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CREATOR SPIRIT, SPIRIT OF GRACE: TRINITARIAN DIMENSIONS OF A  
CHARITOLOGICAL PNEUMATOLOGY

by

Wesley Scott Bidy, B.A, M.A., Th.M.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,  
Marquette University,  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT  
CREATOR SPIRIT, SPIRIT OF GRACE: TRINITARIAN DIMENSIONS OF A  
CHARITOLOGICAL PNEUMATOLOGY

Wesley Scott Bidby, B.A., M.A., Th.M.

Marquette University, 2016

This dissertation takes up the question of the link between the creative and the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit. It presents creation as ordered to redemption and redemption as the completion of creation, especially for human beings. On the understanding of the relationship between the two orders of the Spirit's activity proposed here, creation is of a piece with redemption and is therefore an operation of grace just as the latter is. I ground my depiction of the Spirit's role in both aspects of the divine economy in an account of her role within the immanent Trinity. Indeed, this dissertation focuses primarily on the nature of the Spirit's eternal relation to the other two persons of the Godhead, which is the foundation of her work in the world. It offers a conception of her intra-trinitarian role that can reconcile some apparently incompatible ideas suggested by the New Testament concerning the relationships between the divine persons, that accords with the principles that have regulated trinitarian theology throughout the history of the universal church, and that attempts to do justice to the concerns underlying different and long-controverted trinitarian models authoritatively supported by separated church traditions. Yet my account also challenges traditional views. Most fundamentally, I submit that the principle of the equality and inseparability of the persons in God calls for understanding the Holy Spirit as having a more active part in the eternal constitution of the Trinity than she has usually been ascribed. In dialogue with Thomas Weinandy and David Coffey, among others, I characterize her as mediating the exchange of love between the Father and the Son in a way that illuminates why she is essential to making them the particular persons they are. I then argue that her work in creating and redeeming humanity stems from this intra-trinitarian activity, drawing on the thought of Gerard Manley Hopkins to illustrate how grace as a theological concept can clarify the link between creation and redemption.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wesley Scott Biddy, B.A, M.A., Th.M.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	i
A NOTE ON THE USE OF PRONOUNS FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT .....	1
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	8
Prospect .....	8
Framing the Problem: Who Is the Holy Spirit? Aspects of a Perennial Answer... ..	9
The Contemporary Theological Scene and the Present Study .....	32
CHAPTER TWO: THE IMMANENT AND THE ECONOMIC TRINITY .....	54
The Question of Knowing and Speaking about the Trinity .....	54
Setting the Agenda: Karl Barth and Karl Rahner .....	55
The Radical Turn to the Economy .....	68
The Concern to Preserve the Immanent-Economic Distinction .....	97
Conclusion .....	117
CHAPTER THREE: THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON, PART ONE .....	125
Constructing a Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: The Problem of Economic Diversity and the Church's Trinitarian Tradition .....	125
"Opening a New Debate on the Procession of the Spirit:" The Klingenthal Proposals .....	132
The Vatican Clarification of the <i>Filioque</i> .....	180
Summary and Prospect .....	200
CHAPTER FOUR: THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON, PART TWO .....	206
Thomas Weinandy: "Begotten in the Spirit" .....	206
David Coffey: The "Procession" and "Return" Models of the Trinity .....	227

Striving for Convergence .....	240
Perichoresis .....	251
Mediating between Old and New Understandings: A Speculative Proposal ....	262
Conclusion .....	289
CHAPTER FIVE: GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS: INCORPORATING IDEAS FOR SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY .....	292
The Purpose of the Present Chapter .....	292
“On Creation and Redemption” and the Absolute Primacy of Christ .....	293
Creation in Christ and Christ in Creation .....	308
The Redemption of Creation .....	318
Appropriating Hopkins for the Present Theological Study .....	327
CHAPTER SIX: THE SPIRIT’S MISSION IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION ...	333
Pneumatological Dimensions of the Absolute Primacy of Christ .....	333
Identifying the Spirit’s Work in Relation to the Son’s: A Recently Developed Paradigm .....	338
Colin Gunton: Perichoresis and Particularity .....	351
Filiological and Pneumatological Aspects of Inscape and Instress .....	368
The Holy Spirit’s Proper Mission in Redemption .....	378
Conclusion .....	390
CONCLUSION .....	396
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	405

## A NOTE ON THE USE OF PRONOUNS FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

The reader will notice that I frequently employ feminine pronouns for the Holy Spirit. A number of theologians do this, but as the practice is disputed, my use of it calls for some explanation. I offer that here in order to avoid interrupting or delaying the argument of the first chapter or creating an overburdened footnote upon the first appearance of the word “she.”

The use of gendered pronouns for persons of the Trinity is a problem for which there is currently no generally acceptable solution.<sup>1</sup> The names Father and Son, of course, are male and call for masculine pronouns. “The Holy Spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) is neuter in the Greek from which we have this name for the third person of the Godhead—a name that, unlike Father and Son, does not of itself immediately betoken a personal entity analogous to human persons. Yet since the Spirit is recognized as a person, the pronoun “it” seems quite inappropriate to use of the Spirit; we never refer to persons, but only to non-personal things, as “it.” One could avoid pronomial references altogether, simply repeating “the Spirit” and “the Spirit’s” instead of using “he/she,” “him/her,” “his/her,” but this can make for cumbersome prose, and it creates the problem of using personal pronouns for the Father and the Son but not for the Holy Spirit, which smells faintly of the suggestion that the Spirit is somehow less personal in a way analogous to

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<sup>1</sup> The problem arises in connection with the need for non-sexist language, but more importantly with the need for non-sexist concepts and for concepts that do not subtly and improperly model God after aspects of created reality, including human sex and gender. Although this is an intrinsic need for theology, it has been brought to light above all by feminist critics. For Christian feminist critiques of traditional Christian language and concepts for God, see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon, 1982); Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); and Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). For wide-ranging discussions of multiple issues relating to speech about the Trinity in light of challenges raised by feminist concerns—generally in defense of traditional language and concepts—see Alvin F. Kimel, Jr., ed., *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

our personhood than the Father and the Son are, which in turn smells more than faintly of heresy. It will not do to use “he or she” for the Spirit as we often do when speaking indefinitely of human persons because this only makes it sound as though the Spirit has a definite gender, but we do not know what it is, which is obviously not the case: human persons only have a gender or a sex because we have bodies; because the divine persons do not have physical bodies, none of them can have a sex or a gender—the only true genderedness in the Trinity belongs to the created humanity that is joined in person to the Son.

This leaves us with the need to choose either masculine or feminine pronouns for the Spirit. One could marshal various arguments for why one or the other should be chosen—for example, that the Spirit is sometimes referred to by a masculine pronoun in Scripture (e.g., John 16.13) or that the Spirit is sometimes associated with feminine imagery (e.g., on an interpretation of the Spirit hovering over the waters of creation in Gen. 1.2 like a mother bird brooding over her young). However, I, for one, have never found a totally compelling argument of this kind, which leads me to conclude that there is nothing wrong with simply *picking* one of the gender options, and I opt for the feminine. This choice has the happy result of eliminating some occasions when multiple uses of “he” for different persons of the Trinity could create confusion regarding the antecedent, although of course there are other ways of avoiding that problem, and in any case, pointing out a happy result is not to make an argument on behalf of the choice. My chief reason for using the feminine for the Spirit is simply that it has become rather common to do so. After all, in matters of language, convention goes a long way, provided that the convention is not inherently problematic. If the practice is understood correctly, I do not

believe that speaking of the Spirit as “she” is inherently problematic—in fact, it may even be helpful. Certainly, there are dangers to be avoided here: the traits and actions of the Spirit are no more intrinsically feminine than those of the Father and the Son are intrinsically masculine, and while well-intentioned efforts are sometimes made to characterize the Spirit as “the feminine person of the Trinity” in order to offset potentially patriarchal ideas of God, these can easily backfire if one then assigns to the Spirit characteristics that foster cramped or even damaging conceptions of femininity. Indeed, I think it unadvisable to base a decision about language for God on the interests of a political agenda—even one that is in keeping with the implications of the gospel, as I believe the overcoming of patriarchy to be.

On the other hand, employing feminine pronouns for the Holy Spirit may have a useful *theological* consequence if the practice is understood in a way that makes it disrupt a facile transposition of the category of gender onto God in the first place. To that end, consider the following. Any of the trinitarian persons can be thought of in either masculine or feminine terms: the Father can easily be imagined as a mother and the Son or Word has long been identified with Wisdom, personified in Scripture as a woman. The reason this is possible is not that God is both masculine and feminine; it is that God is neither. It is equally an exercise in metaphorical thinking to apply masculine or feminine conceptions to God, since the very category of gender properly pertains only to created reality (where, indeed, it functions in very flawed ways). However, given that the pronoun “he” has largely ceased to function grammatically as gender-neutral, referring to all three of the divine persons as “he” can make it very easy to conceive of God as

actually being intrinsically masculine or even male.<sup>2</sup> But if God is sometimes spoken of as “she”—as one sees done by a number of theologians with reference to the Holy Spirit—then that mistake is less easy to make.

Of course, it would be just as mistaken to conclude from the latter that God is two parts masculine to one part feminine, although the danger exists that some will make this mistake. That is why it must be insisted that referring to the Spirit as “she” does not indicate that the Spirit embodies a feminine dimension of God. Regardless of what traits we may especially associate with women and femininity in human society, the Spirit does not resemble women or their femininity more than she resembles men or their masculinity. On the contrary, men and women possess whatever positive traits they do because all of us human beings are made in the image of the one God, and whatever negative traits we possess—including the tendency to assign each other characteristics that divide and stifle members of the human community along lines of gender—are symptomatic of the sin that exacerbates our created limitations (which, without that sin, could function as an uncompromised gift). The persons of the Trinity cannot be divided into different dimensions of God or varying embodiments of characteristics found among

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<sup>2</sup> David Coffey soundly defends his own (somewhat reluctant) use of the masculine pronoun for the Spirit (*Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* [New York: Oxford University, 1999], 5-6). However, I disagree with him that the forms “she,” “her,” and “hers” are more unsuitable than the masculine alternatives because “given their lack of background, they explicitly identify God as sexual, which ‘he’ and ‘his,’ given their actual background, do not” (ibid., 6). It is true that grammatically, “he” was universally recognized as gender-neutral when used for indefinite individuals until quite recently, and at least for theologically sophisticated minds, referring to God as “he” has never indicated that God is sexually male. However, “he” is now widely recognized as inappropriate for use as a gender-neutral pronoun, and in the minds of very many people—including some of the theologically sophisticated—God is, indeed, masculine (or at least more masculine than feminine), and is properly referred to as “he” *for that reason* (see, for example, Donald G. Bloesch, *The Battle for the Trinity: The Debate over Inclusive God-Language* [Ann Arbor: Servant, 1985], 37, 100). Hence, in my judgment, the “actual background” of the use of masculine pronouns for God is a very problematic witness for continuing the practice. The only way of rendering that usage unproblematic is to note explicitly that in retaining it, one is not identifying God as male (as Coffey himself makes clear that he is not doing). But *pace* Coffey, one can do the very same thing when using feminine pronouns and thereby avoid “explicitly identify[ing] God as sexual[ly]” female. That is precisely what I am doing here.

men and women. Thus, the Spirit should not be seen as *having* a different gender from the Father and the Son. If the Spirit is *referred to* by a grammatically different gender, though, we may usefully derive from it a reminder precisely of the lack of sexually-correlated gender identity in God. The reminder is occasioned not least by a recognition of the absurdity that would ensue from taking literally the ascription of differing gender identities to the trinitarian persons: we would end up with an androgynous God, two-thirds male and one-third female. This very absurdity points to the fact that if God can be referred to by pronouns of both genders, it is because God properly belongs to neither. What I am suggesting is that insofar as the words “he” and “she” call to mind genderedness as they apply to human beings, the employment of both words for God at the level of the persons may introduce a kind of cognitive dissonance into our tendency to correlate these words with the human characteristics of gender division and then apply them to God because the mind naturally balks at conceiving of God, at the level of God’s oneness, as being polygendered. In turn, this dissonance points back to the initial act of reference, the use of the gendered pronouns, leading the mind to ask, Why would God be polygendered at the level of the persons in their diversity if God is not so at the level of their unity? The answer, of course, is that God is not.

To be quite clear, all of this is not meant to provide an argument that the Spirit *should* be spoken of in the feminine. Rather, it is an explanation of how I wish for my reader to understand my use of this practice, which I have taken up from an existing convention without endorsing others’ reasons for using it.<sup>3</sup> In sum, when I refer to the

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<sup>3</sup> For descriptions of several examples of reasons given and analysis of why they present difficulties, see Elizabeth A. Johnson, “The Incomprehensibility of God and the Image of God Male and Female,” *Theological Studies* 45.3 (1984), 457-60, and idem., *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 50-54. Johnson is critical of efforts to identify

Spirit as “she,” I am not indicating anything about the Spirit’s personal characteristics in contradistinction to the Father and the Son; my use of the feminine pronoun is not intended to imply feminine genderedness in the Spirit any more than the use of “he” for the other two persons indicates masculine genderedness in them. It is simply a matter of assigning the Spirit a personal pronoun. And while my use of the feminine is not

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“feminine traits” in God and to identify the Spirit with the “feminine dimension” of God, but she advocates the alteration of “female symbols” with male ones for God and for the trinitarian persons, where the symbols represent not mere aspects of the divine, but “the fullness of God in creating and redeeming” (“The Incomprehensibility of God,” 461). For her, the difference between these things is that the “traits” and the “dimensions” approach involve gender stereotyping from an androcentric point of view, but “imag[ing] God equivalently as male and female” presents a couple of theological advantages. Her explanation is worth quoting at length: “God is properly understood as neither male nor female. But insofar as God created both male and female in the divine image and is therefore the source of the perfection of both, God can be represented equally well by images of either. Both are needed for a less inadequate imaging of God, in whose image the human race is created. This ‘clue’ for speaking of God in the image of male and female has the advantage of making clear at the outset that women enjoy the dignity of being made in God’s image and are therefore capable as women of representing God. Simultaneously, it relativizes undue emphasis on any one image, since pressing the fulness of imagery shows the partiality of images of one sex alone. The incomprehensible mystery of God is brought to light and deepened in our consciousness through the imaging of God male and female” (ibid., 460).

My approach differs from Johnson’s considerably, but the following point comes close to the argument that I have made about discerning a positive consequence of the use of feminine pronouns: “Female images and concepts of God disclose the relative character of male images and bracingly restrict their claim to ultimacy. . . . The understanding that God lies beyond whatever is thought or said is realized in the use of diverse images which balance or negate each other and thus point profoundly to the mystery of the present God who remains unknown” (ibid., 444). A minor difference between us here is that I do not seek to emphasize God’s unknownness. A more significant one is that Johnson holds that the two goals that she has in view—“deepening yet further this truth of the incomprehensibility of God” and “promoting the human dignity of women”—are inseparable (442), but I am convinced that these goals can and should be approached on different grounds. If they are not, there is a danger of subordinating the theological agenda to the political one in a way that undermines the success of the former. It is not clear to me that Johnson herself sufficiently averts this danger. She quotes Rosemary Radford Ruether’s assertion (*Sexism and God-Talk*, 23) that “[t]he image of God as predominantly male is fundamentally idolatrous,” adding, “as would be the image of God as exclusively female” (“The Incomprehensibility of God,” 442). However, when she proceeds to write of “speaking of God in the image of male and female,” one wonders whether the approach to conceiving of God that she advocates is, in fact, very much more likely to avoid the problem of idolatry than the “traditional” conceptions that she justly criticizes. Restricting the range of appropriate religious symbols to male images is, no doubt, a mistake, but it seems that expanding the range of symbols to include female images will not necessarily diminish the human tendency to cast God in our own image—it may only give us a broader set of ways to do that. Moreover, Johnson argues that “[f]ocusing on [the image of God as represented by one gender] to the exclusion of the other and clinging to that image has the religious effect of making God less God, at once restrictively expressed and too well known” (464). Again, she is right to critique the acts of exclusive focusing and clinging that she does. Yet it would seem that the proliferation of symbols that Johnson seeks, while desirable for promoting the human dignity of women, would serve to make God *all the more familiar*, which is at cross-purposes with the goal of amplifying our consciousness of the divine incomprehensibility. In this way, I think that Johnson’s theological agenda suffers a bit from being too closely wedded to her political one (although it should not be overlooked that the latter does have a legitimate theological backing in its own right). If the two were advanced on different grounds, the problem would be easier to avoid.

primarily motivated by the prospect of the positive consequences that it may have, I do see those as supporting the case for its suitability.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“Any man with a microphone can tell you what he loves the most.  
And you know why you love at all if you’re thinking of the Holy Ghost.”  
—The White Stripes, “Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground”

### **Prospect**

This dissertation addresses the question of the nature and the ground of the connection between the creative and the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit. It presents creation as ordered to redemption and redemption as the completion of creation. On this understanding of the relationship between the two orders of the Spirit’s activity, creation appears as an operation of grace just as redemption is, for the former is of a piece with the latter. I ground this depiction of her role in the creative and redemptive aspects of the divine economy in an account of her role within the immanent Trinity. Indeed, this dissertation is chiefly a work of trinitarian theology that explores the nature of the Spirit’s relation to the other two persons of the Godhead as the foundation of her work in the world. My thesis is that the Holy Spirit brings human persons to the particular form of perfection intended for us in creation, drawing us into relationship with one another, with other creatures, and with God, because within the immanent Trinity the Spirit mediates the exchange of love between the Father and the Son wherein their particularity as persons finds perfection. Redemption is a re-creation that fulfills the purpose for which humans are created insofar as it unites us with Jesus Christ the eternal and incarnate Son of God and, through him, with God the Father.

## Framing the Problem: Who Is the Holy Spirit? Aspects of a Perennial Answer

Recent pneumatologists have commonly begun their writings by referring to the Spirit as “the forgotten God,” for it is a truism that pneumatology has been an underdeveloped area of reflection in the history of Christian thought. Kilian McDonnell’s remark in 1985 aptly expresses the difficulty to which theologians continue to allude: “Anyone writing on pneumatology is hardly burdened by the past and finds little guidance there.”<sup>1</sup> However, the very fact that acknowledging this problem has for some time appeared to be almost an obligatory gesture in works on the Spirit and the fact that it is seen so often demonstrate that things have changed. The past few decades have been marked by a surge of attempts to overcome the pneumatological deficit in theology.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kilian McDonnell, “A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit?” *Theological Studies* 46 (1985), 191-218: 191.

<sup>2</sup> For examples of complaints about insufficient theological attention being given to the Spirit and acknowledgements of how the field has changed, see *ibid.*, 191-93; Otto Dilschneider, “Die Geistvergessenheit der Theologie. Epilog zur Diskussion über den historischen Jesus und den kerygmatischen Christus,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 86 (1961), 255-66: 261; Nikos Nissiotis, “The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity for Church Life and Theology,” *The Orthodox Ethos*, ed. A. J. Philippou (Oxford: Holywell, 1964), 32-69: 37-38; A. G. Adam, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1965), 29; Albert Outler, “Veni, Creator Spiritus: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” *New Theology* 4, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (London: Macmillan, 1967), 195-209: 195-96; Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Herder & Herder, 1997 [1983]), 159-60; Alasdair I. C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Bible, the History of Christian Thought, and Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), *passim*; Boris Bobrinskoy, “The Indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: ‘Pneumatic Christology’ in the Cappadocian Fathers,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 28 (1984), 49-65: 49; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1992), 1; Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1-2; Gordon Preece and Stephen Pickard, “Introduction,” *Starting with the Spirit*, ed. Preece and Pickard (Hindmarsh: Australian Theological Forum, 2001), vii-xiii:vii-viii; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 11-19. From these examples, among many others that could be cited, it is possible to glean a sense of the course that the turn to pneumatology—and the spreading awareness of this turn—has taken. The 1960s saw noteworthy efforts to bring attention to the lack of adequate treatment of the Holy Spirit in historical and contemporary theology (along with some landmark attempts to redress the problem, including the work of Heribert Mühlen and Hendrikus Berkhof, to mention just two figures). This developing consciousness of a need for greater attention swiftly bore fruit. Thirty years after Dilschneider wrote of the “forgottenness of the Spirit,” so much material devoted to the Spirit had been published that Moltmann spoke of “a positive obsession with the Spirit,” although he added that for all the illumination this had brought, “a new paradigm in pneumatology” had yet to emerge (*The Spirit of Life*, 1). After the turn of the century, the pneumatological deficit continues to be recognized

There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit has been “remembered,” the vast number of published articles, books, and conference proceedings dedicated to the third person of the Trinity in recent years is evidence of a broader and more thoroughgoing concern explicitly to treat the Spirit as a distinct object of theological inquiry than has been seen, arguably, in a millennium and a half. This renaissance in pneumatology has developed alongside one in trinitarian theology that began taking shape in the middle third of the twentieth century and has continued. To be sure, the return to the doctrine of the Trinity has been a major factor in the renewal of interest in the Holy Spirit. However, the two revivals have taken place as distinct pursuits—so much so that McDonnell could say in 2003 that the two had “not so far converged in any significant way.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, it should be noted that one reason for the paucity of attention historically given to pneumatology as a topic in its own right is that Scripture provides less guidance for understanding the *identity* of the Holy Spirit than theologians could wish—the aforementioned pneumatological deficit could be said to date from the very earliest of the Christian classics. Yet there has never been doubt among orthodox believers about at least two aspects of the Spirit’s identity: the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the God who made all things, i.e., the Creator Spirit, and the Spirit of the Christ through whom God the Father is graciously making all things new, i.e., the Spirit of grace. We may consider the latter first.

In the New Testament, as in secular Greek, the word χάρις has a wide range of meanings, but the most common and most characteristic sense of “grace” that appears in

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as an inherited problem that remains to be overcome, but no one who has followed the development of this field closely would be likely to argue that the Spirit is still widely neglected.

<sup>3</sup> Kilian McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God: The Holy Spirit as the Universal Touch and Goal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003), 2.

the NT derives from the close relationship between two of the classical meanings: “an attitude or disposition of ‘goodwill, graciousness,’” and the manifestation of such a disposition through “favor [shown], kindness [done], beneficence.”<sup>4</sup> *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* defines the word simply as “love demonstrated by giving,” noting that “in the gospel, grace is unmerited divine favor, arising in the mind of God and bestowed upon his people.”<sup>5</sup> It is something that God possesses and something that God gives. The NT supports the idea, amply attested in the OT, that graciousness is a definitive divine characteristic: “the LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex. 34.6; see Neh. 9.31, Ps. 86.15, Joel 2.13) is, indeed, “the God of all grace” (1 Pet. 5.10) and is known to *be* love (1 John 4.8) by lavishing the riches of this grace on us (Eph. 1.7-8). God’s goodwill is expressed in God’s gifts to us, and the fact that God gives these even when we manifestly do not deserve them is precisely what reveals God to be intrinsically benevolent. Moreover, in the Epistles, grace is not only the mode of God’s giving—i.e., gift without regard to merit, so that no one can boast of his or her standing before God (Eph. 2.8-9)—but also the name for a particular and dynamic gift, in which usage it is a technical term. In this respect “grace” refers to divine power operating in the midst of human weakness (2 Cor. 12.9), the transformative goodness of God at work to forgive sins and to “restore, support, strengthen, and establish” (1 Pet. 5.10) believers in their life in Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the etymology of the word in this sense, Burton Scott Easton explains,

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen Westerholm, “Grace,” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 2, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 655-660: 656-57.

<sup>5</sup> Gary S. Shogren, “Grace: New Testament,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1086-88: 1086.

<sup>6</sup> Paul’s benediction, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (1 Thess. 5.28; see Rom. 16.20 and 1 Cor. 16.23) suggests that “God’s goodwill is demonstrated and made available to all in Jesus Christ and is effective in the lives of believers, not simply in their initial coming to faith, but also in the strength they need for their daily lives” (Westerholm, “Grace,” 658).

“Between ‘God’s favor’ and ‘God’s favors’ there exists a relation of active power, and as *charis* denoted both the favor and the favors, it was the natural word for the power that connected them. This use is very clear in 1 Cor 15 10, where St. Paul says, ‘not I, but the grace of God which was with me’ labored more abundantly than they all: grace is something that *labors*.’”<sup>7</sup>

It is easy to see how such a conception of grace would foster a thoroughgoing association of grace with the Holy Spirit, who is identified with the power of God in numerous biblical passages (e.g., Mic. 3.8, Luke 1.35, 1 Cor. 2.4; cp. Matt. 12.28 with Luke 11.20, Luke 24.49 with Acts 1.8, and Rom. 8.11 with 1 Cor. 6.14).<sup>8</sup> This active power that is grace, again, is a gift (Rom. 5.15, Eph. 3.7), and the Holy Spirit, who is “given” (Rom. 5.5) and “received” (Acts 8.15-19, 10.47, 19.2; John 20.22), is repeatedly referred to as a “gift” (Acts 2.38, 8.20, 10.45; cp. Matt. 7.11 with Luke 11.13 and John 4.10 with 7.37-39). She is active in the “spiritual gifts” (πνευματικῶν/πνευματικά in 1 Cor. 12.1, 14.1, χαρίσματα [‘gifts’] in 12.31) given to believers.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Spirit operates in those whom God has graced as the principle of redemptive transformation,

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<sup>7</sup> Burton Scott Easton, “Grace,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, vol. 2, ed. James Orr (Chicago: Howard-Severance Co., 1915), 1290-92: 1290.

<sup>8</sup> In the OT, the Spirit of YHWH appears perhaps most commonly as a power that comes upon human beings, enabling them to perform some function in the service of God and Israel (e.g., Num. 11.16-29, Judg. 3.10, 6.34, 11.29, 1 Sam. 16.13, Is. 42.1, 61.1, Ez. 11.5). This conception survives into the NT, where the Holy Spirit empowers the mission of Jesus and the church. The idea that, for the biblical authors (in contrast to later Christian exegetes who developed the doctrine of the Trinity), the Spirit of God or Holy Spirit is either a circumlocution for God or an *impersonal* power—in short, that it is simply a way of designating the action of God and does not represent an entity who is in any way distinct from YHWH or the Father—is a long-accepted one in both OT and NT scholarship, but it has recently come into question. See Michel René Barnes, “Veni Creator Spiritus,” last modified January 2006, <http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/spiritus.pdf>. A number of interpreters read Paul in particular as thinking of the Holy Spirit in personal terms. See Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 829-31; Ron C. Fay, “Was Paul a Trinitarian? A Look at Romans 8,” *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 327-45; Andrew K. Gabriel, “Pauline Pneumatology and the Question of Trinitarian Presuppositions,” *Paul and His Theology*, 347-62; Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 135-66.

<sup>9</sup> See also Heb. 2.4, which places “gifts of the Holy Spirit” alongside signs, wonders, and miracles or “works of power.”

delivering them from sin, granting them life and peace, and assuring them of a glorified body in the resurrection (Rom. 8). As Tit. 3.6-7 declares, making the pneumatological orientation of grace explicit, “this Spirit he [God] poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” The Spirit might be called the gift who brings the gift of grace to bear its fruit.<sup>10</sup> It is not surprising, then, to find the expressions “full of grace and power” and “full of . . . the Holy Spirit” used together in Acts 6.5, 8 as if “grace” and “the Holy Spirit” were interchangeable terms.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the strong correlation between χάρις and πνεῦμα ἅγιον that one finds throughout the NT is most directly attested in the formula “the Spirit of grace” in Heb. 10.29.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, Scripture equally clearly links the gift of grace with the person of Jesus. Luke has Paul proclaim to the Jerusalem Council, “we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 15.11), while the Paul of the Epistles writes to the Corinthians, “I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1.4), to the Romans, “if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many” (Rom. 5.15), and to the church at Ephesus, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our

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<sup>10</sup> Gal. 5.22-23 enumerates “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” as “the fruit of the Spirit.” Additionally, the description in Is. 11.2-3 of the Spirit of YHWH that will rest on the Messiah has traditionally been interpreted by the church as listing seven gifts that the Spirit bestows on those joined to Christ, namely, wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (following the LXX and Vulgate, where “piety” and “fear of the Lord” both appear, in contrast to the two mentions of “fear of the Lord” in the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text).

<sup>11</sup> The two also appear virtually interchangeable in the Pauline formulas “you are not under law but under grace” (Rom. 6.14) and “if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law” (Gal. 5.18). Similarly, see the parallel between Eph. 4:7-13, which lists a number of ministerial gifts given in “grace,” and 1 Cor. 12:4-11, which names various spiritual gifts given by or through the Spirit.

<sup>12</sup> While it is likely not a reference to the Holy Spirit, there is a precedent in Zech. 12.10 for the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος.

trespasses, according to the riches of his [God's] grace" (Eph. 1.7).<sup>13</sup> John the Evangelist begins his book by declaring, "The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1.17), while John the Revelator ends his with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints" (Rev. 22.21). Any account of charitology (theology of grace) has to bear witness to the fact that all Christian experience of grace is fundamentally christic in nature because it is only through the revelation of God as self-giving love in Christ that we know grace as grace and because what grace does is conform us to Christ. However, the purpose of drawing attention to the pneumatological orientation of grace is not to draw attention away from its christological orientation. Rather, it is to acknowledge that the grace of Christ—which is at once his own and the grace of God the Father who gives it through him—is always given and received precisely in the Holy Spirit.

The intimate tie between the Spirit and grace is attested not only in the NT but in liturgy and in much theological literature across the centuries. The church seems always to have recognized it, even if only implicitly, and the history of theology is replete with evidence of an explicit recognition of it in various forms. For example, Tertullian singles out the Holy Spirit as the agent who sanctifies the waters of baptism, imbuing them with the power to sanctify the baptized,<sup>14</sup> upon whom the Spirit herself subsequently

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<sup>13</sup> Many other Pauline passages could be cited, e.g., Rom. 3.24, 16.20; 2 Cor. 8.9, 13.14; Eph. 2.7; Phil. 4.23; 2 Tim. 1:9, 2:1. I speak of "the Paul of the Epistles" and refer to all of the above writings as Pauline simply on the grounds that they all bear his name, leaving aside the question of whether Paul himself wrote them all.

<sup>14</sup> Tertullian, *On Baptism* 4, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 3, ed. Allan Menzies, trans. Sidney Thelwall, American edn. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885), pp. 669-79: 670-71. Tertullian draws a parallel between the Spirit hovering over the waters in the Genesis 1 creation story and the Spirit coming upon the baptismal waters. He suggests that in hovering over the primeval waters, the Spirit rendered water an element suitable for cleansing, and in ch. 8 he writes of the Spirit "recognising as it were His primeval seat" in the baptismal waters and descending to repose upon them, so that they become in fact capable of spiritual cleansing. Tertullian then recalls the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove on Jesus at the

descends.<sup>15</sup> Origen appropriates to the Father the bestowal of existence on human beings, to the Word the derivation of their nature as rational, and to the Spirit their reception of holiness, for “the grace of the Holy Ghost” is made present so that “those beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it.”<sup>16</sup> Basil speaks of the “Supplier of life” and “origin of sanctification” as “an intelligent essence, . . . generous of Its good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by Its inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end;” the Spirit “perfect[s] all other things” and “sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind.”<sup>17</sup> From her we receive a catalogue of gifts that culminates with “abiding in God, . . . being made like to God, and, highest of all, . . . being made God.”<sup>18</sup> Ambrose asserts that the Spirit is the author of the grace whereby we are “born again” as sons and daughters of God, for this is a birth “of the Spirit” (John 3.5-6).<sup>19</sup>

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latter’s baptism, finding in this a sign of what happens to the newly baptized Christian: just as a dove brought an olive branch, a token of peace, to the ark after the deluge to announce that God’s wrath against the sinful world had subsided, so the Holy Spirit comes upon the sinner purified by baptism, bringing him or her the peace of God (p. 673).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 8, pp. 672-73. In ch. 6, Tertullian explicitly denies that the baptized receive the Spirit *in* the waters of baptism; rather, the washing *prepares* them to receive the Spirit, which reception Tertullian apparently regards as taking place during the anointing with oil and invocation that follow the baptism proper (7-8, p. 672).

<sup>16</sup> Origen, *De Principiis* 1.3.8, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, ed. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, trans. Frederick Crombie, American edn. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885), pp. 239-382: 255.

<sup>17</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* 9.22, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, vol. 8, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Blomfield Jackson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1894), pp. 2-50: 15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 9.23, p. 16. For a brief but useful examination of grace in the pneumatology of Basil’s most significant contemporary influence, Athanasius, see Dominique Gonnet, “The Salutary Action of the Holy Spirit as Proof of his Divinity in Athanasius’ *Letters to Serapion*,” *Studia Patristica* XXXVI (2001), 509-13.

<sup>19</sup> Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit* 2.7.63-64, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, vol. 10, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. H. de Romestin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1896), pp. 93-158: 122. In the context, Ambrose is arguing that the Spirit must be divine as are the Father and the Son because like them the Spirit performs the work of regeneration, which, being a form of creation, could not be performed by a creature—only someone who is divine can create and re-create. His references to the Spirit as the “author” of grace throughout his exposition of regeneration as being “born of the Spirit” appear

In one of her hymns to the Holy Spirit, Hildegard of Bingen binds together the Spirit's roles as creator and giver of grace when she sings,

O COMFORTER, Thou uncreated Fire,  
Who dost with life each living thing inspire!  
Holy art Thou, to quicken all the creatures Thou hast made;  
Holy art Thou, to sorely broken hearts affording aid;  
Holy art Thou, to cleanse the wounds of souls by sin betrayed.<sup>20</sup>

Thomas Aquinas devotes a theologically rich article in the *Summa contra Gentiles* to “the effects attributed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture regarding the rational creature, so far as God's gifts to us are concerned.”<sup>21</sup> Most of his conclusions hinge on the Augustinian idea that the Spirit proceeds in the Godhead in the manner of love, just as the Son, the Word, proceeds by way of intellect or understanding. In this vein he begins by explaining,

When we are somehow made like a divine perfection, perfection of this kind is said to be given us by God . . . . Since, then the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of the love by which God loves Himself, . . . from the fact that in loving God we are made like to this love, the Holy Spirit is said to be given us by God. Hence the Apostle says: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us” (Rom. 5:5).<sup>22</sup>

Thomas goes on to argue that since “nothing operates where it is not,” God is present wherever God produces an effect, and “since the charity by which we love God is in us by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself must also be in us, so long as the charity is in us.”<sup>23</sup> This charity makes us friends with God, and in friendship, it is fitting to share what one has with a friend, as the Spirit does in giving us spiritual gifts whereby “we are

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intended to emphasize that the Spirit is not just an intermediary who dispenses to us the grace of the Father and the Son; rather, this grace is of or from the Spirit herself, too, because it is the Spirit's own to give as a divine person.

<sup>20</sup> *Ancient Hymns and Poems, Chiefly from the Latin*, trans. T. G. Crippen (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1868), 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Four: Salvation*, trans. Charles J. O'Neil (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1957), 121. Subsequent references will be given in the notes by SCG and the book, chapter, and paragraph numbers, followed by page numbers from this edition.

<sup>22</sup> SCG 4.21.1, p. 121.

<sup>23</sup> SCG 4.21.3, p. 122.

configured to God and . . . made ready for good operation.”<sup>24</sup> Also, because when one befriends another, “every offense is removed” between them, it is to be seen that since the Spirit makes us friends with God, “it is by Him that God remits our sins.”<sup>25</sup> In sum, Thomas grounds the love that unites and conforms us to God in the person of the Holy Spirit who is God’s own self-love, and in doing so, he forges an exceptionally cogent connection between the Spirit and the whole of the life of grace. Finally, Martin Luther states as clearly as anyone in the theological tradition the indispensability of the Spirit’s operation in salvific grace:

I believe, not only that the Holy Spirit is the only true God together with the Father and the Son; but also that, apart from the operation of the Holy Spirit, no one can come to God, nor receive any of the blessings effected through Christ, His life, cross, and death, and whatever else is ascribed to Him. Through Him, the Father and the Son move me and all others that are His. Through the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son rouse, call, and draw us; and, through and in Christ, give us life and holiness, and make us spiritually-minded. Thus the Holy Spirit brings us to the Father, for He it is by whom the Father, through Christ and in Christ, does all things, and gives life to all.<sup>26</sup>

As stated above, however inadequately the history of theology has attended to pneumatology, the identification of the Holy Spirit as grace-giver has remained definitive for Christian understandings of who the Spirit is since the beginning.

The other aspect of the Spirit’s identity mentioned above as having never been questioned among orthodox Christians is that of creator.<sup>27</sup> To be sure, the Spirit’s activity

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<sup>24</sup> *SCG* 4.21.7-8, pp. 123-24, quoted at 124.

<sup>25</sup> *SCG* 4.21.10, pp. 124-25.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Luther, *A Short Exposition of the Decalogue, the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer*, in *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther*, vol. 1, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf (London: Lutterworth, 1952), 87.

<sup>27</sup> There may be scattered exceptions to this rule. Origen might be (and sometimes is) cited as one, since he opines that while the working power of the Father and the Son is to be found in all things that exist, the Holy Spirit operates only within the sanctified (*De Principiis* 1.3.5-7, pp. 253-55). However, he also professes that the Spirit of God who hovered over the waters at the beginning of creation is none other than the Holy Spirit (1.3.3, p. 252), which implies that the Spirit was initially involved in bringing about the created world, and he later writes that “God the Father alone, and His only-begotten Son, and the Holy

in creation has been a relatively minor theme throughout the history of theology, but as will be seen, it has become important for some contemporary pneumatologies, and it is useful to consider the precedents for that development. Once again, we may begin with Scripture. In doing so, we must acknowledge at once the perhaps curious fact that the NT offers no explicit testimony to early Christian conceptions of the Spirit as a creative agent. The writings of Paul, Luke, and John are pneumatologically dense—more so than other works from the late Second Temple period (or just after it) that do contain a notion of God’s Spirit as creator, such as Judith, 2 Esdras and 2 Baruch<sup>28</sup>—but they make no mention of the Holy Spirit being involved in the creation of the world or of life.<sup>29</sup> Yet this silence does not seem so strange when one considers that the NT authors are all writing primarily about Jesus Christ, and accordingly their pneumatological interest lies with the Spirit’s role in the Christ-event and in the sanctification and empowerment of believers, in relation to which the topic of the Spirit’s creative function is not a first-order concern. Furthermore, there is no reason to suppose that these authors do not accept the

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*Spirit*, not only possess a knowledge of those things which *they have created*, but also of themselves” (4.1.37, p. 381, emphasis added). Hence, Origen is a complex case. However, in any event, exceptions to the rule that the Spirit has not been denied as creator will be rare, and without doubt, those who have made this denial (e.g., the Pneumatomachians) have been found wanting by the church at large.

<sup>28</sup> Judith 16.14 couples a statement that God created through speech with one describing God’s Spirit as creating at God’s behest, as it were: “Let all thy creatures serve thee, for thou didst speak, and they were made. Thou didst send forth thy Spirit, and it formed them.” By 2 Esdras I mean the book also known as 4 Esdras. 2 Esdras 6.38-39 reads, “I said, ‘O Lord, thou didst speak at the beginning of creation, and didst say on the first day, “Let heaven and earth be made,” and thy word accomplished the work. And then the Spirit was hovering, and darkness and silence embraced everything . . . .” 2 Baruch 21.4-5 also depicts God creating through God’s word and God’s Spirit: “I began to speak in the presence of the Mighty One, and said: ‘O Thou that hast made the earth, hear me, that hast fixed the firmament by the word, and hast made firm the height of the heaven by the spirit, that hast called from the beginning of the world that which did not yet exist, and they obey Thee.’” Barnes takes “First and Second Temple literary references to the ‘Spirit of’ God (etc.) as referring to something like an entity separate from JHWH” and makes a sound case that “it is as difficult to exclude a softer, more ‘polytheist’ interpretation of ‘Elohim making via word and spirit’ as it is to exclude a hard monotheistic interpretation” such as that given by rabbinic Judaism (“Veni Creator Spiritus,” 2-16, quoted at 3, 9). I owe my attention to these passages to Barnes, who examines how they function as midrashim on Gen. 1.1-2—in the case of the Judith and 2 Baruch texts, apparently under the influence of Ps. 33.6.

<sup>29</sup> Jesus’ statement that “It is the Spirit who gives life” (John 6.63) refers to a soteriological rather than a ktisiological reality—i.e., it is concerned with salvation rather than creation.

idea of the Spirit's involvement in creation that is expressed in multiple places within their own Scriptures, i.e., the OT (specifically the LXX).

The opening sentences of Genesis provide the first and possibly the most important instance of biblical witness to the Spirit as creator, where the Spirit of God is depicted “hovering over” the primordial waters, an anticipatory detail that sets the scene for God’s act of bringing order to the earth that is “formless and void” (Gen. 1.2) and bringing life to the lifeless world. The Hebrew word for “spirit,” *ruah*, also means “breath,” and the figurative connection between these usages is significant in a number of OT passages. Indeed, when God breathes “the breath [*neshamah*] of life” into the man to be called Adam (2.7), making him “a living being,” the image recalls that of the Spirit hovering over the waters, but it registers the divine interaction with creation on a much more intimate level, establishing a direct link between the presence of God to creatures and their vivification. The association of God’s Spirit with the giving and sustaining of life appears in Job: “The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (33.4); “If he should take back his spirit to himself, and gather to himself his breath, all flesh would perish together, and all mortals return to dust” (34.14-15).<sup>30</sup> It appears again in Ps. 104.30, when the psalmist addresses God with the words, “When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.” As will be seen below, this text is particularly significant for patristic and medieval exegetes who write of the Creator Spirit, as is Ps. 33.6: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host [*or* power] by the breath of his mouth.” A long tradition of Christian exegesis has seen the latter passage as referring to the second and third persons

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<sup>30</sup> For further examples of the idea that spirit/breath is given by God to keep mortal creatures alive, see Is. 42.5 and Eccl. 12.7.

of the Trinity at work in creation. As the Spirit here establishes the created order, in the Wisdom of Solomon she upholds and preserves it: “the spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said” (1.7). Again,

How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?  
Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?  
You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.  
For your immortal spirit is in all things. (Wis. 11.25-12.1)

Taken together, these biblical stories and songs present the Creator Spirit as one who by her intimate presence—hovering over and even filling the world—makes possible the ordering of creation, sustains it in existence, and with loving care vivifies the creatures within it.

Irenaeus was one of the earliest to advance the idea that God the Father creates jointly through God’s Word and Spirit, and appealing to Ps. 33.6 for authority, he assigns each of them a distinct role in the work:

since God is rational, therefore by (the) Word He created the things that were made; and God is Spirit, and by (the) Spirit He adorned all things: as also the prophet says: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens established, and by his spirit all their power*. Since then the Word establishes, that is to say, gives body and grants the reality of being, and the Spirit gives order and form to the diversity of the powers; rightly and fittingly is the Word called the Son, and the Spirit the Wisdom of God.<sup>31</sup>

The Spirit, so to speak, fills out or completes the effort begun by the Word (not necessarily in a temporally sequential sense), *adorning* what he *creates* and *ordering* that to which he *grants being*. Athenagoras takes a related line of thought when he writes that

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<sup>31</sup> Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 5, trans. Armitage Robinson (New York: Macmillan, 1920), p. 73. It should not go unnoticed that Irenaeus identifies the *Spirit* with the divine Wisdom, not the Son, as do so many later Christians. This idea that the Spirit is fittingly called the Wisdom of God because she gives order and form to created things may owe something to the biblical picture of Wisdom as a figure who was “beside” God “like a master workman” during the shaping of the world (Prov. 8.30). For other statements of Irenaeus’ on creation through (the Word and) the Spirit, see *Against Heresies* 1.22.1 and 4.20.1, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut, American edn. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885), 315-567.

God “has framed all things by the Logos, and holds them in being by His Spirit.”<sup>32</sup> Once again, the activity of the Word is mentioned first, and that of the Spirit seems logically dependent upon it, but the latter is no less important than the former. Athenagoras also states that all created things are “governed” by the Spirit.<sup>33</sup> These two aspects of operation, holding all things in being and governing them, amount to a conceptually complete (if scarcely elaborated) doctrine of pneumatological providence. If Irenaeus appears to suggest that the Spirit completes the creative work of the Word/Son, Basil makes the point directly when he bids his reader to think of the Father as the “original cause,” the Son as the “creative cause,” and the Spirit as the “perfecting cause” of all things that are made.<sup>34</sup> It seems likely that this hypothesis is inferred from an understanding that the Spirit performs a parallel role in the order of salvation, i.e., completing in us the work of redemption that the Father initiates and the Son enacts.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians* 6, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 2, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. B. P. Pratten, American edn. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885), pp. 128-48: 132.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, p. 131.

<sup>34</sup> Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 16.38, p. 23. He adds by way of qualification, “The operation of the Father who worketh all in all is not imperfect, neither is the creating work of the Son incomplete if not perfected by the Spirit. The Father, who creates by His sole will, could not stand in any need of the Son, but nevertheless He wills through the Son; nor could the Son, who works according to the likeness of the Father, need co-operation, but the Son too wills to make perfect through the Spirit. ‘For by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath [the Spirit] of His mouth’” (brackets in original).

<sup>35</sup> The Cappadocians generally view all divine action in the world as following this *taxis*. Gregory of Nyssa articulates the principle as follows: “every operation which extends from God to the Creation, and is named according to our variable conceptions of it, has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Spirit” (*On “Not Three Gods”* par. 9, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, vol. 5, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1892], pp. 331-36: 334). That Basil likely bases his conception of the Spirit’s role in the creative *taxis* on that of her role in the redemptive one is suggested by the fact that later in *De Spiritu Sancto* (26.61, p.38), he remarks that “the Holy Spirit perfects rational beings, completing their excellence,” and immediately characterizes this perfection as “being ‘conformed to the image of the Son of God’” (quoting Rom. 8.29). The relationship between the Spirit’s activity in creation and in redemption was likewise important for Pseudo-Basil, who ties κτίσις (creation) and ἀνακαίνωσις (renewing) together as actions of the Spirit in *Against Eunomius* V.728 to argue that the Spirit is of the same nature of the Father and the Son who also perform these divine works. See Franz Xaver Risch, *Pseudo-Basilii, Adversus Eunomium IV-V: Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar, Supplements to*

Ambrose likewise sees the Spirit's creative action in a way similar to Irenaeus; where Irenaeus speaks of the Spirit adorning creation, Ambrose ascribes to the Spirit the provision of creation's grace and beauty. He writes,

So when the Spirit was moving upon the water, the creation was without grace; but after this world being created underwent the operation of the Spirit, it gained all the beauty of that grace, wherewith the world is illuminated. And that the grace of the universe cannot abide without the Holy Spirit the prophet declared when he said: "Thou wilt take away Thy Spirit, and they will fail and be turned again into their dust. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be made, and Thou wilt renew all the face of the earth."<sup>36</sup>

From Gen. 1.2 and Ps. 104.29-30 Ambrose draws two conclusions: (a) "no creature can stand without the Holy Spirit," which is essentially the same as Athenagoras' point that the Spirit holds all things in being, and (b) "the Spirit is the Creator of the whole creation."<sup>37</sup>

The hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus," attributed to Rabanus Maurus of the ninth century, is an address to the Spirit as creator, although it treats as much of the Spirit's gifts in upbuilding our spiritual life as it does her creative action. The hymn is worth quoting in full, particularly in Robert Bridges's faithful and beautiful translation:

Come, O Creator Spirit, come,  
and make within our heart thy home;  
to us thy grace celestial give,  
who of thy breathing move and live.

O Comforter, that name is thine,  
of God most high the gift divine;  
the well of life, the fire of love,  
our souls' anointing from above.

Thou dost appear in sevenfold dower  
the sign of God's almighty power;

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*Vigiliae Christianae* XVI, ed. J. den Boeft, R. van den Broek, A. F. J. Klijn, G. Quispel, and J. C. M. van Winden (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 85-86.

<sup>36</sup> Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit* 2.5.33, pp. 118-19.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

the Father's promise, making rich  
with saving truth our earthly speech.

Our senses with thy light inflame,  
our hearts to heavenly love reclaim;  
our bodies' poor infirmity  
with strength perpetual fortify.

Our mortal foes afar repel,  
grant us henceforth in peace to dwell;  
and so to us, with thee for guide,  
no ill shall come, no harm betide.

May we by thee the Father learn,  
and know the Son, and thee discern,  
who art of both; and thus adore  
in perfect faith for evermore.<sup>38</sup>

Bridges's translation does not include the final verse of the Latin original, but I offer this  
as an attempt to render it in a style consistent with his:

To God the Father glory be  
And to the risen Son, with Thee,  
O Paraclete, the three in one,  
While the eternal ages run.

It should be noticed that the Spirit whose breath gives us life is asked to fortify our bodies  
and to grant us lives of peace and safety. This reveals a belief in the Spirit's responsibility  
for the providential care of creatures, which is as important a part of the theology of  
creation as the notion of the creator bringing things into existence. When we come to  
Thomas Aquinas, we find him again arguing in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* from the  
supposition that the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of the divine self-love. Having  
previously asserted (*SCG* 1.75) that God wills the existence of other things out of love for  
God's own goodness, Thomas reminds the reader that the Holy Spirit proceeds precisely

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<sup>38</sup> *Songs of Praise*, ed. Percy Dearmer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Martin Shaw, enlarged edn.  
(London: Oxford University, 1932), 179.

as this love, from which he concludes that the Spirit is the principle of created things.<sup>39</sup> He also attributes to the Spirit the movement in things that governs them and drives them to their proper ends,<sup>40</sup> and he points out that “[l]ife . . . is especially manifested in motion,” for which reason life is also fittingly said to be the domain of the Spirit.<sup>41</sup> As in our overview of the theological tradition on the Holy Spirit and grace, we may end this brief survey with one of the Reformers. Calvin writes that “it is the Spirit who, everywhere diffused, sustains all things, causes them to grow, and quickens them in heaven and in earth. Because he is circumscribed by no limits, he is excepted from the category of creatures; but in transfusing into all things his energy, and breathing into them essence, life, and movement, he is indeed plainly divine.”<sup>42</sup> These sentences sum up the operation of the Spirit in continuing creation, particularly in the giving and sustaining of life.

As brief as it is, this survey of biblical and historical sources demonstrates that the church has apparently always had at least two fairly clear ideas about who the Holy Spirit is. And although it is widely held that the Christian West has a markedly deficient history of thought regarding the Spirit relative to the Christian East—indeed, this is perhaps the most frequently made (and least frequently substantiated) claim in pneumatology today<sup>43</sup>—it can be seen that these ideas have inhabited the waters of both streams of

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<sup>39</sup> SCG 4.20.2, pp. 119-20. Thomas cites Ps. 104.30 in support of the point.

<sup>40</sup> SCG 4.20.3-4, p. 120.

<sup>41</sup> SCG 4.20.5, p. 121.

<sup>42</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1.13.14, vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006 [1960]), 138.

<sup>43</sup> While it is possible to illustrate ways in which the Spirit has played a larger part in Eastern than in Western theology, it is remarkable that virtually no one who makes the claim of the superiority of Eastern pneumatology appears to feel any compulsion to demonstrate that it is true. It seems to be a narrative that many systematic theologians have accepted and continue to repeat quite uncritically. Although I have made my selection of representatives for the above historical survey somewhat geographically diverse, I have chosen a majority of Western figures because I think that their voices ought

tradition. It is important to recognize, then, that the phenomenon of *Geistvergessenheit* bemoaned by so many theologians has by no means amounted to a complete oblivion. The perennial identification of the Holy Spirit as the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of grace indicates an awareness both that the Spirit has a role in creation as well as in redemption and that the person and work of the Spirit are inextricably bound up with the person and work of the Father and that of the Son, each of whom also creates and redeems.

On the other hand, the lament that pneumatology has historically come up short is well-founded. The fact that christology is the hub from which all other spokes extend on the wheel of Christian theology, coupled with the fact that Jesus' relationship with the Father is the most fundamental of all christological issues, renders it natural that paterology and filiology should get their due whenever christological, soteriological, or trinitarian questions come in for consideration. Per contra, the pneumatological dimensions of such questions might be, and frequently have been, either left unconsidered or relegated to the status of a mere addendum tacked on, almost as an afterthought, in order to bring the Holy Spirit into the discussion of the matter at hand so that it has a (nominally) trinitarian character.

For example, throughout the history of theology, the dominant model in christology proper has been the descending, incarnational model inspired above all by John 1. In it the relationship of the Logos to the Father, on the one hand, and to the created humanity of Jesus, on the other, is of paramount importance because it concerns how the preexistent person of the Logos, while retaining his consubstantiality with the

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to be noted in the face of the widespread assumption that Western pneumatology has been especially deficient (and I use the word "especially" because Orthodox theologians have sometimes seen their own tradition as lacking sufficient attention to the Spirit: see Nissiotis, "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 37-38, and Bobrinskoy, "The Indwelling of the Spirit in Christ," 49).

Father as divine, becomes consubstantial with us in order to save us. However, while it has often been attended by a recognition that the humanity of Jesus is created by all three persons of the Trinity—including, of course, the Holy Spirit—this model has largely been able to do without a thoroughgoing account of the Spirit’s relationship to Christ. The rise of Spirit christology discernible since the early 1970s is most easily viewed as a series of attempts either to replace or to supplement the Logos christology model, initially out of a concern that the latter has failed to meet the needs of the modern mindset, especially in regards to what passes in our intellectual climate for an adequate account of the full humanity of Christ, and more recently as a response to the pneumatological problem just identified.<sup>44</sup>

The Holy Spirit has been accorded a more prominent role in soteriology than anywhere else, but none of the classical interpretations of the atonement—theories variously stressing liberation (Christus Victor), ransom or satisfaction, penal substitution, or the exemplary love of Christ<sup>45</sup>—includes a significant pneumatological component at all. The Spirit has chiefly been understood as completing the sanctification of believers, applying the benefits won for us by Christ’s passion and resurrection, but not necessarily as playing an integral role in *bringing about* those benefits. Reading most atonement theology, one does not get the impression that the Spirit’s activity is any way *constitutive* of salvation; that activity (where it is mentioned at all) appears more as an instrumental cause of our *reception* of salvation.

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<sup>44</sup> For discussion, see Roger Haight, “The Case for Spirit Christology,” *Theological Studies* 53 (1992), 257-87, and Ralph Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (New York: Oxford University, 1994), 141-94.

<sup>45</sup> Theories involving ransom, satisfaction, and/or penal substitution often include a clear paterological-filiological dynamic, with the Son paying ransom or making satisfaction to the Father, or accepting from the Father (or in the Father’s eyes) the punishment that the human race deserved for sin.

Finally, in trinitarian theology proper, there is always the danger of either estranging the Holy Spirit from the Father-Son relation or reducing her to an impersonal aspect or by-product thereof. This danger is not unrelated to the difference among the trinitarian names, which of itself reflects why giving the Spirit her due presents a challenge. The very names Father and Son are predicated on the relation between them, and all that is said of the person of the Son or the work of Christ implies his relation to the Father who eternally begets him and who sent him into the world on his mission. However, the name Holy Spirit does not imply the third person's relation to either of the others or to the two of them together—at least, certainly not in the same way that the names Father and Son indicate the relation between those persons. Augustine sees the Holy Spirit's name as indicating that the Spirit is the communion between the Father and the Son, since both of them are holy and both are spirit and since the Spirit belongs to both of them, but he acknowledges that the relationship of the Holy Spirit to them is not apparent from her name itself.<sup>46</sup> The difficulty that this fact poses may be cast as follows. Ensconced in the name Father is the fact that the first person would not be the *distinct person* he is without the second person, and the same is true for the Son, whose name indicates that he takes his identity from his being begotten by the Father. But the Father and the Son would both be holy as well as spirit even they existed as a Binity, since these attributes pertain to their common essence, and so the name Holy Spirit does not indicate her indispensability to the *personhood* of either or both of the other two persons (as, indeed, the names of the first two persons do not imply their relations to the third, but only to each other). It is one thing to argue, as everyone from the Cappadocians to Calvin has done, that the Spirit must be divine if she creates and redeems. It is another, harder

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<sup>46</sup> Augustine, *The Trinity* V.12, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City, 1991), p. 197.

thing to demonstrate that the Spirit's existence is essential within the Godhead, i.e., that the Father and the Son would not be the distinct persons they are without her. Yet if this is not the case, then at best the Spirit holds a lesser status in the Trinity than the other two persons, and at worst there may be no compelling reason to posit the Trinity at all, for it would do just as well to posit a Binity that internally is characterized by, and externally works according, to a common holiness of spirit. We must ask, What is the Spirit's identity as a person within the Trinity, and why is it essential to the formation of the identity of the Father and of the Son?

This question of the Spirit's intra-trinitarian role has formed a major point of interest during the renaissance of pneumatological and trinitarian doctrine mentioned above, and it lies at the heart of the present study. Before proceeding to a further examination of it, it will be useful to note where the deficit in pneumatology appears within the perennial twofold answer to the question of the Spirit's identity as it touches us in the economy, namely, that she is the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of grace. First, as mentioned above, while the notion of the Spirit as creator can be found throughout the history of Christian thought, it has undoubtedly been a minor theme. It is perfectly understandable that theology has stressed the Spirit's creative activity less than the Father's and the Son's. After all, the work of creation is primarily appropriated to the Father, and fittingly so in light of the fact that he is the source of the other two divine persons, which makes him the ultimate source of all things, while the Son's creative agency is important to affirm within the context of christology and for that reason warrants special attention. However, not only has the Spirit's creative work been emphasized comparatively less than the Father's and the Son's, but much more

significantly, it has been emphasized far less than other works of her own: if one were to itemize the activities prevalently ascribed to the Spirit by theologians, creation would not occupy a high spot on the list; it would fall below sanctification, inspiration, revelation of and aid in understanding truth, the giving of charisms, uniting the church and guiding its members individually and corporately, and others by a wide margin.

Sanctification has long been treated as the most important, and indeed as the most characteristic, activity of the Holy Spirit. This, too, makes sense because sanctification is the chief end of the gift of grace in this life<sup>47</sup> and without it everything else that the Spirit does in and for the church would be meaningless.<sup>48</sup> Curiously, though, the Spirit's close association with sanctification and with the church sometimes leads to an eclipse of the

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<sup>47</sup> Here let "sanctification" indicate the nexus of salvific effects that can be parsed into the distinct but inseparable elements of justification, regeneration, and sanctification. My comfort with using "sanctification" to represent the whole nexus perhaps reveals that my own conception of the working of grace places me more in sympathy with a "Catholic" than a "Protestant" approach to understanding salvation, as many Lutherans and some Reformed might suggest that "the chief end of the gift of grace in this life" is to be identified with justification. However, I do not mean to dismiss the distinction between justification and sanctification that these traditions have found it important to stress (as, indeed, Catholic theology does not dismiss it). Rather, I identify sanctification as the chief end because, to employ these terms in a Protestant sense, while justification is an end in itself, it also leads to sanctification as an end; significantly, the reverse is not true. Also, I call sanctification the chief end of the gift of grace "in this life" because the chief end of grace *tout court* lies in glorification, which is only consummated in our life with God beyond this world. For points of convergence as well as differences regarding justification, regeneration, and sanctification between today's Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed, see The Lutheran World Federation and The Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), especially 4.2-4.3 (pp. 18-20) and the "Sources" for these sections (pp. 31-34), and *Justification and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement: The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, ed. William G. Rusch (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003), especially Michael Root, "The Implications of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and Its Wider Impact for Lutheran Participation in the Ecumenical Movement," 47-60, and Gabriel Fackre, "The *Joint Declaration* and the Reformed Tradition," 61-85; Frank D. Macchia's contribution to the latter volume, "Justification and the Spirit of Life: A Pentecostal Response to the *Joint Declaration*," 133-49, brings a strong concern for pneumatology to bear on these topics and the ways that the *JDDJ* addresses them.

<sup>48</sup> John Wesley's summary of the effects brought about by the Spirit in the Christian life captures the centrality of sanctification to the Spirit's gracious operation, as he lists all of the effects under the heading of producing holiness: "I believe the infinite and eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, to be not only perfectly holy in himself, but the immediate cause of all holiness in us: enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting our persons to Christ, assuring us of the adoption of sons, leading us in our actions, purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies to a full and eternal enjoyment of God" (*A Letter to a Roman Catholic, The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 10, ed. Thomas Jackson [London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872], 80-86: 82).

Spirit herself at work therein. Theologians working in charitology and ecclesiology have often written whole treatises on these subjects with scarcely any references to the Holy Spirit. It is a problem of theological method that these disciplines, whose subject matter coincides with that of pneumatology at several points, have frequently supplanted pneumatology without being noticeably informed by it. In terms of theological content, Philip Pare and Yves Congar suggest that in Catholic faith and liturgy, the Eucharist, the Pope, and the Virgin Mary have functioned to some extent as “substitutes” for the Holy Spirit.<sup>49</sup> Protestant thought and piety has avoided these particular dangers because the concern not to allow anyone or anything to usurp the role of Christ as our “one mediator” (1 Tim. 2.5) before the Father is a badge of Protestant self-identification—after all, one of the classic Protestant charges against Catholicism is that it allows Mary and the Pope to do precisely that—but this concern may be a factor in the development of another, particularly Protestant manner of edging out the Spirit. Protestant theology is capable of so stressing our dependence on Christ the mediator and advocate as to give short shrift to our dependence on the “other advocate (παράκλητος)” (John 14.26), the Holy Spirit, as the one who binds us to Christ and thereby mediates our relationship to the mediator. Moreover, Catholic and Protestant charitology alike have been chiefly consumed with the question of the relationship between grace and human capabilities and of the divine will and human obedience or disobedience to it. This fixation has upstaged the specifically pneumatological domain of the theology of grace ever since the Pelagian controversy. Yet the problem of losing sight of the Spirit herself in the work she performs is not only symptomatic of the West. For example, Pavel Florensky finds in the Orthodox ascetic

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<sup>49</sup> Philip Pare, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Western Church,” *Theology* 51 (1948):293-300; Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 1, trans. David Smith (New York: Herder & Herder, 1997), 160-64.

fathers a habit of speaking of “grace”—which appears in their words as “a kind of sanctifying and impersonal *power* of God”—in the place of the Spirit, with the effect that “what is usually known” in reflection on salvific experience “is not the Holy Spirit but His grace-giving energies, His powers, His acts and activities.”<sup>50</sup>

To repeat, the perennial identification of the Holy Spirit as the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of grace indicates an awareness both that the Spirit has a role in creation as well as in redemption and that the person and work of the Spirit should be situated within a trinitarian context. However, the deficit in pneumatology touches these two points, as well, which has left a great deal of room for discussion of some significant questions. For example, there has not been universal agreement about the nature of the relationship between the creative and redemptive actions of the Spirit: do they belong to two orders of divine action that are in principle separable or at least are held together only in tension, or do they form a kind of continuum? Likewise, while theology has been able to spell out with some ease such things as why paternity is especially linked with creativity in God and why it was fitting that, of the three divine persons, the Word or Son should be the one who became incarnate as a man on earth, it has not been so easy to explain what characteristics particular to the person of the Holy Spirit render it especially appropriate that the Spirit should have a particular role to play in the dispensation of grace. One might ask, is it only because of the *historical* fact that the Spirit applies the grace of Christ to believers that she warrants the names Spirit of grace and Lifegiver (the Nicene Creed), or is there something about the Spirit’s *eternal* identity that naturally disposes her to such a grace-giving operation?

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<sup>50</sup> Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, trans. Boris Jakim (Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 90, quoted in Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 24-25.

## The Contemporary Theological Scene and the Present Study

As noted above, Jürgen Moltmann asserted two decades ago that the renaissance in pneumatology had yet to produce a “new paradigm.” Gordon Preece and Steven Pickard interpret this as an allusion to what Karl Barth described as his dream for a future theology that, in Preece’s and Pickard’s words, would “do justice to Schleiermacher’s real concern for human experience in dependence upon God.”<sup>51</sup> Barth wrote of “the possibility of a theology of the third article” of the creed,

in other words, a theology predominantly and decisively of the Holy Spirit. Everything which needs to be said, considered, and believed about God the Father and God the Son in an understanding of the first and second articles might be shown and illuminated in its foundations through God the Holy Spirit, the *vinculum pacis inter Patrem et Filium*. The entire work of God for his creatures, for, in, and with human beings, might be made visible in terms of its one teleology in which all contingency is excluded.<sup>52</sup>

Following Moltmann,<sup>53</sup> Preece and Pickard characterize this theology as “beginning with” the third article or the Spirit, and they frame the essays in their edited volume *Starting with the Spirit* as taking up the challenge of reconfiguring theology by placing pneumatology “first,” i.e., making it the primary point of departure from which one approaches all of the major loci of theological inquiry.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, I think that one can discern the emergence of a new paradigm in pneumatology, although I cast it somewhat differently. I must say first that I do not fully agree with Kilian McDonnell’s assessment, cited above, that the trinitarian and

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<sup>51</sup> Preece and Pickard, “Introduction,” viii.

<sup>52</sup> Karl Barth, “Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher,” trans. George Hunsinger, *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen, Winter Semester of 1923/24*, ed. Dietrich Ritschl, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 261-79: 278.

<sup>53</sup> *The Spirit of Life*, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Preece and Pickard, “Introduction,” vii-ix. Of particular importance on this score is D. Lyle Dabney’s essay “Starting with the Spirit: Why the Last Should Now be First,” *Starting with the Spirit*, 3-27.

pneumatological revivals “have not so far converged in any significant way.” It appears to me that contemporary theology has been attempting to redress the tradition’s failure to give a sufficiently thorough account of who the Holy Spirit is, a failure that takes the form of not explaining *why the existence and activity of the Spirit as a particular person is unique and necessary both to the inner life of God and to the work of God in the world*. Hence, perhaps the most salient commonly shared attribute of pneumatologists and many theologians of the Trinity today is a concern to find something that the Spirit can be said *to do* in whatever act of God arises for discussion—whether it is the act of the trinitarian life eternally unfolding or any operation of God *ad extra*. This marks a significant convergence. Moreover, I see this concern as one of the forces most powerfully shaping the new pneumatological paradigm. To reframe a statement I made in the opening paragraph of this chapter, the present study is an exercise in constructive pneumatology undertaken in dialogue chiefly with that paradigm and the corresponding currents of trinitarian theology.

In recent work on the Trinity, three major developments may be isolated for attention. The first pertains to the distinction traditionally made between the “immanent Trinity” and the “economic Trinity.” The former designation is a way of referring to how God eternally relates to Godself in three persons and is concerned with the trinitarian *taxis*—the ordered set of relationships and roles among the persons in which each one is distinguished from the other two by particular characteristics. The “economic Trinity” refers to how God relates to the world and is concerned with how we understand the various persons to be involved in that relationship, i.e., what each person does in particular and what they all do in common. There has been widespread discussion about

the validity of this distinction. Some, e.g., Piet Schoonenberg and Roger Haight, have suggested that it should be jettisoned because human beings can only know how God relates to us in time, not how God relates to Godself eternally. Catherine Mowry LaCugna rejects it because it seems to disjoin God's "inner" life from the economy of salvation.<sup>55</sup> All three of these figures appeal for support to Karl Rahner's famous axiom, "*The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity*,"<sup>56</sup> although his intention in making this statement arguably differs from theirs in appealing to it. By contrast, Paul D. Molnar is a particularly vocal example of those who have criticized this axiom in defense of the immanent-economic distinction, which he and others believe is crucial to preserving respect for divine freedom.<sup>57</sup>

A second development in trinitarian theology is the recovery and expanded use of the concept of perichoresis, which expresses that the three divine persons mutually "contain" and "interpenetrate" one another—in other words, each person intimately shares in the being of the other two. The concept was developed above all by John of Damascus in the eighth century but fell somewhat out of currency later. Jürgen Moltmann has been a prominent champion of its return.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Piet Schoonenberg, "Trinity—The Consummated Covenant: Theses on the Doctrine of the Trinitarian God," *Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion* 5 (1975-1976): 111-116; Roger Haight, "The Point of Trinitarian Theology," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 4 (1988): 191-204; Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991).

<sup>56</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad Herder, 2002 [1970]), 22, italics in original.

<sup>57</sup> Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002).

<sup>58</sup> For a programmatic statement of what perichoresis means for the doctrine of the Trinity as he perceives it, see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1981]), 174-76 (best understood in the context of the overarching argument of part V of the book, pp. 129-90); for an expanded view of the work that Moltmann sees the concept as capable of doing, see idem., "Perichoresis: An Old Magic Word for a New Trinitarian Theology," *Trinity, Community and Power: Mapping Trajectories in Wesleyan Theology*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood, 2000), 111-25.

A third development worth mentioning stems largely from the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century, during which Westerners began to study Eastern Orthodoxy more closely and to attempt to overcome some of the theological disagreements that have kept the churches divided. The most notorious point of contention has been the *Filioque* controversy: the West has long held that the Holy Spirit “proceeds” from the Father *and the Son* (*Filioque* in Latin), while the Orthodox insist that the Father alone is responsible for the Spirit’s procession. A number of Roman Catholic and Protestant thinkers have attempted to mitigate or circumvent the theological divide on this question by clarifying, modifying, or supplementing the filioquist position. Besides the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, examples of noteworthy individuals include Moltmann, Jean-Miguel Garrigues, Leonardo Boff, Thomas Weinandy, and David Coffey.<sup>59</sup> The challenge is both ecumenical and dogmatic: to preserve the traditional idea that the Father is the sole principle or origin (ἀρχή, *principium*) of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which the Orthodox perceive the West as denying through the *Filioque*, while giving an account of the eternal relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit, in which many in the West find Orthodox theology wanting. That this issue is a dogmatic concern can be seen in the fact that the discussion revolves around not simply the canonical question of the liceity of the West’s interpolation of the word *Filioque* into the Nicene Creed but also and more significantly the theological

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<sup>59</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edn., 20 September 1995: 3, 6; Jürgen Moltmann, “Theological Proposals Toward the Resolution of the *Filioque* Controversy,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy*, ed. Lukas Vischer, (London & Geneva: SPCK & World Council of Churches, 1981), 164-73; Jean-Miguel Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View of the Position Now Reached in the Question of the *Filioque*,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 149-63; Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988); Thomas Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010 [1995]); David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford University, 1999).

question of the extent to which the East and the West hold the same trinitarian faith. A distinct and yet related question is that of the intrinsic adequacy of various construals of the doctrine of the Trinity proffered by theologians or endorsed by churches. The distinctness of the latter is reflected in the fact that the Holy Spirit's procession vis-à-vis the Son's generation from the Father has received a tremendous amount of attention even where the ecumenical implications of the topic clearly do not provide the impetus for a given treatment of it.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, it is significant that filioquist theology was widely taken for granted in the West prior to the beginning of the ecumenical movement,<sup>61</sup> but now it is not; it is retained by many, to be sure, but not taken for granted. Indeed, in general it can be said—and this is the heart of the third development—that since the *Filioque* question first came to the fore in twentieth-century

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<sup>60</sup> Karl Barth, who may be considered the father of the trinitarian renaissance, famously defends the *Filioque* as being necessary to upholding the truthfulness of God's self-revelation, the unity of God *in se*, and the possibility of salvation (*Church Dogmatics* I/1, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. Bromiley, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010], 473-87). Fellow Reformed theologian George S. Hendry critiques Barth's argument and finds the *Filioque* "an inadequate solution to a genuine problem" (Alasdair Heron, "The *Filioque* in Recent Reformed Theology," *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 110-17: 113; see Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* [London: SCM, 1965], 45-52). Neither Barth nor Hendry approaches the matter with a view to its ecumenical import. What these two examples illustrate is that the *Filioque* was on the table for discussion as a trinitarian question of importance in its own right before some of the landmark consultations between Western churches and the Orthodox—such as the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches—took place and issued significant statements on the question in the 1970s. It would be difficult to sort out the precise extent to which ecumenical concerns have shaped the importance that has been placed on the *Filioque* during the trinitarian revival, but in any case, the influence has surely worked in both directions. For Barth's understanding of the *Filioque*, including consideration of ecumenical issues surrounding it, see David Guretzki, *Karl Barth on the Filioque* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>61</sup> It is natural that filioquism should have been taken for granted in Catholic theology, since the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the Councils of Lyons (1274) and Florence (1439) conferred normative status on the doctrine. A number of early Reformers defended it because "[t]hey feared that without it the doctrine of the Trinity would lose its epistemological justification in the history of revelation" (Bernd Oberdorfer, "'... Who Proceeds from the Father'—and the Son? The Use of the Bible in the *Filioque* Debate: A Historical and Ecumenical Case Study and Hermeneutical Reflections," *The Multivalence of Biblical Texts and Theological Meanings*, ed. Christine Helmer [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006], 145-60; see also idem, *Filioque: Geschichte und Theologie eines ökumenischen Problems* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001], 282-95, and Bruce D. Marshall, "The Defense of the *Filioque* in Classical Lutheran Theology: An Ecumenical Appreciation," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 44.2 [2002], 154-73). After the seventeenth century, however, the *Filioque* appears to have been simply accepted within Protestant circles as an orthodox teaching that did not require demonstration (or perhaps did not warrant special consideration).

ecumenical dialogues, the relationship of the Spirit to the Son has become a much more frequently and thoroughly discussed question in trinitarian theology.

This last point is reflected in the resurgence of pneumatology, as well. One of the most interesting and helpful parts of Gary Badcock's major work on pneumatology<sup>62</sup> is his appropriation of the Spirit-christology of Heribert Mühlen and Walter Kasper to form a conception of "the Christlike Spirit." Significantly, this conception takes into account the eternal (immanent) trinitarian reality that informs the temporal (economic) relationship between Christ and the Spirit. D. Lyle Dabney contends that pneumatology ought to be the starting point for theology in the postmodern era but adds that what is meant by talk of the Spirit must be defined with reference to the story of Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup> Dabney focuses, though, on the work of God in the economy; an unanswered question is how his project might be related to a theology that deals with the immanent trinitarian relation of the Son to the Spirit.

Another element of Dabney's work, which is shared by pneumatologists such as Moltmann, Denis Edwards, and Colin Gunton,<sup>64</sup> is an effort to highlight the Spirit's role in shaping and sustaining the created world, as well as showing the continuity that exists between the Spirit's operations in creation and redemption. The presence of this trend in recent pneumatology may be seen as a contemporary instantiation of what has been

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<sup>62</sup> *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

<sup>63</sup> Dabney, "Starting with the Spirit," 24-25; idem, "Naming the Spirit: Towards a Pneumatology of the Cross," *Starting with the Spirit*, 28-58.

<sup>64</sup> Among other publications that could be cited, see D. Lyle Dabney, *Die Kenosis des Geistes: Kontinuität zwischen Schöpfung und Erlösung im Werk des Heiligen Geistes* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997), and "The Nature of the Spirit: Creation as a Premonition of God," *Starting with the Spirit*, 83-110; Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), and *The Spirit of Life*; Denis Edwards, "Ecology and the Holy Spirit: the 'Already' and the 'Not-Yet' of the Spirit of Creation," *Starting with the Spirit*, 238-60, and *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004); Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), and "The Spirit Moved Over the Face of the Waters: The Holy Spirit and the Created Order," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 4.2 (2002): 190-204.

shown above to be a traditional pattern for conceiving of the Holy Spirit's identity: the Spirit is the giver of life to the created order and the giver of "new life" to those who are sanctified.

Having said this, however, I come to two lacunae that warrant attention. First, in truth, it has become fairly common for theologians of various stripes (not only those especially concerned with pneumatology) to emphasize the connection between God's creative and redemptive work. However, one rarely sees a thorough explication of *grace* as the thread that creates that connection, even though, as I will argue, grace is the theological category that would most naturally provide a framework for our understanding of it. A second, related lacuna is this: in spite of the fact that since the NT, theological reflection on Christian experience has always recognized the Holy Spirit as applying the grace of Christ to believers, written works on pneumatology frequently lack much explicit treatment of grace, while works on charitology frequently lack much explicit treatment of the Spirit. I have already noted this dearth in the history of charitology, but I mention it again here in order to draw attention to the fact that the problem has yet to be overcome, as well as to the fact that it corresponds to a dearth in pneumatology: the intimate tie between the Spirit and grace needs more consideration from the perspective of both areas of theology.

I previously alluded to the fact that Western charitology has largely been controlled by the Augustinian problematic of nature and grace, which hinges on the question of human capacity or incapacity: grace is understood chiefly in terms of what it does for human beings, and the theological debate about it revolves around the question of precisely why, when, and how we need it to do what it does. This question is, of

course, crucial to answer. Yet it is legitimate to explore grace along other lines than those drawn by the Augustinian problematic. Indeed, I regard the West's traditional approach as largely anthropocentric,<sup>65</sup> and I believe that we would do well to supplement it with a more theocentric one. The latter approach would begin not from the question of what we human beings are like so that we need grace but from the question of who God is and what God desires so that God gives grace. To develop a comprehensive charitology lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, I will offer an account of grace that is linked to an understanding of the Holy Spirit's identity as an eternal person, and in this respect it may be seen as part of a quest for a theocentric charitology. Starting with the Spirit creates the opportunity to pursue an understanding of grace that is primarily concerned not with the relationship between grace and human nature but with the relationship between God's work in creation and that in redemption.

The foregoing details have established the context for the question addressed by this dissertation. Let me now outline more clearly the focus and aim of my project and the manner in which I will proceed. A few words about the title may serve as a point of entry to this discussion. It will be obvious at this point that I am concerned with the double identification of the Holy Spirit as both the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of grace. However, by the construction "Creator Spirit, Spirit of grace" I also intend "Spirit of grace" to function as an appositive that identifies the Spirit who is called Creator as being

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<sup>65</sup> Again, questions about what grace does in and for human beings must be answered, so for a theology of grace to be largely anthropocentric does not mean that it is necessarily flawed. It only means that it is likely to be limited. One of the limitations of charitologies in the Augustinian tradition is that they tend not to be inherently trinitarian. What they have to say about grace is confined, or with merely superficial changes could be reduced, to a description of how God (as divine, without reference to God's tri-personality) encounters and blesses human beings; they do not convey a sense of the necessity to understand grace as *the Father* encountering and blessing us through *the Son* in *the Spirit*. To echo a point made by Karl Rahner, if the doctrine of the Trinity were suddenly eliminated from Christian theology, many treatises on grace would scarcely be affected (see Rahner, *The Trinity*, 10-11).

*precisely* the Spirit who is known as the giver of grace. It is like when one says, “the sixteenth president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln.” “Abraham Lincoln” is an appositive that identifies just who the sixteenth president is. In the same way, I mean for “Spirit of grace” to indicate just who the Creator Spirit is. However, my purpose here is not merely to assert that the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of grace are same entity (as if there were any remaining Marcionites who would contest that point). Rather, the apposition of these names is an initial signal of the position I take on the relationship between the things that each name tells us about this entity. My position is that what it means for the Holy Spirit to be the creator can only be rightly understood in light of what it means for the Holy Spirit to be the giver of grace. When we name the Spirit as both Creator Spirit and Spirit of grace, the latter name should inform our interpretation of what the former name indicates about the one we are naming.

As previously mentioned, Basil’s hypothesis of the Spirit as the perfecting cause of creation is likely an inference drawn from his understanding that the Spirit performs a parallel role in the order of salvation. This would indicate that, at least in this important respect, his ktisiology is controlled by his soteriology. I contend that that is the appropriate relationship between these two areas of doctrine and that a pneumatology that is concerned with both should proceed with this in mind. The Christian experience of God, through Christ and in the Spirit, is of a saving reality. Everything that the Christian knows about God is understood from within that experience. Revelation unfolds within the knowledge of God as savior—it cannot be received as revelation, recognized to be *God’s* truth, in any other way—and we only know God to be the God that God truly is

when we recognize God as the one who seeks to save us. Hence, what we say about God as creator must be controlled by what we know about God as savior.

In point of fact, the pattern is already established for us by the creation story in Gen. 1.1-2.3. The narrative points forward to the giving of the law by God upon delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt and to Israel's liturgical life in service to the God who had claimed them. The first four days of creation are characterized by the separation of elements (light from darkness, the waters above the firmament from the waters below, sea from dry land, night from day), just as clean will be separated from unclean in the ritual law, and the fifth and sixth days are characterized by the creation of vegetable and animal life "according to their kinds," which also reflects the law's concern with the distinctions whereby all things are assigned their proper place and time.<sup>66</sup> Even more prominent is the detail that God rested on the seventh day and blessed it, instituting in the cosmic order what will be instituted in Israel's law at Sinai (Ex. 20.8-11), the holiness of the Sabbath. Joseph Blenkinsopp finds in the Priestly source a "parallelism between world-building and sanctuary-building:" "the spirit of God is an active agent in creation and the construction of the sanctuary (Ex 31:3), both conclude with Sabbath [see the repeated command to observe it at the end of the instructions for building the tabernacle in Ex. 31.12-17], and the sanctuary is erected on the first day of the first month, corresponding to the New Year's Day of creation."<sup>67</sup> It is surely the case that the story of the creation is written with the story of the election of Israel in mind. The reader is meant to understand that the God who made all things is none other than the one who chose Israel out of all nations to be God's own people (Ex. 19.5, Lev. 20.26, Deut. 7.6).

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<sup>66</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 62.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

In a similar way, NT texts that look back on the creation accounts in Genesis do so through the prism of what has taken place in Jesus Christ. The opening words of Matthew's gospel, βίβλος γενέσεως ("the record of the genealogy"), introduce the genealogy of Jesus with the same phrase that appears in the LXX version of the second Genesis creation story, which begins as "the account of the origin" of heaven and earth (2.4). The echo evokes the idea that in Jesus Christ God has done something dramatically, unmistakably new. The prologue of John commences by repeating the ἐν ἀρχῇ ("in the beginning") of Gen. 1.1, placing the Word who "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1.14) in the same position that Gen. 1.1 places God, at the beginning of all things. This verbal parallel would be suggestive enough, even if the author did not proceed to state explicitly that the Word "was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1.1) and that "all things were made through him, and nothing that has been made was made without him" (1.3). In 1 Cor. 15.45, Paul contrasts the creation of Adam, who "became a living being," with the resurrection—which could also be described as a new creation—promised to us through "the last Adam," who by his own resurrection "became a life-giving spirit." In each of these cases, the text alludes to creation in a way that beckons the reader to understand it anew in light of the coming of Christ.

Thus, Scripture points the way to interpreting God's creative activity from the perspective of what we know of God as savior, as I wish to do in regard to the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is important maintain a distinction between the orders of creation and redemption. Without that distinction, we would lose sight of the novelty of the calling of Israel to be God's people and, what is of even greater urgency for Christianity, the novelty of the Son's mission in the incarnation and of the Spirit's

mission from Pentecost forward. For this reason, while the content of soteriology—i.e., the reality of salvation—is what provides the *controlling standpoint* from which we should view creation, I advocate treating ktisiology *under the heading of* charitology rather than soteriology. Let us here underline the distinction between them. Charitology normally operates in the service of soteriology, but they are not identical disciplines. It might be said that soteriology addresses how we are saved, charitology how we are blessed. Obviously, to be saved is to be very blessed, indeed; however, there are other ways that God blesses creatures besides saving them.

The Spirit bestows a great many blessings that rank lower than the faith, hope, and love that mark our salvation in this life—the *charismata* being among them—as well as one blessing that surpasses it, namely, our final glorification in the next life. Yet we may take a step back and, remaining with the theme of creation, number as the first of the Spirit’s blessings the gift of life itself. Creation is an utterly gratuitous act of God, whose own life is infinite plenitude of joy in Godself and who did not create out of any need for something other than Godself. That is the divine side of the matter. The creaturely side is that being is a *good* enjoyed by the creature. In spite of the transience and struggle that, certainly on this planet, marks the existence of every living thing, and even in spite of the particularly acute forms of evil that human beings are capable of committing and experiencing, the Christian imagination holds that being—the individual being of every creature—is fundamentally good in itself. Moreover, God is always present to creation, sustaining it in existence and desiring its good. Nothing that is is unblessed by God; nothing is ungifted; nothing is without a measure of divine grace. And everything that has its gift has it from the Spirit, since as Gregory of Nyssa says, “every operation which

extends from God to the Creation, and is named according to our variable conceptions of it, has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, and is perfected in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>68</sup> In this way, the Holy Spirit is not only the Creator Spirit *and* the Spirit of grace; the Holy Spirit is the Creator Spirit *as* the Spirit of grace.

The title of this study identifies it as a “charitological pneumatology,” which is to say that it is a study of the Holy Spirit that is particularly attuned to the theology of grace. To be clear at the outset, my concern with grace depends on a somewhat broad definition of the word but will take up a limited scope of inquiry. Drawing upon the description of grace given above, we may use the following as a general definition: grace is the active power of God whereby God’s favor toward creatures effects their blessedness. The pneumatology to be developed here is charitological in the sense that it explores the question of the Spirit’s identity with reference to the question of the Spirit’s activity in grace. The specific (and limited) ways in which I wish to examine the operation of grace will become apparent in subsequent chapters. What remains to be clarified at the moment is how this project will be shaped by another aspect of the question of the Spirit’s identity, namely, the aspect of the Spirit’s relations to the other two persons of the Godhead.

