that religion. It is important to note that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in no way denies the reality of God's saving presence in elements of the world religions and in persons themselves, and the reality of the Holy Spirit's presence. What is at stake is the best Trinitarian way this might be best explained.

Whether I (or the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) have interpreted Dupuis's writings correctly, his contribution is important for pushing forward the Trinitarian agenda. The same might be said of Panikkar who in his early work (1964) replicated Rahner's position, but in his later work (1981, the revised edition of 1964; and 1973) made bold steps forward although in an eclectic manner. I think many of his later steps (Christological, pneumatological, and ecclesiological) are akin to Dupuis. (Interestingly Dupuis criticizes Panikkar's Christology for precisely that which the Congregation for the Doctrine of

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the Faith criticizes Dupuis (Dupuis 1997: 151-2)). However, Panikkar also develops what he calls a vision of a 'cosmotheandric reality' whereby the 'modalities' of the Father, Son, and Spirit are mutually corrective pointers towards the divine mystery. The Father represents the apophatic truth that the divine is utterly other, such that nothing can be properly said of 'it' and silence is the purest way of responding to this unfathomable mystery. Allied to this path is the way of mysticism (p. 580) and asceticism which strips down the pretensions of the self in the light of the 'nothingness' of the divine. This brings about a deep self-surrender or self-forgetfulness, and thus a profound compassion, love, and service. He sees various strands of apophatic mysticism within Christianity, and most profoundly within Theravada Buddhism and Advaita Hinduism. However, for Panikkar there is always a danger of indifference to the world in this mystical path. The Son is an icon compared to the utter mystery of the Father that is beyond all forms. The 'Son' represents the path of devotion and personalism, the ecstasy of love and joy, mercy and forgiveness, personal reconciliation and humanity. Indeed, Panikkar reads the *kenosis* of Christ, his self-emptying, in terms of the *sunyata* and *nirvana* of Buddhism. He also sees theistic Hinduism within this iconic spirituality. If the danger of the Father's path was worldly indifference, the danger of the Son's path is anthropocentrism, making the human the measure of all things, or in its divine form, assuming God to be a 'person' writ large. The Spirit represents the unseen mediator which is only seen in its powerful effects. This path is also associated with power and charisma and Panikkar relates this to the Shaivite Sakti tradition in Hinduism and Tantric Buddhist traditions that map the deep powers within the human in which the divine resides, the *kundalini*. The danger of this path is that of idolizing works or rites. Panikkar is content to allow the reality of each tradition to fructify and transform the other, while recognizing that none has the whole truth and all have some truth, a truth which is pluriform, not unitary. Religions are thus complementary paths to the cosmotheandric reality.

Panikkar's approach is especially helpful for his vast erudition and intimate knowledge of the eastern traditions and for his Trinitarian appreciation of many aspects of the world's religions. It would be better that the cosmotheandric reality be construed as an analogical resonance to the mystery of the Trinity, as *vestigia Trinitatis*. This would usefully provide points of contact for respectful exploration and dialogues. However, for Panikkar there is almost an inversion of the *vestigia* tradition, for he seems to want to say that Christianity itself has vestiges of the cosmotheandric reality that are far greater and deeper than disclosed in the Christian revelation. The symbolic triadic structure subordinates the historical particular narrative of revelation. It is certainly true that Christian revelation cannot be equated with the fullness of God's mystery as if nothing more of God can be said, known, or worshipped. However, it is held that the revelation given in the Trinity is that of God's very self, whom we will come to know face to face only in heaven.

I have critically examined this small selection of Trinitarian theologians to show that many of the problems identified by non-Trinitarian theologians are robustly met within a Trinitarian theology. Respect for others, learning from the religions, as well as working together for the common good, are all richly facilitated within a Trinitarian orientation. Of course, a Trinitarian orientation might also call for a deep critique of other religions

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when they stifle the common good or extinguish the 'lights' within sectors of their own tradition. This is politically and socially complicated, but necessary from a theological standpoint. I have drawn attention to critical aspects of these theologies not to minimize their important contributions, but to alert the reader to many unresolved issues once the (p. 581) Trinitarian path is walked. There are many other theologians who might have been profitably discussed in this section such as Colin Gunton, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Clark Pinnock, and S. Mark Heim (see Kärkkäinen 2004 for a useful survey of Trinitarian theologies of religion). Word-limits in part account for their exclusion as well as my judgment that the four above help to lay a trail well worth heeding.

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Let me draw together some of the threads above. I want to suggest that five mysteries of the faith (Spirit, Son, Father, Church, kingdom) need to be constantly held together in tension to properly theologially reflect upon interreligious dialogues. When these five are held together they open all sorts of rich avenues along which to develop a Christian engagement with the religions. To forget the Son is to erase the scandal of particularity. To forget the Spirit is to erase the universal outreach of the Son's work. To forget the Father is to forget the unitive purpose of the triune revelation: a communion of love. To forget the Church is to erase the visible sign of Trinitarian glory in the liturgy and the liturgy's reach in transforming creation. To forget the kingdom is to erase the justice and peace inaugurated in Christ's person that might transform the earth into heaven. In what follows, there are many points made that require substantial argument and development before they can commend themselves more fully, but I wish to draw a wide portrait to help with a Trinitarian orientation.

The Catholic Church is clear about two realities and one problematic implication of these two realities. First, those who are not Christians, who have not rejected or heard the Gospel are offered the means to salvation in some way or other. *Lumen Gentium* 16 puts it thus: 'Nor does divine Providence deny the helps that are necessary for salvation to those who, through no fault of their own, have not yet attained to the express recognition of God yet who strive, not without divine grace, to lead an upright life' (Tanner 1990: 861). Second, in this providential mystery non-Christians are related to the paschal mystery through the Holy Spirit. From *Gaudium et Spes* 22: 'For, since Christ died for all, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this Paschal Mystery' (Tanner 1990: 1082). But the manner in which salvation takes place, the problematic implication, is a matter for theological investigation (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2000: no. 21). I have developed one tentative solution elsewhere in some detail which utilizes the Apostle's creedal confession that Christ 'descended into hell' (D'Costa 2009: 161–211). In brief, I argue that in the same way that most Christians are purified in preparation for the beatific vision (a process usually called 'purgatory'—which need not have the stage machinery of flames and fire and the typology of duration), so might it be for non-Christians who have accepted God's

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grace in this life, whose potentiality must result in an actuality—through God's grace and in His judgement. I analogically draw upon the ancient tradition of the (p. 582) descent into the underworld where Christ preaches to the righteous, both Jews and Gentiles, who lived before him and through his grace are destined for salvation. I argue that this 'descent' takes place in every eucharist, where Christ's saving death is enacted, and the prayers for the entire world by the Church entail the Church's involvement in this salvation. The early Church used this solution to address the righteous before Christ and I argue that the righteous after Christ are in an analogically similar position. I think this speculative solution helps resolve various imbalances that we have seen in other Trinitarian approaches. It allows us to respect the real differences that are visible and culturally enacted within other religions. It allows that many of these particularities are preparations. It allows respect for the difference between an explicit meeting of Christ as central to the preaching of the Gospels and the way in which Christ's work in the Spirit is already under way in history. It allows for a relation of the particular Christ to the universal action of the Spirit, keeping intact the centrality of the incarnate Word rather than a disembodied Logos. It keeps intact the necessity of both the Trinity and the Church in the order of salvation.

