The Trinitarian Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons

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by

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ABSTRACT
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This dissertation is a study of the Trinitarian theology of Irenaeus of Lyons. With the exception of two recent studies, Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, particularly in its immanent manifestation, has been devalued by scholarship due to his early dates and his stated purpose of avoiding speculative theology. In contrast to this majority opinion, I argue that Irenaeus' works show a mature understanding of the Trinity, in both its immanent and economic manifestations, which is occasioned by Valentinianism. Moreover, his Trinitarian theology represents a significant advancement upon that of his sources, the so-called apologists, whose understanding of the divine nature converges in many respects with Valentinian theology. I display this advancement by comparing the thought of Irenaeus with that of Justin, Athenagoras, and Theophilus, on Trinitarian themes.

Irenaeus develops Trinitarian theology in the following ways. First, he defines God's nature as spirit, thus maintaining the divine transcendence through God's higher order of being as opposed to the use of spatial imagery (God is separated/far away from creation). This definition allows him to speak of God's work in the world apart from the use of semi-divine agents. Second, Irenaeus removes spatial language and a time element from the concept of divine generation. Thus, although both Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit are generated from God/Father, they eternally exist with God and in God. Because they come from God, they are divine to the same degree as God, existing in an eternal, mutually interpenetrating relationship, which results in one, simple divine nature. Finally, Irenaeus distinguishes the three entities in their eternal unity through attributing to them different functions in the economy. God/Father is the source of the creative and redemptive work, while Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit enact the work. However, the logic of Irenaeus' argument demands that the same quality of divinity be shared among all three figures. Their equal divinity provides the Son and the Spirit the power to enact the will of the Father in the economy. The result is a developed Trinitarian theology that posits three distinct entities named Father, Son, and Spirit, eternally united through one divine and spiritual nature.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
Apol.	*1 and 2 Apologies*
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
Aug	*Augustinianum*
AugStud	*Augustinian Studies*
Autol.	*To Autolycus*
CH	*Church History*
Dial.	*Dialogue with Trypho*
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique
Epid.	*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*
FC	Fathers of the Church
Greg	*Gregorianum*
Haer.	*Against Heresies*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ILC	*Illinois Classical Studies*
ITS	*Indian Theological Studies*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JrnRel	*Journal of Religion*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Leg.	*Legatio*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NPNF	The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NV	*Nova et Vetera*
NVT	*Nouvelle Revue Théologique*
RSPHTH	*Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*
RSR	*Recherches de Science Religieuse*
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*
SP	*Studia Patristica*
SVF	Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
Tim.	*Timaeus*
TU	*Texte und Untersuchungen*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitchrift*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
ZNTW	*Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Introduction

This dissertation concerns two subjects normally not mentioned in the same sentence, namely, the second century bishop Irenaeus of Lyons and Trinitarian theology. After the appearance of several treatments of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology at the beginning of last century, the majority of Irenaean scholars and historians of doctrine either have been silent or disparaging regarding Irenaeus' understanding of the Trinity, particularly in the Triune God's eternal or immanent manifestation, that is, apart from his work in the economy.[1] The majority of monographs on Irenaeus' theology in the latter part of the twentieth century have focused on less, so-called speculative issues. Trinitarian theology, scholars have argued, is a feature of later, more developed theologies; Irenaeus simply did not ask these questions.

Against this prevailing scholarly assumption, my thesis asserts that Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology constitutes a significant facet of his thought and provides the logic that supports his understanding of the work of God in the economy. Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology particularly is manifested when he is read in the context of, and in contrast to, his immediate predecessors and primary sources, the so-called "apologists." For all that Irenaeus owes to Justin and some other apologists, he intentionally breaks from their

[1] The terms "immanent" and "economic" refer to a modern theological distinction between the Trinity revealed apart from his works in creation (immanent) and the Trinity revealed through his works in creation (economic). Although the distinction is anachronistic for describing the thought of the Patristic era, it is useful to label and distinguish the emphases of my work. I am concerned particularly with Irenaeus' understanding of the immanent Trinity because while an increasing number of scholars have begun to regard Irenaeus' understanding of the economy as Trinitarian (notably the works by Ysabel de Andia, Eric Osborn, and Hans Urs von Balthasar—see below p. 3n4 for bibliographic references), these studies continue to deny that Irenaeus considered God as Triune apart from his manifestation in the economy. While the recognition of the Trinitarian aspects of the divine work of the economy is a welcomed development from some older scholarship which denied the nomenclature of "Trinity" to Irenaeus' thought altogether, this position is problematic insofar as the economic manifestations of Father, Son, and Spirit in Irenaeus' theology are tied to and logically depend upon their immanent processions apart from the economy.

understanding of God precisely in the areas that have a bearing on Trinitarian theology. The decisive factor in his separation from the apologists in these areas is the proliferation of various "Gnostic" schools and writings that were adversely affecting the understanding of the faith handed down from the apostles.[2] Irenaeus found his sources inadequate to meet the challenges of "Gnosticism" because the apologists' understanding of God, and particularly God's relation to the material creation, suffered in many of the same areas as his "Gnostic" opponents. Thus, Irenaeus' Trinitarian formulations against the "Gnostic" understanding of the divine being are in many ways a *de facto* condemnation of the apologists' understanding of God as well.[3] When viewed in this light, Irenaeus alters the dominant way of understanding God, both in his relation to the world and in his relation to other divine or semi-divine beings, in the extant Christian literature of the second century. Thus, while Irenaeus is not—and cannot be—a pro-Nicene figure, he can be credited with advancing Trinitarian thought in the direction of the fourth century. Accordingly, Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology demands a substantial treatment.

In this introduction, I intend to do three things: (1) give a brief review of past scholarship on Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, the focus of which will be two recent works that have engaged Irenaeus positively on this subject; (2) address questions of methodology related to how this study will proceed; and (3) convey the plan of the work.

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[2] I use quotation marks around the traditional appellation "Gnostic" to indicate its inadequacy. The "Gnostics" were not a monolithic community, but a conglomerate of disparate groups with many distinctions. These differing theological communities were grouped together by early heresiologists for polemical purposes. In the first chapter, I will specify the type of "Gnosticism" that most concerns Irenaeus as Valentinianism and will subsequently refer to his opponents as the Valentinians for better historical accuracy.

[3] To be clear, I am not arguing that any "Gnostic" figures were directly influenced by the writings of the apologists. My claim is only that in certain areas, the respective theological systems of the apologists and the various "Gnostic" systems are in the same trajectory of thought, with the latter producing the logical, and often absurd, ends of the theological formulations of the former. I *am* arguing that Irenaeus perceived the convergences, which explains his clear departure in certain areas from the understandings of the apologists, notably Justin, whom he otherwise considers authoritative witnesses to the teachings of the apostles.

1. Scholarship Orientation

Past scholarship on Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology can be divided into two broad trajectories. Scholars in the first trajectory argue that Irenaeus lacks any identifiable Trinitarian insights, particularly in regards to the Trinity's immanent manifestation. While scholars in this trajectory often address aspects of Irenaeus' work that may be considered Trinitarian, such as his christology or pneumatology, they either deny that Irenaeus considered the inner relationships of the Godhead apart from creation or they find his understanding of those relationships deficient from a fourth century perspective. Both conclusions have the same result—Irenaeus did not understand God as Triune in any meaningful sense. As supporting evidence, they cite the passages where Irenaeus condemns speculative theology under which questions about the inner relationships of the Godhead necessarily fall. These scholars claim that speculation on the generation of divine beings, and other similar questions, was the mark of "Gnostic" theology, the kind of speculative thought against which Irenaeus argued. Thus, Trinitarian theology includes questions that Irenaeus did not consider and to ask such questions of him is anachronistic. Some scholars cite Irenaeus' intention to do nothing but pass on the doctrine he received from his teachers. Consequently, Irenaeus often is included in the same family as, or seen as the culmination of, second century thought. In this case, his Trinitarian theology is overlooked largely by virtue of the lack of Trinitarian theology in the second century.[4]

[4] Some prominent examples include Andia, *Homo Vivens: Incorruptibilité et divinization de l'homme selon IRÉNÉE DE LYON* (Paris, 1986), André Audet, "Orientations Théologiques chez Saint Irénée," *Traditio* 1 (1943): 15-54, André Benoît, *Saint Irénée: introduction a l'étude de sa théologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), G.N. Bonwetsch, *Die Theologie des Irenäus;* coll. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie II, 9 (Gütersloh, 1925), Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus,* trans. J.E. Steely (New York and Nashville, TH: Abingdon Press), 1970, Jean Daniélou, *The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea,* vol. 2, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture,* trans. and ed. John Baker (London:

Conversely, scholars of the second trajectory not only maintain that Irenaeus has an understanding of God as Triune, they maintain that Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology is an early example of Nicene orthodoxy. Scholars in this second trajectory commonly note as evidence Irenaeus' dual emphases on the unity of God as well as the presence of three beings—Father, Son, and Spirit—working in the economy. Without much argumentation or thorough analysis, they assume this combination constitutes a mature Trinitarian understanding. Additionally, these scholars cite the sheer volume of Irenaean passages that address the Father, Son, and Spirit together as evidence of developed Trinitarian thought. Scholars in this trajectory generally ignore Irenaeus' warnings against speculative theology.[5]

Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1973), Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 2, trans. Neil Buchanen (New York: Russell and Russell, 1958), Albert Houssiau, *La Christologie de Saint Irénée*, Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis Dissertationes 3.1 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires; Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1955), Georg Kretschmar, *Studien zur frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie*, vol. 21, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie (Tübingen: Mohr, 1956), J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers), 1960, John Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), Friedrich Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochien adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bein Irenaeus* (Leipzig, 1930); Denis Minns, *Irenaeus* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), Juan Ochagavía, *Visibile Patris Filius: A Study of Irenaeus' Teaching on Revelation and Tradition* (Rome, 1964), Antonio Orbe, *Hacia la Primera Teologia de la Procesión del Verbo*, Estudios Valentinianos, 2 vols. (Rome, 1958), Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: S.P.C.K., 1959), Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 1, *The Beginnings of Patristic Literature From the Apostles Creed to Irenaeus*, repr., Christian Classics (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2005), J. Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, vol. 1, *The Antenicene Theology*, trans. H.L.B. (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1910), Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2, *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*, trans. Andrew Louth, Francis McDonagh, and Brian McNeil, ed. John Riches, 1984, repr. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), and Gustav Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus*, trans. Ross MacKenzie (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959).

[5] Three twentieth century scholars stand out here: F.R.M. Hitchcock, *Irenaeus of Lugdunum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), Jules Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité: des origines au concile de Nicée*, *Bibliothèque de Théologie Historique*, vol. 2, *De Saint Clément a Saint Irénée*, ed. G. Beauchesne (Paris: Beauchesne, 1928), and F. Vernet, "Iréneé (Saint)", DTC, VII/2, 1927, 2394-2535. There have been many important works of the last century touching some aspect of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology not listed here. These studies do not relate their topic, positively or negatively, to a Trinitarian framework and, as such, do not belong in these trajectories. Nonetheless, these works will be helpful in the discussion of the particular aspect of Trinitarian theology upon which they comment, and I will interact with them accordingly.