Kilian McDonnell is fond of quoting Yves Congar’s remark that “the health of pneumatology is in Christology” and then transposing it into “the health of pneumatology is Trinity.” Both are correct, provided (as McDonnell himself points out) that the christology is also sufficiently trinitarian.<sup>69</sup> According to McDonnell, the crucial thing is

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<sup>68</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On “Not Three Gods”* par. 9, p. 334.

<sup>69</sup>Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1996), 236; idem, *The Other Hand of God*, 193; idem, “A Response to D. Lyle Dabney,” *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of*

to work out both christology and pneumatology within “a trinitarian . . . dynamic, in which there is a movement from God and to God: the Father sends the Son in the Spirit to save and transform the world and the church, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ, back to God.”<sup>70</sup> I wholeheartedly agree with McDonnell’s transposition of Congar’s dictum. It is because of that conviction that this dissertation is framed as the “trinitarian dimensions” of a charitological pneumatology. Furthermore, I am concerned with how what McDonnell calls the trinitarian “movement from God and to God” is grounded in the intratrinitarian “movement” in which God is eternally from and to Godself according to the dynamic of the three persons. Hence, the major question that drives my study is, What do we need to say about the Trinity in order to speak intelligibly and responsibly about the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of grace? To put it another way, If we call the Holy Spirit the Spirit of grace, what must we say about the Father and the Son?

As stated above, my thesis is that the Holy Spirit brings human persons to the particular form of perfection intended for them in creation, drawing them into relationship with one another and with God, because within the immanent Trinity the Spirit mediates the exchange of love between the Father and the Son wherein their particularity as persons finds perfection. The originality of the thesis is to be found in three aspects of the argument that I will make concerning it. First and most importantly, my account of the Spirit’s mediation of the communion between the Father and the Son is situated within an understanding of the immanent Trinity that incorporates what I believe are the best elements of the constructive proposals of two contemporary thinkers, Thomas

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*Pneumatology*, ed. Bradford Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2001), 262-64: 263. The article of Dabney’s to which McDonnell is responding is “Why Should the Last Be First? The Priority of Pneumatology in Recent Theological Discussion,” *Advents of the Spirit*, 240-61.

<sup>70</sup> McDonnell, “A Response,” 263.

Weinandy and David Coffey. This understanding establishes and then builds upon a synthesis of those best elements in light of recent ecumenical discussions of the Trinity (particularly as touching the *Filioque* controversy), ending in a constructive proposal of my own. The resulting picture of the immanent Trinity will control both the range of questions that I will address concerning the Holy Spirit's creative and redemptive work and the shape of the answers that I give to them. Second, as will be seen in what follows, the thesis owes a debt to an argument made by Colin Gunton, but it expands that argument in dialogue with one made by Wolfhart Pannenberg and others. This dialogue, informed by the preceding account of the immanent Trinity, concerns the way in which created particularity reflects the particularity of the trinitarian persons, which is a particularity structured according to and perfected in relationship. Third, my approach to the idea of the formation of creaturely particularity and its consummation in the work of the Holy Spirit is deeply informed by the thought of the nineteenth-century British poet and Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, especially his christological vision of creation and redemption and his charitology, which sees redemption as continuous with creation because the latter is ordered to the former.

My argument as a whole is definitively shaped by three theological judgments that will serve as methodological presuppositions according to which I conduct it. These directives, let us call them, are as follows:

- (1) there is a *convenientia*, a "fittingness," between pneumatology and charitology that derives from features of the Holy Spirit's eternal identity as a trinitarian person—which is to say that it is not merely on the basis of an

appropriation from the Spirit's operation in the divine economy that the Spirit can rightly be identified as the Spirit of grace;

(2) insofar as God's creative action is wholly gratuitous and creation is always graced by God, the theology of creation ought to be treated within a charitological framework, with the corollary that the Holy Spirit's operation in creation is understood as belonging to the Spirit's role as "Lifegiver," i.e., the giver of grace;

(3) the identity of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of grace must, in turn, be articulated with reference to the fullness of the trinitarian mystery, i.e., in light of the Spirit's relationship to the Father and to the Son.

The significance of each of the directives will be apparent already from what I have said thus far and will become clearer in the course of my study. At present I will point out that the judgments couched in them represent incipient answers to the questions that I mentioned at the close of the previous section as being left open by the pneumatological tradition—(a) the question of the relationship between the Holy Spirit's creative and redemptive actions and (b) the question of the relationship between the historical fact that the Spirit gives grace and the character of the Spirit's eternal personhood within the Trinity.

Most of the building blocks of my argument will emerge from an engagement with topics that have been in play in recent discussions on the Trinity. Above I isolated three developments in trinitarian theology for attention. These topics are of particular importance for my thesis, and in addition to analyzing others' treatments of them, I will offer some thoughts of my own about each that I hope may contribute something useful

(if small) to the conversation. I will provide a glimpse here of how I plan to approach them, following the order in which I named them earlier.

The relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity: The first of my directives presupposes that the way that we are led to perceive God's trinitarian being through the self-revelation and self-communication that God makes to us in the economy of salvation corresponds truly to the manner in which God eternally exists as Trinity (even if it is not a one-to-one correspondence, such that the economic Trinity *completely* reveals the immanent Trinity). It seems to me that the worthwhileness of my argument as a whole depends on the acceptance of this presupposition and that the question of the relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity remains a live one in theology. Chapter Two will be dedicated to this issue. I will examine the perspectives of a number of twentieth- and twenty-first-century theologians and, in addition to critiquing the shortcomings in some of them, I will attempt to knit together the best insights captured from these various perspectives, forming a synthesis that will justify the project in Chapters Three and Four of giving an account of the immanent Trinity. That account will, in turn, determine both the range of questions about the economic Trinity that I will address in Chapter Six and the shape of the answers that I give to them.

Perichoresis: In roughly the past three decades, the concept of perichoresis has seen an enormous surge in popularity in writings on the Trinity, but there is disagreement about its proper use. To name two controversial moves: some of the so-called "social trinitarians" employ it as the sole explanation for the unity between the divine persons, and it is not uncommon to speak of perichoresis as a dance between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in which humans can be made to participate. I side with those who

find both of these problematic. However, I also believe that the concept can be put to a broader range of uses than it traditionally has been, and with very helpful results. First, I will employ it in a significant capacity in my proposal for understanding the relationship between the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit by the Father in Chapter Four. Second, in spite of the dangers of conceiving of humanity taking part in the mutual containment and interpenetration of the divine persons, I am sympathetic to Colin Gunton's treatment of perichoresis as a transcendental that applies to created being,<sup>71</sup> and I contend that between human beings, in particular, a form of it obtains that is analogous to that between the trinitarian persons. This idea will figure prominently in my treatment of the Holy Spirit's proper role (i.e., as a particular divine person) in both creation and redemption in Chapter Six.

The question of the Holy Spirit's procession vis-à-vis the Son's generation from the Father: To maintain, with McDonnell, that "the health of pneumatology is in Trinity" is to express in shorthand the heart of the third premise guiding my thesis—viz., that any thorough examination of the identity of the Holy Spirit needs to include a strong account of the Spirit's relations to the other two persons. I have already pointed to two loci of inquiry where I will make a constructive offering by way of attempting to mediate between the seemingly opposed positions of contemporary theologians. Here I will pencil in a few further details about these two loci.

(1) David Coffey and Thomas Weinandy have each made very intriguing suggestions for conceiving of the Trinity in ways that they believe mitigate the problems that Western filioquism is alleged to cause while also doing greater justice to the full range of biblical testimony to the trinitarian relations than theology has traditionally

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<sup>71</sup> The idea is developed in detail in *The One, the Three and the Many*.

done. Coffey proposes that we ought to honor two different but complementary ways of understanding the relations, a “procession” model and a “return/bestowal” model. His project retains the *Filioque* but does not give it the last word in the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup> Weinandy submits that the problem of the *Filioque* is the perception that it subordinates the Spirit to the Father and the Son, but that this can be overcome if we understand the Son as being begotten *in* the Spirit. He seeks a “perichoresis of action” in the trinitarian *taxis* that rules out all possibility of subordinationism.<sup>73</sup> Here is the rub: I find both proposals attractive, but of course, putting both to the same problems would lead to incoherence if they are incompatible. And indeed, they contain different visions of the order of the trinitarian persons, for Coffey subscribes unreservedly to the traditional *taxis* of Father-Son-Spirit, whereas Weinandy contend for a logical simultaneity of the Son’s and the Spirit’s processions. However, while the two proposals cannot be wedded in their entirety, it is possible to combine the best aspects of both in a unified comprehension of the immanent Trinity. I will show that this possibility is already adumbrated in the pneumatology of François-Xavier Durrwell, who professes what lies at the heart of Coffey’s two models alongside what is essentially Weinandy’s model, and in Durrwell’s writing the ideas seem to fit together with sufficient coherence.<sup>74</sup> Durrwell’s characterization of the intra-trinitarian relations calls

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<sup>72</sup> Coffey makes the argument at length in *Deus Trinitas*, as well as in his article “The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son,” *Theological Studies* 51 (1990), 193-229; it also figures prominently in his *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1979).

<sup>73</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*; for the phrase “perichoresis of action,” see 78ff.

<sup>74</sup> François-Xavier Durrwell, *Holy Spirit of God: An Essay in Biblical Theology*, gen. ed. Scott Hahn, trans. Sister Benedict Davies (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger, 2006 [1986]).

for critique, but the fact that he holds together the strongest parts of these two opposed arguments inspires my own effort to do so in a more thoroughgoing way.<sup>75</sup>

(2) Wolfhart Pannenberg posits that the distinction of creatures from God presupposes, corresponds to, and is grounded in the self-distinction of the Son from the Father, while the binding of creatures in dynamic relation (or, in fellowship) with God presupposes, corresponds to, and is grounded in the binding-in-fellowship of the Father and the Son by the Spirit.<sup>76</sup> It would seem, then, that for Pannenberg, the achievement of creaturely particularity should be appropriated to the Son, and we should appropriate to the Spirit the achievement of relationship or fellowship, notwithstanding the differences introduced by particularity. This is an interesting and, to me, an appealing supposition. However, so is Colin Gunton's contention that "the Spirit's distinctive mode of action in both time and eternity, economy and essence, consists in the constituting and realization of particularity" insofar as the Spirit acts to particularize both the divine persons in the Godhead and the multitude of created beings in the world.<sup>77</sup> Are these two suppositions at odds, or might they be interpreted in a way that reconciles them? I believe that each contains valid insights, and I will attempt to show how harmony between them can be found.

The majority of my argument will thus consist of an engagement with developments in recent trinitarian theology and pneumatology that attempts to provide a clear conception of the Spirit's personal identity in terms of the two motifs noted at the beginning of this section, viz., the Spirit's eternal relation to the Father and the Son and

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<sup>75</sup> Durrwell's work in fact precedes Weinandy's and hence the disagreement between Weinandy and Coffey. My point is that he shows some of the key ideas themselves to be compatible.

<sup>76</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991-1998), 2: 20-35.

<sup>77</sup> Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 190.

the Spirit's role in creation as well as redemption. Again, the questions that I address and the answers that I give concerning the latter motif will be tightly controlled (and thus limited) by the scope of my focus on, and the conclusions that I draw concerning, the former motif. As noted above, my treatment of the creative and redemptive work of the Spirit will also be significantly informed by the thought of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Chapter Five will consist of a sustained analysis of an array of his writings that, when seen together, depict Christ as grounding a continuum between creation and redemption in a world marked everywhere by his intimate presence, and I will discuss how the poet's concepts of "inscape" and "instress" figure into this picture. Without accepting all of the theological ideas that Hopkins advances, I maintain that it is important to conceive of creation and redemption as continuous aspects of divine operation in the world and that he offers a helpful example of such a conception. Hopkins lacks a developed pneumatology, but in Chapter Six I will bring a pneumatological perspective to bear on his christological vision of creation and redemption. Especially significant here are the possibilities for understanding creation being realized in terms of inscape, for understanding the operation of grace in terms of instress, and for seeing the Spirit as having a role in each.

### **Conclusion**

The plan of the remaining chapters in this dissertation is as follows. Chapter Two will focus on the topic of how we may speak of the inner life of God, the immanent Trinity, on the basis of God's self-revelation in the economy of salvation. Chapter Three will frame the questions that this study attempts to answer about the immanent Trinity. It will define those questions from the perspective of a particular context in which they

have been discussed in recent decades, namely, ecumenically-concerned conversations about the theology at issue in the continuing dispute between (and within) Eastern and Western churches regarding filioquism. This will pave the way for Chapter Four, in which I will give extensive attention to the promising constructive trinitarian work of Thomas Weinandy and David Coffey. I will offer an understanding of the interpersonal relations in the immanent Trinity that builds on some of their insights and that attempts to do justice to the major concerns of the trinitarian tradition in the East and the West. In Chapter Five I will turn to Gerard Manley Hopkins in order to glean from his theology a compelling vision of creation as ordered to redemption or consummation in Christ and of grace as the concept that links God's creative and redemptive action in the world. In Chapter Six I will show (1) how we may understand the Spirit's gracious creative and redemptive operation as being grounded in the role she plays in the immanent Trinity—i.e., mediating the exchange of love between the Father and the Son in a way that is essential to their being as persons—and (2) how we may understand her creative and redemptive operation as being distinct from but related to that of the Son in light of their eternal relationship. The Conclusion will summarize the overall argument of the dissertation, as well as noting some avenues for further study that it opens.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE IMMANENT AND THE ECONOMIC TRINITY

### **The Question of Knowing and Speaking about the Trinity**

The argument that I am advancing assumes that it is possible and permissible to say quite a bit about the inner structure of the divine life—about the immanent Trinity, God *in se*. It presupposes that the internal acts wherein the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit relate to one another are a proper and (at least potentially) fruitful subject of theological inquiry. Identifying this presupposition brings us onto turf that has been heavily trodden during the trinitarian renaissance. Is the immanent Trinity indeed something about which we can legitimately claim to have any real knowledge? And if it is, what difference does our understanding of it make for the rest of our theology? Is the project of developing a theology of the immanent Trinity a purely speculative enterprise that, in the final analysis, has no significant bearing on the truths of faith that take their meaning from God's actions in history? In that case, it is perhaps at best innocuously irrelevant to the good news that God has elected to be God *for us* in Christ and the Holy Spirit. At worst it may undermine the message by suggesting that there is, so to speak, an immanent Trinity above or behind the economic Trinity, the former of which has greater ultimacy than the latter, such that the self-givenness of God to humanity in the economy loses the radical character that we wish to attribute to it. On the other hand, if God is not internally, eternally trinitarian in something like the way in which God encounters us and reveals Godself to us as trinitarian, then to what extent can we regard God's economic trinitarian being as genuinely revelatory? Questions and concerns such as these have engendered much discussion in the past few decades.

In fact, the relationship between the economic and the immanent Trinity has been treated as one of the most crucial questions in the recovery of trinitarian theology. This is due in part to the importance accorded it by the two figures whose work did the most to put that question on the radar for the many theologians who have tracked it, Karl Barth and Karl Rahner. Although they were motivated by different concerns, followed different paths of argument, and reached conclusions that differ in significant respects, both sought to ground the church doctrine of God's eternal triunity firmly in God's self-revelation (Barth) or self-communication (Rahner) in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

### **Setting the Agenda: Karl Barth and Karl Rahner**

The resounding theme of the first volume of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* is God's definitive self-revelation in Christ. Barth insists throughout that we can know God only as God reveals Godself, and God reveals Godself solely yet certainly through God's Word. That Word comes to us in a threefold form or in three moments: (1) revelation proper, which is the Christ-event, God's Word made flesh and dwelling among us; (2) the words of Holy Scripture, wherein the coming of Christ is witnessed by the prophets as a promise and by the apostles as a promise fulfilled; and (3) church proclamation of the revelation in Christ as attested by the Bible. The first is "originally and directly" the Word of God while the latter two are "derivatively and indirectly" so.<sup>1</sup> This is true both because the Bible and church proclamation depend upon and serve the event of revelation, pointing beyond themselves to it, and because they are in themselves made up of human words that can only function to reveal God to sin-blinded human beings when and where

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. Bromiley, 2nd edn. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 117. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the body of the text. References to this and other volumes of *Church Dogmatics* will be abbreviated *CD* with the appropriate volume number.

God graciously chooses to make them do so. The event of revelation, on the other hand, is God's own once-and-for-all act that can never be relativized or taken back. Barth calls it "the condition which conditions all things without itself being conditioned" (I/1, 118). Yet the Word of God proper, revelation, only ever comes to us in the twofold mediacy of the Word written and proclaimed, just as we only receive the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, and because God does freely and graciously cause Scripture and church proclamation to bear faithful and effective witness to revelation, they are one with and equal to it, just as the Son and the Spirit are one with and equal to the Father.<sup>2</sup>

This analogy foreshadows Barth's attempt to place the doctrine of the Trinity at the head of dogmatics. Traditionally, one begins with an account of Holy Scripture as the source of knowledge about God "(apart from the actual content of faith)" and then, with regard to the doctrine of God, deals "first with God's existence, nature and attributes (again apart from the concrete givenness of what Christians call 'God')" (300). However, Barth wishes to break with this tradition because if we do not first make clear *who* God is—"the question . . . which it is the business of the doctrine of the Trinity to answer" (301)—then it will be difficult to see what it is that makes Scripture holy (viz., the fact that God's Word is God's self-revelation). Furthermore, our considerations of questions about God's existence, nature, and attributes may be led astray if from the start we are not answering them in light of that which "basically distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian," viz., the doctrine of the Trinity. Indeed, it is the latter doctrine that distinguishes the Christian concept of revelation as Christian, as well (301). The major argument of this section of *Church Dogmatics* I/1 is that "God's Word is God Himself in His revelation. For God reveals Himself as the Lord and according to Scripture this

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<sup>2</sup> The analogy is first suggested on p. 121 of *CD* I/1, though it is not yet spelled out there.

signifies for the concept of revelation that God Himself in unimpaired unity yet also in unimpaired distinction is Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness” (295). According to Barth, Scripture presents God as the one who reveals Godself to be God (hence, God is the Revealer). God does so through God’s own speech, in God’s own person rather than in some less-than-divine-form, and thus in this event it must be recognized that what God reveals is God’s very self (hence, God is Revelation). Finally, it is also God who brings about the effect that this revelation has on the men and women who receive it, and God is as personally present in that effect (God’s Revealedness) as in the act of revealing Godself. These three aspects of revelation—God’s identity as the one who reveals, God’s act of revealing, and God’s production of the effect of this act on humanity—are distinct but united within the event of revelation, and this trinitarian structure of revelation points us toward the doctrine of the Trinity, which interprets the content of what God reveals about Godself.<sup>3</sup> God as Revealer corresponds to God the Father, God as Revelation corresponds to God the Son, and God as Revealedness corresponds to God the Holy Spirit.

Again, for Barth, we can only know God if God reveals Godself, but if God does reveal Godself, then we *must* know God *as* God reveals Godself. The form and content of God’s self-revelation demand a trinitarian interpretation; indeed, the demand is so strong that the statements of the doctrine of the Trinity “may be regarded as indirectly, though not directly, identical with those of the biblical witness to revelation,” which the doctrine

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<sup>3</sup> Barth writes, “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. The crucial question for the concept of revelation, that of the God who reveals Himself, cannot be answered apart from the answer to this question given in the doctrine of the Trinity. . . . [W]e find revelation itself attested in Holy Scripture in such a way that in relation to this witness our understanding of revelation, or of the God who reveals Himself, must be the doctrine of the Trinity” (ibid., 312).

exegetes (333). Therefore, any retreat from the doctrine can only mean a surrender of revelation itself and, with it, all claim to knowledge of God. We must understand God as the Trinity, for this is how God has shown and given Godself to us.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, because it is *God* who *through Godself* reveals *Godself* (296), it can be said with certainty that in revelation we encounter God as God truly is: “God is precisely the One He is in showing and giving Himself” (382).

With the certainty of revelation thus solidly established, it becomes legitimate and even necessary to speak of the immanent Trinity as something about which we have genuine knowledge. In fact, if we take the biblical witness to the Christ-event seriously, it cannot be avoided. Christ reveals the Father to us and reconciles us to him. In so doing, Christ reveals himself to be God, for only God can reveal Godself and reconcile us to Godself. Barth writes,

[T]he event of revelation has divine truth and reality because that which is proper to God is revealed in it, because Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the One He already was before, apart from this event, in Himself too. . . . Jesus Christ is the true and effective Revealer of God and Reconciler to God because God in His Son or Word does not posit and make known a mere something, however great or meaningful. He posits and makes known Himself exactly as He posits and knows Himself from and to all eternity. He is the Son or Word of God for us because He is so antecedently in Himself. (414-16)

Barth makes a corresponding argument about the Holy Spirit, who is imparted to humanity so that we may accept and respond in love and obedience to God’s revelation, which we cannot do on our own. Appealing to the Augustinian tradition that the Spirit is the gift of reciprocal love between the Father and the Son, he asserts,

God—and to this degree He is God the Holy Spirit—is “antecedently in Himself” the act of communion, love, gift. For this reason and in this way and on this basis He is so in His revelation. . . . The intra-divine two-sided fellowship of the Spirit, which proceeds from the Father and the Son, is the basis of the fact that there is in

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<sup>4</sup> See Barth’s denunciation of modalism, *ibid.*, 382.

revelation a fellowship in which not only is God there for man but in very truth—this is the *donum Spiritus sancti*—man is also there for God. Conversely, in this fellowship in revelation which is created between God and man by the Holy Spirit there may be discerned the fellowship in God Himself, the eternal love of God: discerned as the mystery, surpassing all understanding, of the possibility of this reality of revelation; discerned as the one God in the mode of being of the Holy Spirit. (470-71, 480)

Thus, on both christological and pneumatological grounds, we must affirm that the economic Trinity is rooted in the immanent.

On the subject of the relationship between the economic and the immanent Trinity, Barth presses two major considerations. One is that, as discussed above, “[t]he reality of God in His revelation cannot be bracketed by an ‘only,’ as though somewhere behind His revelation there stood another reality of God; the reality of God which encounters us in His revelation is His reality in all the depths of eternity. This is why we have to take it so seriously precisely in His revelation” (479). In connection with this Barth establishes the “rule” that “material dogmatic statements about the immanent Trinity can and must be taken from definitions of the modes of being of God in his revelation” (485). The picture of God painted in the doctrine of the economic Trinity, so to speak, also provides an accurate depiction of the immanent Trinity. However, he also contends that it is necessary to draw “a deliberate and sharp distinction” between the two (172) insofar as the revelation through which we know God as the economic Trinity is a free divine action that might never have taken place, in which case there would be no such thing as the economic Trinity. God might have existed from and to all eternity as “God in Godself” without ever being “God for us.” Barth makes this point relatively early in *CD I/1* as a caveat during his discussion of the Word of God. He explains that we understand God’s Word properly only when we understand that it is spoken totally

without obligation on God's part and received totally without deserving on ours. "It would be no less God's eternal Word if it were not spoken to us, and what constitutes the mercy of its revelation, of its being spoken to us, is that it is spoken to us in virtue of the freedom in which God could be 'God in Himself' and yet He does not will to be so and in fact is not so, but wills to be and actually is 'God for us'" (171-72).<sup>5</sup> Barth returns to the point later in the volume, noting, "On the distinction between the 'in Himself' and 'for me' depends the acknowledgment of the freedom and unindebtedness of God's grace, i.e., of the very thing that really makes it grace" (420). This second consideration obviously does not detract from the first about the certainty with which we can and must speak of the immanent Trinity on the basis of the revelation given in the economic Trinity. Yet it is useful to recognize that Barth refuses to collapse the former into the latter when we come to Karl Rahner, who, in the eyes of many interpreters, makes a case for identifying the two.

Rahner's theology is not as thoroughly trinitarian as Barth's, but his treatment of the immanent-economic dynamic has had a more visible influence than Barth's on the subsequent discussion of that question. In the opening section of *The Trinity*, Rahner explores the curious isolation of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian piety and in typical theological textbooks. Although believers everywhere verbally affirm that God is three persons, in the practice of their spiritual lives they are "almost mere

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<sup>5</sup> This counterfactual claim is important enough to Barth that he repeats it in *CD I/2*, writing that "in His Word becoming flesh, God acts with inward freedom and not in fulfillment of a law to which He is supposedly subject. His Word will still be His Word apart from this becoming, just as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit would be none the less eternal God, if no world had been created" (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I/2*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. Bromiley, 2nd edn. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010], 135).

‘monotheists.’”<sup>6</sup> They believe that God became human to save us but do not really grasp the fact that it is specifically the second person, the Word, who became incarnate. Thus, if the doctrine of the Trinity were officially abandoned by the church and God declared to be uni-personal, the average Christian’s christology would scarcely be affected. It is already the case that most people’s understanding of the incarnation focuses on the fact that God came to us as a man who revealed himself to be God, particularly in showing the love that characterizes his divine nature, not on the fact that this person revealed the loving *Father* through revealing himself as the loving *Son*. Yet Rahner is not taking a swipe at simple-minded churchgoers who lack the sophistication to appreciate doctrinal nuances. He finds that most textbook theology contains the same focus on the first fact and the same lack of focus on the second.

Rahner suggests that this stems from the tradition, following Augustine, that holds that any of the three persons of the Trinity might have become incarnate—it need not have been the Word (11). This supposition gives rise to serious difficulties, Rahner argues. “If we admit that *every* divine person might assume a hypostatic union with a created reality, then the fact of the incarnation of the Logos ‘reveals’ properly nothing about the Logos *himself*, that is, about his own relative specific features within the divinity” (28). We would not be able to ascribe to the Logos precisely the characteristic by which we identify him as Logos, Word, namely, that he is intrinsically that in and through which—that person in and through whom—the Father expresses and communicates himself. Indeed, the identity of the Father is equally at stake in the matter, for the Father “is the one who is in principle ‘invisible,’ who reveals himself and appears

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<sup>6</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad Herder, 2002 [1970]), 10. The original German edition was published in 1967. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the body of the text.

precisely by sending his *Word* into the world. . . . A revelation of the Father without the Logos and his incarnation would be like speaking without words” (29). Furthermore, if our adoption as sons and daughters of God might just as easily have been brought about through the incarnation of any other divine person, then our sonship and daughterhood in grace would not be a reflection of or participation in the Son’s eternal sonship (30). We arguably would still be God’s sons and daughters, but we would not be sons and daughters *in the Son*. This seriously and adversely alters the logic of the doctrine of adoption. If it is and can only be because of the Son that we are sons and daughters, then the Trinity is an indispensable soteriological mystery; however, if we do not need to look to divine sonship in order to understand our own sonship and daughterhood, then what difference would it make to us if there were no divine Son—no Trinity—at all? The claim that any of the divine persons might have become incarnate seems intended to uphold their unity and equality and to honor God’s freedom. Its consequence, though, is a loss of the revelatory link between trinitarian mission and procession (ibid.). Rahner insists, then, that “the Logos is really as he appears in revelation, that he is *the one* who reveals to us (not merely *one* of those who might have revealed to us) the triune God, on account of the personal being which belongs exclusively to him, the Father’s Logos” (ibid.).

Rahner connects the theory he wishes to refute with the principle encapsulated in the scholastic axiom *in Deo omnia sunt unum ubi non obviat relationis oppositio*—in God all things are one except where opposition of relation prevents this. Briefly, the principle reflects the understanding that the divine persons are differentiated by their relations to one another and only by these relations; apart from the hypostatic properties that the relations entail, everything predicated of God applies equally to each of the

persons because it is predicated of the common essence. For example, wisdom, power, and love belong equally to all three persons as essential attributes. Yet in its traditional usage, the principle also holds that all divine activity *ad extra* is likewise common to the persons. Some operations are appropriated to one or another of them because there is a resemblance between a given operation and that person's hypostatic properties, but no action can properly be ascribed to one person alone because the efficient causality by which God operates *ad extra* is an exercise of the power that belongs to the single shared essence (see 13, 76).

Now, certainly it must be true that each divine person participates in every divine action—the result of positing that one person could act independently of the others, inevitably, is tritheism. However, Rahner points out that the principle described above drives a wedge between theology of God *in se*, which posits real differences in divine activity among the persons, and theology of God in the world, which does not: generation, active spiration, and passive spiration mark proper differences between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but again, it is only by appropriation that actions in the world are differently ascribed to them. The problem with this, for Rahner, is that it means that “we ourselves have nothing to do with the mystery of the Holy Trinity except to know something ‘about it’ through revelation” (14). While we know because we have been told so that God is triune, it is in no way apparent that this fact makes any difference to how we are saved. Yet, Rahner insists, “[t]here *must* be a connection between Trinity and man. The Trinity is a mystery of *salvation*, otherwise it would never have been revealed” (21). The theologian is tasked with explaining why the doctrine of the Trinity is

crucial for soteriology, showing that what every dogmatic treatise (e.g., christology, charitology) says about salvation only makes sense in light of this doctrine.

It is in this context that Rahner introduces his famous trinitarian axiom, “*The ‘economic’ Trinity is the ‘immanent’ Trinity and the ‘immanent’ Trinity is the ‘economic’ Trinity*” (22). The axiom “presents the Trinity as a mystery of salvation” (21) when it is understood as conveying the idea that the grace we receive is God’s *self*-communication to us in Christ and the Spirit: “It is God’s ‘indwelling,’ ‘uncreated grace,’ understood not only as a communication of the divine nature, but also and primarily . . . as a communication of persons” (35)—“each one of the three divine persons communicates himself to man in gratuitous grace in his own personal particularity and diversity” (34-35). Now, it bears noting that David Coffey believes this last claim to be inconsistent with Rahner’s overall argument, as well as dangerous. He writes, “If we put all three persons on the same plane and simply say that they communicate themselves in grace . . . , we are reducing, albeit unintentionally, the trinity of God to an undifferentiated unity, for Rahner himself pointed out, rightly, that whatever pertains univocally to the three divine persons pertains thereby to God in his unity rather than his trinity.”<sup>7</sup> One could

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<sup>7</sup> David Coffey, “*Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?*” *Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2005), 101. Coffey argues that the Holy Spirit communicates herself to us in a way that the other persons do not—namely, in the manner of quasi-formal causality—although in possessing and being possessed by us, the Spirit mediates a relation between us and the other two (ibid., 101-02). Quasi-formal causality is a concept introduced by Rahner to explain God’s action in uncreated grace. Here God does not simply produce something different from Godself as God does in a work of efficient causality such as creation. Rather, God gives Godself to the creature as an active, abiding presence that determines the creature’s existence. In uncreated grace, “God is really an intrinsic, constitutive principle of man as existing in the situation of salvation and fulfillment” (Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych [New York: Crossroad, 2005 (1978)], 121). Thus, God is present in the graced person in a way that is analogous to the way in which a form is said to be present in matter as the formal cause of that matter being whatever particular thing it is. The “quasi” in Rahner’s term is necessary to specify that God remains distinct from and transcendent to the person (on the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of forms, as opposed to the Platonic, forms have no existence separate from the matter that they inform; Rahner seems concerned to emphasize that God is not absorbed by the creature to whom God communicates Godself). See Rahner,

interpret Rahner as cementing himself in this dangerous stance when he goes on to explain that “these three self-communications are the self-communication of the one God in the three relative ways in which God subsists” (35). Yet while Coffey’s intuition on this point is surely correct, it must be seen that Rahner is trying to assert precisely that in the event of grace the divine persons do not reach us as an *undifferentiated* unity, but as a unity wherein each is present “in his own personal particularity and diversity,” i.e., in the personal particularity that characterizes each one in the immanent Trinity. God is present with us in Christ and his Spirit, not only through the gift of created grace (a gift that, as created, remains other than Godself), nor even merely in true divinity (merely in a way that reveals God’s *nature*), but as the Trinity itself (39).

Rahner’s effort to render the immanent Trinity theologically inseparable from the economic Trinity takes its cue from a crucial fact, which gives him his strongest argument against a too-thoroughgoing application of the principle that all of God’s activity in the world belongs equally to the three trinitarian persons. This fact is that even though the entire Trinity participates in the creation of Jesus’ human nature, a work of efficient causality, only the Son assumes that nature as his own. It is an action in the world that is not merely appropriated to one divine person but belongs to him alone (23). It has already been seen that Rahner maintains that only the Logos could have become incarnate and that he emphasizes that what we see in Jesus is not simply God in general but the Logos. He then proceeds to make a bold, sweeping claim:

Human nature in general is a possible object of the creative knowledge and power of God, because and insofar as the Logos is by nature the one who is “utterable”

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*Foundations of Christian Faith*, 120-22; idem., “Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 319-46: 328-31; idem., “The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966), 36-73: 65-67.

(even into that which is not God); because he is the Father's Word, in which the Father can express himself, and, freely, empty himself into the non-divine; because, when this happens, that precisely is born which we call human nature. In other words, human nature is not a mask (the *πρόσωπον*) assumed from without, from behind which the Logos hides to act things out in the world. From the start, it is the constitutive, real symbol of the Logos himself. So that we may and should say, when we think our ontology through to the end: man is possible because the exteriorization of the Logos is possible. (32-33)

The nature of the Logos makes humanity possible and it makes it possible for the humanity of Jesus to express the Logos in the same way that the Logos expresses the Father. This argument is particularly significant for the conclusion that Rahner draws from it. He writes, "[W]hat Jesus is and does as man reveals the Logos himself; it is the reality of the Logos as our salvation amidst us. . . . [H]ere the Logos with God and the Logos with us, the immanent and the economic Logos, are strictly the same" (33).

Rahner considers the incarnation a "dogmatically certain," hence indisputable, instance of the validity of his axiom (27). Although it is a less clear instance in its own right, the gift of the Holy Spirit can and should also be seen as confirming the rule. The experience of faith leads us to understand that in this gift God the Father "*really communicates himself* as love and forgiveness" (67) to us through the mediation of the Son, so the Spirit must truly be God, and she must be distinct from the Father and the Son because Christ himself distinguishes her, as gift, from himself and his Father (68). The Spirit who is communicated to us as love by the Father and the Son proceeds from both within the immanent Trinity as their mutual love. Unfortunately, this is nearly all that Rahner has to say about the specific issue of the relation between the Spirit's immanent identity and her economic work. He does assert that just as it must be the Son who becomes incarnate, so it must be the Spirit who sanctifies, i.e., sanctification is properly the Spirit's operation—it is not merely appropriated to her (86)—but he does not really

make an argument to support the assertion.<sup>8</sup> It must be admitted that Rahner does not have a very thoroughly developed pneumatology, and perhaps we should not be surprised to find so few details on this point. However, there is enough here that we can clearly discern what he is doing. First, the “starting point” for understanding the procession of the Spirit is “the experience of faith,” i.e., our encounter with the Spirit in grace (67). This method, approaching the question of immanent personhood in light of economic activity, follows the precedent set in the account of the immanent and economic Logos, where Rahner appeals to the concrete facts of salvation history to refute the “received wisdom” on certain points in trinitarian theology. Thus, Rahner makes good on his proclamation that “the doctrine of the ‘missions’ is from its very nature the starting point for the doctrine of the Trinity” (48). And by placing the missions at the head of the treatise in this way, he does his best to ensure that the doctrine may be rescued from irrelevance to the treatises on christology and charitology and from the perception of irrelevance to the lived spirituality of believers.

There is more that can usefully be said about what Rahner means by his trinitarian axiom, but I will reserve it for a dialogue later in the chapter with a critic who finds the axiom dangerous. In the meantime, let us turn to its reception in subsequent theology, for rarely in modern history has a single sentence penned by a theologian attracted so much attention or been put to such a variety of interpretations and applications that it can be said to have taken on a life of its own, as this one has. Almost everyone agrees that Rahner was onto something, but there is debate about how his “rule,” as it is sometimes

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<sup>8</sup> Instead, he dismisses the claim that sanctification is only appropriated to the Spirit first by replying, “*gratis asseritur, gratis negatur*” (“what is asserted without proof may be denied without proof”), and then by stating that given the incarnation, the claim “loses all sense” (Rahner, *The Trinity*, 86 n. 9). He does not explain why this is so.

called, should be employed. Ralph Del Colle remarks that it “begs for either qualification or radicalization,”<sup>9</sup> and as Fred Sanders has documented in an exceptionally useful study,<sup>10</sup> many notable theologians have accepted it in either a restricted or a radicalized form. A look at some examples of various responses to Rahner’s axiom will highlight its significance for subsequent efforts to characterize the relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity. It will also return us to those questions and concerns introduced at the beginning of the chapter, illustrating their importance in recent trinitarian theology and providing some context for the constructive argument that I am making in this dissertation.

### **The Radical Turn to the Economy**

In terms of influence, the most important feature of Rahner’s *The Trinity* is his effort to ground statements about the immanent Trinity in ones about the economic Trinity, rendering salvation history the primary locus of trinitarian reflection. One of the earliest noteworthy attempts to continue this effort is found in an article by Piet Schoonenberg, who states outright that he sees himself as “carrying on Rahner’s trinitarian thinking,”<sup>11</sup> although it is clear that he carries it to a length that Rahner refused to go. Schoonenberg presents his ideas in the form of thirty-six theses, beginning with one that is fundamental for the rest: “All our thinking moves from the world to God, and can never move in the opposite direction.”<sup>12</sup> Revelation does not change this fact. Revelation takes place in human history, and we only experience God’s self-

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<sup>9</sup> Ralph Del Colle, “The Triune God,” *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Colin Gunton (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 121-40:136.

<sup>10</sup> Fred Sanders, *The Image of the Immanent Trinity: Rahner’s Rule and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Piet Schoonenberg, “Trinity—The Consummated Covenant: Theses on the Doctrine of the Trinitarian God,” *Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion* 5 (1975-1976), 111-116: 111.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

communication *within* the world. This means for Schoonenberg that we cannot begin with knowledge of the Trinity and proceed from it to draw conclusions about Christ and the Spirit among us—the inverse course is the only one open to us.<sup>13</sup> Like Rahner, then, he wishes for trinitarian theology to begin with the missions. Yet it appears that unlike Rahner, he also wishes for it to end there.

Schoonenberg endorses Rahner's axiom, and to his credit, he explains what he means when he makes the statement more clearly than Rahner explains what *he* means by it. Schoonenberg writes, "The economic Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity, for no less than God himself is present as Logos in Jesus Christ and as Holy Spirit in us. In the history of salvation God *himself* is trinitarian."<sup>14</sup> Rahner would not disagree with this, although his concern is not with the fact that we really meet *God* in the economy, but with the fact that we meet the *trinitarian persons*, whose immanent personal characteristics determine how they encounter us. Schoonenberg continues, "Conversely the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity. It is accessible to us only as economic Trinity. That God is also trinitarian apart from his self-communication in salvation history may neither be denied nor presupposed as obvious."<sup>15</sup> Thus, in Schoonenberg's usage, "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity" makes an ontological claim, while "the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity" makes an epistemological one (and his explanation of the latter—that it means that we can only know God in the economy—is direct and free of ambiguity; what Rahner intends to convey by the second half of his axiom is harder to discern). So far there is nothing objectionable in Schoonenberg's position on the identity of the immanent and the economic Trinity. Even the assertion that we cannot *presuppose as*

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

*obvious* God's triunity apart from salvation history merely follows from the truth that we must base whatever we say about the Trinity on God's self-revelatory actions among us.

However, Schoonenberg proceeds to argue that "[t]he question of whether God is trinitarian apart from his self-communication in salvation history could be answered if the relationship between God's immutability and his free self-determination were accessible to us. Because this is not the case, the question remains unanswered and unanswerable. It is thereby eliminated from theology as a meaningless question."<sup>16</sup> In other words, we cannot know whether there is any such thing as the immanent Trinity, if (as has traditionally been the case) by "the immanent Trinity" one means "God as God exists irrespective of the economy." Schoonenberg has no real use for the concept of God sans the economy. When he uses the term "immanent Trinity," then, what he means is something like "God's very self." When he employs Rahner's axiom, what he means is that the economic Trinity is God's very self immanent in the world, and what we know of God's very self is the economic Trinity. However, when it is used this way, it is no longer *Rahner's* axiom. Rahner repeatedly asserts that God is eternally and necessarily trinitarian and that if God were not trinitarian in Godself "already" (by logical priority), then our graced encounter with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit would not be a genuine self-communication of God—the persons would be only created mediations of God's presence.<sup>17</sup> Schoonenberg apparently does not find this line of thought compelling. He concludes that theology can only describe the "immanent Trinity" according to the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See Rahner, *The Trinity*, 38, 64-65, 74, 99-103.

limits of what we know from the economic Trinity, although this makes trinitarian doctrine concrete, thoroughly related to humanity, and serviceable for preaching.<sup>18</sup>

The idea that the trinitarian persons are eternally related to each other in accordance with the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit lies at the heart of the notion of the immanent Trinity. It is important to recognize that Schoonenberg does not abandon the idea of inner-divine relations and processions. However, he locates them in God's life in the world, among us. Thus,

The salvation-economy fatherhood of God is the inner-divine fatherhood, and vice versa.

. . . The salvation-economy filiation is the inner-divine filiation, and vice versa.

. . . The Spirit of God at work in salvation history is the inner-divine Spirit, and vice versa.

The communications or "missions" of the Son and of the Spirit reveal themselves as inner-divine "proceedings." The inner-divine "proceedings" (*processiones*) are known to us only as missions. The missions are the processions, and vice versa.

The relations between Father, Son, and Spirit are accessible to us only in their relation to us. The salvation-economy relations are the inner-divine ones, and vice versa.<sup>19</sup>

The upshot of this appears to be that *in the economy*, the Father really generates the Son who becomes incarnate in Jesus, and the Spirit given to us as gift and sanctifying power really is present in the relation between the Father and the Son—there really are processions in God—and so although we only know the processions from the missions, our knowledge is true; the Trinity is not a pantomime.

Yet can we continue to speak of God as tri-personal? Schoonenberg maintains that we cannot say that God in Godself is three persons according to the current meaning of

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<sup>18</sup> Schoonenberg, "Trinity—The Consummated Covenant," 112.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 112-13.

the word “person” because doing so suggests that there are “three subjects of divine consciousness and divine freedom,” which indicates that there are three gods. On the other hand, “Jesus Christ and the Father face one another in personal relationship, and the Holy Spirit in us prays to the Father and calls out to the Son, and so faces them too in personal relationship.”<sup>20</sup> Father, Son, and Spirit face one another as reciprocal persons in salvation history and can do so only because of salvation history. What makes this possible is the unity of the Logos with the human person of Jesus and the presence of the Spirit in our (the church’s) persons. Significantly, Schoonenberg insists that Jesus should be described not as a divine person with an assumed human nature, but as a *human person*; he refuses the idea that the humanity of Jesus is anhypostatic. Instead, he proposes that Jesus is *enhyposstatic* in the Logos insofar as God, in the Logos, is present in Jesus and sustains his being, while the Logos is also *enhyposstatic* in Jesus because it is in Jesus that the Logos acquires the capacity to face the Father in an I-Thou relationship and thus “becomes divine person in the fullest sense of the word” according to its current linguistic usage.<sup>21</sup> There was some distinction between God and the Logos in salvation history prior to Christ, but with the incarnation that distinction “became fully interpersonal, a distinction between the Father and the Son.” Likewise, the Spirit was known to be at work in the world before Christ, but through him and by virtue of being present in the church God’s Spirit became the Paraclete and stands “in some personal relation to the Father and the Son.” Thus, with reference to the economy it can be said that “[t]he immanent Trinity”—i.e., God’s very self—is a Trinity of persons.” Schoonenberg quickly adds that this does not tell us whether God, apart from or before

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 115.

God's work in creation and redemption, was or is "in some way trinitarian, e.g., existing in three principles of being which are the foundations of his self-communication in salvation history."<sup>22</sup> God's ineffability entails that that is simply impossible to know.

Schoonenberg's concerns with remaining epistemologically modest regarding the inner being of God and orienting trinitarian theology to the economy alone are shared by Roger Haight. Haight sketches four problems in contemporary trinitarian thought. First, various speculative theologies of the Trinity relativize each other as their plurality reminds us of the absolute transcendence and the ultimate mysteriousness of God. Second, not only does the classical terminology that describes God as three persons give rise to tritheistic misunderstandings in light of the modern meaning of the word "person," but many theologians reinforce or enhance the impression of tritheism by depicting the three of the Trinity as a trio of "somebodies" who communicate with each other. Third, the doctrine of the Trinity is derivative, being dependent on the experience of salvation in Jesus and on a historical process wherein specific christological and soteriological theories have been employed to interpret that experience, yet the doctrine tends "to become objectified and considered as an autonomous datum and even premise for theology."<sup>23</sup> As such, it is then used to interpret the NT and to develop understandings of redemption and of Christ—the very things that the doctrine itself depends upon—which Haight finds illogical.<sup>24</sup> Fourth, some of the key beliefs and arguments that formed the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>23</sup> Roger Haight, "The Point of Trinitarian Theology," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 4.2 (1988), 191-204; 192.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 192-93. This argument has a different focus than but is made from a similar vantage point as Schoonenberg's contention that "the Trinity can never be the point of departure" for understanding Christ and the Spirit among us (Schoonenberg, "Trinity—The Consummated Covenant," 111).

foundation for the doctrine as it originally took shape no longer enjoy the same credibility they once did.

Rather than attempting to solve any of these problems, Haight proceeds to outline the point of the doctrine and the theology of the Trinity, which he believes will provide a context within which they might be solved. The first dimension of the point of the doctrine can be seen when one considers its historical development. Christians were always monotheists, yet a need arose to account for the unicity and unity of God in the face of their understanding that Jesus and the Spirit are also divine. The concept of the Trinity evolved in order to protect God's oneness, which remains the lone unshakable datum in trinitarian theology.<sup>25</sup> With a look over his shoulder at the problems enumerated earlier, Haight writes, "Theologies that seek to describe or explain differentiation within God in terms of threeness are purely speculative; they are suspect in so far as they promote a language that undermines the unicity and unity of God."<sup>26</sup> That is, they are suspect because they run against the grain of the point of the doctrine.

The second dimension of the doctrine's point concerns the salvific economy. The Christian experience of God's salvation is that it is mediated to us through Jesus and in the Spirit, and as it is really *God's* salvation, we recognize that nothing less than God is present and active in them.<sup>27</sup> Along with monotheism, this soteriological affirmation is what is at stake in trinitarian teaching. According to Haight, "the doctrine is not intended to be information about the internal life of God, but about how God relates to human beings."<sup>28</sup> Our encounter with God in Jesus and the Spirit does allow us to make

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<sup>25</sup> Haight, "The Point of Trinitarian Theology," 195-96.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-99.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

assertions about God, and in that sense trinitarian doctrine possesses some objective validity. On the other hand, Haight wishes to be epistemologically more critical and more modest than Rahner is when the latter identifies the economic Trinity with the immanent Trinity of the established speculative tradition of the church.<sup>29</sup> In Haight's view the experience of faith allows us to say objectively—and this is the third dimension of the point of the doctrine of the Trinity—that “*God really is as God is encountered in Jesus and the Spirit, that is, God is saviour.*” We can say, on the basis of what is communicated to us in Jesus and the Spirit, that God is *by nature* loving and gracious. Yet this dual mediation of grace “does not necessarily yield really distinct differentiations within God that can be named.” Such differentiations, i.e., what we traditionally call the trinitarian “persons,” “are objects of speculation which, whether or not they correspond to real differentiations within God, is not the *point* of the doctrine of the Trinity.”<sup>30</sup> The point is that the God who is absolutely one is truly present in Jesus and the Spirit to save us out of the gracious love that characterizes God's very being.

Haight maintains that the theologian lacks grounds either to deny that there are differentiations (persons) in God or to show conclusively that these do exist. He criticizes Rahner on this point as follows:

Rahner consistently argues that if there were no real self-differentiation in God, then what one experienced in Jesus and the Spirit would not be a *real self-*communication of God. But the force of this argument or assertion is not clear. There is no logical connection that demands a correlation of an internal differentiation within God and God's actual self-communication to human existence. If God were conceived as single, simple, spiritual, personal, and sovereignly free subject, this characterization of God could of itself account for God's *self-*communication to Jesus and each human being. In other words,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 202.

without affirming a modalist position, still, it too can account for the point of the doctrine of the Trinity and there is no really convincing argument against it.<sup>31</sup>

Haight is surely correct in arguing that God could be mono-personal and still communicate Godself to Jesus and to all other human beings in a real way. However, this self-communication would have a different character than it has if God is truly trinitarian. Consider only the christological consequences of the mono-personalist conception that Haight describes. If there is no eternal Son who becomes incarnate in Jesus, then Jesus is an adopted son. His sonship may be different in degree from the sonship and daughterhood of the rest of us who are adopted—it may be quantitatively and qualitatively greater because “no less than God” is present in him (however that presence is to be understood)—but because he also has it through adoption, it is not different in kind from ours. In that case, it could still be held that we receive our adoption and our salvation through Jesus: he could be the mediator to us of that presence of God that he himself first received. Thus, Jesus would still be savior. However, what he passes along to us would be a gift that is distinct from himself and in fact of a different nature than himself, for his nature would be like ours in kind, i.e., strictly human. In speaking of the divine self-communication, we could say that God gives Godself to us in Jesus, but we could not say that *Jesus* gives us *himself*. That makes a real difference in the character of the self-communication. There is no logical impediment to believing Haight’s supposition, it would arguably be based on a legitimate reading of the NT, and it would adequately serve what he describes as the point of the doctrine of the Trinity. Yet it seems to me that it would not be the faith of the Christian church. Certainly, doctrine develops over time, and theology changes to interpret it in new and different ways. But I believe

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 202 n. 12.

that this christology falls short of what the church would recognize as the deposit of faith that it possesses and professes as an abiding truth.

Haight acknowledges that Christian faith is functionally trinitarian virtually by necessity.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, he consistently treats the inference from God's work in Christ and the Spirit to an immanent Trinity, along with efforts to articulate how we might best understand the divine self-differentiations of which it consists, as unverifiable "speculation." Now, he is no doubt right to insist that "in the measure that trinitarian theology gets completely absorbed in defining and working out the distinctions in God's inner life, in the same measure it misses the point."<sup>33</sup> One should never lose sight of the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity is rooted in and intended to help us better understand the economy of salvation. He believes that we can objectively predicate certain things of God's nature—in short, that God is intrinsically loving and gracious—but, again, that we are merely speculating when we posit that God exists eternally in three persons. We are reaching beyond what we can truly claim to know from the revelation that God's self-communication involves.

However, if what we can know about God is restricted in that way, then we must ask whether we can really know, for that matter, that God's *nature* is to be loving and gracious. We know that God has acted graciously toward us, so we know with certainty that God is capable of love, but how do we know that God is *inherently* loving? Might it not be the case that although God has chosen to show us love, God is equally capable of

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<sup>32</sup> There are two reasons for this. First, the symbols of God the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit define the NT witness and cannot be excised from Christian speech about God (ibid., 196-97). Second, human existence is structured such that if God's self-communication to humanity is to be "explicitly conscious and effective" for us, it must be twofold: it must include an "external objective medium" by which we obtain knowledge of it and an "internal principle of appropriation" by which it becomes effective for us personally (ibid., 197). The historical reality of Jesus provides the external medium and our experience of the Spirit provides the internal principle that we cannot do without.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 203.

indifference and might choose to cease showing any care for creation at all? It seems to me that if one employs Haight's critical epistemology consistently, then one is left unable to make claims about God's nature any more solidly than about "possible differentiations within the one God's life."<sup>34</sup> In that respect, his approach to the question of what we know and can know about God proves ill-suited to serve a crucial part of the point of the doctrine of the Trinity as he defines it.

Furthermore, Haight, like Schoonenberg, considers God's oneness a confirmed datum but God's eternal threefoldness to be an unverified and unverifiable postulate. There is something to be said for the epistemic humility and respect for divine transcendence and mystery evident in the latter stance. And it is true that we cannot know with apodictic certainty that God eternally exists as triune. Yet in the end, we do not have that kind of certainty about the unicity and unity of God, either. We cannot demonstrate, in a way barring all possible reasonable objections, that God exists or that there is only one God rather than many or that the one God is perfectly at one with Godself. The reason we profess that God is one and that there is only one God is because God has revealed Godself as the one Lord and as the Lord who is one (see Deut. 6.4).<sup>35</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity is the product of an interpretation of our experience of God's self-revelatory actions in history, but so is our basic monotheism. It is equally true in both cases that we are dependent on revelation for what we know and that we do not know it with apodictic certainty but only with the certainty of faith. That is the only kind of certitude that we can have about matters pertaining to an ultimately transcendent and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>35</sup> References to God's oneness can mean God's singularity or uniqueness (unicity); or they can mean God's unity, i.e., the absence of division or disharmony of any kind in God that would make God in any way not "at one with" Godself. In this instance I mean the latter.

mysterious God. Yet while acknowledging it as the kind of certitude it is, we may embrace it as a form of knowledge that has a claim to confidence. Thus, if we are justified in concluding on the grounds of revelation that God is one and that God is naturally loving, just, and gracious—as Haight is right to argue that we are—and if it is possible to conclude on the basis of God’s self-revelation that in the economy God’s very self is trinitarian—as Schoonenberg rightly claims—then it is also legitimate to use the same grounds to form a theological argument that reaches the conclusion that God is intrinsically, eternally threefold.

Then again, perhaps the impetus to draw conclusions about the inner structure of the divine life does not simply carry the risk of leading us to miss the point of the doctrine of the Trinity—perhaps it has fatally caused that outcome throughout the history of what we know as full-fledged trinitarianism. This is one of the chief arguments of Catherine Mowry LaCugna’s book *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. The first half of it presents a study of some of the milestones in the development of the doctrine in both the East and the West. LaCugna details ways in which, prior to the Council of Nicaea, Christian theology focused on soteriologically-driven concerns, working to draw out the theological and especially christological implications of God’s economy of salvation.<sup>36</sup> The Arian crisis precipitated a need to define Christ’s relationship to God the Father in explicitly ontological terms. Arius maintained that the Logos was a divine being inferior to God the Father; God, being by nature impassible, cannot suffer, but because he possesses a lower grade of deity, the Logos could suffer and thus redeem humanity. The pro-Nicene response asserted on the one hand that Christ was not less divine than the

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<sup>36</sup> Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 26-30. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the body of the text.

Father but rather was very God with us and on the other hand that the Logos did not suffer in Christ—the flesh that he assumed suffered, but he himself could not. LaCugna argues that the first part of this response marks a correlation between *oikonomia* (reflection on divine action in the world) and *theologia* (reflection on God qua God), while the second part places a gap between them (34-35).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the Nicene solution opened the door for greater concentration on the intra-divine relationships between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and as soon as this happened, theologians began attempting to understand those relationships in ways that prescinded from the economy. Whereas pre-Nicene theology was attuned to the study of God “for us,” post-Nicene theology became increasingly dedicated to speculation on God *in se*. For LaCugna, the emergence of trinitarian doctrine led almost immediately to its defeat, for as it ceased to be directed by and toward soteriology, it also became marginalized from the rest of theology and failed to exercise the role that it should in the lives of believers (9-12, 43).

The aim of LaCugna’s book is to repair the breach between *oikonomia* and *theologia* so that the doctrine of the Trinity can attain its promise as “a practical doctrine with radical consequences for Christian life” (1). She views Rahner’s axiom as a good place to start insofar as it represents an effort to reorient trinitarian thinking toward the economy, and she heartily supports his conception of God as self-communicating, which she calls “the essential premise of a revitalized theology of God” (230). Yet she demurs to his contention that God’s distinct manners of subsisting in the economy have their origin and ground in intrinsic intra-divine distinctions (221). She repeats a claim made by

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<sup>37</sup> For this reason, LaCugna does not accept the pro-Nicene view on the inability of God to suffer. She writes, “As long as Jesus’ person is identified with God’s *ousia*, then we must say that God suffers. A God incapable of suffering would not be fully personal, even though we are unable to say what it means for God to suffer as God” (295-96).

Haight, that Rahner asserts there to be real differentiations in God without explaining what difference their existence makes (222).<sup>38</sup> In fact, though, Rahner does make an argument in one of his articles on christology that offers a clear explanation of the significance of the distinction between the Father and the Logos. Regarding the notion that, as he argues in *The Trinity*, only the Logos could have become incarnate, he writes,

The immanent self-utterance of God in his eternal fullness is the condition of the self-utterance of God outside himself, and the latter continues the former. It is true that the mere constitution of something other than God is the work of God as such, without distinction of persons. Yet the onto-logical possibility of creation can derive from and be based on the fact that God, the unoriginated, expresses himself in himself and for himself and so constitutes the original, divine, distinction in God himself. And when this God utters himself as himself into the *void*, this expression speaks *out* this immanent Word, and not something which could be true of another divine person.<sup>39</sup>

Whether this argument *proves* that *only* the Word could have become flesh for us, it certainly provides a lucid exposition of the intelligibility that the incarnation acquires when we see the Λόγος προφορικός (uttered Word) as originating and being grounded in a Λόγος ενδιάθετος (internal Word).

However, LaCugna objects in principle to the turn to the immanent Trinity for an explanation of truths about God's activity in the economy. There are at least two reasons for this. The first is that we only know God as God reveals Godself in the economy, and it is impossible from this perspective to establish the reality of a transeconomic intra-divine "realm" wherein the trinitarian persons eternally exist as "God in Godself." The second is that the moment one begins to base arguments on supposed distinctions "in" God, one departs from and loses focus on the economy, which in turn causes the doctrine to lose its relevance for life and faith (227).

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<sup>38</sup> See Haight, "The Point of Trinitarian Doctrine," 202.

<sup>39</sup> Karl Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, 105-120: 115.

In fact, LaCugna suggests that we abandon the terms “immanent Trinity” and “economic Trinity” because “they are bound inextricably to the framework that operates with a gap between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.” She prefers the latter pair of terms, the meaning of which she clarifies as follows: “*Oikonomia* is not the Trinity *ad extra* but the comprehensive plan of God reaching from creation to consummation, in which God and all creatures are destined to exist together in the mystery of love and communion. Similarly, *theologia* is not the Trinity *in se*, but, much more modestly and simply, the mystery of God” (223). What is most important about these definitions for LaCugna’s purposes is that the words are not defined in contrast to one another. The meanings of “immanent Trinity” and “economic Trinity” are determined by the distinction between these two terms. The danger of the distinction is that it easily becomes a contrast, and where the economic and the immanent Trinity are contrasted, they easily become separated, which is precisely what LaCugna wishes to avoid. Furthermore, as noted above, it is not as though we can verify any claims about the immanent Trinity in *contradistinction* to the economic Trinity because “there is no transeconomic perspective from which to establish” them (227). In our experience of God, “[t]here is neither an economic nor an immanent Trinity; there is only the *oikonomia* that is the concrete realization of the mystery of *theologia* in time, space, history, and personality” (223).

Rather than a theology of the immanent Trinity, LaCugna would have an immanent theology of the Trinity, by which she means a theology of the Trinity immanent in the world. Because we only approach *theologia* through *oikonomia*, “an ‘immanent’ trinitarian theology of God is nothing more than a theology of the economy of *salvation*” (224). For LaCugna, knowledgeable speech about the uncreated aspects of

divine life is “patently impossible” (230), and so if “the immanent Trinity,” “God *in se*,” and “God’s inner life” refer to what God is like apart from God’s life with us, then such concepts can do theology no good and plenty of harm. On the other hand, she does not wish to see trinitarian doctrine *reduced* to soteriology. She grants legitimacy to speculation about “the eternal ground and the intrinsic structure of the Trinity *as revealed*” (ibid.). This is reflection on Godself, not merely on the events wherein God acts for us, although LaCugna stresses that it should be undertaken as a move in the analysis of the economy (229). Yet it is difficult to determine what this allowance amounts to. LaCugna speaks inconsistently about the prospect of seeking an “eternal ground” for what we know as the economic Trinity. For example, she claims to disagree with Rahner’s position that the economic distinctions between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are rooted in intra-divine self-differentiations, but she supports his affirmation that there is a single divine self-communication wherein the begetting of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit take place in “both eternal and temporal modalities” (231, see 224). She gives the *nihil obstat* to inquiry into the “immanent” grounding of the christological and pneumatological missions—as long as such inquiry is directed toward understanding them *as* missions—but she also asserts that it is only possible to speak about the “*created* manifestations [of God’s life] in history and person” (230, emphasis added; 231-32). My response is that if we are not to posit self-differentiation in God’s very self, then we cannot affirm the presence of genuinely distinct divine persons in salvation history without divorcing *oikonomia* from *theologia*. LaCugna clearly wishes to avoid sundering the two, and she does hold that we must think of God “as persons in communion with other persons,” i.e., human persons, even if she poses this as an

alternative to “thinking of persons or relations ‘in’ God” (225). Perhaps the best interpretation of her is to accept her statements that suggest that it is permissible to conclude to what is traditionally called the immanent Trinity on the basis of what we experience of God in the economy, with the caveat that, as she never ceases to remind the reader, one must not make the mistake of considering the Trinity *in abstraction from* salvation history. Then all of her remarks contradicting the permissibility of doing this can be put down to an abundance of caution that whatever is said about the immanent Trinity not be treated as something that belongs to God’s “inner life” apart from God’s life with us and for us.

This is perhaps a charitable reading of LaCugna. It is surely more generous than that given by Thomas Weinandy, who accuses LaCugna of denying a true divine subjectivity to the Son and to the Holy Spirit even in the economy. He also believes that by failing to recognize God’s autonomy from creation in the immanent Trinity, she reduces God to the ontological level of the economy. According to Weinandy,

LaCugna so collapses the Trinity into the economy that . . . the *oikonomia* is no longer the realm in which the trinity of persons as they exist, in all their otherness, act, and so relate to us in all their otherness as distinct divine subjects, but the only realm in which the trinity of ‘persons’ actually exist. The Trinity does not exist ontologically distinct from the economy. ‘The Trinity’ ontologically is the economy. Thus the Trinity is not the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit acting in time and relating to us in history as they are in themselves, but merely an impersonal theological principle grounding, sustaining, and articulating our relation to ‘God’ and with one another. God is no longer a trinity of persons or subjects. The term ‘trinity’ now merely expresses the trinitarian pattern or mode of God’s revelation as manifested through Christ and in the Spirit by which human persons (including Christ) are related to God.<sup>40</sup>

In short, Weinandy equates LaCugna’s refusal to speak of the Trinity in abstraction from the *oikonomia* with a denial that God truly is a trinity of persons at all. I am not

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010 [1995]), 134-35.

convinced that this critique is entirely fair. LaCugna states that it is acceptable to say either that God is “one person in three modalities” or that God is “one nature in three persons” because both can be understood to have approximately the same meaning—for her the important thing is to retain the idea that God is *personal* (305). One may do well to disagree with her on this matter, but it must be pointed out that she does not deny threefoldness to God; in fact, she seems to assume that it will be predicated of God in one form or another, and she voices no objection to that. At the very least, then, we must see that LaCugna *allows for* the orthodox profession that God is tri-personal (in the economy, at any rate).

However, one cannot overlook the fact that LaCugna rules out of bounds all talk of the Trinity existing apart from the *oikonomia*. Regarding the assertion that God is inherently triune and would be so even if God had not created the world, she writes,

[I]t is unintelligible if it cannot be verified *kat' oikonomian* [according to the economy]. The only basis for belief in the triune God is the concrete, actual history of God with us as revealed in Christ and the Spirit. Second, there is literally no basis for the claim that God would be one way or another apart from creation, since we are unable to prescind from the fact of creation and our place in it to attach any meaning to the assertion. (176, n. 93)

It is certainly true that God's history with us in the missions of Christ and the Spirit provides the sole basis for belief in the Trinity. It is false, though, to say that the claim that God would be triune apart from creation is unintelligible and baseless. The justification for and the meaning of the claim lies in our understanding that in the economy of salvation, God reveals Godself *to be* triune; God reveals God's *identity* to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The economic Trinity is God's being triune with us, but if God is not intrinsically triune, then strictly speaking, the fact that God is triune with us is not itself revelatory. That is, God may be said to reveal God's nature through a trinitarian

pattern, but this trinitarian form that the revelation takes is extrinsic to God—God might have revealed Godself equally well without using this pattern—and therefore the triunity that we perceive is not *itself* a revelation of anything about God. But if God’s economic triunity is not merely the form but also part of the *content* of God’s self-revelation, then what it reveals is precisely that God’s very self is triune, that God *is* a trinity. If it is God’s *identity* to be the Trinity, then it is justified to conclude that God would have this identity even if there were no creation.

Assuming the premise that God’s very self is triune, the alternative to the conclusion that God would be the Trinity even without creation is to suppose that God acquires God’s triunity only through the economy.<sup>41</sup> LaCugna does not argue for this supposition. Doubtless she would assert that we cannot say that God was not trinitarian “before” the *oikonomia* because to do so would also be to prescind from the *oikonomia* in which God actually encounters us in a trinitarian mode. It would seemingly run contrary to her theological project to fix one’s attention on the question of whether God is necessarily and eternally or only contingently and historically trinitarian.

Yet I do not share LaCugna’s worry that speculation concerning God *in se* without immediate reference to the economy will inevitably lead to a baleful separation between *oikonomia* and *theologia*. It is true of much of theology’s history that trinitarian doctrine has not been sufficiently connected to soteriology, and as LaCugna argues, to a significant extent the cause of this can be traced to a failure to forge a strong enough link between reflection on the intra-divine relations and reflection on the christological and pneumatological missions. However, I believe that it is possible to distinguish the

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<sup>41</sup> This idea *is* at least potentially consistent with the premise that God is “inwardly” triune: the fact that God becomes triune in time would not mean that God’s acquired triunity is any less genuine than an eternal triunity would be.

immanent Trinity from the economic Trinity in certain respects without making what is said about the first irrelevant to what is said about the second. In that vein, it makes a significant theological difference whether one affirms or denies the postulate that God would exist as the Trinity without creation, and this difference touches *oikonomia* as well as *theologia*.

If God is intrinsically, eternally trinitarian, that fact does not require an explanation. It would be possible to produce a speculative explanation for God's triunity, but it would not be necessary. If God simply is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and has never been otherwise, there is no need to explain why God is not otherwise. However, if God is only contingently threefold—if God only *became* the Trinity through God's involvement with the world—an explanation is called for. In that case, God has undergone a radical change, and there must be a reason for it. Why would God differentiate Godself into multiple persons in time? To my mind, the only answer that readily suggests itself as stemming from specifically Christian theological premises is that God became Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the sake of effecting the incarnation. The idea, presumably, would be that the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit began with the choice of God (who with this choice became God the *Father*) to give Godself to creation or to join creation to Godself in a particular manner—a manner that necessitates, or at least is especially suited and facilitated by, the differentiation of Godself into three persons or modes of subsistence and the assumption of humanity by one of those. This bold proposal would offer a profound conception of the lengths to which God is willing to go—altering the very structure of God's own being—in acting for the sake of the world.

It seems that one would want to posit that even if God elected to become trinitarian with the incarnation in view, the divine self-differentiation was in effect at the first moment of creation. Otherwise, one would have to cut ties with the tradition that all things were created by, through, or in the Son or Word (e.g., Jn 1.3, Col. 1.16). Indeed, one would be left unable to refer to the Trinity to explain the relationship between creator *as creator* and creature *as creature*; one could only appeal to the Trinity for an account of the relationship between God as *savior* and humanity as *saved*. There would then be a strange and complete disjunction between our conceptions of God's activity in creation and of God's activity in redemption, and moreover, there would be a tectonic disruption of how God's *identity* may be conceived in light of these two forms or arenas of activity. The mono-personal creator God would be quite different from the three-personed savior God. This problem, in fact, would be fatal for any theology that understands creation as an event in which God remains engaged as long as the world exists (*creatio continua*), which today is virtually a ktisiological given.

Yet even if this difficulty is avoided by supposing that God's triunity dates at least to the initial moment of creation, the notion that God only became triune in time leaves something to be desired. First, it requires us to assent to one of the following ideas. (A) Like the existence of the world, the existence of the Trinity is contingent on the choice of God that it should exist. That God exists as the Trinity is just as contingent a fact as the fact that the world exists; it could be the case that there is no Trinity just as easily as it could be the case that there is no world. In fact, if God chooses to become trinitarian for the sake of effecting the incarnation, that choice is logically subsequent to and dependent on God's choice to create. In that regard, there is indeed a greater degree of contingency

attached to the existence of the Trinity than there is to the existence of the world. This simply seems counterintuitive. The alternative is to suppose that (B) it is *necessary* for God to create the world, and God becomes trinitarian in order to become incarnate within it because a trinitarian existence is either necessary or fitting to that purpose. The problem with this idea is that it compromises divine transcendence. The only reason why creation would be *necessary* is that God must create the world in order to fulfill something that would otherwise be lacking in Godself. If God needs the world in order to be fully Godself, then it becomes difficult to draw a complete ontological distinction between God and the world.

By contrast, the supposition that God is eternally, intrinsically trinitarian bears an attractive consequence. Here it is possible to understand God's act of giving Godself to Godself through Godself—the act of being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as an act identical with God's essence; it is the act that makes it true that God *is* love and love is what God is. It is possible then to perceive that act as the root of God's act of giving Godself to us in Christ and the Spirit. This perception brings depth to our understanding of the gift that we receive in the economy of salvation. It means that what God does for us is an extension, an embodiment of what and who God eternally is. Now, one who holds that God is only contingently and temporally trinitarian can also assert that what God does for us is an extension and embodiment of what and who God eternally is. However, there the doctrine of the Trinity would not be the key to the meaning of the statement, for on that view, God's being the Trinity is not the most basic and essential thing about God's being God, since it is the result of a divine choice. On that view, God has a root identity that “precedes” God's triunity, i.e., God was God before God was the

Trinity, and thus God's triunity cannot provide the paradigm for understanding what it means for God to be God. What one would mean by the statement that God is for us what God eternally is, presumably, is that God is essentially loving, but the Trinity would not be the key to understanding what it means for God to be love eternally. Here, on the view that God is eternally trinitarian as I am interpreting and endorsing it, the doctrine of the Trinity is precisely the key to understanding what it means for God to be God, for God to be love. If God's triunity is simply God's act of being God, then God would be triune even if God were not to have created the world. There would be an immanent Trinity even if there were no economic Trinity. Yet this last point does not divorce *theologia* from *oikonomia*. We have grasped that this act of love given and received interpersonally in the Trinity is what God is *in se* by inference from what God is *pro nobis*, and once we have grasped it, we return from the *Deus in se* to the *Deus pro nobis* with an understanding of the latter that amplifies its significance. Now we see that the trinitarian mystery of God's love for us is simply the gracious enactment in the world of the eternal and intrinsic mystery of Godself. In fact, in this sense, it is not too much to say, as Rahner does, that "the two mysteries, that of our grace and that of God in himself, [constitute] one and the same abysmal mystery."<sup>42</sup>

However, if, as I have argued, it is preferable to maintain that God would exist as the Trinity even if there were no world, may it nonetheless be said that God's involvement with the world has an effect on what it means for God to be trinitarian? Jürgen Moltmann contends that it may and should. The first thing to be noted about his

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<sup>42</sup>Rahner, *The Trinity*, 39.

thought on this point is that he interprets the cross as “an event between God and God.”<sup>43</sup> If Christ’s suffering and death are seen as belonging strictly to his human nature and not affecting him in his divine nature, it is possible to view the crucifixion as something that alters humanity’s standing before God but that does not alter God in any way. Classical theism has taken just this view because it embraces the notion of divine impassibility as a concomitant of divine immutability, which itself is taken to be an aspect or a consequence of divine perfection. Moltmann holds that, on the contrary, we should understand God as being capable of suffering precisely out of the fullness of God’s being, i.e., God’s love. According to Moltmann, “If love is the acceptance of the other without regard to one’s own well-being, then it contains within itself the possibility of sharing in suffering and freedom to suffer as a result of the otherness of the other.” By the same token, if God were unable to open Godself to the possibility of suffering through being affected by another, then God would be unable to love.<sup>44</sup> If God suffers through love, then it is possible to go further in the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* between Christ’s divine and human natures than patristic and scholastic theology were willing to go. The line of thought derived from the church fathers is that the unity of Christ’s person allows one to say that God was crucified or that the babe of Bethlehem is the creator of the world. Indeed, because of its union with the divine person of the Son, the human nature of Jesus participates in actions that are proper to God, and in that sense the characteristics of divinity are truly communicated to his humanity. However, divine impassibility bars the possibility of a genuine communication of his human experiences to his divine nature. In that direction, a *praedicatio idiomatum* is possible—we may say, e.g., that God was

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<sup>43</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1974]), 244.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

crucified—but we must recognize that no ontological *communicatio* occurs. Once the notion of impassibility is jettisoned, though, such communication *is* possible. Now the cry of dereliction from the cross may be interpreted not merely as an expression of the anguish of Jesus' human nature but also as a symbol of a rupture that takes place within God. When God forsakes Jesus, it is God the Father abandoning God the Son. Moltmann describes the crucifixion as an intra-trinitarian event:

The Son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of his Son. The grief of the Father here is just as important as the death of the Son. The Fatherlessness of the Son is matched by the Sonlessness of the Father, and if God has constituted himself as the Father of Jesus Christ, then he also suffers the death of his Fatherhood in the death of the Son.<sup>45</sup>

When Christ dies, the eternal Son does not cease to exist, but nevertheless it is the eternal Son's death. This eternal Son experiences the death of his human nature as his own estrangement from his Father. At the same time, and without negating the truth of the estrangement, the Father and the Son are united in the cross by the spirit of their common surrender to suffering in love, which is nothing other than the Holy Spirit.<sup>46</sup>

Moltmann believes that this understanding of the event of the cross puts aside the dichotomy between the immanent and the economic Trinity.<sup>47</sup> Staurology (theology of the cross) and trinitarian thinking must go together at all times:

“Concepts without perception are empty” (Kant). The perception of the trinitarian concept of God is the cross of Jesus. “Perceptions without concepts are blind” (Kant). The theological concept for the perception of the crucified Christ is the doctrine of the Trinity. The material principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is the cross of Christ. The formal principle of knowledge of the cross is the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 244-45; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1981]), 82-83.

<sup>47</sup> Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 245.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 240-41.

Moltmann explains that he came to endorse Rahner's axiom of the unity of the immanent and the economic Trinity because he could not accept the idea that what happens on the cross, which is the foundation for our knowledge of the Trinity, has no effect on the inner life of God. In fact, he goes so far as to say that "[t]he economic Trinity not only reveals the immanent Trinity; it also has a retroactive effect on it."<sup>49</sup> He writes, "The pain of the cross determines the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity."<sup>50</sup> The relationship between the Father and the Son is eternally colored by what takes place between them in the historical event of the crucifixion. Equally so, the joy engendered by the glorification of creation united with God in the salvation-historical work of the Spirit eternally "moulds" the inner-trinitarian life.<sup>51</sup>

It is difficult to discern exactly how God's relationship to created time operates in Moltmann's conception. God appears to exist within time in one respect and outside of it in another. Moltmann prefers to speak not of "God in history" but of "history in God" because he sees human history as taking place within God's history.<sup>52</sup> However, one wonders about the relationship between God and time because Moltmann certainly understands Christ as "the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 5.12): "Before the world was, the sacrifice was already in God. No Trinity is conceivable without the Lamb, without the sacrifice of love, without the crucified Son. For he is the slaughtered Lamb glorified in eternity."<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Moltmann describes what for us is not yet a reality—the eschatological glorification of creation through its unity with God

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<sup>49</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 160.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 246-47. See *idem*, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 61-96 and especially 97-128.

<sup>53</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 83.

in the Spirit—as bringing God joy “from eternity to eternity.”<sup>54</sup> However the relationship between God’s eternity and God’s history is to be understood as incorporating world history, what is clear is that Moltmann views the relationship between God and the world as mutually determinative.

This does not negate the fact that “the divine relationship to the world is primarily determined by [the] inner relationship” of God to Godself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the intra-divine interpersonal relationships are the foundation for every aspect of the trinitarian relationships that we perceive in salvation history. God’s fidelity to Godself entails that God cannot manifest Godself in the world in any way that does not truly represent the nature of God’s intrinsic triunity. For example, Moltmann regards it as “impossible” to maintain that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son in history but only from the Father within the Trinity itself.<sup>56</sup> This argument is consistent in approach with the one that he makes about God really suffering in the passion of Christ. In both cases, Moltmann contends that the trinitarian persons are in themselves, “act” among themselves, just as they appear and act among us. For this reason, he asserts the principle: “*Statements about the immanent Trinity must not contradict statements about the economic Trinity. Statements about the economic Trinity must correspond to doxological statements about the immanent Trinity.*”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 153-54. This would lead one to expect that Moltmann to be a proponent of the theology of the *Filioque*, but we will see in the next chapter that he is not.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 154, italics in original. The significance of doxology in trinitarian thinking for Moltmann is that statements about the immanent Trinity have their *Sitz im Leben* in the worship of the church, where we not only thank God for God’s good gifts to us but adore and extol God for God’s own goodness, which involves contemplating God in Godself (152-53).

Now, Moltmann argues that there would be a contradiction in claiming that God is love but that God suffices for Godself.<sup>58</sup> He suggests that creation is necessary for God, for although he describes the love that God has for creatures as free love (in distinction from the necessary love with which God the Father loves God the Son), he also writes:

It is in accordance with the love which is God that he should fashion a creation which he rejoices over, and call to life his Other, man, as his image, who responds to him. Not to do this would contradict the love which God is. . . . “Love as the one that communicates does not yet find the real place of its activity in God himself, but only where there is purely free, primal giving, only where there is pure neediness in the receiver.”

In this sense God “needs” the world and man. If God is love, then he neither will nor can be without the one who is his beloved.<sup>59</sup>

I have already criticized the notion that God needs to create the world, arguing that it seriously damages the idea of divine transcendence and renders it difficult to make a complete ontological distinction between God and the world. I also fail to see the contradiction between the claims that God is essentially loving and that God does not require the existence of anything other than Godself. First, God’s nature is to will goodness, and if God wills the existence of anything, then God wills its good. To will the good for something is to love it. God does love everything that exists by willing goodness for it (primarily the goodness of being), but even if nothing existed except for God, God would still will God’s own goodness. God would still love Godself with the love that God is. It could be argued that if God is conceived of as a solitary subject, God’s self-love is a very different thing from God’s love for creatures; the former is autotelic, the latter is allotelic, and as such they are really different kinds of love. However, Moltmann believes that each of the trinitarian persons should be understood as a distinct subject capable of

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 58. The quotation in Moltmann’s text is cited as I. A. Dorner, *Die Unveränderlichkeit Gottes* (Leipzig: n.p., 1883), 355.

interpersonal love. On this idea, the divine love could be considered autotelic insofar as it is God, i.e., the three persons, willing the goodness that is the divine nature and allotelic insofar as it is the Father loving the Son. Here a self-sufficient existence for God, an existence without creation, would not mean one lacking in love. It would be characterized by a love that is analogous to that which God has for the world that God has in fact made. Given his conception of trinitarian personhood, it is odd that Moltmann does not see the matter this way.

My disagreement with Moltmann about God's "need" for creation aside, I find his theology of the cross compelling. It realizes the radical potential of the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* and offers a powerful vision of what it means for the God who is our salvation to bear our burden (see Ps. 68.19). Because God accepts separation from Godself on the cross, the Spirit who unites the Father and the Son in their sacrifice can unite creatures separated from the Father to him through the Son.<sup>60</sup> Yet the cross reveals the very nature of God, who created out of the love that God is a world that God loves without ceasing. And just as the cross makes a difference in the inner life of God because of what transpires on it between the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit, so creation makes a difference to the inner life of God because it is a product and an object of the love of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God would be God, the Trinity would be the Trinity, if God had not created the world. But because of creation and above all because of the Christ-event, God is God—the Trinity is the Trinity—in a

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<sup>60</sup> Building on the statement in Heb. 9.14 that Christ offered himself to God "through the eternal Spirit," Moltmann writes, "The common sacrifice of the Father and the Son comes about through the Holy Spirit, who joins and unites the Son in his forsakenness with the Father" (*The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 83; see 82). Also: "In the cross, Father and Son are most deeply separated and at the same time most inwardly one in their surrender. What proceeds from this event between Father and Son is the Spirit which justifies the godless, fills the forsaken with love and even brings the dead alive, since even the fact that they are dead cannot exclude them from this event of the cross; the death in God also includes them" (*The Crucified God*, 244).

different way than God would be if God had not created the world and if the Son had not come to live and die as one of us. The economic missions of the Son and the Spirit give new content to the Son's inner sonship and to the Spirit's inner spirithood, as well as to the inner fatherhood of the Father who sends them. The missions do not make the persons who they are, but they make a difference to *how* the persons are who they are. We might compare what occurs in the Trinity through the economy to a sculpture that an artist paints sometime after creating it. The application of paint does not change the shape of the sculpture at all. It is recognizably the same object whether it is painted or not. Yet when it is painted, it is itself in a new way. Because God has chosen to include that which is not God—because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have chosen to include those who are not themselves—in the divine life of love, that life itself takes on new and vibrant “color.”

### **The Concern to Preserve the Immanent-Economic Distinction**

I have argued for the need to profess the immanent Trinity with the understanding that the Trinity would exist even if the world did not. To this extent, I have favored maintaining a distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity in my engagement with some of the interpreters of Rahner's rule. Let us return to that rule from the perspective of those who seek to limit its meaning, especially in the interest of remaining mindful of divine transcendence.

Paul Molnar assesses Rahner's axiom very critically. He credits Rahner with having positively influenced contemporary theology by his insistence that we must begin our thought about God with the economic Trinity and that the economic Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity. However, Molnar believes that Rahner's own “transcendental”

theology is unfaithful to this insight.<sup>61</sup> Rahner uses the term “transcendental” in two senses. (1) He frequently approaches questions about the human grasp of the divine through an analysis of the structure of our understanding and the nature of our experience. Rahner calls this method transcendental because it somewhat follows the form of argument that Kant introduced under that name and that has been called such ever since.<sup>62</sup> (2) In a number of his writings, Rahner argues that all human beings have an unthematic experience of God as the absolute mystery precluded in the mystery of our own being, and all thereby have unthematic knowledge of God. This is transcendental knowledge because we have it by virtue of an implicit apprehension, or pre-apprehension, of being as such (*Vorgriff auf esse*), which involves and yet *transcends* both ourselves and the entirety of the finite objects of our knowledge.<sup>63</sup> In the experience of being as that which transcends all that is concretely known, a person “reaches out toward what is

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<sup>61</sup> Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 108, 124.

<sup>62</sup> Rahner explains, “A transcendental line of enquiry . . . is present when and to the extent that it raises the question of the conditions in which knowledge of a specific subject is possible in the knowing subject himself. . . . In any act of cognition it is not only the object known but also the subject knowing that is involved. It is dependent not only upon the distinctive characteristics of the object, but also upon the essential structure of the knowing subject. The mutual interconnection and the mutual interconditioning process between the subject knowing and the object known precisely as known and as knowable are in themselves the object of a transcendental enquiry. The *a priori* transcendental subjectivity of the knower on the one hand and the object of knowledge (and of freedom) on the other are related to one another in such a way that they mutually condition one another, and they do this in such a way that knowledge of the *a priori* conditions which make knowledge possible in the subject necessarily constitutes also an element in the actual knowledge of the object itself . . . .” (“Reflections on Methodology in Theology,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 11, trans. David Bourke [New York: Seabury, 1974], 68-114: 87).

<sup>63</sup> Rahner’s arguments concerning the *Vorgriff* are developed in *Spirit in the World*, trans. William Dych (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968) and *Hearer of the Word: Laying the Foundation for a Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Andrew Tallon, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994). Patrick Burke (*Reinterpreting Rahner: A Critical Study of His Major Themes* [New York: Fordham University, 2002], 26-27) and Karen Kilby (*Karl Rahner: Theology and Philosophy* [New York: Routledge, 2004], 21-22) argue that in *Spirit in the World*, his earliest major work, Rahner carefully distinguishes being from Absolute Being or God, the former of which is known unthematically but immediately in the *Vorgriff*, whereas the latter is at most indirectly “co-affirmed” in our awareness of being. They note that in Rahner’s later writings, beginning with *Hearer of the Word*, he drops this distinction and makes God the reference of the *Vorgriff*.

nameless and by its very nature is infinite.”<sup>64</sup> This reaching out is itself an unthematic experience of God, who is the source and goal of our transcendental dynamism.<sup>65</sup> The experience necessarily occurs in every human being; although it may not reach conceptual objectivation or may in fact be denied in one’s act of interpreting one’s experience, the experience of God itself is “inescapable.”<sup>66</sup> Molnar objects to all of the above. An avid Barthian, he believes that all theological thinking must make God’s self-revelation in Christ and the Spirit as recorded in Scripture its initial datum, and in his view Rahner contravenes this because Rahner’s transcendental method actually begins with our self-experience.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, for Molnar, “the creature either *needs* God, grace, revelation and faith or has them as part of his or her ontology,”<sup>68</sup> and if every human being necessarily has knowledge of God, then one can reach an understanding of God by using the tools of the philosophy of religion to interpret one’s own experience rather than having to *believe* on the basis of God’s self-revelation as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the economy.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 62.