This orientation suggests, following Vatican II, that we could productively view other religions as potential *praeparatio evangelica* and *semina Verbi*. In the light of contemporary experience, this solution helps to explain the deep fonts of wisdom and truth found within other religions. These particular truths act as a *praeparatio*. As *vestigia Trinitatis* they might lead a person more deeply into truth, goodness, and holiness, for they are truths from God, consonant with his Word (*semina Verbi*) even if they are not themselves the Word. Here we have the particularity of Christ's action made universal through the action of the Spirit, but both are fragmentary due to human sin, and both are echoes of that reality enacted in the drama of redemption. The Church is not immune from this experience of fragmentariness as it is made of saints and sinners, but its sacramental nature stands as a visible reality of the grace of God's Trinity. The relation of these 'lights' to the 'Light' within the Church will be dealt with below. They cannot be domesticated or subordinated as if they never called the Church into question. Non-violent practices, profound meditation techniques, care for widows, a scathing apophatic critique of idolatries are just a small list of examples whereby Christians may be deeply called into question by the religions and their practices.

The critic may press arguing that this solution just fails to match the pastoral experience we have of good, true, and holy non-Christians. This is a complex matter. There is no doubt that many non-Christians reflect the values of the kingdom far more bravely, resolutely, and charitably than many a Christian. There is no doubt that many non-Christians preach a message that is closer to the holy mystery of God's revelation than some preaching that is heard from pulpits. But is this really what is at stake? I think not. What is at stake is the objective truth of the Christian Gospel. It is for this reason alone that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith criticized some of Dupuis' moves that render salvific equality to other religions. In terms of objective truth, other religions for all their wisdom contain 'omissions, insufficiencies and errors regarding fundamental truths about

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God, man and the world'. They do not preach a Trinitarian God and a crucified Christ, a witness that might call into question the practices of the Church.

(p. 583) Knitter and Pieris remind us that social justice historically is often the prerogative of a non-Christian religion and not the Church, and the latter heralds in the kingdom of God. I have noted the difficulty of employing the 'kingdom of God' as if Gospel values could be shorn of their relationship to the person of Jesus Christ. I have also argued that God works in whatever manner He chooses, often through non-Christians and their religious traditions. But the 'kingdom' is not an ideological and political manifesto, but rather the in-breaking of God's rule through discipleship and a 'normal' martyrdom in resistance to the ways of the world. In this sense, Barth's recognition of 'parables' and 'lights' in the non-Christian world is significant as it acknowledges that much is to be learnt from Others. But we should be careful about attributing, without qualification, the coming of God's kingdom when it is detached from a witness to the triune God. All witness to the truth of course participates in God's will, but the Gospel cannot be reduced to a social programme and is always and finally a call to discipleship in Christ.

Discipleship to the Trinity enjoins what the Catholic Church calls the social doctrine of the Church, a rich deposit that has only been uncovered and explicated in the last hundred years. This social doctrine is rooted in God's revelation, His plan of love for all humanity (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 2004: 13-31). This requires that the Church work with all religions to further the 'common good'. Clearly, discerning the 'common good' is a task that employs Christian criteria regarding social justice but, precisely because this is not an ideology or political programme, engagements in interreligious dialogues can deepen the sense of what the 'common good' is, as well as forge bonds between religious communities to strive together to achieve the common good. This takes place in practice in virtually all countries where the contingent political arrangements in place mean differing forms of social action, sometimes with other religions and sometimes in critique of other religions. Through such processes Christian communities will also learn how they have failed in the past and present to promote the common good, and humility and contrition is required in this process.

What is the relation of the Church to the *vestigia Trinitatis* to be found in the religions? The answer takes us to the question of inculturation. There can be no question that everything that is true, good, and holy within the cultures and religions of the world will find a place within the Church, but, as with the gold of the Egyptians, they may not quite find the same place they had originally. But the lustre will shine forth more fully and could even sometimes be a critique of the religions from which it arises. For example, Jews for Jesus rightly argue that Israel has failed to recognize its messiah, that which was promised to it. It has failed to fully grasp the fullness of the promises. Jews for Jesus also need to criticize Christians who live as if God's messiah had not come. Please note, this does not mean a negation of the Jewish covenant, but a fulfilment in which it is honoured and elevated. Or to switch examples, it may be that Buddhist converts and Christian mediators searching for disciplined practices of 'mindfulness' will rejoice in the powerful techniques and traditions of meditation within Buddhism. In utilizing them within Christ-

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ian discipleship they might need to critique the telos of Buddhist meditational practices and also perhaps criticize the restlessness and wordiness of some liturgical experiments.

(p. 584) Finally, inculturation also relates to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity and the liturgical practices of the Church. The metaphysical underpinning and the terminological conceptualizing of the Trinity are deeply indebted to the Greek philosophical heritage. Substance, accidents, potentiality, actuality, hypostasis, and perichoresis are not biblical terms. Hence, as the Church inculturates globally, there will be other ways of speaking the truth of God's Trinity, other ways that will be strange and 'alien' to the Latin West, and other ways that will deepen the understanding of God's mystery. But there is a need to test their continuity with the Church's Graeco-Latin heritage so that philosophy and culture do not dictate to revelation, but rather revelation shapes these cultures and philosophy to find appropriate articulation. This is an immensely complex process which often allows very wise judgements in hindsight. It is rather akin to the debate about modernity that still rages in Christian western circles. The liturgical issue also has a current analogue: the debate about the advisability of Latin as a universal language of the Church (even though it represents a western location) rather than the parochial contingency of vernacular liturgies with the attendant danger of different liturgies and meanings. The problems are complex and the solutions very difficult, but what is at stake once more is honourable worship of the true God.

Much work needs to be done in this field. I have only scratched a rich surface of a multifaceted reality. I have tried to bring to light the richness, complexity, and challenges of developing a Trinitarian orientation to interreligious dialogues.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Kärkkäinen (2004); D'Costa (2000 and 2009).

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Gavin D’Costa

Gavin D’Costa is Professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Bristol. He has published six books on interreligious dialogues and advises the Catholic Church in Britain and the Vatican on interreligious dialogue.

Globalization, Postmodern Theories of Culture, and the Trinity

Tracey Rowland

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This article explores the relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity for discussions about globalization and postmodern theories of culture. It suggests that Trinitarian love infuses culture with a self-giving and teleological order that overcomes the ongoing mechanization and monetization of culture. It cites Pope John Paul II's theology of marriage and the family as an example of this renewal through self-giving love.