Each trajectory has limitations that obscure the true nature of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. Scholars in the first trajectory rely on a simplistic and literalistic interpretation of Irenaeus' statements against speculative theology as well as his stated intention to do nothing more than hand on the teaching of the faith. Such an interpretation fails to understand the rhetorical nature of these statements. Irenaeus did not want to present himself as speculative or innovative because this would have placed him beyond the pale of the teaching of the apostles and the *regula fidei,* the very sources he utilized to discredit "Gnostic" theology. Whether he is true to this claim must be tested. Some scholars in the first trajectory also fail to understand the historical importance of "Gnosticism" to Irenaeus' theology by including him with other apologists in a general theological grouping. Two writers should not be considered in the same family of thought simply because they write in or near the same time period, particularly when the occasions of their respective works differ. Again, whether or not they belong in the same family of thought can be determined only through a comparison of the theologies, themselves.

Likewise, scholars of the second trajectory downplay the importance of the historical context to understanding Irenaeus' work. Whereas scholars of the first trajectory often fail to see the influence of "Gnosticism" on the manner in which Irenaeus conceives of God, those scholars of the second trajectory tend to ignore the "Gnostics" altogether, making more references to the so-called "Arian" argument and use of Scripture that occasioned the fourth century Trinitarian debates. Moreover, in the second trajectory Irenaeus is read according to categories that are not his own but instead belong to a later era (e.g. person). Although these scholars give a positive estimation of Irenaeus'

understanding of the Trinity, their conclusions are anachronistic and obscure what embryonic Trinitarian insights or understanding may be present in Irenaeus' thought.

Two recent scholars elude these trajectories, namely Jacques Fantino and Michel René Barnes.[6] As such, these scholars will be my primary dialogue partners throughout this dissertation, and in many aspects their studies can be understood as starting points from which the present dissertation builds. Therefore, a brief review of both arguments is necessary to situate my work in relation to their claims.

Fantino's methodological approach resembles the works of the first trajectory. He does not ask questions of Irenaeus that correspond to modern systematic concerns, but he focuses instead on Irenaeus' exegetical arguments against "Gnosticism," the center and organizing principle of which he locates in the concept of "economy" (οἰκονομία). Fantino understands the economy in Irenaeus' thought to define the relationship between God and creation/humanity. In particular, the economy expresses and realizes the Father's will that each human participate in the divine life in order to attain to the image and likeness of God. Humans attain this goal through the cooperative work of God/Father, Word/Son, and Wisdom/Spirit in various divine acts. He writes, "All creation [and] all the economy are the work of the Father, of the Word, and of the Wisdom who act according to this scheme; no other person intervenes in this process and

[6] Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée: Lecture des Écritures en réponse à l'exégèse gnostique. Une approche trinitaire* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994); Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," *NV* 7 (2009): 67-106. What follows are not comprehensive summaries of the works, but brief remarks intended to relate each scholar's method of finding Trinitarian theology in Irenaeus as well as some of their key claims. Deeper interaction with the works will occur through the course of the dissertation. In this section only, citations of these works will be marked in the text. Aspects of my argument appear in Khaled Anatolios, "The Immediately Triune God: A Patristic Response to Schleiermacher," *Pro Ecclesia* 10, 2 (2001): 159-178. Nonetheless, his treatment of Irenaeus in the midst of several other Patristic figures allows only a summary engagement with Irenaeus' thought. Moreover, while he notes several times that Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology was advanced beyond that of his predecessors, he does not identify the nature of the advancement. Absent from his work is the comparative analysis of the kind I will offer here.

it is for this reason that the Irenaean scheme perhaps legitimately qualifies as Trinitarian" (293). Elsewhere, he writes, "Salvation comes from the Father by the intermediary of the Son who gives the Spirit and humanity is habituated by the Spirit to accede to the Father through the Son" (208). According to Fantino's interpretation of Irenaeus, every work of the economy is an expression of the Trinity.

Where Fantino breaks from the first trajectory is his judgment that the manner of the work of the three persons in the economy *necessitates* an eternal distinction. In other words, the existence of the Son and Spirit is grounded in their eternal relation to the Father. This truth is implied through the Irenaean contrast between the "uncreated" and the "created." In this division, the Son and the Spirit always are grouped with the Father on the side of the uncreated. This contrast manifests itself in the logic of Irenaeus' understanding of salvation and reveals the divine identity of the Son and Spirit—if humanity is saved through contact with the uncreated, then the agents of that connection must be uncreated. Moreover, Fantino observes that, in contrast to the "Gnostics," Irenaeus holds that the Son and the Spirit do not come into existence for the purpose of working in the economy. This is the import of Irenaeus' belief in creation *ex nihilo.* God does not generate the Son and the Spirit in order to form eternal, unformed matter (as the "Gnostics" held), nor does he first make unformed matter, which the Son then forms into beings (as, for example, Theophilus held). God the Father, through the Son and Spirit, creates beings directly. Thus, the Son and Spirit do not come into existence in order to accomplish some task or fulfill some role. As uncreated beings, their existence is not dependent on the will of the Father; the roles they accomplish in the economy are in virtue of the truth that they themselves are God.

Fantino's guiding thesis is that Irenaeus develops these Trinitarian realities precisely through his interaction with "Gnosticism." Questions of the mode of existence of the divine beings prior to creation, their generation from the first cause, and the like were the provenance of "Gnostic" theology, but through Irenaeus' interaction with and arguments against these theological systems, he comes to reflect on these speculative issues and consistently alters them to align with the witness of Scripture. Fantino writes, "It is the interpretation of the Scriptures joined to the critique of Gnosticism which has led Irenaeus to the Trinitarian scheme Father-Word-Wisdom in the work in creation and in all the economy" (291). By this method, Fantino avoids the pitfalls of both trajectories. He does not approach Irenaeus with foreign categories of thought, nor does he superimpose later Trinitarian concerns onto Irenaeus as do the works of the second trajectory. Fantino neither simplifies Irenaeus' thoughts nor assumes that because Irenaeus wrote in the second century he necessarily lacks any Trinitarian categories, as the works of the first trajectory maintain. Instead, his reading of Irenaeus in the context of his debate with "Gnosticism" enables him to discern that Trinitarian categories of thought are necessary to understand fully the logic of Irenaeus' polemic.

Writing over a decade later, Barnes is less hampered by the assumptions of the first trajectory than Fantino, reflecting perhaps the positive impact of Fantino's work on subsequent scholarship. Therefore, Barnes does not conduct his Trinitarian inquiry based on the work of the three entities in the economy or any other less speculative aspect of Irenaeus' work. Rather, he assumes that for which Fantino spends the majority of his work justifying—the presence of immanent Trinitarian thought in Irenaeus—and

proceeds with a more straightforward systematic study of Irenaeus' understanding of the inner relations between Father, Son, and Spirit.

For Barnes, the most important theological concept for understanding Irenaeus' Trinitarian thought is *spirit,* not in the sense of Holy Spirit, but in the broader sense of divine essence according to the standard means of referring to God in the second century (e.g. John 4:24). He sees the notion of spirit as the foundation of every aspect of Irenaeus' Trinitarian thought, notably the relationship between the Father and the Son. Moreover, Barnes shows how Irenaeus' notion of God as spirit leads him to remove the concept of space from the Godhead. In their theory of emanation, the "Gnostics" had partitioned the divine essence into several spatially separated parts, thus producing a compound nature antithetical to the properties of spirit. Barnes writes, "the spatial understanding denies the spiritual nature of God, for an important characteristic of God's spiritual nature is the life of inter-penetration and omnipresence" (76). Consequently, the removal of space from the divine nature allows Irenaeus to affirm the closest possible relationship between the Father and the Son. They exist in a "reciprocal immanence," completely interpenetrating one another. This reciprocal immanence reveals the equality of Father and Son and qualifies the Son as the unique revealer of the Father.

Barnes notes, as many have before him, the reticence with which Irenaeus approaches the generation of the Son from the Father. Nonetheless, by reading Irenaeus' theology in light of "Gnostic" speculations, Barnes gains insight regarding Irenaeus' understanding of the matter. The "Gnostics" taught the emanation of Aeons in a sequence according to logic. Irenaeus rejects this psychological understanding of generation for two reasons. First, it denies God's simplicity. Second, it teaches a beginning for the

emitted Aeons. Barnes then discerns Irenaeus' understanding of the generation of the Word as formed against this "Gnostic" understanding, and, again, the key is spirit. He writes, "Whatever is said about God cannot run contrary to the reality or nature of Spirit. In particular, if we think about the generation of the Word we cannot think of a transition in the life of the Word from 'in' to 'out' of God, since these are spatial notions which cannot be applied to Spirit. As spirit, the Word is always entirely 'in' God and 'outside' of God" (86). Barnes here correctly shows that despite Irenaeus' statements to the contrary, his theology contains speculative thought on the inner relationship of Father and Son.

Turning to Irenaeus' understanding of the Holy Spirit proper, Barnes concentrates on those aspects that pertain to his high pneumatology. Specifically, he shows how Irenaeus frequently attributes to the Holy Spirit the same functions he used to show the divinity of the Son. Primarily, he identifies Spirit as a co-creator with the Son, and he gives to the Spirit the title "Wisdom." Moreover, Barnes shows that key to Irenaeus' understanding of the role of the Spirit in creation is Psalm 33/2, which reads, "By the Word of the Lord, the heavens were spread out, and by the Spirit of His mouth, all their power" (98). In this Psalm, Irenaeus finds what Barnes calls a "'two agent' exegesis of creation" that provides him scriptural warrant for incorporating the Holy Spirit into his consideration of the divine act of creation (99). For Irenaeus, to create is to be God, and thus the Spirit, like the Son, is God.

While Fantino's approach resembled those works of the first trajectory, Barnes' approach resembles those works of the second trajectory in that he asks more speculative questions of Irenaeus. Nonetheless, because he consistently reads Irenaeus' theology in

the context of his polemic with "Gnostic" theology, he avoids reading foreign concepts into Irenaeus' work. A concrete example of this method is Barnes' utilization of "spirit" to understand Irenaeus' Trinitarian thought. "Spirit" is a more primitive term than essence (οὐσία) or person (ὑπόστασις) and one that more clearly corresponds to Irenaeus' thought. Yet, as Barnes shows, spirit carries with it inner Trinitarian realities.

Both Fantino and Barnes provide a way out of the quagmire that has dominated twentieth century scholarship on Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. They are able to comment meaningfully on Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology without turning him into a fourth century, pro-Nicene figure. Still, more work remains to be done in the course they have charted. Fantino spends so much space explaining Irenaeus' understanding of the economy that he fails to address theological issues necessary to understanding Irenaeus as a true Trinitarian theologian. For example, there is little discussion in his work on such topics as Irenaeus' understanding of the unifying principle of Father, Son, and Spirit or the nature of the hierarchy that exists among the three entities. Moreover, he concentrates on the work of the Son in the incarnation to the detriment of his work prior to the incarnation. In his more traditional approach, Barnes addresses many of these Trinitarian questions; nevertheless, his article length treatment does not allow space to consider all of the pertinent Irenaean passages, both those passages that support his points and those that detract. Finally, while both scholars consider Irenaeus' theology in relation to "Gnosticism," missing from their works is a consideration of his Trinitarian theology in relation to the apologists' theology. The nature of Irenaeus' Trinitarian advancement is

understood best in this context, and this comparative method will be the primary contribution of the present study.[7]

2. Methodology

Critical treatments of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology have to date been limited; therefore, the burden of this dissertation will be an engagement with the primary sources, namely *Adversus Haereses* and *Epideixis* (hereafter *Haer.* and *Epid.*).[8] To support the thesis of this study, I will analyze Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology in contrast to the apologists' thought in order to better display his advancement in Trinitarian theology. I will limit the apologists' works to the following: (1) the *Apologies* and *Dialogue with*

[7] One result of this study will be a separation between Justin and Irenaeus regarding their respective understandings of the nature of God and, in particular, the nature of the Second Person. The common historical narrative of the first few centuries of the Church is that Irenaeus follows the general theological trajectory established by Justin. (This assumption is not unrelated to the assumptions of the first trajectory that Irenaeus represents the culmination of second century thought.) While it is beyond dispute that Irenaeus is positively influenced by Justin (see below pp. 22-24), it is not the case that he follows him in every aspect. My study will underscore the differences between the two figures often overlooked by scholars attempting to uphold the traditional narrative.