<sup>65</sup> Rahner writes, “We may fittingly suppose that man in his knowing and willing is a being of absolute and unlimited transcendence. All his spiritual acts, no matter what their object, are founded on this transcendence, which is a reaching forward of knowledge and will. . . . Obviously, this transcendence can only be described by an assertion . . . about the ‘Whither’ of this anticipatory grasp which exceeds all determinate objectivations. And again, this ‘Whither’ of transcendence can only be spoken of in terms of experience of transcendence as the limitless openness of the subject itself. Act and its finality, in this basic transcendent act, can only be and be understood as a unity. It is also obvious that the activation of this transcendence as such is always something other than its objectivated description, which is always a matter of subsequent reflexion and never really comes abreast of it. Finally, it is also obvious that the most primordial, underivative knowledge of God, which is the basis of all other knowledge of God, is given in the experience of transcendence, in so far as it contains, implicitly and unobjectivated, but irrecusably and inevitably, the ‘Whither’ of transcendence, which we call God” ( “The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology,” 49-50). See also Karl Rahner, “The Experience of God Today,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 11, 149-65: “God is present as the asymptotic goal, hidden in itself, of the experience of a limitless dynamic force inherent in the spirit endowed with knowledge and freedom” (153).

<sup>66</sup> Rahner, “The Experience of God Today,” 150-53, quoted at 152.

<sup>67</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 102-03, 106, 108-09, 124.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Molnar, “Can We Know God Directly? Rahner’s Solution from Experience,” *Theological Studies* 46.2 (1985), 228-61: 229, 231 n. 15, 240 n. 56, 242-43, 249.

In keeping with what he believes to be the consistent position of Scripture and the theological tradition of the church, Molnar asserts that it is not possible to know God directly.<sup>70</sup> For God to be directly known, the divine essence would have to belong to the structure of creation, as is supposed in pantheism and panentheism. If God is truly transcendent—if God is ontologically other than created reality—then ideas about God can only be posited in faith, as inferences from God’s revelatory actions in history.<sup>71</sup> Molnar links God’s transcendence with God’s freedom and criticizes Rahner for undermining them together. This is to be seen in his treatment of Rahner’s theology of revelation and of the symbol.

Rahner refers to the experience of God had by all persons as transcendental revelation. In the spiritual acts wherein a person unconsciously encounters God, God speaks to him or her. Every human being necessarily hears a word from God in this way. Molnar perceives a problem here. According to him, if human nature is such that we must hear God speaking, then the logical corollary is that God must speak to us—God does not have the freedom to be silent.<sup>72</sup> In typical Barthian fashion, Molnar holds that God is only God insofar as God is free. Furthermore, in his view, Rahner’s idea of transcendental revelation compromises divine transcendence because it entails that God and creatures mutually condition one another.<sup>73</sup> Now, it is true that Rahner believes that in any act of cognition, the knowing subject and the object known mutually condition one another

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 233-38.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 236-37. After citing Basil of Caesarea’s assertion that we claim to know of God through God’s activities but we do not presume to grasp the divine essence, Molnar writes, “In this insight there already began developing the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity, which carried through the perception that the transcendent God cannot be known directly. That God is transcendent and that creatures might know Him directly are mutually exclusive presuppositions in a Christian doctrine of God—for the tradition as for Scripture” (236).

<sup>72</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 101-02 n. 95.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 104.

because the subject can only know the object if it is really present to be known, while the object can only be known according to the cognitive structure of the subject. It should be noted, however, that the object is only conditioned by the subject within the subject's knowledge, that is, in the subject's mind. There is no question of the object being conditioned *in itself* by the subject's act of knowing it. For example, when I observe a rock, the rock itself is not affected by the mere fact that I know about it, although in my mind the image of the rock—the phantasm of it, to use the Thomistic term—takes the form that my mind is capable of giving the rock (which may differ from the rock's intrinsic properties),<sup>74</sup> and in *that* regard the rock is conditioned by my cognitive structure. This kind of co-conditioning obtains in the act wherein a human being knows God. We know God according to the capacity of our intellect. Again, there is no suggestion in Rahner's thought that God *in Godself* is ontologically conditioned by our knowledge of God. Yet Molnar apparently believes that that is what is entailed in the claim that human beings know God through transcendental revelation. He alleges that this claim “obliterates any essential difference between Creator and creature.”<sup>75</sup> He also calls the idea of mutual conditioning “the hallmark compromise of the divine freedom sought by the *creatio ex nihilo*.”<sup>76</sup> His argument is that if God must reveal Godself, and if in revealing Godself God is conditioned by us, then God is neither free nor truly transcendent of creation. Necessity is thrust upon God by us creatures and God becomes enmeshed with the created order. A God who is “subject to the a priori structures of human knowledge . . . cannot possibly be free,” and in making God so subject, Rahner

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<sup>74</sup> This, of course, is the epistemological limitation to which Kant pointed when he argued that we can only know how a thing is perceivable *by us*—we can never claim to attain *das Ding an sich*, the thing in itself.

<sup>75</sup> Molnar, “Can We Know God Directly?” 232 n.15.

<sup>76</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 104.

commits himself to “a pantheist position” wherein “[i]t is literally impossible and unnecessary for [him] to distinguish God from man.”<sup>77</sup>

I believe that Molnar seriously misinterprets Rahner’s thought on this topic. He takes issue, for example, with Rahner’s statement that the mystery of Godself and our transcendence to this mystery “are mutually dependent on each other for their intelligibility” within the moment of the experience of transcendental revelation.<sup>78</sup> Here it seems obvious to me that Rahner is simply putting his finger on the point that if we are to encounter God, God must be present to be encountered and we must have the encounter in terms of the spiritual dynamism that belongs to our nature as it is endowed with God’s grace.<sup>79</sup> He is describing what in his view the event logically must involve if it is to

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<sup>77</sup> Molnar, “Can We Know God Directly?” 250.

<sup>78</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 68.

<sup>79</sup> It would take us too far afield to discuss here Rahner’s theology of the relationship between nature and grace at length, but a brief word is perhaps in order. According to him, God offers Godself in love to every human being, and “[m]an should be *able* to receive this Love which is God himself; he must have a congeniality for it. He must be able to accept it (and hence grace, the beatific vision) as one who has room and scope, understanding and desire for it. Thus he must have a real ‘potency’ for it. He must have it *always*. He is indeed someone always addressed and claimed by this Love. For, as he now in fact is, he is created for it; he is thought and called into being so that Love might bestow itself. To this extent this ‘potency’ is what is inmost and most authentic in him, the centre and root of what he is absolutely. He must have it *always*: for even one of the damned, who has turned away from this Love and made himself incapable of receiving this Love, must still be really able to experience this Love (which being scorned now burns like fire) as that to which he is ordained in the ground of his concrete being; he must consequently always remain what he was created as: the burning longing for God himself in the immediacy of his own threefold life. The capacity for the God of self-bestowing personal Love is the central and abiding existential of man as he really is” (Rahner, “Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, 297-317: 312). This is the well-known idea of the “supernatural existential.” As an existential, it is not an element of human *nature*—which, considered in the abstract, could exist without the endowment of a capacity for divine love—and yet as a matter of concrete fact it is a universally occurring feature of human existence and it indeed plays a role in shaping the very structure of that existence; it is present in us prior to our freedom, our self-understanding, and our experience, and it provides a condition under which these are exercised (see Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 133, and David Coffey, “The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential,” *Theological Studies* 64 [2004], 95-118: 96). The fact that human nature might (in theory) exist without being characterized by this innate longing for and receptivity to grace is crucial for recognizing what it means to call it supernatural: If it were a necessary element of human nature, God would seemingly be *required* to offer grace (which for Rahner is ultimately Godself) to us because being human would by definition consist of desiring God; it would be both unjust and nonsensical for God to make a creature whose essence is to desire God and then deny it the satisfaction of that desire. On the other hand, if our nature does not *in and of itself* include a capacity for God, then that capacity is something that elevates nature above what it would be in itself. This is what makes God’s love a free gift, i.e., what makes it grace (Rahner, “Concerning the Relationship between

happen and what we must recognize about the event if we are to grasp it at all. It is imperative to recognize that he is speaking strictly of God and humanity as inner moments of the phenomenon of transcendental revelation. He is pointing out that the only way to make sense of the concept of the mystery of God *insofar as it is experienced by human beings* is to discuss that mystery in conjunction with that in us which makes it possible for us to experience it. He states explicitly that the divine mystery “exists absolutely,”<sup>80</sup> i.e., God exists unto Godself, but his focus is on the moment of transcendental revelation, and he argues that to understand the one who reveals requires that we ask simultaneously about the one to whom the revelation occurs. That is all that Rahner means when he speaks of the mystery of God as being dependent for its intelligibility on human transcendence. He is not claiming that God as Godself is ontologically dependent on humanity in any way. Yet Molnar adduces this passage in support of his assertion that “[f]or Rahner there can be no God without creatures as there can be no creatures without God.”<sup>81</sup>

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Nature and Grace,” 312-13). Again, it is true that every person possesses the supernatural existential, which means that there are no instances of human nature existing in itself, untouched by the self-offer of God. This renders “pure nature,” nature alone, a “remainder concept (*Restbegriff*)” (ibid., 313); it is the idea of what remains when we subtract the supernatural existential from the form of life that humanity concretely has. We cannot say precisely what nature would be without the supernatural existential, and yet it is important, in Rahner’s view, to retain the idea that nature *might* exist without it, for it is only in recognizing that God never *had* to offer Godself to us that we can experience the true gratuitousness of the fact that God does so (ibid., 313-15). In “Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace,” the first version of which was published in *Orienterung* in 1950, Rahner appears not yet to have worked out “how the supernatural existential is related to grace itself, and in what sense it is distinct from it” (316), but in later writings he does treat the existential as “the *beginning* of the self-communication of God in grace” (Coffey, “The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential,” 108). Coffey’s article provides a helpful survey of the development of Rahner’s thought on this question.

<sup>80</sup> Rahner, *Foundations*, 68.

<sup>81</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 104. Here, too, Molnar links God’s freedom with God’s ontological transcendence of created reality: “In order to describe the Christian God there would have to be a clear statement that his particular *freedom* precludes the idea that he can be described in revelation and grace as mutually dependent in this way” (106).

If this conclusion is as mistaken as I am arguing it is, we should ask what would lead Molnar to read Rahner's theology of revelation in such way that he would draw it. It is possible that Molnar's interpretation here is guided by his interpretation of Rahner's theology of the symbol. Molnar claims that Rahner's *theology* of the symbol is controlled by his *philosophy* of symbolic ontology, which properly pertains to created reality.<sup>82</sup> According to Molnar, Rahner regards it as acceptable to employ the principles of this metaphysics of the symbol in a description of God because the metaphysics points us to our transcendental experience of the holy mystery, which itself is genuine knowledge of God.<sup>83</sup> Molnar asserts that in fact Rahner's presupposition that "the nameless ground which we all experience is identical with the triune God known in faith" is precisely what leads him to identify the immanent Trinity with the economic Trinity.<sup>84</sup> His argument appears to be that for Rahner, because our transcendental experience really brings us into contact with God, what we learn about being in general through that experience can form the basis of valid conclusions about the being of God. Thus, when our reflection on this experience leads us to perceive that all being is symbolic in nature, we may conclude that God's being is, as well. And because what we learn therein is *knowledge*, it must match up with what we learn in categorical revelation, i.e., the special revelation of the truths of Christian faith, which indeed explicates transcendental revelation. Furthermore, because our knowledge of God is genuine, God must be in Godself as God appears to us. That means that if we know God as the economic Trinity, then we know God's immanent trinitarian being, as well.<sup>85</sup> We will observe in a moment how Rahner uses a theology of

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<sup>82</sup> Molnar, "Can We Know God Directly?" 230.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>85</sup> See *ibid.*, 249-51.

symbols to explain the link between the immanent and the economic Trinity. What is important to note here is that in Molnar's analysis, while Rahner affirms the need to ground our thinking about God in the economic trinitarian actions, he actually begins his own thought from a philosophical rather than a theological point of departure—indeed, he begins with human self-experience rather than with divine self-revelation—in his theology of the symbol just as he does in most other aspects of his theology.<sup>86</sup> This point demonstrates the relevance of Molnar's critique of Rahner's theology of revelation to our topic, the relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity. Molnar finds the theological method that he sees Rahner as using to be deeply problematic. Perhaps more importantly, though, he believes that Rahner's theology of the symbol as applied to the Trinity has disastrous consequences for a doctrine of God.

Rahner argues that “all beings are by their nature symbolic, because they necessarily ‘express’ themselves in order to attain their own nature.”<sup>87</sup> A being expresses itself in something that, in an act of formal causality, it causes to be distinct from itself and that it retains as “its own other.” The “other,” which is the symbol, originates from and therefore depends on that which is symbolized. Indeed, being an expression of the “original” is the very essence of the symbol.<sup>88</sup> It has no independent existence. At the same time, that which is symbolized *must* constitute the symbol in order to realize itself. This self-realization in the other is “the necessary mode of the fulfilment of its own essence,”<sup>89</sup> the being itself is constituted only insofar as it constitutes its symbol. Therefore, beings are symbolic primarily *for themselves*. Importantly, while the original

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<sup>86</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 106.

<sup>87</sup> Rahner, “The Theology of the Symbol,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, 221–252: 224.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

and the symbol are distinct, they are not separate. In constituting its symbol, a being makes of itself a plurality, yet this plurality does not destroy the unity of the being, but rather flows from that unity: “the ‘one’ develops, the plural stems from an original ‘one’, in a relationship of origin and consequence; the original unity, which also forms the unity which unites the plural, maintains itself while resolving itself and ‘dis-closing’ itself into a plurality in order to find itself precisely there.”<sup>90</sup> The unity finds itself precisely in the plurality because the being becomes “at one with itself” through its self-expression in the symbol. What does it mean for a being to be at one with itself? It means that the being “possesses itself” in knowledge (and love), because it is in knowing that being is realized.

The notion that being realizes itself in knowledge, and that being and knowing are therefore ultimately one, is what Rahner calls the luminosity of being, and it plays an important role in his thought. In *Spirit in the World* he develops the idea that “being and knowing are the same. Knowing is the being-present-to-self of being, and this being-present-to-self is the being of the existent.”<sup>91</sup> As Leonardo R. Silos explains,

Self-actuation is the dynamism towards the perfection (in instances, *because of* the perfection) of the Being of a being, the process through which a being achieves itself, through which it is *in act*. That, however, is the condition of possibility of [its] cognitional and volitional *Self-possession*: a being knows and is known inasmuch as it is in act (*in tantum est ens cognoscens et cognitum, inquantum est ens actu*). Being-present-to-itself is only another term for the actuality of a being, its Being, its self-actuation.<sup>92</sup>

Symbolic causality, he notes, is a mode of self-actuation.<sup>93</sup> This is to be seen when Rahner writes,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>91</sup> Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 69.

<sup>92</sup> Leonardo R. Silos, “A Note on the Notion of ‘Selbstvollzug’ in Karl Rahner,” *Philippine Studies* 13.3 (1965), 461–470: 469.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

[P]ossession of self (in knowledge and love) is . . . *the* content of that which we call being (and hence self-realization). And [a being] comes to itself in the measure in which it realizes itself by constituting a plurality. But this means that each being—in as much as it has and realizes being—is itself primarily ‘symbolic’. It expresses itself and possesses itself by doing so. It gives itself away from itself into the ‘other’, and there finds itself in knowledge and love, because it is by constituting the inward ‘other’ that it comes to (or: from) its self-fulfilment, which is the presupposition or the act of being present to itself in knowledge and love.<sup>94</sup>

For example, in human beings, the soul “expresses” itself and thereby “attains” itself, comes to its reality, in the body—specifically, one might say, through the sense faculties, which are the avenues of knowledge. This means that “the body is the symbol of the soul, in as much as it is formed as the self-realization of the soul, . . . and the soul renders itself present and makes its ‘appearance’ in the body which is distinct from it.”<sup>95</sup> This is one important sense in which humans are symbolic beings.

As noted above, Molnar believes that Rahner discovers this symbolic ontology in the world and applies it to the Trinity. Rahner, however, claims that in point of fact it is the revelation of the Trinity that leads us to recognize the symbolic nature of being, and in the light of this revelation, created symbolic existence may be seen as a *vestigium trinitatis*.<sup>96</sup> He points out that the Logos is the image and the expression (Word) of the Father. The generation of the Logos is the divine act of self-knowledge, or to put it another way, it is in the person of the Logos that the divine self-possession in knowledge takes place. Therefore,

[T]he Father is himself by the very fact that he opposes to himself the image which is of the same essence as himself, as the person who is other than himself, and so he possesses himself. But this means that the Logos is the ‘symbol’ of the Father, in the very sense which we have given the word: the inward symbol which

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<sup>94</sup> Rahner, “The Theology of the Symbol,” 229-30.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 226-28.

remains distinct from what is symbolized, which is constituted by what is symbolized, where what is symbolized expresses itself and possesses itself.<sup>97</sup>

The Father's self-expression and self-possession in the Logos is more perfect than the relationship between original and symbol is or could be in any creature, including humans. The Trinity, indeed, is the supreme mode of symbolic existence.

Apart from the fact that he objects to the method by which he thinks that Rahner reaches this conclusion, Molnar allows that the conclusion itself might be judged as "fairly innocuous."<sup>98</sup> It would not necessarily present a great problem to apply the metaphysics of the symbol to the immanent Trinity. However, Molnar asserts that when Rahner applies it to God's action in the economy, which his method forces him to do, he makes a serious error. According to Rahner, the created humanity of Jesus is the symbol of the Logos just as the Logos is the symbol of the Father: it is the self-expression of the Logos under the conditions of historical existence in the world, and it is precisely what allows the Logos "to be there" in the incarnation. "The humanity is the self-disclosure of the Logos itself, so that when God, expressing himself, exteriorizes himself, that very thing appears which we call the humanity of the Logos."<sup>99</sup> In short, the incarnation is an extension or continuation of the intrinsic act of self-expression whereby God attains God's own being.<sup>100</sup> The problem that Molnar detects here is that

[Rahner's] concept of symbolic expression operates in such a way as to suggest that since symbols must express themselves to exist, therefore God must express himself *ad intra* and *ad extra* as well . . . . And . . . since Rahner thinks the

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>98</sup> Molnar, "Can We Know God Directly?" 252. Molnar does, however, appear to fault Rahner for suggesting that because God, like all other beings, must express Godself symbolically, the intra-trinitarian relations are not free but "necessary occurrences" (251). It seems to me that this suggestion is a positive rather than a negative consequence of Rahner's argument. To deny that the trinitarian relations occur necessarily is to say that God might not exist as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I have argued that this idea is theologically undesirable.

<sup>99</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," 239.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 236-37.

expression of God's Word *ad extra* is the continuation of his necessary symbolic expression *ad intra* it is difficult if not impossible for him to maintain a clear and sharp distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity and between God's free existence *ad intra* and his free act of creation *ad extra*.<sup>101</sup>

On Molnar's reading, if God's symbolic self-expression in the Logos is necessary and if the incarnation continues that act, then the incarnation is also necessary. This, of course, means that God is not free.<sup>102</sup> It also suggests that creation must exist in order for God to complete the act of being Godself. After all, the incarnation cannot take place if there is no world, and if the incarnation is necessary, then so is the existence of the world.<sup>103</sup>

Perhaps this idea is in Molnar's mind when he states that "[f]or Rahner there can be no God without creatures as there can be no creatures without God."<sup>104</sup>

It is clear that Rahner claims that the divine self-utterance *ad extra*, i.e., the incarnation of the Logos, continues the divine self-utterance *ad intra*, i.e., the generation of the Logos from the Father. It is also clear that Rahner holds that the inner self-utterance is necessary. However, it is not clear that the self-utterance *ad extra* is necessary. In fact, Rahner explicitly denies that it is.<sup>105</sup> Molnar's position is that Rahner cannot logically make that denial because his symbolic ontology holds that beings must express themselves and that they attain their own nature only in this expression, which

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<sup>101</sup> Paul D. Molnar, *Incarnation and Resurrection: Toward a Contemporary Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 75.

<sup>102</sup> Molnar writes, "[S]ince, according to [Rahner's] symbolic ontology, 'All beings must express themselves', God can express himself outwardly only 'because God "must" "express" himself inwardly'. Thus, when Rahner describes the incarnation as the continuation of God's inner symbolic movement *ad extra*, he conceptually compromises God's freedom to have existed without becoming incarnate" (*Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 162; the second phrase that Molnar puts within quotation marks is cited from Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," 236).

<sup>103</sup> Molnar, "Can We Know God Directly?" 253-55.

<sup>104</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 104.

<sup>105</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," 237: the created continuation of God's self-utterance is "a free continuation, because its object is finite." In "On the Theology of the Incarnation," he writes, "God himself goes out of himself, God in his quality of the fullness which gives away itself. He can do this. Indeed, his power of subjecting himself to history is primary among his free possibilities. (It is not a primal must!) And for this reason, Scripture defines him as love—whose prodigal freedom is the indefinable itself" (115).

means that that which expresses itself and that in which it is expressed mutually condition one another and are mutually necessary.<sup>106</sup> Yet I believe that Molnar misses a key difference in the kinds of necessity that obtain in the case of God's interior self-expression and in the case of God's exterior self-expression.

While it must be admitted that Rahner does not offer a clear account of the difference between the way in which the Logos symbolizes the Father and the way in which the humanity of Jesus symbolizes the Logos, I think that the fairest and most accurate way to read him is to recognize that such a difference exists. The difference is between an absolute and a conditional necessity. It is impossible for the Father not to generate the Logos because it is only in doing so that the Father possesses himself in knowledge and in that moment actuates his own being. Therefore, the Father's self-symbolization in the Logos is absolutely necessary. Now, Rahner maintains that when God utters Godself into the non-divine in order to address the non-divine, "that precisely is born which we call human nature."<sup>107</sup> Indeed, he seems to suggest that if God is to exteriorize Godself in this way, the act *naturally and inevitably* results in the incarnation.<sup>108</sup> If that reading is correct, then it may and must be said that it is necessary for the Logos to constitute the human nature of Christ as his symbol. However, this is a conditional necessity: the existence of Christ's human nature is necessary only because God freely chooses to bring about the state of affairs that requires it, i.e., God's self-utterance *ad extra*. It would be absurd to call inferring that necessity an infringement of divine freedom or divine transcendence. As I see it, the difference between God's

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<sup>106</sup> See Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 259: "there is a *mutually causal relation* between" the symbol and the thing symbolized (emphasis added).

<sup>107</sup> Rahner, *The Trinity*, 33.

<sup>108</sup> See Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," 113-17.

absolutely necessary internal self-symbolization in the generation of the Logos and God's conditionally necessary external self-symbolization in the incarnation of the Logos is implicit in Rahner's account because he insists that the latter is free. Molnar does not perceive this. Yet his critique is useful insofar as it highlights the need to make explicit what is only implied by Rahner, namely, that while the divine self-utterance *ad extra* continues the divine self-utterance *ad intra*, the phenomenon of symbolization that takes place in the one is only analogous, not completely structurally identical, to that which takes place in the other.<sup>109</sup>

Perhaps the simplest way to characterize Molnar's most serious objection to Rahner's application of symbolic ontology to God is this: Rahner makes the economic Trinity the symbol of the immanent Trinity, and because symbols are necessary for the fulfillment of the being of that which they symbolize, the immanent Trinity becomes the economic Trinity out of necessity. Molnar believes that this move compromises divine freedom and transcendence because it "allow[s] history to condition God's own being and action."<sup>110</sup> He finds that allowance cropping up widely in contemporary trinitarian theology, to theology's detriment.<sup>111</sup> His solution is to retrieve the Barthian insistence that we draw a deliberate and sharp distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity. As Michael T. Dempsey explains,

[F]or Molnar, everything depends on not conflating or collapsing the immanent into the economic Trinity or identifying the two without remainder. If God is *a se* only as God is *pro nobis*, then the being of God is conceived, quite explicitly, in terms of human beings (anthropocentrism), but not in terms of the inconceivable

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<sup>109</sup> Of course, it also true that the Father's self-symbolization in the Logos and the Logos's self-symbolization in the human nature of Christ are each only analogous to the way in which the human spirit symbolizes itself in the body.

<sup>110</sup> Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 166.

<sup>111</sup> Molnar is correct that recent theology has seen the embrace of the idea that God is conditioned by history. As shown above, LaCugna and Moltmann are among those who actively promote it.

perfection and glory of God to reveal himself to us as God is in himself. It is thus essential that, in order to understand and appreciate what it means to say that God is for us, we must also understand what it means for God to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in himself. “The covenant of grace is a covenant of *grace*,” Molnar writes, “because it expresses the free overflow of God’s eternal love that takes place in pre-temporal eternity as the Father begets the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit.” The being of God must be understood as complete in the perfection of God’s own eternal, inner-Trinitarian life and would remain so even if there had been no creation, reconciliation, or redemption. And it is precisely this that constitutes the truth of Christian faith and the gratuity of grace.<sup>112</sup>

Because of this, Molnar is unwilling to endorse Rahner’s axiom that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa.

Yves Congar, by contrast, finds value in the axiom, although, he, too expresses a concern for preserving divine transcendence. He regards the assertion that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity as being beyond dispute because the missions of the Son and the Spirit simply *are* their eternal processions resulting in effects in the created order.<sup>113</sup> However, he points out that “there is a distinction between the economic, revealed Trinity and the eternal Trinity” because of the kenotic character of God’s self-communication to the world. For example, the Father is omnipotent but does not use his power to obliterate evil; the Son is the divine Wisdom, but he is known first as “the wisdom of the cross” that appears as foolishness; and the Spirit “has no face” in the world “and has often been called the unknown one.”<sup>114</sup> The economic Trinity reveals the immanent but does not reveal it entirely. Congar therefore urges caution regarding the second half of Rahner’s axiom—the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity. If it is to

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<sup>112</sup> Michael T. Dempsey, “Introduction,” *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology*, ed. idem. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 1-25: 8-9. Dempsey quotes from Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, 63.

<sup>113</sup> Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 3, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad, 1983 [1979-80]), 12.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

be accepted, it must be qualified. Otherwise, it could be taken to mean that the immanent Trinity is *only* what appears to us in the economy.<sup>115</sup>

Congar's warning points to the need to see that, as Walter Kasper puts it, Rahner's axiom must not be understood as identifying the immanent Trinity with the economic Trinity "along the lines of the tautological formula  $A = A$ . The 'is' in this axiom must be understood as meaning not an identification but rather a non-deducible, free, gracious, historical presence of the immanent Trinity in the economic Trinity."<sup>116</sup> The axiom is, indeed, frequently read as a statement that the immanent and the economic Trinity are simply identical.<sup>117</sup> I believe that when Rahner proposes it, his point is neither that there is no difference between the former and the latter, nor that the one is simply indistinguishable from the other. In the crucial section of *The Trinity* "God's Threefold Relation to Us in the Order of Grace"—which receives curiously little attention in much of the literature on the axiom—he explains what he means by it. What Rahner does there, as I read him, is to attempt to exemplify the pattern that our minds should follow in thinking through the immanent-economic dynamic: if we begin a thought with the immanent Trinity, we must proceed to the economic Trinity; if we begin a thought with the economic Trinity, we must proceed to the immanent Trinity. When we consider the immanent Trinity, we must recognize that the three persons communicate themselves—i.e., in one communication that has a threefold aspect—according to the manner in which

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>116</sup> Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Crossroad: New York, 1984), 276.

<sup>117</sup> See Sanders, *The Image of the Immanent Trinity*, which surveys theologians who radicalize Rahner's axiom and those who restrict it. According to Sanders, thinkers in both camps treat the axiom as asserting the identity of the immanent and the economic Trinity, and one group wishes to push the implications of this assertion further than Rahner did while the other wishes to limit the sense in which the immanent Trinity can be considered identical with the economic Trinity.

they subsist in relation to one another, for “these persons do not differ from their own way of communicating themselves.”<sup>118</sup> Thus,

The Father gives himself to us too as *Father*, that is, precisely because and insofar as he himself, being essentially with *himself*, utters himself and *in this way* communicates the Son as his own, personal self-manifestation; and because and insofar as the Father and the Son (receiving from the Father), welcoming each other in love, drawn and returning to each other, communicate themselves *in this way*, as received in mutual love, that is, as Holy Spirit. God relates to us in a threefold manner, and this threefold, free, and gratuitous relation to us *is* not merely a copy or an analogy of the inner Trinity, but this Trinity itself, albeit as freely and gratuitously communicated.<sup>119</sup>

The immanent Trinity is itself (also) the economic Trinity. When we consider the economic Trinity, we must recognize that we are dealing with the self-communication of God to the world, and what is communicated is not “God in general” but the divine persons. Observe Rahner’s phenomenological description of the threefold aspect of this self-communication:

It is the self-communication in which that which is given remains sovereign, incomprehensible, continuing, even as received, to dwell in its uncontrollable incomprehensible originality. It is a self-communication in which the God who manifests himself “is there” as self-uttered truth and as freely, historically disposing sovereignty. It is a self-communication, in which the God who communicates himself causes in the one who receives him the act of loving welcome, and causes it in such a way that his welcoming does not bring the communication down to the purely created level.<sup>120</sup>

These three aspects correspond to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, respectively. Rahner insists that the aspects are truly distinct from each other within the dimension of salvation history<sup>121</sup> and that they therefore disclose real distinctions in God’s inner life: “The ‘threefoldness’ of God’s relation to us in Christ’s order of grace is already the reality

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<sup>118</sup> Rahner, *The Trinity*, 36.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

of God as it is in itself: a three-personal one.”<sup>122</sup> The economic Trinity is itself the presence in history of the immanent Trinity.

If my reading is correct, then Rahner is misinterpreted when he is seen as *simply* claiming that the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity are *strictly* identical. To be sure, he denies that we can adequately distinguish between the doctrine of the Trinity and the economy of salvation,<sup>123</sup> which is another way of saying that we cannot separate the mystery of the immanent Trinity from the mystery of the self-manifestation of the triune God among us. My point, though, is that *Rahner’s* point in introducing his axiom is not to claim a one-to-one correspondence between the immanent and the economic Trinity. However, as noted above, the axiom has taken on a life of its own, and in that life the question of what Rahner himself meant by it has often been elided. This is not altogether a bad thing. It may be said that because Rahner put forward his axiom, the thesis that the immanent and the economic Trinity are identical *tout court* has emerged as an idea to be addressed in its own right.

One of the most useful creative responses to this development is Fred Sanders’ proposal that the economic Trinity be understood as the image of the immanent. Sanders appeals to the concept of image in Athanasius’ christology. The Son is the image of the Father, being that in which (the one in whom) the Father eternally beholds himself; the Son is begotten as the Father’s self-expression in Wisdom (according to the common fourth-century interpretation of Proverbs 7), which the Father has never been without and in which he delights (Prov. 7.30).<sup>124</sup> Sanders emphasizes that Athanasius’ notion of image

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>124</sup> On this, see Athanasius, *Orationes adversus Arianos* 1.20, Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca*, 161 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1857-66), vol. 26, 53.

parallels his concept of *homoousios*, which not only indicates sameness of essence, but also includes “a certain directional component, such that while the Son is confessed to be *homoousios* with the Father, there is something inappropriate about describing the Father as *bomoousios* with the Son.” The directional element of the term indicates that in a relationship of consubstantiality, the second term (here, the Son) derives from the first—an order that is not reversible.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, the Son is the image of the Father, but the Father could never be called the image of the Son. Of course, the Son in his incarnation serves as the image of the Father *for us*—Jesus declares, “he who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14.9). With this concept of image in mind, Sanders proceeds,

This personal presence of the Son in the economy of salvation, as the presence of that person who is the perfect self-expression of the Father, makes possible the presence of the Trinity in the economy of salvation. Because the Son is the image of the Father within the immanent Trinity, the Son’s presence in salvation history makes the economic Trinity the image of the immanent Trinity.<sup>126</sup>

Sanders compares this “*eikonic*” approach to the relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity with the axiom that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and *vice versa*, noting that his approach does not admit the possibility of a “*vice versa*” because of its unidirectional thrust: just as the Father is not the image of the Son, so the immanent Trinity is not the image of the economic Trinity.<sup>127</sup> This suggests that the reality of who God is as the eternal Trinity determines the shape of God’s action in history, while the reverse is not true. Sanders’ proposal therefore secures the ontological priority of the immanent Trinity to the economic, thus distinguishing them in a way that preserves divine transcendence. At the same time, it firmly roots the economic Trinity in

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<sup>125</sup> Sanders, *The Image of the Immanent Trinity*, 171. Sanders’ interpretation of Athanasius is informed by R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

the immanent by making the former the definitive expression of the latter. Sanders indeed emphasizes that the only image of the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity, and he intimates that it is the only *possible* one.<sup>128</sup> For this reason his proposal “subverts the possibility of thinking of two independent ‘Trinities’ which must then be shown to stand in some relationship.”<sup>129</sup> That is, it tells us that we must think of the economic Trinity as that which images the immanent and that we must think of the immanent Trinity as that which is imaged by the economic. Sanders acknowledges that his use of the concept of image to describe the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity bears “superficial similarities” to Rahner’s use of the concept of symbol to do the same.<sup>130</sup> It appears to me that the similarities are more than superficial. Still, his model has the advantage of making the ontological priority and independence of the immanent Trinity clearer than Rahner’s scheme does, and in doing so it makes a significant contribution to the immanent-economic discussion.

### Conclusion

Understanding of the Trinity necessarily proceeds asymptotically: it is possible to approach the mystery to an ever-closer degree, but it will remain forever on the horizon as something that we cannot encompass in human thought and language. We do not and cannot understand God perfectly; our trinitarian theology can only ever be analogously accurate. Still, I have argued that it is pivotal to maintain that God’s self-revelation as the Trinity is a revelation of Godself as *intrinsically* triune and therefore that God is trinitarian apart from the economy. With Congar, one must remember, too, that in the

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 185-86.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

missions of the Son and the Spirit, God is present in the world by *kenosis*, and as such, the missions do not reveal God entirely. In *this* sense, there is a gap between the Trinity as it exists in itself and as it appears among us. Furthermore, as Barth and Molnar emphasize, it is important to draw a clear distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity insofar as the latter is a completely free continuation of the former, contingent on the gratuitous choice of God to bring about the created order in which the drama of redemption takes place. Yet the distinction should not be drawn so sharply that we make any of three mistakes.

First, we must not lose sight of the fact that the dynamism by which the eternal Trinity enters history is intrinsic to the very being of God. God's immanent life is a life of eternal imminence. God's existence is the act of being that has always been occurring, is always occurring, and is always about to (continue to) occur. It is in the nature of God—i.e., it is who God is—to be forever on the verge of being the God that God will be. This is the imminence of eternally ecstatic energy, the energy that flows between the trinitarian persons, which is God's self-love. As eternal, it is always that which is about to happen. The economic Trinity is the efflorescence of this internal energy *ad extra*. It is, so to speak, the potential energy of intra-trinitarian love having become kinetic energy in being released toward that which is not God.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> We may illustrate this idea with a common example. When an archer draws back an arrow on a bow, the arms of the bow store potential energy, which is converted to kinetic energy in the arrow when the bowstring is released. Similarly, the immanent Trinity bears within itself the potential to become the economic Trinity insofar as the inner-divine love creates the possibility of extra-divine love, and that potential is realized when God chooses to create and redeem the world. Obviously, the analogy is imperfect. Strictly speaking, when potential energy becomes kinetic energy, it is no longer potential, whereas the intra-trinitarian love remains what it is even when it is directed toward creation. The immanent Trinity does not cease to be what it is when it becomes the economic Trinity. Still, perhaps the analogy may be of some use.

Of course, this is a free efflorescence or overflow; it need not take place, and if it does, God remains free in determining *how* it takes place. The point is simply that it is the *same* energy: the extra-trinitarian love *is* the intra-trinitarian love—God loves us with the very love that God is.

Second, we must not forget what Haight and LaCugna rightly insist upon, that the chief goal of trinitarian theology is to illuminate God's work in the economy. It is neither necessary nor desirable to eliminate the immanent Trinity as an object of reflection, but reaching conclusions about God in Godself is not the primary aim of trinitarian thought. After all, it was the failure of theology sufficiently to relate trinitarian dogmatics to the concrete history of salvation that led to the long-perceived irrelevance of the doctrine of the Trinity to the other doctrines of the church and to Christian spirituality. David Coffey has sketched what I believe is the appropriate course for theology in probing the mystery of the triune God. What we find in the NT, he points out, is a "functional" concern with how God has acted to save us through Christ in the Spirit rather than a clear teaching that there are three differentiated persons in the Godhead. The latter doctrine is the achievement of the patristic church, acquired by reflection on Scripture in light of philosophical categories supplied by the Hellenistic milieu. The fathers realized that Christ's role in redemption, his functional divinity as presented in the NT, demanded as a corresponding ontological reality his existence as a divine person. They subsequently drew the same conclusion about the Holy Spirit. This thought process represents a transition from what Coffey calls the "biblical Trinity" of God, Christ, and the Spirit as saving agents to a doctrine of the immanent Trinity.<sup>132</sup> It is a process that continues in

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<sup>132</sup> David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford University, 1999), 12-16.

theology today. Our thinking must, of course, move in this direction because we are dependent on revelation for our knowledge of the Trinity at all, and the biblical writings are for us the primary data of revelation. Yet Coffey holds that Schoonenberg is “only half correct” when he asserts that “[a]ll our thinking moves from the world to God, and can never move in the opposite direction. . . . There is no way that we can draw conclusions from the Trinity to God and to the Spirit given to us; only the opposite direction is possible.”<sup>133</sup> Coffey writes that Schoonenberg’s principle

is correct in that it approves the transition from the biblical Trinity . . . to the immanent Trinity and disapproves any transition from the immanent to the biblical Trinity in the sense of the generation of new fundamental data. But it is incorrect in that it takes no account of the necessity of a return from the immanent Trinity to the biblical data to acquire the doctrine of the economic Trinity. The latter is not simply identical with the biblical Trinity. The doctrine of the biblical Trinity . . . has as its distinguishing feature a purely functional character. The economic Trinity, on the other hand, is the integration of the immanent Trinity with the biblical data, and this entails a return, a move in the direction disallowed by Schoonenberg . . . .<sup>134</sup>

In this step of the process of trinitarian thinking, we implicitly affirm that the immanent Trinity exists in its own right, but we focus on that same Trinity’s operation in history. We read the Bible anew, informed by the conclusions that we have reached about the divine persons in their internal relations to one another.<sup>135</sup> It is here that trinitarian theology is fully realized.

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<sup>133</sup> Schoonenberg, “Trinity—The Consummated Covenant,” 111.

<sup>134</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 16. He takes inspiration from Bernard Lonergan for the epistemological order of the relationships between the biblical, the immanent, and the economic Trinity. According to Lonergan, “Experiencing is only the first level of knowing; it presents the matter to be known. Understanding is only the second level of knowing; it defines the matter to be known. Knowing reaches a complete increment only with judgment, only when the experienced has been thought and the merely thought has been affirmed” (*Insight* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1958], 357). Coffey describes the data that present the biblical Trinity as “the ‘matter to be known,’” the immanent Trinity as “our understanding of these data in the world of our own intellectual culture,” and the economic Trinity as the judgment wherein we affirm that the immanent Trinity as we have understood it is indeed the Trinity at work in the world as revealed by the biblical data (*Deus Trinitas*, 17).

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

As Coffey rightly states, “[t]he proper study of the Trinity is the study of the economic Trinity, which of course presupposes both the biblical and the immanent Trinity.”<sup>136</sup> I would, however, qualify his remark that “[w]ith this enlightened return to the biblical data the inquiring mind comes to rest. There is nothing more for it to do.”<sup>137</sup> My qualification is that what is involved here is not merely the theological interpretation of Scripture. The doctrine of the economic Trinity is made up of *the ideas abstracted* from our enlightened return to Scripture. It is the set of assertions we make about the *identity* of the triune God *precisely insofar as* God is and acts for us. It consists of statements that convey such ideas as: the Father is he who does *x* in salvation history; the Son is he who does *y* in salvation history; the Holy Spirit is she who does *z* in salvation history.

This brings us to the third mistake to be avoided: as Moltmann asserts in his adaptation of Rahner’s axiom, we must not make statements about the immanent Trinity that are inconsistent with what we perceive of the Trinity in the world. We have seen that in Moltmann’s thought, this rule means that one cannot say, for example, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in salvation history but only from the Father in the eternal life of the Trinity, a point with which I concur. It also means that “the

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. Coffey himself makes the important qualification that the three-stepped process of trinitarian reflection—discovering the biblical, then the immanent, then the economic Trinity—is not something that is ever accomplished once and for all. The data of the first step consist of more than just the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. They include all that our culture, tradition, education, and religious experience bring to bear on our apprehension of the biblical doctrine, however much we try to exclude them in order to focus solely on the Bible. This consideration in itself, not to mention the communal and personal biases to which we are subject, imposes a certain selectivity on our choice of biblical data: some we shall see as important and therefore emphasize, others we shall by comparison neglect or overlook altogether. As a result, our understanding, correct though it may be as far as it goes, will of necessity be inadequate. And our affirmations, again correct as they may be, will amount only to a partial knowledge of the economic Trinity. But our contribution will add to a store of knowledge that will in turn contribute to the experience (the data) and the understanding of those who follow us, and so, with occasional setbacks as wrong or fruitless courses are chosen, our communal knowledge of the Trinity will increase into the future in a never-ending cycle, through both simple advancement and dialectic” (ibid., 18).

economic Trinity not only reveals the immanent Trinity; it also has a retroactive effect on it.”<sup>138</sup> I have given my own approval to the notion that the inner-trinitarian life is “colored” by the divine persons’ involvement in the world. Yet before proceeding in this vein, let us acknowledge at the outset that there is an exception to the rule at hand. It has been established that the kenotic conditions under which the Son and the Holy Spirit act in the world create a difference between their manner of existence among us and their manner of existence in themselves, at least as the latter is traditionally understood. When God joins Godself to creation, as occurs in the Son’s union with a human nature in Christ and in the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the church, there are significant differences between the predications to be made of God insofar as God is an eternally maximally great being and the predications to be made of God insofar as God identifies Godself with the temporal activity of ontologically limited created agents. This is true whether one accepts or rejects the notion of divine impassability. If God does suffer, it is only through God’s relationship with the world, as there would be no cause of suffering if there were no creatures. If God does not suffer, then we must distinguish between, say, the eternal peace of the Son and the change and suffering that take place in his person in history, i.e., in his human nature. In both cases we must make different predications of God in Godself and of God in the world. Furthermore, the ontological difference between God and created reality seems to render it beneficial if not necessary for *creation* that if God joins Godself to creation, God does so kenotically. Otherwise, as Sergius Bulgakov argues, this descent of God into the world would result in either the destruction of the

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<sup>138</sup> Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 245.

world or its immediate and complete transfiguration.<sup>139</sup> In a sense, these two outcomes would be equivalent because in either case the world would cease to be *itself*. For these reasons, there is a rule of *kenosis* that creates an exception to the rule that statements about the immanent Trinity should not contradict statements about the economic Trinity.

However, this exception is based strictly on the ontological difference between God and the world. There is nothing about that difference that gives us license to suppose that the structure or *taxis* of the interpersonal relations of the immanent Trinity differs from that of the economic Trinity. We may and must say that the economic Trinity does not reveal everything about the immanent Trinity. Yet there can be no suggestion that it is unreliable as a guide to understanding the immanent Trinity. In salvation history, the trinitarian persons act according to the unique properties that constitute their respective identities within the Trinity, their *propria*. This is the assumption at work in a theology of the immanent Trinity that informs a theology of the economic Trinity, which it is the purpose of the theology of the immanent Trinity to do. The doctrine of the immanent Trinity is the backbone of a full-fledged doctrine of the economic Trinity because the notion that God truly is, “antecedently in Godself,” what God shows Godself to be in salvation history is integral to the meaning of claims about trinitarian actions in the world. Of course, our only source of knowledge about the nature of the immanent Trinity is the “initial data” provided by those actions, i.e., what Coffey calls the biblical Trinity. We are required to derive a doctrine of the immanent Trinity from that, and we are required to craft the doctrine of the economic Trinity—here understood as the set of statements made about who the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are insofar as they

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<sup>139</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004 [1936]), 349-50.

are *Deus pro nobis*—in light of the understanding we have gained of the immanent Trinity. If we forgo Coffey’s terminology with its useful distinction between the biblical, the immanent, and the economic Trinity to stay with the traditional immanent-economic schema, we could say that we derive the doctrine of the immanent Trinity from the *fact* of the economic Trinity, and we then base the *doctrine* of the economic Trinity on the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. But because everything we can know about God in Godself is based on God’s self-revelation in the economy, and because we must understand the trinitarian persons as acting in salvation history according to their eternal *propria*, we cannot suppose that there is a difference between the way that the trinitarian persons relate to each other in the immanent Trinity and the way that they manifest themselves as interrelated persons when they act in the world. The economic Trinity is what Rahner calls the symbol and what Sanders calls the image of the immanent Trinity. It will be the task of the next chapter to explore the implications of this.

## CHAPTER 3: THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON, PART ONE

**Constructing a Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: The Problem of Economic Diversity and the Church's Trinitarian Tradition**

It has been established that any doctrine of the immanent Trinity must be based on the biblico-economic Trinity, i.e., on God's self-revelation in God's acts in salvation history as proclaimed in Scripture. As soon as we affirm this, however, we encounter a problem: "the sheer diversity, not only of the possible trinitarian *interpretations* to which the economy of salvation is susceptible, but of the actual economic basis of trinitarian theology itself."<sup>140</sup> That is, the biblical testimony suggests that multiple models of the economic Trinity are possible. Kilian McDonnell finds in the NT five triadic formulas, based on various orderings of the divine names, that can loosely be termed "models" of how the Holy Spirit operates in relation to God (the Father) and Christ (the Son):

(1) The Effective Act Model: God-Spirit-Christ/Son (Gal 4:6; [Matt 1:18; Luke 1:26-35; Acts 15:7-11])—the Spirit as the dynamic of God's outreach.

(2) The Kyrios Model: Christ/Jesus-God-Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22; 2 Cor 13:[14]<sup>141</sup>; [Acts 2:32-33])—Christ as the Lord of the Spirit, and the meaning of that Lordship for the role of the Spirit in history.

(3) Historical Model: Spirit-Christ-God/Father (1 Cor 12:4-6; Eph 4:4-7)—the order of history and experience.

(4) Access Model: Christ-Spirit-Father (Eph 2:18-22)—the Spirit has exclusive rights of access to the Father.

(5) Sending Model: God/Father-Christ/Son/Jesus-Spirit (Rom 8:3-17; Eph 1:3-14; [Matt 28:19; Acts 5:30-32; John 1:14, 29-34; 14:16; 15:26; possibly 1 John 1:1-4; 3:23-24])—based on the missions of the Son and the Spirit from the Father.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 213.

<sup>141</sup> The citation in the text is 2 Cor 13:13, but undoubtedly it is verse 14 that is meant (Kilian McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God: The Holy Spirit as the Universal Touch and Goal* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003], 7).

McDonnell thinks that the “predominant New Testament view” seems to combine the Historical with either the Effective Act or the Sending Model.<sup>143</sup> The Effective Act and the Sending Model could be construed as models of the economic Trinity, as could the Historical if it were interpreted as modeling our access in the Spirit through Christ the Son to the Father (see Eph. 2.18). Gary Badcock identifies three models in the NT—Father-Spirit-Son (equivalent to McDonnell’s Effective Act), Father-Son-Spirit (equivalent to the Sending Model), and a model of the Father and the Son spirating together the Spirit who is the bond of their mutual love<sup>144</sup>—and judges the three to be fundamentally diverse and not naturally compatible.<sup>145</sup>

Badcock considers three ways of dealing with this problem of economic diversity. The first attempts to resolve the problem by positing that the various proto-trinitarian models in the NT represent stages in the development of an overall conception. Badcock dismisses this because historical-critical research has shown that the broad traditions in NT thought—e.g., the Pauline, the Synoptic, the Johannine—took shape independently of each other. Therefore, he concludes, they cannot be seen as steps in a single process of development.<sup>146</sup> According to Badcock, this attempt to resolve the problem is flawed not only exegetically but also theologically. It is guided by an *a priori* assumption that the economic Trinity is identified with the immanent. The thesis that a theology of the

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 8. McDonnell writes that there is “a combination of the Effective Act (Father-Son-Spirit) and the Historical (Spirit-Son-Father) Models,” but this is clearly a slip because the Effective Act Model is supposed to be God-Spirit-Christ/Son (a reading of the biblical passages adduced for it makes this obvious), whereas the ordering of Father-Son-Spirit pertains to the Sending model. It is unclear whether McDonnell meant to identify the Effective Act or the Sending Model as the one that combines with the Historical in the predominant NT view.

<sup>144</sup> Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love*, 213.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 214-15.

immanent Trinity should be based on the economy of salvation is supposed to let the latter determine the former, but here one is interpreting the economic data in light of a trinitarian presupposition.<sup>147</sup> This means for Badcock that the thesis is being made to “militate against its original intention.”<sup>148</sup>

In my eyes, this objection is something of a red herring. The presupposition of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity is different from the presupposition that the biblical paradigms for the Trinity form a unity. The second presupposition, in fact, is rooted not in a given theology of the Trinity but in a theology of revelation that pertains to the history of the church and to Scripture. However, there is indeed a theological difficulty in the attempt to explain the diverse proto-trinitarian models in the NT as a series of stages in a progressive trajectory: it seems to assume that later developments are an improvement of earlier ideas. Yet it is very questionable, to say the least, whether the proto-trinitarian ideas that emerged in texts written later straightforwardly present an advancement of those that emerged in texts written earlier. For example, Paul’s conception of the relationship between God/the Father, Christ/the Son, and the Holy Spirit does not appear to be simply a relatively primitive form of the conception of that relationship in, say, Luke-Acts, nor does the latter appear to be simply a less-developed conception of it than is found in John. These are different conceptions that sometimes have overlapping features, which is why McDonnell can spot the Effective Act Model in Galatians as well as in Matthew and Luke or the Sending Model in Romans and Ephesians as well as in Matthew, Acts, and John. Yet we cannot put the differences between them down to one conception being a more evolved form of another unless we

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 215-16.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 216.

are willing to argue that the later corrects the earlier. But how would we justify the claim that, say, John's proto-trinitarianism has gotten right what, say, Paul's proto-trinitarianism has gotten wrong?

The second way of handling the problem of economic diversity identified by Badcock is simply to be selective about which data to use in constructing a model of the immanent Trinity. Here one determines which aspect(s) of the biblical witness should be deemed most important and focuses thereon, rendering extraneous any testimony that might suggest a contrary trinitarian vision. However, this poses two problems. First, it raises the question of the basis for one's choice of which material to use and which to exclude.<sup>149</sup> Even if one can justifiably claim that a given element of the economy of salvation is more central than another, it can be much more difficult to justify altogether leaving out of one's trinitarian model elements of the economy that could be seen as evidence for another construction that is incompatible with one's own. Yet making a given fact about the economy the basis of a model seems to necessitate such an exclusion because different economic facts lend themselves to interpretation in terms of contradictory models.<sup>150</sup> For example, there are passages in the NT that arguably suggest that the Spirit establishes the sonship of Jesus (Mark 1.9-11, with parallels in Matthew and Luke; Rom. 1.3-4) and some that indicate that the Son is "of" and therefore perhaps *from* the Spirit (Matt. 1.18, 20; Luke 1.35). There are also passages that state or suggest that the Spirit is "of" and therefore perhaps *from* the Son (e.g., Gal. 4.6; John 14.16, 26; 15.26; 16.14-15). To read either set of passages into the immanent Trinity would seem to create a model of the *taxis* that would forbid one to read the other set of passages into the

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 222-23.

immanent Trinity because doing so would disrupt this *taxis*. There is no doubt that by restricting oneself to certain elements of the economy, one can produce a coherent vision of the Trinity. However, in doing so, one encounters the second of the aforementioned problems: One's choice to restrict the economic data that one prioritizes must be made on the basis of some idea of the immanent Trinity. By exercising this restriction, then, one "appears to thwart the original purpose of the turn to the economy in contemporary trinitarian theology,"<sup>151</sup> namely, to let the economy determine one's understanding of God.

The third approach to the diversity problem identified by Badcock, which he thinks is the only way past the dilemma just described, involves recognizing that "not only do the separate moments of the economy not contain the whole of [the trinitarian] mystery, but neither even does the economy as a whole."<sup>152</sup> That is, there is not a complete identity between the economic and the immanent Trinity. We have already seen, in the last chapter, the necessity of reaching this conclusion. Still, it seems to me that it is important to construct a theology of the immanent Trinity that can incorporate and harmonize as much relevant information from salvation history as possible, and it seems that with sufficient imagination, it should be possible for theology to continue making progress in this regard.

Putting before ourselves the problem of the diversity of possible trinitarian models based on the biblical data is useful because it brings to our attention the fact that the churches in East and West each settled on a single model (with limited variations) of the trinitarian *taxis* and ever since then have explained away whatever parts of the

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 225.

biblical witness appear to conflict with it. The usual move has been to rule such evidence inadmissible by restricting its relevance to created reality. For example, theologians have denied that the Holy Spirit's work in the conception of Christ reflects a role of the Spirit in the Son's eternal generation, claiming that the creation of the humanity of Jesus tells us nothing about the origin of his uncreated person. LaCugna points to the incarnation in her argument that reading all of the economy into the inner life of God would force us to reach some "absurd conclusions," the one here being that "the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Spirit (*a Patre Spirituque*)."<sup>153</sup> This is absurd to her and others because it contravenes the accepted *taxis* Father-Son-Spirit. Many Orthodox, committed to the belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *alone*, have asserted that Christ's words about the Spirit receiving from him and being sent or given by him refer only to the Spirit's mission in the world.

For a theology that seeks to conform its understanding of the immanent Trinity as closely as possible to the biblical revelation, this kind of move is only justified where exegetical considerations *not driven by a prior commitment* to some model of the Trinity demand it. We must not read the NT data about the relationships between the trinitarian persons naïvely, but we must not dismiss parts because they are troublesome for our efforts to create a neat picture, either. It is naïve to suppose that a given statement or story was intended by its author to provide us with straightforward information about the immanent Trinity. There are few, if any, biblical passages that can be interpreted as speaking directly and unambiguously about God *in se*; the message consistently concerns the work of God *pro nobis*. This truth makes it easy, in fact, to claim that a certain datum

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<sup>153</sup> Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 220.

should be taken as revelatory only of the nature of God's operation in the world and not also of the structure of God's inner, eternal being. And in a given case the claim may be quite defensible. However, we do need to take the full biblical witness seriously if we are to be true to the project of basing our doctrine of the immanent Trinity on the economy of salvation. It is particularly important to give more consideration than has historically been given to those passages that suggest that the Holy Spirit brings about the sonship of Jesus in his conception, baptism, passion, and resurrection. This is a significant theme in the NT, and it has tended to receive short shrift in speculative trinitarianism. We must attempt to determine whether and how it should be interpreted as reflecting a role for the Holy Spirit in bringing about the eternal Sonship of the Son, i.e., within the immanent Trinity. In the next chapter, I will argue—largely in support of a thesis advanced by Thomas Weinandy—that the Spirit should be understood to have such a role, despite the fact that this idea has not enjoyed widespread acceptance in the history of theology.

It must be added, however, that for any theology to be recognizable to all Christians as thoroughly Christian, as orthodox and catholic, it must be reconcilable with the Christian tradition. This, in fact, leads us to make a necessary addendum to the statement with which we began this chapter, viz., that a doctrine of the immanent Trinity must be based on the biblico-economic Trinity. Without retracting that statement in any measure, we have to complement it with another: Statements about the immanent Trinity may take the form of inferences drawn from the inner logic of the church's universally established trinitarian dogma, which itself is founded on God's historical self-revelation. That dogma, stated most simply, is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God eternally existing as irreducibly distinct and equally divine persons. All of our

assertions about the immanent Trinity must serve to establish and elucidate the implications of this confession. Furthermore, as one of my interlocutors, Thomas F. Torrance, has written, “Any theology which is faithful to the Church of Jesus Christ within which it takes place cannot but be a theology of reconciliation, for reconciliation belongs to the essential nature and mission of the Church in the world.”<sup>154</sup> It is worthwhile as one does trinitarian theology to bear in mind the extent to which the ideas articulated might be acceptable to believers from various ecclesial bodies, especially as differences in trinitarian thinking remain emblematic of the divide between Eastern and Western churches. Here, then, we seek an understanding of the immanent Trinity that can accommodate as much as possible of the NT data concerning the relationships between the divine persons, that accords with the principles common to trinitarian theology throughout the history of the church, that is sensitive to ecumenical considerations, and that will ground an understanding of the economic Trinity that can help us to account with clarity for the relationship between the creative and the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit. The continuing discussion of the *Filioque* problem will provide our point of departure and will occupy us for the remainder of the present chapter.

### **“Opening a New Debate on the Procession of the Spirit:” The Klingenthal Proposals**

The most productive ecumenical consultations on this matter in recent memory were the pair of meetings that took place at Schloss Klingenthal under the auspices of the World Council of Churches’ Faith and Order Commission in 1978 and 1979. I will give sustained attention to the documents generated by these consultations for two reasons. First, most subsequent dialogues have failed to make significant progress beyond what

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<sup>154</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 7.

was achieved at Klingenthal in theological analysis of, or agreement about, the Spirit's procession between churches that profess the *Filioque* and those that do not.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, although more than thirty-five years have passed since the WCC meetings concluded, they remain the gold standard for ecumenical discussion of this topic. Second, theologians at Klingenthal presented a series of proposals for bringing the separated churches closer in understanding to one another, and a few of these are particularly valuable for the clarity with which they express the issues at stake and/or for the creativity with which they approach them while preserving what the authors perceive as truths belonging to the sacred deposit of tradition.<sup>156</sup>

The consultations resulted in a memorandum that briefly sketches the history of the controversy over the *Filioque* and the respective concerns that the East and the West sought to honor with their actions and arguments, and it notes points of agreement between both sides throughout history and today. The memorandum expresses the delegates' conclusion to recommend that the Creed be restored in the West to its original form—without necessarily condemning the theology of the *Filioque*—and their suggestion that the churches represented explore the value of other historically used formulations that might serve as alternative expressions of what the *Filioque* was and is intended to convey, namely:

- the Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son;
- the Spirit proceeds from the Father and rests on the Son;

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<sup>155</sup> I will revisit this claim at the conclusion of this section.

<sup>156</sup> The papers containing these proposals are published together under the heading “Opening a New Debate on the Procession of the Spirit” (hence the title of this section of my chapter) in Lukas Vischer, ed. *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy* (London & Geneva: SPCK & World Council of Churches, 1981).

– the Spirit proceeds from the Father and shines out through the Son.<sup>157</sup>

These formulations appear in the theological proposals mentioned above, to some of which we now turn.

The Old Catholic Herwig Aldenhoven objects to one specific form of filioquism. He distinguishes between the *Filioque* as it was used early in Spain to affirm the essential unity of the divine persons, Augustine’s doctrine of it, and the medieval development that affirms that the Holy Spirit has her eternal origin in the Son as well as the Father insofar as they form a single principle of the Spirit’s procession. It is the last of these that disturbs Aldenhoven. His grievance is not the common Eastern complaint that this theology confuses the persons of the Father and the Son by transferring to the latter the former’s hypostatic property of spirating the Spirit. Rather, it is that this move posits an absolute logical and ontological anteriority of the Son to the Spirit.<sup>158</sup> He bases his argument on the premise that the Trinity’s operation in the world cannot contradict its innate being, for then there would be no true divine self-revelation. He acknowledges that the divine life is communicated to us from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, which suggests a priority of the Son to the Spirit. He adds to this that “what can be said about the divine life, can also be said about the divine essence, . . . understood as the basis of the divine life,” which means that we can speak of the divine essence being from the Father through the Son. However, while this looks at first blush like an admission of the *Filioque* at the level of the intra-trinitarian communication of the divine essence, Aldenhoven states just a little later that “the divine life—or divine essence—comes *from* the Father *through* the Son . . . *in* the Spirit, who sees that this life or essence achieves its

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<sup>157</sup> *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 16.

<sup>158</sup> Herwig Aldenhoven, “The Question of the Procession of the Holy Spirit and Its Connection with the Life of the Church,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 121-32:123.

purpose in us.”<sup>159</sup> He uses “life” and “essence” interchangeably to describe what is communicated to human beings, which makes it appear that his initial remark about the divine essence does not refer to its inner-divine communication but is meant to convey that what comes to us in the gift of divine life is nothing less than the divine essence. This seems all the more likely in light of the fact that after noting that the divine life is given to us through the Son in the Spirit, he quickly adds that this does not fully describe the relationship between the two persons in that communication. After all, it is the Holy Spirit herself who makes the communication to us through Christ possible by being the one through, in, or by whom Christ is made man (Luke 1.35), offers himself as a sacrifice to the Father (Heb. 9.14), and is raised from the dead and exalted (cf. Rom. 1.4 [and 8.11]), and the one whom Christ sends because he himself received her (Acts 2.33). This means that in the divine self-communication to humanity there is not an absolute priority of the Son to the Spirit.<sup>160</sup> Aldenhoven makes the case that the operation of the Son and the Holy Spirit also presuppose each other in the phenomenon of Christian knowledge and in fact of all knowledge, and that the same holds for the establishment of human and ecclesial community.<sup>161</sup> Again, though, there would be no genuine revelation of God in history if the persons’ operations among us ran contrary to their real relations among themselves. Therefore, according to Aldenhoven,

Although we cannot draw from [the above] the *positive* conclusion that Son and Spirit also necessarily presuppose each other in the inner-trinitarian relationships, we can draw the *negative* conclusion that neither can precede the other absolutely, logically or ontologically, in the inner-trinitarian relationships and that allowance must be made for the reciprocity of their relationship, which precisely because of

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 125-26.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 127-30.

this reciprocity cannot be a relation of origin. Only their relationships to the Father are relations of origin.<sup>162</sup>

Aldenhoven is trying here to balance the principle that the Trinity is truly revealed to us with an emphasis on the apophatic character that all claims to knowledge about God ought to have.

He also addresses the notion that a logical priority of the Son to the Spirit should be deduced from the fact that the Father's name derives from his relationship to the Son and is not commonly complemented by a name, such as Breather, that indicates his relationship to the Spirit. Aldenhoven's response to this idea is based on the unstated premise that his imagined interlocutor mistakenly believes that since what we have in the trinitarian revelation is primarily a glimpse into the Father-Son relationship, the Father-Son relationship is the primary one in the Trinity. Our author asserts that while the Holy Spirit does not present her own personality to us directly like the Son does, her hiddenness is not a sure sign of her logical or ontological posteriority to him. "From a purely logical standpoint," he cautions one to bear in mind, "the hidden could undoubtedly also come first."<sup>163</sup>

Indeed, it may be interjected that the question of the Father's name deserves further consideration. The Father is known to us as "the Father" and is called by this name because he is the Father of the Son who taught us to call him by this name and who has made us sons and daughters with himself of this same Father. That we know the first trinitarian person in this capacity and by this name should not blind us to the fact that his spiration of the Spirit is as important a feature of his distinct personality as his generation of the Son. If he did not generate the Son, he would not be precisely the person he is. If

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 125.

he did not spirate the Spirit, he would not be precisely the person he is. The first truth is indicated by his name; the second is not, but it must be borne in mind when we think of the Father in his personhood—that is, with regard to what makes him who he is, what constitutes his distinct personal identity. In the immanent Trinity, the Father is as much Spirator of the Spirit as he is Father of the Son. Indeed, in the economy, the Father is as much the sender of the Spirit, the one who blows the πνεῦμα into the world and the church, as he is the sender of the Son. We receive the spiration that takes place within the immanent Trinity as the mission that is its created effect in the world.<sup>164</sup> The intra-divine spiration and the mission in which we are touched by it stand parallel in intelligibility to the intra-divine generation and the mission in which we are touched by it. It would therefore be quite correct in this respect to identify the first trinitarian person as “the Spirator” as a complementary identification to that of “the Father.”

However, a couple of caveats are in order. To begin with, what is meant by the name Spirator can by no means be separated from what is meant by the name Father because, as we shall discuss further below, the Father’s spiration of the Spirit is entirely ordered to his generation of the Son. Furthermore, it would be inappropriate to call the first trinitarian person “Our Spirator” for two interconnected reasons. The first is the obvious fact that we have not been taught to call him by any such name. Second, the practice would be theologically misguided. We have learned to address God, i.e., the first person of the Trinity, as “Father” not only because Christ did so but also because our relation to the one he called Father is a participation in and imitation of his relation to this Father. To be more specific, while we relate to this person in a number of ways (e.g., as

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<sup>164</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 43, a. 2, ad. 3, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 1 (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1948), p. 220: The “mission” of a divine person is defined as an “eternal procession, with the addition of a temporal effect.”

creatures to our Creator), it is from our participation in and imitation of Christ's unique relation to him, sonship, that we derive the unique proper name we use for him. We say "Father" because we are adopted children, adoption being a concept that conveys the sonship and daughterhood we attain yet distinguishes our sonship and daughterhood from the sonship of Christ, which as it pertains to his human nature is constitutive of his very existence, not attained in the midst thereof. That adoption takes place through the grace wherein the Holy Spirit joins us to Christ and thereby makes us participants in the Son's relation to the Father. It would be a misstep to call the Father "Our Spirator" because adoption is a created participation in the Son's generation, not in the Spirit's spiration.<sup>165</sup>

Let us return to Aldenhoven's argument. On the basis of God's activity among us, he avers, we must say that the Father alone is "the ground (αἰτία) and origin (ἀρχὴ)" of the Son and the Spirit but also that the latter are related to each other, for there are other relationships in the Trinity besides those of origin. Their relationships to each other, along with the fact that they originate from the Father in different ways, account for the hypostatic difference between them. However, Aldenhoven claims, we cannot logically define the mode of that difference. Yet in his mind, this marks not a weakness in our conception of the Trinity but rather the apophysis that necessarily characterizes it.<sup>166</sup>

Now, I believe that he does well in contending that neither the Son with the Spirit should be assigned an absolute logical or ontological precedence to the other, but I disagree with him on this last point. The theologian bears a responsibility to clarify, and in my view, if

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<sup>165</sup> Bernard Lonergan affirms that the habit of charity is a created participation in passive spiration and thus creates the base of a special relation between us and the Father—and the Son, since Lonergan holds that the Father and the Son together actively spirate the Spirit—that imitates the Spirit's relation to them (*The Triune God: Systematics*, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields [Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007], 473). My point is not to deny a claim of this sort but to clarify that the doctrine of adoption has a unique place in determining how we name the first person of the Trinity.

<sup>166</sup> Aldenhoven, "The Question of the Procession of the Holy Spirit," 131.

we speak about the intra-trinitarian relations without specifying what we mean when we claim that the Son and the Spirit come forth from the Father in different ways and that they are related to each other, we are less respecting the divine mystery than we are failing to meet our responsibility. Certainly, the apophatic note is important to sound: our formulations will always fall short of expressing the fullness of divine truth. Yet it would be strange for God to reveal that there is a hypostatic difference between the Son and the Holy Spirit if God did not suppose us to be capable of reaching some understanding of what that difference consists of.

In his paper for Klingenthal, the Orthodox theologian Boris Bobrinskoy lists three points on which the *Filioque* has positive value and is compatible with Orthodox thinking on the Trinity. The first is the idea of the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son and bond of love between them, which Gregory Palamas advocates when he compares the Spirit of the Word to a love (ἔρως) of the Father and the Word for each other and to a joy (χαρὰ) that “is common to them by mutual intimacy.”<sup>167</sup> Bobrinskoy might also have cited as an Eastern witness Epiphanius of Salamis, who calls the Holy Spirit σύνδεσμος τῆς Τριάδος, the “bond of the Trinity.”<sup>168</sup> On the other hand, Bobrinskoy qualifies this point of convergence by saying that for the Orthodox, the Spirit is not alone in playing a unitive role in the Trinity. The Father holds the Son and the Spirit together in himself as their source, and the Son does the same thing with the Father

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<sup>167</sup> Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* 36, trans. Robert E. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988), 123. Bobrinskoy alludes to this text of Palamas’s but does not cite it.

<sup>168</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *Ancoratus* 7, Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca*, 161 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1857-66), vol. 43, 28B. Subsequent references to works published in this series will be cited “PG” with the volume and column numbers.

and the Spirit because in him they “find their resting place.”<sup>169</sup> This raises a question that warrants some consideration. Western theology does not hold that the Spirit is the only trinitarian person in whom the other two persons are gathered together and united, for on the doctrine of circumincession or perichoresis, each person is understood as containing and interpenetrating the others. The East has the same doctrine, and on it each person is thought of as containing and interpenetrating the others in the same way—that is, circumincession means the same thing, takes place in the same manner, for each of the persons. However, here Bobrinskoy is describing different ways in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each hold the other two together in himself or herself. Does the West understand the Spirit’s unitive action as a *proprium*, a definitive hypostatic property, in a way that bars it from being able to say what Bobrinskoy says, that the Father and the Son each also unites the other two persons in himself in a unique way? I think not. It seems to me that the West would only object to a suggestion that the Father or the Son performs the very same unifying role as the Spirit.

According to Bobrinskoy, a second point of filioquist teaching that has a place in Orthodox theology is that the Father and the Son give the Spirit together in the economy. He notes that Orthodoxy would add that the Spirit also gives herself because every gift to creation comes from all three trinitarian persons and that as the Spirit is given to us, she also leads us to and gives us the Son and, through him, the Father.<sup>170</sup> Of course, these are fundamental truths for Western trinitarianism, as well. The third positive aspect is that “[t]he eternal Son is not extraneous to the procession of the Holy Spirit,” an idea that the Orthodox qualify by saying that the manner in which this takes place is ineffable, that it

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<sup>169</sup> Boris Bobrinskoy, “The *Filioque* Yesterday and Today,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 133-48:142.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-43.

does not involve making the Son a cause of the Spirit, and that it must not be understood as transferring to the Son the Father's hypostatic property of being the sole source of the Son and the Spirit in their divinity.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, it is crucial to affirm that the Son is not a stranger to the Spirit's eternal procession. Regarding the first of the Orthodox qualifications, I would say: of course the Son's relationship to the Spirit's procession is ineffable, just as the Son's and the Spirit's ways of coming forth from the Father are ineffable in themselves. However, neither of those relationships is so ineffable that we can say nothing about them beyond that there is such a relationship. We give some content to them merely by calling them generation and procession or spiration. To use these terms is not to claim an exhaustive knowledge of the realities to which they point, but they do identify those realities in a meaningful way. By the same token, we should be able to identify the Son's relationship to the Spirit in her procession. The second Orthodox qualification gives rise to questions to which we will return later: does the West view the Son as a cause of the Spirit's procession, and is it erroneous to do so? The third qualification touches the most fundamental point of disagreement between the East and the West on the *Filioque*, viz., whether it violates the monarchy of the Father. This, too, will be a matter for discussion in what follows.

It is refreshing to encounter an Orthodox theologian willing to say anything positive about the *Filioque*. However, Bobrinskoy is no John Beccus, and he does not fail to point out what he sees as the omissions and inadequacies of filioquism. The chief difficulty in his mind seems to be that Latin theology makes the Son prior to the Holy Spirit, which he argues creates an unbalanced picture of trinitarian relations. The East complements the Father-Son-Spirit model with that of Father-Spirit-Son. The latter is

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 143.

suited to convey the idea, associated with John Damascene, that the Spirit eternally reposes on the Son. This points to “an infinite coincidence” of the two,<sup>172</sup> whose being is “concomitant (St Gregory of Nyssa) and simultaneous (St John Damascene).”<sup>173</sup> The Holy Spirit is no more extraneous to the Son’s generation than the Son is to the Spirit’s procession.

Yet scarcely less objectionable from an Orthodox perspective is the notion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son *tanquam ab uno principio* (as from one principle), “whatever may be the explanations or attenuations of the formula.”<sup>174</sup> Here Bobrinskoy registers the perennial complaint that the *Filioque* mistakenly assigns the Son a share in the Father’s incommunicable hypostatic property of being the source of the Spirit. Anything that is common to two of the divine persons must in fact belong to all three of them. In the economy, the Son does, indeed, join the Father in giving the Spirit, but there the Spirit also gives herself as “the hypostatic gift of trinitarian grace.”<sup>175</sup>

The Orthodox can accept the idea that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds through the Son, which has been embraced by a number of their own luminaries. However, Bobrinskoy finds the *per Filium*/διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ insufficient as a formula of compromise because it is ambiguous. The Council of Florence declared explicitly that it means that the Spirit proceeds eternally from both the Father and the Son as from one principle and by a single spiration—a notion that has ever since been almost universally assumed in the West and almost universally rejected in the East. The West, therefore, has long assigned a quite specific meaning to the *per Filium*, but the expression has less clarity in Eastern

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

usage. The most certain thing that can be said about the latter is that the Orthodox do not mean by it what the West does. Bobrinskoy is surely right, then, to conclude that it is an inadequate formula for conveying the common faith of the divided churches.

As for his critique of the *Filioque* itself, his point that the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession are concomitant and simultaneous provides a salutary reminder that, as Aldenhoven argues, there is not an absolute priority of the Son to the Spirit. On the other hand, he may be overstating the matter when he asserts that "[a]ny introduction, even purely conceptual and speculative, of anteriority in the generation of the Son relative to the Spirit's recession" represents an unacceptable "rationalization and unbalancing of the trinitarian mystery."<sup>176</sup> It will be seen below that Orthodox theologians do not all agree with this. Indeed, we will need to consider further whether it is appropriate or necessary to posit some form of priority for the Son. The other point of Bobrinskoy's critique may indeed be accurately stated, namely, that the Latin teaching on the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son as from a single principle "is radically unacceptable to Orthodox theology, whatever may be the explanations or attenuations of the formula." Yet if that is accurate, it possibly reveals a fundamental problem not only in the attitude of the Orthodox toward ecumenism but also in their theological method. To say that an idea is absolutely unacceptable *no matter how it might be explained* suggests a determination not to understand the idea as it is actually held by the party who subscribes to it and whose conception of it determines its only real meaning. Saying this gives the impression that one is committed *a priori* to the belief that one's dialogue partner must be wrong—the partner's thought *cannot* be interpreted in a way that would lead to agreement but must be fitted for a Procrustean bed in one's own

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., emphasis added.

understanding so that it is perpetually perceived as error. Such a disposition would betray a lack of interest in apprehending the truth about what the West in fact professes and a commitment to a belief that is possibly demonstrably false. This would represent a flawed theological method, indeed. But perhaps Bobrinskoy does not mean that the East could never approve the West's *idea* as theologically valid but rather that it could never adopt for its own use the West's *formula, tanquam ab uno principio*, because of how that would inevitably read in Eastern ears, regardless of what the West actually means by it. In that case, if he is right, the ecumenical movement and theologies that seek to serve it have limited options, but it is not a foregone conclusion that the Orthodox will forever condemn a doctrine that at least for Catholics bears conciliar authority.

The Roman Catholic proposal for the Faith and Order meetings was given by Jean-Miguel Garrigues. We may say at the outset that it is remarkably nuanced and displays a profound ecumenical sensitivity. He begins the constructive part of his argument by echoing some remarks made by V. V. Bolotov at the end of the nineteenth century. First, the Spirit is the third trinitarian person, her existence presupposing that of the Son as well as the Father because the Father is Father precisely of the Son. In naming the first person, the Father, we immediately recognize him as having the Son with him. Thus, when we say that the Spirit proceeds from the *Father*, we presuppose the Son “being there” with the Father as the second person. It follows from this that, in the words of Bolotov, “The begetting of the Son-Word is a condition proper to God (θεοπρεπῶς) for the *unconditioned* procession of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>177</sup> He appears to mean that while the

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<sup>177</sup> Quoted in Jean-Miguel Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View of the Position now Reached in the Question of the Filioque,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 149-63: 151. Garrigues does not cite his source, but Bolotov's article originally appeared anonymously in German as “Thesen über das Filioque von

Son himself does not condition the Spirit's procession (nor does anything else), the begetting of the Son must occur in order for the Spirit's procession to take place. This is because, in addition to the fact that the Father who spirates the Spirit has the Son with him at the spiration, the begetting of the Son is in fact "the motive and the basis (and therefore the logical 'prius') for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father."<sup>178</sup>

Garrigues then cites a third reason given by the Russian theologian why the Spirit must be numbered third. If it is asked, as it was by the Arians and Macedonians, why the Spirit is not a begotten Son, the answer to give is the one that was given to them, namely, that it is because only τὸν Μονογενῆ (the Only-begotten) is begotten. "Therefore, the Son by his being as Begotten, also determines the τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως, the *modus existendi*, of the Holy Spirit, his being non-begotten."<sup>179</sup> At the risk of putting the argument too playfully, the Spirit comes forth from the Father by way of ἐκπόρευσις (procession) because the way of γέννησις (generation, begottenness) is already taken by the Son. Of course, this answer to the posed question hardly explains anything. Why can there be only one begetting? Perhaps we can aid the argument by taking recourse to other ways of conceptualizing the second person, such as Word or Image. Doing so will enable us to justify, too, Bolotov's claim that the Son's begetting is the motive and basis of the Spirit's procession. Because the expression of the divine mind is perfect, there is only one self-iteration of God, i.e., in the Logos or Word, and it is for the sake of the speaking of this Word that the divine πνεῦμα comes forth. In the same way, the Father has and can have only one reflection, one self-image. The Holy Spirit goes forth from the Father in

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einem russischen Theologen," *Revue Internationale de Théologie* 6 (1898): 681–712 and was later reprinted in French as "Thèses sur le 'Filioque' par un théologien russe," *Istina* 17 (1972): 261–89.

<sup>178</sup> Quoted in Garrigues, "A Roman Catholic View," 151–52.

<sup>179</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 152.

order to rest on this Image as the Father's loving gaze. Whatever the explanatory power of Bolotov's third argument, Garrigues accepts that the uniqueness of the Son's generation determines the Spirit's own unique mode of being.<sup>180</sup>

All of this points toward what is, according to Garrigues, the only content conveyed by the *Filioque* that can properly be claimed as dogma, namely, that "the Holy Spirit goes forth from the Father *as Father, i.e. as begetter of the unique Son.*"<sup>181</sup> In this respect, he tells us, the *Filioque* adds nothing to the dogma of the third person pronounced in the Creed; it merely spells out what the Creed already indicates in its original Greek form, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father who begets the Son. Indeed, the *Filioque* itself is not actually a dogmatic assertion but a theologoumenon. In Garrigues's usage, that term refers to two things: (1) an explication of what is implicit in a dogma, which has significance for the entire church insofar as the dogma itself is universally accepted, and (2) an explanation of a dogma from a particular theological perspective or within a particular theological tradition. The *Filioque* functions as a theologoumenon in the first sense by naming the Son in the profession that the Spirit proceeds from the Father in order to make explicit that it is as Father *of the Son* that the Father spirates the Spirit. The Eastern formula that operates as a theologoumenon in the same sense is the one associated with Photius: the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον). It makes clear that the Father is uniquely the principle (ἀρχή) from whom the Spirit ultimately originates. In other words, it affirms the monarchy of the Father, and it does so with the intention of emphasizing the uniqueness of his person. Because of this intent, Garrigues prefers to translate ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 152.

“from the one only Father.” In his rendering, the μόνου in the formula loses the polemical sense of “alone” that it has borne since its earliest usage in the *Filioque* controversy and becomes simply an emphatic declaration that the Father from whom the Spirit proceeds is unique in the Trinity, being the one unoriginated person and the principle and source (πηγή) of the other two. Each of these truths is embraced by both East and West, so both theologoumena are universally valid as long as this is all they are understood to say. In fact, the two truths can be expressed together in a single “ecumenical theologoumenon,” as Bolotov calls it, as follows: “I believe in the Holy Spirit who goes forth from the one only Father insofar as he begets the only Son (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς, ὡς τὸν Μονογενῆ γεννῶντος, ἐκπορευόμενον).”<sup>182</sup>

The East and the West have, however, developed their pneumatology in distinctive forms that should be classified as theologoumena in the second sense. A dominant trend in the Eastern tradition has seen the Son’s meditation “merely as a passive and quite non-causal condition of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone.”<sup>183</sup> The idea that has been expressed by many Orthodox was given official formulation by Patriarch Tarasius at the second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea: “The Spirit goes forth from the Father *through the Son* (ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς δι’ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον).”<sup>184</sup> Here the generation of the Son is regarded as a negative condition for the procession of the Spirit on two counts: first, because, as we saw Bolotov argue above, the uniqueness of the Son ensures that the Spirit’s procession is not a second generation, and second, because the Spirit is eternally manifested through the Son.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 154, 157.

Likewise, the *Filioque* has served as a Western theologoumenon in the second sense of that term. In the Alexandrian and Latin traditions, the monarchy is understood as the trinitarian persons' "consubstantial communion proceeding from the paternal source in the Son and then, in him and from him, in the Spirit," such that the Son's mediation in the procession of the Spirit is viewed in terms of "the relational presence of the paternal source enabling the Son to share with the Father in communicating his divinity to the Spirit." Here the Son is a *positive* condition of the Spirit's procession. Yet Garrigues adds that "this procession is seen not as the original relationship of ἐκπόρευσις from the Father in distinction from the genesis of the Son but as the final moment in the communication of the consubstantial divinity which 'proceeds' (πρόεισι) in the sequence of the divine Persons (the procession of the Son and then of the Spirit is spoken of generically)."<sup>186</sup> Neither of these explanations of *how* the Son mediates the procession of the Spirit has a dogmatic character; they are simply different approaches to the dogma that is recognized by the whole Church, namely, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father as he begets the Son.<sup>187</sup>

Whether despite or because of the fact that they derive from different perspectives, the first apophatic and the second kataphatic, these two theologoumena are compatible enough to be combined, as they are in Maximus the Confessor's formulation, "Just as the Holy Spirit exists by nature according to the essence of the Father, so too He

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 154. In *L'Esprit qui dit Père!* et le Problème du Filioque (Paris: Téqui, 1982), Garrigues discusses the fact that the Greek fathers tend to use the verb ἐκπορεύεσθαι for the procession of the Spirit as a distinct person from the Father and ποιεῖναι for the Son's and the Spirit's common going-forth from the Father. A. Edward Siecienski acknowledges the validity of this distinction but points out that it is not universally applicable because several fathers use the terms synonymously; it was over the course of some centuries that ἐκπόρευσις came to be increasingly used, and then rigidly confirmed, as a technical term for the Spirit's hypostatic origination (*The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* [Oxford: Oxford University, 2010], 82-83).

<sup>187</sup> Garrigues, "A Roman Catholic View," 155.

is by nature according to the essence of the Son, inasmuch as He goes forth essentially from the Father through/by reason of the begotten Son.”<sup>188</sup> That it would be a mistake to absolutize either approach over against the other is also suggested by the fact that illustrious exponents of each decline to commit themselves to some significant aspects of the positions that the respective traditions following them have often taken for granted. Garrigues points to Hilary’s comments on Christ’s pneumatological discourses in the Gospel of John, wherein the proto-filioquist father affirms that for the Holy Spirit to receive from the Father and to receive from the Son are the same thing, yet he hesitates to say that receiving from the Son and proceeding from the Father are the same.<sup>189</sup> Turning to the East, Garrigues notes that Gregory of Nyssa voices an openness to the possibility of a causal role of the Son in giving the Spirit her place in the Trinity when he writes,

Just as the Son is united to the Father and receives his being from him, without being posterior to him in his existence, *so the Holy Spirit in turn receives himself from the Son who is contemplated prior to the hypostasis of the Spirit solely from the standpoint of causality*, although there is no room for temporal intervals in this eternal divine life. Consequently, apart from the argument of causality, the Holy Trinity contains within itself no distinction.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., translating from Maximus’s *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 63 (PG 90, 672CD).

<sup>189</sup> Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 155. See Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.20, Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina*, 217 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1844-55), vol. 10, 251A. Subsequent references to works published in this series will be cited “PL” with the volume and column numbers. (Presumably because of a typographical error, Garrigues’s citation of the passage he quotes lists it as coming from PL 10, 215A, which is *De Trinitate* 7.20.)