Keywords: Trinity, globalization, theories of culture, Trinitarian love, Pope John Paul II, marriage, family, self-giving love

The Trinity and Social Theory

Immanuel Kant famously wrote that the doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, has no practical relevance at all, even if we think we understand it. Whether we are to worship three or ten persons in the deity makes no difference. At the polar end from Kant, Nicolai Fedorov, a nineteenth-century Orthodox theologian, coined the expression 'the Trinity is our social programme'. Fedorov's thesis was taken up in the twentieth century by Paul Evdokimov who argued that through Christ's Incarnation the whole of humanity enters into God as its ontological place. Miroslav Volf summarizes Evdokimov's thesis as the idea that because the resurrection of Christ is immanent to all human beings, the participation in the triune life of God is not just an eschatological promise, but a present reality and therefore also a historical program. Ted Peters however rejects Evdokimov's thesis as overly optimistic and not sufficiently appreciating the vast gulf that separates humanity from divinity. Similarly, Karen Kilby has suggested that the meeting of Trinitarian theology with social theory runs the risk of becoming an excuse for the projection of fashionable political concepts onto God. Scholars have a tendency to fill out Trinitarian concepts with notions borrowed from human experiences of relatedness, thereby making the Trini-

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ty a 'resource for combating individualism, patriarchy and oppressive forms of political and ecclesiastical organisation' (Kilby 2000: 438).

Volf tries to steer a middle position between Peters and Evdokimov. As he sees it: 'the question is not whether the Trinity should serve as a model for human community; the question is rather in which respects and to what extent it should do so' (Volf 1998: 405). He argues that there are two basic limits to modelling the human community on the Trinity: (p. 587)

First, since ontically human beings are manifestly not divine and since noetically human notions of the Triune God do not correspond exactly to who the Triune God is, Trinitarian concepts such as 'person', 'relation', or 'perichoresis' can be applied to human community only in an analogous rather than a univocal sense. (Volf 1998: 405)

Second, because of sin human beings can never be perfect images of the Trinity in this world. Volf prefers to say that the doctrine of the Trinity ought to shape our social vision.

An example of a merely analogical appropriation of Trinitarian theology to cultural analysis may be found in the following passage by Aidan Nichols who believes that it is possible to find in the Trinity a 'key to the wider need of humanity's global culture to marry the universal and the particular, the unilateral insights of the Enlightenment into encyclopaedic universality, and of Romanticism into differentiated multiplicity, the One and the Many':

First, a culture should be conscious of transcendence as its true origin and goal, and this we call culture's tacit 'paterological' dimension, its implicit reference to the Father. Second, the forms which a culture employs should manifest integrity—wholeness and interconnectedness; clarity—transparency to meaning; and harmony—a due proportion in the ways that its constituent elements relate to the culture as a whole. And since these qualities—integrity, clarity and harmony—are appropriated in classical theology to the divine Son, the 'Art' of God and splendor of the Father, we can call such qualities of the beautiful form the specifically Christological aspects of culture ... And thirdly, then, in the Trinitarian *taxis*, the spiritually vital and health-giving character of the moral ethos of our culture yields up culture's pneumatological dimension, its relation to the Holy Spirit. (Nichols 1999: 16-17)

Graham Ward links such analogical appropriations to Christ's call in the Gospel of St Matthew to read the signs of the times. Since the Church, 'situated in an eschatological and soteriological management of time, established its teachings on the Trinity and the relationship of the Triune God to creation', 'reading the signs of the times is the Church's participation in that management' and 'Christians live in Christ and live pneumatologically through the practices of encountering, negotiating and interpreting the world around them' (Ward 2000: 103). Ward describes Radical Orthodoxy as a project of Christian cultural criticism whose chief concern is 'with unmasking the cultural idols, providing ge-

neological accounts of the assumptions, politics and hidden metaphysics of specific secular varieties of knowledge—with respect to the constructive, therapeutic project of disseminating the Gospel’ (Ward 2000: 104). In doing so, the Radical Orthodoxy scholars have recovered the eastern concept of *epektasis* in which God is not to be seen as an infinite positive quantity, but as forever ecstatically giving more and more, and they have contrasted this account of the Godhead with that of Duns Scotus, particularly his doctrine of the univocity of being, which they treat as the original and mortal sin of the history of theological speculation in the West. They also emphasize the temporal mediation and interpretation of the *logos* and they offer a high Christology of (p. 588) the cosmic Christ as *logos*, together with an appreciation of the particularity of the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth (Hughes and Bullimore 2002: 187).

The Sovereignty of the Mob

Both these elements of Radical Orthodoxy Christology are evident in Milbank's application of Giorgio Agamben's account of the *homo sacer* in Roman jurisprudence to an analysis of the trial of Christ. After the succession of the plebs in Rome it was granted to them a right to pursue to the death someone whom they as a collective had condemned. Such an individual was declared *homo sacer*—a person cast out from the community. For Milbank Christ is *homo sacer* some three times over. He is abandoned first by the Jewish leaders to the Roman governor, then by those representing the sovereignty of Rome to the sovereign-executive mob, then finally by the sovereign-executive mob to the Roman soldiers. Milbank concludes that neither Jewish nor Roman law could be relied upon to condemn Christ; only a mob into which sovereign power and plebiscitary delegation had been collapsed could achieve this (Milbank 2003: 91-3).

The Invalidation of the Secular

The ‘sovereignty of the mob’ and its juxtaposition with the sovereignty of Christ is a recurring theme in Milbank's analysis of contemporary western culture. Following Jean-Yves Lacoste and Olivier Boulnois, Milbank argues the sovereignty of Christ was lost with the rise of modern philosophy which did not simply emancipate itself from theology but arose from within the space of ‘pure nature’—‘a fiction’ created by theologians in the Baroque era. Whereas in the premodern reading, the Incarnation of Christ and the hypostatic descent of the Holy Spirit inaugurated on earth a counter-polity exercising a counter-sovereignty, nourished by sovereign victimhood, in the theology of Cajetan (1469-1534) and Suárez (1548-1617) a dualism develops between nature and grace and the natural and the supernatural, with the natural eventually finding itself equated with the secular and the supernatural finding itself equated with the sacred. The end result is that one whole dimension of reality, often described as the ‘public space’, is to be kept chastely uncontaminated by any claims of Christ to an exercise of His sovereignty. This Suárezian political theory was highly popular in mid twentieth-century Catholic social thought, but its claims to a classically Thomist pedigree have been severely questioned,

and it is now generally agreed that the notion of there being ‘two ends’ to human nature, one natural, and one supernatural, and corresponding secular and sacred orders, is alien to classical Thomism. Catholic scholars calling themselves ‘Whig Thomists’, an expression coined by Michael Novak, continue to foster the Suárezian dualism, and this fault line between those who follow Suárez and those who (p. 589) prefer a more premodern interpretation is pivotal for theological engagements with the phenomena of globalization and postmodern culture. Those who follow Suárez tend to be less critical of globalization.