[8] For many of the *Haer.* texts engaged, I will be using my own translations from the Latin (Greek where possible) as supplied in the critical editions by Adelin Rousseau *et. al.* in the *Sources Chrétiennes* series. Bibliographic notes for the corresponding *Haer.* books are as follows: Book One, Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies 1.1 and 2, Sources Chrétiennes* 263 and 264, trans., intro., and notes Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau (Paris: Cerf, 1979), Book Two, Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies 2.1 and 2, SC* 293 and 294, trans., intro., and notes Rousseau and Doutreleau (Paris: Cerf, 1982), Book Three, Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies 3.1 and 2, SC* 210 and 211, trans., intro., and notes Rousseau and Doutreleau (Paris: Cerf, 1974), Book Four, Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies 4.1 and 2, SC* 100.1 and 100.2, trans., intro., and notes Rousseau, *et. al.* (Paris: Cerf, 1965), and Book Five, Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les Hérésies 5.1 and 2, SC* 152 and 153, trans., intro., and notes Rousseau, Doutreleau, and Charles Mercier (Paris: Cerf, 1969). Where adequate English translations exist, I will consult them, but always in connection with the Latin and Greek texts. Previous English translations include *Against the Heresies* in *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. A. Roberts and J.W.H. Rambaut, eds. Roberts and J. Donaldson, 1887, repr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999) and *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against the Heresies*, trans. and notes Dominic J. Unger, rev. John J. Dillon, Ancient Christian Writers 55 (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). For the *Epid.* texts engaged, I will use several strong translations of the Armenian text, including John Behr, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: On the Apostolic Preaching* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), J.A. Robinson, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (London: S.P.C.K., 1920), Rousseau, *Irénée de Lyon: Démonstration de la Prédication Apostolique, SC* 406 (Paris: Cerf 1995), and J.P. Smith, *St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, ACW 16 (New York: Newman Press, 1952). Where a translation or a helpful note from these volumes is used, I will refer to it in the footnotes with the author's name and page number. I will refer to the ANF translations with the more common abbreviation (ANF) and volume and page number. Where no reference is included in the footnotes, the translation is mine.

Trypho of Justin (hereafter 1 *Apol.*, 2 *Apol.* and *Dial.*), (2) the *Plea for the Christians* of Athenagoras of Athens (hereafter *Leg.*), and (3) the *To Autolycus* of Theophilus of Antioch (hereafter *Autol.*).[9] Although writing in different times and different places in the Roman Empire, these three figures witness a consistency in their understanding of God, the Logos, and the Spirit that make them apt candidates for comparison to Irenaeus. Moreover, the use of three figures instead of one further demonstrates that the theology in their works is neither individual nor provincial but is representative of second century theology in general.[10]

The best method of accentuating the differences between the Trinitarian theology of Irenaeus and that of the Apologists is simply to juxtapose their respective treatments of Trinitarian themes. Accordingly, each chapter of this dissertation will work with a principle theme of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, engaging first the presence of that theme in the Apologists' thought followed by a more comprehensive treatment of the

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[9] For these works, I will be using my own translations from the Greek texts as supplied by the critical editions. These are as follows: Justin, *Apologie pour les Chrétiens, SC* 507, trans., intro., and notes Charles Munier (Paris: Cerf, 2006), *Dialogue avec Tryphon*, Paradosis 47.1 and 2, ed. and trans. Philip Bobichon (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003); Athénagore, *Supplique au sujet des chrétiens; et, Sur la résurrection des morts, SC* 379, trans., intro., and notes Bernard Pouderon (Paris: Cerf, 1979); and Theophili Antiocheni, *Ad Autolycum*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995). Important English editions that I will use include: Justin Martyr, *The First* and *Second Apologies*, ACW 56, trans., intro., and notes Leslie W. Barnard (New York, Paulist Press, 1967) and *Dialogue with Trypho*, FC 3, trans. Thomas B. Falls, rev. and intro. Thomas P. Halton (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003); Athenagoras, *Embassy for the Christians. The Resurrection of the Dead*, ACW 23, trans. and notes Joseph Hugh Cretan (Westminster, MD.: Newman Press, 1956) and Athenagoras, *Legatio* and *De Resurrectione;* Oxford Early Christian Texts; ed. and trans. William R. Schoedel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum;* Oxford Early Christian Texts; ed. and trans. Robert M. Grant (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) and Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, ANF 2:89-121. Where an English translation is used, I will include the author's name and page number in the footnote. Where no reference is included, the translation is mine.

[10] As I will show in chapter one, Irenaeus knew and used both Justin and Theophilus' respective works as sources. He did not know Athenagoras' work. I use Athenagoras in this comparative study only in order to develop more fully the context of second century "Apologist theology" prior to Irenaeus. My thesis that Irenaeus intentionally alters the theology of his sources to meet the demands of "Gnosticism" applies to Justin and Theophilus only. I will hereafter refer to these three collectively with the title "Apologists" to indicate a collective group. When I use the title "Apologists" in the following work, I mean only to indicate Justin, Athenagoras, and Theophilus.

theme in Irenaeus' thought.[11] I will draw out the differences in their thought through a variety of methods, the most important of which include: (1) a comparison of key texts in which one or more of the divine entities are discussed; (2) a comparison of the use of the same Trinitarian titles (e.g. Father, Logos, Spirit, etc.); and (3) an inquiry into the possible sources of certain constructions or arguments.[12] In all cases, I will demonstrate

[11] Although this dissertation is primarily a study of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, I have chosen this order to better display the innovations Irenaeus makes upon his sources. The one exception to this method comes in chapter one, where I address the setting of each figure. Here I will engage Irenaeus first to emphasize that he is the primary figure in this study.

[12] In identifying philosophical influences of the Apologists, I will not be concerned to identify specific figures, a method which has been attempted elsewhere. Mark J. Edwards, for example, asserts that Numenius is a direct influence upon Justin. Edwards, "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin," *JTS* 42 (1991): 17-34. Conversely, Osborn argues that Justin's Middle Platonic source is Albinus. Osborn, *Justin Martyr* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1973), 22. While these authors cite specific parallels from their preferred philosophical figure, by the second century these philosophical elements largely have become commonplaces among different figures of one school, such as Middle Platonism, not to mention several different philosophical traditions, such as Middle Platonism and Stoicism. This process results in what is often called "eclecticism" and this characteristic of the state of second century philosophy has been noted by many scholars. For example, see Michel Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme des Pères de l'église: De Clément de Rome a Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957), 37-40. Therefore, my purpose will be to show only that the ideas of the divine nature offered by these figures were common in second century eclectic philosophy. My primary source to this end will be the Middle Platonic work *Didaskalikos* (hereafter *Didask.*), not because I believe that there is a direct link between it and the Apologists (indeed I do not), but because the *Didask.* commonly is held as representative of a large segment of Middle Platonist thought during the second century. On this point, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, rev. ed. (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press), 272. A.J. Malherbe makes the same observation in his use of *Didask.* as a comparison to Athenagoras' *Leg.* Malherbe, "The Structure of Athenagoras, 'Supplicatio Pro Christianis," *VC* 23 (1969): 1-20. To further this point, and because the authorship of *Didask.* is an open question, I will cite the text by its title, not by the name of its author, who traditionally was identified as Albinus, but more recently has been identified as Alcinous. In addition, in several places I will note similarities between the Apologists and Philo of Alexandria. The question of Philo's influence upon the apologists has been a subject of contention among scholars for the majority of the previous century. The difficulty in assessing this influence, as nearly every treatment acknowledges, is that while there are extensive similarities between Philo and for example Justin, Justin neither mentions Philo nor quotes him directly. Moreover, the doctrinal similarities are far from precise and the exegetical treatments of Scripture rarely correspond to offer any degree of certainty. At one end of spectrum on this question stands E.R. Goodenough who finds in Justin a strong dependence on Philo and attempts to correlate nearly every doctrine. Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (Jena: Frommann, 1923), esp. 139-175. On the other end stands Barnard who rejects any Philonic dependence opting instead for a purely Middle Platonic influence. Barnard, *Justin Martyr* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 92-95. For a good overview of the problem, see David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 94-118, esp. 97-105. Commenting on this subject lies beyond the purview of the present work, although the similarities between the Apologists and Philo are too strong to dismiss. Thus, I will note certain similarities not to argue for a direct correspondence, but to help place the Apologists in a larger, Hellenistic exegetical tradition that encompasses both Philo and the Apologists.

where Irenaeus' understanding and thought categories diverge from or develop upon those of the Apologists.

Although some scholars, in an attempt to respect the development of Irenaeus' thought from the beginning of *Haer.* to the *Epid.*, have organized the chapters of their studies according to Irenaeus' works (e.g. chapter one treats *Haer.* 1 and 2, chapter two treats *Haer.* 3, and so on),[13] I will organize my study according to theme. While I recognize that this method runs the risk of importing a false, systematic arrangement on Irenaeus' works, it is necessary because every Trinitarian facet here engaged overlaps several books of *Haer.*, not to mention both *Haer.* and *Epid.* To limit my discussion of Irenaeus' views on a subject to one book, the Father to *Haer.* 2 for example, would be to miss his full and mature understanding of that subject.[14]

3. Plan

The primary factor in the differences between Irenaeus and the Apologists with respect to Trinitarian theology is the varying historical circumstances that occasioned their works. Therefore, in the first chapter I will consider the varying settings of Irenaeus and the Apologists and the subsequent occasions of their work. As Irenaeus is the

[13] Barnes' treatment is a good example of this method, although Barnes himself has to step outside its confines to make certain points. Anthony Briggman's recent work employs this method on a large scale. Briggman, *The Theology of the Holy Spirit according to Irenaeus of Lyons.* Unpublished dissertation, Marquette University, 2009. Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

[14] Nonetheless, I acknowledge a development in Irenaeus' thought as his work progresses, particularly regarding the Holy Spirit, a development I will address in chapter four. Incidentally, my method precludes me from making a definitive judgment on an open question in Irenaean studies, namely, the dating of *Epid.* relative to *Haer.* Nonetheless, Irenaeus' most developed Trinitarian statements come from the later books of *Haer.* and the *Epid.* indicating that the latter was written after or around the same time as the former. Given the textual evidence that Irenaeus wrote the books of *Haer.* in the order that we now possess, *Epid.* is likely a more mature work. On this point, see Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 9-12.

primary figure of this study, the majority of text in the first chapter will be devoted to his setting. I will engage the respective settings of the Apologists only to ascertain the differences between their contexts and occasions for writing, and the same of Irenaeus.