<sup>190</sup> Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 156, quoting Gregory’s *Contra Eunomium* 1.42 (PG 45, 464). Theodore Stylianopoulos, commenting on Garrigues’s essay, asserts that Gregory does not actually state here that the Spirit is caused by the Son. Technically this is true. However, that appears to be the obvious implication of Gregory’s statement that it is τὸν τῆς αἰτίας λόγον (“on account of,” or “with reference to,” “a cause”) that the Son precedes the Spirit in the trinitarian order. Furthermore, Gregory explains to Ablabius in *On “Not Three Gods”* that we only understand the divine persons to be distinguished from each other in terms of causation and that the difference we perceive between the two who are caused (the Son and the Spirit) is that “one [the Son] is directly from the first Cause [the Father], and another [the Spirit] by that which is directly from the first Cause” (Gregory of Nyssa, *On “Not Three Gods”* par. 16, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, vol. 5, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1892], p. 336). Already the presupposition that causality alone distinguishes the divine persons entails that either the Son or the Spirit must somehow cause the other if they are to be distinct, and it is clear that the second would cause the third because he precedes her. Then Gregory suggests all the more clearly that the Son is a cause when he calls the Father the first Cause, implying that there is a second, and speaks of the Spirit as being caused through

Garrigues sees the fact that Hilary and Gregory take these positions as evidence that the theological explanations of the dogma of the Holy Spirit given by the Greek and Latin traditions should not be accorded the finality of the dogma itself. Unity between the churches will only come about when we center the theologoumena on it rather than on the divergent interpretations of it.<sup>191</sup> Each church should acknowledge that its formula is only one possible articulation of the truth implicit in the Creed; that the other church's theologoumenon, supported by "a venerable patristic tradition that could not be discredited by its own theologoumenon," is no less orthodox than its own; and that the two formulas, which were held concurrently in the undivided church for centuries, aim to express the same ineffable mystery.<sup>192</sup>

In one of the most helpful sections of his paper, Garrigues discusses the differences between the words used for the Spirit's procession in the Greek and Latin versions of the Creed. The Greek ἐκπόρευσις denotes a passage out of an origin that distinguishes what goes forth from that in which it originates. The Latin *procedere* "has the inverse connotation," i.e., it means "to go forward giving place to that from which one moves away and to which by that very fact one remains connected." Thomas Aquinas gives examples of *processio* that convey a "progression starting from the origin of what moves forward while maintaining with [the origin] a homogeneous link of

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(διὰ) the one who is directly from the first Cause (PG 45, 150 3B). Stylianopoulos himself acknowledges the latter point, though he maintains that Gregory "meticulously avoids" making the "easy inference" that the Son is in fact a second cause (Theodore Stylianopoulos, "The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?" *Spirit of Truth: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit*, ed. Stylianopoulos and S. Mark Heim [Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox, 1986], 25-58: 43). But if Gregory makes a point to stop short of explicitly applying the word αἰτία to the Son (as he has good reason to do after referring to the Father earlier simply as "the Cause"), he scarcely could have given a clearer hint that the Son should be understood to play a role in the Father's causation of the Spirit.

<sup>191</sup> Garrigues, "A Roman Catholic View," 156.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 157-58.

communion: it is the same stroke which proceeds from [a] point into [a] line [drawn from the point], the same light which proceeds from the sun in [a] ray, the same water which proceeds from the spring into the stream.” In each of these examples, “[t]he origin is not apprehended first of all as the principle from which a distinction issues,” as in the Greek verb ἐκπορεύομαι, “but as the starting-point of a continuous process.”<sup>193</sup> Thus, the meaning of the Latin verb that was used to refer to the Spirit’s procession in the Creed does not quite match that of the Greek verb for it. A more exact translation of ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον would have been *qui ex Patre se exportat*, “who issues from” or “who goes forth out of the Father” rather than *qui ex Patre procedit*.<sup>194</sup> The Greek word to which *procedere* corresponds is προχωρεῖν.

These linguistic distinctions become significant in Garrigues’s proposed version of the ecumenical theologoumenon. He uses προχωρῶν as equivalent to the Alexandrian fathers’ προῖδν, i.e., “proceeds” as a generic term for the origination of one thing from another—in the sense of going forward from that other, whether as from an ultimate principle or mediately. He employs it to speak about “the eternal immanent movement of trinitarian communion in which the divine nature advances from the Father into the Son and from the Son into the Holy Spirit.”<sup>195</sup> Following the tradition of the East, he reserves ἐκπορευόμενον for the going-forth out of the Father that defines the Spirit’s unique τρόπος ὑπάρξεως or manner of being within the Godhead, i.e., that which characterizes her as a distinct hypostasis.<sup>196</sup> Garrigues thus explicates the creedal declaration as

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>196</sup> I will consistently use τρόπος ὑπάρξεως in this sense. It therefore refers to the unique property belonging to the person in contradistinction to the other persons in the Godhead (paternity for the Father, filiation for the Son, procession or spiration for the Spirit). This usage stands in the tradition of the Cappadocians Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Amphilochius (see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An*

follows: “The Holy Spirit, by going forth out of the one only Father who begets the unique Son, proceeds in origin from both; in Greek: ἐκ μόνο[υ] τοῦ Πατρὸς Μονογενῆ γεννῶντος ἐκπορευόμενον καὶ ἀμφοῖν προχωρῶν; in Latin: *Ex unico Patre unicum Filium generante se exportans, ab utroque procedit*.”<sup>197</sup> Here he avoids the Latin formula *ex Patre Filioque procedit*, recognizing that *ex* tends to carry the sense of “principle” in a way that *a* does not.<sup>198</sup> Thus, to say that the Spirit proceeds *ab utroque* does not suggest that both the Father and the Son are the primary principle of the Spirit (only the Father is this); it only indicates that the Spirit—more precisely, the Spirit’s divine nature—“goes forward” from both, so that she takes her place in the trinitarian taxis as the third person who exists in consubstantial communion with the first and the second and on this account is what they are as God, which is just what the *Filioque* intends to affirm. This proposal attempts to do justice to the concerns most characteristic of Eastern and Western approaches to trinitarian theology. As will be seen, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has authoritatively accepted the explanation that Garrigues gives of the *Filioque* as referring to the communication by the Father and the Son of their consubstantial divinity to the Spirit, i.e., her proceeding (προϊόν) in the Godhead, rather than her proceeding (ἐκπορευόμενον) from the Father as principle or source.<sup>199</sup> We will

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*Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* [Oxford: Oxford University, 2004], 210, 359; and Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* [Rome: Pontificum Institutum S. Anselmi, 1955], 155-61). For them, it does not identify what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each is—an individuated subsistence—in the way that Karl Barth and Karl Rahner famously employ the term to do (see William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God* [Oxford: Oxford University, 2013], 88-89, 92-93).

<sup>197</sup> Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 160.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 160-61. He notes, first, that although Augustine uses the phrase *qui ex Patre Filioque procedit*, he “always recognized that the character of principle expressed in the Latin *ex* referred only to the Father” and, second, that the Roman liturgy used the phrase *qui a Patre filioque procedit*, “in which the Latin *ab* locates the *filioque* on the level of condition and not of cause as primary principle” (ibid.).

<sup>199</sup> That is not to say that the Council took the idea from Garrigues directly but that the idea itself has received official sanction, which makes its place in his argument all the more significant.

discuss below the question that this distinction raises, namely, what is the difference between being the origin of a divine person and communicating the divine nature?

Beneath (1) the core dogmatic assertion that the Spirit goes forth from the Father as he begets the Son and (2) the two theologoumena that attempt to *state* how the trinitarian order issues from the Father's monarchy—"the Spirit goes forth (ἐκπορευόμενον, *se exportat*) from the Father alone through the Son" and "the Spirit proceeds (πρόεισι, *procedit*) from the Father and the Son"—there is (3) the level of the Eastern and Western medieval systems that try to *explain* how the Son and the Spirit stand to each other in the trinitarian order. In Orthodox Palamism, "the Son is the condition of the Spirit only with reference to his eternal manifestation as energy negatively distinct from his origin as Person in the Father alone." In Western scholasticism, the Son causes the Spirit's procession insofar as he, in and because of his reciprocal relationship with the Father, constitutes with the Father a single principle of origin for the Spirit's person.<sup>200</sup> Whereas the theologoumena were held at the same time in the undivided church, these medieval elaborations of them developed in the context of estrangement and controversy between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Garrigues advises the churches to seek to reestablish communion around agreement about the dogmatic core, which alone will make possible a new quest for common expression of the truth that the Constantinopolitan Palamite councils on the one hand and the Councils of Lyons and Florence on the other "attempted to formulate unilaterally."<sup>201</sup>

Dumitru Staniloae of the Orthodox contingent at Klingenthal responds to Garrigues's proposal in his own paper. He views the Bolotov-Garrigues formula, "The

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<sup>200</sup> Garrigues, "A Roman Catholic View," 161.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

Holy Spirit proceeds from the only Father as He begets the only Son,” as acceptable from an Orthodox perspective, partly because it has a precedent in Gregory Palamas, who says, e.g., “The Spirit has his existence from the Father of the Son, because he who causes the Spirit to proceed is also Father.”<sup>202</sup> Now, Palamas’s statement does not quite convey the same idea as the Bolotov-Garrigues formula. In the absence of further details, the former only tells us that the first trinitarian person is both Father of the Son and Spirator of the Spirit. The latter, at least in Garrigues’s clearer articulations of it, specifies that the begetting of the Son is in fact a condition of the Spirit’s procession. In any case, though, Staniloae has no objection to this idea. He approves that it “underlines the fact that the Father causes the Spirit to proceed from himself in order to communicate him to his Son, in order to be more united with the Son by the Spirit.”<sup>203</sup> This interpretation of Garrigues’s formula not only accepts but indeed offers additional support for the supposition that the Spirit’s procession depends on the Son’s generation. Staniloae continues to amplify the implications of the formula when he remarks that it also emphasizes that the Son’s relationship to the Father is to him from whom the Spirit overflows. In this relationship, the Spirit is for the Son “the Spirit of the Son of the Father” and for the Father she is “the Spirit of the Father of the Son.”<sup>204</sup> Staniloae’s interpretation brings out the important truth that if the Son’s generation and therefore his presence with the Father is a condition of the Spirit’s procession, the coming-forth of the Spirit in turn conditions the Son’s relationship to the Father.

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<sup>202</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and His Relation to the Son, as the Basis of Our Deification and Adoption,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 174-86: 176, citing Gregory Palamas, *Gregoriou tou Palama Syggrammata*, vol. 1, ed. Panagiotes Chrestou (Thessalonica: Ethniko Hidruma Ereunon, 1962), 46.

<sup>203</sup> Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 176.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

As brilliant as his interpretation of the Bolotov-Garrigues formula is, Staniloae follows it with a bewildering commentary on the incompatibility of the formula's implications with those of the *Filioque*. He argues that if the Son had a role in the coming-forth of the Spirit into existence, then rather than making us adopted sons of the Father by grace, the Spirit would make us fathers. It is hard to trace the reasoning behind this proposition. It is perhaps a little less surprising that Staniloae would claim, as he does next, that if the Spirit proceeded from the Son as well as the Father, this would also make the Son the Father of the Spirit. Let us give Staniloae the benefit of the doubt and assume that he does not mean what this statement appears at first glance to mean, i.e., that the *Filioque* implies that the Son generates the Spirit and therefore is her Father. If the *Filioque*'s teaching that the Spirit proceeds from the Son were taken to imply that the Son *generates* the Spirit, then the teaching that the Spirit proceeds from the Father would equally have to be taken to imply that the Father generates the Spirit as a second Son (or Grandson). Staniloae's objection would thus be an Arian/Macedonian one, equally applicable to the belief that he himself (along with the entire Christian world) actually holds and refutable by the same means that he himself (along with the entire Christian world) would use to refute it. Let us assume instead that his objection stems from the typical Eastern perception that the *Filioque* confuses the hypostatic properties of the Father and the Son, since it is presupposed by the Orthodox that to have the Spirit proceed from him is a property that belongs uniquely to the Father, a *proprium* that defines him. It may be, then, that Staniloae's previous assertion hinges on the unstated presupposition that in grace the Son communicates to us through the Spirit a relationship modeled on his own hypostatic property. Staniloae would then be arguing that if the Son

in some way spirates the Spirit, then he has been turned into a second Father and therefore what he communicates to us in grace through the Holy Spirit is the hypostatic property of Fatherhood that he has appropriated from the first Father. But if this is the argument, it is at best very incomplete. Even if the Son were supposed to have “paternalized” himself by absorbing the Father’s property of spirating the Spirit (the position that we are taking Staniloae to be alleging that filioquism unwittingly takes), he would not have ceased to be generated from the (first) Father. Why could the Son/second Father not communicate to us through the Spirit grace that conforms us to his Sonship without also conforming us to his Fatherhood? Of course, to ask this is not to grant that the *Filioque* does make the Son a second Father. The purpose of the question is simply to point out that if that *were* granted, Staniloae still would not have justified his previous claim that we would be made fathers instead of sons (and daughters) through the Spirit if she proceeded from the Son. That argument never gets off the ground. And if Staniloae means something else when he pairs that initial charge with the one that the *Filioque* makes the Son the Father of the Spirit, I am unable to guess what it is. Finally, I find astonishing his ensuing claim that “if the Spirit also comes from the Son [as well as the Father], he would no more be the Spirit of the Son, but would be exclusively the Spirit of the Father.”<sup>205</sup> How can the Spirit’s being “of” the Son be at odds with her being “from”

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 176-77. Theodore Stylianopoulos correctly points out that for “comes,” one should read “originates”—“Of course the Spirit comes also from the Son!” (“The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?” 55 n. 88). He also finds this section of Staniloae’s essay to be fraught with problems. One of his criticisms is that the latter’s argument about adoption posits “a qualitative similarity between the hypostatic sonship of the Logos (immanent Trinity) with our adopted sonship by grace (economic Trinity) which is impossible by Eastern criteria since our adopted sonship is a common adoption by the Trinity” (55). As seen above, I view adoption as a created participation in generation, in the immanent sonship of the Son/Logos. However, my thinking aligns with Stylianopoulos’s up to a point, for as will be seen Chapter Six, I follow David Coffey in viewing our adoption or re-creation as sons and daughters in the Son as a work of the whole Trinity (although it is rightly appropriated to the Holy Spirit and although it is completed by a mutual possession between ourselves and the Spirit in an operation that is proper to her in the

the Son? By this logic, the Spirit's coming-forth from the Father means that she may be the Spirit of the Son, but she cannot be called the Spirit of the Father. Obviously, Staniloae does not believe that the latter is true. It is perplexing that he would imagine the former to be.

To return to Staniloae's direct remarks about the Bolotov-Garrigues formula: he does not see it as uniting in itself the *Filioque* and the ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς. For him, the statement that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone "is not a mere theologoumenon, but a point of faith" since all it does is make explicit the monarchy of the Father, a belief in which was unanimous among the fathers.<sup>206</sup> Here Staniloae misses the distinction that Garrigues draws between the universally valid dimensions of the theologoumena he discusses and the dimensions in which each serves as an expression of the theology of a particular tradition. Admittedly, Garrigues could perhaps have made that distinction a bit clearer, but as I noted above, bringing out that which is implicit in a dogma is precisely what he identifies as the function of a theologoumenon in its universally valid sense. Garrigues recognizes the ecumenical (universal) character of the words ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς, which he renders "from the one only Father"—not to deny that the Father alone is the ἀρχή of the Spirit but simply to strip away the polemical connotations attached to the phrase "from the Father alone." Yet even if Staniloae had observed Garrigues's distinction between different dimensions of a theologoumenon, it is clear that he would not have approved of any union of the ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς with the *Filioque* because he considers the latter not a theologoumenon at all but a doctrinal error on the grounds that it

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economy). See David Coffey, *"Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?" Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2005), 34.

<sup>206</sup> Staniloae, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit," 175.

“destroys . . . the monarchy of the Father”<sup>207</sup> and in fact “confounds the Father and the Son in the common in personal substance” by claiming that the Spirit proceeds from the two of them as from one principle.<sup>208</sup> Here he either ignores or rejects Garrigues’s classification of the *tanquam ab uno principio* as an elaboration or interpretation of the *Filioque* that is not strictly identical with the theologoumenon as such.<sup>209</sup>

Staniloae believes that Garrigues himself avoids the error in the classical Western teaching by modifying the formula “The Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son (*qui ex Patre filioque procedit*)” to “The Spirit who proceeds out of the Father and from the Son (*qui ex Patre et a Filio procedit*).”<sup>210</sup> This precise expression does not appear in Garrigues’s essay as published in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, but it does capture the difference that he marks between *ex* and *a*, wherein only the former designates an ultimate principle. Staniloae sees in this a distinction between the first and second persons in what they communicate to the Spirit.<sup>211</sup> To be clear, Garrigues holds that the Father and the Son both communicate the divine essence to her, but only the Father is the ultimate principle of it. It may be more accurate, then, to say that Garrigues’s distinction recognizes a distinction in *how* the Father and the Son give what they give to the Spirit. Whether this would be as satisfying to an Orthodox mind as a distinction in *what* they give is an important question. Be that what it may, Staniloae is largely satisfied with Garrigues’s explanation of the formula he follows Bolotov in proposing—at least, as Staniloae has received that explanation. Once again, he quotes Garrigues in words that do

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>209</sup> The question of the compatibility of this medieval development with the doctrine of the Father’s monarchy will be discussed in its own right below.

<sup>210</sup> Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 177.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

not appear in the latter's essay as we have it (perhaps Staniloae is working from an earlier draft?), but the substance of the quotation is the same as that of the published text of Garrigues's explanation. It should be noted that in this version, the difference between ἐκπορεύεται and πρόεισι—between the Spirit's procession in the proper sense (her τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) and her procession in the generic sense (her reception of the divine essence)—is rendered as the difference between “taking origin from” and “proceeds.” Garrigues is quoted as saying: “‘In taking his origin from the one Father who begets the one Son, the Spirit proceeds out of the Father as origin, by his Son.’ In Greek: ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς Μονογενῆ γεννῶντος ἐκπορευόμενον, ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Υἱοῦ πρόεισι. In Latin: *Ex unico Patre generante unicum Filium ortus, ex Patre et a Filio procedit.*”<sup>212</sup> The translation of ἀπὸ/*a* as “by” rather than “from” may be intended to prevent potential confusion since in English “from” can carry the sense of either ἐκ/*ex* or ἀπὸ/*a*. The nuance of Garrigues's idea requires that the respective senses of those words be distinguished: ἐκ/*ex* means “out of” or “from” in the sense of ultimate origin—the Spirit proceeds out of the Father from within him; ἀπὸ/*a* means “from” in a sense that conveys a departure from a vicinity—the Spirit proceeds from the Son as from a point on a line (along which she has already been traveling, so to speak).

Staniloae points out that this explanatory formula renders more explicit the move that Garrigues is making toward a reconciliation between Eastern and Western trinitarianism. Again, he finds it mostly satisfactory, although he would prefer not to see the word “procession” used with reference to the relation between the Spirit and the Son because it may seem to obscure the difference of that relation from the one between the

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

Spirit and the Father.<sup>213</sup> It seems to me that this point of disagreement illustrates the unlikelihood of finding a simple, easily implemented solution to the problem of what to do about the use of the word “procession” in the West. It is true that it is the most common technical term for the Spirit’s unique mode of origination from the Father. However, it is also the only technical term for the action that commonly characterizes the Son’s and the Spirit’s existence, i.e., their going-forth (the literal meaning of the verb “process,” descending from *procedere*) from the Father. As convenient as it theoretically would make things, replacing either usage of “procession” as a technical term is no easy matter. I believe that we are better off continuing to use this one word and acknowledging that it means different things in different contexts.

In any case, Staniloae puts forward some ideas that do much in the way of describing the eternal relationship between the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit from an Orthodox perspective. First, he quotes Gregory Palamas, who in turn is following Gregory Nazianzen, as calling the eternal Son the Treasurer of the Spirit. According to Staniloae, the concept of the Son as Treasurer (and personified Treasury) of the Spirit (who is personified Treasure) points to the particular, unique relationship between them as persons. Palamas invokes the image put forward by John Damascene of the Spirit reposing in the Son: it is in this repose in him that the Spirit is to be understood as the Treasure that rests in the Treasurer/Treasury.<sup>214</sup> The Damascene says that the Spirit “accompanies (συμπαρομαρτοῦν) the Word” and Palamas that “the procession accompanies (συνακολουθούσης) the begetting,” but Staniloae astutely points out that the repose of the Spirit in the Son throws more light on the “special relation” between them

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 179-81.

than does the notion that the Spirit *accompanies* him in his generation.<sup>215</sup> Yet the notion of accompaniment makes an important contribution: it speaks to the inseparability of the procession and the generation. Without this, the repose could be perceived as something that follows and is added to the Son's existence (not to say in a temporal sequence); instead, it is to be seen as intrinsic to his existence. Staniloae writes,

The Son is the living, personal, spiritual “place” of the “repose” of the Spirit[,] . . . where the Spirit dwells as if at home. . . . The procession of the Spirit from the Father finds its final fulfillment in his repose in the Son, as a personal dwelling place, beloved of the Spirit. But the Son is begotten *as* a personal dwelling place, happy to have the Treasure of the Spirit in himself, the Spirit who rests in the Son because he has all his joy in him, the fullness of joy.<sup>216</sup>

This is to say that the generation and the procession, the being of the Son and the being of the Spirit, are oriented toward each other.

Staniloae continues, arguing that still more precise articulation of the special relation between the second and third persons is given by Gregory of Cyprus, who calls it the “manifestation” (ἐκφανσις) or “shining forth” (ἐκλαψις) of the Spirit through or from the Son.<sup>217</sup> As Staniloae sees it, this idea gives a dynamic meaning to that of the Spirit's repose in the Son, as “[t]he Treasure shines out, revealing itself, from the Treasury.”<sup>218</sup> He adds that the “inner dynamic presence of the Spirit in the Son” is what makes it possible to say that her manifestation comes “‘through’ or ‘from’ the Son, words which cannot be used of the procession itself.”<sup>219</sup> Here we see in brief the position that Gregory adopts to combat a filioquist reading of patristic texts that speak of the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις through the Son. He denies that they in fact mean that the ἐκπόρευσις itself

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., emphasis added.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 182-83.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 183.

takes place through the Son, claiming that they refer to the Spirit eternally shining through the Son like the sun's light through a ray but do not indicate her having existence (ὑπαρξιν ἔχειν) as a hypostasis.<sup>220</sup> Still, for the Cypriot, Staniloae explains, the shining forth through the Son results from the procession from the Father, which enables us to say that it results from the link between procession and begetting. Indeed, this makes Gregory comfortable in using a single term, προβολή (“sending”), to refer to the Father causing both the Spirit's procession from himself and her shining forth from the Son—a “double but inseparable activity.”<sup>221</sup> It may be added that it is possible to see the inseparability of the Spirit's hypostatic origination from the Father and her manifestation through the Son as a reflection or manifestation of the inseparability of procession and generation.<sup>222</sup> Staniloae remarks that the latter ensures that the person of the Son and the person of the Spirit are necessarily interior to each other.<sup>223</sup>

Depending on how it is interpreted, this retrieval of the Byzantine fathers may provide an ecumenically useful account of the eternal relationship between the second and third persons of the Trinity. That is important, especially because the Eastern theologoumenon that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone leaves the question of her relationship to the Son conspicuously open. Answering that question is a large part of the function of the *Filioque*. Of course, the ideas put forward by Staniloae constitute a considerably different answer than filioquist theology gives. Perhaps the most consequential question to be asked is whether his description of the Spirit's relationship

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<sup>220</sup> See Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 140-43; Markos A. Orphanos, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit according to Certain Later Greek Fathers,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 21-45:27-28.

<sup>221</sup> Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 183.

<sup>222</sup> It is by no means clear that Gregory of Cyprus himself would have wished to say this—see below. This is my gloss on Staniloae's interpretation of Gregory's thought.

<sup>223</sup> Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 183.

with the Son is to be applied to their eternal constitution as hypostases—to what Latin theology would call their relations. As stated above, Gregory of Cyprus interprets the statement that the Spirit proceeds through the Son (διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεσθαι) to mean not that her ἐκπόρευσις is really by or through him but that she is manifested or shines out through him.<sup>224</sup> Here Gregory puts himself in the strange and strained position of asserting that ἐκπορευόμενον (or ἐκπορεύεσθαι) does *not* refer to the Spirit's hypostatic derivation—more precisely, that it both does and does not have this reference in the phrase ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον [ἐκπορεύεσθαι], for it does regarding “from the Father” but does not regarding “through the Son.” This interpretation does violence to the grammar and probably to the original intention of the Greek fathers' statement. Yet it is possible to see in it the preservation of a truth important to the East and the West. Gregory conceives of causality and principiativity as being equivalent, and he clearly understands διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ as denoting a causal role for the Son. That leads him to argue that predicating the phrase of the procession “would deprive the Father from being the only cause and the only source of divinity.”<sup>225</sup> His objection, therefore, aims specifically at the compromise of the Father's monarchy that is entailed by the formula *as he understands it*. His concern is one shared by the entire church. Those who profess the *Filioque* have always likewise desired to preserve the monarchy of the Father and have

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<sup>224</sup> In Gregory's words, “The Father is the foundation and the source of the Son and Spirit, and the only source of divinity, and the only cause. If, in fact, it is also said by some of the saints that the Spirit proceeds [ἐκπορεύεσθαι] through the Son, what is meant here is the eternal manifestation [ἐκφανσιν] of the Spirit by the Son, not the purely personal emanation [πρόοδον] into being of the Spirit, which has existence [ὑπαρξιν ἔχοντος] from the Father alone” (*Expositio Fidei contra Veccum*, as translated in Aristeides Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium: The Filioque Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1996], 220; some Greek words in brackets provided by Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 142).

<sup>225</sup> Gregory of Cyprus, *Expositio* 5, as translated in Papadakis, 220. Whereas Gregory understands “through the Son” to identify the Son as a cause, he is perfectly willing to apply the phrase to the creation of the world because the Son is, with the Father, the creator of the world and the cause of its existence (ibid., 9; Papadakis, 221-22).

maintained that their understanding of the former doctrine rendered it consistent with the latter. Of course, Gregory never could have been convinced of the validity of the Latin view. However, he might have been able to accept the idea that the Spirit proceeds through the Son if he had thought that “through” did not indicate causality.

This would have been to follow the path that Maximus the Confessor had trodden. Maximus affirms that the Father is the only cause of the Spirit’s hypostatic existence,<sup>226</sup> but he is willing to say that the Spirit proceeds (ἐκπορεύομενον) through the Son.<sup>227</sup> For him there is no contradiction between these ideas. It is possible—indeed, probable—that even though he uses the technical term for the Spirit’s unique hypostatic procession taking place δι’ Υἱοῦ, he is thinking of the Spirit’s procession in the more generic sense of the “progression” (προϊέναι) of the divine essence in the trinitarian taxis, for as we have seen in the citation given by Garrigues above, Maximus is arguing that “just as he [the Holy Spirit] belongs to the nature of God the Father according to his essence so he also belongs to the nature of the Son according to his essence, since he proceeds inexpressibly from the Father through his begotten Son.”<sup>228</sup> This would explain why he can defend the Latins’ use of the *Filioque* on the grounds that by it they “do not make the Son the cause of the Spirit” but “show the progression through him and thus the unity of the essence.”<sup>229</sup> It must not go unnoticed that his defense of the Latins is intended to show that they understand the Spirit’s procession in the same way that his fellow Greeks do. It seems that Gregory either was unaware of the Orthodox tradition that interprets the

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<sup>226</sup> In his defense of Latin trinitarianism, he writes that the Romans share the understanding that he and the Constantinopolitans hold, that “the Father is the one cause of the Son and the Spirit” (Maximus, *Letter to Marinus* [*Opusculum* 10; PG 91, 136], trans. in Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 80).

<sup>227</sup> Maximus, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 63.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., trans. in Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 77.

<sup>229</sup> Maximus, *Letter to Marinus*, trans. in Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 80-81.

διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ in this way or (perhaps more likely) found it too similar to the Western understanding of the procession to be accepted in his time. That is unfortunate because it indicates that the procession of the Spirit is necessarily related to the begetting of the Son much more clearly than his theory of manifestation does.

It appears to me that Staniloae is expressing Gregory's view as his own when he writes that the Spirit's manifestation can be said to be "through" and "from" the Son but that neither prepositional phrase can be applied to her procession. This would make sense in light of his response to Garrigues's elaboration of the formula he follows Bolotov in proposing, for Staniloae would prefer that the word "proceeds" not be used with reference to the Son's relation to the Spirit, even when it means *πρόεισι*, not *ἐκπορευόμενον*.<sup>230</sup> But if he does not recognize the *διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ/per Filium* formula as theologically valid, we must determine whether he puts forward a conception of the eternal relationship between the Son and the Spirit that accomplishes what it and the *Filioque* do, which is to ground the inseparability of the Spirit from the Son in her procession itself and thereby to render the intelligibility of her hypostatic identity dependent on the Son's relationship to the Father. That is a crucial element of Western trinitarianism, and indeed, the truth it seeks to clarify is, as Garrigues rightly argues, of dogmatic significance for the entire church. This truth is that the Spirit goes forth from the Father insofar as the Father begets the Son. Therefore the Spirit's procession is not tangentially related to the Son's generation by the fact that both are from the Father; on the contrary, the former mystery is intrinsically connected to the latter. If the formula *διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον* is to be disowned by Orthodox theology, can it be replaced with another concept that adequately expresses this truth?

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<sup>230</sup> Staniloae, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit," 177.

I do not believe that Gregory Palamas's teaching on the Holy Spirit's "energetic" procession through the Son does the job, at least not unless it is interpreted through another idea. Regarding Maximus the Confessor's statement that the Spirit proceeds through the Son, Palamas writes, "[W]henever you hear him say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both, because it comes from the Father essentially through the Son [ἐκ πατρὸς οὐσιωδῶς δι' υἱοῦ προχέμενον], understand reverently that he is teaching that the natural powers and energies of God are poured forth but not the Spirit's divine hypostasis."<sup>231</sup> In explaining what he claims that Maximus means, Gregory in fact corrects him, for Maximus's own words in the passage in question are that the Spirit ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσιωδῶς δι' Υἱοῦ γεννηθέντος ἀφράστως ἐκπορευόμενον ("essentially and ineffably proceeds from the Father through the begotten Son").<sup>232</sup> Gregory uses προχέμενον in place of his predecessor's ἐκπορευόμενον in order to emphasize that Maximus is not actually referring to the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις. Instead, he means that the Father's energies—the love, power, goodness, wisdom, and beauty that gush from his essence—flow out through the Son in and with the Spirit. According to Gregory, the consubstantiality and the perichoresis of the trinitarian persons make it possible to say that the Spirit belongs to Christ (i.e., to the divine Son, to whom she belongs eternally), but the hypostatic uniqueness of the Father as cause makes it impossible to say that she proceeds from the Son. Concerning her essence and her hypostasis, she "is of him, but not from him" (αὐτοῦ ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξ αὐτοῦ).<sup>233</sup> However, because she eternally reposes in and is manifested through him, it can be said that concerning her energy, she

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<sup>231</sup> Gregory Palamas, *Logos Apodeiktikos* 2.20, *Logoi Apodeiktikoi*, ed. Boris Bobrinskoy, *Gregorion tou Palama Syggrammata*, vol. 1, p. 96; English in trans. Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 146.

<sup>232</sup> Maximus, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 63.

<sup>233</sup> Gregory Palamas, *Logos Apodeiktikos* 2.29-2.30, p. 105; Orphanos, "Later Greek Fathers," 32.

“is both of him and from him” (καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ).<sup>234</sup> Here Palamas establishes a relationship between the Son and the Spirit, but it is by no means immediately clear that his idea can help with our problem. The energies come forth from the divine essence, which the Son and the Spirit receive from the Father alone in Gregory’s theology. Therefore, the Spirit does not receive them from the Son—she possesses them insofar as she possesses the essence and thus irrespective of any relationship she has to the Son. Her energies are not received through or from the Son but poured out through or from him. The idea entails that the Spirit has something to do with the Son, but there is nothing in the idea itself to suggest that a relationship between these two persons is *necessary* for either of them. Why should not the Spirit’s energies be manifested or poured out from her irrespective of the Son, just as she receives them irrespective of the Son?

We need to see the τρόπος ὑπάρξεως of the Spirit, procession, as being related to that of the Son, generation, if we are to understand the Son and the Spirit as being hypostatically related *to each other* and not just as being alike related to the Father. And indeed, *there must be* a relation between the Son and the Spirit that is quite distinct from the relation that either has to the Father. Otherwise, the Godhead would be not a Trinity but a sort of double Binity, which might be depicted as an angle rather than as a triangle. If there were no hypostatic relation between the Son and the Spirit, they would resemble each other insofar as they both possessed the Father’s essence, but they would not be persons united in difference. As I argued above, understanding the Spirit’s coming-forth from the Father as being oriented toward and united to that of the Son—for example, as

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<sup>234</sup> Gregory Palamas, *Logos Apodeiktikos* 2.73, p. 144; 1.29, p. 54; quoted at 2.30, p. 105; Orphanos, “Later Greek Fathers,” 31-32.

breath to a word or a gaze to an image—actually helps us conceptualize the difference of the τρόπος υπάρξεως of the one person from that of the other. Apart from such a relation, the resemblance between them would be like that of siblings (which is not the kind of relatedness we are seeking). In fact, if the Son and the Spirit were not hypostatically related, there would be no perichoresis between them because, as we will discuss in the next chapter, perichoretic unity is a mutual immanence grounded in a reciprocal relation between persons. But it cannot be by a union through their energies that the Son and the Spirit are hypostatically related because the energies belong to the essence, and for Gregory neither the Son nor the Spirit has anything to do with the other's reception of the essence. Neither does it help to consider the energies *in abstraction from the essence* bringing about the unity between the Son and the Spirit. The energies are participable by creatures; they are what join human beings to God. That which unites us to God surely cannot alone be that which unites two divine persons to each other.

In conclusion, if Gregory Palamas is to be invoked in the effort to resolve the question of the Spirit's eternal relationship to the Son in general and the *Filioque* controversy in particular, the solution cannot come through his teaching on the Spirit's energetic procession through/from the Son apart from the notion of a logically prior relationship between them, on which that energetic procession is based. This is important to note since Palamite theology is believed by some to hold promise for offering terms in which East and West might achieve rapprochement.<sup>235</sup> The relationship I have just

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<sup>235</sup> Robert Haddad ("The Stations of the Filioque," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 46.2 [2002], 209-268: 257-58) and Siecienski (*The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, 158) speculate that had the emperor not forbidden the Greek delegation to discuss Gregory Palamas's ideas at Ferrara-Florence, the Council might have borne more ecumenical fruit. In its document "The Filioque: A Church-Dividing Issue?: An Agreed Statement" (accessed July 12, 2015, <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/orthodox/filioque-church-dividing-issue-english.cfm>), the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation does not go so far as to advocate the

identified as essential to posit can be found in Gregory's supposition that the Spirit's procession accompanies the Son's begetting, provided that the accompaniment is interpreted to be necessary because the Spirit's going-forth from the Father is oriented toward the Son's and vice versa. Fortunately, as we have seen, this is exactly how Staniloae interprets it. He speaks of the Son being begotten *as* a dwelling place for the Spirit and of the Spirit proceeding *in order* to repose in the Son. In this light the Spirit's manifestation through the Son in whom she reposes can be viewed as the end, the purpose, of the Spirit's procession from the Father, and the flow of her energies out through him can be viewed as the natural result (rather than the basis) of that manifestation. Indeed, that is just what Staniloae makes of Gregory the Cypriot's conception of the manifestation (which is not concerned with the divine energies). He explains that according to Gregory, the Spirit's procession from the Father results in her shining forth from the Son because her procession is united to his begetting, and that Gregory expresses this by saying that "the shining out from the Son marks a progress [πρόοδον] in the existence which the Spirit receives from the Father, one might say a fulfillment, the achievement of the end for which he [the Spirit] came into existence."<sup>236</sup> With these words and in his ensuing remark that the ἐκλαμπις is a "crowning of the procession of the Spirit from the Father," Staniloae portrays the manifestation as the natural and fitting or necessary completion of the procession. It is clear that he himself

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adoption of Gregory the Cypriot's and Gregory Palamas's views on the Spirit's procession, but it submits that they "opened the way, at least, towards a deeper, more complex understanding of the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in both the East and the West" and considers it unfortunate that they did not have a greater effect on later medieval theology in either tradition.

<sup>236</sup> Staniloae, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit," 184. Oddly, in a footnote to this statement Staniloae cites a passage from the *Expositio* that makes no such claim: "For [the formula 'through the Son'] here denotes the manifestation and illumination, and not the emanation [of the Spirit] into being" (PG 142, 242B-C, trans. in Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium*, 222). What matters for my purposes, however, is that *Staniloae* holds the idea that he here attributes to Gregory.

senses that this is the implication of his reading of the Cypriot because he acknowledges that the teaching is “very bold” and that it appears to suggest that it is only in the shining forth from the Son that the Spirit receives her full existence. For this reason, Staniloae immediately adds that according to Gregory, the Spirit’s manifestation from the Son “is, in the last analysis, due to the Father,”<sup>237</sup> a qualification that preserves the monarchy of the Father. Above I posed the question whether Staniloae’s description of the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit can be applied to the constitution of their persons. It seems to me that with this last argument, he firmly establishes (1) that the existence of the Spirit depends on that of the Son and (2) that her procession is necessarily linked to his begetting. The developed form of the *Filioque* affirms more than this, but Staniloae has articulated a position that addresses in a significant way two of the major concerns that the West has aimed to satisfy through filioquism.

In connection with this I wish to make two observations. First, Staniloae feels it necessary to defend the final idea that he derives from Gregory of Cyprus—that the Spirit’s manifestation through the Son fulfills her procession from the Father, bringing it to its proper end—from the possible objection that it compromises the Father’s monarchy. His argument that it does not do so is that even though the manifestation that completes the procession is through or from the Son, that manifestation itself is ultimately due to the Father. This bears a striking similarity to the defense given in the West of the Augustinian conception of the *Filioque*. Augustine holds that the Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father, but he marks a crucial difference between the ways in which the Father and the Son are responsible for her procession: the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and only from the Father, *principaliter*, i.e., as from a principle

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<sup>237</sup> Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 184.

or ultimate source. He writes, “But the Son is born from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds principally from the Father and—the Father timelessly giving [to the Son that it should be so]—jointly from them both.”<sup>238</sup> Augustine is clearly distinguishing here between the procession’s origin in the Father (*de Patre principaliter*) and its common performance by the Father and the Son (*communiter de utroque*). The Father has it of himself that the Spirit should proceed from him, while the Son has it as a gift from the Father that the Spirit should proceed from him. At this point in the argument of *De Trinitate*, Augustine has already asserted that “the source [*principium*] of the whole divinity, or, if you prefer to say, deity, is the Father.”<sup>239</sup> Proponents of the *Filioque* have long maintained that this qualification of the claim of joint procession upholds the monarchy of the Father. It is certainly a statement that the procession from the Son “is, in the last analysis, due to the Father,” to use Staniloae’s words. He would likely be quick to reply that this is a different matter from his argument about the manifestation, that to cause the Spirit’s going-forth is a hypostatic property that the Father does not share with the Son. But the logic of the defense given for both ideas is the same.

Second, as we have seen, Garrigues views the “dominant trend” in the East of late antiquity and the early medieval period as treating the Son’s mediation “merely as a passive and quite non-causal condition of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone.”<sup>240</sup> Theodore Stylianopoulos believes that Staniloae’s essay demonstrates that in fact the Orthodox have assigned the Son an active, causal role in the eternal manifestation of the Spirit’s hypostatic existence and “an active, yet non-causal, participation . . . in the

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<sup>238</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate Libri XV* 15.47 (PL 42, 1095), my translation; see *ibid.*, 15.29 (PL 42, 1081).

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.29 (PL 42, 908).

<sup>240</sup> Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 153.

Spirit's procession from the Father."<sup>241</sup> I myself am not convinced that Staniloae's paper really does give evidence of the latter. I do not believe that it supports the idea that the Son participates in the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις at all. On the contrary, I think that Staniloae follows Gregory of Cyprus in denying as much. Also, while he undoubtedly speaks of "an active repose of the Holy Spirit in the Son,"<sup>242</sup> the dynamism here seems to belong to the Spirit—in her repose she is active, for she shines out through or from the Son—and I do not find that he similarly depicts the Son as being active in this relationship, although he does not reject the possibility that the Son could be so depicted. But regardless of whether Stylianopoulos has accurately assessed Staniloae as presenting an Orthodox pedigree for the notion that the Son non-causally but actively participates in the Spirit's procession, Stylianopoulos's embrace of that notion is in itself a move of potential ecumenical significance. It recalls the position of Maximus the Confessor, and Stylianopoulos soon validates the comparison when he quotes John Zizioulas' statement that East-West rapprochement can and should be based on the "golden rule" laid down by Maximus, viz., that it be recognized on the one hand that the Father is the sole αἴτιον (cause) in the Trinity and on the other hand that "a mediating role of the Son in the origination of the Spirit is not to be limited to the divine Economy, but relates also to the divine οὐσία."<sup>243</sup> That the Spirit proceeds out of the Father as her causal origin and that this origination is mediated by the Son as concerning her possession of the divine essence

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<sup>241</sup> Stylianopoulos, "The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?" 38.

<sup>242</sup> Staniloae, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit," 180.

<sup>243</sup> John Zizioulas, "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective," *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, vol. 1, ed. J. S. Martins (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), 29-54: 54; Stylianopoulos, "The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?" 41.

comes remarkably close to what Garrigues explains to be the meaning of the ecumenical formula that he follows Bolotov in proposing.

The final contribution to Klingenthal we must consider is that of Jürgen Moltmann. He would dispose of the *Filioque* because it does not make clear that the Father is the one source of divinity for the Son and the Spirit.<sup>244</sup> Yet he has little use for applying the causality of the Father as a general concept to the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit. It reads back into the intra-trinitarian relations a relation that exists between God as Creator—irrespective of the distinctions between the divine persons—and the world.<sup>245</sup> And just as the notion of God’s causality vis-à-vis creation is applied to God without distinguishing the persons (for all three cause creation), so the notion of the Father as cause of the Son and the Spirit leaves in obscurity the differences between the latter two, who come forth from the Father in different ways.<sup>246</sup> Moltmann would like to see the concept of “first cause” removed from trinitarian doctrine altogether and replaced with a focus on the individual relations between the persons, “for in them, the logical priority of the Father is self-evident.”<sup>247</sup> Although I share this viewpoint, it is difficult to imagine most Orthodox consenting to sideline the idea of causality as that which characterizes the Father over against the Son and the Spirit. Yet Moltmann makes a point in connection with this that must not be denied. He emphasizes that it is “as

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<sup>244</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, “Theological Proposals towards the Resolution of the *Filioque* Controversy,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 164-73: 168.

<sup>245</sup> Compare this with Thomas Aquinas’s explanation that in contrast to the Greeks, the Latins do not use “cause” interchangeably with “principle,” applying both to the Father concerning his relationship to the other persons, because “cause” appears to indicate a difference of substance and of perfection or power in that which causes and that which is caused (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 33, a. 1, ad. 1; p. 173). There is no such difference between the Father and the persons who proceed from him.

<sup>246</sup> Moltmann protests against speaking generically of two processions for the same reason (“Theological Proposals,” 171), and in fact he is similarly concerned about the language of “three persons” because it conveys only what is common and similar, not what is particular and distinct, about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—he speaks of the need to focus on the concrete rather than the abstract and thus to apply “a different concept of ‘person’” to each of them (*ibid.*, 172-73, quoted at 173).

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

*Father of the Son*, not as *monarch of the Godhead*, that the Father in eternity ‘breathes forth’ the Holy Spirit.”<sup>248</sup>

This brings us to the first part of the formula that he proposes for expressing the Spirit’s relations to the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity, namely, “the Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son.” Moving along the same path as we have seen Garrigues take, Moltmann argues that because the Father is precisely the Father of the Son, the Spirit’s procession from him presupposes the Son’s generation from him. Without being a source for the Spirit, the Son is the “material precondition” for her coming into existence. The fact that the Spirit proceeds from the Father not merely because he is the source of deity but specifically because he begets the one Son means that she “derives also from the Fatherhood of God, that is, from the relation of the Father to the Son.”<sup>249</sup>

The Holy Spirit comes forth in her hypostatic existence from the Father alone, and the Son does not participate in the communication of the divine nature to her, but he is not without a part in shaping her personality. Moltmann appeals to Epiphanius’s statement that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son as a basis in tradition for the second part of his own formula: the Spirit “receives his form from the Father and from the Son.”<sup>250</sup> The form (*Gestalt*) in question is the “face” (πρόσωπον) of the Spirit, the features of which are molded in her interpersonal relationships with the Father and the Son. Her ὑπόστασις, understood strictly as her mode of subsistence and thus denoting her ὕπαρξις (being, existence) with respect to its origin, is from the Father. Her πρόσωπον, understood as εἶδος (form, shape, image) and thus denoting the

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 179; see 169.

manifestation of her particularity with respect to those with whom she is in communion, is received from the Father and the Son. *That* she is a person is due only to the Father; *how* she is a person is determined by the Son, as well, insofar as the Spirit acquires her distinctiveness precisely through her relationships with him and the Father.<sup>251</sup> Thus Moltmann calls the Spirit's *πρόσωπον* her “relational form.” When he repeats the argument of this essay in *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, he refers to it as her “relational, perichoretic form.”<sup>252</sup>

This last fact is perhaps revelatory. It seems to make explicit what his description of the Spirit's *πρόσωπον* suggests: that the reception of form is simply that which occurs between the trinitarian persons in their relations to one another. Moltmann writes of them, “They have the divine nature in common; but their particular individual nature is determined in their relationship to one another. . . . The three divine Persons exist in their particular unique natures as Father, Son and Spirit in their relationships to one another, and are determined through these relationships.”<sup>253</sup> He means that the nature of each one's personality (the nature of Fatherhood, of Sonship, and of Spirithood) is defined by that person's relations to the other two. “The inner being of the Persons is moulded by these relationships.”<sup>254</sup> They exist only in their relations to one another. Moreover, these relations render the persons so interior to one another that they exist wholly in one another, which is the meaning of perichoresis. And this doctrine eliminates the possibility of subordinationism in the Trinity because it describes a reciprocal dependence of the

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 169-70. Moltmann points out that the Spirit's procession into existence is logically but of course not temporally prior to her reception of form (170).

<sup>252</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1981]), 187.

<sup>253</sup> Moltmann, “Theological Proposals,” 172.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

persons on one another—a reality that even applies to the Father.<sup>255</sup> Now, Moltmann is assuredly correct about the nature of trinitarian relatedness and its implications in terms of perichoresis. But it appears that his account of the Spirit's reception of form, εἶδος, or πρόσωπον is simply an appropriation to the Spirit of something that in fact is true of all three persons. Each person receives his or her relational form from the other two. The Son receives his *Gestalt* from the Father and the Spirit. The Father receives his *Gestalt* from the Son and the Spirit. Therefore, Moltmann's complete formula, "The Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father of the Son, and receives his form from the Father and from the Son,"<sup>256</sup> is accurate. It conveys two important truths. However, the second truth should not be understood as stating something unique about the Spirit in distinction from the Father and the Son.

Before leaving the Klingenthal papers,<sup>257</sup> let us return for a moment to Stylianopoulos's response to them. In a commentary on Garrigues's essay, he pronounces

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 175-76

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>257</sup> At the beginning of this section, I claimed that "most subsequent dialogues have failed to make significant progress beyond what was achieved at Klingenthal in theological analysis of, or agreement about, the Spirit's procession between churches that profess the *Filioque* and those that do not." Here at the section's conclusion, it is appropriate to comment on a few of the subsequent dialogues.

In 1984 the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission issued "The Dublin Agreed Statement" (*Growth in Agreement II: Reports of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, ed. Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, and Warren G. Rusch [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 81-104), which addresses the *Filioque*. The Anglicans repeat the agreement with the Orthodox that they expressed at a previous meeting (Moscow, 1976) that the word was irregularly added to the Creed and should be removed (par. 44; *Growth in Agreement*, p. 92). The paragraphs dealing with filioquist theology are not as detailed, as clear, or indeed as accurate as one would wish them to be. The Orthodox state that they find the *Filioque* unacceptable, although they affirm that Augustine's theology of it "is capable of an Orthodox interpretation" (par. 45; *Growth in Agreement*, p. 93). The text does not explicitly explain how his theology contrasts with approaches that must be rejected outright, but one may assume that his view escapes condemnation insofar as it is not taken to include the idea that the Son is "a cause or co-cause of the existence of the Holy Spirit." This is apparent from the fact that the only theological objection to filioquism that the Orthodox raise in the Statement is that "the later Western use of the *Filioque* . . . confused 'cause of existence,'" which is identified with ἐκπόρευσις and which can only be attributed to the Father, "with 'communication of essence,'" which is identified with ἐκφάνσις and which takes place "from the Father and the Son." Curiously, the Statement associates this distinction with Maximus and Anastasius the Librarian, neither of whom speaks of a shining-forth (ἐκφάνσις) of the Spirit (see the texts cited by the

Statement: Maximus's *Letter to Marinus*, PG 90, 672 CD; Anastasius' *Letter to John the Deacon*, PL 129, 560D-561A). Moreover, where the term ἐκφάνσις does appear in Orthodox trinitarianism—beginning with Gregory the Cypriot—it does not carry the sense of “communication of essence.” If the Orthodox wished to say that the Father and the Son both communicate the divine essence to the Holy Spirit, they would be professing the *Filioque* as Garrigues explains its original significance as a theologoumenon. But they appear not to wish to do so; the most they are willing to grant is that the *Filioque* “can be understood in an Orthodox way” and to that extent may be regarded as a “Western theologoumenon,” i.e., an idea that they do not themselves embrace but do not count as an error. The Anglicans, for their part, point out that the Western teaching of the *Filioque* has never denied the Father to be “the sole ‘fount of deity’ (*fons deitatis*/πηγὴ θεότητος)” even when it has “associated the Son with the Father as the ‘principle’ (*principium*) of the Spirit” (par. 46; *Growth in Agreement*, p. 93). The Statement includes no details positively setting out the compatibility of these ideas, but again, neither do the Orthodox register a problem with the Western theology of the Father as *fons deitatis*—the only concern they voice pertains to the Father's causality. On that point, the Anglicans note that the Western tradition has generally ceased to describe the Son as a “cause” of the Spirit, and they “put on record that they do not wish to defend the use” of *causa* in this regard. In spite of this, the Statement reports that the two sides “have failed to reach full agreement” about the theological validity of the *Filioque* as doctrine, the Anglicans accepting it and the Orthodox rejecting it (par. 95; *Growth in Agreement*, p. 100). Since the Anglicans do not hold to the one filioquist claim rejected by the Orthodox in the Statement, one is left to wonder where the remaining disagreement lies.

The Orthodox-Reformed “Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity” of 1992 (accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.reformiert-online.net/agora2/docs/18warctd.pdf>), while detailed and nuanced, does not raise the issue of the *Filioque*. It reflects contentment with lines such as “the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and abides in the Son” and “The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but because of the unity of the Godhead in which each Person is perfectly and wholly God, he proceeds from the Father through the Son for the Spirit belongs to and is inseparable from the Being of the Father and of the Son. He receives from the Son and through him is given to us.” While these statements reflect a noteworthy commonality of belief and expression, they do not touch disputed points and therefore do not mark a significant advance in the doctrinal controversy—except perhaps in treating “through the Son” as a formula acceptable to both traditions, since we have seen that some Orthodox deny that the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις occurs δια τοῦ Υἱοῦ.

The “Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity, 1998” (*Growing Consensus II: Church Dialogues in the United States, 1992-2004*, vol. 2, ed. Lydia Veliko and Jeffrey Gros [Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005], 409-13) does not merely fail to make any ecumenical progress concerning the *Filioque*. On the contrary, it contains a rather astounding leap backward on the part of the Orthodox. In it they declare that they “uniformly oppose” the teaching that “the Holy Spirit eternally comes forth from the Son, so as to depend for his being and his possession of the one divine nature on the Son as well as on the Father” (“Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity,” par. 11; *Growing Consensus*, p. 412). While the denial that the Son communicates the divine nature to the Spirit is a denial of an Alexandrian Orthodox tradition, it is perhaps no great surprise that the Orthodox would here reject outright the teaching of the Council of Florence about the Spirit receiving both her personal subsistence and her essence from the Son along with the Father. What is shocking is that in this document they in fact limit their acceptance that the Son participates in the Spirit's procession to the sense that “the Spirit is sent from the Father through/and the Son in the mystery of our salvation in Christ.” For the Eastern delegation at the meeting that produced the text, “the dispute over the *Filioque* can be narrowed down to” whether one recognizes the distinction between *oikonomia* and *theologia* (ibid.). This was the stance taken by Photius in the ninth century, but by the end of the thirteenth century Gregory the Cypriot had bequeathed to Orthodoxy a sense of the need to maintain that there is an eternal relationship between the Son and the Spirit. By failing to recognize any such eternal relationship between them, the Orthodox authors of the Statement appear willing to set back the discussion between East and West over a millennium.

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation produced a document in 2003 titled “*The Filioque: A Church-Dividing Issue?: An Agreed Statement*” (accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/orthodox/filioque-church-dividing-issue-english.cfm>), which presents a carefully detailed account of the history of the

the *Filioque* erroneous on the grounds that it is incompatible with the Father's monarchy and that it erases the hypostatic distinction between him and the Son. He writes,

The context of the Creed, in which the Greek ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον ("who proceeds from the Father") parallels the earlier confessional formula ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα ("begotten from the Father"), has clearly in view the Son's and the Spirit's eternal origin from the Father and only the Father. In other words, the acquired technical meaning of procession, accurately based on the ἐκ ("out of") of the creedal term ἐκπορευόμενον ("who proceeds out of"), renders the *filioque* a doctrinal error because *in the context of the Creed the filioque formula inescapably confesses a joint cause (Father "and" Son) in the Spirit's origin*. But any ascription of joint cause to the Son in the Spirit's coming into existence or ὑπόστασις as such cannot avoid blurring the persons of the Father and the Son, according to Cappadocian presuppositions, into a single, unthinkable Father-Son person . . . .<sup>258</sup>

Stylianopoulos invokes the idea of Cappadocian presuppositions because he holds that the Nicene Creed can only be properly understood in terms of the thought of "the chief theological witnesses which stand behind it, namely, Athanasios, Basil, and Gregory the Theologian."<sup>259</sup> Now, this principle must be employed with caution. As the Creed is an

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liturgical use of the *Filioque* (and, to a lesser extent, the theology behind it) and the controversy it inspired. It outlines points of agreement on trinitarian doctrine between the Orthodox and Catholic traditions, perhaps most significantly acknowledging that both "clearly affirm that *the Father is the primordial source (archē) and ultimate cause (aitia) of the divine being*"—something that the Orthodox have generally not seen Catholic theology as clearly affirming. It also recognizes that the two traditions have developed substantially different categories and conceptions for understanding the trinitarian mystery and that the differences between them cannot be dismissed or reduced to equivalence. It concludes with a list of ways in which the churches might fulfill the Consultation's recommendation that they "commit themselves to a new and earnest dialogue concerning the origin and person of the Holy Spirit, drawing on the Holy Scriptures and on the full riches of the theological traditions of both [their] Churches, and to looking for constructive ways of expressing what is central to [their] faith on this difficult issue." All of this is quite good. However, the document does not itself seek to begin that constructive dialogue by proposing specific ideas for resolving the *Filioque* controversy, and the Consultation's "hope that many of the papers produced by [its] members" during its meetings between 1999 and 2003 would be published together "as the scholarly context for [the] common statement" has gone unfulfilled.

<sup>258</sup> Stylianopoulos, "The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?" 43-44.

<sup>259</sup> I have argued above that the Cappadocian father whom Stylianopoulos does not mention by name here, Gregory of Nyssa—who was present at the Council of Constantinople—strongly suggests that the Son has some kind of causal role in the Spirit's procession. On my reading of Athanasius, he is one of the earliest examples of the Alexandrian tradition in which the Spirit is understood to receive the essence of the Father through, and we may even say from, the Son. The Spirit is "proper to the Son's substance" just as the Son is to the Father's (Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.25.2, *Works on the Spirit*, trans. Mark

expression of the faith of the entire church, its meaning cannot be exclusively determined by the parameters of three or four theologians' ideas. But of course it is true that any consideration of the Creed's meaning must take into account what its framers intended to say by it. Here, then, we must ask, Are the creedal statements about the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession best understood as declaring *whence* the persons eternally originate and/or as defining their respective modes of origination? If so, the *Filioque* is at the very least potentially misleading. However, *pace* Stylianopoulos, I concur with André de Halleux's judgment that

the statement of the procession certainly appears to express an intention absolutely parallel to that of the Nicene Fathers in the second article of their Creed: to state that the Son is begotten of the Father was tantamount to excluding his creation from nothing; to state that the Spirit proceeds from the Father was likewise to signify that he is not a creature. It would therefore be wrong to see here the adoption of a position concerning the precise mode of the ἐκπόρευσις rather than a simple confession of the divinity of the Spirit, synonymous in this respect to all the other clauses of the pneumatological article,<sup>260</sup>

which call the Spirit the Lord and Lifegiver who is worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son and who has spoken through the prophets. This addresses the first part of Stylianopoulos' critique of the *Filioque* based on the meaning of the Creed. If statements in the Nicene Symbol about the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession are best understood as being intended to convey that the two persons, originating from the Father in their respective ways, receive his substance and are of one being with him—

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DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Galliwitz, and Lewis Ayres [Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 2011], pp. 51-137: 92). In fact, it is precisely because the Spirit belongs to the Son that she also belongs to the Father (ibid., 2.10.3-4 [3.1 in the commonly-used numbering system], pp. 118-19); it is because she is joined to the Son that she has the same nature as he and the Father (1.17.5, p. 80). This is to say that some of the major witnesses to the theology that informs the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed can be cited in support of what Garrigues identifies as the original filioquist interpretation of it (leaving aside the medieval development of the doctrine that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son *tanquam ab uno principio*).

<sup>260</sup> André de Halleux, "Towards an Ecumenical Agreement on the Procession of the Holy Spirit and the Addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed," *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 69-84: 81.

as is stated for the Son and implied for the Spirit—then the *Filioque* may be a helpful theological explanation of how the Spirit receives the Father’s substance.

However, the explanation that it gives will only be helpful if the second part of Stylianopoulos’ critique can be satisfactorily answered, i.e., if it can be shown that the *Filioque* does not blur the hypostatic distinctions between the Father and the Son by making them a joint cause of the Spirit’s procession. In his mind, the *Filioque* needs to be “modified or at least authoritatively interpreted” in a way that demonstrates its alignment with the “intentionality” of the Creed.<sup>261</sup> The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity attempted to provide just such an authoritative interpretation ten years after Stylianopoulos’ essay was published.

### **The Vatican Clarification of the *Filioque***

In a document titled “The Greek and Latin Traditions regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit,” the Council responded to Pope John Paul II’s request for a clarification of the doctrine of the *Filioque* that would “highlight its full harmony with what the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople of 381 confesses in its creed: the Father as the source of the whole Trinity, the one origin both of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>262</sup> The document touches on a number of points that are relevant to our discussion thus far and that will help to advance it. First, it acknowledges that the expression of the one catholic and orthodox faith given in the Creed in its original Greek form possesses a “conciliar, ecumenical, normative and irrevocable value” and that it cannot be contradicted by any particular liturgical tradition’s peculiar profession of faith. It explains the paterological

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<sup>261</sup> Stylianopoulos, “The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?” 35.

<sup>262</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 20 September 1995, 3, 6: 3. I will sometimes refer to this document as “the Clarification.”

and pneumatological doctrine enshrined in the Creed as the teaching that “the Father alone is the principle without principle (ἀρχὴ ἄναρχος) of the other two persons of the Trinity, the sole source (πηγή) of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, therefore, takes his origin from the Father alone (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρὸς) in a principal, proper and immediate manner.” The document then gives its imprimatur to the Augustinian assertion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *pricipaliter*, which it interprets as a recognition that “the Father is the sole Trinitarian Cause (Αἰτία) or principle (*principium*) of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” and thus as safeguarding the monarchy of the Father that the Greek and Latin fathers alike confess. It also notes that whereas this procession from the Father alone as source is identified by the word ἐκπόρευσις, both the Catholic and the Orthodox Church have refused to admit the formula τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον (“who proceeds from the Father and the Son”) into the Greek text of the Creed. To be sure, all of this makes for a strong statement that Catholics join the Orthodox in affirming the Father’s monarchy. Of course, the Catholic Church’s continued inclusion of the *Filioque* in its recitation of the Creed demonstrates that it does not regard the dogma of the monarchy as excluding a mediatorial role of the Son in the Spirit’s procession. But on that score the Clarification points out that the Orthodox Orient also links the Son to the procession by saying that it takes place through him.<sup>263</sup> The task, then, is to show that the *Filioque* belongs within the trinitarian faith common to East and West because it does not contradict the teaching of

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<sup>263</sup> As examples it offers the statements of Maximus the Confessor and Tarasius cited above, as well as one from John Damascene: “I say that God is always Father since he has always his Word coming from himself, and through his Word, having his Spirit issue from [ἐκπορευόμενον] him” (*Dialogus contra Manichaeos* 5 [PG 94, 1521B]), Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 3.

the Symbol of 381 that the Father is “the sole origin (ἀρχή, αἰτία) of the ἐκπόρευσις of the Spirit.”<sup>264</sup>

The document proceeds to situate the *Filioque* in its proper linguistic and theological context, which is different from that in which the monarchy of the Father is affirmed. It explains, as we have seen Garrigues do, that the Latin word *procedit* has a wider range of meanings than the Greek ἐκπορευόμενον and that the *Filioque* concerns not the Spirit’s hypostatic origination by ἐκπόρευσις but the fact that she proceeds substantially (προᾤσι οὐσιωδῶς, *procedit substantialiter*) in the Godhead as the Father and the Son communicate their consubstantial divinity to her.<sup>265</sup> It adds that this teaching common to the Latin and Alexandrian traditions “does not mean that it is the divine essence or substance that proceed[s] in [the Holy Spirit], but that it is communicated from the Father and the Son who have in common.”<sup>266</sup> Now, the first clause of this qualification strikes me as quite odd because the very thing that the document has just attempted to show is that the *Filioque* refers to the Spirit’s procession insofar as it is a reception of the divine essence or substance (rather than insofar as the procession is a distinctive τρόπος ὑπάρξεως). That is to say, the *Filioque* conveys precisely that what proceeds in the person of the Spirit is the essence or substance of the Father and the Son, and that it is on account of this fact that she is divine as they are. What that first clause of the qualification surely wishes to say is that the Holy Spirit is not merely the divine substance “in motion,” so to speak, but is a person in her own right. This seems clear

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<sup>264</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 3. It should be noticed that the document uses ἀρχή (origin, principle) and αἰτία (cause) synonymously here. Perhaps it throws in αἰτία with a view to Orthodox readers for whom causality has particular significance as a distinguishing characteristic of the Father, but we may ask whether principiativity and causality are in fact interchangeable ideas.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 3-6.

from the fact that the document bases its claim on the declaration of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) that the divine substance “does not generate, is not begotten, does not proceed; but it is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, the Holy Spirit who proceeds.”<sup>267</sup> Quoting that pronouncement also provides an opportunity for the Clarification subtly to address the criticism frequently lobbed at Latin theology that the *Filioque* makes the divine nature the principle of the Spirit as soon as it ascribes spiration to the Son along with the Father.<sup>268</sup> When it goes on to cite the Second Council of Lyons (1274) as confessing that “the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles but as from a single principle (*tanquam ex uno principio*),” it immediately points out that the teaching of the Lateran Council eliminates the possibility that this singular principle could be the divine essence.<sup>269</sup> This matter in fact is related to the question of the monarchy of the Father: the monarchy resides in the Father as person instead of in the divine nature. And as the document reiterates, the “original relationship” of the Holy Spirit is to the Father, the principle without principle from whom alone she has her ἐκπόρευσις. Yet as this Father is Father of the Son, the Spirit “is consecutive to the relation between the Father and the Son,” and “[t]he eternal order [*taxis*] of the persons in their consubstantial communion implies that” the Father, “as Father of the only Son, . . . is, *with the Son*, the single principle from which the Spirit proceeds”<sup>270</sup> (again, in terms of the communication to her of the divine substance).

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>268</sup> For example, Staniloae claims that the Western doctrine “confounds the Father and the Son in the common in personal substance” (“The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 177).

<sup>269</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 6.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 6. The words in the second set of quotation marks are taken by the document from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), n. 248, p. 74, emphasis added.

Having stated its understanding of the *Filioque* as not compromising the monarchy of the Father, the ultimate source of the divinity of the Son and the Spirit and the cause of their respective generation and procession, the Clarification moves on to describe the way in which the proceeding Spirit brings the divine life to its trinitarian perfection. It asserts that while the Holy Spirit follows the Father and the Son in the *taxis*, the first and second persons are who they are precisely *in her*: “The Father only generates the Son by breathing (προβάλλειν in Greek) through him the Holy Spirit and the Son is only begotten by the Father insofar as the spiration (προβολή in Greek) passes through him. The Father is Father of the One Son only by being for him and through him the origin of the Spirit.”<sup>271</sup> To ward off a potential misunderstanding of the implications of this formula, the document reiterates that the Son does not come after the Spirit, for the order of the persons is fixed (Father-Son-Spirit). Rather, as it explains the reality spoken of in the formula from the inverse perspective, the Father’s spiration of the Spirit “takes place by and through (the two senses of διὰ in Greek) the generation of the Son,” giving the latter its “trinitarian character.”<sup>272</sup> All of this suggests that there is a logical but not an ontological priority of the Son to the Spirit. It emphasizes the irreducible mutuality of their processions (understood in the generic sense of the word) and of their persons. We have seen Aldenhoven and Bobrinskoy critique the *Filioque* on the grounds that it does not reflect that mutuality, and the critique is well-founded and salutary to the extent that it is directed at the incompleteness, not the presumed incorrectness, of the doctrine. Therefore, the document’s balanced formula or pair of formulas represents an interpretive

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<sup>271</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 6.

<sup>272</sup> According to the document, this is the sense of John Damascene’s statement that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from Father and reposes in the Word” (ibid., 6; John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa* 1.7 [PG 94, 805B]).]

expansion of the *Filioque* that discloses the reciprocity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Even if the document merely affirmed that there is such a reciprocity, it would have marked an advance in what the Church has officially said about the relation between the second and third persons in general and about the *Filioque* in particular. Yet it does better than that and gives content to the reciprocity or mutuality: the Father begets the Son by breathing the Spirit through him; the Father spirates the Spirit by and through his generation of the Son.

Is it really sensible to say both that the generation takes place by the spiration and that the spiration takes place by the generation? Do the two statements contradict each other? They do not if they are understood to mean that generation and spiration are mutually dependent. We can draw an analogy for this by considering light as a kind of electromagnetic radiation.<sup>273</sup> Light travels through space as a wave formed by an electric and a magnetic field oscillating in response to one another. Changes in one field induce changes in the other, and these changes cause each field, and hence the light, to propagate. It is as if each field were bearing up and propelling the other as they carry the energy of the light. What is important for our analogy is that the electric and magnetic fields are mutually dependent on one another for their movement. Within radiation, the existence and action of the one entails and in fact requires the existence and action of the other. The generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit from the Father are like the emission of electric and magnetic fields in a ray of light from the sun in this way: each entails and requires the other. The two processions do so because each has its meaning, and takes its form, only in relation to the other.

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<sup>273</sup> I owe the initial idea for this analogy to John and Amanda Galeotti, who suggested it in personal conversation.

This becomes quite clear in Thomas Weinandy's restatement of the ideas we have been examining from the document:

The Spirit comes forth (*ekporeuetai*) from the Father as the Father generates the Son, that is, in the act of generating the Son the Father breathes forth the Spirit through him. It is as Father of the Son that the Father breathes forth the Spirit through him. The Son is the only begotten, then, because it is through him that the Father breathes forth the Spirit and thus the Spirit reposes upon the Son since it is through him that the Father breathes the Spirit forth.<sup>274</sup>

Here Weinandy brings into focus the reciprocity and ontological simultaneity of the Son's generation and the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις, expressing that each person is determined by the τρόπος ὑπάρξεως of the other.

The Clarification tells us that the spiration gives the generation its trinitarian character and that the Holy Spirit “characterizes” the relation between the Father and the Son “in the manner of the Trinity.” It then explains this characterization by drawing on the Augustinian tradition that describes the Spirit as the Father's gift of love to the Son: “The divine love which has its origin in the Father reposes in ‘the Son of his love’ in order to exist consubstantially through the Son in the person of the Spirit, the Gift of love.”<sup>275</sup> Thus, the Holy Spirit as love-in-person characterizes—i.e., stamps, seals—the Father as the lover of the Son and the Son as the beloved of the Father. Importantly, the document lodges the “gift of love” concept within the structure of its interpretation of the *Filioque*. The Father is the origin of the Spirit (love), who “exist[s] consubstantially through the Son,” i.e., who receives her consubstantial being through the Son. She receives that being through him in her repose in him. Here the document is attempting to

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<sup>274</sup> Thomas G. Weinandy, Paul McPartlan, and Stratford Caldecott, “Clarifying the *Filioque*: The Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue,” *Communio* 23 (Summer 1996), 354-73: 363.

<sup>275</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 6.

synthesize the διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ/*per Filium*<sup>276</sup> and the notion of the Son as the Spirit's resting place—which already appear together in the Damascene—with the gift of love idea and to use them to interpret the Latin-Alexandrian notion of the essential procession of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead. This is creative, and the synthesis largely seems to work. What is surprising is that there is no mention of the Spirit as the Son's returned love for the Father and hence as their mutual love, which belongs to the Augustinian tradition as much as the initial thought of the Spirit as the Father's gift to the Son.

The most significant response to “The Greek and Latin Traditions regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit” written by an Orthodox figure came from John Zizioulas in the form of a brief essay titled “One Single Source.” His first concern has to do with the Eastern and Western conceptions of the Father as source (πηγή), principle (ἀρχή), and cause (αἰτία) within the Trinity. He acknowledges that the Clarification sees an equivalence between the understanding of the Father's monarchy embraced by the Greek fathers and that contained in the expression bequeathed to the West by Augustine that the Spirit proceeds *de Patre principaliter*, but he is not convinced of this equivalence. He perceives the *Filioque* as suggesting that there are two sources of the personal existence of the Spirit, the Father as “first and original cause (principaliter)” and the Son as “a secondary (not principaliter) cause.” He also regards the Second Council of Lyons as being unclear on the matter of the Father as cause when it pronounces that “as Father of the only Son, he is, with the Son, the single principle from which the Spirit proceeds.”<sup>277</sup> Obviously, Zizioulas does not find the Vatican document's explicit statement that “the

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<sup>276</sup> The extent to which the Eastern and Western traditions meant the same thing by “through the Son” *prior to* the *Filioque* controversy is a matter worthy of inquiry. The Clarification seems to assume that they are entirely in harmony on this point.

<sup>277</sup> John Zizioulas, “One Single Source,” accessed August 1, 2015, <http://agrino.org/cyberdesert/zizioulas.htm>.

Father is the sole Trinitarian Cause (Αἰτία) or principle (*principium*) of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”<sup>278</sup> to be sufficient, and he voices a wish that the Catholic Church would affirm that “the Son in no way constitutes a ‘cause’ (αἰτία) in the procession of the Spirit.” Yet surely that is exactly what the just-quoted statement from the Clarification indicates. Indeed, when the document cites Augustine’s confession, it explains that *principaliter* means “as principle,” which seems intended to dispel the possibility of interpreting the word to mean “principally” in the sense of “chiefly,” an interpretation that would suggest that there is another who acts as source or cause of the Spirit in the same way as the Father but does so to a lesser extent. It is immediately after ruling out the latter possible interpretation by its definition of Augustine’s *principaliter* that the document declares the Father to be the sole cause and principle of the other two trinitarian persons.

One wonders if Zizioulas is prevented from clearly seeing or fully appreciating this by his own prior understanding of Augustine’s trinitarian theology. On his reading, Augustine identifies the one God not with the Father as the Cappadocians do but rather with “the one divine substance (the *deitas* or *divinitas*).”<sup>279</sup> This is, of course, a different complaint than that Augustine’s expression for the procession leads to the idea that the Son is a secondary cause of the Spirit, but the two are related insofar as they both accuse Augustine (and the West after him) of failing to recognize the Father alone as trinitarian principle and cause. Yet this second allegation is contradicted by the fact that, as we have seen, Augustine directly states that “the source of the whole divinity, or, if you prefer to

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<sup>278</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 3.

<sup>279</sup> Zizioulas, “One Single Source.”

say, deity, is the Father.”<sup>280</sup> Moreover, the Clarification confirms the proclamation of the Fourth Lateran Council that the divine substance does not generate the Son or spirate the Spirit. Whatever the most accurate interpretation of Augustine may be, I think that the document is quite clear in its stance on the sole causality and principiativity of the Father and that this stance is markedly congruent with that of the Eastern church, even though the formulations of the monarchy in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, to be sure, are not identical.

Zizioulas does agree with the Vatican statement on two crucial points. First, he recognizes that Gregory of Nyssa grants the Son a “mediating” role in the Spirit’s procession and that other Eastern fathers have characterized this role by saying that the Spirit proceeds “through” the Son. Zizioulas interprets the document as claiming that this idea must provide the basis for continued discussion of the Son’s involvement in the procession between Catholic and Orthodox theologians, and he concurs with that judgment.<sup>281</sup> In this regard his position represents an ecumenical advance from Bobrinskoy’s reticence about the διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ as a formula of union and certainly from Staniloae’s rejection of it as a concept that may be applied to the Spirit’s ἐκπόρευσις. Second, Zizioulas admits that Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor, and others hold that the Son participates in the communication of the divine essence to the Spirit who derives “from the Father alone as Person or ὑπόστασις,” and he allows that this creates the possibility of “a kind of *Filioque* on the level of οὐσία [sic], but not of ὑπόστασις.”<sup>282</sup> But this is precisely where the Clarification itself situates the *Filioque*. It

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<sup>280</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate* IV.29 (PL 42, 908). In theory, it could be argued that Augustine’s trinitarian theology as a whole does not do justice to this claim, but Zizioulas offers no such argument.

<sup>281</sup> Zizioulas, “One Single Source.”

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

explains, “Even if the Catholic doctrine affirms that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in the communication of their consubstantial communion, it nonetheless recognizes the reality of the original relationship of the Holy Spirit as person with the Father, a relationship that the Greek Fathers express by the term ἐκπόρευσις.”<sup>283</sup> The Spirit originates hypostatically in the Father alone, although the Son participates in the Father’s transmission of the divine essence to the Spirit. The first moment is captured by the word ἐκπόρευσις, while the second is, as Garrigues puts it, “the final moment in the communication of the consubstantial divinity which ‘proceeds’ (πρόεισι) in the sequence of the divine Persons.”<sup>284</sup> There is no difference between what Zizioulas acknowledges could be argued to be an Orthodox version of the *Filioque* and what the Vatican claims that the *Filioque* in fact teaches. We may also note here that the document certainly interprets the statement of Lyons that the Father and the Son are the single principle of the Spirit as referring to this communication of the divine nature to the Spirit by both of them together. This is clear from the fact that it quotes that statement just after explaining that the Spirit “proceeds (προεῖσι) from the Father and the Son in their consubstantial communion”<sup>285</sup> and from the fact that it emphasizes that the *uno principio* of the Spirit is not the divine essence but the Father acting with the Son. If the idea of the Father and the Son jointly passing on the divine nature to the Spirit is acceptable to the Orthodox, might not the document’s interpretation of Lyons be so, as well?

Zizioulas does not address what seems to me the most creative and constructive piece of the document’s argument, in which it depicts the Son’s generation and the Spirit’s procession as reciprocally oriented toward and therefore mutually necessary to

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<sup>283</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 6.

<sup>284</sup> Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 154.

<sup>285</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 3.

each other. One might have expected some commentary on this, given that the *Filioque* is commonly criticized for creating an unbalanced picture of the relationship between them (as Aldenhoven and Bobrinskoy illustrate). His focus on the last section of the document is trained, instead, on its treatment of the Spirit as reposing on the Son and as the Father's gift of love to the Son. In a footnote to the latter, the document cites Gregory Palamas, who writes, "This Spirit of the supreme Word is like an ineffable love of the Begetter toward the ineffably begotten Word himself, even as the beloved Word and Son of the Father also uses this love toward the Begetter, but he does so inasmuch as he possesses this love as going forth together with him from the Father and resting consubstantially in him."<sup>286</sup> In the main body of the text, the document refers to multiple passages of Scripture that speak of an intimate relationship between the Son and the Spirit, seemingly in support of the ideas that the Spirit rests on the Son (John Damascene) as the Father's love for him (Augustine and Gregory). Zizioulas objects to this move. He asserts that the Damascene and the Palamite do not base their ideas on the economy and that the Clarification makes a mistake in doing so. Now, I have contended that the only legitimate bases for statements about the immanent Trinity are the data of the economy and the need to infer conclusions that follow from the inner logic of the church's universally established trinitarian dogma, which is itself founded on God's self-revelation in history and must always be interpreted in harmony with that revelation. John of Damascus and Gregory Palamas develop their arguments on the latter basis,<sup>287</sup> so Zizioulas is correct in

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<sup>286</sup> Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* 36, p. 122, my translation. The Vatican document translates the passage slightly differently (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "The Greek and the Latin Traditions," 6).

<sup>287</sup> See John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa* 1.7 (PG 94, 805B) and Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* 36, p. 121-22. Both are giving accounts of the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit according to analogies with the human mind, but as is true with Augustine, their understandings of the trinitarian persons are in place prior to the formation of the analogies—their

pointing out that they do not rely on the economy for those. However, in terms of theological method, one can hardly make a more serious error than to claim, as Zizioulas does, that such arguments “*should not* be justified on the ground of the economy.”<sup>288</sup> He takes this position because he sees that if the notions of the Holy Spirit as reposing in the Son and as the love of the Father for the Son are first accepted because they represent economic realities and are then projected into the immanent Trinity, then the same thing could be done not only with the *Filioque* (which the Orthodox have always agreed could be applied to the economy) but also with a *Spirituque*, and he wishes to bar the door against the latter possibilities.<sup>289</sup> But to rule out the economy as grounds on which statements about the immanent Trinity may be based is to eliminate the best possible justification for them. It could only strengthen our sense of the truth of the idea that the Spirit is eternally the love of the Father resting in the Son to see that this relationship between the Son and the Spirit can be discerned in the life of Christ. Yet Zizioulas is so anxious to ward off potential legitimization of the *Filioque* that he seeks to eliminate any appeal to salvation history as evidence of that relationship. The wall constructed against Augustine and company thus hinders the passage of John Damascene and Gregory Palamas, as well.

The Vatican document has not escaped criticism from Catholic theologians. We will consider the critiques offered by two of them, the first being David Coffey. Coffey

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understandings of the mind are not the data from which they construct their conceptions of the Trinity. On Gregory’s psychological analogy, see Jeremy D. Wilkins, “‘The Image of This Highest Love’: The Trinitarian Analogy in Gregory Palamas’s *Capita 150*,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 47: 3-4 (2003), 383-412.

<sup>288</sup> Zizioulas, “One Single Source,” emphasis added.

<sup>289</sup> Zizioulas writes, “The *Filioque* in no way can be projected from the Economy into the immanent Trinity, and the same is true also of any form of *Spirituque* that might be detected—this is in fact possible—from the relation of Christ to the Spirit in the history of salvation” (ibid.). If the *Filioque* cannot be read into the immanent Trinity *in any way* from the economy, what is the basis for the version of the *Filioque*, i.e., at the level of οὐσία, that Zizioulas grants belongs to Orthodoxy’s heritage?

expresses concern that the document does not address some significant aspects of the *Filioque* as the doctrine is taught by the Catholic Church. The Clarification deals with the declaration of Lyons that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single principle. As seen above, it interprets this in terms of the Father and the Son jointly communicating the divine nature to the Spirit, the Son himself having received the nature from the Father, the “principle without principle.” It is at least conceivable that the Orthodox could accept this interpretation, which is intended to preserve the monarchy of the Father and which treats the procession of the Spirit, insofar as it takes place from both the Father and the Son, as her προῖέναι rather than her ἐκπόρευσις. However, the document does not report the second point that Lyons makes about the Spirit’s procession from both persons, namely, that she proceeds from them “not by two spirations, but by one single spiration.”<sup>290</sup> Because it leaves this out, Coffey remarks, “It is hard to avoid the impression that the Clarification is playing down the full content of the Western Filioque in its effort to make it more attractive to the East.”<sup>291</sup> This comment suggests that in his mind, when Lyons invokes the term “spiration,” it is referring to the hypostatic procession of the Spirit, the effecting of her ἐκπόρευσις. Indeed, he judges it “perfectly clear that it is the production of the person of the Holy Spirit as such” that Lyons is discussing when it claims that she “proceeds” from the Father and the Son.<sup>292</sup> If that is how the Council is to be interpreted, one can scarcely disagree with his remark about the Clarification. However, the authors of the document do not interpret the Council’s use of “proceeds” as Coffey does, and it would require no great stretch of logic to give them the

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<sup>290</sup> Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1990), 314.

<sup>291</sup> David Coffey, “The Roman ‘Clarification’ of the Doctrine of the Filioque,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5.1 (March 2003), 3-21: 8.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

benefit of the doubt and suppose that if asked about the spiration, they would interpret it as referring to the communication of the divine nature to the Spirit, which they clearly argue is a joint act of the Father and the Son to be distinguished from the Spirit's original relationship of ἐκπόρευσις from the Father alone. In fact, this would be the most natural supposition to make, given that (1) the document defines the procession (προϊέναι) from the Father and the Son as a joint communication of the divine nature and (2) Lyons uses "spiration" in the same sense as it uses "proceeds," spiration being the act that causes the procession. If the document speaks of the procession of the Spirit as her reception of the divine nature, surely it must interpret spiration as the transmission of the divine nature to her.

On the other hand, Coffey is not being unfairly critical in conveying his impression that the Clarification seems to be downplaying elements of the doctrine of the *Filioque*. In particular, the document never mentions the articulation of it given by the Council of Florence, which decrees that

the holy Spirit is eternally from the Father and the Son, and has his essence and his subsistent being from the Father together with the Son, and proceeds from both eternally as from one principle and a single spiration. We declare that when holy doctors and fathers say that the holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, this bears the sense that thereby also the Son should be signified, according to the Greeks indeed as cause, and according to the Latins as principle of the subsistence of the holy Spirit, just like the Father.

And since the Father gave to his only-begotten Son in begetting him everything the Father has, except to be the Father, so the Son has eternally from the Father, by whom he was eternally begotten, this also, namely that the holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.<sup>293</sup>

Florence repeats the teaching of Lyons that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son "as from one principle" and "by one single spiration," but it expands on it. It

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<sup>293</sup> Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 526.

specifies that the Spirit receives from the other two persons both her essence and her “subsistent being,” i.e., her personhood. This stands at odds with the Clarification’s interpretation of the *Filioque* as pertaining to the communication of the divine nature to the Spirit rather than to the origination of her person.

Earlier I noted that we would need to visit the question of what difference there might be between originating a divine person and passing on the divine nature. Coffey raises this question and correctly points out that the answer implicitly given by the Council of Florence is that there is no difference between the two. As he reads the Florentine teaching, “If the Father and the Son hand on the divine nature, this act must be, and is, identical with their positing a third divine person, namely, the Holy Spirit.”<sup>294</sup> Coffey’s complaint that the Clarification passes over the proclamation of the Council, which of course is authoritative Catholic doctrine, is linked to another point of criticism that he raises against the document and the argument that it, like Garrigues, makes about the *Filioque* expressing only the consubstantiality of the divine persons. Regarding this matter he quotes the judgment of André de Halleux:

If the Latin *processio* is not synonymous with the Greek “ekporeusis,” it does not follow that each of these concepts expresses exactly and exclusively one of the two complementary aspects of the mystery, the first bearing on consubstantial communion and the second on the hypostatic character. This exactitude in abstract definitions has little chance of transmitting the living complexity of patristic thought, for which “procession” undoubtedly connoted personal origin, and “ekporeusis” essential participation. Why would each of the two sides of Christendom have seized on just one half of the revealed gift?<sup>295</sup>

If one accepts this argument, as Coffey does, one must conclude that a cornerstone of the Clarification’s account of the *Filioque* way is insufficiently solid. According to Coffey,

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<sup>294</sup> Coffey, “The Roman ‘Clarification,’” 10.