The Univocity of Being

While some scholars have focused on the Suárezian watershed, others have tracked the path toward a theologically autonomous natural and secular order to Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308). In Matthew Levering's reading, Scotus opened the door to secularism by removing human-to-human relationships (in contrast to human-to-God relationships) in his account of the operation of the natural law (Levering 2008: 155). Catherine Pickstock also locates a decisive shift away from a metaphysics of participation in the work of Scotus toward the doctrine of the univocity of being, rendering Scotus the forerunner of the liberal tradition of political theory:

The ‘representation’ of subjects as formal bearers of equal rights was possible only once their humanity had been abstracted from their creaturehood without any concomitant advance toward deification, a movement that was in parallel with the Franciscan shift toward an immanent levelling of perfection terms. (Pickstock 2005: 306)

Kevin J. Vanhoozer has summarized von Balthasar's criticism of Scotus’ univocity of being doctrine in the following words:

Epistemologically, it provides a *magna carta* for reason to undertake an independent study of all that has being without having recourse to revelation; the metaphysical project—the attempt to gain knowledge of being, including God, through reason—here achieves legitimacy. The ‘God’ thus known, however, is only a conceptual idol manufactured by human reason; and the ‘God’ proclaimed dead or unbelievable by Nietzsche is, likewise, only the construction of modern ‘ontotheology’. On this account, then, the deconstructive or nihilist versions of postmodernity are actually the logical culmination of basically modern tendencies. (Vanhoozer 2003: 21–2)

Contrary to the logical projections of the ontology of Scotus and Suárez and contemporary ‘Whig Thomists’, Milbank's understanding of the work of the Trinity within creation and redemption ‘forbids us to baptise the secular desert as the realm of pure reason, pure nature, natural law or natural rights’. Christians should not account for themselves ‘before a uniform liberal court’ which is itself ‘a fiction’, and one whose ‘dark inner secret is constitution by a voluntarist theology securing order through the formal regulation of chaos from a single sovereign centre’ (Milbank 2003: 121). Liberal democracy is a ‘mere

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virtual circus designed to entertain the middle classes of the privileged world' (Milbank 2003: 5). As Pickstock concludes: 'The liberal politics of "representation" of supposedly originally isolated and fully autonomous individuals through the objective artifices of (p. 590) contract, money, politeness and parliamentary election has been challenged by the work of MacIntyre and Sandel and many others' (Pickstock 2005: 280).

Alasdair MacIntyre has described liberal democracies as sites of civil war between proponents of hostile moral traditions. In the terminology of Nichols, the Christological dimensions of postmodern culture are weak. MacIntyre's critiques of the role of bureaucratic practices are particularly helpful in explaining this weakness, as well as explaining the tendency towards social conformism and the banality of mass culture. In cultures characterized by conflicts of values between and within institutions individuals will be encouraged to fragment the self and wear different masks in different contexts in order to avoid social marginalization. MacIntyre argues that the behaviour of the Sartrean rebel is an attempt by the self to defend its integrity from the bureaucratic practices which divide it into its role-governed functions and the postmodern celebration of difference is also, at least in part, a reaction against what Weber called the iron cage of reason. Far from being 'value neutral' MacIntyre believes that bureaucratic practices are ideological, that is, specifically designed to serve a political end, in this case that of concealing the conflict between moral traditions. Since liberalism operates so as to preclude appeals to what might be described loosely as 'ultimate values' there is a social trend toward undermining the prudential judgement of professionals and circumscribing their actions with allegedly value-neutral mandatory regulations. As a consequence, professionals are 'no longer trusted, but instead must be endlessly spied upon, and measured against a spatial checklist of routinized procedure that is alien to all genuine inculcation of excellence' (Milbank 2003: 185).

Stanley Hauerwas has summarized much of the above cultural criticism with the statement that 'postmodernism is the outworking of mistakes in Christian theology correlative to the attempt to make Christianity "true" apart from faithful witness'. In other words, postmodernity would not have arisen but for the errors of Christian theologians:

Modernity, drawing on the metaphysics of a transcendent god, was the attempt to be historical without Christ. Postmodernity, facing the agony of living in history with no end, is the denial of history. In the wake of such a denial, the only remaining comfort is the shopping mall, which gives us the illusion of creating histories through choice, thus hiding from us the reality that none of us can avoid having our lives determined by money. Money, in modernity, is the institutionalization of the univocity of being that Scotus thought necessary to ensure the unmediated knowledge of God. (Hauerwas 2007: 149)

Hauerwas concurs with Fredric Jameson that postmodernism is the logic of late capitalism in which the production of culture has been integrated into commodity production, thus creating the need for continuous waves of novelty. For Hauerwas it is obvious that this condition creates a self which is at best fragmented, at worst, multiple, and that this

is something that Christians need to survive. They should not seek to accommodate themselves to it, or correlate their faith with it.

(p. 591) **Globalization and the Culture of Death**

In addition to the problem of the sovereignty of the mob and the bogus neutrality of the secular public space, there is the further problem of globalization. As Christa Van der Westhuizen argues, globalization is not a benign and neutral process. It is rather 'the practical consequences of the implementation of the ideology of neo-liberalism, which, in the name of competition and efficiency, pursues a world in which the market reigns supreme over society' (Van der Westhuizen 2009: 1). Van der Westhuizen quotes Pierre Bourdieu: 'Today's neoliberal capitalism utilises the lexicon of liberty, liberalism and deregulation to grant economic determinisms a fatal stranglehold by liberating them from all controls, and to obtain the submission of citizens and governments to the economic and social forces thus "liberated" '. It is precisely this element of contemporary culture, whether one calls it globalization or the cultural consequences of late capitalism, which is regarded as particularly toxic to any attempt to model human society on Trinitarian relations. Social life itself is now embedded in market relationships (which rarely, if ever, have anything to do with love), rather than market relationships being embedded in social life. Lieven Boeve argues that the ideology of the market provides the contemporary master narrative: 'Commodification separates cultural objects from their original associations and narratives, and makes them available for exchange on the market, items to be acquired for a price that frequently does not square with their real value' (Boeve 2007: 23).

Ward has similarly argued that the 'death of God has brought about the prospect of the reification and commodification (theologically termed idolatry), not only of all objects, but of all values (moral, aesthetic and spiritual)'. Now everything is not only measured and priced but it has an image: 'The age of the Promethean will to power has been superseded by the age of Dionysian diffusion, in which desire is governed by the endless production and dissemination of floating signifiers' (Ward 2001: xiv). In a world where there is no relation between signifier and signified there is a general meaninglessness which can lead to depression, despair, and even a preference for death over life. This thesis was presented by John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) and Pickstock in *After Writing* (1998). John Paul II spoke of a culture of death and Pickstock of a polity of death.