In the second chapter, I will engage Irenaeus' understanding of God/Father and its implications for the unity of the Godhead. I will show how the Apologists conceived of God as Creator but lacked a robust notion of him as Father. Moreover, their understanding of the divine transcendence led them to speak of God in spatial terms (God is "above" or somehow "removed" from the material world), which has ramifications for their understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Conversely, Irenaeus develops the unique relationship between the Father and the Son through his use of the divine title "Father." Moreover, he redefines transcendence allowing him to remove all spatial imagery from his conception of the divine being. Thus, Irenaeus' argument here establishes the logic which dictates his entire Trinitarian theology.

In chapter three, I will engage Irenaeus' understanding of the nature of the Logos/Son. This study will involve both a general analysis of the Logos theology operative in these works as well as a particular analysis of these figures' respective understandings of the generation of the Logos from God. I will show how the Apologists' Logos theology necessarily subordinates the Logos to God. As they conceived of God as spatially distant from material creation, they were forced to make the Logos the active power of God in the world in the manner of Middle Platonist thought, thus making the separate existence of the Logos dependent upon his work in the economy. Irenaeus' theology does not stand in the same need of an intermediary in creation; therefore, the existence of the Logos/Son is dependent not on his work, but on his divine nature as

eternal Logos. Furthermore, Irenaeus' rejection of the "Gnostic" theory of emanation reveals his understanding of the generation of the Logos that supports the divine, eternal nature of the Logos.

Chapter four will address Irenaeus' pneumatology. For the Apologists, the Spirit is limited to a prophetic role. Irenaeus enlarges this limited role by attributing the work of creation to the Spirit and calling the Spirit "Sophia." Not only does "Sophia" correspond with "Logos," implying that the Sophia is present along with the Logos with and in God eternally, but it also describes a role of the Spirit in the economy of salvation, namely that of binding together or completing the creation. This independent role suggests a full personhood of the Spirit never witnessed in the pneumatology of the Apologists.

Finally, chapter five will concentrate on those passages in these figures' respective works that address the relationships of all three entities. For Irenaeus, these passages occur for the most part in the context of the economy, particularly in their cooperative works of creation and redemption. As I will show, a hierarchy emerges among the different entities akin to the hierarchy evident in the Apologists' understanding of the natures of the Son and Spirit. Even so, while the logic of the Apologists' argument demands a hierarchy of gradating divinity, or an ontological hierarchy, Irenaeus' hierarchy is not to be conceived of in terms of gradations of divinity, but instead in terms of differing economic functions, or a functional hierarchy. For Irenaeus, the Father is the source of the divine actions performed by His agents, the Son and the Spirit who, in turn, are obedient to the Father's will. Yet, the logic of Irenaeus' argument demands that the same quality of divinity be shared among all three entities.

Their equal divinity provides the Son and the Spirit the power to enact the will of the Father in the economy.

Chapter One: The Dissimilar Contexts of Irenaeus and the Apologists

In this opening chapter, I will attempt to provide a context for the *Sitz im Leben* in which Irenaeus lived and wrote. This background knowledge is necessary to understanding the nature of the progression in Trinitarian theology witnessed in Irenaeus' thought as well as to identifying the historical contingencies that made such a progression possible. This process requires (1) an investigation into the influences upon his thought acquired from the various geographical settings of his life, and (2) an investigation into the occasion for Irenaeus' writing, which will involve a discussion of his methodology and manner of argumentation. After treating these topics, I will address the respective settings of the Apologists. Here, I will explore only the manner in which their respective historical contexts differ from that of Irenaeus, both in terms of the influences upon their thought and their respective occasions for writing.

1. Irenaeus

1.1 Life

The only established date in Irenaeus' life is 177 C.E., at which time Eusebius reports Irenaeus in Rome acting in the role of presbyter on behalf of the church of Lyons.[1] From this date, along with several autobiographical details in *Haer.*, Irenaeus'

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.1. This trip occurs about the same time as the outbreak of persecution in Lyons, which Eusebius places in the seventeenth year of Marcus Aurelius' reign, or 177 C.E. P. Nautin's arguments for placing the date of the persecution at 175 C.E. are noteworthy, but this argument has not influenced subsequent scholarship, the majority of which maintains the traditional dating. Nautin, *Lettres et Écrivains Chrétiens des IIe et IIIe Siècles* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 62-64. The purpose of Irenaeus' trip is to deliver a letter to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome, related to the Montanist controversy that recently had occurred in Phrygia (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4). Eusebius' excerpt from the letter testifies to Irenaeus' status as presbyter at the time of the trip.

birth often is placed around 130 C.E.[2] Nothing is known of his family of origin, although he likely became a follower of Christ at a young age.[3] While Irenaeus is in Rome in 177 C.E., a disastrous wave of persecutions began in the Gallican churches of Lyons and nearby Vienne and claimed the lives of many Christians, including the aged bishop of Lyons, Pothinus.[4] Irenaeus ascended to the episcopacy of Lyons upon returning from Rome, and later, perhaps due to his success in restoring Christianity to persecution-torn Gaul, he assumed the role of bishop over the entire geographical area.[5] Of the many treatises and letters attributed to Irenaeus, only *Haer.* and *Epid.* are extant.[6] These works

[2] The established 177 C.E. date makes any birth date later than 140 C.E. unlikely given that he is a presbyter at least by the later 170s and any birth date after 140 C.E. would have made him too young for the presbyterate in 177 C.E. M.S. Enslin, "Irenaeus: Mostly Prolegomena," *HTR* 40 (1947):137-65.

[3] In a letter written to a certain Florinus and preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.20.5-7), Irenaeus claims to have heard Polycarp, the aged and revered bishop of Smyrna, as a youth. See below p. 21n9. Audet suggests that Irenaeus was baptized as an infant, although this conjecture goes beyond the evidence. Audet, "Orientations Théologiques," 15ff.

[4] The account of the martyrs of Lyons originally was written as an encyclical letter to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. It is extant only in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.1-5.3.3. For a general introduction and helpful notes on the account of the martyrs of Lyons, see Herbert Musurillo, intro. and trans. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs,* vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xx-xxii, 62-85. Although information is uncertain, Irenaeus' emissary trip to Rome likely contributed to his escape from the fate of martyrdom. Eusebius reports that imprisoned martyrs had written the letters Irenaeus was carrying at the time of his trip (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4). Presumably, then, Irenaeus left Lyons after some Christians had been put in jail but before the large scale targeting and killing of Christians began. Nautin's early dating of the persecution forces him to maintain that Irenaeus escaped persecution simply because not all Gallican Christians were persecuted. Nautin, *Lettres et Écrivains,* 96-98.

[5] Other ancient sources report that Irenaeus ascended to a status higher than that of provincial bishop, the role his predecessor Pothinus played. Various works in the *Acta sanctorium* report Irenaeus' efforts to evangelize the entire area. For example, the *Acts of Saint Ferreolus* reports that Ferreolus and his brother Ferrutio were sent by Irenaeus to evangelize the Besançon district. Moreover, the account relates that Felix, Fortunatus, and Aquileius were sent for the same purpose to Valence. The account claims that Irenaeus evangelized the territory of the Celts, also. References in Enslin, "Irenaeus," 147n26.

[6] The specific titles Eusebius attributes to Irenaeus are *Against Heresies, On Knowledge, Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,* various unnamed *Dissertations,* and *On the Ogdoad* (*Hist. eccl.* 5.20.2, 26.1). Additionally, in *Hist. eccl.* 5.20.1, Eusebius refers to the letter to Florinus as *On Monarchy* or *That God is not the Author of Evil,* as well as another letter to a certain Blastus entitled *On Schism.* Additionally, many Irenaean fragments preserved by other authors exist. For example, Eusebius gives excerpts of his letter to Pope Victor on the Quatrodecimen Controversy (*Hist. eccl.* 5.23.3, 24.11-17). In the present dissertation, I will consider only the two extant works.

likely were written throughout the 180s and possibly into the 190s.[7] The circumstances of Irenaeus' death are unknown, but most often placed around 200 C.E.[8]

1.2 Influences

The biographical details of his life confirm that Irenaeus spent extended periods in three different geographical locations. The references to his acquaintance with Polycarp suggest that Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor, possibly in Smyrna.[9] The traditional date of Polycarp's martyrdom is 155 C.E., which given the approximate date of Irenaeus' birth, means that he likely spent at least his first 20 years in his home country. As I have noted, at the very least Irenaeus spent his final 20 years in Gaul. Reasons for Irenaeus' relocation to Lyons from Asia Minor are unknown;[10] nonetheless, the trip makes it likely

[7] Irenaeus writes from a position of authority—definitively commenting on which books of Scripture should be read, etc.—suggesting he has attained the office of bishop by the time of his writing. Moreover, as I will show below, the content of *Haer.* 1 shows that he has already spent time in Rome, which occurred prior to his ascendency to bishop. The duration of the writing of *Haer.* likely spans a number of years, as the prefaces to each book of *Haer.* confirms they are written at different times (in each case, Irenaeus assumes that his reader already has received and is familiar with the previous books). Nonetheless, as I noted in the introduction, the methodology of the current work does not depend on this progression of thought. To be more precise with the dating of his extant works is impossible.

[8] The approximate date of his death is figured according to his last appearance in Eusebius' works, namely his intervention in the so-called Quatrodecimen Controversy (*Hist. eccl.* 5.24.9-18). Eusebius preserves a letter Irenaeus wrote to Victor, who was bishop of Rome in the final decade of the second century. Like information of his birth, no reliable information exists concerning the circumstances of his death. Tradition regards Irenaeus as a martyr, but witnesses to this tradition are late and unreliable. Most scholars believe that references to his status as a martyr have confused him with a later figure, Irenaeus of Sirmium, who was martyred under Diocletian in 304 C.E. Enslin, "Irenaeus," 146-147.

[9] Irenaeus' letter to Florinus reads, "When I was still a boy I saw you in Lower Asia with Polycarp, when you had high status at the imperial court and wanted to gain his favor. I remember events from those days more clearly than those that happened recently—what we learn in childhood adheres to the mind and grows with it—so that I can even picture the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and conversed, his comings and goings, his character, his personal appearance, his discourses to the crowds, and how he reported his discussions with John and others who had seen the Lord." *Hist. eccl.* 5.20.5-7 in *Eusebius: The Church History*, trans. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 195-196. See also *Haer.* 3.3.4.

[10] Many scholars draw attention to the strong ties that existed between the churches in Asia Minor and the churches in Gaul at this time. For example, the account of the martyrdoms at the churches of Vienne and Lyons was written specifically for the churches in Asia and Phrygia (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.3). Moreover, two of the martyrs mentioned in that account are thought to have originated from

that he sojourned for a time in Rome. Rome's central location between Smyrna and Gaul made the city a natural respite for travelers, and given the prominence of both the city and the church of the city around the middle second century, a young Christian scholar likely would have felt drawn to stay there for a time.[11] With his experiences in these three geographical locations, Irenaeus would have been influenced by a variety of different teachers and trends of burgeoning Christian thought, several of which deserve attention.

1.2.1 Justin

The most important of the influences upon Irenaeus for my purposes was Justin. Many aspects of Irenaeus' theology correspond to the theology of the Martyr, and the degree of dependence suggests that Irenaeus was exposed to Justin's writings while sojourning in Rome.[12] Irenaeus regards Justin as a faithful witness to the teaching of the apostles. He quotes Justin twice, both instances as an authority against Marcion.[13]

Pergamum and Phrygia, both provinces of Asia. Enslin notes a tradition asserting that Irenaeus' predecessor Pothinus hailed from Asia Minor. Enslin, "Irenaeus," 149. This evidence suggests the route from Asia Minor to Gaul was traversed by more Christians than Irenaeus. Perhaps Irenaeus' connection with one of these Gallican Christians while both were in Asia Minor led Irenaeus to Gaul.