<sup>295</sup> André de Halleux, “Orthodoxie et Catholicisme: Du Personalism en Pneumatologie,” *Revue Theologique de Louvain* 6 (1975), 3-30: 21-22; trans. in Coffey, “The Roman ‘Clarification,’” 14.

the document fails to represent adequately the Catholic tradition concerning the procession of the Spirit by leaving aside statements, such as that made by Florence, that involve the Son in the origin of the Spirit's personhood.<sup>296</sup> We will examine in the next chapter how Coffey describes the trinitarian relations in clear harmony with the Florentine teaching. For the moment, we turn to one more critique of the Clarification.

As seen above, Thomas Weinandy interprets the document as saying that

[t]he Spirit comes forth (*ekporeuetai*) from the Father as the Father generates the Son, that is, in the act of generating the Son the Father breathes forth the Spirit through him. It is as Father of the Son that the Father breathes forth the Spirit through him. The Son is the only begotten, then, because it is through him that the Father breathes forth the Spirit and thus the Spirit reposes upon the Son since it is through him that the Father breathes the Spirit forth.<sup>297</sup>

Weinandy supports this conception of the Son's begetting and the Spirit's procession as reciprocally oriented to each other and therefore as mutually necessary. However, he believes that it is undermined by another idea that the document emphasizes, namely, that the Spirit is consecutive to the persons of the Father and the Son in their relation to each other "since he [the Spirit] takes his origin from the Father as Father of the only Son" and "since the Son characterizes as Father the Father from whom the Spirit takes his origin."<sup>298</sup> Weinandy perceives the rationale by which this idea places the Spirit third in the trinitarian *taxis*: "only 'after' the Father begets the Son does the Spirit come forth because the Spirit comes forth from the Father and the Father is only Father as a consequence of begetting the Son."<sup>299</sup> It would seem that the begetting of the Son that makes the Father the Father takes place independently from the spiration of the Spirit. If

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<sup>296</sup> Coffey, "The Roman 'Clarification,'" 12. He suggests that numerous examples of such statements can be found, but he does not point to any other than Florence.

<sup>297</sup> Weinandy, McPartlan, and Caldecott, "Clarifying the *Filioque*," 363.

<sup>298</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "The Greek and the Latin Traditions," 6.

<sup>299</sup> Weinandy, McPartlan, and Caldecott, "Clarifying the *Filioque*," 363.

that is how the Clarification is to be interpreted, the idea does indeed jar against its subsequent claim that “the Father only generates the Son by breathing . . . through him the Holy Spirit and the Son is only begotten by the Father insofar as the spiration . . . passes through him.”<sup>300</sup>

For Weinandy, the trouble with the assertion that the Spirit is consequent to the Father-Son relation is not simply that it creates an inconsistency with other claims made by the document. The greater problem is one that attends the trinitarian tradition as a whole, both in the West and in the East, which has almost always held this view. That problem lies in what Weinandy believes are philosophical concepts that Christian theology absorbed without recognizing the ways in which they were ill-suited for use in developing a doctrine of the Trinity that could do justice to the biblical revelation. The prime source of the difficulty is Middle and Neo-Platonic emanationism. The East, in particular, understands the Godhead as being strictly identical with the person of the Father, who imparts his essence to the Son and the Spirit as they emanate from him—the Son first and then the Spirit through him.<sup>301</sup> Here “[t]o be God is ultimately to be the Father,” the Son and the Spirit being “only derivatively God” and “shar[ing] in *his* Godhead.”<sup>302</sup> Weinandy finds that this undermines the Son’s and the Spirit’s equality with the Father as well as the unity of the Godhead. The Father is God independently of the being of the Son and the Spirit, and so even though they receive his nature, they are

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<sup>300</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions,” 6.

<sup>301</sup> Thomas G. Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010 [1995]), 9-10. Weinandy over-generalizes somewhat in portraying the διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ as the characteristic Eastern understanding of the trinitarian order. As we have seen, the meaning and validity of this formula and the theology that attends it have not been, and today are not, universally agreed upon in the East.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 54.

not really one in being (*homoousios*) with him but only similar in being (*homoiousios*) to him.<sup>303</sup>

Indeed, the best way to understand Weinandy's objection to the residue of Platonic emanationism that he sees in the history of trinitarian doctrine is to examine the contrast that he draws between it and Athanasius's interpretation of the *homoousion*. On Weinandy's reading of Athanasius, the Godhead is not identical with the person of the Father alone but rather is the Father begetting the Son and spirating the Spirit. As T. F. Torrance puts it in a statement quoted by Weinandy, the *homoousion* meant for Athanasius "not merely that the *ousia* of the Son was *of* the *ousia* of God, but that there was an indivisible and continuous relation of being of the Father in the Son" and of the Son in the Spirit, "so that the being of the Godhead is whole or complete not in the Father alone but in the Son and the Holy Spirit" with him as those with whom he stands in determinate relation.<sup>304</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg explains, in a passage also cited by Weinandy, that Athanasius perceived the Father and the Son as mutually conditioning one another such that the Father would not be himself without the Son: the Father only has the property of being unbegotten in relation to the Son whom he begets.<sup>305</sup> To return to Torrance's argument, Athanasius emphasized that the Logos "is *internal* to the Being of God, for God was never without what is properly his own,"<sup>306</sup> viz., the Logos that/who is divine rationality.<sup>307</sup> Likewise, the Spirit inheres in the being of the Son: "The Spirit is

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>304</sup> Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 246.

<sup>305</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991 [1988]), 279-80.

<sup>306</sup> Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 226.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 225. Torrance cites Athanasius's *Contra Arianos* 1.35ff. and *De Decretis* 1.15, 20, among other texts, as examples.

not outside the Word, but being in the Word, is in God through him.”<sup>308</sup> Torrance, Pannenberg, and Weinandy judge that the Cappadocians failed to take up the Athanasian concept of the Godhead as identical with the three persons in their communion of homoousial relations. Basil and the two Gregorys instead subscribe to the pre-Nicene idea that the Godhead resides properly in the person of the Father, and the fact that he is “independently” ὁ θεός while the Son and the Spirit (1) do not define the Father’s person and (2) only possess his substance in a derivative or participatory way implicitly makes them subordinate rather than equal to him.<sup>309</sup> Weinandy perceives this as the residue of Platonic emanationism, according to which what comes forth from the One is extrinsic, subsequent, and ontologically inferior to it. The problem is that the Cappadocian understanding of the Father as the fount of deity, not the Athanasian view of the *homoousion*, has chiefly characterized the Eastern approach to the Trinity up to the present.

Emanationism exists in a less obvious form in Western trinitarianism, not least because the *Filioque* evinces that the West has a different perspective on the meaning of the Father’s monarchy than the East has. Yet for Weinandy, the West, too, inadvertently undermines the unity and equality of the trinitarian persons through its dependence on a philosophical presupposition that does not comport entirely well with the biblical revelation. Here the source of difficulty is the Aristotelian notion that something must be known before it can be loved.<sup>310</sup> The Holy Spirit is the love of the Father for the Son, but

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<sup>308</sup> Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 231-32, quoting Athanasius, *Ad Serapionem* 3.5.

<sup>309</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 12-13; Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 252; Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 280. On this point see also William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1982), 279-80.

<sup>310</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 14.

since the Father must know the Son before loving him, the Son must precede the Spirit in the trinitarian order. Weinandy does not directly explain why this Aristotelian notion is detrimental to trinitarian theology, although one can deduce a likely reason. Portions of the NT portray Christ, the Son, as dependent on the Spirit for his relationship with the Father, and if we are to base our understanding of the immanent Trinity on the economy of salvation—as Weinandy affirms we should<sup>311</sup>—then we ought not to speak of the immanent Father-Son relationship as being established prior to and independently of the Spirit’s place in the Trinity. For Weinandy, the Spirit should not be seen as logically or ontologically subsequent to the other two persons. This somewhat divides her from and subordinates her to them. In fact, the whole idea of trinitarian sequentialism stands in serious need of revision. According to Weinandy, “A proper understanding of the Trinity can only be obtained if all three persons, logically and ontologically, spring forth in one simultaneous, nonsequential, eternal act in which each person of the Trinity subsistently defines and equally is subsistently defined by, the other persons.”<sup>312</sup> This argument provides the backdrop for his larger constructive project of reconceiving the trinitarian relations. Some of his central ideas are foundational for the understanding of the immanent Trinity on which I will ground my account of the Holy Spirit’s economic identity.

### **Summary and Prospect**

We will begin the next chapter with Weinandy’s project. For the moment, let us highlight some of the points from our study in this chapter that will inform the discussion to come.

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

1. The NT depicts and describes the relationships between the divine persons in salvation history in ways that would support various construals of the *taxis* of the immanent Trinity. However, from late antiquity until quite recently, Western theology has almost universally agreed that the Father begets the Son and causes the Son to join him in having the Holy Spirit proceed from him. Eastern trinitarian thinking has been somewhat less uniform regarding the Son-Spirit relationship. Many in the East have been content to say merely that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, leaving in obscurity the question of what, if anything, the Son has to do with the Father-Spirit relationship. When the Orthodox have answered that question, they have said, e.g., that the Spirit proceeds through the Son or that she reposes in him. Expressions such as these suggest, as the *Filioque* formula does, that the Son precedes the Spirit in the intra-trinitarian order.

2. On the other hand, as Aldenhoven and Bobrinskoy argue—Aldenhoven on the basis of indications in the economy and Bobrinskoy from the principle of “balance” (by which he seems to mean the equality of the trinitarian persons)—there is not an absolute logical or ontological priority of the Son to the Holy Spirit. In fact, according to Bobrinskoy, Orthodoxy complements the understanding of the trinitarian *taxis* as Father-Son-Spirit with a Father-Spirit-Son model, to which he thinks the notion of the Spirit reposing in the Son is better suited. He does not explain how the two models or *taxis* are compatible, which is an important question. However, he does well to assert that the Son’s generation and the Spirit’s procession are not extraneous to each other—that, indeed, there is “an infinite coincidence” of the two persons, as their being is “concomitant . . . and simultaneous.”<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Bobrinskoy, “The *Filioque* Yesterday and Today,” 143, 145.

3. Then again, the fact that there is not an absolute priority of the Son to the Holy Spirit does not mean that he cannot be said to precede her in any way. Garrigues follows Bolotov in claiming that the begetting of the Son is “the motive and the basis (and therefore the logical ‘prius’) for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father.”<sup>314</sup> I have attempted to justify this claim with reference to the metaphors of Word and Image for the Son. God the Father expresses himself in the Logos or Word, and he breathes forth the Holy Spirit precisely in order to speak this Word. Likewise, the Father has his reflection or image in the Son, and the Holy Spirit goes forth from the Father in order to rest on this Image as the Father’s loving gaze.

4. The Spirit therefore proceeds from the Father as the begetter of the Son (and not, Moltmann correctly points out, from him merely as monarch of the Godhead<sup>315</sup>). Garrigues expresses this in what Bolotov calls an ecumenical theologoumenon: “I believe in the Holy Spirit who goes forth from the one only Father insofar as he begets the only Son.”<sup>316</sup> Here the generation of the Son is, in Moltmann’s words, “the logical presupposition and the material precondition for the procession of the Spirit from the Father.”<sup>317</sup> Staniloae approves of this idea, adding that “the Father causes the Spirit to proceed from himself in order to communicate him to his Son, in order to be more united with the Son by the Spirit.”<sup>318</sup> He also finds in Garrigues’s formula an emphasis on the fact that the Son is related to the Father as the source of the Spirit. If the Son’s generation and therefore his presence with the Father is a condition of the Spirit’s procession, the

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<sup>314</sup> Quoted in Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 151-52.

<sup>315</sup> Moltmann, “Theological Proposals,” 172.

<sup>316</sup> Garrigues, “A Roman Catholic View,” 153. Moltmann’s way of putting it is that the Spirit “derives also from the Fatherhood of God, that is, from the relation of the Father to the Son” (“Theological Proposals,” 168).

<sup>317</sup> Moltmann, “Theological Proposals,” 168.

<sup>318</sup> Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit,” 176.

coming-forth of the Spirit in turn conditions the Son's relationship to the Father. To wit: the Spirit is for the Son "the Spirit of the Son of the Father" and for the Father she is "the Spirit of the Father of the Son."<sup>319</sup> Staniloae follows this with a reading of the Byzantine fathers that helpfully shows ways in which the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession are oriented to one another. I will attempt to show in the next chapter that a logical priority of the Son to the Spirit in the trinitarian *taxis* is compatible with an understanding that they reciprocally condition one another, and indeed that they condition the Father, in a way that reveals the necessity of each person to the others and thereby brings out their equality with one another.

5. As interpreted by Garrigues and the Vatican Clarification, the *Filioque* teaches that the Son participates in the Father's communication of the divine nature to the Spirit. Zizioulas grants that this idea has an Orthodox pedigree, and following Maximus the Confessor in particular, he holds that the Son mediates the Spirit's origination from the Father as it "relates . . . to the divine οὐσία."<sup>320</sup> At the same time, Garrigues, the Clarification, and Zizioulas agree that the hypostasis of the Spirit originates in her ἐκπόρευσις from the Father alone. But is it sensible to say that the Son communicates the divine nature to the Spirit without being the origin of her person? Coffey thinks not, and he finds himself supported by the Council of Florence's proclamation of the *Filioque*, according to which the Son, with the Father, is the source from which the Spirit has her personal existence as well as her essence. For his part, Moltmann submits that the Spirit proceeds in origin only from the Father, yet she receives her *Gestalt* (form) from both him and the Son because of her perichoretic relations with them. I have pointed out that

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Zizioulas, "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit," 54.

in fact not only the Spirit but also the Father and the Son each receives his or her relational form from the other two persons. In the next chapter I will offer an interpretation of what the Spirit receives from the Son that attempts to do justice to some of the signal concerns of Catholics and Orthodox, and the notion of the perichoretic indwelling of the trinitarian persons will factor importantly in my explanation of *how* she receives what she does.

6. The idea that an ecumenically-minded approach to the question of the Son's place in the Spirit's procession might give pride of place to the formula διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορευόμενον calls for particular attention. It is true that the formula has a history of usage in both the East and the West. Zizioulas reads the Clarification as stating that this common usage should form the basis of further discussion between Catholics and Orthodox, and he agrees. However, the phrase "through the Son" is ambiguous, and the two traditions have not always meant the same thing by it.<sup>321</sup> If we are to argue that the Spirit proceeds through the Son, we must make clear what this means. In particular, we should make clear whether it denotes an active or a passive role of the Son in the procession.

7. We may conclude with a general statement. We are pursuing an account of the Trinity that attempts to answer the question that the *Filioque* attempts to answer about a role of the Son in the Spirit's coming-forth from the Father and the question that the *Filioque* leaves open (or better, raises) about a role of the Spirit in the Son's coming-forth from the Father. If any such account is to reflect the faith of the entire church, it must

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<sup>321</sup> Bobrinsky ("The *Filioque* Yesterday and Today," 146) and Weinandy (Weinandy, McPartlan, and Caldecott, "Clarifying the *Filioque*," 358) point out the ambiguity, and Staniloae's treatment of Gregory of Cyprus shows that the East has used "through the Son" to mean something very different than the filioquist sense authoritatively ascribed to those words at the Council of Florence.

preserve the monarchy of the Father in whatever explanation it gives of how the Son and the Spirit relate to one another as they proceed from him.

These ideas will inform the discussion to come in the next chapter, as they will do much to shape my response to the two theologians in dialogue with whom I will chiefly develop my account of the immanent Trinity.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE SPIRIT OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON, PART TWO

**Thomas Weinandy: “Begotten in the Spirit”**

We have seen that Thomas Weinandy objects to the traditional sequentialist understanding of the trinitarian persons’ relations to one another because he sees it as being tainted by philosophical presuppositions that are incompatible with the dogma of equality between the trinitarian persons. He is not alone in finding this understanding insufficient. Moltmann certainly accepts what he calls the “monarchical concept of the Trinity,” according to which God the Father is the eternal source and the temporal sender of the Son and the Spirit, and which generally sees the persons in that order (although the unity of God’s Word and God’s Breath makes it possible and important, he thinks, to see them in complementary fashion in the order God/Father-Spirit-Word/Son). Yet he adds that this is not and cannot be the only model we use to comprehend the relations between the trinitarian persons.<sup>1</sup> We employ the “eucharistic concept” of the Trinity when we reflect on God’s reception of our prayers, our praise, and our very selves into God’s own life. Here we speak of a movement of human *anabasis* or ascent that proceeds from the Spirit through the Son to the Father, i.e., in an inversion of the monarchical concept that describes God’s katabatic (descending) movement towards us.<sup>2</sup> Finally, in what Moltmann calls the “doxological” concept of the Trinity, there is no place at all for a sequence of the persons. In the words of the Creed, the Holy Spirit is worshiped and glorified *with* (not before or after) the Father and the Son, for the three are perceived not in the order in which God communicates Godself to humanity or in which human beings

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1992), 293-95.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 299-300.

are communicated to God but in “the self-circling and self-reposing movement of *perichoresis*” wherein the divine persons forever give themselves to and receive themselves from one another.<sup>3</sup> Sergius Bulgakov pushes even further than this. He regards the entire idea of an ontological ordering of the trinitarian persons as a mistake. Indeed, he asserts that paternity, filiation, and procession should not be understood to indicate relationships of origination or causal dependence between any of the persons. According to him, “all three hypostases are equally without beginning, and in this equi-beginningless being of theirs, they do not know origination from one another; they exist supra-eternally.”<sup>4</sup> Of course, this leaves one to wonder what content is to be ascribed to the words “fatherhood,” “sonship,” and “procession.” But Bulgakov’s point is clearly that the notions of “source” and “derivation” are incompatible with the equality and co-eternity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Weinandy’s position is situated between Moltmann’s and Bulgakov’s. He retains the notion that the Son and the Spirit originate from the Father, but he denies that it is appropriate to see “an order of priority, precedence and sequence”<sup>5</sup> among the trinitarian persons for the same reason that Bulgakov rejects the idea of origination. For Weinandy, the persons can only be ontologically equal, and equally eternal, if each so defines the others that the very concept of any one of them is incomplete without resort to the concept of the other two. We saw in the last chapter that he finds fault with an approach to the Trinity in which, as William Hill puts it, “the Father . . . is acknowledged to be God

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 303-04, quoted at 304.

<sup>4</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004 [1936]), 128.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas G. Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010 [1995]), 74.

prior (conceptually) to his giving origin to the Son and the Spirit.”<sup>6</sup> Weinandy holds that the Godhead is identical with the trinitarian act in which the three persons are simultaneously constituted as the Son is begotten by and the Spirit proceeds from the Father.<sup>7</sup>

Weinandy has a distinct conception of the relationship between the Son’s generation and the Spirit’s ἐκπόρευσις, and of how both they and the Father are subsistently defined (constituted) by the relations established through these processions. His basic thesis is that “the Father begets the Son in or by the Holy Spirit.” His explication of this formula deserves to be quoted in full:

The Son is begotten by the Father in the Spirit and thus the Spirit simultaneously proceeds from the Father as the one in whom the Son is begotten. The Son, being begotten in the Spirit, simultaneously loves the Father in the same Spirit by which he himself is begotten (is Loved).

The Spirit (of Love) then, who proceeds from the Father as the one in whom the Father begets the Son, both conforms or defines (persons) the Son to be the Son and simultaneously conforms or defines (persons) the Father to be the Father. The Holy Spirit, in proceeding from the Father as the one in whom the Father begets the Son, conforms the Father to be Father for the Son and conforms the Son to be Son for (of) the Father.<sup>8</sup>

This description of the trinitarian relations emphasizes an idea of Weinandy’s that the tradition has not held, viz., that the Spirit plays an active role within the Trinity. The Spirit performs actions that help to determine the personal characteristics of the Father and the Son.

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<sup>6</sup> William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1982), 77.

<sup>7</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 60, 64.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Since we are seeking an understanding of the immanent Trinity that is based on the economy of salvation (including aspects of the Spirit's work in it that have not always been incorporated into accounts of the immanent Trinity) and since Weinandy devotes significant attention to the NT data that he believes supports his thesis, it will be worthwhile to give a brief overview of Weinandy's biblical argument for his position. He begins with Jesus' baptism as narrated in the Synoptics. Matthew and Mark describe the Spirit descending on Jesus like a dove as he comes out of the water while the Father declares him to be his beloved Son (Matt 3.16-17, Mark 1.10-11).<sup>9</sup> For Weinandy, the scene recalls God speaking the *fiat* of creation as God's Spirit hovers or broods over the waters in Gen. 1.2-3, and it suggests that God is preparing to re-create the world in Jesus, his Son and Word. The fact that Jesus will proclaim the kingdom of God in obedience to the Father through the power of the Spirit also evokes the OT motif of prophets speaking the word of God because God's Spirit comes upon them. Weinandy argues that "[t]he breath/spirit by which God speaks his creative word at the dawn of creation and his prophetic word throughout history is the same breath/Spirit by which he eternally breathes forth his Word/Son."<sup>10</sup> He also points to the link between the descent of the Spirit by which Jesus is commissioned and anointed for service and the Father's pronouncement of being well pleased with him, drawing the conclusion that "as the Spirit conformed to Jesus to be the faithful Son on earth, so the Spirit conforms him as the Son, within the Trinity, so as to be eternally pleasing to the Father. Thus the Father's testimony to Jesus' Sonship, in affiliation with the descent of the Holy Spirit, intimates

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<sup>9</sup> Luke confirms this descent of the Spirit and declaration by the Father, although he depicts them as apparently occurring after the baptism (Luke 2.21-22).

<sup>10</sup> Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*, 27.

that he eternally authenticates (begets) the Son in the Spirit.”<sup>11</sup> He adds that because it is in the Spirit’s coming upon Jesus that he is shown to be the beloved of the Father and the Father is shown to be the lover of the Son, we may conclude that in the eternal life of God, it is in the Spirit that the Father begets the beloved Son and so is constituted as the loving Father.<sup>12</sup>

Next, Weinandy looks to the passion, particularly to Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane as reported in Mark, wherein he addresses the Father as “Abba” as he submits to the Father’s will that he drink the bitter cup of death (Mark 14.36). Weinandy views this scene in connection with Paul’s indication (Gal. 4.6-7, Rom. 8.14-16) that the Spirit enables us to cry, “Abba, Father!” because it is by or in the Spirit that we are adopted and conformed as sons and daughters of God. The Spirit made Christ, and makes us, capable of calling the Father “Abba” as his beloved, loving, obedient children because she is the Spirit of sonship in the immanent Trinity, “conform[ing] the Son to be Son (love for the Father is the essence of sonship)” and “conform[ing] the Father to be Father (love for the Son is the essence of fatherhood).”<sup>13</sup> Jesus’ obedience to and love for the Father is most clearly visible in that “through the eternal Spirit [he] offered himself without blemish to God” (Heb. 9.14), and this he was able to do because he is eternally “disposed to the Father” in filial love through the same Spirit.<sup>14</sup> Weinandy also reads Rom. 1.4, 8.11, and possibly 6.4 as identifying the Holy Spirit as the agent of Christ’s resurrection.<sup>15</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 29, 35-37, quoted at 37.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 30 n. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Rom. 1.4 declares that “Jesus Christ our Lord” was “designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.” Rom. 8.11 reads, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.” If Rom 6.4 refers to the Spirit, it does so more obliquely: “We were buried therefore with him [Christ] by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised

raising Christ from the dead by the Spirit, the Father confirms and glorifies him as his Son, just as in the immanent Trinity he “begets (eternally establishes and confirms) the Son in divine glory and power by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>16</sup> Because it is through the Spirit that the Father does this for the Son in eternity and in time, it is likewise through the Spirit that God will raise our bodies to new life (Rom. 8.11), confirming our adoption as sons and daughters.<sup>17</sup>

Weinandy’s exegetical argument for his thesis is at its most straightforward in its encounter with the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, both of which report that Jesus’ conception was the work of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1.20, Luke 1.35). As one would expect, Weinandy claims that the begetting of the Son in Mary’s womb, i.e., the creation of the humanity joined to the Son whom the Father eternally begets, by or in the Holy Spirit reflects that the Son’s eternal generation and conformation as Son takes place in or by the Holy Spirit, which also means that the Father becomes the eternal Father precisely through his begetting of the Son in the Spirit.<sup>18</sup> Our author thinks, as well, that the Johannine notion of being “born of the Spirit” (John 3.5-8) does not apply only to believers who are born “anew” or “from above;”<sup>19</sup> it also speaks of the nature of the

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from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” To be sure, the Spirit is not named here, but Weinandy notes that “glory” (δόξα) may be a substitute for πνεῦμα, just as those two words and “power” (δύναμις) are closely associated in Luke (*The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 32 n. 15).

<sup>16</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>19</sup> The Greek word ἄνωθεν carries both meanings, which leads to Nicodemus’s perplexity, during his conversation with Jesus, at the thought of a person being birthed a second time by his or her mother (John 3.4).

eternal birth of him who is uniquely from above, having descended from heaven (v. 13), because the divine Son is begotten in the Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

We may observe, finally, that Weinandy finds more support for his position in the fact that in John the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth” (15.26) and Jesus is the true Word:

The Father eternally glorifies/begets/speaks his Word of truth in or by the Spirit of truth. . . . Moreover, as the Spirit of truth fashions Jesus into the Word of God, so the Spirit of truth conforms the Father into the Truth-Speaker. The Father is the Truth-Speaker and the Son is the true Word only because the Father speaks his Word, by which he becomes Father, by the breath of the Spirit of truth.<sup>21</sup>

Time and again, Weinandy puts forward passages and paradigms in the NT that can legitimately be interpreted so as to buttress his contention that the Father begets the Son in the Spirit and that the Spirit conforms the Father in his paternity and the Son in his sonship. He treats quite a bit more material than I have discussed, but this sampling should sufficiently indicate that the edifice of Weinandy’s proposal rests on a foundation of varied biblical data.

Weinandy frames his systematic exposition of his thesis as an answer to the question—which he believes the trinitarian traditions of East and West have failed to address adequately—what is it about the Father’s paternity that results in the Spirit proceeding from him rather than being begotten by him as another Son? For Weinandy, the Spirit “proceeds from the Father as the fatherly Love in whom and by whom the Son is begotten,” and therefore the Son’s generation and the Spirit’s spiration take place in the same act.<sup>22</sup> He asserts that this in fact shows the nature of divine paternity to be such that

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<sup>20</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 45-46. Weinandy himself does not refer to believers or Jesus being born “from above,” but he does speak of both being born “of the Spirit,” and he connects the Son’s eternal birth with his having come to earth from the Father.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

it is necessarily in Love that the Father generates the Son and therefore it is necessarily as the Father's Love for the begotten that the Spirit proceeds.<sup>23</sup> Now, this assertion appears to be unjustified where it stands: the premise that the Father begets the Son in the love of the Holy Spirit does not of itself show that he *must* do so simply by the nature of his fatherhood. What does suggest that the Father naturally and necessarily begets the Son in the Spirit is the concept of generation as producing the Word of the Father, for on the analogy of human speech, a word must be carried by a breath. As we have already seen, Weinandy indeed argues that the Father "speaks his eternal Word by the breath of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth," and that it is this spiration that makes him "the Word/Truth-Speaker" and the Son his true Word.<sup>24</sup> Of course, this analogy only helps Weinandy's case when it pertains to the idea of the spoken word. A mental word (a thought) is produced without need of breath or of any mental faculty analogous to it. Yet a mental word is itself only an analogue of a spoken one. The concept of each kind of word would seem fit to serve as an analogy for a different trinitarian model: the Western psychological analogy pioneered by Augustine and refined by Aquinas posits that as the human will embraces an idea produced by the mind, so the Holy Spirit is the Father's will or love embracing his Word, whose existence is logically ordered before that of the Spirit (since the Father knows the Word logically prior to loving him). But since the idea of a mental word is not superior to that of a spoken word, there can be no prejudice against Weinandy using the analogy of a spoken word to clarify his trinitarian model, which differs from the classical model that employs the Augustinian-Thomistic psychological analogy.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 75.

Moreover, the notion that the Father speaks the Word in the Spirit allows one to perceive clearly the difference between the two processions: the breathing (spiration) is what makes the speaking (generation) possible. The Spirit is not a second Word/Son but the person in or by whose being and action the Father speaks the one Word or begets the one Son. Again, Weinandy poses the question about the difference between the processions as a question about the nature of the Father's paternity. It is important to acknowledge, therefore, that he argues that the Father's spiration of the Spirit is no less an exercise of his paternity than his generation of the Son, for he breathes forth the Spirit as the love that conforms him to be Father for the Son and the Son to be Son for him.<sup>25</sup> And while it might at first be supposed that the exercise of paternity by definition results exclusively in generation, the notion of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son distinguishes the character of the Spirit's procession and her person from the Son's, so that we may see from another angle why the Spirit is not a Son: she is instead the person in whom he attains his sonship by receiving and returning the love of the Father. On this point Weinandy writes,

The Son is Son because, having been begotten by the Father in the Spirit of sonship, he loves the Father as Son. This act of filial love, enacted in the Spirit of sonship, is what makes him the Son. This means that the Father is the Father not only because he begets the Son, but also because, in the begetting of the Son, the Son loves the Father, and so as Son helps constitute the Father as Father. The Father would not be Father unless he had a Son who loved him as Son. Now the cornerstone which holds together this fatherly act of lovingly begetting the Son and this filial act of the Son loving the Father is provided by the action of the Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

The act that marks the Spirit as a person distinct from the Father and the Son, once more, is her conformation of each of them for the other by being the Father's love for the Son and the Son's responding love for the Father.

The various ways in which Weinandy speaks of trinitarian acts are important to multiple aspects of his argument. Denying that the Godhead can properly be identified with the divine nature in abstraction from the divine persons or with the person of the Father alone, Weinandy writes, "The one Godhead, the one being of God, is the action of the Father begetting the Son and spirating the Spirit, and so sharing with them the whole of his deity, constituting them as equal divine persons."<sup>27</sup> Again, maintaining that the trinitarian persons exist in a logical and ontological simultaneity in which each of them subsistently defines and is subsistently defined by the others, he argues that "[t]he Trinity is one simultaneous and harmonious act by which the Persons are who they are, and they are who they are only in the one act of being interrelated."<sup>28</sup> In these remarks, Weinandy indicates that the Godhead is identical with the Trinity and that the Trinity is identical with a single action of interrelation in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit participate.

In other contexts, though, Weinandy describes the begetting of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit as concurrent yet certainly distinct acts of the Father.<sup>29</sup> He does so when advocating one idea and when countering another. First, François-Xavier Durrwell is an important ally of Weinandy's in pneumatology, for he also understands the Son as being begotten in the Spirit, who is "the Spirit of the Father in his fatherhood" just as "it

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>28</sup> Weinandy, McPartlan, and Caldecott, "Clarifying the Filioque," 364.

<sup>29</sup> Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*, 71 n. 32, 72.

is in his fatherhood that [the Father] is the source of the Spirit.”<sup>30</sup> However, Durrwell is willing to say the following:

the whole mystery of the Father is to beget his Son; if therefore the Spirit proceeds from the Father whose mystery consists in begetting, and if he himself is not the Son, *he must therefore be this begetting*. Although human language fails us, it would seem that one could say: the Spirit is the action of the Father as father, he is the begetting.<sup>31</sup>

Weinandy responds by cautioning against the mistake of depersonalizing the Spirit by reducing her to a process, which Durrwell risks doing when he states that she is the begetting itself. The Spirit is an agent, not merely an act. Weinandy emphasizes a point that Durrwell’s statement elides, viz., that it is important to preserve the distinction between the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit. Failure to do so raises the specter of modalism. Therefore, in this instance, rather than speaking of the begetting and the procession as a single action of the Father, Weinandy calls them “simultaneous but distinct acts.”<sup>32</sup> By doing so he intends to make clear that while the begetting occurs in the procession, and the latter is in fact the means by which the former takes place, the one is not identical with or reducible to the other. Second, Weinandy refers to them as distinct while contending that they occur in all respects *together*. Part of his aim is to rebut the traditional Western presupposition (inherited from Aristotelian philosophy) that something must be known before it can be loved. He writes,

The Father does not, even logically, first beget the Son and then love the Son in the Spirit. The begetting of the Son and the producing of the Spirit are simultaneous and, while distinct, mutually inhere in one another. The Father is the Father because, in the one act by which he is eternally constituted as the Father,

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<sup>30</sup> François-Xavier Durrwell, *Holy Spirit of God: An Essay in Biblical Theology*, trans. Sister Benedict Davies, gen. ed. Scott Hahn (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger, 2006), 202.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>32</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 71 n. 32

the Spirit proceeds as the Love (Life and Truth) in whom the Son is begotten of the Father.<sup>33</sup>

Note that Weinandy speaks of generation and spiration as two acts but then immediately calls the Father's performance of them—which is precisely his being the Father—a single act. This inconsistency of expression, however, does not necessarily betoken an inconsistency in his logic about the activity of the Father. On the next page he tells us that “[t]he one action by which the Spirit is the Spirit is twofold”<sup>34</sup> insofar as it pertains to two other persons, for she conforms the Father and the Son to be for one another in love, but that twofold conformation takes place within her one procession. Weinandy would doubtless say that the one action by which the Father is the Father is also twofold, and this seems to be materially the same thing for him as saying that the Father performs two acts that “mutually inhere in one another.”

In my judgment, it is legitimate to do as Weinandy does and describe trinitarian action either in the singular or in the plural, depending on the perspective we are taking. We may say, for example, that generation and spiration are two moments or modalities of the same act, i.e., the one act of God's being, the act of relating to Godself that God eternally is. Here we do not see the Father as begetting the Son on the one hand and spirating the Spirit on the other, so that we have to acknowledge the begetting and spirating separately and then determine how they are related. Rather, we consider the Father simply as begetting the Son in the Spirit, a single act. Alternate ways of stating the same thing would be “the one act of God is the Son being begotten from the Father in the Spirit” or “the one act of God is the Spirit proceeding from the Father as the one in whom

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 73.

the Son is begotten.” Any of these identifies the one self-relating act that God is. Or we may say that generation and spiration are two distinct acts of the Father—simultaneous, necessarily concomitant, and mutually inhering, but distinct—in that each is a motion whose *terminus ad quem* cannot be confused with that of the other, namely, the irreducibly different persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The being of each of these latter two persons is the act, filiation for the Son and procession or passive spiration for the Spirit, wherein he or she relates to the other and to the Father. Again, the difference is one of perspective. The statement that God’s being is a single act of relating to Godself pertains to the supposition that God is a single absolute subject. When we say either that the one divine act is the Father begetting the Son in the Spirit (or one of the alternate expressions of this idea that I mentioned) or that the Father performs two distinct acts, by which token the Son and the Spirit can also be said to perform their own acts, the statement reflects the supposition that the divine single absolute subject subsists in three relative subjects of consciousness and activity.<sup>35</sup>

Weinandy’s insistence that generation and spiration are mutually inhering acts of the Father belongs to his overall conception of a “*perichoresis* of *action* within the Trinity which makes the persons be who they distinctively are.”<sup>36</sup> The Word goes forth

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<sup>35</sup> I have taken the expression that God is a single absolute subject subsisting in three relative subjects from David Coffey (*Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed? Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* [Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2005], 49). This expression succinctly captures the idea that “each divine person [is] a distinct center of activity, albeit in a qualified sense” (*ibid.*), and I accept Coffey’s view that it encapsulates the understanding of “the one divine consciousness subsist[ing] in a triple mode” (Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell [New York: Crossroad, 1986], 289) that William J. Hill has summarized as follows: “The members of the Trinity are now seen as constituting a community of persons in pure reciprocity, as subjects and centers of one divine conscious life. Each person is constituted what might analogously be called an ‘I’ in self-awareness of its own unique identity, but only by way of rapport to the other two persons as a non-self; indeed it is in virtue of that free interplay, wherein each person disposes himself towards the others in knowing and loving, that each person gains his unique identity” (*The Three-Personed God*, 272; see Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* 49).

<sup>36</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 78.

from the Father in the breathing forth of the Spirit; the Son is begotten in the love that is the Spirit. Equally, the Spirit proceeds from the Son as the love that he returns to the Father and the breath in which he cries “Abba!” to the one who begets him.<sup>37</sup> The Spirit’s procession from or spiration by the Father and, derivatively, from or by the Son co-inheres with the begetting of the Son because it is only in loving the Father in the Spirit in whom he is begotten that the Son is truly Son, just as it is only in loving the Son and receiving his filial love that the Father is truly Father. In fact, according to Weinandy, the fact that generation and spiration co-inhere is precisely what accounts for the perichoresis or co-inherence of the persons themselves.<sup>38</sup> All three persons are involved in whatever action is performed by any one of them. Not only are they involved; each plays an *active* role, including the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup>

This last claim constitutes one of the most distinctive elements of Weinandy’s argument as a whole. He stresses the point that the trinitarian tradition in both the East and the West has conceived of the Spirit as purely passive within the immanent Trinity. For the East, she merely proceeds from the Father (whether through the Son or not), and for the West, she is passively the love with which the Father and the Son act toward one another. Weinandy argues that this lack of activity on the Spirit’s part creates an unacceptable asymmetry within the Trinity, and he poses his thesis as a solution to that problem: “Once the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father as the one in whom the Son is begotten, so conforming the Father to be Father and the Son to be Son, a symmetry of action and thus a symmetry of *perichoresis* within the Trinity is secured.”<sup>40</sup> Yet while he

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 80 n. 43.

ascribes considerable significance to the Spirit playing an active role in the trinitarian relations, he fails to show just how the Spirit is active rather than passive. That she is the breath in which the Word comes forth or the love in which the Son is begotten from the Father does not indicate an activity of her own. Weinandy maintains that the Spirit conforms the Father and the Son to be for each other, but he explains that she so conforms them by being the Spirit in which they love each other,<sup>41</sup> which depicts them, not her, as acting.<sup>42</sup> In fact, he can describe the conformation or personing of the Father and the Son simply as their actions toward one another in or by means of her, i.e., without identifying her as the agent of the personing: “it is by the Spirit that the Father substantiates or ‘persons’ himself as Father because it is by the Spirit that he begets the Son. In so doing the Father substantiates or ‘persons,’ by the same Spirit, the Son and the Son personally re-acts, and so is ‘personed’ in the Spirit of sonship, as Son of the Father.”<sup>43</sup> There can be no question that the Spirit’s existence is essential to the Father’s being the Father and the Son’s being the Son in Weinandy’s account, but he never establishes just what the Spirit *does* to conform or define the other persons.

This omission is unfortunate and surprising. However, it is also easy to correct. One need only say that the Spirit not merely *is* the love that the Father and the Son give to one another; she *bears* the love of each to the other, a task that it is the whole joy of her being as person to carry out. Obviously, this language suffers the limitation of being somewhat anthropomorphic, but it affirms, in the analogical manner of all theological speech, that the Spirit possesses the divine consciousness in a unique way and acts

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 17, 74.

<sup>42</sup> Steven M. Studebaker offers a perceptive analysis of how the theology of the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son typically casts the Spirit in a passive role in *From Pentecost to the Triune God: A Pentecostal Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 116-18.

<sup>43</sup> Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 73.

accordingly, just as the Father and the Son do. The goal of Weinandy's project is to attain a fuller and more symmetrical picture of the Trinity by "giving the Holy Spirit his proper trinitarian role" so that "we more easily recognize his personal ontological depth as a distinct subject."<sup>44</sup> If, as Weinandy holds, a proper trinitarian role is an active one, then it is vitally important to state clearly how the Spirit acts rather than merely being that through which or the person through whom the other persons act.

Still, we may ask whether it is in fact advisable to conceive of the Holy Spirit as being active within the intratrinitarian relationships. Weinandy hopes that his proposal can be of use in ecumenical discussions with the Orthodox, who have often accused Western theology of subordinating or depersonalizing the Spirit. However, Ralph Del Colle points out that the Orthodox are also convinced that the processions of both the Son and the Spirit "are basically passive in their modality"—for example, the Son does not actively mediate the Spirit's procession—and he questions whether introducing the idea of the Spirit actively personing the Father and the Son simply complicates matters further on the ecumenical front.<sup>45</sup> He submits that it would be more helpful to retain the sense of passivity suggested by the traditional concept of the Spirit as intradivine gift and love while "identify[ing] that the Spirit's passive procession as person is of a distinctive type that, precisely as love received, is essential to the personing of the Father who begets the Son in love."<sup>46</sup> This, he thinks, would accomplish the most important goal of Weinandy's project, which is to show in a new light what makes the Spirit unique and indispensable within the Trinity.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 17. See also Weinandy, McPartlan, and Caldecott, "Clarifying the Filioque," 364.

<sup>45</sup> Ralph Del Colle, "Reflections on the Filioque," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 34.2 (1997), 202-17: 216.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 216-17, quoted at 217.

Let us suppose that the Orthodox are not likely to accept a characterization of the Spirit as active in the constitution of the trinitarian persons. Is it possible to reconcile such a stance with one that holds that the Spirit can only truthfully be called a full person, on equal terms with the Father and the Son, if she *acts* within the immanent Trinity? An attempt to do so might assign an active role to the Spirit in the intratrinitarian relations but specify that it is the “passive action” of receiving and of being given and received. In considering how such passivity can really be an action, we may consider Jesus’ passion as an example. When he is delivered or betrayed “into the hands of sinners” (Mark 14.41 and par.) or when he accepts being whipped and nailed to the cross, no Christian would deny that he is performing an action. Jesus is completely passive in these events, but in being so, he brings things to pass. The same is true of Mary’s *fiat mihi* at the annunciation.<sup>47</sup> Passivity can be a profoundly efficacious form of action. Likewise, the Spirit may be understood as acting to bring things about in the immanent Trinity—namely, the shaping of the personhood of the Father and the Son—precisely in being completely passive, in being their gift of love to one another. This seems to me to be a legitimate option, provided that it entails the supposition that the Spirit *wills* to be given by the other persons as donative love, for without that it would be entirely meaningless to say that she is active in any sense.

I, however, am not certain that it would be really necessary for ecumenical reasons to qualify in this way the statement that the Spirit is active within the Trinity. The Orthodox commitment to understanding the modality of the Son’s and the Spirit’s processions as passive seems to stem entirely from their more basic commitment to the idea of the Father as the sole trinitarian cause. If one specifies that the Son and the Spirit

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<sup>47</sup> This example was suggested to me in personal conversation by Ralph Del Colle.

act in a non-causal way within the Trinity, the East would appear to have no grounds for objection. In fact, as I have shown, Theodore Stylianopoulos fully endorses what he believes Dumitru Staniloae to have proven: that the Orthodox can and do accept an active but non-causal role of the Son in the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις. It seems, then, that Weinandy's thesis of the Spirit's activity should not pose an impediment to ecumenical engagement with the Orthodox as long as it is not interpreted to make the Spirit a cause (according to the Eastern understanding of that term) of the existence of the Father and the Son, which it does not. Weinandy affirms that the Father alone is the source from which the Son and the Spirit originate, even as he claims that each person acts toward the others in a way that contributes to the definition of the others as persons, i.e., subsistent relations within the Trinity.<sup>48</sup> It is true that he views the Spirit as mediating the generation of the Son and the Son as mediating the procession of the Spirit, but he never describes either as originating from the other.<sup>49</sup>

What may limit the ecumenical value of Weinandy's proposal as far as the Orthodox are concerned is his critique of their approach to trinitarian thinking since the time of the Cappadocians as Neo-Platonic. For that matter, he finds Western theology wanting, as well, because it, too, has been shackled by philosophical presuppositions inimical to the biblical revelation. And indeed, Weinandy's effort to correct both traditions has drawn criticism from fellow Catholics. Paul McPartlan expresses dismay at Weinandy's argument that "we have all—Basil, Cyril and Maximus included—been

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<sup>48</sup> Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*, 74, 81-85.

<sup>49</sup> I interpret the Eastern doctrine of trinitarian causality as treating "cause" (αἰτία) as co-extensive, and virtually interchangeable, with "source" (πηγή) or "principle" (ἀρχή).

wrong” in assigning the Father and the Son any kind of precedence to the Holy Spirit.<sup>50</sup> I myself suspect that Weinandy could increase the ecumenical appeal of his thesis if he were to emphasize its points of continuity with the church’s post-biblical tradition, limited though they admittedly are, to an extent that is at least comparable with that to which he stresses its revisionary character. Still, it is important not to misinterpret what he has done. McPartlan errs when he paints Weinandy as advocating a trinitarian *taxis* of Father-Spirit-Son in contrast to the Father-Son-Spirit *taxis* of “the *filioquists*.”<sup>51</sup>

Weinandy never states that the Father spirates the Spirit even logically prior to begetting the Son. David Coffey recognizes that Weinandy does not intend to place the Spirit before the Son but argues that this rearrangement of the traditional *taxis* is “the inevitable consequence” of Weinandy’s thesis:

If the Father begets the Son “in” the Holy Spirit, this can only mean that the Son comes forth from the Father and the Holy Spirit (*Spirituque*). What else can the preposition “in” signify in the immanent Trinity? . . . The infinity and perfection of the divine persons dictate that any use in their regard of prepositions denoting activity can only signify that they are co-principles of other divine persons.<sup>52</sup>

However, I think that because Coffey does not put forward Weinandy’s idea in the latter’s own terms before critiquing it, he, too, fails to represent the idea itself adequately. Weinandy underscores the simultaneity of the spiration and the begetting, particularly with regard to the image of them as the Father’s speaking of his Word by or in his Breath. The Word does not come *from* the Breath, as the term *Spirituque* would indicate. He comes forth *by* or *in* the Breath. “By” and “in” do not signify principiativity in the way

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<sup>50</sup> Weinandy, McPartlan, and Caldecott, “Clarifying the *Filioque*,” 367. This is somewhat strange, though, because McPartlan himself thinks that understanding the trinitarian persons in a linear sequence, whether Father-Son-Spirit or Father-Spirit-Son, is a theological dead end (370).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>52</sup> David Coffey, “Spirit Christology and the Trinity,” *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. L. Dabney (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2001), 315-338: 335.

that “from” does, just as “through” does not. *Pace* Coffey, it makes a difference *which* preposition one uses to describe the relationship between one trinitarian person and another. Not all prepositions necessarily signify that one person is the principle or co-principle of another. For example, if it were clear that “through” indicated principiativity, the formula “through the Son” would not have become the bone of contention between the East and the West that it did in the *Filioque* controversy. If that were clear, Catholic theology could content itself with using the *per Filium* to express the Son’s role in the Spirit’s procession, for it would be obvious that *per* connotes the same thing that *a* or *ex* denotes in the statement that the Spirit proceeds from (*a/ex*) the Son. It is partly because this is by no means obvious that most Catholic theologians—including Coffey<sup>53</sup>—recognize that the *per Filium* is not precisely equivalent to, and cannot serve as an easy substitute for, the *Filioque*. By the same token, Weinandy’s “by/in the Spirit” is not equivalent to *Spirituque*.

On my reading, Weinandy does not make the Spirit a (logically) pre-existing instrumental cause of the Son when he speaks of the Father begetting the Son “by” her, nor does he mean for us to understand the Spirit as the pre-existing “womb” *into which* the Father begets the Son.<sup>54</sup> The Word/Breath image really is key to understanding his intention: the two come forth together in an indissoluble bond. Weinandy would regard placing the Spirit prior to the Son in the trinitarian order as mistaken on the same grounds as he considers it wrong to place the Son ahead of the Spirit. Gregory J. Liston rightly notes that he does alter the traditional *taxis*, but he does so by ordering “the Father as first

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<sup>53</sup> See David Coffey, “The Roman ‘Clarification’ of the Doctrine of the Filioque,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5.1 (March 2003), 3-21: 10-15.

<sup>54</sup> Leonardo Boff does use just this image (*Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988 ], 147), although he does not really think of any of the trinitarian persons as being prior to the others in any sense, as we will discuss below.

(by virtue of the *monarchia*) and the Son and Spirit as equally and simultaneously second.”<sup>55</sup>

I accept the majority of Weinandy’s argument, and I will incorporate his thesis at a fundamental level into the summary account of the immanent Trinity that I will offer later in this chapter. However, the above defense of his approach to the *taxis* leads me to a caveat of my own. The one perhaps major part of his proposal that I cannot agree with is his denial of logical priority among the trinitarian persons. He holds that there is an order of origin and derivation between them, but not one of priority, precedence, and sequence. Yet an order of origin and derivation is at least a logical ordering. It may or may not be more than a logical ordering, but it cannot fail to be a logical one. For example, the source of a river is logically prior to its flow. The source may always have flowed into a river and therefore not precede the river temporally. Indeed, insofar as the source is considered *as a source*, it is also logically dependent on the river of which it is the source—the idea of a source logically depends on the idea that something comes from it, as the idea of anything that is intrinsically correlative to something else logically depends on the idea of that other thing. However, notwithstanding this dependence, the source still has a logical priority to the river. Likewise, the Father is logically prior to the Son and the Spirit insofar as he is the source of them, even though (1) paternity and filiation being correlates, his fatherhood is logically dependent on the Son, i.e., it is the begetting of the Son that makes him Father, and (2) as Weinandy argues and as I agree, a proper understanding of that fatherhood holds it to depend for its intelligibility on the spiration of the Spirit in whom the Father’s relationship to the Son consists. Furthermore,

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<sup>55</sup> Gregory J. Liston, *The Anointed Church: Toward a Third Article Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 227.

I maintain that the Son does logically precede the Spirit in one sense, namely, that just as breath is emitted for the sake of conveying words in the act of speaking, so the Father breathes forth the Spirit for the sake of speaking his Word. I will defer a fuller discussion of this point until after I have engaged Coffey's own constructive proposal for understanding the trinitarian relations.

### **David Coffey: The "Procession" and "Return" Models of the Trinity**

We began Chapter Three by observing that the biblical testimony to God's self-revelation in Christ and the Holy Spirit is sufficiently varied to allow for more than one model of the biblical/economic Trinity and thus more than one model of the immanent Trinity based on the available data. Coffey recognizes this fact, and accordingly he constructs two models of the immanent Trinity, not as a pair of options to choose from but as construals of the trinitarian *taxis* from two perspectives, neither of which is reducible to the other. On the one hand, we see most clearly in John's Gospel that God the Father sends the Son and (through him) the Spirit into the world. This is the "mission" model of the biblical Trinity. When transposed to the realm of the immanent Trinity, it yields what can fittingly be called the "procession" model because it deals with the Son and the Spirit going out from the Father, the Son by generation and the Spirit by ἐκπόρευσις.<sup>56</sup> Here the *taxis* is Father-Son-Spirit for the West and for at least some in the East. On the other hand, we see, particularly in the Synoptics, that Jesus comes from and returns to God the Father in the power of the Spirit. This dynamic produces a *taxis* of Father-Spirit-Son-Spirit-Father. It is of course no coincidence that that is the best way of schematizing the notion that the Holy Spirit is the love bestowed on one another by the

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<sup>56</sup> David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (Oxford University, 1999), 43.

Father and the Son. This *taxis* pertains to what may be called the “return” model of the Trinity because while it assumes the going-forth of the Son and the Spirit from the Father depicted (albeit with the Son preceding the Spirit) in the mission/procession model, it distinctively reflects Christ’s return to the Father in the economy as well as the Son’s return of the love bestowed on him by the Father in the immanent Trinity, both of which take place in or through the Spirit.<sup>57</sup> The first model focuses on the establishment of distinction between the persons in the immanent Trinity and so may be named the “distinction” model; the second brings the persons’ unity to the fore and is appropriate to call the “model of union.”<sup>58</sup> It must be noted that the return or union model presupposes the distinction of persons captured by the procession model. It is therefore the more comprehensive of the two.<sup>59</sup>

We may recognize at the outset that the mutual love theology plays a major role in Coffey’s project, just as it does in Weinandy’s. However, whereas Weinandy links the processions of the Son and the Spirit to the concept of the Father and the Son reciprocally loving each other within a single model of the Trinity, Coffey finds it necessary to parse the ideas of procession and mutual love according to two distinct, albeit complementary, models. He employs two models not only because the biblical data yield two different *taxeis* but also in order to distinguish between “two ‘stages’ of the Trinity, *in fieri* (in the process of becoming) and *in facto esse* (as already constituted).” He stipulates that there can be no real distinction of this kind in God since God does not “become” in time.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> In the first edition of his book *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1979), Coffey refers to the return model as the “bestowal” model because it deals with the mutual bestowal of the Holy Spirit on one another by the Father and the Son. He later began calling it the return model to highlight the fact that it contrasts with and complements the procession model.

<sup>58</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 44.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 51.

However, the distinction is necessary because our *understanding* of the Trinity must proceed in steps that isolate for consideration various aspects of the dynamic relationship between the trinitarian persons.

We have seen that Coffey subscribes to the full content of the *Filioque* as defined by the Council of Florence, viz., the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one principle and by a single spiration, receiving her essence and her subsistent being from them both. Coffey locates the *Filioque* in the procession model insofar as the aim of the doctrine is to establish the hypostatic distinction of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, and the procession model is concerned precisely with the differentiation of the trinitarian persons. According to Coffey, who almost certainly follows Thomas on the point, the Spirit can only be distinguished from the Father and the Son if she proceeds from both of them as from one principle.<sup>61</sup> However, we only grasp completely how the Spirit proceeds from both with the aid of the return model, wherein she proceeds as their mutual love.

On the return model, the Spirit is understood to be the “objectivization” of the Father’s and the Son’s love for each other.<sup>62</sup> Her person results from their reciprocal love. However, in the first place, she is simply the Father’s love for the Son. This is a way of interpreting the Eastern idea, which we have seen Staniloae discuss, of the Son as “Treasurer” of the Holy Spirit who rests on him (i.e., in this interpretation, as the Father’s love).<sup>63</sup> Coffey holds that the Father begets the Son in love, but *contra* Weinandy, he

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 48. He does not refer to Thomas in this context, but the Angelic Doctor’s argument in *Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 2 and a. 4 probably form the basis of his assertion.

<sup>62</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 49. He credits John Cowburn (*Love and the Person* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967], 295) with identifying the Spirit as the “objectivization” of this love.

<sup>63</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 49, who in fact cites Staniloae regarding the idea (Dumitru Staniloae, “The Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and His Relation to the Son, as the Basis of Our

does not identify the Holy Spirit with this love. Rather, the Father loves the Son in the Spirit logically posterior to begetting him. Coffey's explanation of this point demands to be quoted in full:

In the immanent Trinity the love of the Father for the Son, which is the Holy Spirit, is a love that logically follows, rather than precedes, the generation of the Son, as the taxis requires. St. Thomas has pointed out that "every agent, whatever it be, performs each action out of love of some kind (*ex aliquo amore*)."<sup>64</sup> This must apply also to the Father in the act of generating the Son. But the love of the Father with which he generates the Son can only be his self-love, not his love for a Son who according to the taxis (and to put the matter crudely) does not yet exist. This love, therefore, cannot be the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit is the Father's love for *the Son*. As his self-love, this "first" love is identical with the Father himself. But acting in his total self-possession, which is his self-love, identical with himself, the Father generates the Son, whom he then loves with a "second" love, which is the Holy Spirit.<sup>64</sup>

Coffey recognizes that this immediately raises the question of how the Father's love for the Son can be identified with the Holy Spirit if she is supposed to be their *mutual love*. As he puts it, "Does not the mutuality of the love of Father and Son have to be completed by the Son's love for the Father before it can be said that the Holy Spirit is constituted as a person?"<sup>65</sup> After all, does not the Florentine *Filioque* teach that the Son's joint spiration with the Father is what gives the Spirit both her essence and her hypostatic being? Coffey answers that it is necessary on biblical grounds to identify the Father's love for the Son with the Holy Spirit. It is after doing this that we can perceive the truth contained in the formula employed by Gregory of Nyssa and Epiphanius on the basis of John 15.26 and 16.14, "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son." The Spirit

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Deification and Adoption," *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy* [London & Geneva: SPCK & World Council of Churches, 1981], 174-86: 179).

<sup>64</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 49. His quotation of Thomas comes from *Summa Theologica* I-II, q. 28, a. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 50.

receives from the Son “the attribute of being [his] love of the Father, which completes that of being the Father’s love for the Son,” rendering her their *mutual* love.<sup>66</sup>

As he makes this argument, Coffey perceives the need to avoid separating the procession of the Spirit into two different stages, the first of which is somehow deficient and requires the second to supply something that it lacks. This is what he fears Moltmann does by positing that the Spirit receives her hypostatic existence from the Father as she proceeds from him alone and receives her relational form from the Son.<sup>67</sup> He therefore offers the following commentary by way of clarification, which again deserves to be quoted at length:

The initial personal love of the Father for the Son is identical with the Father’s own person. Similarly, the purely personal answering love of the Son for the Father would be identical with the Son’s own person, were it not for the fact that in the meeting of the two loves, their mutual love, the objectivization that takes place becomes a reality that transcends its constituent elements, that reality being the person of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. Henceforth according to the taxis the Father’s love for the Son and the Son’s love for the Father are each to be identified with the Holy Spirit. . . . According, then, to the traditional taxis, *first* there is the generation of the Son by the Father, and *second* there is the coincident bestowal of the Holy Spirit by the Father on the Son and the bestowal of the same Spirit by the Son on the Father. It is only as the *mutual* love of the Father and the Son, or rather as its objectivization, that the Holy Spirit has his existence.<sup>68</sup>

Coffey is arguing that even though the love with which the Father loves the Son technically does not produce the Spirit until it is reciprocated by the Son, that initial paternal love can be identified retroactively as the Holy Spirit once we see the Spirit to

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 50; see Jürgen Moltmann, “Theological Proposals towards the Resolution of the *Filioque* Controversy,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 164-73: 169. I think that I showed in the previous chapter that Moltmann’s formula does not do what Coffey worries about it doing. However, even if Coffey has misinterpreted him and therefore made him a straw man, one can understand Coffey’s concern.

<sup>68</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 50-51.

have been produced by that reciprocation. Or to state it from the other perspective, because the Father's love for the Son will become the Spirit once the Son returns it, we may refer to the Father's love for the Son as the Holy Spirit before it is returned, anticipating the fact that this very love will be, when returned, a constituent element of the *mutual* love that the Holy Spirit is.

To allow Coffey to complete his thought in his own words:

As mutual, the double bestowal of love, that is, by the Father and the Son on each other, must be coincident and indeed must constitute a single bestowal and a single act . . . . But the Father's love for the Son always has priority over the Son's love for the Father, and the latter is always an answering love. Anticipating the Son in existence, the Father anticipates him also in activity, in love. This *prevenient* act of the Father, however, is not to be identified with the Holy Spirit. As a *prevenient* act of the Father it is identical with the Father's hypostasis, with the Father himself. The love of Father and Son becomes mutual when the Son responds, and *as* mutual it, or rather its objectivization, is the Holy Spirit. While the Father's *prevenient* love of the Son is to be identified with the Father, the Son's answering love is to be identified with the Holy Spirit, not with the Son, because the Son's response is what renders the love mutual. In effect this means that, insofar as it is mutual, the love comprises constituent elements that are simultaneous and coincident; but insofar as these elements are personal and individual, they have an order, in which the Father's love for the Son remains prior to the love of the Son for the Father. In other words, the priority of the Father's *prevenient* love is imported into the mutual love without prejudice to the coincidence of its elements *qua* mutual.<sup>69</sup>

This deals adequately with the problem of appearing to suggest that the Father's love for the Son is a partial production of the Holy Spirit that is only completed when, in a different (subsequent) act, the Son's answering love adds something that was missing in the Father's production of the Spirit as a person. It is true that we have to view the two loves sequentially in order to establish the logical priority of the Father's love to that of the Son and hence the reciprocal character of the Son's returned love. To do so is to see

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 51.

the Trinity *in fieri*.<sup>70</sup> However, once we have established the priority of the paternal love we turn our attention to the Trinity *in facto esse*, where the two loves are understood to be one, for the “order and succession deriving from the paternal monarchy . . . have been sublated (preserved but transcended) as the reciprocal love itself has been sublated into the mutual love.”<sup>71</sup> And since “[w]hat is actually the case with [God] is the eternal *factum esse*,” we can say that “there is no actual love of the Father for the Son that is not the Holy Spirit.”<sup>72</sup>

Again, with this explanation, Coffey avoids having the Spirit proceed twice or in two individual, incomplete stages. What is puzzling about it, though, is that the idea of the two loves of the Father—the self-love with which he generates the Son and the second love, directed to the now-begotten Son, which is to be identified with the Holy Spirit—has dropped out of the picture. One would think that Coffey would claim that the Father’s second love is what, upon being returned by the Son, becomes the Holy Spirit. There would then be no need to contrast the prevenient self-love of the Father with the love of the Son for the Father or to specify that this filial love is not self-love, for it would be apparent that only the other-directed love of the Father and the Son, i.e., their love for each other, brings about the person of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Coffey does state a bit later that the self-love of the Father and the Son is not “notional” or “person producing.”<sup>73</sup> On the face of things, this appears to contradict the previous argument that it is from his self-love that the Father generates the Son.<sup>74</sup> However, he means here that the love of the

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Coffey, “The Roman ‘Clarification’ of the Doctrine of the Filioque,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5.1 (March 2003), 3-21: 18.

<sup>72</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 51.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 49.

Father and the Son that is productive of the Holy Spirit is their love for each other. This becomes clear when, a bit further still in his argument, he retrieves the idea of the two loves of the Father, and there he indeed distinguishes them precisely as the self-love from which the Father generates an image or likeness of himself and his love of this image as “his other, the Son.”<sup>75</sup> According to Coffey, who aligns himself with Thomas, it is the very nature of generation as an act to produce a likeness of that which generates.<sup>76</sup> In generating the Son, then, the Father communicates to him all that he has (except, of course, the property of being the one who generates him, i.e., the property of being the Father). This includes the power to love one’s other, which for the Son is the Father. Next, the Father loves the Son *as* other, and the Son likewise loves the Father as other. They therefore love one another simultaneously. Coffey continues,

This mutual love, the self-communication of the Father and the Son (to each other), is a single act, not just because its two components occur simultaneously in the Godhead, but because the Son’s power to love (the other) is identical with the Father’s power to love (the other), each being identical with the divine essence precisely as communicated by the Father to the Son (and not, therefore, with the divine essence precisely as such), that is, as communicating a perfect personal likeness.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 62-63; quoted at 63.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 56; see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 27, a. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 63. The qualification that the power to love the other is identical with the essence precisely as communicated to the Son, not with the divine essence precisely as such, is very important, for if that power were identical with the essence as such, the Holy Spirit would have to possess it, as well. The Spirit is different from the Son in that she is not the Father’s image, which is another way of saying that she is not generated as the Son is. Yet this is an appropriate moment to address a comment that Coffey makes elsewhere about generation resulting in a likeness between the Father and the Son. He writes that “while all three trinitarian persons are ‘like’ each other in respect of the divine nature, only the Father and the Son are ‘like’ each other as persons” (ibid., 56). If all he means is that the Father and the Son have in common a personal characteristic that the Spirit does not share, he is correct, for both spirate the Spirit (i.e., love through her), whereas she does not spirate herself. And to be sure, as I have just noted, Coffey holds that the Father and the Son have this in common because the Son is generated as a likeness of the Father, which of course he is. However, Coffey’s phrase “only the Father and the Son are ‘like’ each other as persons” could be misleading if it is not supplemented by an acknowledgment that in fact the personhood of each trinitarian person differs from that of the others. The Spirit, indeed, is different from the Father and the Son in that her person has not the opacity of a lover or a beloved but the translucence of the love with which lovers gaze on one another. The Father, for his part, differs from the Son and the Spirit in that he alone is the ultimate source and cause of their being. The Son is unique in that he is the focal

This joint but single act of the Father and the Son produces the Holy Spirit, “the objectivization, or, better, the personalization, of their mutual love.”<sup>78</sup> Coffey contrasts the return model with the procession model as interpreted through the psychological analogy. The latter treats as notional the divine knowledge (which takes the form of a Word) and the divine love (which is identified with the Holy Spirit), whereas on the return model, it is self-love and love of other that are notional.<sup>79</sup>

The idea that the Father confers the power to love, i.e., spirativity, on the Son in the act of generation forms an important part of the account of the *Filioque* that Coffey gives in terms of the procession and the return model. The procession model sees the Father and the Son as breathing forth the Spirit together because they possess the numerically single power of spirating, the exercise of which places them in an opposition of relation to the Holy Spirit. This means that the Spirit is distinguished from them as a person because she originates from them—she is *a Patre Filioque*. The personal distinction between the Father and the Son is only visible here to the extent that the Father has the *vis spirativa* (“spirative power”) of himself, whereas the Son has it from the Father.<sup>80</sup> The fact that the Father gives this power to the Son makes it possible to say that the Father spirates the Spirit through him, although the *per Filium* does not tell us

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point of the activity of the Trinity; his generation is the act that determines the defining characteristics of the Father and the Spirit, for the Father becomes Father by begetting the Son in order to call him back to himself in the love of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father in order to repose on the Son and to return him to the Father in love. On the other hand, it is equally important to acknowledge that to some extent the concept of person applies univocally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for it is equally true of each that he or she is a suppositum who instantiates the divine nature, i.e., each is a distinctly incommunicable instance of it, a fact that is perhaps most easy to perceive when one considers that it means that each person possesses the divine consciousness in a measure equal to that of the others, even if each possesses it in a unique way.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 55-56; Coffey, “The Roman ‘Clarification,’” 15, 20.

whether the Son is passive or active in his possession of the power and the exercise of it that takes place in him.<sup>81</sup> For the answer to that we look to the return model. In it we find occasion to understand the Thomistic assertion that the Father and the Son are “*duo spirantes* (‘two who spirate’)” but perform only “*una spiratio* (‘one spiration’)”<sup>82</sup> in the context of the mutual love theology. Because they breathe forth the Spirit in love, it is possible to convert the terms of Thomas’s claim from spiration to love and say that in the Trinity there are “*duo amantes sed una amatio* (‘two who love but one act of loving’)”<sup>83</sup> Coffey explains that the Father generates the Son as his likeness, which gives the Son the *virtus spirandi* (“power of spirating”). Then the Father and the Son love each other by this power.

Because the power of spiration is complete in each of them, each breathes forth the Holy Spirit, but because this power is strictly one in both, having been communicated from the Father to the Son, its act, which is spiration, must also be one, even though there are two who spirate and they do so not together (over against some third) but over against each other. Even here, therefore, in the return model (where we are dealing with mutual love), there are *duo amantes sed una amatio*.<sup>84</sup>

Here we see that the Son indeed actively spirates the Spirit. For that reason, we conclude from the return model that the Spirit is not only proceeds *through* him but in fact proceeds *from* him as his love for the Father, i.e., as the love that is objectivized as the Spirit in his reciprocation of the Father’s love. It should be recognized that this is nothing less than the full Florentine *Filioque*: the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one principle and by a single spiration, being produced by both of them as a person in possession of the divine nature.

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<sup>81</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 48.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 56. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 4, ad. 7.

<sup>83</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Coffey, again following Thomas, goes a step farther in honing the point that the Father and the Son constitute one principle of the Holy Spirit and spirate her by a single act. These *duo spirantes* should be said to be *unus spirator* because “in respect of breathing forth the Holy Spirit their perfect likeness based on generation rules out any ‘opposition of relation’ between them.” Since Coffey accepts the Scholastic adage, “In God all things are one where opposition of relation does not prevent it,” he concludes that the Father and the Son must be one as the spirator of the Spirit.<sup>85</sup> To my mind, it is not strictly necessary to posit that Father and Son are one spirator in order to secure the singleness of their spiration. Yet I draw attention to Coffey’s treatment of the axiom *duo spirantes sed unus spirator* because I will give a different interpretation of it later in the chapter.

To round out our examination of Coffey’s dual-model account of the Trinity, let us consider his attempt to do justice to the legitimate concerns of the West as expressed in filioquism and those of the East as expressed in monopatrism. On the one hand, he affirms that the Holy Spirit is constituted by the mutual love of the Father and the Son and thus proceeds from them both. On the other hand, because “there is a sense in which the love of the Father for the Son precedes (and evokes) that of the Son for the Father,” and because this love for the Son “is the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and resting on the Son,” it is also true to say that the Father is the cause of the Spirit (according to the Eastern sense of “cause”). Coffey claims that these two statements are “intellectually irreconcilable,” although he defends them as being dialectical rather than

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 57. As stated above, Coffey takes his cue from Thomas in denying that the “two who spirate” are “two spirators.” However, Thomas argues the point on different grounds than Coffey does (see *Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 4, ad. 7). In my view, Coffey’s approach excels Thomas’s, which is largely based on grammatical considerations.

contradictory.<sup>86</sup> Yet it appears to me that he himself promptly attempts to reconcile them. To do so he invokes Thomas's argument that the Spirit proceeds in two ways, immediately and mediately, and deploys it according to his two trinitarian models. As he explains Thomas's thought, the Spirit proceeds immediately from the Father inasmuch as the Father uses his power of spiration, but she proceeds mediately from him inasmuch as he exercises this power through the Son. This is dialectic, not contradiction, because the two parts of the statement involve looking at the procession from two different points of view. We see the procession's immediacy when we consider the *virtus spirandi* itself, for the Father possesses it completely in himself and requires no impetus from anyone or anything to use it. We then see that this very procession is mediated when we view it in light of the fact that it involves *duo spirantes*.<sup>87</sup> Coffey identifies the latter with the procession model: the Son mediates the procession of the Spirit, which occurs through him and from him<sup>88</sup> insofar as he and the Father are jointly opposed to the Spirit as principle of her origin. Coffey interprets the immediate mode through the return model: the Spirit proceeds from the Father *to* the Son as the Father's love, reposing on the Son, as the Orthodox say.<sup>89</sup> The return model adds, of course, that the Spirit then proceeds from the Son back to the Father as his return of the Father's love, but it is important to recognize the immediacy of the Spirit's procession from the Father to the Son because it shows the sense in which she ultimately proceeds from the Father "alone," as the East emphasizes, or from him *principaliter*, as the Western tradition has put it.

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<sup>86</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* 72.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86. I showed in the last chapter that Staniloae advocates this idea, and Coffey cites him as doing so (Staniloae, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit," 181; Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* 86).

In conclusion, the distinctive feature of Coffey's project is his development of the return model as a supplement to the procession model through which both the East and the West have historically attempted to account for all the aspects of the trinitarian relations. Coffey maintains that the problem with using the procession model alone is that it cannot account for all of the biblical data concerning the revelation of the triune God, since this data yields two different *taxeis*, Father-Son-Spirit and Father-Spirit-Son-Spirit-Father. The return model accounts for the biblical testimony to the love between the Father and the Son, which in Coffey's judgment is "the most basic feature" of the Gospels' depiction of the reality of Jesus.<sup>90</sup> Therefore Coffey believes that theologies that deny that this mutual love can be predicated of the immanent Trinity—a denial made by Karl Rahner, H. F. Dondaine, and Yves Congar<sup>91</sup>—as well as those that simply do not account for it—e.g., those that limit themselves to the procession model as explicated in terms of the psychological analogy, such as Lonergan's<sup>92</sup>—"will be judged ultimately inadequate, and, from the ecumenical point of view, unhelpful."<sup>93</sup>

The ecumenical value of the return model is that it is congenial to Eastern concerns and emphases. (1) It acknowledges the monarchy and causality of the Father vis-à-vis the Spirit insofar as it recognizes the priority of his love (spiration) to that of the Son. (2) It can incorporate the Eastern ideas that the Spirit reposes on the Son (John Damascene), that she "proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son" (Gregory of Nyssa, Epiphanius), and that the Son is the Treasurer of the Spirit (Gregory Nazianzen,

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<sup>90</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 58.

<sup>91</sup> See Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad, 1997 [1970]), 106; H. F. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas et la Procession du Saint-Esprit," *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Somme Théologique. La Trinité*, vol. 2 (Paris: 1946), 397-401; Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, vol. 1 (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 90. Coffey responds to their critiques in *Deus Trinitas*, 54-58.

<sup>92</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 45, 47.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

Gregory Palamas). (3) Although the notion of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son has never been a major theme of Orthodox theology, it has authoritative support from Gregory Palamas and modern support from Boris Bobrinskoy.

Coffey's other contribution to our discussion lies in his fruitful use of the distinction between the Trinity *in fieri* and *in facto esse*. The procession model shows us the trinitarian persons being distinguished in terms of origin, i.e., in their opposed relations, which is them *in fieri*. The return model shows us first the sequential loves of the Father and the Son—again, an *in fieri* perspective—and then the loves as forming one mutual love that is the Holy Spirit, which is the Trinity *in facto esse*, i.e., in the established relations between the persons. The advantage of the *in fieri/in facto esse* distinction is that it allows us to understand the dynamism of trinitarian life in terms of constitutive elements in dialectic with the fact that the Trinity is an eternal reality that does not admit any temporal process of becoming.

### **Striving for Convergence**

One point made by Coffey that we have not yet considered is that the identification of the Holy Spirit as the objectivization of the Father's and the Son's love for each other can be made in more conventionally "personal" terms by the statement that the Spirit "mediates the Father and the Son to each other."<sup>94</sup> This recognizes for her an active role in the Trinity despite the passivity seen in the fact that she is spirated by the Father and the Son.<sup>95</sup> Passivity and activity are compatible here. If one can say, as I have previously quoted Gregory Palamas as saying, that the Father and the Son "use" toward

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<sup>94</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* 102.

<sup>95</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 164 n. 7.

one another the love that the Spirit is like,<sup>96</sup> one can and should add that she is not used as an unwitting or unwilling tool. It may be even better to say—though the anthropomorphic image should not be taken too far—that she is “employed” by the Father and the Son, i.e., she acts consciously and willingly in their service, even if one thinks, as Coffey does, that she only comes into being as she performs this act.<sup>97</sup>

Coffey and Weinandy have in common, then, that they assign the Holy Spirit an active role in the immanent Trinity. We have already had occasion to note the major point of disagreement between them. Weinandy finds it necessary on biblical grounds to reconceive the trinitarian relationships so that the processions of the Son and the Spirit are understood to be perichoretically interdependent and all three persons to be mutually conditioned or personed by one another’s activity. Coffey, on the other hand, firmly locates the Son’s generation in logical priority to the spiration of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, making the the latter dependent on the former and the former independent of the latter. In Coffey’s view, the *taxis* of Father-Son-Spirit belongs to “the developed faith of the Church in both East and West, and hence must be regarded as a theological datum, even if one secondary to Scripture.”<sup>98</sup> For him, it is the theologian’s duty to harmonize new understandings of Scripture with official dogmatic formulations. That is why even though he finds the biblical Trinity to appear in the form of two “apparently opposed” *taxeis*, Father-Son-Spirit and Father-Spirit-Son-Spirit-Father, both his procession and his return model assume the *taxis* Father-Son-Spirit for the immanent

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<sup>96</sup> Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, trans. Robert E. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988), 36 (p. 122): “[T]his Spirit of the supreme Word is like an ineffable love of the Begetter toward the ineffably begotten Word himself, even as the beloved Word and Son of the Father also uses [χρηται] this love toward the Begetter” (my translation).

<sup>97</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?* 102.

<sup>98</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 164 n. 7.

Trinity,<sup>99</sup> the return model interpreting the second biblical *taxis* (the chiefly Synoptic one of Father-Spirit-Son-Spirit-Father) in light of the traditional one derived chiefly from the Gospel of John and ensconced in the procession model.

I believe that Weinandy sufficiently makes his hermeneutical case for the Son's dependence on the Spirit in the economy. As our goal is to base our theology of the immanent Trinity as much as possible on the economy as described in Scripture, we are justified in concluding that the Son must depend in some way on the Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Of course, there is no dispute in the Christian tradition that the Spirit's mission is mediated by and therefore dependent on the Son. Following our epistemological principle regarding the immanent Trinity, then, we also affirm the traditional Western position that the Son mediates the Spirit's eternal procession. In sum, I accept Weinandy's argument that the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit are mutually dependent. Here we have moved well beyond the agreement established with Aldenhoven and Bobrinskoy in the last chapter that the Son's generation is not prior to the Spirit's procession in all respects. The two are simultaneous insofar as they are interdependent.

Furthermore, Weinandy is entirely right in holding that the Father must not be conceived of as God independently of the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is God only *as* the Father, and he is the Father only because he begets the Son. Yet, as we previously saw Garrigues, Staniloae, and Moltmann assert in various ways and as Weinandy contends is the necessary corollary of the thesis that the Father begets the Son in the Spirit, the Father also spirates the Spirit precisely in his paternity, which means that he is likewise never the Father without the Spirit.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

The significant limitation of Coffey's trinitarian theology, in my opinion, is that it does not account sufficiently for this last point. In fact, I do not see that he makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is necessary to the relationship between the Father and the Son. He shows her being produced by their relationship and subsequently characterizing it. However, in his account, the Father-Son relationship is established completely independently of the being of the Holy Spirit. In fact, while the Spirit *results* from their mutual love, it is not clear to me that she is *necessary* for them to love each other.

On the other hand, I agree that the tradition that understands the trinitarian *taxis* to be Father-Son-Spirit is too firmly entrenched to be disposed of—even if I am less certain than Coffey is that the East is as committed to it as the West is—and in any case, as I have mentioned previously, I believe that in a certain sense the Son is logically prior to the Holy Spirit and I affirm the traditional *taxis* accordingly. Also, while Coffey is not the first to employ the distinction between the Trinity *in fieri* and *in facto esse*, his use of it inspires the one I will make. I will take up his concept of the two loves of the Father, as well, albeit for a different purpose than it serves in his account.

My aim in what follows, therefore, will be to incorporate what I think are the best parts of Weinandy's and Coffey's proposals into a picture of the immanent Trinity that is faithful to the whole of the NT witness concerning the trinitarian relationships and that does justice to certain truths that the church in the East and the West holds to be indispensable. That some of Weinandy's and Coffey's most distinctive ideas are at least possibly compatible is suggested by the fact that François-Xavier Durrwell expresses a version of some of each one's distinctive ideas together in his book *Holy Spirit of God*. Calling the Spirit "the voice of the Father who pronounces the Word," he equates the

notion of the Word being conveyed by the Father's Breath with the idea that "the Father begets his Son in the Holy Spirit."<sup>100</sup> He also anticipates Weinandy's claim that the Father is conformed as Father in the Spirit and that the coincidence of begetting and spiration ground the perichoresis of persons in the Trinity:

In the Spirit God leaves himself and is carried towards the Son and himself becomes what he is: the Father. Furthermore, love brings about the existence of the other in love: God similarly begets, in Love, the eternal Son. The person who loves wants the other to have life, he wants this to the point of wishing to *exist* for the other and in him; it is thus that, in the Spirit, God *exists* for his Son, he *exists* in him, becoming Father in begetting the Son.<sup>101</sup>

On the basis of the supposition that the Father begets in love, Durrwell affirms something crucial to both Weinandy's and Coffey's theology, namely, that the Father bestows on the Son the power to love him in the Spirit in return, which the Son does.<sup>102</sup> Equally so, Durrwell makes statements that Weinandy never would but that read as if they had flowed from Coffey's pen. He avers that the Spirit is ordered third among the persons and that it is impermissible for theology to alter this order.<sup>103</sup> Like Coffey, he claims that she must be third because she is "constituted in the relationship of the Father and the Son."<sup>104</sup> He adds, however, that the Spirit does not truly come after the Father and the Son, for she is present in the Father's paternity and the Son's filiation,<sup>105</sup> and both their otherness from each other and their communion with each other—characteristics that constitute personality—"are initiated in the love of the Spirit."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Durrwell, *Holy Spirit of God*, 199.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 199-200. Durrwell states multiple times in various ways that the Son is begotten in the Spirit and that the Spirit "proceeds in the begetting of the Son" (ibid., 202; see 198-203, 210, 212-13).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 207; see 210.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 211.

These ideas do not contradict one another if we interpret them as follows: The Father spirates the Spirit as he begets the Son, the Spirit being that by which (or, better, she in whom) the Father wills to love the Son in the Son's otherness from him and so to be united with the Son in communion as the Son loves him in return. The Father loves the Son in begetting him and so begets him in love. It is this loving that makes him truly Father and that makes the Son his Beloved, which in turn allows the Son to love the Father and so to be truly Son, such that loving and being loved by one another in the Spirit plays a major role in the constitution of their persons. The Spirit, for her part, is indeed constituted in the Father-Son relationship, for it is in being (or bearing) their love for one another that her personal identity consists. Furthermore, she is logically third in the trinitarian *taxis* because the Father spirates her *for the sake* of begetting the Son.<sup>107</sup> She is, to speak loosely, the means to the end, but the end logically precedes the means. Admittedly, Weinandy and Coffey would likely take issue with different parts of what I have just said by way of interpreting Durrwell, but this interpretation does synthesize some of the valuable points each of them makes. I do not intend to minimize their differences, but taking stock of the presence of a version of their distinctive ideas side-by-side in Durrwell helps to relativize those differences.

It is not possible, nor would it be desirable, entirely to assimilate Weinandy's thought to Coffey's or vice versa, but we can create a limited convergence between them within a new perspective that comprehends some of the contributions of both. Let us, then, set forth some thoughts on the immanent Trinity that draw from the best aspects of

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<sup>107</sup> Staniloae also understands spiration as ordered to generation; he claims that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father with a view to his 'repose' on the Son" ("The Procession of the Holy Spirit," 181).

Weinandy's and Coffey's proposals, taking as our point of departure the synthesis of their ideas represented in the interpretation I have just given of Durrwell.

1. The Father loves himself in such a way as to produce an Image of himself that/whom he loves as other than himself. In this way he generates the Son as a going-forth of his nature in another person. He spirates the Spirit as another going-forth of his nature, accompanying that of the begetting of the Son. This *processio* of the love that is the divine nature produces a different person than does the *processio* that produces the Son, in accord with its different *telos*.<sup>108</sup> The generation of the Son constitutes a differentiation of God from Godself, for it is the Father's self-expression in a person other than himself—that is its accomplishment. The spiration of the Spirit is also a divine self-differentiation, for the Spirit really is a different person from either the Father or the Son; indeed, the Spirit goes forth (proceeds) from the Father in order to repose on the Son in his otherness from the Father. However, the *telos* of the spiration is not the establishment of difference within God, but a *reditio in seipsum*, a return of God to Godself, as the Spirit returns the Son to the Father—more precisely, as the Spirit bears the love of the Son for the Father (back) to the Father.

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<sup>108</sup> When we speak of a procession having a *telos*, we must be careful to excise from the concept of “end” any suggestion that the Father deliberately begets the Son or spirates the Spirit in order to bring about some effect that otherwise might not have been brought about. For the Father to do so would mean that he undergoes a change from not being in relation to the other persons to being in relation to them, which is an unacceptable idea both because it connotes that the Father's existence is logically independent of the Son's and the Spirit's and, *a fortiori*, because it implies contingency in the existence of the Son and the Spirit. It is an especially problematic version of the kind of emanationism that Weinandy decries. However, Emmanuel Durand points out that the concepts of order and origin would seem at first blush to be inapplicable to persons who possess the divine nature, in which there is no beginning or change, yet “following the Fathers, medieval authors managed to eliminate any connotation of anteriority-posteriority or superiority-inferiority from the concept of order, to keep from origin only the relationship of that which has a principle to its principle” (“Perichoresis,” *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in trinitarian Theology*, ed. Robert Woźniak and Giulio Maspero [New York: T&T Clark, 2012], 177-92: 187). As he proceeds to argue, it seems possible likewise to “purify” the concept of end in applying it to the Trinity and to use it to show how the interpersonal relations of the Trinity eternally attain their perfection (ibid.).

2. Coffey's distinction between the self-love with which the Father generates the Son and the love with which the Father loves the Son as other can help us to clarify why generation and spiration are not collapsed into one another even when they are united as closely as Weinandy wants them to be. If there are two loves, then there must be two processions, even if we regard the Father begetting the Son in the Spirit as a single act, as Weinandy sometimes describes it. To be sure, each love is identical with the divine essence, but the loves produce different results—different persons—according to the difference of intentionality between them, one being self-directed love and generating an Image, the other being other-directed love that reposes on that Image.

3. With Coffey, then, I hold that the Father begets the Son from love and that he loves this Son with another love. Yet I submit that it is preferable not to see this other love as being a “second” love that is entirely posterior to the “first” but rather to view the two loves as having a certain simultaneity. For Coffey, the Father begets with a love that is identical with his self-love, the love that is the divine nature, then loves the Son as another person, and this latter love is productive of the Holy Spirit when the Son returns it. I prefer the idea that the Father loves the Son as “other” in the very moment of the generation and that this other-directed love is already the person of the Spirit. In that way the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit are simultaneous. With this suggestion, I am, like Weinandy, denying that the principle that something must be known before it can be loved is entirely applicable to God. In God, the will-to-be-one-with, the love of, the other—including Godself as other (viz., in the person of the Son, the Father's other)—is not completely subsequent to the knowing of that other. Indeed, it can even be said that God's love for something is not completely subsequent to its existence.