Ward notes that a paradox here is that, although the neo-liberalism underpinning globalization promotes itself with reference to greater consumer choice, the culture it generates is renowned for its standardization of almost every dimension of life. This criticism has also been made by William T. Cavanaugh who sees homogeneity and the depthlessness of signs as key symptoms of globalization and postmodernism:

Globalization is an aesthetic, a way of seeing the world, of reading its images and signs. Frederic Jameson is right, I think, to call postmodernism the 'cultural logic of late capitalism', for in both it is the surface image that counts. In globalized

capitalism, exchange value has overcome use value, and what is desired is desire itself. Postmodernism as well trumpets the vacuity of signs, such that the signifier refers (p. 592) only to other signifiers, not to the signified. As Jameson says, postmodernism is a leap in what Benjamin called the 'aestheticization' of reality, the cutting loose of representations from what they represent ... This depthlessness of signs is captured by Andy Warhol's Campbell soup cans. As Jameson comments, Warhol's art ought to be a powerful political critique of commodity fetishism. That it is not makes it postmodern. Even the critique of commodities has itself become a commodity. (Cavanaugh 2001: 333)

The Eucharist and the Transcendental Logo

Cavanaugh endorses Christopher Clausen's statement that America is a graveyard of cultures—the 'melting pot is where cultures come to die'. It destroys particularity. In contrast, eucharistic theology 'produces a catholicity which does not simply prescind from the local, but contains the universal Catholic within each local embodiment of the Body of Christ' (Cavanaugh 1999: 182). As a consequence, 'the consumer of the Eucharist is no longer the schizophrenic subject of global capitalism, awash in a sea of unrelated presents, but walks into a story with a past, present and future' (Cavanaugh 1999: 192). Christianity rather than Whigish globalization is *the* tradition in which the division between plain folk and aristocrat, universal and particular, parish and global community, can ultimately be reconciled. Within this tradition there is a most sacred place, but it exists beyond time in the eternity of the New Jerusalem; while in the period between the first Easter and the consummation of the world, the eucharist unites the universal and the particular in a multitude of sacred places across the globe. As Gottfried Benn elegiacally expressed the idea in his poem *Verlorenes Ich*:

Oh, when they all bowed towards one centre and even the thinkers only thought the god, when they branched out to the shepherds and the lamb, each time the blood from the chalice had made them clean/and all flowed from the one wound, all broke the bread that each man ate—oh, distant compelling fulfilled hour, which once enfolded even the lost ego. (Benn 1960: 215)

Cavanaugh's conclusion is powerfully supported by Naomi Klein's *No Logo* which has become the manifesto of the anti-globalization movement. According to Klein brand-name multinational corporations sell images and lifestyles rather than simple commodities: 'Branding is about ideas, attitudes, lifestyle and values all embodied in the logo. The "transcendental logo" replaces the corporeal world of commodities, of "earthbound products"' (Klein 2002: 22). When the sovereignty of Christ is replaced by the sovereignty of the mob, the consumption of the Body and Blood of Christ is replaced by the consumption of brands which serve as symbols of some desired personal or social attribute. For example, a pair of Dolce e Gabbana underpants will cost several times the money of the same garment without the embroidered logo. The consumer does not buy (p. 593) the expensive designer label product because of superior quality fabric or tailoring, but be-

cause he believes that the logo will pseudo-sacramentally convey a desired attribute such as the physical prowess of David Beckham. The market power of brands and logos attests to a sublimated need in postmodernity for the sacramental, that is, for signs, symbols, and grace which help to define the self. As de Maeseneer observes, brand-name multinational corporations have their own theo-aesthetic programme (de Maeseneer 2003: 8).

Cavanaugh believes that 'the *kenosis* of God creates the possibility of a human subject very different from the consumer self'; however both he and Pickstock reach the conclusion that the Trinitarian solution to the lost or homeless ego is currently eclipsed by the market. The logos of designer brands have replaced the eucharist as the source of the unity or disunity of the self (Cavanaugh 2001: 342). For Cavanaugh, Pickstock, and Milbank, the current global neo-liberalism represents a rival sacrality to that of Christ: 'Economic relations do not operate on value-neutral laws, but are rather carriers of specific convictions about the nature of the human person, its origins and its destiny. There is an implicit anthropology and an implicit theology in every economics' (Cavanaugh 2001: 325).

The Form of Love and the Form of the Machine

David L. Schindler, the editor of the English language edition of *Communio*, the journal founded by Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Joseph Ratzinger (now Benedict XVI), agrees that elements of globalization and postmodernism can be tracked back to Scotus and Suárez, but in his own genealogy he has focused on the dualisms of Descartes. Schindler distinguishes between a secular logic which has as its hallmark the principle of simple identity ($x=x$) and what he calls a 'credal logic'. The features of a secular logic come to expression in the manner in which causal activity is understood primarily in terms of effectivity, that is, in the manner in which epistemological primacy is accorded to negation, doubt, and control, over affirmation, faith, and openness; and in the manner in which meaning is derived by breaking the action or question into ever smaller bits for an analysis of the simplest conceptual units, or by the addition of differences. In contrast, the 'credal' logic has as its hallmark the principle of identities already in relation, as with the Trinity. Its features come to expression in several different ways: causal activity understood first as forceful gives way to activity that is from within and to effective activity now understood to be creative and generous rather than self-assertive; and the primacy of negation, doubt, and control gives way to a primacy of affirmation, receptivity, and receptiveness. Schindler does not argue that the two logics are exclusive, but rather that it matters a great deal which logic is accorded primacy. The principle of simple identity forces inclusion by way of dualistic addition, (p. 594) whereas the presupposition of the principle of relation leads to inclusion by way of integration. Concretely, the form of the secular logic is mechanical and thus sexual relations hollowed out into their material shell become lustful manipulation, political relations extracted from sacred bonds of brotherhood in Christ become brute power, and market relations extracted from a concern for the common good become hedonistic consumerism, while the music and ar-

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chitecture generated by the laws of such market relations become noise and harsh ugliness (Schindler 1990: 19). Schindler characterizes the problem as a double dualism:

The tendency is to separate form, that is, the meaning which gives the shape to a culture's institutions and patterns of life, from love, and this separation presupposes a more basic separation of nature from God; so that form, abstracted from love, becomes externalised, manipulative and forceful; while love abstracted from form, becomes blind and empty of order (Schindler 1995: 201).

Schindler observes that the modern nihilism of mechanical identity opens of its inner dynamic into the postmodern nihilism of dispersal, though the post in postmodernity signals what is in fact only the later arrival of what is structurally implied already in Modernity's Cartesianism (Schindler 2008: 240). Moreover, Schindler concludes that while postmodernity exposes the sense in which modernity's form is static and lifeless identity (i.e. mechanistic) and modernity's event is empty and arbitrary movement, it does so effectively by annihilating form, leaving, in the end, only movement that, as formless, leaves intact the terms of modernity (Schindler 2000: 709).

Following von Balthasar, Schindler offers the Trinitarian form of love as the alternative to the form of the machine: the Incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus Christ 'reaches all the way down through the "flesh" of the entire created cosmos' (Schindler 2004: 126). The Incarnation means it is theoretically possible to build a culture or civilization of love (as John Paul II called it) on the Trinitarian form of identities in relation rooted in a receptivity to love. Alternatively, a culture built on the principles of force and effect is a culture which no longer believes or trusts in love. It is a Stoic, Pelagian, mechanistic, bureaucratic, and ultimately passionless culture.