[11] Several influences upon Irenaeus' thought can be explained only through positing a sojourn in Rome. Examples I will explore momentarily include Justin and various pupils of Valentinus. Irenaeus notes in *Haer.* 1 that at an earlier point in his life he had encountered these "Gnostics" and their commentaries upon Scripture. See *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2. Valentinianism is most concentrated in Rome. Grant notes two more influences Irenaeus would have received in Rome that I will not explore in detail here, namely, Clement and Hermas. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 38-40.

[12] Circumstantial evidence makes personal contact possible. Justin is in Rome at least by the latter half of Antoninus Pius' reign (138 to 161 C.E.). Furthermore, the account, or *Acta,* of Justin's martyrdom states that he frequently taught others who came to him for instruction in the Christian faith. Musurillo, "The Martyrdom of Saints Justin, Chariton, Charito, Evelpistus, Hierax, Paeon, Liberion, and their Community," in *Christian Martyrs,* 42-61. This evidence suggests that Justin would have been a well-known Christian teacher in Rome precisely during the time when Irenaeus must have been there. For specifics of Justin's historical setting, see below pp. 47-49.

[13] *Haer.* 4.6.2; 5.27.2. The first quotation comes from a lost work of Justin's, possibly entitled *Against Marcion*. The second quotation is not attributed to any specific work, although the citation's context suggests that it may have come from the same work as the first quotation. Eusebius includes both quotations in *Hist. eccl.* 4.18.9. Munier asserts that these quotations are not from a treatise entitled *Against Marcion,* but instead from the so-called *Syntagma,* a more general treatise written against a variety of

Moreover, he works hard to separate Justin from his erstwhile disciple Tatian, whom Irenaeus regards as a heretic.[14]

J. Armitage Robinson may be credited with most convincingly demonstrating the relation between Justin and Irenaeus. In the introduction to his 1920 English translation of the Armenian text of the *Epid.*,[15] Robinson illustrated Justin's influence upon Irenaeus through a close comparison of passages in the works of the two figures. Comparing Irenaeus' *Epid.* 57 and Justin's *1 Apol.* 32, both of which center on the scriptural passage of Jacob's blessing of Judah (Genesis 49:8-12), Robinson discerned nine striking parallels that demonstrate a direct dependence.[16] I will explore three parallels here. First, Justin quotes the Genesis passage in an abbreviated form, and Irenaeus uses the same abbreviated form. Second, Justin observes that Judah is the ancestor of the Jews, and Irenaeus does likewise. While the detail seems insignificant, Robinson correctly underscores that Justin's context demands the inclusion of this fact, since Justin is writing to pagans who were unfamiliar with the intricacies of Jewish history. Conversely, for the well-instructed Christian for whom Irenaeus wrote the *Epid.*, the detail is superfluous. Third, Justin interprets the robe of the prince of Judah in the Genesis passage as "those who believe on him,"[17] or in other words, the Church. Robinson claims this interpretation is Justin's personal opinion and contrasts it to the more universal interpretation, which

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heresies, of which Marcionism would have comprised one section. Munier, *SC* 507:20n1. Justin refers to his *Syntagma* in 1 *Apol.* 26, and the context of his citation indeed suggests the presence of anti-Marcion material in this work. As neither Justin nor Eusebius mention a work entitled *Against Marcion*, Munier's conclusion seems preferable although it is impossible to be certain.

[14] *Haer* 1.28.1.

[15] Robinson, intro. and trans., *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (London: S.P.C.K., 1920).

[16] Robinson, *Demonstration*, 7-11.

[17] 1 *Apol.* 32, as quoted in Robinson, *Demonstration*, 8.

held the robe to signify Christ's passion.[18] Although the interpretation is absent from tradition prior to Justin, Irenaeus also interprets of the robe in this passage as the Church, suggesting that he acquired this interpretation from the Martyr.

To this evidence, I would add the similarity in the two figures' understandings of the Old Testament theophany passages. Justin interprets the subject of these various appearances of God as the Logos rather than the Most High God. His principle examples of the theophanies include: (1) the visitation of the three angels to Abraham at Mamre, (2) the angel who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, (3) the Lord who appeared and spoke to Jacob in his vision of the ladder, and (4) the visitation to Moses in the burning bush. Irenaeus offers the same interpretation of the Old Testament theophanies, and in *Epid.* 44-46, he uses the same four scriptural examples.[19] The use of the same four theophany stories, when other available examples seem more obvious or appropriate,[20] along with Robinson's arguments sufficiently demonstrate the influence Justin had on his Lyonnaise pupil.

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[18] Robinson, *Demonstration*, 8.

[19] With the visitation to Jacob, Justin also highlights the account of the man who wrestled with Jacob as a manifestation of the Logos, a story which Irenaeus does not mention. Nonetheless, Justin's account of Jacob's story in *Dial.* 58.10-11 confirms his greater interest in the ladder vision because here, rather than the wrestling episode, the Lord speaks to Jacob. Moreover, when Justin recounts the theophany examples in a summary fashion in *Dial.* 86, he highlights only the ladder vision. Irenaeus is drawn to the ladder vision as opposed to the wrestling account because in the ladder he finds a type of the cross. See *Epid.* 45.

[20] For example, although Theophilus possesses the same understanding of the Old Testament theophanies as Justin, he utilizes an altogether different scriptural example to make his point, namely the voice of God in the garden of Eden, which calls to Adam (*Autol.* 2.22). More obvious examples than those used by Justin and Irenaeus, may include the story of the Lord leading the Israelites through the desert by a pillar of cloud and fire or the Lord's appearance to Moses on Sinai in the clouds and thunder.

1.2.2 Theophilus

A second important influence on Irenaeus' thought is Theophilus of Antioch. Unlike with his use of Justin, Irenaeus does not cite Theophilus by name or directly quote his work; furthermore, no compelling geographical evidence suggests the connection.[21] Nonetheless, a significant number of parallels exist between the works of the two writers, and these parallels suggest a literary connection. While earlier scholars noted the parallels,[22] the posthumous work of Friedrich Loofs was the first to make a thorough and decisive link between the two writers.[23] In fact, Loofs attempted to demonstrate through the tools of source criticism[24] that significant portions of *Haer.* consisted of unattributed, direct quotes from Theophilus' lost work *Against Marcion.*[25] Unfortunately, Loofs' influential work caused a general devaluing of the unity of Irenaeus' thought and of Irenaeus as an original thinker among scholars in the years following the publication of

[21] Although Irenaeus originated in Asia Minor, roughly the same area as Antioch, by the time Theophilus writes, and by the time Irenaeus shows evidence of knowing him (see below p. 26n28), he is already in Lyons, far removed from Antioch. On the other hand, the connection between the churches of Asia Minor and the churches of Gaul (see above p. 21n10) would have made it possible for someone traveling from Antioch to Lyons to provide Irenaeus with Theophilus' work. For the specifics of Theophilus' setting, see below pp. 51-52.

[22] Notably, Robinson, *Demonstration*, 49-60.

[23] Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochien adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bein Irenaeus* (Leipzig, 1930).

[24] Loofs emerges from and represents a German tradition of scholarship devoted to identifying the sources that make up a historical work, the so-called "*Quellenforschung*." In particular, Loofs' method originated in observations made by Harnack and Bousset. Loofs' point of departure emerges in his identifying supposedly incompatible theological ideas within Irenaeus' work (e.g. *Adoptionschristologie* and *Geistchristologie*) and attributing them to different sources apart from any prior attempt to identify an alternate reason that would account for the discrepancy (such as the progression of Irenaeus' thought), much less an attempt to identify coherence.

[25] In his list of Theophilus' works, Eusebius mentions a work against Marcion (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.24). Loofs bases his argument for the connection between Theophilus and Irenaeus on this work, as opposed to the extant *Autol.*, because the reference to Marcus Aurelius' death (180 C.E.) in *Autol.* 3.27 makes the latter work contemporary with Irenaeus' *Haer.* and makes the literary dependence he discerns impossible. Nonetheless, Loofs also notes a number of significant parallels between *Haer.* and *Autol.* as a means of justifying his reconstructions project. Loofs, *Theophilus*, 67-70.

Loofs' work.[26] The latter half of the last century witnessed an increasing trend among scholars to reject Loofs' atomistic approach to Irenaeus while at the same time retaining his insights regarding the connection between Irenaeus and Theophilus.[27] While the connection between Irenaeus and Theophilus still is not accepted as widely as the connection between Irenaeus and Justin, the majority opinion after Loofs asserts that Irenaeus knew and was influenced by Theophilus' work. However, against Loofs' reconstruction of a non-extant work, scholars now demonstrate the parallels between Irenaeus' work and Theophilus' *Autol.*[28]

Two parallels central to Loofs' thesis remain critical in demonstrating Theophilus' influence upon Irenaeus. The first parallel features the common use of the

[26] The three decades following Loofs' work are marked by a paucity of studies dedicated to Irenaeus' comprehensive thought, a decisive shift from Irenaean scholarship prior to the appearance of Loofs' work. On this shift, see Benoît, *Saint Irénée*, 37. The exception here is Hitchcock, who effectively critiqued Loofs' assumptions and methodology. Hitchcock, "Loofs' Theory of Theophilus of Antioch as a Source of Irenaeus," *JTS* 38 (1937): 130-139, 255-266. Hitchcock concluded that Irenaeus did not know Theophilus and found sources for the parallels in earlier works used by both men, e.g. Philo. With the exception of his denial that Irenaeus knew Theophilus' work, Hitchcock's work influenced those studies that began anew to consider Irenaeus' work as a unified whole and may be credited with helping to discredit Loofs' theory for later scholarship. See p. 26n27.

[27] Several important works show the flaws of Loofs' thesis and the general unity of Irenaeus' work and reversed the scholarly trend of devaluing Irenaeus, notably, Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation* and Philippe Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle Alliance selon S. Irénée: unité du livre IV de l'Adversus Haereses* (Paris and Namur: Éditions Lethielleux, Presses Universitaires de Namur, 1978). As a result of these studies, a work on Irenaeus' thought, such as the present dissertation, no longer has to justify the validity of its project against Loofs' conclusions.

[28] Kretschmar determined that the parallels connecting Irenaeus and Theophilus could not be attributed to *Autol.* alone, but he did not repeat Loofs' method of reconstructing lost sources. Kretschmar, *Trinitätstheologie,* 34-36. The most significant work on the relationship between Theophilus and Irenaeus in recent years is Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit,* 151-159, a version of which also is printed as "Dating Irenaeus' Acquisition of Theophilus' Correspondence *To Autolycus*: A Pneumatological Perspective," *SP* 45 (2010): 397-402. Briggman's thesis asserts that Irenaeus knew and used Theophilus' *Autol.* but that he did not acquire the work until sometime in the midst of writing *Haer.* 3. This thesis explains both Irenaeus' developed pneumatology in the later books of *Haer.*, with regard to the pneumatological parallels between the two works noted here, as well as the discrepancy between the mature pneumatology of *Haer.* 3-5 and the underdeveloped pneumatology of *Haer.* 1-2. I find Briggman's thesis persuasive in explaining Irenaeus' pneumatological development and will return to his thesis in detail in chapter four. See below p. 192n68.

phrase "hands of God" to refer to the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit.[29] Both writers connect the phrase to the work of the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit in creating human beings, and both writers ground the idea in the same scriptural passage, Genesis 1:26, despite the absence of the phrase "hands of God" in that verse (and its presence elsewhere in Scripture). For Theophilus and Irenaeus, Genesis 1:26 provides an account of God's command to his agents, the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit, to create human beings.