In order to grasp the plausibility of this claim, we can think of an analogy with creation. God does, indeed, concretely love creatures who exist, as they exist. God's concrete love for them logically follows God's concrete knowledge of them as existents. Yet it is in love for these creatures *who might be* that God brings them into existence. God wills to love that which is other than Godself and so creates that which is other than Godself in order to love it. The will to love creatures who do not yet concretely exist is itself love, although this moment in God's act of loving can and should be distinguished from that moment in the same act wherein God concretely loves them once they do exist. The first moment in the act logically precedes the second one. Now, to be sure, it may be argued that God foreknows these creatures—even every individual one of them—and loves them in foreknowing them, not only once they actually come into existence in time. However, this argument does not touch the point that it is out of an initial will to love—which, again, is itself love—that God ever “thinks up” the specific creatures whom God foreknows that God will create and love. It is true in a sense, then, that God loves the world into existence before God knows it into existence. In this respect the love with which God loves creation is active logically prior to God's knowledge of creation. We might call this moment God's abstract love for creation simply to distinguish it from God's concrete love for creation. But although we have just established that this love has a logical anteriority to God's knowledge of the creatures whom God will and does bring into existence, it is not *absolutely* anterior to God's knowledge vis-à-vis creation. For it is not as though God's will to love that which is not God exists without God having an idea of potential objects of love, i.e., without God having abstract knowledge of them simply as that which would be other than Godself. The notion that God could will to love

something without having an idea of a “something” to love is obviously nonsense. Thus there is in fact a logical simultaneity of love and knowledge at the root moment of God’s movement to create.

For the sake of clarity, it perhaps deserves to be stated that when we speak of God the Father begetting the Son in a will to be distinct from yet one with another, this should not be taken to imply that the Father begets the Son as a matter of choice. The Father only exists as person—indeed, he only *can* exist as person—by begetting the Son and loving the Son as other than himself in the Spirit. There is no God at all who is not the Father who begets the Son in the Spirit, and *there would be* no God if God were not this. There is and can be no first divine person without a second and a third. After all, if the Son and the Holy Spirit are equally divine with the Father, their existence is as necessary as his is. To say this, of course, is not to diminish God’s freedom any more than it diminishes divine freedom to say that God cannot do evil or that God cannot fail to know the truth. To be what one is by definition does not impinge one’s liberty. Liberty is a question of what one may do as the kind of being one is. God is synonymous with the Trinity in Christian doctrine, so to posit that the Father might not beget the Son and spirate the Spirit would be to posit that God might not be God, which is absurd.

4. The mutual love of the Father and the Son is essential to the personing of both. The Father would not truly be the Father if he did not love his Son whom he beholds as other than himself. The Son would not truly be the Son and Image of the loving Father if he did not love the Father. Thus it is only as he returns to the Father the love in which he is begotten that the Son’s begottenness is completed. Furthermore, because the Father’s fatherhood is correlative to the sonship of the Son, it is only as he receives the Son’s

returned love that the Father's paternity is fulfilled. The love that completes the paternity of the Father and the filiation of the Son is, or is borne by, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is only in or through her that they are Father and Son in the plenitude of their personal being. Here let us point out that when we consider the Trinity *in fieri*, we may view the Father's generation of the Son in love as an initial movement and the Son's return of the Father's love as a subsequent one. However, when we speak of the Trinity *in facto esse*, we must say simply that it belongs to the Son's begottenness, and not to a moment distinct from his being begotten, for him to love the Father in the Holy Spirit.

5. To explicate this last point: in the Holy Spirit the Father loves the Son, whom he beholds to be his Image, *as he begets him*. It is *in his being begotten* from the Father that the Son receives the Spirit and, in her, returns the love of the Father. From this perspective, therefore, the Son's return of the Father's love is not posterior to his generation but interior to it.

6. The fact that the Father loves his Son as other (Image) as he begets him means that the Son is begotten in his Father's love, i.e., in the Holy Spirit. But for the Son to be begotten in the Spirit does not preclude the Spirit proceeding from him. On the contrary, if it belongs to the begetting of the Son to love the Father in return, then it belongs to his begetting to have the Spirit proceed from him, for the Spirit proceeds back to the Father from the Son as his reciprocal love. Thus, for the Holy Spirit, to be the one in whom the Son is begotten *is* to proceed from the Son.

This recognizes the necessary concomitance and simultaneity of generation and procession, which Bobrinskoy alludes to, basing himself on Gregory of Nyssa and John

Damascene.<sup>109</sup> The Vatican Clarification speaks of that concomitance when it states, first, that “[t]he Father only generates the Son by breathing . . . through him the Holy Spirit and the Son is only begotten by the Father insofar as the spiration . . . passes through him” and, second, that “the spiration of the Spirit from the Father takes place by and through . . . the generation of the Son.”<sup>110</sup> As Weinandy emphasizes, the two processions are interdependent and interpenetrate.

7. To have the Spirit proceed from him is given to the Son, caused in him, by the Father in the act of begetting him. Equally so, to be the one in whom the Son is begotten is given to the Spirit, caused in her, by the Father in the act of spirating her. The Father, then, is the source or cause of the Son’s participation in the spiration of the Spirit and the source or cause of the Spirit’s participation in the generation of the Son.

This last point opens the door for the proposal with which I will conclude this chapter. However, before ushering in that proposal, I must say a bit about a concept that is integral to it, namely, perichoresis.

### Perichoresis

Originally used with regard to the human and divine natures of Christ, in which context it had a somewhat different meaning,<sup>111</sup> the word περιχώρησις was employed by Pseudo-Cyril and John of Damascus to express “the dynamic Union and Communion of

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<sup>109</sup> Boris Bobrinskoy, “The *Filioque* Yesterday and Today,” *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, 133-48: 145.

<sup>110</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “The Greek and the Latin Traditions regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 20 September 1995, 3, 6: 6.

<sup>111</sup> See the classic study of G. L. Prestige, “ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΕΩ and ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΗΣΙΣ in the Fathers,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1928), 242–52. *Perichoresis* derives from the verb περιχωρέω, originally meaning “to encompass,” although in John of Damascus it becomes a technical term meaning “to coinhere” or “to interpenetrate.” In spite of a widely held misconception, *perichoresis* has no etymological relationship with περιχορεύω, meaning “to dance around/in a circle.”

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit with one another in one Being in such a way that they have their Being in each other and reciprocally contain one another, without any coalescing or commingling with one another” as persons (i.e., without losing the distinctive properties that differentiate them) “and yet without any separation from one another.”<sup>112</sup> Bertrand de Margerie explains that in the Damascene’s usage, “Perichoresis evokes mutual interpenetration and containment, with an active nuance in both, and focuses on the total character of [the] interpenetration.”<sup>113</sup> The richness of the term’s meaning can be seen more clearly by comparing the two Latin words into which it traditionally has been translated, *circumincessio* and *circuminsessio*, each of which may be said to lay slight emphasis on a particular aspect of its significance. *Circumincessio*, “passing into one another,” indicates the active interpenetration of the persons as they eternally co-exist *ad/εἰς* one another. *Circuminsessio*, “dwelling in one another,” indicates the abiding coinherence—static and ecstatic—of the persons as they eternally in-exist *in/ἐν* one another.<sup>114</sup> When the term περιχώρησις gained currency in the West, Bonaventure translated it *circumincessio*, while Aquinas and the Council of Florence opted for *circuminsessio*. However, far from there being any incompatibility between the two, each aspect is implied by the other.<sup>115</sup>

The doctrine of perichoresis aids trinitarian theology by dissolving the perennially-perceived tension between threeness at the level of person in God and

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<sup>112</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 170.

<sup>113</sup> Bertrand de Margerie, *La Trinité chrétienne dans l’histoire* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1975), 249. All translations from this work are my own.

<sup>114</sup> Translations of the two Latin words into English vary widely, and many are terrible. I have opted for the ones given in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, 2nd ed., trans. G. W. Bromiley, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 370.

<sup>115</sup> De Margerie, *La Trinité chrétienne dans l’histoire*, 250. The author notes that both have a biblical basis in the Gospel of John: “One could say that circuminsession reminds us of John 10.38, 14.9f., and 17.21, while circumincession is in line with John 1.2 and 1.18” (ibid.).

oneness at the level of essence. It conceptualizes the persons accomplishing their unity even in their diversity, forming their oneness precisely through *the way in which* they are three. Jürgen Moltmann recognizes this, but he employs the idea of perichoresis in a way that warrants some criticism. He accepts that it is necessary to begin with either the one or the three, and his own preference is for the latter,<sup>116</sup> so that explaining the unity of the persons becomes his task. Moltmann believes that true trinitarianism will be lost if the unity is secured through the idea of God as a single self-conscious subject. He also maintains that if it consists solely in the possession of a common nature, then there is nothing to prevent Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from being viewed as three gods. For him, the doctrine of perichoresis circumvents both of these pitfalls.

Moltmann insists that “personal character and social character are only two aspects of the same thing,”<sup>117</sup> which is a suitable conclusion to draw in light of the fact that the personal characteristics of each of the divine persons are defined by and can only be understood in terms of the relations between them. This is what he has in mind when he writes, “The unitedness, the at-oneness, of the triunity is already given with the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.”<sup>118</sup> In Moltmann’s understanding,

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<sup>116</sup> Moltmann considers this to be the more biblical approach in that the history of Christ testifies to three persons, whereas he thinks that to “start from the One God and ask about his trinitarian self-differentiation” is an approach controlled by “philosophical logic” (Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1981], 149). Moltmann does not really argue for this point, which is highly contestable. It seems to me that the biblical testimony would equally support either angle of procedure.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. The German text reads, “Die *Einigkeit* der Drei-einigkeit ist durch die *Gemeinschaft* vom Vater, Sohn und Geist selbst schon gegeben” (*Trinität und Reich Gottes: zur Gotteslehre* [Munich: Kaiser, 1980], 167). Kohl’s translation does not reflect the italicization in the original text and thus does not convey a special emphasis on *Einigkeit* and *Gemeinschaft*. It appears to me that she takes the two words, rather, to be something like technical terms for Moltmann, at least as he uses them in this context. For example, she does not render *Einigkeit* simply as “unity,” but rather as “unitedness, at-oneness.” This choice makes sense if Moltmann is trying to depict a *particular kind of unity* here—viz., a union between three “robustly distinct” subjects—as, indeed, the overall thrust of his argument suggests.

having true personhood means being a self-conscious center of action.<sup>119</sup> Part of what he is bringing out here is that that does *not* mean being a self-enclosed individual. Moltmann proceeds to develop this line of thought in terms of perichoresis. Once we see what he does there, it will be possible to examine where his account becomes problematic.

It is worth quoting Moltmann at length to show just what he has in mind when he appeals to perichoresis. As he sees it, the concept

grasps the circulatory character of the eternal divine life. An eternal life process takes place in the triune God through the exchange of energies. The Father exists in the Son, the Son in the Father, and both of them in the Spirit, just as the Spirit exists in both the Father and the Son. By virtue of their eternal love they live in one another to such an extent, and dwell in one another to such an extent, that they are one. It is a process of most perfect and intense empathy. Precisely through the personal characteristics that distinguish them from one another, the Father, the Son and the Spirit dwell in one another and communicate eternal life to one another. . . . In their perichoresis and because of it, the trinitarian persons are not to be understood as three different individuals, who only subsequently enter into relationship with one another (which is the customary reproach, under the name of ‘tritheism’). But they are not, either, three modes of being or three repetitions of the One God, as the modalistic interpretation suggests. . . . The unity of the triunity lies in the eternal perichoresis of the trinitarian persons. . . . [T]he trinitarian persons form their own unity by themselves in the circulation of the divine life.<sup>120</sup>

This description captures well the key elements of perichoresis and contains nothing objectionable.

However, Moltmann overstates his case by proceeding to claim, “This means that the unity of the triune God cannot and must not be seen in a general concept of divine substance,” adding, “That would abolish the personal differences.”<sup>121</sup> While unity of substance does not *alone* account sufficiently for the oneness in God, it is not inherently

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<sup>119</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 142-43, 146-47.

<sup>120</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 174-75.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

opposed to the possibility of personal difference. On the contrary, substantial unity by itself could leave the door open as much to tritheism as to mono-personalism.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, if the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not joined together in substance, then it seemingly becomes impossible to say anything about *what* they are together: we may say that the three are *who* they are together, but we have no sensible way of claiming that they are *God* together, so that the concept of substance cannot simply be dispensed with. Furthermore, the doctrine of perichoresis has always been used *in light of* the fact that the persons are confessed to be one in nature. De Margerie points out, for example, that in the statements promulgated by the Council of Florence, “the mutual immanence of the divine Persons is presented as a consequence of the unity of nature between them.”<sup>123</sup> It is also true that in John of Damascus, according to G. L. Prestige, perichoresis is depicted as being “not a consequence but an equivalent of unity.” However, it is important to note that in the Damascene’s thought, while “the co-inherence of the Persons [is set] on a level with their unity of nature as a ground of the divine unity,”<sup>124</sup> the one does not *displace* the other; even as he moves beyond what can be shown about divine unity by the homoousion, it remains clearly present in his account.<sup>125</sup> Hence, if Moltmann wants to use the term “perichoresis” in a way that is consistent with its traditional

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<sup>122</sup> The threat of tritheism arises from the possibility that the one nature should be mistakenly understood as something like mere homogeneity among the persons. J. N. D. Kelly (*Early Christian Doctrines*, fifth, rev. ed. [London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977]) notes that at the Council of Nicaea and in its wake, it was not entirely clear whether the homoousion indicated that the Son was “of the same nature” as the Father in a generic sense—the two being one in having “the kind of substance or stuff common to several individuals of a class”—or whether it meant “numerical identity of substance” between them (234); later theologians recognized the necessity of interpreting it in the latter sense, although Kelly argues that the Nicene fathers themselves likely did not perceive this (234ff.).

<sup>123</sup> De Margerie, *La Trinité chrétienne dans l’histoire*, 245. He quotes the statement (which the Council adopted from Fulgentius), “Because of this unity (of nature), the Father is entirely in the Son and entirely in the Holy Spirit; the Son entirely in the Father, entirely in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit entirely in the Father, entirely in the Son,” 244-45.

<sup>124</sup> Prestige, “ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΕΩ and ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΗΣΙΣ in the Fathers,” 249.

<sup>125</sup> Indeed, I am convinced that the homoousion is integral to the very intelligibility of the concept of perichoresis, as Torrance has shown at length in *The Christian God*, 168-202.

meaning with reference to the Trinity, he cannot really drop the notion of substantial unity.

And in truth, he does not wish to do so. He sometimes explicitly acknowledges the consubstantiality of the divine persons and speaks of their possession of a common nature.<sup>126</sup> It is clear that tossing out the notion of the divine nature is not his aim. Rather, he seems more to want simply to *avoid* talking about the Trinity in terms of substance because in his view the tradition of doing so has hindered theology from adequately capturing the deeply interpersonal (social trinitarian) nature of the divine life and of God's history in the world.

The doctrine of perichoresis alone cannot adequately account for the divine unity. Nor does its history suit it for the purpose of correcting a supposedly Western "static" understanding of the trinitarian relationships with an emphasis on their dynamism that is supposedly more Eastern in character. I have already quoted de Margerie as acknowledging that with John of Damascus the word carries an active nuance in its evocation of mutual interpenetration and containment, but he adds, "In fact, the Damascene's use nonetheless centered on the mutual immanence of the Father and the Son, without especially emphasizing this active interpenetration."<sup>127</sup> In support of his claim de Margerie adduces the following piece of analysis by August Deneffe:

With the trinitarian perichoresis as it is established in the inner-divine uttering and proceeding, the Damascene does not think so much of a dynamic entering of the one person into the others, as just of their static, restful being-in-one-another. This is attested by the fact that in all the places known to me—and I believe all the places from *De Fide orth.* to have been cited—he says [that the persons are] . . . *en allélois*, while with the christological perichoresis he uses sometimes *en*,

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<sup>126</sup> For example, he affirms that the Son "is one in substance or essence with the Father and has everything in common with him, except his 'Personal' characteristics" (Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 166; see 167, 171-72).

<sup>127</sup> De Margerie, *La Trinité chrétienne dans l'histoire*, 249.

sometimes *eis* and *dia* [with respect to the relations between Christ's two natures].<sup>128</sup>

On this de Margerie enthusiastically comments, "One may say that this remark of Deneffe's contributes definitively to dispose of the legend that still lingers in so many manuals and books, which the sources do not verify: the idea that the Greek Fathers supposedly propagated a 'dynamic trinitarian perichoresis' has no solid historical basis." Even if this is something of an overstatement, de Margerie goes on to point out that, prior to John of Damascus, pseudo-Cyril had spoken of a "perichoresis *in*" with reference to the Trinity, "which prefigures already the Thomist *circuminsessio*. . . . In this respect, the Council of Florence followed the Greek patristic tradition in adopting the spelling *circuminsessio*."<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, he also argues that while "the Florentine formulation suggests the 'static' immutability of [the trinitarian persons'] mutual immanence by the use of the preposition *in*, [this] does not exclude, as moreover the doctrine of the relations demands, that the divine Persons are *toward* one another and *in relation to* one another—*ad* and not only *in*."<sup>130</sup> Likewise, he maintains, for Thomas, "circuminsession is inseparably circumincession: no *in* without *ad* in the mutual relations between divine Persons."<sup>131</sup> These observations undercut the idea of a divergence between the Greek and Latin traditions on the question of the static or dynamic character of perichoresis and of the intratrinitarian relationships, broadly speaking.

What purpose, then, should the doctrine of perichoresis serve in trinitarian theology? I agree with Emmanuel Durand that it has two proper functions. First, it

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<sup>128</sup> August Deneffe, "Perichoresis, circumincesso, circuminsessio. Eine terminologische Untersuchung," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 47 (1923), 497-532: 507; cited in de Margerie, *La Trinité chrétienne dans l'histoire*, 249; my translation from the German there.

<sup>129</sup> De Margerie, *La Trinité chrétienne dans l'histoire*, 249-50.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

recapitulates the unity of God in the face of the diversity of the hypostases, showing them to be united not only in their common possession of the divine nature but also in their tri-personality; each of the three encompasses and interpenetrates the others so that they are one even in their multiplicity. We have already spoken of this function above. Second, perichoresis can and should regulate other concepts, particularly the contested ones of the Father's monarchy, the *ordo originis* of the persons, and the *Filioque*.<sup>132</sup> It performs both of these functions by informing the ideas of reciprocity of relation and communion.

We find the biblical basis of the doctrine of perichoresis in the Johannine statements about the mutual immanence of the Father and the Son, a motif that has been extended to the relationships between all three trinitarian persons. Durand remarks that

the mutual immanence of the three permits, as a consequence, concluding to their *inseparability*, for, if they are truly each one in the other, [then] the mention or the presence of one of the three persons is accompanied by that of the two others. Such a perichoresis can be translated, on the one hand, into the intrinsic *connection* between the generation and the procession, and, on the other hand, into the effective *reciprocity* of the trinitarian relations. So, in terms of analysis, we come to formulate the trinitarian perichoresis according to a double register, on two plans articulated to each other, one being the immanent acts of the divine life and [the other] being the trinitarian relations expressed through these acts; in fact, neither the two immanent acts (generation and procession) nor the two pairs of reciprocal relations (Father-Son and Father[-Son]-Spirit) are truly extrinsic to each other.<sup>133</sup>

Durand proceeds to explain that the formulation of the Father's and the Son's mutual indwelling given in John 17.20-26 takes on the sense of a communion of love and that it therefore is readily interpreted as "recapitulating the unity of essence and the distinction

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<sup>132</sup> Durand, "Perichoresis," 180-81.

<sup>133</sup> Emmanuel Durand, *La périchorèse des personnes divines: Immanence mutual; Réciprocité et communion* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2005), 322. All translations from this work are my own.

of the persons” in interpersonal terms.<sup>134</sup> A bit further, he comments on the first “plan” or blueprint of perichoresis,<sup>135</sup> the immanent acts of generation and procession, writing that “in a way connected to the very act of generation that eternally sets forth the Son as the Well-beloved of the Father, the Spirit proceeds precisely as this Love of the Father for the Son.” While the Spirit is in no way the principle of the Son, she is nonetheless “eternally present ‘at the very place’ of his eternal begetting, as the paternal Love that eternally hypostasizes itself in reposing on the Son.” By the same token, the Son “proves to be fully Son in the fact that he returns this same Love to his Father in an eternal thanksgiving. This return of a received and filial Love to its paternal Source completes the trinitarian cycle of eternal life.”<sup>136</sup> That is to say, the generation of the Son fully comes into its own with the Son’s return of the Father’s love in the Holy Spirit, and so his generation is bound to the Spirit’s procession just as the inverse is true. In the loving communion between Father and Son we see the fundamental connection between generation and procession.

The interpersonal love of the Father and the Son also helps us to see the reciprocity of the trinitarian relations in terms of the mutual immanence of the persons. Durand describes the Father himself reposing in the Son through his Love. “Since this love is reciprocal,” he proceeds to explain, “the immanence between the Son and the Father is thus understood as being mutual. This reciprocity is a property of the relation between the Father and the Son.”<sup>137</sup> The dwelling of the Father and the Son in one another in love reciprocally defines them as being in relation to one another. Much the

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> “Blueprint” is the word Durand uses for it in “Perichoresis,” 181.

<sup>136</sup> Durand, *La périchorèse des personnes divines*, 330-31.

<sup>137</sup> Durand, “Perichoresis,” 182.

same can be said for the relation between the Father and the Spirit. He is fully present in the Love he bears for the Son, while the Spirit who is this love dwells in the fatherly source from which she comes.<sup>138</sup> The Father and the Spirit are, then, co-determined by their relation to one another. The Father-Son relationship can only be understood in conjunction with the Father-Spirit relationship and vice versa. This is what Durand means in the statement quoted above that the two pairs of reciprocal relations, like the two immanent acts of generation and procession, are not extrinsic to one another.

To sum up, as Durand explains the doctrine of perichoresis, the trinitarian persons are logically inseparable because of the reciprocity of their relations and ontologically inseparable because of their mutual immanence. It is by virtue of this fact that the doctrine serves its regulative function vis-à-vis the ideas of (1) the monarchy of the Father, (2) the order of origination between the persons, and, consequently, (3) the *Filioque*. Let us say a word about each. (1) The Father is the fontal source of the Son and the Spirit, but they are not therefore subordinate to him, for his existence is entirely relative to and characterized by his relation to each of them. “The Father is not Father except as Father of his Son, and as loving him,”<sup>139</sup> i.e., as having the Spirit proceed from him as his paternal love. (2) We will fail to understand the origination of the Son and the Spirit from the Father if we see either the Father-Son relation or the Father-Spirit relation abstractly in isolation from the other. The Father is indeed the sole principle of the Spirit, but as Bolotov asserts, he is so only in his relation to the Son, or as the Vatican Clarification speaks of the matter, only in his communion with him.<sup>140</sup> Likewise, the Father-Son relation is not fully comprehended without reference to the Spirit in whom

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>139</sup> Durand, “Perichoresis,” 188.

<sup>140</sup> Durand, *La périchorèse des personnes divines*, 333, 335; see idem, “Perichoresis,” 186-88.

that relation is fulfilled in mutual love. The trinitarian order may be grasped aright as Father-Son-Spirit if we remember that the Father-Son relation is the *condition* of the Father-Spirit relation and the Father-Spirit relation is the *perfection* of the Father-Son relation.<sup>141</sup> (3) The Son, as Image of the Father, receives from the Father the spirative power that allows him to reflect the Father by returning the Father's love. As he returns it, the Spirit proceeds from him. Yet the likeness between Father and Son is to be seen precisely as the basis for a communion of love, and as the Spirit is that loving communion in person, she is in a sense the condition of the very likeness between Father and Son that is the basis for the Son's common spiration with the Father; she is the one in light of whom we properly understand the Father-Son likeness.<sup>142</sup>

I concur with all of the aspects of Durand's nuanced analysis that I have presented. Especially helpful for our purposes is his focus on the fact that the Father and the Son dwell in each other through or in the love that is the Holy Spirit. Concentrating on that point allows the theology of perichoresis and the mutual love theology central to Weinandy's and Coffey's projects to illuminate each other. Yet without diminishing the importance of the Spirit's role in the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, we must add that the Father is immanent in the Son and vice versa through the act of generation itself. If the latter were not true, we could not affirm that the Father is immanent in the Spirit and vice versa through the act of spiration itself. Indeed, it is because the act of spiration grounds a personal indwelling that the Son is immanent in the Spirit and vice versa. Without understanding the immanent acts as the basis of mutual immanence, our justification for positing perichoretic relations between each of the

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<sup>141</sup> Durand, *La périchorèse des personnes divines*, 334-35; "Perichoresis," 188.

<sup>142</sup> Durand, *La périchorèse des personnes divines*, 335-36; "Perichoresis," 188-89.

persons would be greatly limited. This will be important to bear in mind throughout the proposal that I am about to offer.

### **Mediating between Old and New Understandings: A Speculative Proposal**

Coffey advocates the formula used by Gregory of Nyssa and Epiphanius “the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son.”<sup>143</sup> He argues that what the Holy Spirit receives from the Son is “the attribute of being the Son’s love for the Father, which completes that of being the Father’s love for the Son,” and with this completion their love is rendered mutual and thereby objectivized *as* the Holy Spirit.<sup>144</sup> In fact, what this means is that for Coffey, as Florence teaches, the Spirit receives her essence and her personhood from the Son as well as from the Father. We have seen that Coffey criticizes the Vatican Clarification for not mentioning this part of the Catholic doctrine of the *Filioque*. The omission appears deliberate since the document is at pains to present the doctrine in the form in which it was accepted by certain Alexandrian fathers, namely, as teaching that the Son joins the Father in communicating the divine nature to the Spirit—an idea that the document distinguishes from the Spirit’s ἐκπόρευσις as person from the Father. Zizioulas grants that where this distinction is made, the *Filioque* can find Orthodox support.

However, to suppose that the Spirit receives her hypostasis from the Father alone but her divine essence from both the Father and the Son appears to create a problem, for it suggests that the logical moment in which she proceeds as person (ἐκπορευόμενον)

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<sup>143</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 50.

<sup>144</sup> Again, Coffey does not treat the Father’s love as insufficient or as requiring the Son’s response in order to be whole in itself. Rather, the Son’s love completes the Father’s insofar as the two loves are considered as the constituent elements of a *mutual* love: their love can only be mutual if the Father and the Son both act, and because in a certain sense the Father’s act comes first, the Son’s act can be described as completing it, i.e., rendering it mutual.

from the Father is prior to the logical moment in which she receives her essence. I submit that this suggestion is incoherent, for at the logical moment in which the Spirit's person is produced, she is a *divine* person. A hypostasis within the Trinity is divine by definition. The concept of a trinitarian hypostasis or subsistence/suppositum is incoherent if it is detached from the concept of the divine nature in which it subsists. The Spirit's being a person within the Trinity is logically simultaneous with her possession of the nature.

That seems to indicate that either (1) the Spirit comes forth from the Father as a person "already" in possession of the divine nature logically prior to her concrete relationship with the Son, even if her proceeding as a person is not ontologically independent of that relationship (what became the prevailing Eastern position) or (2) the Spirit comes forth from the Father and, or through, the Son, receiving her essence and subsistence as person *ab utroque*, from both (the *Filioque* as interpreted by the Council of Florence<sup>145</sup>). It is important to observe that these are arguably equally acceptable understandings, that there is room for both within the home whose walls shelter the Christian faith and describe its boundaries. At the same time, the differences between them should not be lightly dismissed. Coffey avows that the monarchy of the Father—which (1) unambiguously conveys—and the Florentine *Filioque* are compatible but that no theology can be expected to deliver "a positive explanation" why. He believes that "[t]he most we can establish, the most we can attempt, is to show that these two requirements of Christian faith are not mutually exclusive, and that therefore they can be held together in a dialectical tension which is not contradictory." To attempt more, in his

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<sup>145</sup> The Council in fact said *ex utroque*, but I have used *ab utroque* so as to avoid the implication, which could be seen to follow from the use of *ex*, that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son as from an *ultimate* principle—indeed, the Council itself professes that the Father (alone) is the source of the whole deity (see Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 [Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1990], 525-26).

view, would be immodestly rationalistic.<sup>146</sup> I do not share the latter belief, and I wish to attempt something rather more far-reaching. I contend that it is possible to conceive of the Spirit's procession in a way that does justice to the central claims of (1) and (2) and shows them to be compatible.

For this we employ the distinction that Coffey himself uses between the stages of the trinitarian mystery, *in fieri* ("in becoming") and *in facto esse* ("in constituted being"). In the *in fieri* stage, the Father begets the Son by breathing through him the Spirit who reposes in him. The Spirit is a person who possesses the divine nature "already" in her coming forth from the Father—she receives it immediately from him. I do not posit the mediation of the Son in communicating the nature to her in this moment. In a moment logically subsequent to this, the Son loves the Father in return in or through the Spirit. And the love with which he loves the Father is identical with the divine nature. But if what the Spirit bears to the Father from the Son is identical with the divine nature, then the divine nature is what the Son has communicated to her. Of course, as has been stated, she already possesses that nature. Yet that fact does not mean that the Son's communication of the nature to her makes no difference to her being. On the contrary, the Spirit's bearing the Son's love to the Father is precisely what brings her procession to completion. It fulfills the *telos* of the procession, which, as I have argued, is to effect a return of the self-differentiating God to Godself, i.e., to be the one in and through whom the love that the Father gives to the Son returns to him. It must in turn be said that by enabling the completion of the Spirit's procession, the Son characterizes—stamps or seals—her very personhood such that she would not be the person she is without him. In *this* sense she does have her subsistence from him. That is, the subsistent being that she

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<sup>146</sup> Coffey, "The Roman 'Clarification,'" 18.

receives from the Father is shaped by her reception of the divine love or nature from the Son. We have thus come back to the question of the relationship between originating a divine person and passing on the divine nature. I am arguing that, on the one hand, the Son does confer the nature on the Spirit without being, with the Father, the source of her ultimate origination as person but that, on the other hand, his conferral of the nature on her shapes her person in such a way that she can be said to have her subsistent being from (*a/ἀπὸ* rather than *ex/ἐκ*) him, as well. Considering the Trinity *in fieri*, it may be said that the Spirit has her person and her essence *ex Patre* and “then” *a Filio*. Considering the Trinity *in facto esse*, it may be said that she has her person and her essence *a Patre Filioque*.<sup>147</sup>

The idea that the Spirit receives from the Son what she already has can be found in Didymus the Blind’s *On the Holy Spirit*. In the context of an argument that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one in will and nature, he provides an extended commentary on Christ’s statement that “when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into the whole Truth. For he will not speak on his own accord, but whatever he hears he will speak . . . . He will glorify me since he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you. All that the Father has is mine. It is for this reason that I have said to you that he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you”<sup>148</sup> (John 16.13-15). Didymus remarks that the Father does not inform the Son of his will as if the Son did not already know it,

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<sup>147</sup> The Council of Florence declares that the Spirit has her essence and her subsistent being “*ex patre simul et filio*” (Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 525-26). However, since it affirms that the Father is the sole principle of the Son and the Spirit, it is apparent that, in applying the word *ex* to the Father and the Son, the Council does not intend to convey that both are equally the ultimate source of what the Spirit receives. Therefore, I contend that it is not a departure from the Council’s teaching to distinguish between the Spirit receiving ultimately from the Father (*ex Patre*) and in a non-ultimate way from the Son (*a Filio*).

<sup>148</sup> This is the translation of the passage as quoted by Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 146, *Works on the Spirit* by Athanasius and Didymus, trans. Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 2011), p. 189.

for the Son himself is Wisdom and Truth and he “has in wisdom and in substance everything that the Father speaks.”<sup>149</sup> By the same token, the Holy Spirit does not learn from the Son when he speaks, for the Spirit is “the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Wisdom,”<sup>150</sup> the very truth and wisdom spoken by the Son—which is another way of saying that the Spirit possesses the divine nature. To say that one person of the Trinity speaks and another hears means for Didymus that the two have “the same nature and agreement” of will.<sup>151</sup> He explains that therefore we should understand the idea of the Spirit “receiving” from the Son in a way that befits divinity:<sup>152</sup>

For just as, when the Son gives, he is not deprived of those things which he gives [i.e., wisdom and truth] and does not share with others to his own detriment, so too the Spirit does not receive what he did not have before. If he receives what he did not have earlier, then when the gift is transferred to another, its bestower is left empty-handed, ceasing to have what he gave.<sup>153</sup>

The translators of this edition note that here Didymus is giving voice to “the so-called doctrine of undiminished giving. The unexpressed assumption of the last sentence seems to be that in order to be an undiminished giver one must be what one gives rather than receiving it from another.”<sup>154</sup> Thus, the Spirit who gives wisdom and truth, just like the Son, is, like him, herself the wisdom and truth that she gives. She receives those attributes from the Son in order to give them to human beings, but when she receives them, she already has them because she simply *is* the nature to which they properly belong.

Didymus continues,

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 158, p. 192.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 159, p. 192.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 158, p. 192.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 163, pp. 193-94.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 164, p. 194.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 194 n. 131.

Therefore, . . . we now ought to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit receives from the Son that which belongs to his [the Spirit's] own nature. This does not signify that there is a giver and a receiver, but [that there is] one substance, since the Son is said to receive the same things from the Father which belong to his [the Son's] very being. For the Son is nothing other than those things which are given to him by the Father, and the substance of the Holy Spirit is nothing other than that which is given to him by the Son. These statements [in John 16.13-15] are made for this reason: so that we may believe that in the Trinity the nature of the Holy Spirit is the same as that of the Father and the Son.<sup>155</sup>

According to Didymus, the Son receives the divine attributes of wisdom and truth from the Father, but he already *is* those attributes, and the same must be said of the Spirit who receives them from the Son. That the Father is said to give them to the Son and the Son is said to give them to the Spirit teaches us about the persons' "sharing [*consortium*] of will and nature,"<sup>156</sup> "their inseparability of essence or substance."<sup>157</sup>

Didymus's doctrine raises the question of whence the Son and the Spirit ultimately have their essence. In a passage that appears shortly before the ones I have examined, exegeting "he will not speak on his own accord" (John 16.13), he imagines Christ saying of the Spirit, "he is not from himself but from the Father and me. For his very being and speaking belongs to him from the Father and from me."<sup>158</sup> Of course, it is imperative to say that the Spirit, along with the Son, does not possess the divine nature independently but has it from the Father. Otherwise, there would be no monarchy of the Father, and indeed, it seems that the divine persons would be three Gods. Didymus therefore expresses a truth indispensable to orthodoxy when he writes that the Spirit "is not from himself." Yet does he indeed mean that the Spirit derives from the Father and the Son or does he hold that the Spirit already has what she is here said to receive from

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 165-66, p. 194.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 162, p. 193, see n. 130.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 161, p. 193; see 94, p.173.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 153, p. 191.

them, as we saw him affirm above concerning the divine attributes of wisdom and truth? The key phrase to consider in answering this question, I believe, is “his [the Spirit’s] very being” (*ipsum quod subsistit*).<sup>159</sup> Didymus uses the same phrase in the statement seen above, “the Son is said to receive the same things from the Father which belong to his [the Son’s] very being” (*quibus ipse subsistit*).<sup>160</sup> In that case the argument is that the Son already has in “his very being,” i.e., in the substance he possesses, what he is said to receive from the Father, i.e., the qualities of wisdom and truth. We may judge that Didymus means the same thing, the divine essence, when he speaks of the Spirit’s “very being” belonging to her from the Father and the Son. Thus, the Spirit has her essence from the Father and the Son. It is because she possesses that nature in herself that Didymus points out that when she is said to receive from the Son the attributes by which the divine nature is recognized—such as wisdom and truth—she must be understood as receiving what she already has. These attributes are, after all, identical with the divine nature.<sup>161</sup>

The point that I wish to take from Didymus is this: It is not without reason that the Spirit receives from the Son in time what she already has from the Father and the Son in eternity, for the Son tells us that the Spirit receives from him and distributes to us in time in just the same way that he receives from the Father and distributes to us in time, and, interpreted through the doctrine of the undiminished giver, that fact reveals to us the inseparability of nature that the Spirit has with the Son and the Father in eternity. If the

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<sup>159</sup> Didymus, *Liber Didymi Alexandrini de Spiritu Sancto*, PG 39, 1064A, English translation in Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 153, p. 191.

<sup>160</sup> Didymus, *Liber Didymi Alexandrini de Spiritu Sancto*, PG 39, 1065C, English translation in Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 165, p. 194.

<sup>161</sup> The grand argument of *On the Holy Spirit* is that the Holy Spirit must be understood to be substantially God with the Father and the Son because, like them, she distributes the gifts of sanctity and saving knowledge, gifts in which she herself subsists. She is what she gives, and she can give because she is divine. For a thumbnail sketch, see 10-20, pp. 146-49.

Spirit receives in time what she possesses in eternity, then we do well to ask whether this reflects a possible truth about the immanent Trinity. I submit that it does. According to Didymus, the Son communicates to the Spirit what is identical with the divine nature even though she already possesses that nature. My proposal applies this notion in a speculative effort to understand the trinitarian mystery in its *in fieri* stage. Where Didymus speaks of the Spirit receiving wisdom and truth from the Son in order to bestow them on human beings, I am speaking of the Spirit receiving love from him in order to bestow it on the Father. Didymus wishes to ward off a misunderstanding of who the Spirit is that can result from a misinterpretation of what transpires between the Son and the Spirit in the world. The interpretation I am giving of one aspect of the immanent trinitarian dynamic also has an important link with the economy of salvation. As Coffey shows, the return model of the Trinity is based on the witness of the incarnate Son's love for the Father as mediated by the Holy Spirit and on our experience of being caught up and enabled to participate in that love.<sup>162</sup> The idea of the interpersonal love of the Father and the Son and of the Spirit's role in it is, of course, deeply rooted in the biblical testimony to the work of God in Christ and among us. My proposal draws inspiration from Didymus, but as an example of mutual love theology, it ultimately relies on the scriptural account of the salvific economy.

One more point of comparison and contrast between this idea and Didymus's must be noted. For him, the Holy Spirit has her essence from both the Father and the Son. The passage in which he affirms this contains no intimation that there is any difference between the Father giving her the divine nature and the Son giving it to her. The interpretation I am advancing makes a significant distinction between the ways in which

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<sup>162</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 42-43.

they do so. To repeat, the Father communicates his substance to the Spirit in the ἐκπόρευσις that is her hypostatic origination. She proceeds from him through the Son, in whom she reposes as the Father's love for the Son he begets. As she does this, the Son communicates to her the love—identical with the divine nature—that he himself receives from the Father, which she bears back to the Father. The Father and the Son, therefore, do not differ in what they give to the Spirit, namely, the love that is their consubstantial divinity. Yet the ways in which they give it differ. The Father's giving originates the person of the Spirit; the Son's giving fulfills her person, bringing it to its *telos*.

The goal, again, is to interpret the Florentine *Filioque* in a way that is compatible with the notion that the Spirit proceeds as a hypostasis in possession of the divine nature from the Father. I have shown how the teaching that the Spirit has her essence and subsistence from both the Father and the Son can be interpreted in harmony with the latter notion. It remains to ask whether the proposal at hand can accommodate Florence's declaration that she "proceeds from both eternally as from one principle and by a single spiration."

In order to show that it can, I take up the axiom that there are in the Trinity two who spirate but one spirator (*duo spirantes sed unus spirator*), although my treatment of that axiom departs significantly from the meaning it has for its most famous proponent, Thomas. He writes,

Some say that although the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Ghost, there are two spirators, by reason of the distinction of "supposita," as also there are two spirating, because acts refer to subjects. . . . It seems, however, better to say that because spirating is an adjective, and spirator a substantive, we

can say that the Father and the Son are two spirating, by reason of the plurality of the “supposita” but not two spirators by reason of the one spiration.<sup>163</sup>

Now, as Bernard Lonergan explains, according to Thomas, the Father and the Son act as one principle and one spirator because the potency of spiration belongs to the divine essence that is common to them.<sup>164</sup> Considered from the perspective of the *act* of spiration, they are one, for the potency of spiration by which they act is one (no property of the essence is multiple—there are not three wisdoms, three goodnesses, etc.). Yet they are “two spirating,” for they who perform the act are two distinct persons. I take an approach that departs from Thomas’s in one respect but coincides with it in another. First, I identify the person of the Father rather than the divine essence as the principle of the spiration,<sup>165</sup> although it must be said that it is from his nature that the Father breathes forth the Spirit, i.e., the Spirit is a going-forth of his nature in another person.

Consequently, on my understanding the Father is the one spirator, properly speaking,

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<sup>163</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 4, ad. 7, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 1 (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1948), p. 188.

<sup>164</sup> The *potentia spirandi* also belongs to the Holy Spirit, but in a different way: in the Father and the Son, it is possessed as the potency to spire; in the Spirit, it is possessed as the potency to be spirated. This parallels the case with the *potentia generandi*, which likewise belongs to the divine essence, and which the Father possesses as the potency to generate and the Son possesses as the potency to be generated. See Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997), 216-17.

<sup>165</sup> Thomas’s explanation of what he means in identifying the essence as the principle of spiration contains important nuances: “The Father and the Son are in everything one, wherever there is no distinction between them of opposite relation. Hence since there is no relative opposition between them as the principle of the Holy Ghost it follows that the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Ghost. Some, however, assert that this proposition is incorrect: ‘The Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Ghost,’ because, they declare, since the word ‘principle’ in the singular number does not signify ‘person,’ but ‘property,’ it must be taken as an adjective; and forasmuch as an adjective cannot be modified by another adjective, it cannot properly be said that the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Ghost unless one be taken as an adverb, so that the meaning should be: They are one principle—that is, in one and the same way. But then it might be equally right to say that the Father is two principles of the Son and of the Holy Ghost—namely, in two ways. Therefore, we must say that, although this word ‘principle’ signifies a property, it does so after the manner of a substantive, as do the words ‘father’ and ‘son’ even in things created. Hence it takes its number from the form it signifies, like other substantives. Therefore, as the Father and the Son are one God, by reason of the unity of the form that is signified by this word ‘God,’ so they are one principle of the Holy Ghost by reason of the unity of the property that is signified in this word ‘principle’” (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 4, c. 3.; pp. 187-88).

because he spirates *principaliter*, i.e., as the originating principle of the Spirit.<sup>166</sup>

However, the Son is not a stranger to the Father's originating spiration. This fact grounds the possibility of what I conjecture second, namely, that in a moment logically subsequent to the origination of the Spirit from the Father, the Son actively shares in and continues the Father's act of spiration. In that moment, the Father and the Son, as Thomas says, are two who spirate, yet they are appropriately considered as acting as one spirator in virtue of the singleness of the spiration.

Let us begin with the first moment, the originating spiration of the Spirit. The Father spirates in and from himself. Yet just as the Son does not leave "the bosom of the Father" (John 1.18) when he proceeds (is begotten) from him, so the Father abides in the Son as he generates him. With the Vatican Clarification we have said that the Father begets the Son by breathing the Spirit through him. Here we add that the Father breathes the Spirit through the Son by breathing the Spirit from within him. That is, the Father spirates not only in and from himself but also in and therefore through the Son. It is not that he spirates in the Son separately from spirating in himself, for then there would be two spirations. Rather, his one spiration can be considered in the abstract as occurring in two places, so to speak—namely, in himself and in his Son. He spirates the Spirit immediately in that he does so from within himself and mediately in that he does so from within the Son. It is one act of breathing by the Father. The character of ultimacy in the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις derives from the Father's spiration from within himself, but as the Father dwells in the Son as he spirates the Spirit, this ἐκπόρευσις takes place through the Son.

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<sup>166</sup> With the Vatican Clarification, I am here interpreting *principaliter* to mean "as originating principle," not "principally" in the sense of "chiefly."

We must expound this idea further, incorporating it with some of what has been argued earlier. Viewed from the perspective of her origination in the Father as he spirates from himself, the Spirit proceeds *with* the Son, being ordered to him and resting on him as the Father's loving gaze on his Image. Her procession accompanies his generation and therefore is simultaneous with it. From this same perspective, we may also see that her procession occurs *by and through* his generation because the Son's going-forth from the Father is the impetus of her going-forth from the Father; she proceeds because he is generated, and she rests on him as he goes forth. We take a different vantage point when we consider that the Father abides in the Son as he generates him. Looking at the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις from the Father from this perspective, we see the procession as taking place through the Son in a different sense. Because the Father spirates the Spirit from within himself as the ultimate principle from (ἐκ, *ex*) which she proceeds, the fact that he dwells within the Son as he (the Father) spirates raises the question whether the Son can also be identified as the Spirit's ultimate, originating principle when the Father spirates from within him. This we must answer in the negative, for to identify the Father and the Son as together constituting one principle of ultimate origin for the Spirit would be incompatible with the dogma of the Father's monarchy. It is important to note that the Councils of Lyons and Florence wished to confirm that the Father and the Son are not two separate principles of the Spirit and that they do not separately spirate her, but neither council claimed that both persons act as principle or spirator of the Spirit in the same way. In fact, Florence explicitly mentions that in professing the joint procession of the Spirit, the Latins never had any "intention of excluding the Father from being the source and principle of all deity, that is of the Son and of the holy [sic] Spirit,"<sup>167</sup> which is to say that

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<sup>167</sup> Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 526.

the Father alone is the ultimate, originating principle of the other two persons. We can distinguish the ultimacy of the Father as principle of the Spirit by saying that formally he is the source from which she flows. Yet materially the Son is, with the Father, the principle of the Spirit insofar as the Father truly dwells and spirates from within him. Indeed, that the Son is materially rather than formally the principle of the Spirit does not mean that he is less truly the principle than the Father is—to say that he is less so would only be to deny that the Father genuinely abides in him. It is simply that the Son is the principle in a different way, i.e., unlike the Father, he is not the principle in and of himself, and thus is not *ultimately* the principle. Now, because the Son is thus the principle of the Spirit, it cannot be denied that the Spirit materially proceeds from him. However, with regard to principiativity, the word “from” connotes activity, even if it does not directly denote it. But at this moment in the Trinity’s coming into itself, the Son is not yet seen to be active in the spiration of the Spirit. Therefore, it seems better to speak of the spiration or procession of the Spirit as taking place *through* him.

On the other hand, the Father’s acting in and through the Son does not leave the Son without an active role in the spiration of the Spirit. In order to see how, let us allow multiple metaphors to illuminate each other. The Father breathes forth his love for the Son as he begets him. Indeed, he speaks his Word *in* the breath that is his love for his Word. This is another way of saying that the Father begets the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Son receives this love that accompanies and envelops him in his generation. He embraces the Father’s gift. The reason why he is the treasurer of the Spirit, the reason why he can dispense to us from within himself the riches of the Father’s grace in her and by her, is that when he himself receives her from the Father, he possesses her as his own treasure.

Yet the Son's giving to us is rooted not only in his eternally receiving from the Father but also in his eternally giving back to the Father, for he reciprocates the Father's love, giving the Spirit to him in return. This is the Son's own act. He loves with the love that belongs to him, and it is his to give. However, it is the very love that was and is given to him by the Father. He breathes back to the Father the same love in which he is begotten. That is, he spirates the Spirit back to the Father.

The difference between the way the Son spirates and the way the Father does so is, of course, that the Father is ultimately the spirator of the Spirit, while the Son receives that which he spirates from the Father. Thus the Son's act of spirating derives from the Father's. The nature of the Father's gift is that it "inspires" the Son with, breathes into him, the love that he breathes back to the Father. It is in so doing that the Son most definitively images the Father. That is to say, he reflects the Father as mirror image not merely because in him the Father beholds his own nature but also because in the form of a reflection he returns, as it were, to the Father: the Image reflects the Father insofar as the Image returns the selfsame love that goes forth from the Father to rest as his gaze upon his Image. The Spirit is therefore the one who enables the Son to image the Father.<sup>168</sup> The Son, then, loves the Father by and with precisely the same love as that with which the Father loves him: *by* that love because the Father's gift is what empowers his loving, *with* it because the gift he receives is what he gives in return. In fact, this indicates that the Son's act of loving, of breathing back, is a *sharing in and continuation of* the

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<sup>168</sup> The Holy Spirit also possesses the Father's nature, but we do not usually speak of her as the image of the Father or of the Son. It is particularly appropriate to refrain from doing so if she is the trinitarian person in whom the Son's imaging occurs. For Thomas Aquinas's argument that the Spirit should not be called "image," see *Summa Theologica* I, q. 32, a. 2. For examples of Greek fathers who do use this term for the Spirit, see Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Expositio Fidei* (PG 10, 986), Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.20.4 (*Works on the Spirit*, trans. Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Galliwitz, and Lewis Ayres [Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 2011], 51-137: 84), and John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa* 1.13 (PG 44, 856).

Father's spiration. By virtue of this, the two who spirate have a single spiration. To be clear: the Son himself loves the Father—it is not that the Father merely loves himself through the Son. But the Son has it from the Father that he should love the Father, and indeed, his loving the Father is simply an extension of the Father's loving him, for the Father's love conforms the Son to be precisely the Son who, being his Father's image, loves in return. Therefore, formally they are *duo spirantes* because each loves from within himself with a love that belongs to him, but materially they are *unus spirator* because the Son receives the love or spiration of the Father and returns it to him in an act that extends the Father's own act.

The goal of the preceding arguments has been to show how it may be understood that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son “as from one principle and by a single spiration” if we say that the Spirit “has her essence and her subsistent being” from the Son in a different sense than she has it from the Father. Let us summarize the conclusions we have reached. The Father as ultimate, originating principle spirates the Spirit and she thus proceeds (ἐκπορεύμενον) from him as a person in possession of the divine nature as the Father begets the Son. The Spirit's procession, i.e., the Father's spiration of the Spirit, is simultaneous with the begetting of the Son, for she reposes in the Son in his generation as the love of the Father for the Son, and it is for this end that her procession is ordered to his generation. The Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις is διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, by and through the Son, in two senses: (1) the Father spirates her into her repose in the Son as the gift of his love to the Son, which is the impetus of her procession; (2) the Father also spirates, that is, he does not cease to spirate, as he abides perichoretically in the Son he begets, and so the Spirit proceeds through the Son in that the Father who spirates her

does so from within the Son. While the Father alone is formally the principle of the Spirit, insofar as he indwells the Son, he makes the Son to be with him materially a single principle from which the Spirit proceeds.

The Son, being begotten in the Holy Spirit in that he is enveloped by the Father's love in the person of the Holy Spirit as he is begotten, receives this love. This gift of the Father, then, belongs to the Son as his own treasure. Yet the Son returns it to the Father. He does so by communicating it to the Holy Spirit, who bears it back to its source. The love that he communicates to the Spirit is identical with the divine essence, and in this way the Spirit receives her essence from the Son, not as if she did not already possess it but in a way that shapes her personal ("subsistent") being, bringing it to fulfill its *telos*. For the Spirit's role in the Trinity is to bear both the Father's love to the Son and the Son's love to the Father, and her procession is only complete insofar as, in it, the latter love reciprocates the former.<sup>169</sup> Indeed, this reciprocation of the Father's love carries on the Father's own act of loving. The procession in which the Spirit returns the Son's love for the Father or returns to the Father as the Son's love is thus the same movement in which she set out from the Father—it takes place in a single spiration—although in this aspect of the procession we do not observe the character of ultimacy that marks its initial aspect, what is signaled by the *ἐκ* in *ἐκπόρευσις*. Therefore, while we say that the Spirit proceeds in origin (*ἐκπορευόμενον*) from the Father alone, we also say, first, that she does so through the Son, which makes the Father and the Son not formally but materially one principle of her procession, and second, that she proceeds (*procedit*) from the Father and the Son by a single spiration because both communicate to her the love that is

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<sup>169</sup> As stated above, another way of describing this role is that the Holy Spirit realizes the divine *reditio in seipsum*, the return of the self-expressing, self-differentiating God to Godself.

identical with the divine essence in what is truly one continuous act despite its occurring in two distinct moments, being performed by two persons in the way that is proper to each.

This interpretation of the Council of Florence's teaching on the *Filioque* provides what Coffey thinks cannot be found, namely, a positive explanation of the compatibility of that teaching with the monarchy of the Father. He worries that any such explanation will be excessively rationalistic, and whether this one is so is probably to be judged according to one's taste in theological style. However, apart from that matter, the interpretation that I am advancing raises important questions about the Holy Spirit's place in the Trinity. First, if, as I have claimed, the perichoresis of the Father and the Son entails that the Father spirates the Spirit from within the Son, does the perichoresis of the Father and the Holy Spirit entail that the Father begets the Son from within the Spirit? Indeed, it does. Not to draw this conclusion would constitute a serious inconsistency in the understanding of the Trinity being developed here. Yet the conclusion leads to another question: If the Father generates the Son from within the Holy Spirit, are we to say that the Son is begotten *a Patre Spirituque*, from the Father and the Spirit?

In the middle of the twentieth century, the Orthodox theologian Serge Verkhovsky substantially affirmed the validity of a *Spirituque*. Seeking to reconcile the Eastern emphasis on the monarchy of the Father with the best insights of the Latin "triangular" model of the Trinity, as Xavier Pikaza explains, he argued that the *a Patre* that expresses the principiativity of the Father is completed by the *per Filium* and *per Spiritum*,

thus giving rise to a trinitarian movement in two directions: . . . On the one hand it passes from the Father through the Son to the Spirit in order to return to the

Father; on the other hand it moves from the Father through the Spirit to the Son, returning to the Father. The life of God is identified with this dual movement of perichoresis that joins the persons from the Father and to the Father, in this way realizing the one divine essence.<sup>170</sup>

Another Russian thinker, Paul Evdokimov, more explicitly embraced the *Spirituque* some years after the article in which Verkhovsy argued this. Again, Pikaza's analysis is useful:

To overcome the unilaterality of the *Filioque* and the *ek monou tou Patros*, [Evdokimov] felt the need to lay out the dialectic of trinitarian origination. In the first place he emphasizes the monarchy, the Father as principle of revelation and trinitarian unity. From the Father proceed, in mutual correlation and mutual dependence, the Son and the Spirit. Therefore the *Filioque* is always orthodox when it is found to be balanced by the corresponding *Spirituque*. The Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son or *a Patre Filioque*; the Son for his part proceeds *a Patre Spirituque*.<sup>171</sup>

It should be noted here that Evdokimov interprets the *per Filium* and the *Filioque* as equivalent. Presumably, his *Spirituque* may also be interpreted in the sense of *per Spiritum*. In any case, though, it is a bold and significant move that he is willing to use the formula *Spirituque*.

The Catholic theologian Leonardo Boff has endorsed Evdokimov's proposal of this formula.<sup>172</sup> As he reads Evdokimov, the need to pair *Filioque* and *Spirituque* means that

each Person has to be contemplated simultaneously in its relationship with the other two. So the Son through his begetting receives the Holy Spirit from the Father and is then, in his being, eternally inseparable from the Holy Spirit; the Son, then, is begotten *ex Patre Spirituque*. In the same way, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and rests on the Son; this is what corresponds to *per Filium* and *ex Patre Filioque*. In all the interpersonal relationships within the Trinity, there is

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<sup>170</sup> Xavier Pikaza, *Dios como Espíritu y persona: Razón humana y Misterio Trinitario* (Salamanca: Secretariado Trinitario, 1989), 202-03, my translation. See Serge Verkhovsky, "La Procecion du Saint-Esprit d'après la Triadologie Orthodoxe," *Russie et Chrétienté* 3/4 (1950), 197-210: 207-09.

<sup>171</sup> Pikaza, *Dios como Espíritu y persona*, 202, my translation. See Paul Evdokimov, *L'Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe* (Paris: Cerf, 1969), 69-75.

<sup>172</sup> Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 204-05.

always an *and* and a *through*. The Father begets the Son with the participation of the Holy Spirit and breathes out the Spirit with the participation of the Son.<sup>173</sup>

Boff likewise advances the argument that *Filioque* and *Spirituque* must balance each other, but he in fact uses them to serve quite a different end than Evdokimov does.<sup>174</sup> For Boff, these two formulas are justified by, and they reflect nothing other than, the participation of each trinitarian person in the being of the others and their inseparability from one another. In fact, while he thinks it worthwhile to continue using “begetting” and “breathing-out” to identify the personal uniqueness of the Son and the Spirit, he wishes to strip those terms of the indication that the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father as the cause of their being.<sup>175</sup> He believes that the notion that the Father possesses all in himself and gives to the Son and the Holy Spirit without receiving from them creates a “subordinationist heirarchization in God.”<sup>176</sup> In order to establish the equality of the three persons, he feels it necessary to replace the idea of hypostatic origination with that of perichoresis. He denies that any of the three is in any sense prior to the others, asserting that the relationship between the persons “is one of reciprocal participation rather than hypostatic derivation, of correlation and communion rather than production and procession.”<sup>177</sup> His view seems to be that no person is absolutely *from* another in the

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>174</sup> Boff’s readers often assume that his presentation of Evdokimov’s treatment of the *Spirituque* represents his own view, but if I am correct, this is far too facile an assumption. See, e.g., Ralph Del Colle, “Reflections on the *Filioque*,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34.2 (Spring 1997): 207-17, passim; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Trinity: Global Perspectives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 284; Myk Habets, “*Filioque? Nein: A Proposal for Coherent Coinherence*,” *Trinitarian Theology after Barth*, ed. Habets and Phillip Tolliday (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 161-202: 172, n. 32.

<sup>175</sup> Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 145-46.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. In a more recent work, Boff sums up his position as follows: “There is no hierarchy, no precedence, no causal order among them. They are simultaneously eternal and infinite. They emerge together, each one unique but always connected to the others, in such a profound and radical way that they

sense of ontological dependence on a source because each absolutely exists in his or her own right, yet each is *of* both of the others in the sense that it is their compenetration and interpenetrative communion that makes them what and who they are. Each person is defined by his or her relations to the other two, and they communicate to each other all that they have in common in an eternal circulation of life.<sup>178</sup> There is nothing that each does not receive from and give to both of the others at the same time. “If this is so,” Boff concludes, “it follows that everything in God is triadic, everything is *Patreque, Filioque* and *Spirituque*.”<sup>179</sup> Let us spell out this last claim: The Father receives the divine life *a Filio Spirituque* and *a Spirito Filioque*; the Son receives the divine life *a Patre Spirituque* and *a Spirito Patreque*; the Spirit receives the divine life *a Patre Filioque* and *a Filio Patreque*.

I share Boff’s desire to uphold the equality of the trinitarian persons and, as I will explain below, I also subscribe to the proposition that the Father receives from the Son and the Holy Spirit. Yet I cannot agree with the proposal to discard the notion of the Father as ἀρχή of the other two persons. In the absence of that notion, the names of the first two persons are in fact misnomers, for then the Son does not come from the Father any more than the Father comes from the Son. Indeed, the Son is not properly the Father’s Image; each trinitarian person perfectly resembles the others, but the Son is not specifically the Image that reflects or the Word that expresses the Father. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is then no longer properly the Breath in which the Word is breathed out by the Father, for she does not really come forth from the Father. In summary, disposing of

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become one. Together they are one God-love-relationship-communion” (*Come, Holy Spirit: Inner Fire, Giver of Life, & Comforter of the Poor*, trans. Margaret Wilde [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015], 100).

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 93

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 146.

the monarchy of the Father does away with the inner intelligibility of the trinitarian persons' defining characteristics.

Again, Boff uses the terms *Patreque*, *Filioque*, and *Spirituque* to convey that each person receives the divine life from both of the others. The “and” of the Latin suffix *-que* “applies absolutely to the three Persons,”<sup>180</sup> indicating that each one exists only in relation to the other two. Now, Boff's understanding of the persons receiving from one another may be unobjectionable, but I find his usage of these Latin terms somewhat misleading. *Filioque* is a technical term, and while its significance can be parsed in different ways, it has always referred to the Son's involvement in the Spirit's coming from the Father. Because of this, one naturally infers that the term *Spirituque* speaks of the Spirit's participation in the Son's generation from the Father. But Boff does not use these words to mean these things except in an analogous way<sup>181</sup> because he dispenses with the idea that the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father as their origin and cause.<sup>182</sup> It is just because he rejects the framework within which *Filioque* and *Spirituque* take their original meaning that he can meaningfully use the word *Patreque* at all: the *Filioque* and *Spirituque* formulas presume that the Spirit and the Son are from the Father, so it would be redundant to say “and the Father” regarding the origin of the Son or the Spirit. Boff's *Patreque* indicates that the Son receives from the Spirit and the Father and that the Spirit receives from the Son and the Father. This, of course, makes sense.

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> The “descriptive and analogical character” of terms like “begetting” and “breathing-out” entails that in their application to the Trinity, “they do not indicate any theogony, any result of an intra-divine production process, any causal dependence” (ibid., 145-46).

<sup>182</sup> Weinandy takes Boff's use of *Patreque*, *Filioque*, and *Spirituque* as being intended “to articulate that each person of the Trinity is constituted in a simultaneous and an active subsistent relationship with one another,” an effort that he applauds. However, he critiques Boff for being “vague on the need to maintain an order of origin and derivation founded upon the Father” (Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*, 81 n. 44). I do not read Boff as being vague on this point; it seems quite clear to me that he simply rejects what Weinandy believes should be maintained.

However, the problem with using *Patreque* to convey this thought is that that word, like *Filioque* and *Spirituque*, inevitably calls to mind what Boff wishes to excise from the traditional understanding of trinitarian relations, viz., hypostatic derivation. In my view, rather than attempting to revise the meaning of *Filioque* and *Spirituque* and inventing a new term that corresponds to them in their new meaning, Boff would express himself more clearly if he were simply to abandon the terms *Filioque* and *Spirituque* when he drops the idea of hypostatic derivation that they originally depend upon.<sup>183</sup>

Although Boff is probably the Western theologian most frequently named as a proponent of a *Spirituque*, usually when the formula is spoken of, it is given the meaning that Evdokimov gives it, viz., that the Son is begotten from the Father and the Holy Spirit.<sup>184</sup> The *Spirituque* rightly seeks to express the mutuality and complementarity of the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession. However, in the final analysis, this formula embodies an error. It fails to recognize that generation, like ἐκπόρευσις, denotes ultimate origin. The Son is not begotten *a Patre Spirituque* because he does not have the Father *and* the Spirit as his originating principle. By way of parallel, it must be remembered that, after all, the *Filioque* does not refer to the Spirit's ultimate origination but rather to the Son's participation in the spiration of the Spirit by the Father, who is

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<sup>183</sup> Elsewhere, Boff makes matters considerably more confusing by playing fast and loose with these Latin terms. In *Come, Holy Spirit*, he describes the eternal relationship between the trinitarian persons as "one of revelation and recognition. Thus the Father reveals himself through the Son in the Spirit. The Son reveals the Father in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit reveals itself to the Father through the Son (*ex Patre Filioque*), just as the Son is recognized in the Father through the Spirit (*a Patre Spirituque*). The Spirit and the Son meet in the Father (*ex Filio et ex Spirito Patreque*)" (100). The grammar of the Latin phrases in parentheses does not match either the grammar or the sense of the English translation of the corresponding text. Of course, if the English translation has botched the original Portuguese version, to which I have not had access, and if the original does not contain such discrepancies, the criticism does not stand.

<sup>184</sup> See, for example, Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, vol. 3 (New York: Crossroad, 1997 [1983]), 16; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1992), 71; Zizioulas, "One Single Source," accessed August 1, 2015, <http://agrino.org/cyberdesert/zizioulas.htm>; David Guretzki, *Karl Barth on the Filioque* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 19ff.

“the principle without principle” of the Spirit. The Father begets the Son from within the Spirit, but while this fact may legitimize a description of the Son’s generation as being *per Spiritum*, it does not lead to a *Spirituque*, which could only mean that the Son is begotten from (ἐκ, *ex*) the Father and the Spirit as ultimately originating principle. Furthermore, in order to distinguish the way in which the Son participates in the Spirit’s procession from the way in which the Spirit participates in the Son’s generation, I submit that it is preferable to say that the Spirit proceeds *through* the Son and that the Son is begotten *in* the Spirit rather than that the Son is begotten through the Spirit.

Still, the *Filioque* as I have interpreted it expresses something about the Son’s involvement in the procession of the Spirit that should also be said regarding the Spirit’s involvement in the generation of the Son. The Son communicates to the Spirit a love that is identical with the divine essence in order that the Spirit may bear this love to the Father. However, the Spirit also bears the Father’s love to the Son, and this love, too, is identical with the divine essence. This suggests that the line of reasoning applied earlier in the idea of the Spirit receiving her essence from the Son could likewise be followed in arguing that the Son receives his essence from the Spirit. That is, just as the Son communicates to the Spirit the divine nature that she “already” possesses from the Father in virtue of her ἐκπόρευσις from him, so the Spirit communicates to the Son, in the form of the Father’s love, the nature that the Son “already” possesses from the Father in virtue of his generation from him. Indeed, this conclusion cannot be avoided. But it seems to present a problem. In the order of moments in the Trinity *in fieri*, the Father’s love is communicated to the Son in the Spirit logically prior to the Son loving the Father with that same love in the Spirit in return. Does this not mean that the trinitarian *taxis* has been

altered from Father-Son-Spirit to Father-Spirit-Son? If it does, then the present interpretation makes what has generally, though not unanimously, been considered a mistake by the theological tradition.<sup>185</sup>

As we begin to answer the question just posed, it should be recalled that this account has underlined the simultaneity of the processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. If it has changed the trinitarian *taxis* in any sense, it has done so by placing the Spirit *with* the Son rather than before or after him. However, in point of fact, this account can still be seen to accommodate the traditional *taxis* Father-Son-Spirit. The *telos* of the Spirit lies with her repose in the Son as the Father's love for him and her return of his love to the Father. The goal of her existence presupposes the existence of the Son. The Son is therefore logically prior to the Spirit in this respect. Ontologically their being is simultaneous and each person is necessary to the other. The Son would not be the Son without the Spirit and the Spirit would not be the Spirit without the Son. For that matter, the Father would not be the Father without the Son and the Spirit. He is only Father with respect to the Son, but this relationship would not be what it is—i.e., the relationship of a Father to a Son who images him—if the Spirit did not bring to fruition the Son's act of imaging by bearing to the Father from the Son the very love with which the Father loves

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<sup>185</sup> Maximus the Confessor writes, "Just as the Thought [the Father] is principle of the Word, so is he also of the Spirit through the Word. And, just as one cannot say that the Word is of the voice [of the Breath], so one cannot say that the Word is of the Spirit" (*Quaestiones et dubia*, PG 90, 813 B, trans. in "The Greek and Latin Traditions," 6, n. 9). Thomas Aquinas briefly mentions the abstract possibility that the Son is from the Spirit rather than vice versa, but since this is something that "no one says," he dismisses the idea without further ado (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 2, c.). On the other hand, Alexander Golitzin acknowledges that there is a basis for the *taxis* Father-Spirit-Son in the Synoptic accounts of Christ's baptism and in Luke's incarnation narrative, and he sees this *taxis* as being "effectively presupposed both by the Eastern *epiclesis* over the baptismal font and the Eucharistic elements, and by the witness of the Eastern ascetic-mystical tradition, which is to say, that it has its roots in the very deepest and . . . most primordial levels of Christian faith and practice as the latter have been known in the East since . . . the beginnings of Christianity itself" ("Adam, Eve, and Seth: Pneumatological Reflections on an Unusual Image in Gregory of Nazianzus' 'Fifth Theological Oration,'" *Anglican Theological Review* 83.3 [2001], 537-546: 544-45, quoted at 545).

him. It is only insofar as the Father is loved by the Son in the Spirit that he has a Son who is fully his image—that is to say, fully his Son—and therefore the Father’s paternity is complete only in virtue of the action of both the Son and the Spirit. Yet while all of the persons have their being in an ontological simultaneity, the Father-Son relationship logically precedes the Father-Spirit-Son relationship because the Spirit’s procession is oriented to the Son’s generation, whereas the Son’s generation is ordered to the Father’s paternity. The first person is Spirator of the Spirit precisely in order to be Father of the Son. To be sure, it would be true to say that the Father begets the Son for the sake of the spiration of the Spirit. What this means, however, is that the Father begets the Son so that the Son may participate in and return the Father’s loving spiration, which is to say that the Son is truly Son insofar as he does “what he sees the Father doing”—“For the Father loves the Son,” and “whatever he does, that the Son does likewise” (John 5.19-20). Therefore, the spiration of the Spirit belongs to the Father-Son relationship. The fact that the trinitarian relationships are logically ordered this way establishes the *taxis* Father-Son-Spirit. This fact and the resulting *taxis* are quite at home in the present account of the Trinity.

In connection with this, we must consider another difference between what the Son does and what the Spirit does in the communication of love between the trinitarian persons. The Spirit bears to the Son not her own love but the Father’s, and again she bears to the Father not her own love but the Son’s. By contrast, the Son so receives the Father’s gift of love that it becomes his own to give in return. His giving in this way is his imaging of the Father as Son. If the Spirit received and returned as her own the love given by the Father or the Son, she would be another Image—either another Image and

Son of the Father or an Image and Son of the Son. That would give us a conception of the Spirit as Grandson of the Father or as Brother of the Son, a pair of errors that the pro-Nicene party had to deny committing a few decades after Nicea when they advanced claims for the Spirit's divinity.<sup>186</sup> Instead, she differs from the Son in that he is the Image and she is the one who makes possible his imaging by conferring on him the love from the Father that engenders his own act of loving the Father in her. The fact that the Spirit is not the image of the Father does not show her to be less fully personal than he and the Son. On the contrary, the fact that she enables the Son's imaging, which completes his filiation and the Father's paternity, provides a clear indication of her unique and vital role as a person in the Trinity.

The fact that the Spirit bears the Father's, not her own, love to the Son also provides a reason not to use the formula *Spirituque* in a way that would parallel the use of *Filioque* as I am interpreting it here. The Son spirates the Spirit to the Father, conveying the love that is his own treasure back to its paternal source. The Spirit proceeds *from* him because she bears what is his to its destination, much as we would say that a messenger is "from" the one who sends the message. Thus, his communication of the love that is identical with the divine essence to her is different from his reception, in her, of that essential love from the Father. He receives in her the love that belongs to the Father, whereas she receives from him the love that belongs to him as well as the Father. When she receives from him, it is *a Patre Filioque*. It would only be fitting to say that the Son receives the Father's love *a Patre Sprituque* if the love that the Spirit conveys to him

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<sup>186</sup> Athanasius, Didymus, and Cyril of Jerusalem address arguments from opponents along these lines. See DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, "General Introduction," *Works on the Spirit*, 11-50: 38-39; Alasdair Heron, *Studies in the Trinitarian Writings of Didymus the Blind: His Authorship of the Adversus Eunomium IV-V and the De Trinitate* (Ph.D. diss., University of Tübingen, 1972), 170.

were love that she had received from the Father *to be her own* and to join the Father in communicating *as her own*, which it is not. She is the one who bears the Father's love—again, like a messenger—not the lover herself.<sup>187</sup>

The present interpretation of the exchange of love between the divine persons obliges us to say one thing further. I have stated that the Father communicates to the Son in or through the Spirit the love that is identical with the divine nature (though the Son “already” possesses that nature in himself) and that the Son communicates to the Spirit the love that is identical with the divine nature (though the Spirit “already” possesses that nature in herself) in order that she may bear it to the Father. This necessarily means that what the Father receives from the Son in the Spirit is the love that is identical with the divine nature. Thus the Father receives from the Son in the Spirit the divine nature, which of course he “already” possesses. This is the truth lodged in Boff's suggestion that Father receives the divine life *a Filio Spirituque* and *a Spiritu Filioque*, which is crucial to recognize even if, as I have argued, the use of those formulas themselves is inadvisable. But as we have seen, it is the Father himself who in-spires the Son with the love that he breathes back to the Father as a participation in the Father's own spiration. Therefore, when the Father receives the divine nature from the Son in the Spirit, he really receives it *from himself, through the Son, in the Spirit*. This is perhaps the clearest sense in which the Spirit's return from the Son to the Father is the *reditio in seipsum* of the God who expresses Godself in a Word of self-attaining self-differentiation.

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<sup>187</sup> This is not to deny that the Spirit is loved by the Father and the Son or that she loves them. The three centers of the one divine consciousness are open to, or enveloped and penetrated by, one another in such a way that for each, awareness of “self” and awareness of “other” cannot be entirely differentiated: each center is something between an “I” and a “We.” And what is true of knowledge is true of love, i.e., self-love and other-love are necessarily coincident. This means that each person necessarily loves the others with himself or herself. However, that love is distinct from the loving of the Father and the Son described by mutual love theology. In the latter, the Spirit is not the object of the love of either of them but rather the objectivization, or, as here, the bearer of their love for each other.

In addition to this, a final note is called for in the discussion of the processions of the Son and the Spirit in relation to the Father dwelling in each of them. The Son and the Spirit are also in one another, but their perichoresis with one another has an important difference from the perichoresis that each has with the Father. The Son and the Spirit each have something to do with the way in which the other is principiated (i.e., produced from a principle) by the Father, both because of the nature of each one's *processio* and because the Father indwells each of them as he principiates the other. However, since neither the Son nor the Spirit is the fount of personhood, their perichoresis with each other does not shape the principiation of another person. It hardly needs to be said that this difference points not to a lesser grade of deity for the Son and the Spirit but only to the distinction between the form of their personhood and that of the Father, viz., he is the unoriginate source of divine personhood, while they are originated persons.

### **Conclusion**

I have drawn on Weinandy's and Coffey's ideas in order to offer an account of how the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son." My proposal attempts to reconcile the idea that the Spirit has her person and her nature in her ἐκπόρευσις from the Father alone (the position that came to prevail in the East) with the idea that she receives her subsistent being and her essence from the Son, as well, proceeding from both as from one principle and by a single spiration (the Florentine teaching on the *Filioque*). To summarize it: The Father simultaneously generates the Son and spirates the Spirit, each of whom comes forth from him as a person in possession of the divine nature. He remains immanent in each of them as they proceed from him, which means that he spirates the Spirit from within the Son and generates the Son from within

the Spirit—or, as I have put it, he spirates the Spirit through the Son and begets the Son in the Spirit. As the Son and the Spirit come forth, the Spirit reposes in the Son as the Father’s love for his Image, which I regard as another way of saying that the Son is begotten in the Spirit (Love). The Father loves the Son in the person of the Spirit, for she is in herself that very love. Yet it is also legitimate to say that she actively bears the Father’s love, which is identical with the divine essence, to the Son. The Son receives this love in her as gift (à la Augustine and the West) or treasure (à la Gregory Nazianzen and the East). And as the Image who reflects the Father, he returns this same love. That is, he breathes back to the Father the love breathed into him. He does so by communicating to the Spirit the love that is identical with the divine essence—the same love that he receives in the Spirit from the Father—so that she may bear it back to the Father. In this way, as the doctrine of the *Filioque* teaches, the Spirit receives the divine essence from the Son and proceeds (*procedit*) from him.

It is true that the Holy Spirit “already” possesses that essence from the Father, just as the Son “already” possesses it when the Father communicates it to him in her. However, her reception of the essential love from the Son definitively shapes her subsistent being or person because her *telos* is not only to repose in the Son but also to return him, in the form of his reciprocal love, to the Father from whom he goes forth. Indeed, she reposes in the Son precisely in order to reclaim him for the Father.<sup>188</sup> Therefore, for the Spirit to receive the essential love from the Son is, in a real sense, for her to receive her subsistence from him. She is a person when she comes forth

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<sup>188</sup> There is, of course, no conflict between the claims that Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and that she reposes in him. When the Spirit proceeds from him, she does not cease to repose in him, just as the Son does not leave the bosom of the Father when he proceeds from him (see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 36, a. 2, ad. 4.).

(ἐκπορευόμενον) from the Father, but her subsistence or personhood is perfected when she bears to the Father the love that the Son communicates to her so that she will bear it as his filial gift. Her procession is ordered to the Son's generation, and this makes her logically third in the trinitarian *taxis*: Father-Son-Holy Spirit.

The Son's return of the Father's love is, in fact, a continuation by the Son of the Father's own act of spirating the Spirit as love. Therefore, the Father who formally is the sole principle and *unus spirator* of the Spirit makes the Son to be, with him, materially one principle of the Spirit by joining him in his one spiration. The Spirit who proceeds (ἐκπορευόμενον) immediately from the Father proceeds (*procedit*) mediately from the Son. The movement occurs in two distinct moments (from the *in fieri* perspective) constituting a single continuous act of the Father and the Son, performed by each in the way that is proper to him, i.e., by the Father as source (πηγή) of the Son and the Spirit, and by the Son as Image of the Father. The Spirit, too, acts, bearing the Father's love to the Son and the Son's love to the Father. In this way she unites them in their otherness from one another, fulfilling the fatherhood of the Father and the sonship of the Son, i.e., bringing them to their perfection as persons.

I will argue in Chapter Six that this is the immanent trinitarian basis for the Spirit's characteristic work in the world—in creation and redemption—and that her mission reflects its inner-trinitarian ground. For the moment, we will turn to Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose christological vision of creation and redemption can provide us with material that will be needed to construct the argument of that chapter. Above all, this material will take the form of an understanding of grace as operative in creation as well as redemption, with redemption being seen as the gracious completion of creation.

## CHAPTER FIVE: GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS: INCORPORATING IDEAS FOR SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

### **The Purpose of the Present Chapter**

This chapter will comprise an extended examination of the thought of the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. Among his spiritual retreat notes from 1881 is a recondite meditation titled “On Creation and Redemption: The Great Sacrifice,” which, in spite of its obscurity, offers valuable insights into his understanding of the divine plan for the world. The vision that lies at the heart of it is of Christ as the beginning, center, and end (i.e., the goal) of all of God’s work, both in creating and in redeeming. To comprehend that vision is to grasp one of the keys to Hopkins’s *total* vision, for his worldview is deeply theological, and his theology is, as he described his daily life, “determined by the Incarnation” in most of its details.<sup>1</sup> Analyzing the major ideas in this piece provides a springboard for examining an array of the poet’s writings that together depict the incarnation as a mystery of self-sacrifice on which are founded, first, the creation of a world to which Christ is intimately present and, second, a continuity between the making and the gracious remaking of humanity. My study offers a contribution to Hopkins scholarship, but at the conclusion of the chapter I will take up insights from his thought to serve my argument that it is useful to explain the relationship between creation and redemption through the concept of grace. Furthermore, Hopkins’s concepts of *inscape* and *instress* will serve us in the next chapter, where I will employ them to describe the creative and redemptive work of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Christopher Devlin, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Oxford University, 1959), 263. Hereafter this work will be cited parenthetically in the text as *S*.

### **“On Creation and Redemption” and the Absolute Primacy of Christ**

At the beginning of “On Creation and Redemption” Hopkins introduces a distinction between the order of time and the order of intention in the working of the divine design. He notes, for example, that trees were created before humanity (cf. Gen. 1.11-12) but with humanity’s benefit in mind (cf. Gen. 2.9, 16); hence, trees precede humanity in the order of time but vice versa in the order of God’s intention for creation (S, 196). The distinction serves one of the most important components of his theology, an idea inherited from the scholastic theologian John Duns Scotus: commonly called the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ, it is the supposition that God’s eternal plan for the created world is chiefly ordered toward the incarnation. The primary object of God’s will is that the eternal Son, the second person of the Trinity, should unite himself to created reality and bring it to glory in himself. In the order of intention, that union and glorification precedes all other things that God wills to occur, and all other things are willed for the sake of it. Specifically, everything on earth is intended to serve humankind, and human nature itself is designed for the Son of God to unite himself with it. All things are created in view of the incarnation—it is their exemplary cause. Thus, one can say that “the human nature of Christ [is] the *motif* the Divine Architect was to carry out in the rest of creation . . . ; after his body the visible world was sculptured.”<sup>2</sup> The logic of the doctrine may be briefly sketched as follows. What God wills above all is to share Godself at the deepest personal level with something that is not God, and everything that exists has been brought into being for that end. The incarnation and glorification of Christ are

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<sup>2</sup> Allan B. Wolter, “John Duns Scotus on the Primacy and Personality of Christ,” *Franciscan Christology: Selected Texts, Translations, and Introductory Essays*, ed. Damian McElrath (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980), 139-45: 140.

the eternally-intended climax of the cosmic drama that begins (temporally) with God creating the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1.1), and the role of humanity in that drama is defined in relation to its climactic moment. The grace that God would confer on men and women is modeled on the grace with which God suffuses Christ's human nature. Finally, being primary and unconditional in the divine intention, Christ's coming into the world was not dependent on the actions of any creatures, including the sins of human beings.

For Scotus and for most who have subscribed to the doctrine, this last point means that the incarnation would have taken place even if humanity had never fallen into sin.<sup>3</sup> Yet it still would have been to humanity's great benefit that it took place. The desire for union with God is intrinsic to human nature, but the soul requires the supernatural gift of grace to transcend its finitude.<sup>4</sup> Had there been no sin, then, Christ's mission would have been to serve as a conduit of grace that elevated human beings above their natural capacities so that they might enjoy perfect communion with God—in short, it would have been to “redeem” humanity not from sin but from the limitations that naturally separate created beings from Uncreated Being. Whether the human race had fallen or not, this much would be true: the purpose of human existence is to be given a share in the glory that Christ in his human nature possesses to the fullest as the single point in the cosmos with which God is personally united and identified.

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<sup>3</sup> Using the term “predestination” for the incarnation as God from eternity ordained it to happen, Scotus writes, “But I say that the fall was not the reason for the predestination of Christ. On the contrary, if neither angel nor human had fallen—indeed, even if no human beings had been created except for Christ—Christ would still have been predestined” (John Duns Scotus, *Opus Parisiense* Lib. III, d. 7, q. 4, Maximilian Mary Dean, *A Primer on the Absolute Primacy of Christ: Blessed John Duns Scotus and the Franciscan Thesis* [New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2006], 127-29: 128; my translation). For Scotus' argument for the absolute primacy of Christ, see Damian McElrath, ed., *Franciscan Christology: Selected Texts, Translations, and Introductory Essays* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980), 147-59.

<sup>4</sup> In Scotus' words, “God is the natural end of humankind, yet [God] is reached not naturally but supernaturally” (John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, ed. P. Carolo Balić [Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot, 1950], 19; my translation).

Hopkins's Dublin notebook contains clear evidence that he embraces the idea of the absolute primacy of Christ as his own. In Ignatius's *Principium sive Fundamentum*, the founder of the Jesuit order writes, "Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God Our Lord, and by so doing to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake and to help him in the carrying out of the end for which he was created" (S, 122). Hopkins's reflection on this passage in his notebook considers Christ as the single man for whose sake all of humanity, and in turn everything else, was created: "Say the man Christ was created to praise etc and so to save his soul, that is / enter into his glory. And the other things in his train" (S, 257). The "other things" created in Christ's train are all "other things on the face of the earth," and they exist for him. Hopkins also quotes this last phrase from Ignatius in "On Creation and Redemption," alluding to the claim that all things were made for humanity's benefit. He then affirms that "man himself was created for Christ as Christ's created nature for God," adding, "And in this way Christ is the firstborn among creatures" (S, 196). The latter remark echoes the beginning of an ancient Christian hymn recorded in Colossians, a passage that was foundational for Hopkins's christology:

[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth [. . .]: all things were created by him and in him. And he is before all, and [in] him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he may hold the primacy: Because in him, it hath well pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell; And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven. (Col. 1.15-20)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I have quoted from the Challoner edition of the Douay-Rheims Bible, the English version most commonly used by Catholics in Hopkins's day. Hopkins himself probably normally used the Latin Vulgate—he most often quotes from it. Being a translation of the Vulgate, the Douay-Rheims reflects the text of Scripture as he read it better than does the Authorized (King James) Version. I have altered the Douay-Rheims's rendering of verse 17 from "by him all things consist" to "in him all things consist" because I believe that "in" is closer than "by" to the sense in which Hopkins understands the *in ipso* of the Vulgate.