The Trinity, the Family, and Sexual Identity

Since the second Vatican Council (1962-5) there has been an attempt by Catholic theologians to strengthen the connections between Trinitarian anthropology and issues of sexual identity and practice. In his development of a theology of the body, Karol Wojtyła eschewed the use of Stoic categories and instead spoke of love as a gift of the self, of spousal love as the paradigmatic gift of the self, and of the Trinity as the archetype of such a gift (Wojtyła 1993: 301-14). Anthropology was linked to Trinitarian theology and sexuality was situated within this framework of God's offer of divine filiation. William (p. 595) Norris Clarke described the link between anthropology and Trinitarian theology in the following words:

If every being turns out to include a natural dynamism toward self-communication through action, we can say truly, in more than a metaphorical sense, that every being is naturally a self-symbolizer, an icon or image-maker, in some analogous way like an artist, expressing itself symbolically, whether consciously or unconsciously ... Th[is] self-symbolizing tendency in all the finite beings we know turns out to be an imperfect participation or imitation of the inner being of God himself, revealed

to be supremely and perfectly self-symbolizing in its eternal interior procession of the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit from both. (Clarke 2004: 52)

Within this new katalogical framework the married couple may be raised to the exalted position of being a 'radiant icon of Trinitarian love' and the seal of their marital holiness is viewed as nothing less than a 'supernatural work of art'. In the words of Marc Ouellet:

The hour of conjugal and family spirituality is therefore the hour of the transcendence of the self into the image of the Trinity, the hour of becoming a house of God, a home of the Most High, an icon of the Trinity, memory and prophecy of the wonders of salvation history. (Ouellet 2006: 99)

Wojtyła's theology of the body and its appropriation in the works of Angelo Scola and Marc Ouellet has however been criticized as a too romantic account of really existing human relationships. Very few couples think of their family as an icon of the Trinity. Anthony Giddens has argued that part of the culture of modernity (and one may add its postmodern developments) is the transformation and democratization of intimacy. There are no longer commonly accepted standards or ideals for which human relationships might aim. There is no longer even agreement about what constitutes a marriage. Jose Granados concludes:

Family relationships, reduced to fragile emotion that is to be integrated in the voice of individualistic reason, lose their capacity to indicate towards a broader horizon that precedes man and gives a greater frame to his life journey. As a result, there is no fixed orientation for the project of self realization: it is always open to the negotiation of the partners who need each other but are not in a condition of giving or demanding a lasting commitment that could resist the uncertainties of the future ... [Thus, the question becomes] how can we preserve the truth of love and communion, so that it does not become an empty concept, whose plasticity leaves us without orientation in life, lost in the signs without meaning of an unintelligible personal map? (Granados 2007: 186)

The phenomenon of the endless renegotiation of the meaning of social bonds, especially those involving sexual intimacy, is not however regarded by all theorists as necessarily a bad thing. Some scholars seek to apply Trinitarian theology to an affirmation not only of sexual difference in itself but of a multitude of different social expressions of sexual difference. In this context the leading names are Gerard Loughlin, Lucy Gardner, David Moss, Luce Irigaray, Graham Ward, and Gavin D'Costa.

(p. 596) Common to proponents of this approach to Trinitarian theology is an interest in the category of 'difference' and not simply sexual difference *per se*. Notable is Loughlin's reinterpretation of the classical Christian understanding of the divine Tri-unity as a counter-cultural expression of sexual relations that goes beyond heteronormativity, thus de-sacramentalizing marriage in any historical Catholic understanding. The interest in Trinitarian relations as a model for affirmations of, for example, homosexual relationships, often falls within this wider attempt to diffuse the sheer dynamism of the eternal

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processions of God's inner life into embedded human relationships of difference in excess of accepted forms of practice in the historic Church. Amongst theologians who share these interests, a regular theme is the deconstruction of Balthasar's understanding of the relationship between sexual difference and difference in the body of the *ecclesia*. Balthasar's symphonic relationship between these expressions of difference is viewed as unsympathetic to the complexities of varying social and cultural (sexual) contexts. In such a critique, appeal is often made to the philosophy of Irigaray.

To what extent these scholars are really offering a new postmodern account of the social Trinity and not simply extensions of modernist presuppositions remains to be seen, but the importance of the Trinity as a pattern of life to be interpreted in the life of the Church is a common thread.

Trinitarian and Postmodern Affinities

Notwithstanding elements of the above, not every aspect of postmodern theory and practice is deemed hostile to a social order modelled on the Trinity. Compared to the culture of modernity, the culture of postmodernity is in some ways more hospitable to the Trinity. A summary of key elements in postmodern theories of culture which resonate well with Trinitarian theology may be found in the following paragraph by J. A. Di Noia:

In the service of a broader conception of rationality, postmodern thinkers reject the modern quest for a foundation for all knowledge, modelled on mathematical or scientific paradigms of rationality ... In assessing claims to rationality and truth, it is axiomatic for postmodern thinkers to attend to the context in which claims are embedded ... In this connection and in sharp contrast to modernity postmodern thinkers insist on the centrality of tradition and authority in legitimating and supporting truth and rationality, not only in the religious but in the scientific and philosophical fields as well ... Two other characteristic elements in postmodern thinking are its discovering of the rôle of texts and narratives in shaping thought and culture, and its stress on the importance of relationships and community in fostering personal identity. These emphases challenge rationalism and positivism in modern philosophy of language and epistemology, and individualism in modern moral and political philosophy ... In addition postmodern thought views personal identity not (p. 597) as an individualistically cultivated sense and performance of moral duty, but in a communally and relationally shaped life of virtue. (Di Noia 1990: 514)

It is because of such affinities that John Milbank has described his theology as a 'Post-modern Critical Augustinianism', while Conor Cunningham has noted that the postmodern attack on pure reason represents a deconstruction of the secular which need not necessarily point towards nihilism:

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If one links traditional analogy to the post-Renaissance sense of the human shaping of culture and being shaped in turn by culture one has in that way a kind of theological postmodern re-reading of our current intellectual plight: the relativity of culture cannot be sidestepped, yet the formation of culture is in itself a striving towards the infinite fullness of the Son who is 'Word' and the infinite exchange of the Spirit who is 'Gift'. (Candler and Cunningham 2007: 526)

Moreover, David S. Cunningham has drawn attention to how the postmodern themes of relationality, difference and rhetoric are all more 'Trinitarian-friendly' than 'the modernist penchant for division, isolation and classification' (what Schindler calls secular logic), the modern quest for the essence of 'natural religion' (in what Milbank calls the secular desert of Suárez) and the modern habit of approaching theology from within the boundaries of the categories of logic (what Pickstock would recognise as the icy cold hand of Duns Scotus on the Christian imagination) (Cunningham 2003: 186–202).

While the pseudo-sacramentality of market globalization is unlikely to foster anything Evdokimov, Volf, or Nichols might recognize as social practices analogous to Trinitarian relations, the engagement between postmodern theories of culture and Trinitarian theology is likely to be more fruitful, especially if the sublimated quest for sacramentality is revealed to be nothing less than a desire for the gifts that only the Eucharist can bring: *Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso, est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti.*

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Cavanaugh (1999 and 2001); De Maeseneer (2003); Nichols (1999); Schindler (2008); Ward (1998).

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Tracey Rowland

Tracey Rowland is Associate Professor and Dean of the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, Australia and a Permanent Fellow in Political Philosophy and Continental Theology.