A second parallel between Theophilus and Irenaeus concerns the identification of the title "Sophia" (σοφία, Wisdom) with the Holy Spirit. As such, for both writers the Sophia/Spirit is eternal to the same degree that the Logos/Son is eternal—God is never without his Reason and Wisdom, respectively. Moreover, both figures quote the same verse in connection with the identification, namely, Psalm 33/2:6.[30] In fact, both writers use the passage not only to support the identification of the Holy Spirit and the Sophia of God, but also to develop their twin notions of a double agent theory of creation as noted above.[31]

Perhaps even more compelling evidence of the connection between Irenaeus and Theophilus than the parallels themselves is the absence of these theological tropes in

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[29] Compare *Autol.* 2.18 and *Haer.* 4.20.1, among others. In chapter five, I will discuss the "hands of God" image as a Trinitarian image. See below pp. 249-253.

[30] *Autol.* 1.7. *Haer.* 1.22.1, 3.8.3, *Epid.* 5. Although, as Briggman correctly observes, only with the third citation of the Ps. 33/2:6 does Irenaeus support a double agent theory of creation in the manner of *Autol.* 1.7. The first two uses support the agency of the Logos alone. This observation is crucial to Briggman's argument that Irenaeus has not acquired *Autol.* until sometime after writing *Haer.* 3.8.3. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit,* 151-159.

[31] Regarding the history of interpretation of this passage and the uniqueness of Theophilus' interpretation, see Bertrand de Margerie, "Insinuations Trinitaires dans le Psaume 33 (32), 6 chez les pères de l'Eglise et notamment chez saint Basile," *Aug* 40.1 (2000): 35-41. In chapter four, I will show that Irenaeus makes the Sophia-Spirit connection prior to his contact with Theophilus' work, but he does not develop the image to any significant degree until after he has read Theophilus. See below pp. 193-202. The Antiochene's work gave Irenaeus the scriptural and traditional grounding he needed to expand the image that otherwise was at odds with Paul's interpretation.

other writers of the same period. For example, while precedence exists for referring to the "hand of God" or the "finger of God" to describe the act of creation in the Jewish Scriptures, few writers before Theophilus and Irenaeus draw upon the image.[32] More to the point, nearly all Christian writers prior to Theophilus refer to the Logos as an agent of creation, but no Christian writer includes the Spirit as a creator along with the Logos.[33] Likewise, early Christians, following Paul, almost unanimously understood "Sophia" as a title for the pre-existent Christ.[34] Only Theophilus identifies the pre-existent Sophia with the Holy Spirit,[35] thus distinguishing the Holy Spirit from the pre-existent Logos.[36] Irenaeus makes the same identification and in so doing, he departs from two of his most trusted sources, namely Paul and Justin.[37] Given the authority that Irenaeus places on the apostle Paul and tradition in general, it is unlikely that he would have developed the Sophia-Spirit identification apart from a significant and trusted source. Theophilus' status as bishop of an ancient church (Paul's original church, no less) would have qualified him

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[32] I will discuss in detail the scriptural source of this imagery in chapter five. Hitchcock notes Philo as a possible precedent for Irenaeus' use of the "hands of God" image, although he does not show conclusively that Irenaeus knew Philo. Hitchcock, "Loofs' Theory," 131-132.

[33] In chapter four, I will suggest a Jewish background for the Spirit as Creator image, and I will argue that while Irenaeus originally did not obtain the idea from Theophilus, his reading of Theophilus and the scriptural passages Theophilus uses to ground the idea encourages Irenaeus to develop the Spirit as Creator tradition as a significant component of his pneumatology. See below pp. 203-210.

[34] Paul called Christ the "Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). Justin called Christ the "Wisdom" of God as well, and he connected this figure to the personified, pre-existent Wisdom figure of Prov. 8 in *Dial.* 61.1, 3. I will return to the use of "Wisdom" as a christological and pneumatological title and its connection to Prov. 8:22, in more detail in chapters three and four.

[35] *Autol.* 2.10, 2.17.

[36] Theophilus is not always consistent in this identification (e.g. *Autol.* 2.22), and I will explore some of these inconsistencies in chapter four below. One weakness of Loofs' theory, as Hitchcock rightly observes, is the failure to acknowledge these inconsistencies in Theophilus' thought, which make it difficult to suggest Irenaeus' whole scale adoption of Theophilus when he does not show the same inconsistency in his attribution. Hitchcock, "Loofs' Theory," 132. Irenaeus might have fixed these contradictions intentionally, but such an assertion attributes more theological acumen to Irenaeus than Loofs allows.

[37] This creates the triad of God-Word-Wisdom that Kretschmar, for example, sees as the most significant correspondence between Irenaeus and Theophilus. Following Loofs, Kretschmar argues that Irenaeus adopted it from the Antiochene bishop without significant alteration. Kretschmar, *Trinitätstheologie,* 27-36.

as a significant source in Irenaeus' mind. While other parallels could be named, these two sufficiently support the growing scholarly consensus that Irenaeus knew and was influenced by Theophilus.[38]

1.2.3 His Opponents

A third influence on Irenaeus' thought, although of a different kind, involves the various sects against which he wrote *Haer.* and which he would have encountered during his stay in Rome known collectively as "Gnostics."[39] Book One of *Haer.* opens with a

[38] Other examples include the idea that Adam and Eve were created as innocent children and the exegesis of Gen. 1 that understands ἀρχή as a reference to the Logos and his work in creation.

[39] Increasingly, scholars avoid this title because of its lack of precision—the varying sects known as "Gnostics" have many distinguishing characteristics. Even a title such as "Valentinianism" is of little use, as already ancient sources (*e.g.* Tertullian, Hippolytus) had separated Valentinianism into two separate Eastern and Western schools. See Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 39-45. Still, scholars of "Gnosticism" often attempt to identify a loose set of core beliefs uniting all of the different "Gnostic" communities. For example, Alistair H.B. Logan persuasively argues for the existence of an original, foundational "Gnostic" myth from which derived the various expressions of "Gnosticism" at the end of the second century. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy: A Study in the History of Gnosticism* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), esp. chapter 2. In Logan's reading, he finds three principle components encompassing the subjects of theogony/cosmogony, anthropology, and soteriology. These three central components align with the doctrinal emphases linking the various groups Irenaeus addresses in *Haer.* 1. Similarly, Thomassen identifies the soteriological myth of Sophia's fall and subsequent restoration as common to all Valentinian schools, although the names of the Aeons and the manner of Sophia's restoration differ. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 35. The following is not a comprehensive account of "Gnosticism" or even Valentinianism, both of which are subjects to themselves. In my brief account, I am interested only in the aspects of Valentinianism that bear on Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. These aspects include their understanding of the First Aeon and the subsequent origin of the Aeons that constitute the divine *Pleroma*, often referred to as the Valentinian theory of emission or emanation (προβολή). All of these elements are included in *Haer.* 1.1-9, the teachings of the followers of Ptolemaeus, a pupil of Valentinus (see *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2). These details affect the manner in which Irenaeus conceives of God/Father (the subject of chapter two), as well as the manner in which Irenaeus understands the relationship between the Son and Spirit to the Father (the subjects of chapters three and four), and the Triune God as a whole in relation to creation (the subject of chapter five). Moreover, I am interested in the Valentinian account of creation, as Irenaeus counters this understanding with his own account of the Logos' good work of material creation, which forms a crucial part of chapter three. I am not interested in reconstructing "Gnostic" beliefs from the texts found at Nag Hammadi and assessing Irenaeus' accuracy in reporting. Michel Desjardins has called into question this method of ascertaining the accuracy of Irenaeus' reports, and I am in agreement with him that no *a priori* reason exists for assuming the documents of Nag Hammadi more accurate in recounting Valentinianism than Irenaeus' reports. Desjardins, "The Sources for Valentinian Gnosticism: A Question of Methodology," *VC* 40 (1986): 342-347. Nonetheless, even if this comparative exercise offers meaning, such meaning is ancillary to my thesis. Irenaeus formulated his arguments and his theology to meet the challenges of "Gnostic" theology *as he perceived them*. As such,

detailed exposition of the various systems, beliefs, and practices of these sects that Irenaeus understands as deviating from the apostles' true teaching as handed down by the Church's *regula.* The primary "Gnostic" sect or school to which Irenaeus devotes his polemic, as indicated both by the preface of *Haer.* 1 and the text of *Haer.* 2, is Valentinianism, including the schools following Ptolemaeus, Secundus, Marcus, and other unnamed masters.[40] Irenaeus addresses several other schools that lack much common emphases with those of the Valentinians.[41] Although reasons for the emergence

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my thesis depends only on Irenaeus' perceptions of their teaching. In my study of "Gnosticism," I have found most helpful the works by Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity,* 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), Logan, *Gnostic Truth*, Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, and the various articles in *A Companion to the Second Century Christian "Heretics,"* eds. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008).

[40] Irenaeus writes in the preface, "Therefore, we will see to it that it will not be our fault if some are snatched away, like sheep by wolves, whom they fail to recognize because of the treachery of the sheepskin, since they speak the same language we do, but intend different meanings. Of such the Lord admonished us to beware. And so, after chancing upon the commentaries of the disciples of Valentinus—as they style themselves—and after conversing with some of them and becoming acquainted with their doctrine, we thought it necessary to inform you, about these portentous and profound 'mysteries' which not all grasp, because not all have purged their brains…We are speaking of the disciples of Ptolemaeus, an offshoot of the Valentinian school." *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2, Unger, 21-22. Irenaeus reports that Valentinus taught in Rome throughout the bishoprics of Hyginus, Pius, and Anicetus, at least from 140-155 C.E. (*Haer.* 3.3.4). On the biography of Valentinus, see Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed,* 417-422. Thomassen has argued that Irenaeus uses the title "the Valentinians" in two different ways, first to refer to the school of thought that constituted his primary opponents, the Ptolemaean Valentinians, outlined in the first nine chapters of *Haer.* 1 and second to refer to Valentinianism as a whole, which encompasses a much broader set of schools and beliefs. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 13-17. In general, I refer to Irenaeus' opponents as the Valentinians in Thomassen's first sense in order to avoid the ambiguity of the term "Gnostics" (see above p. 29n39) and because Irenaeus is most concerned to dispute the teaching of the Ptolemaean Valentinians. Despite the multiplicity of Valentinian schools outlined in *Haer.* 1, the content of *Haer.* 1.1-9 takes a central place in his polemic of later books.