I will explain the importance of this text for Hopkins further below. For the moment, it is enough to make two observations. First, the passage is replete with references to Christ as “the firstborn,” “before all,” “the beginning,” and “hold[ing] the primacy” in all things. Hopkins’s allusion to it helps us to see how the doctrine of Christ’s primacy informs his starting-point in “On Creation and Redemption,” which has not received the critical attention that it warrants. Second, even as the passage recognizes Christ as a creature, it also identifies him as the agent of creation (asserting his preexistence as a divine figure) and links this agency to his redemptive work in the incarnation. That link plays a crucial role in Hopkins’s theology, for he understands redemption as a kind of new or further creation; a person attains perfection as a creature through being joined to Christ, the pinnacle of creation. In the sentence after the last one quoted from the meditation, Hopkins remarks, “The elect then were created in Christ” such that “their correspondence with grace and seconding of God’s designs” for their salvation “is like a taking part in their own creation, the creation of their best selves” (*S*, 196-97). Those chosen to receive grace are therefore created “in Christ” in at least two senses. First, they are created “in his train,” i.e., their existence is willed by God as a consequence of God’s decision to create his humanity, as is true of everything in the universe. Second, they are (re-)created in unity with Christ through grace, which makes them, to use the Pauline metaphor, members of his body.<sup>6</sup> This second aspect of their creation is a continuation and

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<sup>6</sup> Hopkins (*S* 196) cites Ephesians 2.10 from the Vulgate, which the Douay-Rheims translates, “For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus* in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them” (italics added to reflect that *creati in Christo Jesu* is italicized in Hopkins’s citation). That Hopkins thinks of this as a re-creation is inferred from his comment on the passage, wherein he notes that the author has spoken of himself and others as having once been “dead in sins.” Those created in Christ Jesus have been given new life after being dead and thus have been re-created. Hopkins also has in mind that the elect are predestined for this unity with Christ (*S* 196-97), so God’s eternal plan in creating them was that they be made to be “in” him.

completion of the first. The first aspect represents humanity's penultimate end or purpose in the divine intention and the second represents humanity's ultimate end. In contrast to the elect, Hopkins continues, "the wicked and the lost are like halfcreations and have but a halfbeing" (*S*, 197) insofar as they fail to attain the ultimate end for which they were created.

What follows in Hopkins's meditation is an extraordinarily dense paragraph that, for the purposes of my essay, may be considered the heart of the piece:

The first intention then of God outside himself or, as they say, *ad extra*, outwards, the first outstress of God's power, was Christ; and we must believe that the next was the Blessed Virgin. Why did the Son of God go thus forth from the Father not only in the eternal and intrinsic procession of the Trinity but also by an extrinsic and less than eternal, let us say aeonian one?—To give God glory and that by sacrifice, sacrifice offered in the barren wilderness outside of God, as the children of Israel were led into the wilderness to offer sacrifice. This sacrifice and this outward procession is a consequence and shadow of the procession of the Trinity, from which mystery sacrifice takes its rise; but of this I do not mean to write here. It is as if the blissful agony or stress of selving in God had forced out drops of sweat or blood, which drops were the world, or as if the lights lit at the festival of the "peaceful Trinity" through some little cranny striking out lit up into being one "cleave" out of the world of possible creatures. The sacrifice would be the Eucharist, and that the victim might be truly victim like, like motionless, helpless, or lifeless, it must be in matter. Then the Blessed Virgin was intended or predestined to minister that matter. And here then was that mystery of the woman clothed with the sun which appeared in heaven. She followed Christ the nearest, following the sacrificial lamb "whithersoever he went." (*S*, 197)

This passage connects four distinctive features of the poet's christology with the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ. These are Hopkins's speculation that there was an aeonian incarnation, the belief that Mary participates in her son's redemptive work throughout time, the idea that the incarnation was sacrificial or kenotic in nature, and the affirmation that all of creation is not only ordered toward but also rooted in Christ's material existence. An understanding of all four brings the lines of this beautiful but difficult image into focus.

Hopkins imagines that at the beginning of the angelic mode of time known as the aeon, which lies between eternity and the sort of time that we experience, the eternal Son took on some kind of material being in the presence of the angels. Elsewhere Hopkins refers to this moment as an incarnation, which he labels *ensarkosis* (“becoming flesh”), distinguishing it from the *enanthropesis* (“becoming human”) that was the Son’s historical incarnation as Jesus Christ (*S*, 171). The two events are distinct but not completely separated, and for that reason Hopkins can identify the one who is manifested to the angels by the name of Christ, despite the fact that the “flesh” he puts on then is not humanity, but an unspecified form of matter. Also, because this *ensarkosis* involves the Son taking on a material existence by way of self-sacrifice (about which we will say more below), it can be called the Eucharist. Christopher Devlin identifies a text of Scotus’ that likely informed Hopkins’s thinking:

I say then, but without insisting on it, that before the Incarnation and “before Abraham was,” in the beginning of the world, Christ could have had a true temporal existence in a sacramental manner. And if this is true, it follows that before the conception and formation of the Body of Christ from the most pure blood of the Glorious Virgin there could have been the Eucharist (*Oxoniense*, iv, dist. 10, qu. 4).<sup>7</sup>

Scotus concludes that this was theoretically possible because he sees it as a corollary to the idea that “it is within God’s power to make the Body of Christ really present *universaliter*, anywhere or everywhere in the universe.”<sup>8</sup> Hopkins, on the other hand, believes that Christ did in fact have a “eucharistic” (i.e., material) existence “in the beginning of the world.” The supposition that the Son became incarnate among the angels

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<sup>7</sup> Christopher Devlin, “Introduction to Spiritual Writings,” Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Devlin, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Oxford University, 1959), 107-21: 113-14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

seems to be original to Hopkins,<sup>9</sup> but he does not pull it completely out of thin air. It derives from his interpretation of Revelation 12.

The twelfth chapter of John's Apocalypse recounts a vision of a woman clothed with the sun who is in birth pangs and a dragon that waits to devour the son she will bear. The woman has traditionally been interpreted (especially by Catholic exegetes) to represent Mary, her child is certainly Jesus, and the dragon is identified in verse 9 as Satan. In the vision, God snatches the child away from the dragon, who begins a battle with God's angels, for which rebellion he is thrown to earth, where he then makes war on the woman's other children, faithful believers in Jesus. According to Hopkins, this vision reveals that the Son chose to glorify the Father by going forth from the Godhead and entering a created, material state of being. The person of Mary was created at the same moment and was likewise given a material form that prefigured the body she would inhabit in earthly history. The Son would dwell in her and from there exhibit himself in his own materiality to the angels. In this way, Mary mediated the Son's self-manifestation to them in a way that resembles her mediation of the blessings given to humanity through Christ, for she "mothers each new grace / That does now reach our race," since God has determined that "all God's glory . . . would go / Through her and

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<sup>9</sup> Trent Pomplun ("The Theology of Gerard Manley Hopkins: From John Duns Scotus to the Baroque," *The Journal of Religion* 95 [2015], 1-34) convincingly dispatches the common narrative—which Hopkins himself has helped to create (Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey [London: Oxford University, 1959], 249)—that Hopkins's Scotism made him theologically anomalous among his English contemporaries. In fact, Scotistic christology enjoyed a notable popularity in his day among both Catholics and Anglicans (Pomplun, 4-10). Less compelling is Pomplun's assertion that there is nothing in Hopkin's conception of the great sacrifice that cannot be traced to the work of baroque commentators on Scotus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (ibid., 29). While he shows that there are multiple thinkers whose ideas Hopkins might have absorbed—e.g., into his understanding of the Eucharist and of the logical order in which God foresaw and willed how creation and redemption would play out—Pomplun does not demonstrate that there was any precedent for Hopkin's speculation that the divine Son became incarnate in the presence of the angels.

from her flow / Off, and no way but so.”<sup>10</sup> The angels were created, in turn, so that they might join the Son in glorifying the Father by honoring *his* act of glorification from his created condition. The angels were to “contribute . . . towards the Incarnation and the great sacrifice” (*S*, 200), i.e., the aeonian *ensarkosis*. However, Lucifer revolted from the prospect of the second person of the Trinity inhabiting matter; he supposed that this was unworthy of any immaterial being to do, and being immaterial himself, he elected to cling to the nobility of his own nature rather than celebrate the Son’s self-humiliation. On Hopkins’s reading of the vision in Rev. 12, this moment is represented by the birth of the child and the dragon’s attempt to devour it.

Lucifer’s reaction to the *ensarkosis* serves as a pointer to why Hopkins considers it a sacrifice performed by the Son: it is an act of humility, *kenosis* (self-emptying), that is, not clinging to the privileges of his divinity. As we see in notes that Hopkins made during the same retreat in which he composed this meditation, he interprets the event of the *ensarkosis* in light of Phil. 2.5-8, where Paul exhorts his readers to imitate the mind of Christ, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant; being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.”<sup>11</sup> In his notes, the Jesuit writes, “This process took place in its own

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<sup>10</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn., ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University, 1967), 94. Hereafter this work will be cited parenthetically in the text as *P*. The theology embedded in the poem cited here, “The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe,” provides the basis for ascribing to Mary the title “Mediatrice of all graces,” a practice that has gained popularity among Catholic clergy and laity over the course of the past century. That Hopkins embraces this theology is but one way in which he seems to have anticipated movements in Catholic piety that developed well after his death (Devlin, “Introduction,” 114).

<sup>11</sup> Here I have quoted from the Challoner Douay-Rheims but have altered its punctuation in accordance with the way that Hopkins punctuates the passage when he writes it out in Latin in his notes. This is significant because Hopkins recognizes that his opinion about how it should be punctuated differs from others’, and he believes that the passage as he punctuates it reflects Christ’s aeonian *ensarkosis* as

fashion (1) in the procession of the godhead; (2) in his entrance into creation, his incarnation proper; (3) on earth, in the [*enanthropesis*], the becoming man” (*S*, 181). Remarkably, Hopkins seems to be claiming here that the eternal procession of the Son—the “going-forth” from the Father by which the Son timelessly becomes a distinct person—is a kind of *kenosis*. He provides no indication of what that self-emptying might consist of, but the fact that he sees the procession that way surely explains his statement that it is from the mystery of the Trinity that all sacrifice takes its rise. We can also say with certainty that what the aeonian *ensarkosis* and the earthly *enanthropesis* have in common is that they involve the Son taking a form inferior to his divine status, i.e., a material form, so that he might do his Father a humble service out of love. This abnegation in both of these modes of incarnation is what Hopkins calls “the great sacrifice.”

Hopkins also does not explicitly spell out what the angelic contribution to Christ’s heavenly incarnation was to be, but the idea that they were to make one appears in two important points. First, the purpose of the *ensarkosis* was not only to give the Son a place outside the Godhead from which to glorify the Father but also to provide Mary and the heavenly host an opportunity to conform to his will, and those who did so would be blessed with proximity to God. According to Hopkins, they would thereby be redeemed,

for redeem may be said not only of the recovering from sin to grace or perdition to salvation but also of the raising from worthlessness before God (and all creation is unworthy of God) to worthiness of him, the meriting of God himself, or, so to say, godworthiness. In this sense the Blessed Virgin was beyond all others redeemed, because it was her more than all other creatures that Christ meant to win from nothingness and it was her that he meant to raise the highest. (*S*, 197)

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well as his earthly *enanthropesis* (*S*, 170, 181). The phrases “emptied himself” and “taking the form of a servant” describe Christ’s action in both instances. Everything that follows the semicolon in the sentence applies only to his human incarnation.

We must underline the significance of this interpretation of the meaning of redemption. As the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception had made clear twenty-seven years prior to the writing of this meditation, Mary was never tainted by any form of sin at any time in her existence. Indeed, Hopkins does not suggest that she or the angels needed reparative grace.<sup>12</sup> Rather, their redemption would be the reception of elevating grace, i.e., grace that would raise them from their intrinsic unworthiness of God (*S*, 170). For grace, as Hopkins defines it, is “any action, activity, on God’s part by which, in creating or after creating, he carries the creature to or towards the end of its being, which is its selfsacrifice to God and its salvation” (*S*, 154). The angels and Mary were created to align their wills with the will of the Son, giving over their being to God, which is not only an imitation of but indeed a participation in Christ’s great sacrifice. This is most likely what Hopkins means when he speaks of the angels contributing to it.

The second important point is that the angelic response to Christ’s action had repercussions for the creation of the world, which Hopkins speculates that the angels were to cooperate with God in forming. The fact that Lucifer and a third of the others rebelled against the divine plan partially explains, for Hopkins, why there is so much natural evil. The material world is somewhat misshapen, so to speak, because those angels refused to do their job; the tumult that they caused in heaven has brought about confusion and strife on earth (*S*, 202). This explanation finds its logic in the nature of the relationship between the angelic aeon and our time: a single moment in the aeon can correspond to one, many, or all moments in history. Thus, on Hopkins’s reading of Rev.

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<sup>12</sup> Later in his retreat notes, Hopkins eliminates all possible doubt that he is willing to use the concept of redemption without reference to sin when he speaks of the Son as “the redeemer . . . of his own created being,” i.e., of his human nature, “which he retrieves from nothingness, when it becomes divine and of infinite worth” (*S*, 170). There is no question of Christ’s human nature requiring relief from sin.

12, the attack that the dragon makes on the woman and her child in the vision also depicts Satan's attack on humanity throughout time (*S*, 200). Similarly, Christ's baptism in the Jordan "is symbolical" of his descent into human nature from the Godhead as well as from "that heaven or aeon of Mary in which he had lived and been manifested to the angels" (*S*, 177). The kind of symbol that the poet has in mind is that in which one reality not only represents another to our minds but also is filled with that other that it represents. Christ's baptism represents his descent into human nature both because it is literally a descent (into water) and because it is a visible gesture of humility wherein he surrenders his rights in order to act as a servant (cf. Matt. 3.13-15). Yet the baptism also *participates in* the reality of the incarnation. Here, then, the angelic incarnation corresponds to two temporal events, Christ's conception (or his birth) and his baptism. Recognizing the nature of the relationship between the aeon and history enables us to see that the Son's threefold *kenosis* or self-emptying is one movement executed in three different spheres: in the eternal procession of the Godhead, in the aeonian *ensarkosis*, and in the historical *enanthropesis*. The *ensarkosis* is an extension of the procession, and the *enanthropesis* is an extension of the *ensarkosis*. Likewise, the aeonian incarnation and the creation of the material world are executions in two different spheres of one movement, viz., the making of matter that the Son will inhabit.

In fact, Hopkins theorizes that the creation of the world stems from the *ensarkosis*. This is the import of his cryptic statement in the meditation, "It is as if the blissful agony or stress of selving in God had forced out drops of sweat or blood, which drops were the world" (*S*, 197). The "selving" in God is firstly the procession of the Son from the Father, his becoming a distinct self, in the sphere of eternity. The very same act

takes the form of an incarnation in the sphere of the aeon; the *ensarkosis* is the means by which the Son enacts his selfhood outside of the Godhead. And it is this selving as it takes place in the aeon that results in the appearance of the material universe. The creation of the cosmos is a product of the energy that, like sweat or blood, flows out of the Son in the *ensarkosis*.

Clarity on this point may be gained in light of Hopkins's remark that God's intentional order entails "not only intention in understanding and intention in will but also intention or forepitch of execution, of power or activity" (*S*, 196). The Latin root of "intention," *intendere*, "to stretch forward," provides a clue to why Hopkins equates "intention" here with his neologism "forepitch." To see how it does, and to glean something of the metaphysical sense that "forepitch" carries, we may consider an instance in which he uses the latter to describe a physical image. In a journal entry from 1870, he records that he "found one morning the ground in one corner of the garden full of small pieces of potsherd from which there rose up (and not dropped off) long icicles carried on in some way each like a forepitch of the shape of the piece of potsherd it grew on, like a tooth to its root for instance."<sup>13</sup> It is as if the piece of potsherd were projecting itself ahead in space—throwing itself forward, "fore-pitching" itself—through the icicle that bears its shape. Or, viewed from another perspective, it is as if the icicle arose by partaking of some energy emitted upward by the piece of potsherd. In a way analogous to the imagined self-projection of the potsherd in space, Hopkins appears to suggest, God's creative "power or activity" stretches or projects itself forward in time from the point of its original object, which is Christ in his *ensarkosis*, in such a way that what arises in

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<sup>13</sup> Hopkins, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 201. Hereafter this work will be cited parenthetically in the text as *J*.

creation somehow bears the shape of that original object. Just as the icicle was “like a forepitch of the shape of the piece of potsherd it grew on,” so the created world is a forepitch of Christ. Likewise, just as the icicle seems to have arisen by drawing on some energy emitted by the potsherd, so the created world comes into being by participating in an overflow of energy from the creation of Christ. To return to the image from “On Creation and Redemption,” the world is like drops of sweat or blood shed by Christ as he takes “flesh.” In this way, Hopkins envisions the aeonian creation and incarnation of Christ as the foundation for the creation of all other things. Following the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ, he holds that the entire universe is ordered toward Christ’s material existence in history. But he adds the idea that it is also rooted in Christ’s material existence in angelic time.

Now, a significant qualification is in order regarding Hopkins’s adoption of the doctrine of Christ’s primacy. As mentioned above, Scotus asserts that Christ would have become incarnate even if humanity had never sinned. Hopkins, however, believes that he only came to earth as a human being because of the fall. This fact has been overlooked even by very astute critics. Hopkins remarks, “If Adam had not fallen it seems that Christ and his Mother would not have been born among his descendants” (*S*, 170). Surprisingly, Devlin’s comment on this line is that “Scotus was the first to formulate this hypothesis explicitly,” and he quotes Scotus’ claim that “the fall was not the reason for the predestination of Christ” (i.e., the incarnation), which would have taken place “even if no one other than Christ had been created.”<sup>14</sup> Devlin was a pioneer in the interpretation of Hopkins’s relationship with Scotus, and he normally proves himself a reliable guide to it. In this case, though, he appears to have the idea of Hopkins’s appropriation of the

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<sup>14</sup> Christopher Devlin, “Notes to Spiritual Writings,” in *S*, 273-321: 296.

schoolman so fixed in his mind that he simply reads Hopkins's statement as saying the opposite of what it says. Angus Easson likewise misses the mark when he reports that according to Hopkins, the historical incarnation and even Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross still would have taken place if there had been no fall.<sup>15</sup>

What Hopkins in fact thinks is that if our first parents had not sinned, Christ would have ministered to the human race from his initial, angelic incarnation. As he inhabited Mary's material form in the aeon, she would have been a partner in this work. "She would have been mother of man [in the spirit] but not daughter of man [in the flesh] and Christ would have been Son of Mary but not 'Son of Man'" (*S*, 170). His existence within her and his presence to humanity would have been the "form of a servant" that Phil. 2.7-8 speaks of him taking, but he would not have been "made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." He would have redeemed unfallen human beings in the same way that he redeems the angels, whom "he relieves from imperfection," i.e., the imperfection that all creatures have before they receive and cooperate with grace (*S*, 170). Yet it seems that Christ would not have exhibited himself to us in the same way that he did to the heavenly host. Rather, Hopkins supposes that the paradise in which Adam and Eve first lived was made out of the matter that formed Christ's body in the *ensarkosis*. Thus, "man lived at first . . . in Christ and his mother, who came afterwards to live among men" (*S*, 171). Col. 1.16-17 states that all things were created in Christ; according to Hopkins, humanity was created somewhat literally inside him. While it is not perfectly clear how unfallen persons would have been conscious of Christ, Hopkins alludes to Gen. 3.8—which reports that Adam and his wife "heard the voice of the Lord God walking in

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<sup>15</sup> Angus Easson, *Gerard Manley Hopkins, Routledge Guides to Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 134.

paradise at the afternoon air”—and identifies the one who was walking and speaking as Christ (*S*, 171).<sup>16</sup> Presumably, he imagines that while Adam and Eve lived within Christ’s “flesh,” Christ communicated with them somehow and communicated grace to them, perhaps in a way analogous to that in which a mother passes nutrients to a fetus in her womb, and would have continued doing so had they never sinned.

Hopkins, then, does not subscribe to the Scotistic thesis that Christ certainly would have become incarnate as a human being regardless of whether humanity fell through sin. On the other hand, he does once admit the possibility that Christ *might* have come as a man to an unfallen world. He speaks of Christ having been “the ideal man, God’s meaning in man realized,” remarking that though he lived the life of such a man “in Galilee and on earth he might have lived [it] in some earthly or other Paradise” (*S*, 185). In that case, “the merits of his ideal or perfect life might by concomitance have redeemed man too,” apart from the passion by which in fact he redeemed humanity in history as it has played out (*S*, 185). Perhaps the best summary of Hopkins’s position on the whole question is to be found in his own words: “The love of the Son for the Father leads him to take a created nature and in that to offer him sacrifice. The sacrifice might have been unbloody; by the Fall it became a bloody one” (*S*, 257). All created things would have been directed toward humanity’s participation in Christ’s kenotic *ensarkosis* had there been no fall. As it is, all things are oriented toward the *enanthropesis* in which Christ reconciles all things to God through the blood of his cross (Col. 1.20).

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<sup>16</sup> It is unknown how familiar Hopkins was with patristic literature, but some of the early church fathers, e.g., Theophilus of Antioch and Irenaeus, also held that Gen. 3.8 depicts the Word, the pre-incarnate Christ. This idea lost favor over time, but Hopkins is not usually drawn to an idea because of its popularity. See Theophilus, *To Autolychus* 22, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 2, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Marcus Dods, American edn. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885), pp. 89-121: 103; Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 12, trans. Armitage Robinson (New York: Macmillan, 1920), p. 82.

### Creation in Christ and Christ in Creation

This return to the Colossians hymn provides a point at which we may turn to some other themes in Hopkins's thought, considering in particular the line that declares of Christ, "all things were created by him and in him." For Hopkins, all things are created by and in Christ as they are an extension of the creation of matter that takes place in the aeonian incarnation. He first expresses that idea in 1881 (whether it developed in his mind earlier is impossible to tell), but he appears to allude to Col. 1.15-20 as early as "The Wreck of the Deutschland," which he began in 1875, and there can be no doubt that he was familiar with the hymn long before then. It is in light of the notion that all things are created in Christ, I believe, that we should read the pieces of Hopkins's poetry that a number of critics understand as proclaiming Christ to be somehow materially present throughout the world. Maria Lichtmann understands Hopkins to hold that Christ is forever being enfleshed, i.e., inhabiting matter, "throughout all the places of nature and within all the beings created to give God praise."<sup>17</sup> Philip Ballinger substantially repeats the claim that follows for Lichtmann: "The Word, the Christ, incarnates continually in the world of nature and in people as their individuating design or 'inscape.'"<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Joseph Feeney sees that it is with "fine play and good theology" that Hopkins "affirms Christ's incarnational presence in, and discoverability through, all creation" in "The Wreck of the Deutschland."<sup>19</sup> I concur with the judgment that Hopkins depicts Christ as underlying the existence of every created thing. It seems that in Hopkins's mind, all

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<sup>17</sup> Maria R. Lichtmann, "The Incarnational Aesthetic of Gerard Manley Hopkins," *Religion & Literature* 23:1 (1991), 37-50: 37.

<sup>18</sup> Philip A. Ballinger, *The Poem as Sacrament: The Theological Aesthetic of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 123; see Lichtmann, "Incarnational Aesthetic," 37.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph J. Feeney, *The Playfulness of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 82.

things being created in Christ and Christ being present in all the things that consist in him (Col. 1.17) are two sides of the same coin. However, I submit that critics have tended not to explain with sufficient clarity how Hopkins conceives of his Lord's ubiquitous presence in the world.

In notes for a commentary on Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*, Hopkins reflects on the instruction to contemplate God's presence in all things and the working of God's power in them and to understand that God does this work for the benefit of those God loves. Hopkins avers, "All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him" (*S*, 192-95, quoted at 195). This is remarkably similar to the opening lines of "God's Grandeur:"

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. (*P*, 66)

In Hopkins's mind, God is present in everything that exists, and this presence only requires a certain sensitivity to be perceived. As he exclaims of evidences of the divine in the world in "Hurrahing in Harvest," "these things were here and but the beholder / Wanting" (*P*, 70).

Here I disagree with Michael Lackey's reading of "God's Grandeur." He distinguishes between an "omnipresent" and a "resurrection" religious epistemology: "According to the omnipresent epistemology, God is perceptible at all times, and though humans may not always see God, the problem is not with God, but with the human faculty of perception. The resurrection epistemology, by contrast, holds that God is present, not at all times, but only in those 'charged' moments of resurrection" wherein

new life springs out of death.<sup>20</sup> On the first, God is theoretically always perceptible in nature because God is within every thing at every moment of its existence. On the second, God is not “natural” to nature, but acts on it intermittently to bring vitality out of destruction and barrenness. Against those who take the poem to claim that God is able to be perceived always and everywhere in the world, Lackey contends that Hopkins’s own answer to his question “Why do men then now not reckon [God’s] rod?” is that “the soil” truly is “bare” (*P*, 66) of God’s presence wherever death and decay prevail. God’s grandeur only shines forth when the natural world fulfills its capacity for regeneration, when “the dearest freshness” (*P*, 66) that the Holy Spirit has infused into things brings them back from corruption.<sup>21</sup> If we are to perceive God in the world, Lackey believes Hopkins to be saying, we must look to the resurrection impulse in it. Lackey argues that critics who read the poem with an omnipresent epistemology are mistaken because if God was everywhere at all times, then Hopkins’s resurrection metaphors would be irrelevant.<sup>22</sup>

Lackey’s distinction between religious epistemologies would likely be useful in many contexts. However, this last assertion, the key to his argument against seeing God as omnipresent in “God’s Grandeur,” assumes that for Hopkins, God’s presence to or in things is incompatible with them suffering death and destruction. But the weight of evidence from Hopkins’s writing suggests otherwise. For example, in “The Lantern out of Doors,” he speaks of death or distance “buying” persons he has encountered and then

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Lackey, “‘God’s Grandeur’: Gerard Manley Hopkins’ Reply to the Speculative Atheist” *Victorian Poetry* 39.1 (Spring 2001), 83-90: 87.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 87. The metaphors Lackey has in mind presumably include morning, as the sun returns from the death of its light on the previous evening, and the final two lines’ implied image of eggs brooded over by the Holy Ghost, symbolized as a dove.

“consuming” them in the sense that either one takes them far from sight and causes him to forget them, as “out of sight is out of mind” (*P*, 71). Yet Christ does not forget them but rather follows them wherever they go:

Christ minds: Christ’s interest, what to avow or amend  
 There, éyes them, heart wánts, care haúnts, foot fóllows kínd,  
 Their ránsom, théir rescue, ánd first, fást, last friend. (*P*, 71)

Christ is present even to those whose destination is death. As will be seen below, Hopkins expresses the same idea in “The Wreck of the Deutschland.” Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how God could be conceived as absent from anything in a world about which the poet can say, alluding to the Colossians hymn as he addresses Jesus, “*Omnia sunt in te*” (*P*, 219)—“all things are in you.” Perhaps his most direct statement on God’s omnipresence—indeed, God’s interiority to all things—is to be found in his devotional notes, where he muses, “God is so deeply present to everything . . . that it would be impossible for him but for his infinity not to be identified with them” (*S*, 128). God’s power works on things not from without but from within them, and there is no thing to which God is not present in this way. In Hopkins’s thinking, the grandeur of God resides in created matter like electricity, and it can be discharged into our minds “if we know how to touch” the objects we encounter (*S*, 195). The Jesuit writes, “God’s utterance of himself in himself is God the Word, outside himself is this world. This world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God and its life or work to name and praise him” (*S*, 129). If we are listening, we may hear the divine speaking in and through whatever we encounter and we may name it as such.

Of course, the man who penned the Terrible Sonnets knows how difficult it can be to feel God close by. However, his experience of being “[p]itched past pitch of grief” includes the frustrated expectation of the aid of God’s Spirit—”Comforter, where, where is your comforting?” (*P* 100)—rather than the belief that there is no one at hand to call on. Elsewhere he calls it a scourge to be his sweating self, but it is “God’s most deep decree” (*P* 101) that lashes him with it. In these poems God either feels distant or is near in a problematic way. But the divine presence spoken of in “God’s Grandeur” is the very thing that causes creation to be, and the genuine absence of God from any creature would mean the end of its existence.

“God’s Grandeur” laments that human beings fail to perceive God’s presence in the world. In “The Wreck of The Deutschland,” Hopkins describes what happens when he himself does perceive it:

I kiss my hand  
 To the stars, lovely-asunder  
 Starlight, wafting him out of it; and  
 Glow, glory in thunder;  
 Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:  
 Since, tho’ he is under the world’s splendour and wonder,  
 His mystery must be instressed, strssed;  
 For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand. (*P*, 53)

To “instress” something, as the word is used in this case, means to focus one’s attention on that thing and to incline toward it with one’s will. The mystery that Hopkins speaks of instressing here is in fact not simply the presence of God in general but specifically the presence of *Christ*, for the pronouns “he” and “him” in this stanza refer to Christ. Later in the poem, Hopkins describes a nun aboard the ship *The Deutschland*, which is going down in a severe storm. She calls out to Christ as she discerns him in the tempest coming to her at the hour of her death. She

Read the unshapeable shock night  
 And knew the who and the why;  
 Wording it how but by him that present and past,  
 Heaven and earth are word of, worded by? (*P*, 61)

The one whom heaven and earth are “worded by,” that is, the one who orders them, is the Word, the second person of the Trinity. The nun sees him in the storm because she recognizes that it, like all things in heaven and on earth, is “word of” him. As Hopkins declares in the preceding stanza, he who comes to the nun as she is dying is “the Master, / *Ipsa*, the only one, Christ, King, Head” (*P*, 61). These lines allude to Col. 1.15-20, where in the Latin Vulgate *ipse* appears in various grammatical cases nine times in reference to Christ, the head of the church, by and in whom all things were created and who holds the primacy in all things.<sup>23</sup>

In “Hurrahing in Harvest,” following an exultant description of the beauty of clouds he is observing, the speaker declares, “I lift up heart, eyes / Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour.” The lifting up of his heart recalls the *Sursum Corda* of the Eucharistic liturgy: “Lift up your hearts;” “We lift them up to the Lord.” It is this lifting up of his heart that enables him, when he lifts his eyes, to perceive the Saviour in the beauty of the clouds and to say that “the azurous hung hills are his [Christ’s] world-wielding shoulder” (*P*, 70). And indeed, Hopkins does not believe that that perception is just a pious act of imagination—Christ really is there to be seen. For the upward movement whereby the speaker lifts his heart and eyes is matched by the downward movement whereby the eternal Son “descends” into the world in creating it.

Christ is the mystery underlying everything that exists insofar as he is the Word or Son of God exercising in each thing the creative power that grounds and shapes its being.

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<sup>23</sup> My attention was drawn to this allusion by James Finn Cotter, *Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1972), 157-58.

Here two caveats are in order. First, it is important to distance Hopkins's concept from pantheism. As we have seen, he maintains that God's infinity prevents God from being identified with creatures (*S*, 128). In addition, the logical upshot of pantheism is that the world is not a vast array of individually distinct beings, but a series of manifestations of the being of God. As such, pantheism cannot accommodate a robust account of individuality. But individuality is of tremendous importance to Hopkins. His journals are evidence of a near obsession with observing the distinctive details that characterize things that he encounters, their "inscape." He puts the word through a range of meanings, but the sense with which we are concerned indicates the essential design that shapes a thing as a concrete individual, that which generates the external characteristics that mark the thing's uniqueness and showcase its irreducible particularity. There can be no better way of bringing out what this kind of inscape is and does—and it is precisely a be-ing and a doing, a being that *is* doing, a realization of one's essence in one's action—than the poet himself achieves in the octet of the kingfishers sonnet:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;  
 As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
 Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's  
 Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;  
 Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
   Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
   Selves—goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,  
 Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.* (*P*, 90)

Hopkins's choice of words is remarkable for the effects they produce, at times verging on onomatopoeia and thereby driving home the point he is making. For example, in "tucked string tells," with its *t*'s followed by *s*'s, one can almost hear the finger-pluck on a harp string and the hiss its friction produces, and one can imagine the string crying out *string!* Likewise, "hung bell's / Bow swung" mimics the bell's ringing, with the tongue or

clapper striking the bow on the *b*'s and the hollow reverberating *bong* echoed in "hung" and "swung," and one imagines the bell crying out *bell!* The pun created by "finds tongue" is wonderful: the tongue, being literally that part of the bell which makes it sound, metaphorically enables it to speak "its name." Inscape is a performance, the dealing-out of the "being" that dwells within the thing, of its essence and its individuality. Indeed, kingfishers, dragonflies, stones, strings, and bells "selve" very differently. And various stones, strings, and bells will sound different notes when they are tumbled, tucked, or swung. That each thing in the world enacts its existence in its own unique way is one of Hopkins's deepest convictions.<sup>24</sup> Such a conviction is completely incompatible with pantheism.

The poet's worldview has more in common with panentheism, the notion that all things exist within God and that God permeates all things. Yet calling him a panentheist would be misleading because that term is widely associated with the idea that God somehow develops along with the world, which Hopkins would surely reject. However, it would be quite accurate to label his thought *panenchrstic* if panenchristism is understood to mean the conception of all things as consisting in and being indwelt by Christ. Christ is present in things as the divine power that makes them what they are, that gives them their inscape.<sup>25</sup> He does not flatten out their individual distinctiveness; he is ultimately the

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<sup>24</sup> It may be admitted that Hopkins is "inclined to believe" that animals do not have fully developed individual selves in the way that human beings do (S,128). However, this does not mean that he thinks that apart from humanity, the essence of a species is indifferently instantiated in each member thereof—for example, that there is no difference between one antelope's act of being an antelope and another antelope's act of being an antelope. Hopkins does appear to recognize and value the individuality of members of a species. If this were not so, his grief over the felling of the Binsey poplars (P, 78-79) would be difficult to account for: it is *these particular* trees that he hates to see gone.

<sup>25</sup> The line in the kingfishers sonnet declaring that every creature cries "*What I do is me: for that I came*" contains an echo of Jesus' testimony before Pilate. When Pilate asks him about his identity, Jesus replies, "for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth" (John 18.37). It might be said that Christ causes all things to utter the truth of what they are. Relevant to this theme is a Welsh legend

cause of it. For this reason, it is advisable to qualify Ballinger's claim that Christ "incarnates continually in the world of nature and in people as their individuating design or 'inscape.'"<sup>26</sup> Rather than identifying Christ with the inscape of every creature, it would be more accurate to say that he is the ground of those inscapes. All things are indwelt by Christ, but his activity in creation is to make things to be themselves, not manifestations of him.

The second caveat to be made about Hopkins's vision of Christ's presence throughout the world has to do with the nature of this presence. Like Ballinger, Lichtmann applies the concept of incarnation to Christ's presence in creation when she writes, "For Hopkins, the enfleshment of the divine took place not only once in history but was taking place, literally, throughout all the places of nature and within all the beings created to give God praise."<sup>27</sup> Because Hopkins refers to Christ's *ensarkosis* as the Eucharist and because that aeonian incarnation provides the basis for all of creation, Lichtmann is also willing to say that according to him, "Christ's body inscapes the world as Eucharist."<sup>28</sup> Now, it is natural to liken the Son's internality to all created things to his inhabitation of matter in the *ensarkosis*, in the historical incarnation or *enanthropesis*, and in the Eucharist. However, the mode of presence that makes for his ubiquity in matter is different from the mode of presence that makes for these three things, and the difference must be carefully delineated. The Word or Son is present in everything as its Creator, the

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about the creation of the world via God's pronouncement of the divine name "I AM," an English translation of which Hopkins transcribes in his edition of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The account begins, "GOD, in vocalizing his NAME said ["I AM"], and with the Word, all worlds and animations sprang co- instantaneously to being and life from their non-existence: shouting in extacy of joy, ["I AM"] and thus repeating the name of the DEITY" (Christopher Devlin, "Appendixes," in *S*, 323-56: 354). Creation reflects its author by "proclaiming" its being.

<sup>26</sup> Philip A. Ballinger, *The Poem as Sacrament: The Theological Aesthetic of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 123.

<sup>27</sup> Lichtmann, "Incarnational Aesthetic," 37.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

foundation of its existence. In this regard, he acts in the world in the same way as the Father and the Holy Spirit; all three trinitarian persons are universally present in creation. As each is God, any one of them or the three together can be grasped as the “Ground of being, and granite of it” (*P*, 62). By contrast, only the Word “became flesh” before the angels and in human history, and it is specifically the incarnate Son whose body and blood constitute the Eucharist. That the Son does something unique among the divine persons when he enters matter in the *ensarkosis* and the *enanthropesis* is fundamental to the idea of the great sacrifice; in this “independent” act, he humbles himself in order to give glory to God the Father. But Hopkins gives no reason to think that the Son is present in the rest of created matter in any other mode than as its Creator, and that mode of presence belongs equally to all three persons in the Godhead. In fact, if the Son’s presence throughout the world as Creator were not of a different mode from his presence in the incarnation, there would be ultimately no difference between the kind of encounter Hopkins had with Christ when looking at a bluebell by which he writes that he “know[s] the beauty of our Lord” (*J* 199) and the kind of encounter he had with Christ when receiving the Host at Mass. Hopkins surely would consider it a mistake to equate these kinds of experiences. In the absence of evidence that he himself makes that theological error, it is most reasonable to interpret his theory of the Son’s presence in all matter as conforming to orthodox trinitarian thought. Thus, *pace* Lichtmann and Ballinger, it cannot accurately be said that the Son of God literally becomes incarnate everywhere in nature and in human beings.

Still, it is fitting that Hopkins frequently speaks not merely of meeting God in the world but specifically of meeting Christ. In the tradition of *communicatio idiomatum*,

things are predicated of Christ that, properly speaking, are only true of his divine nature—e.g., that he created the universe. Such statements are applied to his person, i.e., the person of the Word, who assumed a human nature in Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, Hopkins can say that he meets Christ when he means that he meets the divine Son, for it is in or through the Son that God the Father brings all things into existence (“in him were all things created in heaven and on earth”) and sustains their being (“in him all things consist”).<sup>29</sup> Also, though, Hopkins holds that all things are created “in” the *humanity* of Christ in the sense that God wills their existence along with and for the sake of his human nature; they are part of a world whose purpose is to be the theater of the incarnation, and therefore their meaning lies in him. Everything is oriented toward the creation of the humanity of Christ, since in point of fact the Son was destined to live on earth as one of us (even though he would not have been given this destiny if God had not foreseen that human beings would sin). Thus, to recognize the Son in creation is to be reminded always that he is present in the world not only as Creator but also as Savior.

### **The Redemption of Creation**

For Hopkins, Christ’s creative work is linked to what he does for the redemption of humanity. As noted above, Hopkins believes that the unredeemed are unfinished creatures, while the elect’s cooperation with God’s grace “is like a taking part in their

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<sup>29</sup> James Finn Cotter (*Inscape*, 156-57) interprets Hopkins as positing that the human nature of Christ existed in some form prior to the creation of the rest of the cosmos and that his human nature participated in making the world and in various theophanies narrated in the Old Testament. However, I think that Hopkins’s references to Christ as Creator, as the one who walked in the garden of Eden, etc. are better explained as examples of *communicatio idiomatum*. The difficulty with Cotter’s interpretation is that when Hopkins speaks of Christ doing things before his historical incarnation, he describes Christ as appearing “out of [his] pre-human being” (i.e., the material of his *ensarkosis*) and as acting “before he became man” (S, 171). Hopkins’s phrasing suggests that while he uses the name Christ to identify the subject of all of the actions of the Son or Word, he acknowledges that not all of these actions were performed through Christ’s human nature because that did not exist prior to the *enanthropesis*.

own creation, the creation of their best selves” (*S*, 196-97). The notion of salvation as the completion of creation appears in “In the Valley of the Elwy,” where the poet prays for grace to aid human beings, who for their shortcomings do not correspond to the natural beauty of Wales:

God, lover of souls, swaying considerate scales,  
Complete thy creature dear O where it fails,  
Being mighty a master, being a father and fond. (*P*, 68)

As Scotus asserts, human nature was designed to be something that the Son of God might assume, and every man and woman is created with at least the theoretical potential to attain union with God. Hopkins writes of the connection between creation and redemption in terms of an idea purportedly communicated by Christ to a girl named Marie Lataste. In a vision Christ declared to her, “Man comes from God and must return to God. There are two movements in man: that of his being, created by God, toward existence and that of his existing being toward God.”<sup>30</sup> Originally, the latter movement was given with the former as its completion, but the two were separated by human sin, and now we need the sacraments to retrieve and energize our orientation toward God. Hopkins refers to the two movements as “strains.” He supposes them to exist in angels in the same way as they do in humans, and what he says of the fall of Lucifer and his cohort applies to Adam and Eve and their descendants: the strain toward their existence, “their own more or continued being,” remained in them after their sin—as it must, for without it the creature would cease to be—but “the strain or tendency towards God through Christ and the great sacrifice had by their own act been broken, refracted, and turned aside, and it was only through Christ and the great sacrifice that God had meant any being to come to him at all” (*S*, 137-38).

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<sup>30</sup> This is my translation of the French text as it appears in Devlin, “Appendixes,” 327.

The idea of the great sacrifice is key to Hopkins's understanding of creation and redemption, and it is perhaps the clearest concept bridging them in his thought. He writes in his notes on the *Principium sive Fundamentum* of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*, "[T]he world, man, should after its own manner give God being in return for the being he has given it or should give him back that being he has given. This is done by the great sacrifice. To contribute then to that sacrifice is the end for which man was made" (*S*, 129). To give God back one's being is simply to dedicate oneself in all respects to God.<sup>31</sup> In "Morning, Midday, and Evening Sacrifice," Hopkins exhorts persons of all ages to offer to the Lord the particular gifts common to their respective stages of life: the freshness and beauty enjoyed by youth (morning), the strength and boldness of middle adulthood (midday), the "mastery in the mind" of full maturity (evening)—whatever one has one should "hold at Christ's employment" (*P*, 84). "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" has a similar entreaty at its center, but the poem focuses on the promise that comes with it. We might despair that age inevitably robs us of beauty, but we need not, for if we surrender to God's service "whatever's prized" of us—if we "[g]ive beauty back . . . to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver"—we will regain all the splendor of our youth and see it amplified "a heavyheaded hundredfold" in the resurrection of the righteous (*P*, 91-93). What Jesus says about one's life could also be said about one's beauty: whoever seeks to save it will lose it, but whoever loses it for his sake will preserve it (cf. Matt. 16.25). Lucifer failed along just these lines. Hopkins asserts that his sin was "a dwelling on his own beauty, an instressing of his own inscape" (*S*, 201). By contrast, the poet

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<sup>31</sup> Hopkins's notion of "giving back" to God is likely informed by the *Suspice* prayer of the *Spiritual Exercises*: "Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, whatsoever I have and possess. Thou hast given it to me; to thee, O Lord, I return it: all is thine, dispose of it according to thy will. Give me thy love and thy grace, for this is enough for me" (*S*, 193).

writes to his friend Robert Bridges, Christ's *kenosis*, in which he did not cling to the glory that was his divine right but chose to live as a servant, is "the root of all his holiness and the imitation of this [is] the root of all moral good in other men."<sup>32</sup> It was because of this choice, according to Paul, that God the Father exalted Christ when he ascended to heaven (Phil. 2.9-11), bestowing on the Son in his humanity the honor that always belonged to him in his divinity. Thus it is precisely through giving himself up that Christ fulfills himself. In the same way, human beings become most themselves, their own best selves, the versions of themselves that most fulfill the purpose of their creation, when they give back their being to God. That "[t]his is done by the great sacrifice" means that it is done in conformity to Christ; it is a participation in his action. Indeed, men and women not only take part in but also "contribute to that sacrifice" by reprising it in their own lives. Here the creative strain in humanity is rejoined to the redemptive strain that was always meant to complete it.

Again, Hopkins understands grace as divine activity that "carries the creature to or towards the end of its being, which is its selfsacrifice to God and its salvation." As a person cooperates with it, it is the work of "Christ in his member on the one side, his member in Christ on the other. It is as if a man said: That is Christ playing at me and me playing at Christ, only that it is no play but truth; That is Christ *being me* and me being Christ" (*S*, 154). Grace grafts a person onto the body of Christ and causes one to take part in his self-sacrifice. And as seen above, for Hopkins, that sacrifice is not only enacted in the Lord's passion. The incarnation itself—both as *ensarkosis* and as *enanthropesis*—is sacrificial in nature because it takes place by way of *kenosis*. By grace human beings are

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<sup>32</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claude Collier Abbott (London: Oxford University, 1955), 175.

made players in the drama that the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ envisions as the chief end of the cosmos, namely, the glorification of the human nature of Christ in its union with the person of the Word. People take part in that sacrifice by allowing themselves to be joined to Christ and imitating his dedication of his whole being to God's service. When they do, according to the last lines of the kingfishers sonnet,

. . . Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

In the eyes of God, the inscapes of the souls of "the just" (*P*, 90) are shaped by a Christic mold.

Crucially, this does not diminish a person's individuality as Hopkins conceives of it. He writes in his spiritual notes that "God rests in man as in a place . . . expressly made to receive him as a jewel in a case hollowed to fit it, as the hand in the glove or the milk in the breast." Specifically, God rests in a servant in "the form of a servant" (Phil. 2.7), i.e., in Christ, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1.15) residing in one who is the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1.26), "which can only be perfectly when the member" of Christ's body "is in all things conformed" to him. Hopkins affirms, "This too best brings out the nature of the man himself, as the lettering on a sail or device upon a flag are best seen when it fills" with wind (*S*, 195). Being conformed to Christ brings out the nature not merely of "man" but of "the man himself," the particular person in question. If this conformity infringed individuality, there would be a severe disjunction between the notion expressed in the octet of the kingfishers sonnet, that *myself* is the word pronounced by "[e]ach mortal thing," and the one expressed in the sestet, that when "the just man justices" or acts in correspondence with grace, he enacts Christ in himself. But

of course Hopkins intends the second part of the poem to carry forward the idea introduced in the first; the volta is precisely an intensification of the “argument” of the octet: “Í say more” (*P*, 90). The person filled with Christ is more completely himself or herself—more completely what he or she is meant to be—than “the wicked and the lost” are themselves, because human beings “are like halfcreations and have but a halfbeing” (*S*, 197) until they come to redemption.

Hopkins gives an interesting description of how God joins a person to Christ. Earlier we encountered his neologism “forepitch,” which he uses in regard to the relationship between the order of God’s intention and the order of time. He also employs the word “pitch” in a metaphysical sense to mean the determination of a person or thing as dynamically directed to a particular end. Especially when used with reference to persons, pitch is an orientation toward the fulfillment of oneself as a distinct individual. Its meaning renders it similar to Scotus’ term *haecceitas*, which means “thisness” and which Scotus uses to identify the principle of individuation in any given thing, what makes the thing *this* specific member of its species. In fact, Hopkins thinks that “pitch” and *haecceitas* are the same thing (*S*, 151), although they are not quite;<sup>33</sup> for example, a person or thing can only have one haecceity, but he or she or it can have different pitches at different points in time. Connecting this to the relationship between creation and redemption, we can compare metaphysical pitch to the pitch of musical notes. Imagine that the existence of creatures in proximity to God is measured by a musical scale, where the higher notes represent greater proximity. According to Hopkins, grace lifts a person from one pitch of being to another, higher one. For example, if I am located on the line of

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<sup>33</sup> See Bernadette Waterman Ward, *World as Word: Philosophical Theology in Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2002), 213f.

the A note, God can elevate me to the B or C or D note at any given moment. To change my pitch, though, is to alter my being in a profound way. God moves me up the scale by choosing a “better me” from the infinity of possible worlds and presenting me with the choice to become this better self, and if I accept, changing me into this version of myself (*S*, 151-56). All of the possible selves that I might be make up what Hopkins calls my “burl of being” (*S*, 155), and any individual one of these is a “cleave” out of that burl (i.e., a piece cut out of the lump; *S*, 151). “Pitch” and “cleave” are functionally synonymous in his description of elevating grace, “which lifts the receiver from one cleave of being to another and to a vital act in Christ: this is truly God’s finger touching the very vein of personality” (*S*, 158). In it, God turns the present “me” into a “me” whose cleave is joined to Christ’s burl of being. Indeed, as grace continues to work in me, God realizes cleaves from my burl in which I am more closely united with Christ (*S*, 156). Here, then, redemption is a progressive re-creation.

It has been seen that one of the meanings of “inscape” is the essential design that shapes a thing as a concrete individual. It has also been seen that Christ may be understood as the ground of each thing’s inscape because God the Son is present in all things as the creative power that causes them to be what they are. And we have noted that the work of grace is to shape a person’s spiritual inscape according to a Christic mold. Hopkins’s concept of instress, which is related to inscape, also deserves some attention in our examination of how he understands creation and redemption. “Instress” as it is variously used by the poet can mean three things. First, it might be described as the energy by which being dynamically “selves” in an individual, concrete thing, the movement in which “each mortal thing . . . goes itself” (*P*, 90). It is inscape in action,

taking place first within and for the thing itself and then for others who might perceive or otherwise be affected by it. The latter, outward moment can be described as an “outstress” from the perspective of the thing, and Hopkins does use that word for it (e.g., “The first intention then of God outside himself . . . , the first outstress of God’s power, was Christ” [*S*, 197]). As this instress-become-outstress of energy affects another, especially someone perceiving it, it makes an impression on him or her that Hopkins also calls “instress;” this is the second meaning of the term. Here instress could be said to lie between the observed thing and the observer, yet the prefix “in-” in the word is fitting because it captures the fact that something internal to the thing becomes internal to the observer. The instress, as it were, carries the inscape of the thing into the observer’s mind and stamps it there: “It is the forgèd feature [that] finds,” and thrusts an expression of the thing’s “own . . . abrópt sélf” (*P*, 80) upon, him or her. The third meaning, which we have encountered in “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” is a consciously willed act of concentration on or commitment to an object of attention. In one way, this is the other side of the coin of the second meaning. The second meaning focuses on the object’s action on the observer, while the third meaning focuses on the observer’s own action. The two senses meet in Hopkins’s remark in his journal that “what you look hard at seems to look hard at you” (*J*, 204).

Because instress in the third sense is consciously willed, it sometimes has particular moral or spiritual significance. The act of instressing can be performed for good or evil ends. For example, as mentioned above, Hopkins muses that the sin of Lucifer was “an instressing of his own inscape” (*S*, 201), i.e., a commitment to his own beauty and greatness at the expense of submission to the divine plan that he and the other

angels contribute to the Son's great sacrifice. On the other hand, a person can instress Christ, willingly seeking and committing oneself to him. The tall nun aboard the *Deutschland* exemplifies this perfectly in Hopkins's mind, as she manages to perceive Christ even in the storm that kills her and welcomes him to take her soul, calling, "O Christ, Christ, come quickly" (*P*, 59). One can in fact instress Christ anywhere because "he is under the world's splendor and wonder" (*P*, 53) everywhere as the source of every thing's innate instress, and he waits to meet, to instress himself upon, one who is ready to meet him.

On multiple occasions Hopkins reflects on Ignatius's claim that humanity "was created to praise, reverence and serve God Our Lord" (*S*, 122). The poet comments that praise is "joyfully welcoming God's manifestations of himself." And creation is filled with divine glory, charged with grandeur that makes God manifest: "This world . . . is word, expression, news of God." Therefore, the world's purpose and meaning lies in God and "its life or work [is] to name and praise him" (*S*, 129). If we have ears to ear, we will hear God speaking, and the speech that we return is praise. Our own most basic act, in which we cry, "*What I do is me: for that I came*" (*P*, 90), is most perfectly accomplished when in that utterance we confess with wonder and gratitude that it is from God that we have come. This is the beginning of our return to God, and I submit that it is for that reason that Hopkins asserts that one should place praise before reverence and service (*S*, 129). Indeed, he correlates praise with the theological virtue of hope, which directs the soul both to desire eternal happiness and to expect to attain it in heaven. Praise is put first in the trio of actions by which a person works toward salvation because recognizing God and seeking God—instressing God—sets one on the journey back to God. Reverence,

which Hopkins describes as “right mind about God” and which he associates with the virtue of faith, is necessary to plot the course of that journey. And it is in service that the journey is completed. Service corresponds to the virtue of charity or love (*S*, 129), which unites a person to God through him whose taking of “the form of a servant” provided the basis of both creation and redemption. Love, according to Ignatius, consists in a lover giving what he or she has to the beloved (*S*, 192-93), and as we have seen, Hopkins’s moral ideal is that one give back being and beauty to the God who gives it. It requires, to adapt the poet’s description of the root of Christ’s holiness, “holding [oneself] back,” not snatching at one’s own good,<sup>34</sup> self-emptying. In the text for an 1879 sermon, Hopkins declares that “sacrifice [is] the highest act of religion” and that “self sacrifice is the purest charity.” He adds, “Christ was the most religious of men, to offer sacrifice was the chief purpose of his life and that the sacrifice of himself” (*S* 14). To love is to imitate the mind of Christ (Phil. 2.5) and to conform one’s life to the pattern of his, and in this way to participate in and contribute to his great sacrifice so that one may be joined with him to God the Father, which is the ultimate purpose of human existence.

### **Appropriating Hopkins for the Present Theological Study**

Hopkins’s thought is relevant to the argument I am advancing in this dissertation on multiple points. For example, his approach to understanding the world is thoroughly marked by the judgment that every distinct, particular thing is to be recognized in and appreciated for its distinct particularity. And the meditation “On Creation and Redemption: The Great Sacrifice” makes clear that he holds that all of creation depends on the *ad extra* procession of the Son in his aeonian *ensarkosis*, which stems from his

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<sup>34</sup> Hopkins, *Letters*, 175.

eternal procession *ad intra*. This means that Hopkins's theology implies that the distinct particularity of each distinct, particular thing is ultimately rooted in the Son's self-distinction from the Father, wherein his own particularity as a person obtains. As we will see more fully in the next chapter, this thesis has been advanced explicitly by a number of contemporary theologians, probably the most prominent of them being Wolfhart Pannenberg, who has made it the cornerstone of an attempt to give a fully trinitarian account of creation.<sup>35</sup> It is a thesis that I will incorporate into my own account of the Trinity's creative work.

Perhaps the most salient points on which ideas from Hopkins can help us to move forward concern his theology of grace. As stated in Chapter One, charitology in the West has chiefly concerned itself with the nature-grace problematic bequeathed to the church by Augustine. The traditional approach focuses on the question of human capacity or incapacity, asking about the precise reasons and ways we need grace to make up for what we lack. However, this framework, which I regard as largely anthropocentric, need not be the only or even the primary one within which we talk about grace. Hopkins's thought opens an avenue to a christocentric charitology, and following that path moves us in the direction I would like to go, namely, toward a more basically *theocentric* account of grace. Again, according to him, the result of God's gracious activity in persons is that we are grafted onto Christ's body and made to take part in his self-sacrifice. We "contribute to" that sacrifice firstly by assenting to it, by allowing ourselves to be joined to him. That we also imitate the sacrifice in our own lives is really the outward form of the invisible reality of our union with him. The reality brought about by grace is that of "Christ *being*

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<sup>35</sup> See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 31-32, 58.

*me* and *me* being Christ.” Grace, therefore, is understood in terms of its *telos*, and its *telos* lies in humanity only insofar as humanity has its own *telos* in Christ. It may be useful to recall once more Hopkins’s “definition” of grace, which in fact he gives in the context of the description of its operation just quoted: it is “any action, activity, on God’s part by which, in creating or after creating, he carries the creature to or towards the end of its being, which is its selfsacrifice to God and its salvation” (*S*, 154). Here grace is not defined in relation to human capacity or incapacity but according to where it takes us, which is into conformity with Christ.

Hopkins’s interpretation of grace also helps us to meet the need to account for the consistency of God’s work in creation and redemption. Note that when he speaks of God creating the creature, he includes that action under the heading of grace. It is possible, therefore, to make grace the theological category in which creation and redemption can be linked, and I believe that it is advisable to do so. Hopkins’s statement about the word “redeem” deserves another look, as well: “redeem may be said not only of the recovering from sin to grace or perdition to salvation but also of the raising from worthlessness before God (and all creation is unworthy of God) to worthiness of him, the meriting of God himself, or, so to say, godworthiness” (*S*, 197). It is not a stretch to add that creation is redemption from nothingness—that creating is moving a thing from the mere possibility of existence into the actuality of existence. And this can be called an act of grace because (1) it is a gratuitous action on God’s part (God is not required to cause anything to exist) and because (2) whatever God does create God creates benevolently, willing goodness for the creature. Those two characteristics—being unowed and being

given out of love, i.e., given for the good of the creature—are precisely what constitute grace *as grace* when it is given in redemption.

In a recent book on ecotheology, Ernst Conradie notes that the term “re-creation” has come to figure prominently in discussions of the relationship between creation and redemption. He writes that the point of divergence in such discussions can be located by the question: should “the ‘re-’ in ‘*re-creatio*’ . . . be understood as a ‘repairing’” of this present creation or “as ‘again’ . . . which would indicate an act in which God would create anew—and where the continuity between this creation . . . in which we live and the outcome of God’s act of re-creation is not foregrounded[?]”<sup>36</sup> Conradie’s description of the point of divergence is a helpful way of framing the debate that has taken place. However, if we think of these approaches as necessarily pitted against one another and assume that we have to choose one or the other, looking to Hopkins demonstrates that we are presenting ourselves with a false dilemma.

It will be remembered that he uses the word “pitch” to mean the determination of a person as dynamically directed to a particular end—specifically, one’s orientation toward the fulfillment of oneself as an individual. I compared this to the pitch of musical notes on a scale whereon the lines for higher notes represent greater proximity to God. It was also noted that Hopkins explains God’s movement of a person from one pitch to another in terms of God choosing a “cleave” out of the “burl” of a person’s possible selves—i.e., a version of that person that might exist—that is more closely joined to Christ, presenting the person with the choice to become this better version of himself or herself, and, if the person consents, changing him or her into the new and better self. At

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<sup>36</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, “Kuyper’s Significance for Ecotheology and the Need for Further Reflection on Creation and Salvation,” in *Creation and Salvation: Dialogue on Abraham Kuyper’s Legacy for Contemporary Ecotheology*, ed. Conradie (Boston: Brill, 2011), 257-66: 259.

one point Hopkins likens this to transubstantiation insofar as it is “an exchange of one whole for another whole,” although what takes place is not the conversion of one substance into another but the “lifting . . . from one self to another self” (*S*, 151). The comparison will be misleading if it is taken to indicate that there is a complete disjunction between one version of a person and another. It must be recognized that Hopkins understands a person’s whole burl of being, all of his or her possible selves, as really belonging to the person, so that to have one cleave out of his or her burl realized instead of another is not to be changed into a totally different person but rather to be made oneself anew and differently. What Hopkins is trying to express with the transubstantiation analogy is that there is a radical difference between being pitched better or worse toward God. For example, the Saul who persecuted Christians is the same person who became Paul the apostle, but there is a tremendous difference between his pitches at these different times in his life.

Now, Hopkins’s use of the concept of possible worlds or of possible selves is coherent, but the logic about redemption as re-creation in his argument can be accepted even without resort to those concepts. If one prefers, it can be thought through in terms of God’s continuous creation. God creates me at every moment of my existence, sustaining my very being. At any given moment God can preserve me on the line of the metaphysical musical scale where I am currently located—which itself is an act of grace, for my own will that I continue to exist and that I exist in a state of greater proximity to God is not sufficient to make it so—or God can graciously elevate me to another pitch. In either case, God is creating me at whatever pitch I am on. And because I exist in time, for God continually to create me is for God continually to *re*-create me. Suppose, then, that

God does choose to lift me to a higher pitch. Here there is continuity between my old self, my present self, and my new self; God's continuous creation of me is not, obviously, a creation *ex nihilo*. Yet there is genuine novelty, too; there is a real difference between being located on a lower line of the musical scale and a higher one. To connect this to the question that Conradie highlights, my re-creation is both a repairing and a creating anew.

Our very existence is the result of grace, of God "redeeming" us from non-being, elevating us from nothingness to somethingness. God's reason for bringing us into being is that we might accept the further grace that brings us to union with God—that we might not only have life but have it more abundantly. Both in creating and in re-creating or redeeming us, God gives us an orientation toward Godself. God carries us to or toward the end of our being to the extent that we allow God to realize in us the possibility of our better selves, selves united to God through Christ.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE SPIRIT'S MISSION IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION

### **Pneumatological Dimensions of the Absolute Primacy of Christ**

At the close of the last chapter, I expounded an understanding of the operation of grace, inspired by Hopkins, that makes it the theological concept by which we may see the continuity between the creative and the redemptive work of God. For Hopkins, the prospect of that continuity has its basis in the orientation of all created things to the incarnation of the Son. I begin this chapter with a further affirmation of Hopkins' theology: without taking up his overall theory of the great sacrifice and the speculation about the Son's aeonian *ensarkosis* at the center of it, I do accept the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ, which is what Hopkins employs his theory of the great sacrifice to interpret. It is unnecessary for the purposes of my argument in this dissertation to take a position on the question of whether the eternal Son would have become incarnate had human beings never sinned. The definitive claim of the doctrine of Christ's absolute primacy, which is all that concerns us here, is that (in the actual order of the world) all of creation is oriented to and has its fulfillment in the incarnate Christ—more specifically, in his glorification.

We will see a version of this doctrine in some of the contemporary theologians whose ideas I will incorporate into the last part of my argument. While we have the doctrine in view, let me remark that a trinitarian approach to it requires us to consider what role the Holy Spirit plays in orienting all things toward Christ and causing them to find their consummation in him. If creation has its *telos* in Christ, then God speaks the creative word, "Let there be . . .," "Let the waters . . .," "Let the earth . . ." (Gen. 1,

passim), for the sake of speaking his Word into the womb of Mary, whose own “Let it be” (Luke 1.38) signals the *et factum est* of the incarnation.<sup>1</sup> If the world is made for Christ, then God’s judgment that “it was good” (Gen. 1, passim) must be seen as prefiguring his pronouncement upon Christ at his baptism, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3.17 and par.). Now, as Aldenhoven and especially Weinandy have shown, the Spirit makes possible everything that the Son is and does in the economy of salvation. In turn, our study of the immanent trinitarian relationship between the Son and the Spirit leads us to conclude that what the Spirit does in time should reflect the orientation of her procession and her person to that of the Son, the fact that she rests on him, in eternity. Therefore, we may say that the Spirit hovers or broods over the waters of creation *because* she will “come upon” and “overshadow” Mary (Luke 1.35), resting on the Son in the waters of the Virgin’s womb, and *because* she will descend upon him in the waters of his baptism to empower him for his mission. The heavens were made by the Word of the Lord (Ps. 33.6a) so that the Word might descend to earth from heaven (John 3.13), and all the host of heaven were made by the Lord’s Breath (Ps. 33.6b) so that Christ could possess that Spirit whom he conferred on his disciples by breathing on them (John 20.22).

Indeed, the disciples receive from Christ the Spirit in or by whom the world was created for Christ’s sake. This fact darkly hints at the truth that by virtue of the Spirit’s presence with and in the disciples, their creaturely existence, like the existence of all creatures, is to be consummated in their relationship with Christ (Col. 1.15ff., Eph. 1.9ff.). The reception of the Spirit is the “guarantee” of life that is to come (2 Cor. 5.4-5)

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<sup>1</sup> *Et factum est* is the phrase one finds throughout Gen. 1 in the Latin Vulgate when the story affirms that God’s creative pronouncements have come to pass.

and that has in fact already broken in upon the world of sin and death to make those who are “in Christ” “a new creation” (v. 17). As Rom. 8 suggests and as we will discuss below, even the non-human creation is destined for a transformation that is linked to the bodily “redemption” that will result from our adoption as sons and daughters (vv. 21-23). Here, however, our specific concern lies with the culmination of human existence. Eugene Rogers describes the Syriac tradition’s view of the wedding parable in Matt. 22.1-14, in which the Spirit is the wedding garment one dons for “the eschatological banquet” that is “the consummation for which all human beings were created.” In the Syriac interpretation, at his own baptism Christ leaves the garment of the Spirit in the waters to be taken up by those who come there afterward to be washed in anticipation of the wedding. Rogers focuses on the Spirit’s own action here when he writes, “The Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation is bringing up her creation over time, when she hovers also over the waters of the font.” He further comments that in the tradition we are considering, the washing of baptism serves primarily not to cleanse from sin but as a measure of joyous preparation for the feast: “Consummation is logically prior to redemption [i.e., forgiveness of and freedom from sin], as the goal specifies the species of an act.”<sup>2</sup> This is just what a pneumatological approach to the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ must affirm insofar as the doctrine concerns the destiny that God intends for human beings. If we say that the world is made for Christ and that human beings are made for him, then we must say that the Spirit creates humanity for the sake of the consummation of redemption wherein persons are fully united to Christ and are thereby glorified with him.

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<sup>2</sup> Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 138.

Yet if the Spirit's activity in the world has this end, we must ask about the activity's beginning. How does the Spirit's work in creation and redemption, i.e., in bringing about creation's orientation to and consummation in Christ, stem from the Spirit's eternal identity as person? Here we may refer again to Hopkins. One need not lay claim to the whole apparatus of his theory of the great sacrifice to take up his insight that the earthly *kenosis* of the Son—the incarnation (*enanthropesis*) and self-sacrificing life and death of Christ—has its roots in an intra-trinitarian kenotic movement of the Son out from the Father. The kenotic character of this procession consists in the self-giving of the Son, the giving of the love that he himself is, back to the Father in the Spirit. The Son holds none of this love in reserve; he does not breathe back only a measure of the Breath he has received from the Father; he eternally pours it out in return as if to empty himself of it even as the Father eternally fills him with it. The Spirit of and in whom he “empties” himself also enacts a *kenosis* of self. It has often been remarked that she is the “hidden” member of the Trinity, that she has no “face” of her own. This is because she has her whole intra-trinitarian existence in enabling the Father and the Son to gaze upon one another. Naturally, her *kenosis* is only analogous to the Son's. He pours out what belongs to him, whereas she does not give her own love to the Father but rather *is the Son's* outpoured love. Still, she so embraces her identification with this love as to be the active bearer of it to its destination, and that embrace is precisely the opposite of the “snatching” that Phil. 2.6 declares the Son likewise not to have done within the Godhead. She does not count her equality with the Father and the Son a thing for which she must be loved but pours her whole self into the act of bearing and being their gift of love to each other. The kenotic nature of the Spirit's intra-trinitarian activity is then reflected in her mission

in the world, for she is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2.28, Acts 2.17), and for her to inhabit what is finite and mortal is for her to accept an existence bound to that finitude and mortality. This is so even though, like the Son in his self-emptying, she in fact continues to transcend the world despite her immanence within it.

We should observe that the *kenosis* of both the Son and the Spirit is made possible by a *kenosis* of the Father, who in the Spirit gives himself completely to the Son—as completely as the Son gives himself to the Father in the Spirit. His self-giving or self-emptying is the source of that of the Son and the Spirit. Unlike them, however, he is not sent to the world, and so his *kenosis* does not have an extra-trinitarian dimension. It is only known through the persons of the Son and the Spirit: their missions involve a self-emptying through which they reveal themselves as persons, and in revealing their personhood, they reveal that of the Father, who does not have a mission but sends the Son and the Spirit for theirs, and who receives them and the redeemed world unto himself in the accomplishment of those missions.

The redemptive missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit are the temporal effect added to their kenotic processions. As the processions are distinct, so it is possible to distinguish the missions, even if they are linked, which they surely must be since the processions are linked. But if creation is ordered to redemption and redemption is the fulfillment of creation, then it would seem to be possible to identify distinct roles for the Son and the Spirit in creation just as we identify distinct roles for them in redemption. A number of contemporary theologians have, indeed, suggested that each person has a proper role in the one creative act that belongs to the entire Trinity. Let us consider some examples.

### **Identifying the Spirit's Work in Relation to the Son's: A Recently Developed Paradigm**

I pointed out in the last chapter that because Hopkins's theory of the great sacrifice roots the creation of the world in the eternal Son's going-forth from the Father, it implies that the distinct particularity of every distinct, particular thing stems from this procession, whereby the Son is distinguished from the Father in his own particular personhood. I also remarked that Wolfhart Pannenberg stands out among some contemporary theologians who explicitly make this very claim about the Son's generation and that it functions as the cornerstone of his trinitarian account of creation. Pannenberg's argument begins from the premise that the world's existence is entirely contingent on God's free choice; creatures exist strictly because God graciously brings them into being.<sup>3</sup> He rightly identifies this as an act of grace, for existence is a gift insofar as it is given (1) without compulsion on God's part (2) to those to whom it is not owed (3) for their good. He points out that Christian speech about God as creator always recognizes the contingency of creation, which in fact relates not only to the initial conferral of being on creatures but also to their preservation in existence. Such speech applies in the first place to God the Father, in whom all things have their origin and by whom they are sustained in being and cared for. But the goodness, care, or love by which creatures are given existence and preserved in it is in fact nothing other than the intra-trinitarian love of the Father for the Son. "The creatures are objects of the Father's love as they are drawn into his eternal turning to the Son. In other words, they become the object of the

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<sup>3</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991-1998), vol. 2, 20.

Father's love because the eternal Son is manifested in them."<sup>4</sup> It is in just *this* way that the Father loves each creature as the distinct, particular being that it is.

Pannenberg proceeds immediately from this idea to his argument that "[i]n the Son is the origin of all that differs from the Father, and therefore of the creatures' independence vis-à-vis the Father."<sup>5</sup> The Son distinguishes himself as person from the Father—that is the primal difference of anything from God the Father.<sup>6</sup> And while the incarnation is not necessary to the being of the Son as divine any more than creation is a necessary act for God, "the assuming of human existence by the eternal Son is not to be seen as the adding of a nature that is alien to his deity," either. It is, rather, "the self-created medium of his extreme self-actualization in consequence of his free self-distinction from the Father, i.e., a way of fulfilling his eternal Sonship."<sup>7</sup> The difference of Jesus as a creature from the Father is therefore linked to the differentiation of the eternal Son from the Father. Moreover, it is in the incarnate Christ that all of creation is to be consummated (see Col. 1.16, 20; Eph. 1.10). However, Pannenberg contends, "[t]he final ordering of creatures to the manifestation of Jesus Christ presupposes that creatures already have the origin of their existence in the Son. Otherwise the final summing up of all things in the Son (Eph. 1:10) would be external to the things themselves, so that it would not be the definitive fulfillment of their own distinctive being."<sup>8</sup> The Son's self-distinction from the Father makes it possible that things other than God should exist, and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>6</sup> As shown in Chapter Two, Karl Rahner makes a similar claim: "the onto-logical possibility of creation can derive from and be based on the fact that God, the unoriginated, expresses himself in himself and for himself"—that is, in the Logos—"and so constitutes the original, divine, distinction in God himself" ("On the Theology of the Incarnation," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth [Baltimore: Helicon, 1966], 105-120: 115).

<sup>7</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 325.

<sup>8</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, 25.

when creatures do come into existence, the primary fact about them is that they are not God but are related to God in their difference from God. Jesus manifests the eternal Son's difference from the Father and creation's difference from God by acknowledging God his Father to be other than himself—acknowledging and honoring him as his creator and Father—and thus “actualizes in the course of his earthly life the cosmic structure and destiny of all creaturely reality.”<sup>9</sup> By radically accepting his own finitude and proclaiming to all the lordship of God vis-à-vis every creature, Jesus “gave validity to the independent existence of other creatures alongside himself.”<sup>10</sup> In this way, the incarnate Son functions as “a structural model . . . of the determination of all created being for fellowship with God by acceptance of its distinction from him.”<sup>11</sup>

When the Son goes forth from the Father, he forms the foundation not only for the created world's distinction from God but also for its relatedness to God. This is because his own self-distinction from the Father is a necessary condition of his fellowship with the Father—after all, there could be no relationship between them if they were not distinct. Yet while this distinction is necessary for their fellowship, it is not sufficient to account entirely for it. It is only through the Spirit that the Father and the Son are united in fellowship.<sup>12</sup> When God wills to create, the Son goes forth from the Father, distinguishing himself from the Father both as Father and as God, “letting the Father

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. It is important to take note of the fact that human beings, the creatures capable of recognizing their own finitude in contradistinction to the infinity of God, do not typically accept this basic aspect of their existence. They tend instead to “live in revolt against it” and seek a godlike expansion of their being (ibid., 24). Thus, Jesus' acceptance of himself as a finite creature and of God's lordship, and his work to draw others into the ambit of this acceptance, has a corrective/redemptive function.

<sup>12</sup> Pannenberg claims in *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 that the Spirit is “the condition and medium” of the Father's and the Son's eternal fellowship (316) and indeed that she is “constitutive” of it (268). He bases this statement on the fact that in salvation history the Spirit is “the mode of God's presence in Jesus” (267) and her work in him the ground of his sonship (268).

alone be the one God” while he (the Son) becomes the Logos of creation,<sup>13</sup> i.e., the origin of everything in its otherness from God. What holds the Son in unity with the Father even when he departs the deity is precisely the Spirit. Creation is a trinitarian act, and a free one, expressing the Son’s free self-distinction from the Father, “the freedom of the fatherly goodness that in the Son accepts the possibility and the existence of a creation distinct from himself,” and the Spirit’s free act of joining the Father and the Son in agreement.<sup>14</sup>

As stated a moment ago, the Son is for created reality both the foundation of its otherness or distinction from God and its link to God by way of that very distinction. For creatures, being distinct from God and from one another means being related to God and to one another.<sup>15</sup> This is another sense in which the Son is the Logos of creation: he gathers created things into an interrelated order and “brings them together through himself (Eph. 1:10) for participation in his fellowship with the Father.”<sup>16</sup> Here Pannenberg appears to be suggesting that the Son is the origin of creaturely relatedness to God and the principle of the consummation of that relatedness in fellowship with God. However, this takes place only in conjunction with the Spirit, whose creative operation is joined to that of the Son. According to Pannenberg, she “mediates the working of the Logos in creation.”<sup>17</sup> The Spirit is, first, the principle of God’s creative presence with those whom God creates and, second, the medium by which they participate in the life of God. Her role in creation is intimately linked with the Son’s, but it bears a characteristic difference: “For the independence and distinction of the creatures relative to God goes

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<sup>13</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 114.

back to the self-distinction of the Son, but the Spirit is the element of the fellowship of the creatures with God and their participation in his life, notwithstanding their distinction from him.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, the Son’s creative operation serves, first, a distinguishing function and, second, a unitive function, the first being the condition of possibility for the second. The Spirit’s creative operation chiefly serves a unitive function, completing that of the Son’s. Yet it could also be seen as connected with the distinguishing work of the Son, for to exist as a creature at all is to be brought into being by the creative presence of God, of which the Spirit is the principle. In any case, for Pannenberg the unitive work of the Spirit in creation stems from her intra-trinitarian role of binding the Father and the Son in loving fellowship, a theme that is central to the understanding of the Spirit’s eternal person that we developed earlier, particularly in Chapter Four.

Let us recognize that in the account of creation we have just observed, Pannenberg develops his own version of the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ. Jürgen Moltmann also holds that Christ’s being “the foundation for the salvation of the whole creation” entails his being the foundation for its very existence and that if he is “all of creation’s goal,” then he must eternally have been its foundation.<sup>19</sup> According to Moltmann, this line of thinking underlies the NT statements about Christ mediating the creation of the cosmos (e.g., 1 Cor. 8.6, which declares that “all things” are “through” Jesus Christ even as they are “from” God the Father; see Eph. 1.9ff. and Col. 1.15ff.).<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the notion of the universal lordship of Jesus leads to the conclusion, in Heb. 1.2-3, that he who “made purification for sins” also sustains the universe in being “by his

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1981]), 102.

<sup>20</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 94-95.

word of power.” It is through “the eschatological experience of salvation” in him that Christians come to recognize the Son as operating protologically, i.e., as an agent of creation “in the beginning” (see John 1.1, 3), and as the divine Word and Wisdom that preserves the world in existence.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, although the OT already depicts the Spirit of God as being creatively present to the world and imbuing it with life (e.g., Gen. 1.2; Ps. 33.6, 104.29-30; Job 33.4, 34.14-15), the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit as the Lifegiver is thoroughly informed by the eschatological gift of new and eternal life given through the Spirit (e.g., Rom. 8.10ff.; 2 Cor. 5.4-5), who dwells in us (e.g. 1 Cor. 6.19). Moltmann writes, “In the operation and indwelling of the Spirit, the creation of the Father through the Son, and the reconciliation of the world with God through Christ, arrive at their goal. The presence and the efficacy of the Spirit is the eschatological goal of creation and reconciliation. All the works of God end in the presence of the Spirit.”<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that there is no difference between the orders of creation and reconciliation or redemption; it is only to claim that the two have a single end (*telos*) and a single consummation.<sup>23</sup>

Like Pannenberg, Moltmann ascribes particular roles in the creative act to the trinitarian persons. He identifies the Father as the “creating origin” of the world, the Son as its “shaping origin,” and the Holy Spirit as its “life-giving origin.”<sup>24</sup> Of course, this does not tell us much. One wonders, for example, how the “shaping” activity of the Son relates to the “life-giving” activity of the Spirit. Moltmann appears to approach

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>23</sup> Moltmann himself speaks of the need to distinguish between different modes of the Spirit’s presence, i.e., “between his cosmic, his reconciling and his redeeming indwelling,” and to distinguish the Spirit’s operation or efficacy according to the functions of creation, preservation, renewal, and consummation (ibid., 12).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 98.

Pannenberg's thesis that the Son/Logos is the source of created distinctions when he describes the divine Word ordering creation by separating one thing from another in Genesis 1: light from darkness, water from dry land, etc. He points out that "[t]hrough this separation the works of [God's] creation acquire identifiable form, rhythm, and symmetry." However, he emphasizes that such separation is not itself to be identified with the act of creation—it is only the "concrete form" that results from the act<sup>25</sup>—and thus he seems to be making a very different point than Pannenberg, whose argument is that distinction from God and from other things is constitutive of creation. Also, whereas Pannenberg focuses on the role of the Son as Logos of creation, Moltmann concentrates on the operation of the Spirit. He proceeds as the Christian tradition has done in its understanding of the Son's creative activity, allowing the eschatological work of salvation to inform conclusions about the Spirit as creator. Thus, because the Christian's primary experience of the Holy Spirit is to be reborn (John 3.5) and made a new creature (2 Cor. 5.17) in her, the first statement to be made about the "cosmic Spirit" is that she is "the principle of creativity" and of evolution for the material universe, forever introducing new possibilities into the changing world.<sup>26</sup> Second, on the basis of the fact that the Spirit creates community in spite of seemingly insurmountable divisions based on biological and cultural differences between Christians (Gal. 3.28), we may identify the Spirit as the "holistic principle" who "creates interactions, harmony in these interactions, mutual perichoreses, and therefore a life of co-operation and community" within the world as a whole.<sup>27</sup> Third, just as the one Spirit gives individual callings and gifts to the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

many who make up the church (see 1 Cor. 12),<sup>28</sup> so she is for creation the “principle of individuation” by which material beings are differentiated and the source of the impulse to “self-assertion” and “self-preservation” that allows life to evolve.<sup>29</sup> Finally, ecclesial experiences of the Spirit’s presence generate hope as we look forward to the rebirth of creation, the new heavens and the new earth, in which all creatures will live in harmony and human beings in particular will experience “direct fellowship with God.” From this we may perceive it as the work of the Spirit that all creatures are open to the future, being both “aligned towards their [individual] potentialities” and “directed towards their common future.”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the common thread in all of these aspects of the Spirit’s creative operation is that her presence in the world imbues creatures with self-transcendence,<sup>31</sup> enabling them positively to exist in spite of the nothingness from which they come and into which they would disappear if God did not sustain their being, granting them new possibilities for individual and communal development, and leading them to fulfill these possibilities such that they become what they could not on their own. We may add that this is a *gracious* operation on the Spirit’s part, for finite beings are owed neither the presence of the infinite nor the possibility (much less the realization) of becoming anything other than what they are. Furthermore, the Spirit confers on them new individual and communal potentialities *for their good*. All of the Spirit’s works in creation, like her redemptive work in the church, have the character of gift.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 101. Elizabeth A. Johnson views the Spirit’s activity in similar fashion: “The Spirit is the great, creative Matrix who grounds and sustains the cosmos and attracts it toward the future. Throughout the vast sweep of cosmic and biological evolution she embraces the material root of existence and its endless new potential, empowering the cosmic process from within. The universe, in turn, is self-organizing and self-transcending, corresponding from the spiraling galaxies to the double helix of the DNA molecule to the dance of her quickening power” (*Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit* [New York: Paulist, 1993], 57-58).

One would be remiss, though, not to acknowledge that the natural world is marked everywhere by death and tremendous suffering. Moltmann addresses this fact in connection with the idea of the *kenosis* of the Spirit. For God to commit Godself to creation in its finitude and to dwell within it as Lifegiver “presupposes a self-limitation, a self-humiliation and a self-surrender of the Spirit.” This means that the suffering of creation throughout history entails a history of suffering for the Spirit, who experiences “torment and . . . yearning in matter.”<sup>32</sup> Creation groans in its bondage to decay (Rom. 8.21-22), while the Spirit indwelling it “sighs” (v. 27).<sup>33</sup> But just as she engenders the hope of glory in believers who possess her as the first fruits of redemption (Rom. 8.23-24), so she “turns creation’s history of suffering into a history of hope”<sup>34</sup> because she makes of the universe “a system that is open . . . for God and for his future” and thus open for its own consummation.<sup>35</sup>

Denis Edwards explicitly endorses Pannenberg’s supposition that the Son is the source of creatures’ distinction and independence from God, while the Spirit is both the divine creative presence to creatures and the source of their fellowship with God and of their participation in the divine life, notwithstanding the creator-creature distinction.<sup>36</sup> In fact, he combines these two ideas about the Spirit—that it is in her that God is present to creatures as creator and that she establishes an intimate, life-giving relationship between God and them: “The Spirit . . . *creates* precisely as the one who *relates* to each creature, bringing each into communion with the Trinity,” a communion that “is the relation of

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<sup>32</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 102.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 101-02.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>36</sup> Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 126-27.

ongoing creation. Things exist only because God loves them and because the Spirit of God dwells in them (Wis. 11:24-12:1).”<sup>37</sup> By her immanent presence, the Spirit unites created things to God and relates them to each other,<sup>38</sup> “sustaining, renewing, and directing them toward their fulfillment.”<sup>39</sup> Edwards sees the Spirit’s activity of vivifying creatures and drawing them into communion with God as a reflection and continuation of her immanent trinitarian identity. On this point he cites Tony Kelly, whose thought strongly resembles Pannenberg’s. Kelly speaks of the “originating Love that God is (Father)” as expressing itself in the Word and as differentiating itself in this self-expression as Other. Out of this self-differentiation comes the universe of “endlessly differentiated ‘words,’ *logoi*, meanings,” that is, creatures with their various forms of independent existence, each having its own integrity. Yet the Trinity is constituted not only in the self-utterance that generates the Word but also in the “self-gift” that is the Holy Spirit, i.e., when “[t]he Love that has differentiated itself, and been expressed in the Other, becomes a communal activity.” This makes it possible, in turn, to perceive the dynamics whereby created things relate to one another “as a participation in the ecstasy of the Spirit, leading the differentiated, distinct, and independent realities of creation into a self-transcending communion.”<sup>40</sup>

The concept of relatedness to that which is other lies at the center of Lyle Dabney’s ktisiological pneumatology. He points out that relation is in fact indispensable to the notion of “the other” because a distinction between *x* and *y*, the otherness of *x* from

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.*, 118-22, for remarks on how the Spirit “enables creatures to interact in their own creaturely patterns of relationship” (119).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>40</sup> Tony Kelly, *An Expanding Theology: Faith in a World of Connections* (Sydney: E. J. Dwyer, 1993), 158-59; see Edwards, *Breath of Life*, 127.

y, is precisely a *relation* of non-identity between them. A thing is only “other” to us when it is related to us; without that relation, “it is as far as we are concerned, simply ‘not.’”<sup>41</sup> The Spirit who is always and everywhere present, breathing life into creation, makes us at every new moment of our existence to be related to God and to each other.<sup>42</sup> From the grouping of atoms to the bending of human lives within a social unit to a shared purpose, the Spirit is responsible for the constant yet (for us) often unforeseeable “emergence of the common in the world.”<sup>43</sup> I would add that it is the province of the Spirit to do this because within the Trinity she bears the love of the Father and the Son for each other, an act in which their respective loves become their *common* love.

Now, the fact that the commonality that emerges in human relationships is not always foreseeable and cannot be taken for granted forms an important part of Dabney’s account. Human life is marred by the sin by which we fail to engage with God or with each other or with other created things *as other*, i.e., as one who or as that which is not ourselves but with whom or with which we stand in relation: out of sloth and self-centeredness we close ourselves off to the Wholly Other, God, and to other creatures, or else we seek to make them objects to use as we please, thus treating them as extensions of ourselves.<sup>44</sup> Dabney suggests elsewhere that sin introduces such disruption into humanity considered as God’s creation that we must acknowledge a measure of discontinuity in the relationship between the creative and the redemptive work of God.<sup>45</sup> Yet he also argues there that “there is a basic continuity comprehensive of all discontinuity between creation

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<sup>41</sup> D. Lyle Dabney, “The Nature of the Spirit: Creation as a Premonition of God,” *Starting with the Spirit*, ed. Gordon Preece and Stephen Pickard (Hindmarsh: Australian Theological Forum, 2001), 83-110: 97.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-01; quoted at 101.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-08.