Conclusion: Prospects for Trinitarian Theology

Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering

The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity

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This article offers some thoughts about the future prospects of Trinitarian theology. It argues that the vocation of Trinitarian theology is “to think” the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit not in a rationalist fashion but to provide an account of it with the resources of human intelligence guided by faith, as much for the sake of believers. It lists eight important tasks that present themselves today to Trinitarian reflection. These include the need for Christian faith to show its monotheistic nature in a manner adapted to its object (God the Trinity himself) as well as to the cultures in which the Christian faith is expressed and the renewal of Trinitarian theology's reflection on the incomprehensibility of God.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, faith, Christian faith, cultures, incomprehensibility of God, monotheistic nature

The vocation of Trinitarian theology is ‘to think’ the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not in a rationalist fashion, but in order to confess the mystery, to live it, to proclaim it, and to give an account of it with the resources of human intelligence guided by faith, as much for the sake of believers (*intellectus fidei*) as for the sake of dialogue with religious or secular cultures. The affirmation of one God in three persons or hypostases has no other foundation than the revelation and gift of God in history, in the person of Jesus Christ and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The relation of Christians to their God passes through the concrete and singular history of Jesus, and through the experience of the coming of the Spirit. For this reason, Trinitarian faith cannot be the object of a rational reconstruction undertaken *a priori* beyond (or apart from) the history in which God has freely taken the initiative of revealing himself. The confession of the Trinitarian unity of God expresses this fundamental experience of Christians: *God reveals himself and gives himself as he is*. This means that, on the one hand, the confession of the Trinity is a *regulative* authority of Christian experience; on the other hand, it is equally and indissociably the *expression* of an experience of salvation, salvation given in the Spirit of the crucified and risen Jesus who leads us to the Father. Twentieth-century theology developed this fundamental point around the concepts of self-revelation (Karl Barth) and self-com-

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munication (Karl Rahner), but expressions of this truth can be found throughout the history of Christian doctrine; this is, for example, what the 'soteriological' argument of many Fathers of the Church expresses: if the Son and the Holy Spirit communicate the divine life, it is because they are God with the Father. God reveals himself and gives himself as he is: this is the conviction which neither unitarian Arianism, nor Sabellian monarchianism, can uphold.

Among the tasks that present themselves today to Trinitarian reflection, one can call attention to the following eight, without pretending to be exhaustive (our conclusion takes up several elements of Durand 2008 and Emery 2001). (p. 601)

(1) Christian faith ought to show its monotheistic nature, in a manner adapted to its object (God the Trinity himself) as well as to the cultures in which the Christian faith is expressed. The western cultural context today no longer recognizes the primacy of unity, but instead valorizes complexity, diversity, and communion in differences. The conceptual and symbolic instrument that enables one to give an account of Trinitarian unity ('Trinitarian monotheism') constitutes one of the major problems in contemporary reflection. The modern (idealist) conception of the absolute Subject has shown its limits. Contemporary theology often attempts to think about the divine unity either by means of the eastern theme of the 'monarchy of the Father', or by means of notions of *union* or *communion*, conceived on the mode of an interpersonal, open, hospitable, and integrative exchange (a social and communitarian approach). It has been pointed out, however, that the hierarchical connotation ('primacy') of the theme of 'monarchy' has few affinities with the conceptual and symbolic resources of contemporary western culture; its use in our cultural situation is not without paradox. As regards the communitarian model, it is unable to convey the unity that the notions of 'substance' ('essence') and 'subject' sought to express, and it does not always avoid sliding toward tritheism. Can recourse to the notion of 'perichoresis', which today receives an important place in Christian reflection on God the Trinity, furnish an alternative to the notion of unity of essence? This seems unlikely, because the theme of Trinitarian perichoresis was developed from its beginnings (St John Damascene) and in its systematization (Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas) in direct relationship with unity of essence (*ousia*, *essentia*, *substantia*): the concept of perichoresis *includes* unity of essence, and it is unlikely that it could be detached from it. Faced with these difficulties, an important theological current orients discourse on God principally toward metaphors and the description of experiences (see, for instance, Moltmann 2001). But metaphors and experiences, like concepts, must be submitted to a critical evaluation: what criteria can we rely on in order to evaluate the value of metaphors and experiences? And, if theology wants to keep in close relation to its patristic and medieval sources (a living relation to the tradition), does it not also need a synthetic or systematic discourse that requires organizing speculative principles so as to be able to articulate truth about God the Trinity? Whereas classical theologies were often confronted with the difficulty of conceiving the Trinitarian *plurality*, it seems that contemporary reflection more often encounters the difficulty of accounting for the Trinitarian *unity*. If Christian 'Trinitarian monotheism' wishes to

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preserve its intelligibility, a clear notion of the divine unity is necessary. In this respect, the old concepts of 'essence' and 'substance' seem hard to replace, especially if one wishes to affirm the coherence of Trinitarian dogma with the Christological dogma of Chalcedon (Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son, is 'one person' subsisting in 'two natures'): the concepts of essence, substance, nature, and hypostasis cannot be just put aside or ignored (Emery 2009). Rather, these words can still be used today, and their meaning must be explained with the resources proper to each culture.

(p. 602) **(2)** In affirming that God the Trinity reveals himself and gives himself as he is, Trinitarian theology should renew its reflection on the *incomprehensibility* of God. Faith in the Trinitarian unity of God comprises simultaneously the recognition of a transcendence that does not deny the proximity of God to humans (Christology, pneumatology), and the recognition of a proximity that does not negate God's transcendence. Divine incomprehensibility—a fundamental feature of theological discourse about the Trinity—has in Christianity a proper status and specific value. Indeed, it is precisely at the moment of the first maturity of the elaboration of Trinitarian dogma, in the second half of the fourth century, that the incomprehensibility of God receives a determinative status in Christian thought and preaching. Among many writings from this period, see, for instance, St John Chrysostom's homilies on God's incomprehensibility (John Chrysostom 1984). The recognition of the incomprehensibility of God, as a response to radical Arianism ('Anomoeanism', which claimed that the essence of God can be defined), implies that Trinitarian unity is beyond any image (see, for instance, the *Theological Oration* 31.31–3 by St Gregory of Nazianzus (Gregory of Nazianzus 1978: 338–43; Gregory of Nazianzus 2002: 141–3)). God's incomprehensibility is an aspect of the 'conversion of concepts' that is demanded by the newness of the God revealed in Jesus Christ. It is not only a philosophical truth about God, but also—and in a deeper sense—a *Trinitarian* affirmation. In this light, the various 'similitudes' developed in Christian tradition for accounting for the Triune God (psychological and communitarian, social, or ecclesial 'similitudes') are relativized: none of them can pretend to be the exact representation of the unity of God the Trinity (see, in this volume, the contributions of Risto Saarinen and Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt). This reserve likewise concerns the Trinitarian model that 'ecclesiologicals of communion' often develop today. The unity of the ecclesial communion is certainly founded on the Trinitarian unity (Forte 2001), but in a way that is not univocal—unless it surrenders to a tritheist myth—because it cannot represent perfectly the divine unity that is above all representation. God's incomprehensibility requires therefore a reflection guided by *analogy*. The necessity of analogy asserts itself beyond confessional differences, as Karl Barth bears witness: analogy, which offers a true knowledge of God by rejecting equivocity and by equally avoiding univocity, is the sole option left for speaking properly of God the Trinity (Barth 1975: §27, 224–5). And, as one can easily ascertain, reflection on analogy is far from finished among theologians.