[41] Regarding the relationship of these alternate sects to Valentinus, I am persuaded by Joel Kalvesmaki's lucid reading of *Haer.* 1 in "The Original Sequence of Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1: Another Suggestion," *JECS* 15:3 (2007): 407-417. Kalvesmaki posits two separate lines of school successions, first those schools following Valentinus and occupying the majority of *Haer.* 1.1.1-1.21.5, and second those schools following Simon and occupying *Haer.* 1.22.1-1.30.2. While Kalvesmaki's reading of Irenaeus' breakdown of the state of "Gnosticism" can be accepted apart from his alternate ordering of *Haer.* 1, his alternate order relieves some of the difficulties of *Haer.* 1. This reading also fits well with the majority opinion in scholarship that *Haer.* 1.22.1-1.30.2 is not original to Irenaeus, but is instead copied from another source, possibly Justin. Conversely, for a strong presentation that this material is original to Irenaeus, see Phoebe Perkins, "Irenaeus and the Gnostics," *VC* 30 (1976): 193-200. Whether this material is original to Irenaeus or source material is incidental for my purposes. That he incorporates the material into his detailed exposition indicates his acceptance of the accounts as reliable.

of these "Gnostic" groups are unclear,[42] by the end of the second century, they had attracted a large following of people, many of whom had once been members of what Irenaeus deems the true or universal Church.[43]

As a whole, "Gnosticism" is identified commonly as a "religion of saving knowledge."[44] This description agrees with Irenaeus' description of the Valentinians insofar as the content of that saving knowledge is precisely the intricate protology and cosmogony that stands at the heart of his exposition.[45] A few details of their belief

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[42] One of the perennial scholarly debates in the field of "Gnosticism" has regarded when or why the various "Gnostic" sects arose. Irenaeus' attribution of it to Simon Magus (*Haer.* 1.23.2) is polemical and likely apocryphal, but it raises the deeper issue of whether "Gnosticism" predated Christianity or is a phenomenon of Christianity, alone. For a good summary of the various debates in scholarship over the beginnings of "Gnosticism," see the introduction to Logan, *Gnostic Truth*, xiii-xxi. For the better part of the twentieth century, the dominant opinion has been that "Gnosticism" predated Christianity and had its roots in Jewish speculative thought. More recently, Logan has argued that "Gnosticism" can be understood only as a uniquely Christian phenomenon. Fantino holds a similar thesis. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 145-150.

[43] Irenaeus writes in one place that "Gnostics" had "sprung up and shot out of the ground like mushrooms" indicating the great variety of schools as well as, perhaps, a broad geographical area in which they appeared. *Haer.* 1.29.1, Unger, 93. Many scholars posit that the rapid growth of the various "Gnostic" schools stemmed from an active program of proselytizing on the part of the various sects. See, for example, Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 135. While Rome was certainly the epicenter of the movement, there is evidence of its presence in Alexandria, Asia Minor, and Syria as well. Whether the "Gnostics" had reached Irenaeus' province of Gaul is debated. Enslin, for example, believed that "Gnosticism did not threaten the church in Gaul." Therefore, he could not explain Irenaeus' interest in the question. Enslin, "Irenaeus," 147. Conversely, Mary Ann Donovan argues that until the time of Irenaeus, the "Gnostics" had been a part of the community at Lyons. Her argument rests on the familiarity with which the "Gnostics" handled Christian property, such as Scripture. She writes, "Their familiarity with Scripture, the claim that they present themselves under false colors, the claim that they operate as wolves among the lambs, and the Irenaean concern for the impact of Valentinian interpretation on 'the weak' of the community suggest [their presence in the Church]." Donovan, *One Right Reading: A Guide to Irenaeus* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 32. Cf. Nautin, *Lettres et Écrivains*, 99-100. In favor of the latter thesis, I note that Irenaeus reports that Marcus' disciples are "in our own regions around the Rhone." *Haer.* 1.13.7, Unger, 58. Moreover, the fervor with which Irenaeus writes against these groups is strong circumstantial evidence that his own church was also being influenced by these "Gnostic" schools. The evidence supports at least a minimal "Gnostic" presence in Gaul.

[44] Grant, *Gnosticism*, 10. Similarly, Giovanni Filorano writes, "Second-century Gnosticism is therefore characterized by a particular Gnosis…based on the divine communal nature of the divine spark, the luminous, pneumatic element, which must be reawakened and reintegrated into the divine world." Filorano, *A History of Gnosticism*, trans. Anthony Alcock (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 144. Harnack writes, "The name Gnosis, Gnostics, describes excellently the aims of Gnosticism, in so far as its adherents boasted of the absolute knowledge, and faith in the Gospel was transformed into a knowledge of God, nature and history." Harnack, *History of Dogma* 1:231.

[45] Filorano correctly brings out the connection between the saving knowledge that involves the recognition of the divine spark within the true "Gnostic" and the knowledge of the cosmos in the "Gnostic" imagination. He writes, "In Gnostic vocabulary [*gnōsis*] has undergone a profound transformation. *Gnōsis* is now used in an absolute way to indicate a form of meta-rational knowledge, which is the gift of divinity

system, as Irenaeus presents it, are pertinent to the present dissertation. According to Irenaeus, the Valentinians believed in the existence of an eternal, perfect Aeon who was "incomprehensible and invisible, eternal and unbegotten…"[46] This Aeon, also called the First-Source, the First-Father, and the Abyss, was located in a certain place, namely, the "invisible and indescribable heights."[47] He exists in the beginning only with his Thought, also called Grace and Silence,[48] a separate Aeon who emanated from the First-Father.[49] From the union of these two original Aeons, more Aeons emanated in male and female

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and has in it the power to save the one who achieves it. It enables one to take possession of the keys to the cosmic mystery, to solve the enigma of the universe by absorbing the *axis mundi*, or world axis, of archaic cosmogonies into the very essence of one's generation." Filorano, *History of Gnosticism*, 39. Similarly, Balthasar writes of the "Gnostic" system, "Never have man, his structure, his sufferings and his tragedy, been more plainly projected on to the screen of heaven in order to fascinate him and, professedly, to redeem him by the contemplation of this magnified image of himself." Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord* 2:33. These observations suggests that when Irenaeus attacks and dismantles the "Gnostic" protology and cosmogony in *Haer.* 2, he is dismantling the very core of the "Gnostic" religion.

[46] *Haer.* 1.1.1. The Greek forms of these descriptors are ἀχώρητος, ἀόρατος, ἀΐδιός, and ἀόρατος. The Greek fragment comes from Epiphanius' *Panarion*, which provides the Greek for the first 11 chapters of *Haer.* 1. See Rousseau, *SC* 263:66-73.

[47] *Haer.* 1.1.1. The Greek forms of these titles are: Προαρχή, Προπάτορα, and Βυθός. As with much of the technical language of the Valentinians, the Latin translator simply transliterated these titles into the Latin: Proarche, Propater, and Bythos. The practice of giving Aeons alternate names is common in Valentinianism, and Irenaeus often switches back and forth between the titles he uses. Moreover, many of the titles overlap resulting in occasional difficulties in deciphering exactly which Aeon Irenaeus is referring to at any given point in the exposition.

[48] The Greek forms of these titles are: Ἔννοια, Χάρις, and Σιγή. The female nouns express the Valentinian belief that these Aeons exist in male and female pairs and reflect a crucial aspect of Valentinian theory, namely, the use of human analogy to explain divine things. The Aeons exist in male and female pairs, presumably, because humans are born out of male and female pairs. Irenaeus' description of the generation of Mind, the only clear description of the emanation process in his account, expresses the link. He writes, "At one time this Profundity (*Bythos*) decided to emit from himself the Beginning of all things. This emission would be as a 'seed' which he decided to emit and deposit as it were in the womb of Silence, who coexisted with him. After she had received this 'seed' and had become pregnant, she gave birth to Mind." *Haer.* 1.1.1, Unger, 23. I will return to the importance of the human analogy in the Valentinian scheme in chapter three. See below pp. 151-153.

[49] Irenaeus is unclear here. On the one hand, the First-Father exists alone before all other things and is the lone source of everything else, which would include his Thought. On the other hand, the Thought of the First-Father is described as his contemporary (συνυπαρχούση). The difficulty here likely emerges from the Valentinian belief that all Aeons are emanated out of a previous *pair*, making it difficult to posit that Thought was emanated by the Father alone. Still, the first two books of *Haer.* imply throughout that in the Valentinian systems, the Father is above and before all other things—everything ultimately flows from him. Adding to the difficulty is Irenaeus' description of the Nous or Mind with the title "Father" in the sense that the Mind is the Father of all the things after him, what has been called the second principle (*Haer.* 1.11.1). On this discrepancy, see François -M.-M. Sagnard, *La Gnosé Valentienne et le Témoignage de Saint Irénée* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1947), 325-331. Sagnard concludes that, despite some discrepancies, the common Valentinian practice is to associate the title "Father" with the First Aeon.

pairs, until a total of thirty existed together with the supreme God in the *Pleroma* (πλήρομα) or "Fullness."[50] These Aeons were personal, spiritual entities subsisting outside of, or distinct from, the First Aeon in a gradated or descending hierarchy of divine natures. The Aeons' lesser divine natures were the consequence of their respective emanations, both because the emanations occurred at progressively later points in time and because the emanations located the Aeons at progressively larger spatial increments from their source.[51] In other words, the later an Aeon emanated and the farther away from the source the Aeon was located, the lesser its quality of divinity. The effect of this descending hierarchy of divine beings was the presence of a "filter" between the First-Father and the material world which maintained his transcendence.[52] Therefore, space or topology is crucial to the Valentinian understanding of the divine transcendence.[53]

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[50] Irenaeus' use of the word πλήρομα is another example of the Latin translator transposing the Greek word into the Latin language. See Rousseau, *SC* 263:14-15. "Fullness" in the Latin text appears most often as *pleroma*. Occasionally the translator renders πλήρομα with other words such as *adimpletio, plenitudo,* and *pater*. Bruno Reynders, *Lexique Comparé du Texte Grec et des Versions Latine, Arménienne et Syriaque ed L' "Adversus Haereses" de Saint Irénée* (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1954), 88.

[51] *Haer.* 1.1.1, 2.1.4. Tertullian corroborates Irenaeus' reports on Ptolemaic Valentinianism's understanding of the Aeons as separate, spiritual beings existing outside of the Father. *Against the Valentinians,* 4-37. Furthermore, Tertullian reports that this understanding of the Aeons represented an innovation on the part of Ptolemaeus and that Valentinus originally had taught that the Aeons were not separate entities, but existed as the thoughts, sentiments, and emotions within the mind of the First-Father. Irenaeus does not report a distinction in the state of the Aeons in Valentinus' understanding. He gives the same basic account of the Aeons in *Haer.* 1.11.1, the doctrine Irenaeus attributes to Valentinus, himself. This discrepancy is the one of the reasons Thomassen does not view *Haer.* 1.11.1 as an authentic report of Valentinus' own teachings. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed,* 26-27. The discrepancy is not important for my purposes. In his refutation of the Valentinian theory of emanation, Irenaeus assumes that the Aeons are real entities subsisting outside of the First-Father, but who, with him, collectively form the divine *Pleroma.*

[52] The image of "filter" comes from Rousseau, and it is an effective description of this aspect of Valentinian thought. Rousseau, *SC* 293:122.

[53] Schoedel correctly underscored this spatial aspect of "Gnostic" theology, and his account will factor large in chapter two. Two articles address much of the same material, namely, Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology and Some Monistic Tendencies in Gnosticism in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig,* ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 88-108 and idem., "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Christian Doctrine of God," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant,* eds. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken, Théologie Historique 53 (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 75-86.