<sup>45</sup> D. Lyle Dabney, *Die Kenosis des Geistes: Kontinuität zwischen Schöpfung und Erlösung im Werk des Heiligen Geistes* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997), 4.

and redemption in the work of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>46</sup> Likewise, here he asserts that because “the Spirit of God is ever and anew the possibility of God, the possibility that we might yet be for God and God might be for us”<sup>47</sup> in spite of our sin and brokenness, she makes of us and sustains us as creatures who ultimately are not closed but open—open to “new possibility in the grace of the Spirit, . . . the possibility of new creation.”<sup>48</sup> It is thus that the Spirit fosters “emergent commonality” even in the midst of human beings’ estrangement from the non-human creation, from one another, and from God, anticipating her eschatological revival and re-creation of “a world of ‘others’” in perfect relation with their fellow creatures and their creator.<sup>49</sup>

It is worth noting that for Dabney, as for Pannenberg, Moltmann, Edwards, and Kelly, the creative and redemptive work of the Spirit is intimately related to that of the Word/Son. He maintains that in order to conceive rightly of the word by which God utters creation into being as order out of chaos (Gen. 1.3ff.), it is necessary to think first of the wind that blows or the Spirit who hovers over the chaotic waters (1.2); that in order properly to understand the word of command that God speaks to the man God creates in the garden (2.16), it is necessary to consider first the breath of life that God breathes into his nostrils (2.7). This is so even as it is so that one must begin to understand Jesus as the Christ by considering the Spirit as the chrism that anoints him *to be* the Christ at his conception. In creation and in redemption, the wind, breath, or Spirit that comes from God the Father precedes his word/Word and makes its/his utterance possible. According

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>47</sup> Dabney, “The Nature of the Spirit,” 106.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 108-09: quoted at 108.

to Dabney, speaking first of the Spirit is exactly what enables one to give the Word/Son of God his proper place at the center of theology.

The ideas of the theologians we have been considering have enough in common for us to speak of them as representing a paradigm. This paradigm views the Holy Spirit (1) as the trinitarian person in whom God is present to creation and inspires it with life and (2) as the one who brings about interrelation, fellowship, or communion between creatures and between creatures and God. One can interpret each of these statements as applying to both the creative and the redemptive work of the Spirit. Regarding the first: the Spirit is, to begin with, present in things as the creative power of God that brings them into being and sustains them in existence. This is true not only of biological entities but of all creatures. Thomas Aquinas rightly ascribes to the Spirit both the “perfection of life,” which applies to biological entities, and “impulse of motion,”<sup>50</sup> which applies to all matter, for motion belongs to the atoms of which all matter is composed. The Spirit is also the source of new and eternal life in the redemption of humanity, and she moves us toward God the Father—as Hopkins puts it, she graciously “carries [us] to or towards the end of [our] being, which is [our] . . . salvation.”<sup>51</sup> Regarding the second point: the Spirit weaves all created things into a web of relations with other created things so that relationship is a universal feature of existence, and in her God is present (and therefore related) to creation as its creator. She also draws human beings into redemptive communion with God—specifically, by joining us to the person of the Son so that, in him, we become objects of the Father’s love and, with the Son, we return that love in the

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<sup>50</sup> Thomas Aquinas, “Sermon and Collation of St. Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Pentecost,” trans. Peter A. Kwasniewski and Jeremy Holmes, “Aquinas’ Sermon for the Feast of Pentecost: A Rare Glimpse of Thomas the Preaching Friar,” *Faith & Reason* 30.1-2 (2005), 99-139: 109.

<sup>51</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Christopher Devlin, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Oxford University, 1959), 154.

Spirit. Thus God becomes not only our creator but also our Father. The creator-creature relationship is the ground of possibility of the Father-child relationship, and the latter is the intended *telos* of the former and its consummation. We have here, then, a clear conception of the identity of the Holy Spirit within the economy. She is the Spirit of gracious creation and the Spirit of gracious redemption. Furthermore, most of the representatives of the paradigm we have in view explicitly treat this economic identity as being rooted in the Spirit's intra-trinitarian identity.<sup>52</sup> We may say that the fact that she reposes in the Son in the immanent Trinity is the ground of her presence to or in creation—her presence to or in that which, like the Son, is distinct from God the Father—and the fact that she bears the love of the Father and the Son for each other, and thereby establishes or *is* their communion, in the immanent Trinity is the ground of her economic action of establishing networks of relation among creatures as well as the redemptive fellowship of creatures with God.

### **Colin Gunton: Perichoresis and Particularity**

Colin Gunton maintains that “if the triune God is the source of all being, meaning and truth we must suppose that all being will in some way reflect the being of the one who made it and holds it in being.”<sup>53</sup> On this supposition, we should be able to develop concepts by which to identify “universal marks of being.” Gunton calls such concepts open transcendentals.<sup>54</sup> Here I will examine and attempt to supplement his discussion of two of them, beginning with perichoresis. Gunton describes the trinitarian perichoresis as

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<sup>52</sup> Of Pannenberg, Moltmann, Edwards, Kelly, and Dabney, Dabney is the only one who does not draw this inference outright, and I have shown that the inference can be applied to what he says.

<sup>53</sup> Colin Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993), 145.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

the persons' dynamic constitution of each other's being "in what [Samuel Taylor] Coleridge called 'an ineffable cycle of Being, Intelligence and communicative Life, Love and Action.'" The persons coinhere as each gives to and receives from the others that which they eternally and essentially are. To be sure, created things cannot participate in one another's existence to this extent without detriment to their integrity as distinct things, without subverting their concrete particularity.<sup>55</sup> Yet there is a form of creaturely interrelation that is analogous to the divine persons' perichoretic interrelation, which founds the possibility of speaking analogically of creaturely perichoresis. That this form of interrelation belongs to all created realities is what makes perichoresis an open transcendental.

The material universe bears a perichoretic structure insofar as every thing in it is related to every other thing in a way that makes each thing precisely what it is.<sup>56</sup> One can support this claim through physics<sup>57</sup> or metaphysics. Sean Carroll points to the fact that the electric field of electrons enables them to interact with other charged particles and that changing an electron's ambient electric field alters its wave function. He proceeds to explain that

in quantum mechanics, the wave function for a particle will generically be spread out all over the universe, not confined to a small region. In practice, the overwhelming majority of the wave function might be localized to one particular

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>57</sup> Gunton attempts to validate the claim by citing two ideas that purportedly evince a recognition in modern physics of the perichoretic nature of the universe. However, one of them is taken from the nineteenth-century physicist Michael Faraday, whose conception of the interworking of material objects and natural laws Gunton does not show to be accepted by scientists today. The second idea posits that things that interact derive their nature from their relations to those things with which they interact, even as those relations derive from the respective things' natures. Yet Gunton does not link this to the notion that everything in the universe interacts, which he would need to do in order to justify the claim that everything is perichoretic (ibid., 171-72). Therefore, I do not find the examples he cites to be effective in making his case. I offer here what I think is a more helpful example of contemporary physics suggesting that a form of perichoresis applies to the material universe.

place, but in principle there's a very tiny bit of it at almost every point in space. (At some points it might be precisely zero, but those will be relatively rare.) Consequently, when I change the electric field anywhere in the universe, in principle the wave function of every electron changes just a little bit.<sup>58</sup>

All electrons are thus connected to all other electrons insofar as each can in principle affect any and every other, even if imperceptibly. If this is so, then all matter is connected, for all matter is composed of atoms made up of electrons, protons, and neutrons. Every material thing is therefore characterized—marked as the thing that it is—by its connection to every other material thing.

We can make a similar metaphysical argument with reference to the notion of possible worlds. At every moment one of an infinite number of possible states of affairs obtains, constituting the actual world over against the infinity of other possible ones. There is, for example, a possible world that exactly resembles this one in every detail except that, in it, at breakfast this morning I put blueberries in my cereal instead of strawberries, as I did in this one. Had I chosen blueberries, you and I and the Queen of England and all the fish in the sea and every star in the galaxy would belong to a different actual world. There is a possible world that exactly resembles this one in every detail except that on the other side of the universe, two particles that collide in both this world and that other, possible one do so a nanosecond earlier in the other one. We live in this world, not that one, strictly because those two particles take a nanosecond longer to collide than they might. Every one of us lives in the world we do because of the existence and activity of everything else in the universe, as each of us and everything else is constantly constructing the actual world out of the incomprehensibly vast array of possibilities that could be realized. And each person and each thing is at least ever so

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<sup>58</sup> Sean Carroll, "Everything is Connected," last modified February 23, 2012, <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/cosmicvariance/2012/02/23/everything-is-connected/>.

slightly different than he or she or it would have been if another possible world had been realized instead of this one. If the tree outside your bedroom window were a centimeter taller than it is, you would be a different you and I would be a different I. All things in the universe are connected to all other things in a way that makes each thing what it is.

Positing that human interpersonal relations are perichoretic in a way analogous to that of the trinitarian persons also makes sense on a level that registers with our concrete experiences. This claim requires some exploration. To be sure, its truth is not necessarily immediately obvious. Gunton remarks that historically, theology has never taken the idea of human perichoresis seriously.<sup>59</sup> And because it is correct to regard human beings as animals who tend to be governed by self-interest, we may acknowledge with Martin Luther King, Jr. that we have always conducted ourselves in accordance with the principle that self-preservation is the primary “law of life.” But King counters that it is false to assume that this principle is intellectually valid. On the contrary, he asserts, “other-preservation is the first law of life . . . precisely because we cannot preserve self without being concerned about other selves. The universe is so structured that things go awry if men are not diligent in their cultivation of the other-regarding dimension. ‘I’ cannot reach fulfillment without ‘thou.’ The self cannot be self without other selves.”<sup>60</sup> Indeed, a person cannot think or say “I” without awareness, whether at or beneath the surface of consciousness, of another as distinct from oneself.<sup>61</sup> This is most easily seen in the fact that in the first several months of a child’s life, he or she does not have a true

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<sup>59</sup> Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 168-69.

<sup>60</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community? A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991 [1986]), 555-633: 625.

<sup>61</sup> One of the great achievements of Hegel’s philosophy, and thus one of his most significant contributions to the history of Western thought, is his watershed development of the idea of self-consciousness as emerging only in concrete recognition of another’s self-consciousness.

consciousness of himself or herself as distinct from his or her mother, and it is only by coming to make that distinction that the child develops the self-consciousness that enables him or her to identify as “I.”<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, we depend on others not only for our self-understanding but also for our well-being in countless respects. King continues,

All men are interdependent. Every nation is an heir of a vast treasury of ideas and labor to which both the living and the dead of all nations have contributed. Whether we realize it or not, each of us lives eternally “in the red.” We are everlasting debtors to known and unknown men and women. When we arise in the morning, we go into the bathroom where we reach for a sponge which is provided for us by a Pacific Islander. We reach for soap that is created for us by a European. Then at the table we drink coffee which is provided for us by a South American, or tea by a Chinese or cocoa by a west African. Before we leave for our jobs we are already beholden to more than half the world.<sup>63</sup>

Human beings tend to act selfishly, yet we are also at least implicitly, and often profoundly, aware of our need for community, if for no other reason than that it is virtually impossible for any of us to live—certainly to thrive for long—without the help of others. Moreover, complete and protracted solitude almost invariably proves to be psychologically unhealthy. This is because an orientation toward sociality is a basic element of our nature as a species.

It is only by ignoring or explaining away vast swaths of experience confirming this fact that we can fail to recognize it as true, when presented with the idea, that human beings are deeply interconnected with other human beings. It requires little extrapolation from this recognition to suppose that we are connected to more people than those whose influence on our day-to-day living is concretely perceptible. And if we are, then we may in some sense be linked with *everyone*. This, of course, is the premise of the famous

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<sup>62</sup> See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 221, 226, and the works on developmental psychology cited there.

<sup>63</sup> King, *Where Do We Go from Here*, 626.

passage in John Donne's seventeenth meditation from *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, inspired by the tolling of a funeral bell: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."<sup>64</sup> I submit that these words have survived for four centuries not simply because they present an interesting idea in a beautiful way but because for four centuries they have been perceived to speak a vital truth. No one is an island—isolated, self-enclosed. All belong to a main, a whole. Nor does that whole comprise many who are entirely whole in and of themselves as components of the greater whole: each part is so joined to the others that not only the whole but also *each* part of it is affected by the loss of another; "any man's death diminishes me." It is important, as well, to observe that for Donne, the thought of being "involved in mankind" as a whole arises only after, in the opening sentences of the meditation, he considers that the catholicity of the church means that "all that she does belongs to all," and therefore, he writes, the baptism of any child "concerns me; for that child is thereby . . . ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member."<sup>65</sup> His thought follows the pattern we have been following, wherein the Christian experience of salvation provides the controlling perspective from which one views created reality in general, particularly its anthropological dimensions.

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* offers a glimpse of how a person might be conscious of his or her connection both to everyone around him or her and to the non-

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<sup>64</sup> John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions and Death's Duel*, (N.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 63.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

human world in which he or she lives. As a young woman, the titular character, Clarissa Dalloway, has a sense that in death she might somehow remain in people and places, that “on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, [her friend] Peter survived, lived in each other,” because in life “she [was] part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there . . . part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself.”<sup>66</sup> Clarissa “felt herself everywhere,” and she supposes that everyone else is also interwoven with other people and things, “[s]o that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places.”<sup>67</sup> As stated a moment ago about Donne’s passage, I believe that this captures an essential ontological truth about human existence. Every person is by definition a center of consciousness and action, but we are open centers—we are not complete in and of ourselves but open to and completed by other things and especially other persons. It is thus that we are part of, we live in, one another.

To return to and flesh out a point raised above in our discussion of King’s thought, perhaps nowhere is our connection with and our dependence on other persons more clear than in the formation of our identities. Again, there can be no “I” without a “thou.” Moreover, the specific shape that my “I” takes depends to a great extent on the meaning that “you” has when spoken to me by others. In Salman Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, the narrating character, Umeed “Rai” Merchant, remarks that the death of someone close to oneself always entails the loss of a version of oneself as one is seen and judged to be. He muses,

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<sup>66</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1925), 9.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 152-53.

Lover or enemy, mother or friend, those who know us construct us, and their several knowings slant the different facets of our characters like diamond-cutter's tools. Each such loss is a step leading to the grave, where all versions blend and end.

Which notion turns my thoughts back to Vina, to whom all my mental pathways still lead. Her knowledge of me was so deep, her version so compelling, that it held together my miscellany of identities. To be sane, we choose between the diverse warring descriptions of our selves; I chose hers. I took the name she gave me, and the criticism, and the love, and I called that discourse me.<sup>68</sup>

One can and does select from others' perceptions of oneself, giving more importance to some than others, in developing one's self-image. However, no one forms his or her identity independently; one acquires it from without at least as much as one grows it from within. Each of us has an influence—in many cases we are likely to have a more powerful influence than we are aware of—on the formation of the self-image and self-identification of others, especially those whose lives are most intimately linked with ours.<sup>69</sup>

All of this indicates that human beings are ineluctably bound up with one another, that in fact, as Gunton puts it, "persons mutually constitute each other." We do not merely enter into relationships out of choice and then become affected by other persons.<sup>70</sup> We are persons at all only because we are related, from the first moment of our existence and throughout our lives, to other persons, both human and divine. Relationships make human life possible and determine the shape that any particular life takes. We are who we

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<sup>68</sup> Salman Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (N.p.: Vintage Canada, 2000 [1999]), 510.

<sup>69</sup> It may be pointed out that ultimately each of us has a single definitive identity, the "version" of oneself constructed by the action, the perception, and the judgment of God. For example, divine forgiveness is in the first place the choice to identify us not according to our sins but according to God's claim on us as "God's own possession" (1 Pet. 2.9), as God's beloved creatures and children. A great part of a Christian's self-identification consists of the knowledge that God loves and has forgiven him or her.

<sup>70</sup> Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 169. Here Gunton quotes most of Charles Taylor's apt comment that "a common picture of the self, as (at least potentially and ideally) drawing its purposes, goals, and life-plans out of itself, seeking 'relationships' only insofar as they are 'fulfilling,' is largely based on ignoring our embedding in webs of interlocution" (*Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989], 38-39).

are only in relation with other people, and more to the point, each of us is a specific person with a specific identity because we stand in specific relations with specific other persons. In Gunton's words, "particularity in community is the fruit of our mutual constitutiveness."<sup>71</sup> It must be said in addition that some forms of relationship—e.g., relationships between family members, lovers, or friends—have the potential to be so intimate that the lives of those involved can be said mutually to contain and to interpenetrate one another. While such a mutual containment and interpenetration will never be as complete as that which obtains between the trinitarian persons, the fact that our particularity as persons is constituted only in our relations with other persons, and even more so the fact that our interpersonal relationships can be intimate enough to create a degree of mutual containment and interpenetration of lives, make it appropriate to speak of human personality as being perichoretic in a way analogous to divine personality. This is hardly surprising when we consider that humanity is created in the image of God, especially if we take the immanent trinitarian relationships as our model for understanding the concept of image. The Son is the image of the Father because he returns the Father's love in the Holy Spirit. To be an image of God the Father, then, means to be constituted as person by the reception of love from another and to be capable of reciprocating that love. In short, the image of God consists of the ever-realized capacity for receiving and giving oneself in relationship. This capacity in human beings, or better, its realization, makes our existence perichoretic.

Gunton does not attribute human perichoresis to the operation of the Holy Spirit in any special way. However, Moltmann takes a step in that direction, and we can add his insights to the tableau we are creating in dialogue with Gunton. Moltmann sees the

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<sup>71</sup> Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 170.

church as reflecting the trinitarian perichoresis insofar as the Spirit unites the Christian community “through respect, affection, and love. The more open-mindedly people live with one another, for one another, and in one another in the fellowship of the Spirit,” he claims, “the more they will become one with the Son and the Father, and one in the Son and the Father (John 17:21)”<sup>72</sup> To live *with* one another is to be in relationship. To live *for* one another is to be in relationships of giving and receiving that image the trinitarian relationships insofar as they are characterized by donative love. To live *in* one another is to be so bound up in relationship that the existence and action of one’s related “other” concretely affects one’s own existence and action in such a profound manner that in some measure it forms one’s identity, which is an even clearer likeness of trinitarian perichoresis. Moltmann explains that the church experiences the divine love in the “mutual acceptance and participation” of its members. This means that the latter is not strictly a natural phenomenon but an encounter with God in the Spirit. Furthermore, as we have seen time and again, the church’s experience of the Spirit at work in salvation—here specifically in its communal dimension—opens the way to seeing her at work more broadly in the world. According to Moltmann, any social order that “deserves the name ‘human’ in the Christian sense” will be characterized by at least a degree of acceptance and participation in the lives of others, and the farther and deeper such acceptance and participation go, the stronger will be the bonds that unite persons “divided by the perversions of rule.” He continues, “In the community of Christ it is *love* that corresponds to the perichoretic unity of the triune God as it is manifested and experienced in the history of salvation; in human society it is solidarity that provides this correspondence.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 157-58; quoted at 158.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

This solidarity, like ecclesial love, is in a particular way the product of the Spirit's operation, for it is her distinctive role to foster fellowship in spite of difference in the world just as it is her proper role to do so in the immanent Trinity.

Indeed, if, as Gunton argues, perichoresis is an open transcendental characterizing in one way or another everything that exists, then we may say that by relating all things to each other—from protons to pulsars to persons—the Spirit enables creation to reflect its triune creator who is a communion of distinct but related hypostases. In fact, I submit that there can be open transcendentals, which is to say that creation can reflect the creator, only and precisely because the eternal Son, whose generation from the Father grounds the possibility of creation and who orders the world as the Logos, reflects or images the Father. But as I argued in Chapter Four, the Son images the Father only and precisely in the Holy Spirit. To put the same point from the perspective of the Spirit's action, she enables the Son to image the Father. Just so, she enables the world, according to its finite capacity, to reflect the God who made it. Human beings are unique among creatures (at least, the creatures we know about) in being created “in the image and likeness of God,” but this should not prevent us from recognizing a lesser form of resemblance to God in the rest of creation.

Gunton does associate the Spirit in a distinctive way with the second open transcendental he identifies, substantiality. He emphasizes that in his usage, “substantiality” does not mean substance in the sense of a nature common to a species of things. Rather, he employs the word with reference to a thing in its “own proper

distinctness, concreteness and particularity.”<sup>74</sup> Any and every given thing is solidly what it is and not something else. Its being *this* thing is not ephemeral, for its distinctness, concreteness, and particularity do not admit the possibility of reducing it to another thing or blending it into a homogeneity with everything else. Rather, each and every thing is substantially *itself*. Substantiality thus has a strong affinity with the concept of inscape.<sup>75</sup>

It is what assures the particularity of particulars. For Gunton, the Spirit is especially responsible for bringing about such substantial particularity. He adopts Basil’s idea of the Spirit as the perfecting cause of creation, and he interprets perfection as the completion of creatures according to each one’s *telos*. To “realize the true being of each created thing” means, in turn, “bringing it, through Christ, into saving relation with the Father” (189). Gunton does not connect this idea with the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ, but his view aligns with the doctrine insofar as it holds that every creature has its proper ultimate end not in its self-fulfillment as an individual thing but in Christ, i.e., in relation to him. In this respect the Spirit’s work is eschatologically oriented (*ibid.*). However, it also achieves the effect in the present age of substantializing or particularizing each thing. We may say that the Spirit makes each thing to be what it is in the present in order that it might be redeemed *as the particular thing is* in the *eschaton*.

Gunton posits that the Spirit is responsible for created particularity because she is responsible for trinitarian particularity. She is not only the *vinculum* between the Father

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<sup>74</sup> Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 195. Throughout the remainder of the present section, except where part of commentary in a footnote, subsequent citations of this work will be given parenthetically in the body of the text.

<sup>75</sup> Gunton in fact uses the word “inscape” multiple times in this book, mostly in the chapter currently under discussion. However, he tends to give it a different meaning than Hopkins does. Twice in his discussion of substantiality he uses it as a synonym for “framework,” meaning the conditions of possibility for something established by the context in which it is situated: he speaks of the “framework” or “inscape . . . within which human life takes shape” (*ibid.*, 196) and of “creation form[ing] the framework, inscape, for science, art and morality” (*ibid.*, 208). In these cases Gunton’s inscape appears almost external to the thing in question, which is quite distant from Hopkins’s conception.

and the Son but also the “focus” of their distinctiveness. Unfortunately, he does not explain how she “liberate[s] them to be themselves” or why her distinctive role in the Trinity is “to particularize the *hypostases*.” His only gesture in the way of supporting his claim is an inaccurate citation of Richard of St. Victor as arguing that the Holy Spirit as the third trinitarian person is essential to the otherness of the Father and the Son from each other (190).<sup>76</sup> We can give some justification to Gunton’s idea by observing that the Father is particularized by the fact that he begets (loves) the Son in the Spirit and that the Son is particularized by the fact that he images the Father by returning the Father’s love in the Spirit—or, putting the same truths in terms of the Spirit’s action, the Spirit particularizes the other two persons by bearing each one’s love for the other, so conforming the Father as Father for the Son and the Son as Son for the Father. Yet I would add two points. First, the Father and the Son equally particularize the Spirit, for she proceeds from each of them, both in different ways—because she proceeds ultimately from the Father and derivatively from the Son—and materially *ab utroque* as from one principle and by a single respiration. Second, the Father and the Son also particularize one another because the Father makes the Son the Son by begetting him as his own image, while the Son makes the Father the Father by being begotten from him and imaging him. Therefore, *pace* Gunton, the Spirit does not properly (alone) particularize the Father and the Son as hypostases. However, she does particularize them in a distinctive way, namely, by fostering their relation of love and fellowship with one another, and in this way also particularizes herself (even as she is likewise particularized

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<sup>76</sup> He refers to Richard’s *On the Trinity* 3.19, which contains no such idea. What Richard argues there and in the preceding chapters of the book is that the Godhead is supreme in all respects and that for love to be supreme within the Godhead it must be shared among three persons. See Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity, Trinity and Creation*, ed. Boyd Taylor Coolman and Dale Coulter (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2011), 209-352: 259-63.

by the Father and the Son). This engenders the possibility of issuing a qualified agreement with Gunton's claim that "the Spirit's distinctive mode of action in both time and eternity . . . consists in the constituting and realization of particularity" (ibid.). Now, on the surface of things, and taking the claim out of context, this statement could appear to run counter to the paradigm we examined above, wherein the Spirit distinctively *unites* entities rather than founding their distinction from others, which is the creative function of the Son. But the qualified agreement with Gunton's statement that I have in mind is predicated on the supposition that in the immanent Trinity and so in the economy the Spirit realizes particularity precisely by relating things to one another. This, in fact, proves to be exactly how Gunton describes substantiality or particularity.

He begins from the fact that particularity is to be found "at the very heart of the being of God," namely, among the distinct hypostases (ibid.). The substantiality of God "resides not in his abstract being, but in the concrete particulars that we call the divine persons in the relations by which they mutually constitute one another" (191). The trinitarian substantiality is the basis of creaturely substantiality. In turn, then, created things and persons have their substantiality "*by virtue of and not in face of their relationality* to the other" (194). They are constituted what they are, not anything or anyone else, by their relation both to God and to the particular other creatures with whom and with which they are located in space and time (200, 203). This accords with what I argued above about perichoresis. I am the I that I am in large measure, indeed chiefly, because of my relations with other persons and things. To tweak my earlier example, if the tree outside my window were a centimeter taller, I would be a different possible version of myself. Much more so would I be if I had been born to different parents and

raised in a different part of the world than I was, or if I had different neighbors and friends now. My particularity is determined to varying degrees by everything with which and everyone with whom I stand in relation. However, this does not mean that I am not substantial as myself, that there is no “backbone” to the reality of my self. On the contrary, I am so solidly what I am that I help to determine the particular being of every person and thing related to me, which, in various measures, is everything that exists.

Now, even though Gunton accepts the Augustinian tradition that the Spirit is the “unifying link” between the Father and the Son (190), and even though on his account both trinitarian and created particularity derive from relationality, he does not view the Spirit as distinctively working to unite created things to each other. He states that the relation between God and what is not God comes about through the Son (179) and that “it is the Son who is the unifier of creation, the one in whom all things hold together” (206). The Son is the one who relates and unites creatures to God and to each other, and he does so not simply from outside of time but as incarnate (100; see 166, 205). By contrast, the Spirit’s distinctive action is to maintain the distinctiveness of every person and thing within the unity that he, she, or it has with everyone and everything else through Christ, so that each one’s unique particularity does not dissolve in that unity but shines through it (206). Her “characteristic function” has two aspects. The first is “to enable the world to become itself” (229), to enable each thing to be perfected in time in a limited way by being resolutely (substantially) *itself* (206),<sup>77</sup> for the Spirit gives each thing its *haecceitas* or “this-ness” (207). The second is to bring things to their ultimate, eschatological perfection. The latter in fact consists of being “in saving relation with God the Father”

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<sup>77</sup> Here Gunton writes, “The mystery of existence is that everything is what it is and not another thing.”

through Christ (189), and the Spirit “give[s] direction to” creatures by bringing them into this relation (205).

This aspect of Gunton’s argument is not as clear, and therefore is not as convincing, as it might be. One can hardly doubt that he wishes to identify proper roles for the Son and the Spirit in the economy. A major premise of *The One, the Three and the Many* is that Irenaeus’s christology and pneumatology lead to a conception of creation as God’s act of directing particular things toward perfection, which represents an advance on Greek philosophical ideas about particularity, but that beginning with Augustine, Christian theology developed a non-christological and non-pneumatological ktisiology based on the arbitrary will of God and focused on universal forms rather than on particulars, which is the root of a legion of problems that bedevil modernity (53-59). Gunton’s thesis is that if modernity’s most salient difficulties emerged from the displacement of christology and pneumatology from the doctrine of creation, then restoring them to the heart of that doctrine is an appropriate, and may prove an especially effective, way of addressing our cultural disarray. His argument therefore has a significant investment in the notion that the Son and the Holy Spirit perform distinctive roles in creation and its redemptive perfection. However, the view he gives of the proper activities of the respective persons is murky concerning certain important details. In particular, he does not make quite clear what difference there is between the Son’s role as the unifier of creation who relates all things to the Father and the Spirit’s operation of directing creatures into salvific relation with the Father through the Son. One should not expect Gunton to commit the error of *dividing* the Son’s creative and redemptive mission from the Spirit’s, but the coherence of his argument would seem to depend on those

missions being distinct—particular—in accordance with the particularity of the distinct persons, and one is entitled to wish that the missional distinction be a bit more lucid than he makes it. The deficiency in clarity about the missions is coupled with, and I suspect that in part it results from, an insufficiently detailed picture of the roles that the divine persons play in the immanent Trinity. I have already pointed out that Gunton fails to explain how the Holy Spirit performs what he identifies as her distinctive intra-trinitarian function of particularizing the Father and the Son, and I have argued that to particularize other persons does not belong exclusively to the Spirit but is an action that each trinitarian person performs in a unique way. What is more, Gunton does not ground the Son's operation as the unifier of creation in any similar role the Son might play in the immanent Trinity.

However, like his contention that perichoresis is a transcendental and therefore helps us to understand all being, especially personal being, Gunton's account of particularity as determined by relationships offers a significant contribution to a theology of creation that is controlled by a trinitarian perspective. I have connected his idea of created perichoresis with the understanding of the Holy Spirit's intra-trinitarian role developed in Chapter Four and with the understanding of her economic activity taken over from the theological paradigm I described earlier in this chapter. I have also noted the sense in which I find it helpful to speak of the Holy Spirit as particularizing the Father and the Son in a distinctive way, namely, that she fosters their loving relation to each other, and I linked this with Gunton's conception of relation as determinative of particularity. Now I wish to show how that conception enables us to develop an enriched and pneumatologically-oriented understanding of inscape as a complement to Hopkins's

conception of its filiological or christological orientation. Doing so will also provide an opportunity to relate Gunton's conception of particularity-in-relation to the paradigm of understanding created distinctness—the *sine qua non* of particularity—as rooted in the generation whereby the Son is distinguished from the Father and understanding created relationship and fellowship as founded on the procession of the Spirit wherein the Father and the Son are united in love. I will then discuss ways in which one can use the concept of instress to describe elements of the Son's and especially the Holy Spirit's activity in the economy of creation and redemption.

### **Filiological and Pneumatological Aspects of Inscape and Instress**

I have defined "inscape," in the sense of the word that most concerns this study, as the essential design that shapes a thing as a concrete individual. For our purposes, it is not necessary to determine the extent to which inscape should be reified. Its value as a concept lies in its function of identifying a thing's peculiarity and characteristicness together. Now, as I showed in Chapter Five, for Hopkins, Christ is the ground of each thing's inscape insofar as God the Son is present in the thing as the creative power that causes it to be what it is. This understanding of the activity of the Son as creator is to be accepted. In this chapter I have also taken up the view, espoused by Pannenberg, Moltmann, and others whose pneumatology forms the paradigm I described above, that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in and with creatures as their creator. There is no inconsistency between these claims about the presence of the Son and the Spirit. On the contrary, an orthodox trinitarian account of creation and redemption should affirm the truth captured in the axiom (*omnia opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt* ([all] the external works of the Trinity are undivided). No divine person is a stranger to any divine

action in the world. If any of them acted independently of the others, God could not be called one. However, the fact that the divine operations are undivided does not mean that each of the persons performs each operation in the same way. Indeed, we must deny that the persons do so, as the example of the incarnation preeminently demonstrates: while all three persons create the human nature of Jesus Christ, only the Son assumes it. The assumption of humanity is in fact proper to—that is, unique to and definitive of—the mission of the Son. It belongs to the Son to perform this act in the economy because it corresponds to his trinitarian identity. As he images the Father in the Godhead, so he makes the Father “visible” through the humanity of Christ (John 14.9; see 1.18) insofar as the Father dwells perichoretically in the revealing Son and insofar as the Son reveals the Father’s glory (John 1.14; see 17.4-5, 22, Heb. 1.3a). As the Father expresses himself in the Son as *Logos endiathetos*, so he expresses himself in the Son as the incarnate *Logos prophorikos* (see Col. 1.19, 2.9). It is because God the Father expresses himself precisely in the Logos that Rahner rightly argues that if God is to reveal Godself in an incarnation, God can only do so in the person of the Logos/Son. The Father attains his distinction as a person in the distinction of the Son from him. Both he and the Son are realized as persons in their differentiation from one another. And because the Spirit proceeds in the begetting of the Son, her person and her procession being oriented to his, the Son’s self-distinction from the Father is the ground of the Spirit’s distinction from the Father (and from the Son). Thus the Son is the focal point of intra-trinitarian distinction and personal self-realization. It is for that reason that we should see the Son as the ground of that substantial particularity of created things that Hopkins calls their inscape. It is because of the Son’s creative activity in them that they cry, “What I do is me: for that I came.”<sup>78</sup> He

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<sup>78</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn., ed. W. H. Gardner

inscapes creation because he inscapes the humanity of Christ that he assumes when he realizes himself in the world. After all, every created thing exists for the incarnate Christ and is intended to attain its perfection through and in him.

What, then, of the Holy Spirit, who is also creatively present in the world and who, because the external works of the Trinity are undivided, must be understood to be involved in the formation of created inscapes? As we have seen in our discussion of Gunton, a thing's particularity does not obtain in isolation from other things. Rather, all things are what they are partly because of their relations to other things. This instructs us to perceive that a thing only has a particular inscape in relation to other things that have different inscapes. Indeed, particular things are inscaped, given their characteristic shape, by other things. Let us consider a passage from Hopkins's journal. He writes, "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it. It[s inscape] is [mixed of] strength and grace, like an ash [tree]."<sup>79</sup> It is *this particular* bluebell that has captivated the poet, yet he only grasps its inscape in relation to that of an ash tree and his thought about it is only complete when he further relates its beauty to that of Christ. And while that is a fact about his perception rather than about the flower itself, it points toward the important truth that the flower does not exist in a vacuum. This bluebell is what it is and has its distinctive characteristics because of other things: it is descended from other bluebells; it has grown in a certain patch of soil that contains certain nutrients: it has absorbed a given quantity of water and sunlight. Much more are the characteristic features of a person's being and action shaped in relation to others and dependent on the being and action of others. We

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and N. H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University, 1967), 90 (italics removed).

<sup>79</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey (London: Oxford University, 1959), 199 (brackets in original).

may attribute this aspect of inscape to the creative activity of the Spirit, just as we attribute the distinctness of a thing and its inscape from all other things and their inscapes to the creative activity of the Son. The Son inscapes things by causing them to be what they are in distinction from God and all other creatures, and he does so because he is the focal point of intra-trinitarian distinction. The Spirit inscapes things by engendering and sustaining their relations to other things, and she does so because she is the *vinculum caritatis* between the Father and the Son.

As we move from here to the idea of instress, it will be useful to examine one of Hopkins's most thoroughgoing reflections on the work of the Holy Spirit, which is found in his commentary on the "Contemplation for Obtaining Love" at the end of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*. There Ignatius states that love ought to show itself *in operibus* (in actions) and that it consists in a lover's gift or communication of what he or she has to a beloved.<sup>80</sup> Although Ignatius does not connect this thought with the Holy Spirit, Hopkins remarks that she is seen *in operibus* because, in the words of the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus," she is "*Digitus paternae dexteræ*" (roughly, "the finger of the right hand of the Father").<sup>81</sup> He notes, as well, that she is "the communication or the communion of the Father and the Son" and their "bond and mutual love,"<sup>82</sup> i.e., she is what they give to each other as lover and beloved. Because of this, he concludes, she is what "Veni Creator Spiritus" calls the "font of [divine] love"<sup>83</sup> for humanity, and because of that she is, in turn, the bond of love between God and us. The person carrying out the *Exercises*, in

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<sup>80</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Christopher Devlin, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Oxford University, 1959), 192-93.

<sup>81</sup> This concept probably derives from the parallel between Matt. 12.28 and Luke 11.20. Jesus identifies the source of his power over demons as the Spirit of God in the first text and as the finger of God in the second.

<sup>82</sup> Hopkins, *Sermons*, 195.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Hopkins quotes the Latin of the hymn ("*Fons . . . caritas*").

theory a retreatant, considers all that God has given him or her and God's desire to give him or her Godself.<sup>84</sup> Hopkins sees that God gives Godself in the person of the Holy Spirit, that she is "the bestowal of himself by God on man," and thus he identifies her with uncreated grace and with the principle of human participation in the divine nature.<sup>85</sup>

Of course, this highest of God's gifts is anticipated by innumerable mundane ones, on which score the exercise directs the retreatant to recognize that God indwells all creatures and "works and labours for [him or her] in all created things on the face of the earth . . . as in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, flocks, etc."<sup>86</sup> Hopkins again thinks of the person of the Spirit as laboring thus, just as she intercedes for us with inexpressible groans.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, as he explains, the divine power is especially attributed to her, and because "[i]t is by communication of his power that God operates the likeness of himself in things," we do well to understand that it is the Holy Spirit who is communicated to us through the things created for our benefit. It is she who makes the human person a temple in whom Christ may dwell as in a vessel expressly shaped for him.<sup>88</sup> The final point of the contemplation is that every good thing that belongs to humanity—every created participation in the divine attributes that makes for human capabilities and virtues—flows from God like light from the sun or waters from a spring.<sup>89</sup> Here once more Hopkins thinks of "Veni Creator Spiritus," which speaks of the Spirit as "*Fons vivus, ignis*" ("font of life and of fire"). This, in fact, is where he writes the words I have quoted previously,

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<sup>84</sup> The *Exercises* were originally intended for use on spiritual retreats by Jesuits, who of course are all male, but today the text is frequently used by laypersons, male and female alike.

<sup>85</sup> Hopkins, *Sermons*, 195.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 195. Hopkins quotes the Vulgate translation of Rom. 8.26 in a note immediately preceding the paragraph in which he gives a sustained pneumatological interpretation of the contemplation.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-94.

“All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him.”<sup>90</sup>

It is scarcely possible for a reader of Hopkins’s poetry not to be reminded by this of the opening lines of “God’s Grandeur,” which we also visited in the last chapter:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed.<sup>91</sup>

God is present in all things as grandiose love (in the original sense of “grandiose” as “immense”), as loving grandeur, and shines forth from them like light or fire, streams forth from them like drops of oil. Indeed, just as the above passage from Hopkins’s commentary on the Contemplation for Obtaining Love connects God’s presence and operation in things with the Holy Spirit, so “God’s Grandeur” concludes that

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things . . .  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.<sup>92</sup>

The one whose hovering over the waters of creation has perennially been compared to a bird’s brooding over her eggs is continually at work bringing about life in the world. Neither does one have to reach far to link the words of Hopkins’s *Exercises* commentary to his “kingfishers” sonnet: “kingfishers catch fire” and “dragonflies draw flame”<sup>93</sup> because the Holy Spirit within them “give[s] off sparks and take[s] fire,”<sup>94</sup> stones tumbling down wells “ring”<sup>95</sup> because the Spirit causes them to “ring and tell of” the God

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>91</sup> Hopkins, *Poems*, 66.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>94</sup> Hopkins, *Sermons*, 195.

<sup>95</sup> Hopkins, *Poems*, 90.

who dwells in them,<sup>96</sup> of the Christ who “plays in ten thousand places.”<sup>97</sup> In the last chapter I interpreted this poem as depicting inscape as the performance of one’s existence as a particular thing, the “deal[ing] out [of] that being [that] indoors each one dwells,” the “going” of one’s essentially individual self.<sup>98</sup> This aspect of inscape reflects what I have identified in this chapter as distinctive of the creative work of the Son, that is, the establishment of each thing in its particularity insofar as it is distinct from everything else. Let it be remembered that for Hopkins, Christ’s presence in a thing does not diminish but rather makes possible its concrete individuality. Even so, when, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the grandeur of God flames out from created things, it does not eclipse those things but illuminates them.

Here we may also observe that the kingfishers sonnet’s description of things being themselves reflects the first meaning of “instress” that I described in the last chapter, namely, it is the energy by which being dynamically “selves” in a given thing. Instress in this sense causes a thing to perform its inscape first within and for itself, as I stated above. Since this instress renders the thing the distinct entity that the thing is, we may see it as a concept by which to describe that which the Son’s creative activity distinctively accomplishes. Yet I noted that this movement of “inscape in action” entails an outstress of the thing’s being that becomes an instress to one who encounters it, bearing the thing’s inscape into the mind of the other and stamping it there. A person’s eye catches the catching fire of a kingfisher in flight, a person’s ear takes in the ringing of a stone, the “telling” of a tucked string, a bell’s speaking of its name,<sup>99</sup> and the person is instressed by

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<sup>96</sup> Hopkins, *Sermons*, 195.

<sup>97</sup> Hopkins, *Poems*, 90.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

these things. This second kind of instress then creates the opportunity for a third kind to take place, viz., that in which a person contemplates what he or she has encountered. What transpires in such a moment is a connection between things that, I have argued in this chapter, it is the Spirit's distinctive creative work to foster because doing so extends into the economy of creation the intra-trinitarian movement wherein the Holy Spirit unites the Father and the Son in mutual love. Furthermore, if a person knows that God is present in creation, then it is possible that being instressed by and in turn willingly instressing some created thing will involve being instressed with a *sense* of God's presence in it—the person may be instressed not only by the thing itself but also by the grandeur of God, and he or she may instress God in return. If the Spirit is the principle of divine presence to creation, we might indeed expect that she would seek to impress persons with a sense of that presence during the moments of connection between things and persons that she brings to pass.

It is not too much to say that an encounter wherein a person is instressed by and instresses something may contribute to the culmination or perfection of both the thing's and the person's being. As we have seen, in "Hurrahing Harvest" Hopkins describes a scene of clouds and hills in which he discerns the presence of "our Saviour" and remarks, "these things were here and but the beholder / Wanting."<sup>100</sup> What were there but lacking a beholder are evidences of the divine in the world, but those are to be found precisely in these clouds and hills. And because all things in creation exist for humanity's sake—just as humanity exists for Christ's—it can be said that these clouds and hills fulfill their *telos* when they do service to a human being, as they do by instressing Hopkins in this poem

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 70.

with the presence of Christ or the thought thereof.<sup>101</sup> Of course, the non-human creation cannot intentionally do such things. Yet we may suppose that the Holy Spirit fosters encounters for people with the non-human world and with other people wherein a person is instressed by the other, both in its/his/her alterity from that person and in its/his/her relation to that person, as a substantial particular. It seems likely that the Spirit frequently inspires moments in which we sense the connection between ourselves and other creatures, especially other people, because she (i.e., her intra-trinitarian operation) is the ground of possibility of all connections between creatures and because her redemptive work consists of uniting us to Christ and, through him, to one another. These inspired moments of recognition of connection may in fact be seen as a kind of *preparatio evangelica*, for they make one conscious of a reality that Christian thinking interprets as a mystery rendered intelligible in the light shed by the revelation of the triune God. For our purposes, it is most important here to grasp a corollary of the fact that created things attain a measure of their perfection in the events wherein they instress a person through their outstress of themselves. Human beings attain their natural end in acts of knowledge and love in relation to other creatures, especially their fellow human beings. They attain their supernatural end in the knowledge and love of God that are perfected in eschatological union with God. Truly to know and/or to love a thing or a person is to make the thing or the person internal to oneself. To know in more than a superficial way, and certainly to love, calls for an act of attentiveness that Hopkins refers to as “instress” in the third meaning of the word that we have identified. Thus, instressing persons and things is essential to the attainment of one’s natural end, and instressing God is essential

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<sup>101</sup> On instressing someone with a thought, see Hopkins, *Sermons*, 202.

to the attainment of one's supernatural end, i.e., one's perfection as a creature made in the image of God for communion with God.

Scripture and the Christian tradition clearly teach that the Holy Spirit brings us to knowledge and love of God in Christ and that this is the work of grace. Therefore it is fitting to speak of the Spirit as instressing the soul with grace and enabling its act of instressing God and the acts of praise and service to God that follow therefrom. I showed above that for Hopkins, grace is God's act of moving a creature toward its end in Godself, and in doing so re-creating it at a higher "pitch" of being, one more closely united with Christ and the disposition of his whole person to self-sacrifice to God. Hopkins writes that this gracious act is "divine stress, holy spirit, and, as all is done through Christ, Christ's spirit."<sup>102</sup> One could wonder whether "holy spirit" means the person of the Holy Spirit, both because the words are not capitalized and because Hopkins consistently refers to the third person of the Trinity as the Holy Ghost rather than as the Holy Spirit. However, he goes on to call elevating grace "God's finger touching the very vein of personality,"<sup>103</sup> and we have just seen that he identifies the Holy Ghost as the finger of God. Indeed, he soon states explicitly that elevating grace is particularly the gift of the Spirit, bestowed at Pentecost. In it she inhabits a person, making possible his or her self-sacrifice through and in imitation of Christ.<sup>104</sup> The Spirit in fact operates within the person to perform the good that the person cannot perform on

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<sup>102</sup> Hopkins, *Sermons*, 154.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* Hopkins associates "creative grace" with the Father. This was the original grace given to unfallen humanity, which stimulated the will to do good (with no hindrance from a human nature given over to the power of sin) and "destined the victim [the recipient of grace] for the sacrifice," i.e., the dedication of his or her life to God. The Law, the prophets, and the teaching of Christ brought "'medicinal,' corrective, redeeming / grace." Especially as it is given by Christ, this grace is also "mortifying" and has the effect of "bringing the victim to the altar and sacrificing it." The Spirit's elevating grace, in turn, is "the acceptance and assumption of the victim of the sacrifice."

his or her own. Hopkins says in a sermon on the Spirit's role as Paraclete that, upon coming to the disciples at Pentecost, the Spirit cheered them on "not like Christ by his example from without but by his presence, his power, his breath and fire and inspiration from within; not by drawing but by driving; not by shewing them what to do but by himself within them doing it."<sup>105</sup> The Spirit is present and active within the believer as "divine stress," the transformative goodness and power of God at work to accomplish God's good pleasure (see 1 Cor. 15.10, Phil. 2.13), which is to conform him or her to Christ. Even without reifying instress as Hopkins does, we can recognize its value as a concept by which to convey theological ideas. In the last chapter I pointed out that instress makes what is internal to a thing internal to something else. We can say that the Holy Spirit herself acts as the instress of God on human beings. In the elevating grace that effects redemption, she, who is internal to the Godhead, acts within them as the principle of the power that moves them toward their supernatural end, which is unity with Christ and, through him, with the Father.

### **The Holy Spirit's Proper Mission in Redemption**

That the Holy Spirit unites us to the Father by uniting us to Christ is a crucial point because, as I will explain, I regard this as a basic description of the Spirit's proper activity in the economy of salvation. At the beginning of the previous section I briefly discussed what is proper to the Son in his mission, namely, the assumption of the created humanity of Jesus. In my view, it is important to understand the mission of the Spirit as including an element proper to her, as well. If each of the missions of the Son and the Spirit has an element that is unique to and definitive of it, it must be because it is the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 74.

nature of a divine mission to reflect the *proprium* of the person who is sent. This supposition lends a particular intelligibility to the concept of mission as a procession to which has been added a temporal effect. The procession of the person defines his or her *proprium*, the property that distinguishes him or her from the Father and from the other proceeding person. Because the mission *is* the procession in the conditions of created space and time, it is only natural that the mission would be characterized in some way by the person's *proprium*. Indeed, I submit that if the economic Trinity is the symbol (Rahner) or the image (Fred Sanders) of the immanent Trinity, as I have contended it is, then we should expect the missions of the Son and the Spirit to reflect their unique personal properties unless there is a compelling reason to expect otherwise. If, on the other hand, there is nothing proper to the Spirit in her mission, then we are left to explain why this is so when there *is* something proper to the Son in his.<sup>106</sup> Three possible avenues of explanation come to mind. First, one could suppose that the mission of the Son is different in kind than that of the Spirit because his person is different in kind from hers. Now, it is true that the Son's person differs from the Spirit's insofar as he is an image of the Father, whereas she is not. Yet I see no reason why this difference should account for the Spirit not performing a unique function in salvation history. Second, one could argue that in truth there are not two missions, that there is a single mission in which the Son becomes incarnate by the power of the Spirit and later the Spirit continues his earthly ministry and broadens its reach. In short, the one mission belongs to the Son, and the Spirit merely serves it. However, while the Spirit's work is certainly oriented to Christ's (just as her procession is oriented to the Son's), she herself is nonetheless sent (John

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<sup>106</sup> Even if one takes the position held by many since Augustine (and argued against by Rahner) that any of the divine persons might have become incarnate, there is of course no doubt about the fact that only one of them has done so.

14.26, 15.26; Luke 24.49; Gal. 4.6). By definition, therefore, she has a mission,<sup>107</sup> and it is not in every respect identical with the Son's, for only the Son becomes incarnate. If the Spirit has a mission that is not identical with the Son's, then there are by definition two missions, which brings us back to the question that might have been obviated on the supposition that there is only one. A third way of attempting to explain why the Son but not the Spirit should have a proper mission would be to claim that what makes the Son's mission unique is that he unites himself to created reality, which the Spirit does not do. But is this the case? Is the Holy Spirit not united with those who receive and are sanctified by her?

I concur with David Coffey's argument that she is and that one must understand how she is in order to grasp the unique and characteristic feature of her mission. According to Coffey, the Son's union with the human nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit's union with human beings in grace constitute what is proper to their respective missions because in each case the divine person takes a created reality into an immediate relationship with himself or herself. In each case this immediate relationship between humanity and one person of the Trinity mediates relations to the other two persons. Coffey understands the union between a created spirit and a trinitarian person as an operation of quasi-formal causality,<sup>108</sup> in which God communicates Godself to humanity and takes up humanity into Godself. The created spirit must be taken up into the Trinity, Coffey asserts, through a subjective ontological identification with a single divine

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<sup>107</sup> Her being sent (*mittitur*, from *mittere*, "to send") with a purpose to fulfill means precisely that she has a mission (*missio*, also from *mittere*).

<sup>108</sup> On this Rahnerian concept, see Chapter Two, n. 7 above.

person.<sup>109</sup> While it is not clear to me that he sufficiently justifies his claim that this is the *only* way for humanity to be joined to the Trinity,<sup>110</sup> he is certainly right to conclude that Scripture and the patristic witness leave us in no doubt that humanity identifies with the person of the Son. The human nature of Christ is identified with him through the hypostatic union, while all other human beings participate in Christ's sonship through the grace that makes us sons and daughters in the Son. As Coffey points out, this is an important distinction. The hypostatic union makes Christ in his human nature the Son in his own right, for the Son identifies himself as person expressly in Christ, in whom there is no personhood other than the Son's. Christ *is* the Son from the moment of his creation. By contrast, the rest of us are strictly human persons, and our human personality is not supplanted by divine personality even when we are re-created in grace and adopted by the Father. We differ from Christ in that "we never become sons and daughters in our own right" but rather "remain permanently and exclusively dependent on the Holy Spirit for [the] ontological status" of being identified with the Son.<sup>111</sup> In both the incarnation and uncreated grace, a divine person is joined to humanity as a "form" exercising quasi-formal causality on the creature and assimilating it to himself or herself. The first case is a more radical assimilation, the Son acting as "substantial form" on the humanity of Christ insofar as he provides Christ's very person, while the Holy Spirit acts as "accidental form" on human persons, which means that she joins them to herself in a way

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<sup>109</sup> David Coffey, "Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?" *Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2005), 34

<sup>110</sup> Coffey contends that it is inconsistent for Rahner to argue, on one hand, that quasi-formal causality takes its object (humanity) into its ground and, on the other hand, that in this causality all three divine persons have "distinct *objective* relations . . . to the graced soul" (ibid., 33). Coffey holds it as evident that such relations keep the graced soul "external to its trinitarian ground" (ibid., 34), but I fail to see exactly why this is so.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 34.

that ontologically transforms them without displacing their personhood.<sup>112</sup> Coffey also distinguishes the two by saying that the incarnation brings about *unity* of the Son with the human nature of Christ, whereas sanctifying grace results in *union* between the Holy Spirit and individual Christians. This union with the Spirit mediates our union with the Son, through which, in turn, we have our union with the Father.<sup>113</sup>

According to Coffey, all three trinitarian persons extend the sanctifying grace that re-creates a human person.<sup>114</sup> This work falls in the category of efficient causality, to which all strictly *ad extra* operations of the Godhead belong, and as such must be attributed to the Trinity as a whole, for its external operations are undivided. However, the Father's and the Son's act of sanctification takes place through an act of sanctification that is unique to the Spirit. This is because the efficient causality by which the three divine persons re-create a human person is a "deficient mode" of the (quasi-)formal causality by which the Spirit assimilates that person to herself. What is deficient in efficient causality is "the mode of presence of the cause"<sup>115</sup> as compared with that of formal causality: a cause is always said to be present in some way in its effect, but "whereas efficient causality involves the production of an effect ontologically distinct from the agent and therefore a movement *away from* the agent, formal causality bespeaks the effectuation of ontological union with the agent and therefore a movement *into the agent*."<sup>116</sup> Re-creation only affects the human person, but assimilation is firstly a self-determination of a divine person that has an effect on the human person. In re-creation,

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 40, see 106.

<sup>113</sup> David Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986), 227-50: 237.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Coffey, "Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?" 30.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 28.

all three divine persons are present to make a human person a new version of himself or herself, i.e., one subjectively united to Christ, so that he or she becomes a son or daughter in the Son. In the assimilation that occurs in sanctifying grace, the Holy Spirit opens herself to a human person and takes possession of him or her. Coffey explains that “[t]he re-creation takes place in view of the possession and culminates in it” and that while the former logically precedes the latter, the two “form a single and continuous process.”<sup>117</sup> But if, as he also claims, “whatever sanctification is given by the Father and the Son is mediated by the unique sanctification imparted by the Holy Spirit,”<sup>118</sup> it seems that it would be more accurate to say that the re-creation takes place *precisely in* the possession. The possession, then, logically precedes the re-creation, which in turn enables the human person to be assimilated to (in the sense of “made similar to”) the Holy Spirit, i.e., sanctified. This is true to the conception that Coffey takes over from Rahner of formal causality containing efficient causality as its ground of possibility. Re-creation, a work of efficient causality, grounds the possibility of assimilation, a work of (quasi-)formal causality, yet the former is contained within the latter, being a deficient mode thereof insofar as it involves a less radical mode of presence. That the Spirit’s possession of the human person should logically precede the re-creation by the whole Trinity is also what we should expect if, as Coffey argues, the Spirit’s proper work in grace stands parallel to the Son’s proper work in the incarnation. The creation of Christ’s humanity by all three divine persons is logically posterior to the Son’s assumption of that humanity, and while the creation renders the assumption possible, the assumption encompasses the creation. In the words of Augustine that Coffey himself cites, the human nature of Christ is “created

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 32.

by the assumption itself.”<sup>119</sup> Just so, the graced soul is re-created by the Holy Spirit’s taking possession of it.

This view of the matter dovetails with the understanding of grace I have advocated in this dissertation in two important ways. First, it clarifies the appropriateness of and the need for an approach to charitology that is theocentric (as distinct from, though not in opposition to, being anthropocentric) and pneumatologically focused. Grace is only the work of God in humanity because it is first God’s *self*-determination to assimilate God’s creature to Godself, and that firstly in the person of the Holy Spirit. The re-creation of the redeemed person is the *ad extra* effect of the *ad intra* operation of God opening Godself in the Spirit to union with that person. Second, viewing the Spirit’s possession of a person as logically prior to and comprehensive of the re-creation of the person makes more sense than the alternative—seeing the re-creation as preceding and culminating in the possession—if we wish to make the best of the idea advanced by Hopkins that a person is re-created anytime God graciously elevates him or her to a new “pitch” of being in which he or she is more closely united with Christ. In truth, it seems that there are not degrees of union with Christ—for that union simply either exists or does not exist—but only degrees to which one’s life bears the fruit of one’s union with Christ. It is possible for one to progress in such degrees as God elevates him or her by re-creation to higher pitches, i.e., those in which God’s purpose for him or her is more fully accomplished. I would argue that this prospect also depends on one’s cooperation with grace, something susceptible to increase and decrease. Now, if the Spirit’s possession of a person were the *result* of re-creation, then it would be patient of progression. However, a

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<sup>119</sup> Augustine, *Contra Sermonem Arianorum* 8, Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina*, 217 vols. (Paris: n.p., 1844-55), vol. 42, 688; Coffey, “A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit,” 235.

divine self-determination does not occur in degrees, and the Holy Spirit's taking possession of a person is first an *ad intra* operation. Its created effect *ad extra*, in the creature, may unfold over time according to the person's participation in the work of grace. But a creature's action cannot effect a divine self-determination, and so the Spirit's possession of a person cannot be the *result* of that person's re-creation.

Returning to Coffey's argument, we must observe why he holds that the Holy Spirit is the trinitarian person who exercises quasi-formal causality on the graced person. He gives two explanations. The first warrants quoting at some length. In grace, he writes, all three divine persons

are present and united to the created spirit, but in the only way they can be, that is: in the case of the Father, as bringing forth the Son and the Holy Spirit; in the case of the Son, as receiving from the Father and bringing forth the Holy Spirit; and in the case of the Holy Spirit, as receiving from both the Father and the Son. Notice that alone of the three, the Holy Spirit in his personal property is the Godhead in purely receptive mode. Because of the necessary correspondence of the economic and the immanent Trinity, he is the only one who can be, and is, communicated in absolute (unqualified) immediacy to a created spirit, which itself can only be understood as pure receptivity to God; and he it is, therefore, who mediates the other two persons, in a relative (qualified) immediacy. Therefore his unique property, here seen at work in grace, merits and requires that he alone of the three divine persons be acknowledged as quasi-formal cause in his relation to the created spirit.<sup>120</sup>

Coffey is undoubtedly correct to maintain that the immanent relations between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit determine the manner in which they must be present and united to a created spirit. And while I have described the Spirit as communicating the Father's love to the Son and the Son's love to the Father and have acknowledged that love to be identical with the divine essence, I have also noted that she does not give the love as her own possession like the Father and the Son do; rather, she is active in communicating their reciprocal love insofar as she embraces, as the definitive act of her

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<sup>120</sup> Coffey, "Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?" 37-38.

person, being their mutual possession, the one in whom their love for one another is communicated. Because she does not give the essential divine love as her own possession, I can agree that her “personal property is the Godhead in purely receptive mode.” However, when Coffey states that the Spirit’s pure receptivity entails that she alone can be communicated to a creature whose being is defined by its pure receptivity to God, he fails to account for the fact that the Son is, to use his words, “communicated in absolute (unqualified) immediacy” to the human nature of Christ, which is a created spirit. The divine self-communications to humanity in the Son and in the Spirit are different—the Son is hypostatically united only to the humanity of Christ, while all other humans are possessed by the Spirit in a non-hypostatic union—but each is an absolutely (unqualifiedly) immediate communication to humanity in its pure receptivity to God. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Spirit’s pure receptivity in the immanent Trinity makes her the only person capable of such a communication in the economy.

Coffey’s second explanation why it is the Holy Spirit who exercises quasi-formal causality on the graced person is much stronger. He rightly asserts that the principal economic function of the Spirit is to unite us to the Son and that sanctification consists precisely in this, for it is a union with “the Son of God who is ‘called holy’ (see Luke 1:35),”<sup>121</sup> or, to employ another translation of that verse, through the union with Christ brought about by the Spirit, we come to share in the holiness of him who is “called the Son of God.” This, for its part, serves to unite us to the Father, “the all-holy one and source of all holiness.”<sup>122</sup> The Spirit dwells in us in order to join us to Christ and, through him, to the Father just as, in the immanent Trinity, she reposes in the Son in order to join

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

him to the Father.<sup>123</sup> I would use this point to bolster Coffey's claim that only the Spirit can be the one to do what she does in the graced person: it is proper to her to dwell in the Father's adopted sons and daughters because it is proper to her to dwell in his eternal Son (and thus to rest on the Son in his incarnation). The Spirit could never become an incarnate image of the Father because she is not the Father's eternal Image, but she—and only she—can indwell a created person in a way that conforms him or her to the incarnate Image because she—and only she—eternally indwells or rests upon the Image and conforms him as the beloved and loving Son of the Father. Indeed, in uniting us to Christ, the Spirit causes us to participate in and imitate his filial reception and return of the Father's love, which of course takes place in the Spirit herself; one can in fact say of the incarnate Son that what he receives and returns *is* the Spirit.<sup>124</sup> Coffey points out that inasmuch as she is the mutual love of the Father and the Son, it is her *proprium* to be possessed. And because it is, when she takes possession of us in redemption, we take possession of her, as well. There are therefore two aspects that are proper to the Spirit's sanctifying work because they are rooted in her immanent trinitarian identity: (1) she indwells believers in order to make them sons and daughters in the Son in whom she eternally dwells or reposes and (2) by effecting their union (a subjective ontological identification) with the Son, she causes them to receive and possess her as the Father's love and to love the Father in return in conformity with the Son's act of reciprocating that love.

Before we move on, two points of clarification are in order. First, while the Son's return of the Father's love is his spiration of the Spirit, our participation in and imitation

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 103; Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," 236.

of Christ's act of loving the Father in the Spirit does not, of course, cause the Spirit to proceed from us. The divine can only proceed from the divine. Accordingly, the Spirit does not proceed from the Son's humanity but from his divinity. The love with which the Son *in his humanity* loves the Father (and us) is a *human* love, although because of the hypostatic union that love is joined to and undergirded by the love with which he in his divinity loves the Father (and us), which is the Holy Spirit. Our act of loving the Father (and each other) is a participation in and imitation of the Son's *human* love. Our love can never be anything but human. That will remain true even in the *eschaton*, when our union with Christ is consummated and perfected, and our love for God and each other with it. For us to love with a divine love would erase our distinction from God as creatures. However, these necessary qualifications being made, it is vital to understand that we participate in and imitate Christ's human love precisely because "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5.5), that we love with our human love because God the Father "first loved us" (1 John 4.19) in the same Spirit in and by whom he loves his Son. In our union with Christ, we receive the same love (the Spirit) that he receives, and it is just this that empowers us to love the Father and each other. Indeed, it must be said that the Spirit bears Christ's human love in unity with his divine love to the Father and that, insofar as she unites us to Christ and causes us to participate in and imitate his love, she also bears our love to the Father. Even though our love is a human act, it takes place within the ambit of the intra-trinitarian love between the Father and the Son:<sup>125</sup> since the Spirit unites us to Christ, whose humanity is united to the eternal Son, we are loved as he is loved—i.e., with the divine love that is borne by the Holy

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<sup>125</sup> See Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," 236-37; "*Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?*" 103.

Spirit—and we love as he loves—i.e., with a human love that is borne by the Holy Spirit jointly with the Son’s divine love for the Father.<sup>126</sup>

Second, to affirm that there is a proper mission of the Holy Spirit is not to deny the validity of the notion that she and the Son have a joint mission. For example, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* rightly declares that after Pentecost their “joint mission . . . [is] manifested in the children adopted by the Father in the Body of his Son: the mission of the Spirit of adoption is to unite them to Christ and make them live in him.”<sup>127</sup> When we say that both the Son and the Spirit have proper missions, we recognize that each one acts in the economy in a way that reflects his or her immanent trinitarian identity, for each one’s mission is the extension into created time and space of his or her eternal procession. The Son’s and the Spirit’s missions include features that are unique to each because each one’s procession is unique. When we say, on the other hand, that they have a joint mission, we recognize that their missions are no more separated than their processions are. Indeed, the Spirit’s mission is oriented to the Son just as her procession is, and the Son’s mission depends on and culminates in the operation of the Spirit just as his procession does. The one redemptive work that the two persons accomplish in the world is to unite human beings to the Father. Through the Son and in the Holy Spirit we return to and attain union with the Father who is the ultimate origin of our being—the one journey of *exitus* and *reditus* that reflects the one inner-divine movement in which God self-differentiates and returns to Godself, i.e., in which the Father begets and receives the Son in the Spirit.

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<sup>126</sup> Once more, however, there is a difference between the way our human love is joined to the Son’s divine love for the Father and the way Christ’s divine and human loves for the Father are joined. To borrow Coffey’s distinction mentioned above, Christ’s divine and human loves form a *unity* because both belong to his person, but our love is only brought by the Spirit into *union* with the Son’s divine love.

<sup>127</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 690 (New York: Image, 1995), p. 199.

## Conclusion

Let us conclude by revisiting the major themes of the present chapter with this conception of the Holy Spirit's proper role in redemption in view. Dumitru Staniloae asserts that in our union with Christ and our possession of the Spirit, "we form, in a certain sense, one person with Christ" and yet, on the other hand, that "because, unlike Christ, we do not possess the Spirit in his hypostatic fullness, but only as much as we can contain and as corresponds to the person of each of us, the Spirit simultaneously accentuates in us what is specific to us as persons."<sup>128</sup> For Staniloae, then, the Spirit's accentuation of our personal particularity is in a sense the result of a negative, viz., of the fact that we do not enjoy a hypostatic union with a divine person. We are not divine hypostases as Christ is, so the Spirit can only make us grow as *human* persons.<sup>129</sup> However, I wish to emphasize the point that Staniloae makes next, which is that our union through the Spirit causes us precisely to become more fully ourselves.<sup>130</sup> This is so because our *telos* as created persons consists in being joined to Christ. Each of us fulfills the ultimate purpose of his or her being when he or she is united to the one in whom and for whom all things are made. Eugene Rogers comments that in joining us to Christ, the Spirit does not wash out our particularity because God desires communion with us as the discrete creatures we are, and it is essential that we be able to "*use* that particularity to participate in our community with God."<sup>131</sup> Uniformity, understood as lack of diversity, is incompatible with community, which means the incorporation of persons into a body

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<sup>128</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, *Theology and the Church*, trans. Robert Barringer (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary, 1980), 27.

<sup>129</sup> See *ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>131</sup> Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 65.

despite their differences. The community of the redeemed is the body of Christ so richly conceptualized by Paul (e.g., Rom. 12.4-5, Col. 1.24, 1 Cor. 12). The Spirit forms that corporate body just as she formed the body of Christ in Mary's womb (Matt. 1.18, Luke 1.35). She rests on it just as she descended and remained on Christ at and after his baptism (see John 1.32, Mark 1.10 and par.). She fills and leads it just as she filled Christ and led him into and back from the wilderness (Luke 4.1-2, 14).

That each of us reaches his or her particular destiny by being incorporated with others reflects our nature as creatures whose being is defined both by our distinction from God and from all other things and persons—a distinction grounded in the Son's distinction from the Father—and by our relation to God and to all other things and persons, notwithstanding our difference from them—a relation grounded in the Holy Spirit's linking of the Father and the Son in mutual love. Our particularity, our inscape, is shaped by both of these, for all things are substantial, in Gunton's terminology, "*in virtue of and not in face of their relationality* to the other."<sup>132</sup> As I discussed in my coverage of Dabney's theology, sin is the denial and destruction of our relationality with others and with the Wholly Other, God. Gunton is correct, then, to describe the reconciliatory dimension of redemption as "the reintegration of the disintegrated, the restoration by the Spirit of a directedness to the other rather than to the self." He continues, "The need for reconciliation, the redirection to community, is . . . the reason why ecclesiology must be at the centre of our understanding of the human condition."<sup>133</sup> I agree with this, and ecclesiology is central to the theological anthropology I have put forward here insofar as I hold that union with Christ is the end for which all human beings are created, and the

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<sup>132</sup> Gunton, *The One, the Three, and the Many*, 194.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 217 n. 5.

earthly form that that union takes is incorporation into his body, the church. Indeed, I stated a moment ago that this incorporation reflects the nature of our creation as relational beings, but it is necessary to add that ecclesiality is the model and final cause of all human relationality. It is the form of community that all others are intended to serve the building of, and in principle it is the form that best encompasses all others for the accomplishment of God's purposes for the world.<sup>134</sup>

Finally, we must connect the Holy Spirit's redemptive work with the other open transcendental identified by Gunton that we discussed above, perichoresis. There is a form of interdependence and interpenetration of life, analogous to the reciprocity of relation and coinherence between the divine hypostases, that characterizes humanity simply according to our creatureliness, especially according to our being created in the image and likeness of God. Yet Jesus' "high priestly" prayer in John 17 indicates that Christians may participate in the very communion wherein the Father and the Son dwell in one another, i.e., the divine perichoresis. Jesus prays for his disciples and future believers, "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us" (v. 21). At the same time he asks that they be made perfectly one even as he and the Father are one (vv. 22-23). This perfect unity between those who belong to Christ will result from his presence in them: "I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one" (v. 23). Thus, as Emmanuel Durand points out, Christ functions as "an intermediary link between the disciples and the Father"<sup>135</sup>—the Father dwells in the Son and the Son in the

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<sup>134</sup> I say "in principle" because, since the church is made up entirely of sinners and since God certainly works through many other means than through the church, the church is not *in fact* always the form of community in which families, friends, neighbors, and others most cohesively come together and most effectively do the will of God.

<sup>135</sup> Emmanuel Durand, "Perichoresis," *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in trinitarian Theology*, ed. Robert Woźniak and Giulio Maspero (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 177-92: 190.

disciples, and therefore it is through the Son that the Father unites the disciples to each other and to himself. Because the Father is in the Son, the Son's being in them means that the Father is in them. And if the Father and the Son are in the disciples, then they are in the Father and the Son.

Of course, as finite beings, human persons can never mutually envelop and coinhere in other human or divine persons to the extent that the divine persons do with one another. However, because our union with Christ the incarnate Son is real, through it we enjoy something that surpasses the form of perichoresis we possess in virtue of our creation, which is merely analogous to the trinitarian one: in Christ we truly participate in the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son. Now, as I have argued, it is the Holy Spirit who brings about our union with Christ, and we may interpret two statements in his high priestly prayer in light of this idea. First, as we have seen, "glory" may be taken as a circumlocution for the person of the Spirit,<sup>136</sup> and Jesus speaks of giving his disciples the glory that the Father has given him "so that they may be one" (v. 22). The Father joins the Son to himself by giving him his Spirit (his glory), and when the Son gives the Spirit to believers, they are united to him, and through him to the Father and to each other. Second, in v. 26 Jesus tells the Father that he has made and will make the Father's name known to the disciples, "so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." Here Christ's presence in the disciples follows upon the Father's love for him being in them, just as in v. 23 the Father's presence in them follows upon Christ

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<sup>136</sup> Even if the Fourth Evangelist did not himself associate "glory" with the Spirit, it would be appropriate for purposes of theological interpretation to import such an association from elsewhere in the Bible to a reading of this text. In point of fact, however, one may deduce a connection between glory and the Spirit in John from 7.39b: "as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

being in them. But the Father's love for the Son is the Holy Spirit.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the Spirit's indwelling of believers mediates the Son's presence in them because the Son dwells perichoretically in the Spirit, and the Son's presence brings them that of the Father who dwells in the Son. It is as Gregory of Nyssa says: "just as anyone who catches hold of one end of a chain pulls also on the other end, so one who *draws the Spirit* (Ps. 118.131) . . . also draws through him the Son and the Father."<sup>138</sup> As we draw the trinitarian persons, we are drawn into their perichoretic communion and joined to others united to Christ. We become one in Christ and thus in the Trinity, and we do so because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one. The trinitarian perichoresis thus proves to be the model and final cause of ecclesiality<sup>139</sup> in the same way that ecclesiality is of all other forms of human relationality.

In the first chapter I mentioned Basil's idea of the Holy Spirit as the "perfecting cause" of creation who completes rational beings by conforming them to the image of the divine Son made flesh.<sup>140</sup> In this chapter I have discussed Gunton's argument, which Basil probably inspired,<sup>141</sup> that the Spirit's distinctive work in the world is to direct created things both to a limited perfection in time—making them "substantial particulars"—and to an eschatological perfection in relation to Christ. My own thesis follows a similar line of thought. To restate it in light of the details covered in this study: the Holy Spirit completes or perfects human beings as creatures by fostering our relationships with other created things, especially other persons, and above all with the

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<sup>137</sup> See *ibid.*, 191.

<sup>138</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, "Letter 35 To Peter His Own Brother on the Divine Ousia and Hypostasis" 4k, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, trans. Anna M. Silvas (Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 247-59: 254.

<sup>139</sup> Durand, "Perichoresis," 192.

<sup>140</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* 16.38, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 8, p. 23.

<sup>141</sup> Gunton refers to Basil's notion more than once: *The One, the Three, and the Many*, 182 n. 2, 189-91.

triune God, a gracious operation that has its final form in redemptively drawing us into the relation of love between the Father and the Son that the Spirit eternally fosters within the immanent Trinity. We are created for Christ's sake, as the doctrine of his absolute primacy teaches that all things are, and we attain our ultimate end in the union with him that returns us to the ultimate source of our being, the Father. For this reason, our creation is oriented to our redemption, and everything that the Creator Spirit does belongs to her office as the Spirit of grace. In the Trinity she proceeds from the Father as the love in which the Son is begotten, a begetting that is completed by the Son's return of that love in the Spirit; she conforms the Son to be the Father's Image as the one in whom the Son receives and reciprocates his Father's love, as the bearer of that love and thus as the gift of the Father and the Son to each other. In the economy she bears to creatures who have no claim on it a gift that God has no internal compulsion to give but that God gives them for their benefit, the gift of life, an outpouring into the world of the selfsame love whose exchange makes the trinitarian persons who they are. Indeed, the Spirit who bears this gift consummates her creative giving when she is herself possessed by her creatures as the principle of the *eternal* life that Christ came to impart, "that [we] might have it abundantly" (John 10.10). By uniting us to him and conforming us to his image, the Spirit perfects our creation and makes us most ourselves.

## CONCLUSION

Christian pneumatology has perennially recognized the Holy Spirit as creator and sanctifier. I maintain that one should understand her creative activity as a gracious operation insofar as God confers existence on creatures not because of any internal or external compulsion but freely and for the creatures' benefit. Moreover, on my account the Spirit's work in creating humanity is oriented toward her work in redemptive sanctification. This is implicit in the fact that God creates human beings so that we might enjoy communion with God, but it becomes particularly clear if one views the relationship between creation and redemption through the lens of the doctrine of the absolute primacy of Christ. According to it, the being of all things is predicated on the incarnation and glorification of Christ as its model and final cause. The doctrine has its scriptural roots in texts such as Col. 1.15ff., Heb. 1.2-3a, Eph. 1.3-10, and 1 Cor. 3.21b-23. In the history of Western theology it has been championed most famously by Duns Scotus and other Franciscans. It deeply informs the thought of Gerard Manley Hopkins, and it appears in a certain form in the work of a number of recent and contemporary theologians. Its pneumatological import is that all that the Holy Spirit does in creation has its *telos* in the glorification of Christ. Humanity's purpose, therefore, is to serve that glorification, and the final form of our service is participation in it, which the Spirit's sanctifying operation in us secures.

In dialogue with some of the same theologians who subscribe to the heart of the doctrine of Christ's absolute primacy, I have argued that the Spirit's creative and redemptive activity reflects the distinct features of her eternal person and her proper role within the Trinity. Her work in the economy is the image, in Fred Sanders's terminology,

or the symbol, in Karl Rahner's, of her immanent trinitarian identity. My account of that identity attempts to accommodate as much as possible of the NT data concerning the relationships between the divine persons, including the numerous ways in which the Holy Spirit is shown to be responsible for bringing about the sonship of Jesus, a theme that has not been given its due in the history of trinitarian theology. Redressing this shortcoming in the tradition calls for a reconsideration of the idea that the Spirit is entirely passive in the eternal acts that constitute the Trinity. That idea forms a common element in Western filioquist and Eastern monopatrism triadology. However, it can, and I contend that it should, be jettisoned not only on biblical grounds but also for the sake of the consistency of trinitarian doctrine with its regulative principles, especially the equality and inseparability of the divine persons. Yet the effort to render trinitarian theology more consistent with the fundamental principles of the church's universal teaching is precisely what makes an argument such as mine potentially ecumenically viable. Indeed, in order for my account of the interpersonal relations within the immanent Trinity to be judged successful by as broad a Christian audience as I hope for it to be, it will need to be judged to be consonant with catholic orthodoxy. That is why I have made a point to show the compatibility of my proposed understanding with both the Orthodox teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone and the Council of Florence's detailed exposition of the doctrine of the *Filioque*.

My proposal draws heavily from Thomas Weinandy's development of the thesis that the Father begets the Son in the Spirit and from David Coffey's treatment of the return model of the Trinity. I have attempted to integrate the best elements of each of them into an original conception of the immanent trinitarian relations. Part of it takes

inspiration from an argument made by Didymus the Blind, and it makes extensive use of the patristic ideas that the Son is the Image of the Father, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son, that she reposes in the Son, and that she is the treasure that the Son possesses as Treasurer and the gift of love that he and the Father bestow upon one another.

To summarize my proposal once more: The Father simultaneously generates the Son and spirates the Spirit, each of whom comes forth from him as a person in possession of the divine nature. He remains perichoretically immanent in each of them as they proceed from him, which means that he spirates the Spirit from within the Son and generates the Son from within the Spirit—or, as I have put it, he spirates the Spirit through the Son and begets the Son in the Spirit. As the Son and the Spirit come forth, the Spirit reposes in the Son as the Father's love for his Image, which in my conception means the same thing as the statement that the Son is begotten in the Spirit. The Father loves the Son in the person of the Spirit, for she is in herself that very love, which is identical with the divine essence. Yet it is also legitimate to say that she actively bears the Father's love to the Son. The Son receives this love in her as gift or treasure. And as the Image who reflects the Father, he returns this same love. That is, he breathes back to the Father the love breathed into him. He does so by communicating to the Spirit the love that is identical with the divine essence—the same love that he receives in the Spirit from the Father—so that she may bear it back to the Father. In this way, as the doctrine of the *Filioque* teaches, the Spirit receives the divine essence from the Son and proceeds (*procedit*) from him.

It is true that the Holy Spirit “already” possesses that essence from the Father, just as the Son “already” possesses it when the Father communicates it to him in her. However, her reception of the essential love from the Son definitively shapes her subsistent being or person because her *telos* is not only to repose in the Son but also to return him, in the form of his reciprocal love, to the Father from whom he goes forth. Indeed, she reposes in the Son precisely in order to reclaim him for the Father. Therefore, for the Spirit to receive the essential love from the Son is, in a real sense, for her to receive her subsistence from him. She is a person when she comes forth (ἐκπορευόμενον) from the Father, but her subsistence or personhood is perfected when she bears to the Father the love that the Son communicates to her so that she will bear it as his filial gift. Her procession is ordered to the Son’s generation, and this makes her logically third in the trinitarian *taxis*: Father-Son-Holy Spirit.

The Son’s return of the Father’s love is, in fact, a continuation by the Son of the Father’s own act of spirating the Spirit as love. Therefore, the Father who formally is the sole principle and *unus spirator* of the Spirit makes the Son to be, with him, materially one principle of the Spirit by joining him in his one spiration. The Spirit who proceeds (ἐκπορευόμενον) immediately from the Father proceeds (*procedit*) mediately from the Son. The movement occurs in two distinct moments (from the *in fieri* perspective) constituting a single continuous act of the Father and the Son, performed by each in the way that is proper to him, i.e., by the Father as source (πηγή) of the Son and the Spirit, and by the Son as Image of the Father. The Spirit, too, acts, bearing the Father’s love to the Son and the Son’s love to the Father. In this way she unites them in their otherness

from one another, fulfilling the fatherhood of the Father and the sonship of the Son, i.e., bringing them to their perfection as persons.

Now, it is only by expressing himself in his Word that the Father attains his hypostatic being. It is precisely because he generates the Son that he is the particular person he is. Indeed, it is because he has an Other that he is a person at all in the Christian sense of personality, for personality includes relationality, and relationality requires alterity. The *telos* of the Son's generation is to establish this difference within the Godhead. In turn, it is because there is a difference between the Father and the Son that there can be a world of creatures that are different from God. The Son is the Logos of creation, and his presence in it grounds its irreducible distinction from its triune creator. He is thus also the foundation of the substantial particularity of each thing, the resolute "this-ness" that differentiates it from every other thing and makes possible its unique inscape.

But the Father speaks his Word, begets his Son, precisely in love for him. He begets him as his own Image, and he possesses him as his own, only in love. Further, the Son only images the Father—that is, he only is and acts as the Son—by reciprocating his Father's love. The Son therefore belongs to the Father because they love one another. And this love is borne by the Holy Spirit. She enables him to image the Father, and thereby binds him to the Father, in love. It is in that sense that the *telos* of the Spirit's procession is to effect a divine *reditio in seipsum*, a "return" of God to Godself from the self-differentiation established by the Son's generation. In turn, it is because the Holy Spirit fosters fellowship between the Father and the Son, in spite of their hypostatic difference from one another, that creatures who are other than God and other than one

another can enjoy fellowship or community with God and with one another. The Spirit is present and acts within the world in order to build relationships between creatures and their creator as well as amongst themselves. Every creature's substantial particularity or inscape is in fact shaped as much by such relationships as it is by the creature's unicity in distinction from every other created thing.

The Spirit indeed makes us human beings to be fully ourselves by relating us to one another, to other creatures, and to God. She accomplishes that in its truly proper form when, re-creating us by the instress of grace, she “carries [us] to or towards the end of [our] being,”<sup>142</sup> which is salvific unity with Christ, the enfleshed Logos by, in, and for whom all things exist. Human beings are created in the image of the Image of God, but in the re-creation that is redemption, we image the Image more closely because our adoption as sons and daughters causes us to participate in his relation to the Father. That is, the Holy Spirit unites us to the eternal Son so that with him, in her we receive the Father's love and with him, in her we love the Father in return. Even in this life, that union begins to repair and complete our partial and sin-damaged relationships with the world and especially with other persons. In it we also transcend the form of perichoresis intrinsic to our being as creatures and come to share in the mutual indwelling of the Father and his Son. This is the destiny for which we exist. Our creation is informed—formed from within—by its directedness toward redemption. The promise of the possibility of redemption thus shapes what it means for us to be creatures. Our *exitus* from God as non-divine entities takes place for the sake of a *reditus* in which we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1.4). And the Holy Spirit graciously operates through that entire

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<sup>142</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Christopher Devlin, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Oxford University, 1959), 154.

drama, from beginning to end, just as she is the Breath in which the Father speaks his Word and the love in whom that Word does not return to him empty but accomplishes the purpose for which he sends it (Is. 55.11).

In this dissertation, then, I have put forth an understanding of the Holy Spirit's person that attempts to shed light on her work in creation and redemption. She is the Lifegiver, the trinitarian person in whom we receive mortal as well as everlasting life, because she is the trinitarian person by whose action the Father and the Son give each other the love that characterizes the divine life. Of course, the notion that the Spirit binds us to God because she is the *vinculum amoris* between the Father and the Son is by no means new. What is new here is, first, the way I have described the Spirit's role as inner-trinitarian link and, second, my use of that idea of her eternal identity to ground a coherent picture of her creative and redemptive activity—one that synthesizes the arguments of a number of recent and contemporary pneumatologists (Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann, and others on one hand and Colin Gunton on the other). On these two counts my project offers a small contribution to the ongoing renaissance of trinitarian theology and that of pneumatology, both of which have been marked by the search for a clearer conception of what is unique about the Holy Spirit among the divine persons, her *proprium* or *propria*, in the immanent Trinity and in the economy.

The argument of this study lies open to expansion on at least two fronts. First, the mutual love theology central to Thomas Weinandy's and David Coffey's trinitarian models forms the backbone of my own account because it is well suited to articulating (1) the Holy Spirit's indispensable place in the acts that constitute the persons of the Trinity and (2) her distinctive role in creating and redeeming humanity. As stated above, Coffey

thinks that the return model that employs the mutual love theology is more comprehensive and more ecumenically useful than trinitarian theologies that focus only on the procession model as interpreted through the psychological analogy. He cites Bernard Lonergan's theology as an example of the latter. However, an account like Weinandy's or Coffey's or mine that focuses on the mutual love theology may benefit from further attention to insights derived from the psychological analogy. The search for such insights would do well to turn to Lonergan, whose development of the analogy is arguably the current summit of the tradition of which it is a part.

Second, I have here performed an exercise in what I think of as a more theocentric, or less anthropocentric, charitology than we are used to doing in the West since Augustine. In order to focus on the Spirit's identity as gracious creator and sanctifier, I have intentionally left aside many questions about humanity as recipients of grace. What kind of aptitude, if any, does humanity intrinsically possess for receiving the divine? Is such an aptitude given with human nature or introduced into the soul by grace? How do we cooperate with grace by our will, if indeed we do? And if we do, to what extent is it within our own power to do this? Do we depend on God to move us to cooperation? If the present theocentric charitological study were to be supplemented by an anthropocentric one, the latter would need to consider questions such as these.

Finally, I must address a question to which the idea that union with Christ is the goal of human existence easily gives rise. One may well ask whether commitment to this idea requires one to hold that, in short, non-Christians are failed or incomplete human beings. That claim could doubtless be found objectionable. However, the question itself elides the important point that no one attains his or her ultimate end, the finalization of

his or her creation, in this life. Christians are incomplete creatures, as are all other human beings. Furthermore, it remains an open question whether and how persons who never experience explicit faith in Christ in their lifetimes may attain union with him thereafter. It is not known that only those who claim him as Lord now will be found at his side in the kingdom to come. “The πνεῦμα blows where it wills,” unseen (John 3.8), and it may be that the Spirit of grace reaches many without our knowing it.

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