(3) Critical biblical exegesis has offered much to the contemporary articulation of Trinitarian theology (notably, a renewed consideration of the historical life and preaching of Jesus, and of the expressions of faith by the early Church), but it has al-

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so rendered the classic syntheses more fragile, by underscoring the plurality of biblical approaches as well as the differences of perspective between holy Scripture and dogmatic formulations. Systematic approaches must always be compared with the results of scientific biblical exegesis; at the same time, biblical exegesis, when it operates in faith, cannot be abstracted from the reception of Scripture by the ecclesial tradition. (p. 603) An important task here is to show the continuity between holy Scripture and the dogma of the Church (creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople), without minimizing however the differences of perspectives, concepts, symbols, and vocabulary between the New Testament and the creeds. This task has already been undertaken (see especially Levering 2004), and it needs to be continued. At stake here is the permanent requirement of verifying the biblical foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarian theology has need of constant biblical ressourcement.

(4) The recent development of Trinitarian theology has benefited greatly from the progress of historical studies. These historical studies, as evidenced by sections II, III, and IV of this Handbook, show not only the evolution of thought but also the variety of approaches to the same faith by authors from the same epoch. There is not *a* patristic doctrine, but a *plurality* of patristic approaches in the unity of the same faith. Likewise, the reception of the patristic inheritances by the medieval tradition manifests an extraordinary diversity (for the syntheses of the golden age of the Latin scholasticism, see especially Friedman 2010), often less well known than that of the Fathers of the Church and whose richness has only begun to be discovered (see, in this volume, the contributions of Lauge Nielsen, Dominique Poirel, Joseph Wawrykow, Russell Friedman, and Karl Christian Felmy). This contribution of patristic and medieval thought cannot be simply ranged among the optional accessories of the past. Reflection on God the Trinity must continue to seek a fruitful relationship between our contemporary thought and the riches of the patristic and medieval theological tradition. This theological claim is rooted in the fact that today's Church, despite the significant cultural changes, shares one faith with the Fathers and medievals. This unity is perhaps more difficult to express today than is the diversity, but it is the unity that enables us to apprehend the value of the diversity.

(5) Among the urgent tasks today, one of the most important is showing *the unity of Christian theology* in light of faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is necessary to make manifest the '*connexio mysteriorum*', that is to say the intrinsic connection of Trinitarian faith with all the domains of theology: Christology, the doctrine of creation, anthropology, ethics, ecclesiology, sacramental theology, liturgy, ecumenism, theology of the religions, eschatology. This connection is not a one-way street (the 'diffusion' of the mystery of the Trinity in all the other domains of theology) but it is reciprocal (the consequences of other domains of theology for Trinitarian doctrine). The enquiry should be one of mutual enrichment.

(6) Another fundamental task is that of a mutual enrichment between *spiritual life* and Trinitarian doctrine (see, in this volume, the contributions of Daniel Keating, Romanus Cessario, Amy Laura Hall, and Francesca Aran Murphy). Such was the initial goal of Karl Rahner: (re-)shaping the religious life of Christians in Trinitarian fashion. In order to realize this objective, it is undoubtedly helpful to observe the exam-

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ple of the pro-Nicene Fathers (St Augustine for example) who understood Trinitarian theology as an 'exercise' (*exercitatio*) of spiritual purification—an exercise in which the effort to understand the faith is practised within (p. 604) the movement of conversion and the quest for union with God the Trinity (Ayres 2004: 325–35; Studer 1998: 16–19; Studer 1999: 291–310; Studer 2005: 59–84). The understanding and practice of Trinitarian theology as a 'spiritual exercise' is also found among medieval theologians (Emery 2007: 49–72).

(7) The importance of *philosophy* remains equally central. The task here is to identify and discern the philosophical tools appropriate for giving an account of the faith (Morero 2006). Trinitarian theology cannot renounce its speculative dimension. Karl Barth bears witness to this by his effort to re-enliven the theology of the immanent Trinity, in order to show the lordship and liberty of God in his revelation. If Trinitarian doctrine wishes to retain an audience as universal as possible, it cannot give up a firm commitment to rationality. The manifestation of the faith requires a twofold coherence: an internal coherence, which manifests the intelligibility of the mystery of the Trinity to believers; and an external coherence, which is addressed to a broader audience. In addition, Trinitarian theology cannot be content with a mere opportunism with respect to the available philosophies. It must discern the conceptual tools adapted to its object.

(8) Lastly, as the extension of the preceding reflections, it is necessary to point out that today the *metaphysical* explication of the Trinitarian mystery is little developed, for reasons that are as philosophical as they are theological. The necessity of an economic approach to the Trinity is unanimously recognized, but the same does not hold for the immanent Trinity (or, if one prefers, the mystery of the Trinity in its inner life). As Jeffrey Hensley rightly observes:

Despite the renaissance of trinitarian reflection during the last half-century of Christian theology, the doctrine of the immanent Trinity—God's triune being *in se* as distinct from God's acts or operations *ad extra*—has suffered significant neglect. Following Karl Rahner's now famous axiom that the 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity, contemporary theologians have focused primarily on the economy of salvation as the means by which God's triune being is known. (Hensley 2008: 83)

Speculative accounts of the inner life of God ('speculative' in the sense of 'contemplative') have often been eschewed. If contemporary reflection wishes to preserve the riches of the dogmatic tradition and render account of the faith in all its depth, a serious consideration of the immanent Trinity and of the contribution of metaphysical thought will prove indispensable. The divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, cannot be conceived solely in function of their relationship with the created world. This was already one of the fundamental stakes of the first Council of Nicaea—which has lost none of its contemporaneity:

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a reflection and a discourse on the Trinity in its inner life is necessary for safeguarding faith in the action of the divine persons for us.

Readers will profitably consult this Handbook for authoritative treatments of diverse topics. But it is our particular hope that this Handbook, through its various biblical, historical, and systematic approaches, prepares the reader to undertake the above eight (p. 605) tasks that—certainly among others—stand at the centre of Trinitarian theology today. In this way our Handbook, in all its diversity, contributes distinctly to the vocation of Trinitarian theology, that is, to the contemplation of the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in order to better proclaim and live the mystery of faith today.

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Gilles Emery

Gilles Emery, O.P. is Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He is a member of the International Theological Commission of the Catholic Church and a member of the editorial board of the *Revue Thomiste*. His publications include: *La Trinité créatrice* (1995), *Trinity in Aquinas* (2003), *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (2007), *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (2007), and *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God* (2011). He is co-editor, with Matthew Levering of *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (2011).

Matthew Levering

Matthew Levering, is Perry Family Foundation Professor of Theology at Mundelein Seminary. He serves as co-editor of two theological quarterlies, *Nova et Vetera* and the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*. He has authored numerous books, including *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (2005) and *Christ and the Catholic Priesthood* (2010). With Hans Boersma, he edited *Heaven on Earth? Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (2013). He and Gilles Emery co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*.

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