The most important of these Aeons was the first generated from the *Bythos-Ennoea* pair, the Aeon alternately called Mind, Only-Begotten, and the Beginning of all things.[54] At one place, Irenaeus describes the Mind as "similar and equal to his Father who emitted him…"[55] Specifically, this Aeon is the Beginning of all other Aeons that constitute the divine Fullness. He is more distinguished in divinity than the rest of the Aeons precisely because he emanated prior to them; as such, he is physically closest to his source. This proximity is important because it allows the Mind to contemplate the greatness of the First-Father, a privilege not given to the other Aeons. Irenaeus writes, "Mind alone enjoyed himself in contemplating the Father and exulted in considering his immeasurable greatness. He was thinking of communicating Father's greatness also to the rest of the Aeons, how vast and great he is, and that he is without beginning, immeasurable, and incapable of being seen. But at the will of the Father, Silence restrained him, because she wished to get them all to have the mind and the desire to seek after their First-Father mentioned above."[56] Therefore, the Valentinian First-Father is unknown, hidden, and transcendent even to the semi-divine spiritual beings. The Mind's proximity to his source provides him the ability to contemplate the First-Father, in the same way that the distance of the other Aeons to their source precludes their contemplation. A spatial or topological understanding of the divine *Pleroma* provides the logic of this understanding.

The Aeons' desire to contemplate the First-Father leads to the creation of the material world. Specifically, Sophia (σοφία, Wisdom), the last Aeon to be emitted,

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[54] The Greek forms of these names are: Νοῦς, Μονογενής, and Ἀρχὴν τῶν πάτων. Houssiau observes that of all the Aeons of the *Pleroma*, only the Mind properly emanates from the First-Father, which is likely the justification for its alternate title Only-Begotten. Houssiau, *Christologie*, 42.

[55] *Haer.* 1.1.1, Unger 23.

[56] *Haer.* 1.2.1, Unger, 25.

desired to contemplate the First-Father out of turn. As a result, she "fell into extreme agony because of the immense height and unsearchable nature of the Father…"[57] and inadvertently created from herself a formless and evil passion. Sophia is restored to the *Pleroma* by an Aeon named Limit who is emitted after the original 29 Aeons. Limit restores Sophia by physically separating the unholy passion from her.[58] Limit subsequently serves as the gate or "stake" that prevents Sophia's separated passion, called Achamoth (Hebrew for Wisdom), from entry into the *Pleroma*.[59] Material creation ultimately stems from this separated and unintended passion. Irenaeus writes, "This [emotion], they say, became the origin and substance from which this world was constituted."[60] Thus, the Valentinians understood material creation not as the First-Father's good gift and intention but as an unintended abortion or mistake, the result of a passion barred from the presence of the First-Father and physically separated from him

[57] *Haer.* 1.2.2, Unger, 25. I note again the spatial imagery employed. Sophia falls from the heights in which the *Pleroma* is located into a place below the *Pleroma*, which ultimately becomes the place of material creation. I use feminine pronouns to refer to the "Gnostic" Sophia because she is the female Aeon of her pair. When I refer to the Apologists' and Irenaeus' use of "Sophia" to refer to the Son and Spirit respectively, I will use male pronouns in conformity with traditional language used of God. Nevertheless, none of these figures draw any significance for the gender of divine entities with their titles in the manner of the Valentinians.

[58] *Haer.* 1.2.4.

[59] *Haer.* 1.2.2, 4. Limit also is called Stake, Redeemer, Reaper, Limiter, and Restorer. The titles convey a somewhat contradictory, double meaning of an agent who restores or saves and an agent who fences off or keeps out. This contradiction can be explained by Limit's role as redeemer in regard to Sophia but gatekeeper in regard to Achamoth. Limit is one of four Aeons emitted after the fall of Sophia and, as a result, exists outside the *Pleroma*, although not as a result of passion, as is the case with Sophia prior to her restoration. Christ and Holy Spirit are two Aeons emitted "for the stability and support of the Fullness." *Haer.* 1.2.5, Unger, 26. They reveal to the Aeons the knowledge of the First-Father so that none of them will repeat Sophia's mistake. Nevertheless, the content of the knowledge does not reveal the First-Father's nature, which the Valentinians consider unknowable. The Aeons only learn from Christ and the Holy Spirit that "[the First-Father] is immeasurable and incomprehensible, and that he cannot be seen or heard." *Haer.* 1.2.5, Unger, 26. The only thing that can be comprehended of him is his Only-Begotten, that is, the third Aeon called "Mind." The Holy Spirit taught the Aeons to appreciate where they were in the creation and not to pursue more knowledge in the manner of Sophia. The Savior, last to be emitted, is the result of this teaching. He is emitted from the best and most beautiful part of all of the Aeons in gratitude to the First-Father.

[60] *Haer.* 1.4.2, Unger, 31.

by a series of Aeons.[61] Instead, the Valentinians attribute the material creation to a second god, called the "Demiurge," who is ignorant of the First-Father.[62] As a product of ignorance, the material creation is inherently evil and unredeemable.[63]

Finally, the Valentinians identify the ignorant, Demiurgic God with the God of the Jews and the God revealed in the Jewish Scriptures or Old Testament. As such, he is not the God revealed by Jesus Christ in the early Christian writings and teachings passed down by the apostles. This God, rather, is the First-Father or the First Aeon; the Jewish Scriptures are rejected or allegorized to the point of irrelevancy. Furthermore, the division in the Godhead is the basis of the radical dualism of the Valentinian system, which Irenaeus deems its primary error. This division is the focus of his rhetorical response in *Haer.* 2 and the basis for his own exposition of the unity of God.

The division of the Godhead into two competing gods, apart from the series of Aeons, is also the central tenet of Marcionism and explains Irenaeus' inclusion of the

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[61] *Haer.* 1.2.3, 1.4.1.

[62] The Valentinian account of the production of material creation, and the role of the Demiurge in the process, is rather convoluted. According to Irenaeus, the Valentinians believed that Achamoth was a formless substance, and due to this, the Aeon called Christ takes pity on her and goes beyond the Limit to give her an ensouled substance. This ensouled substance is not spiritual like the Aeons, but is liable to suffer. Achamoth goes searching for this Christ who has left her, but Christ, not wanting to go back, sends the Savior instead who comforts her. From his instigation, then, Achamoth in turn, gives form to another ensouled substance, who is the Demiurge (*Haer.* 1.4.1, 5-1.5.1). Cf. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 171-175. This account, incidentally, is also the justification of the Valentinian understanding of anthropology that consists of three substances, namely the spiritual, the ensouled or psychic, and the material (*Haer.* 1.5-7). The first, that which is not prone to suffer or fall, is the Aeons of the *Pleroma*, which also correspond to the "Gnostics" themselves. The second, prone to suffer but also able to be saved, is the Achamoth and corresponds to the vast majority of people in the Church. The third, which is incapable of salvation and has no spiritual substance whatsoever, corresponds to those outside the Church.

[63] Harnack described "Gnosticism" as "the acute secularizing or Hellenization of Christianity…" Harnack, *History of Dogma* 1:226. His observation underscores the degree to which "Gnosticism" moved doctrine into the realm of ideas. As with much of philosophy in the second century, salvation for the "Gnostics" did not include the material world or the physical body (*Haer.* 1.6.2, 21.4, 24.5). The need to reclaim the inherent goodness of God's creation is often the focus of accounts of Irenaeus' treatise, although it will be of little account here.

tenets of Cerdo and Marcion in his catalogue of "Gnostic" heresies in *Haer.* 1.[64] A historical study of Marcion, such as the still unsurpassed work by Harnack,[65] suggests the degree to which Marcion's beliefs differed from those of the Valentinians and other variations of "Gnosticism." For example, Marcion's thought reveals little evidence of the extreme allegorizing project of the Valentinians.[66] Moreover, his work does not contain an intricate prolotological account as witnessed in the various systems of the Valentinians.[67] Despite these key differences, Irenaeus moves seamlessly from the various schools of "Gnosticism" to the tenets of Cerdo and Marcion.

The reason for this inclusion is not, as some scholars have suggested, that Marcion himself is a "Gnostic,"[68] nor is it simply that Irenaeus was using source material

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[64] Despite the convergence with "Gnosticism," Irenaeus also would have been led to refute Marcion and his followers for practical reasons. By all accounts, Marcion was persuasive in his teaching and, like the "Gnostics," had attracted a large number of followers. Tertullian reports that he came to Rome around 140 C.E. where he donated to the church some 200,000 sesterces (Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics*, 30). He was welcomed by the church, although after a period of four years, his unique understanding of Christianity became suspect among the leadership. In 144 C.E., he broke from the church and established a rival community in Rome based on his understandings of "authentic" Christianity. Heikki Räisänen, "Marcion," in *Christian "Heretics,"* 100-124. Justin, writing around a decade after Marcion broke from the church at Rome, reports that he was still alive and that his teaching had "caused many of every race of men and women to speak blasphemies and to deny that God is the Maker of this universe…" 1 *Apol.* 26, Barnard, 41. Allowing for hyperbole, the statement demonstrates the popularity Marcion's beliefs must have had.

[65] *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, trans., John E. Steely and Lye D. Bierma (Durham, N.C.: The Labyrinth Press, 1990).

[66] Harnack consistently emphasizes Marcion's simplicity and efforts to simplify Christianity, in contrast to the intricate protology and mythical elements of "Gnosticism." Harnack, *Marcion,* 12-14, 21-24, 65-67. Moreover, Marcion's original work *Antithesis* demonstrates the lack of recourse to allegory. See Harnack's helpful reconstruction. *Marcion,* 53-63. For more on the *Antithesis,* see below p. 38n70.

[67] Minns writes, "Marcion, for example, did not concern himself with the question of where the God who created this world came from or how he was related to the God of love revealed by Jesus Christ. He simply insisted that there was absolutely no relationship between the two: rather there existed a vast, impassable gulf between them." Minns, *Irenaeus,* 26. This lack of speculation stands in contrast to the intricate details of the production of the Demiurge in Valentinianism. See above p. 36n62.

[68] The relation of Marcion to other "Gnostic" teachers is an open one, although I think it clear, given the differences observed by Harnack, that Marcion is not a "Gnostic" in any traditional understanding of the term. He is included in Irenaeus' treatise because he shares the dualism in the Godhead. Irenaeus is not interested, as Harnack was, in ascertaining whether Marcion's reasons for the dualistic conception of the Godhead aligned with the reasons of the Valentinians. Irenaeus' grouping of the "Gnostics" and Marcion, despite their differences, is warranted insofar as the practical result of their respective theological systems is the same—belief in the existence of two gods, the lesser of whom is the creator of this world.

in which the tenets of Cerdo and Marcion happened to be situated, but rather that Irenaeus' primary objection with Marcion and the Marcionites aligns with his primary objection against Valentinian theology. According to Irenaeus, both systems introduce a division into the Godhead and hold that the Creator is a different God than the God revealed by Jesus Christ:

> [Marcion] advanced the most daring blasphemy against him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to himself. But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God who made the world, and coming into Judaea in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Caesar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judaea, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all of the works of that God who made the world…[69]

This programmatic description is an apt summary of the doctrine that will be the focus of Irenaeus' refutation in *Haer.* 2, and it contains a number of convergences with Irenaeus' descriptions of the Valentinians to this point. First, the God who creates this world is evil. Although not spelled out in the description of Marcion's beliefs, this belief clearly implies that the creation itself is evil. Second, Jesus came not from this creator god but from the higher "father who is above the God who made the world." The work of Christ, then, ultimately reveals a previously unknown or hidden Father and renders the Jewish Scriptures meaningless. Marcion, like the Valentinians, also had writings to help disseminate his teachings effectively.[70] Although Irenaeus likely was not ignorant of the

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[69] *Haer.* 1.27.2, ANF 1:352.

[70] Marcion's Bible was comprised of only two works, namely, the *Gospel,* an edited version of the Gospel of Luke, and the *Apostle*, an edited version of the Pauline corpus (*Haer.* 1.27.2, 3.11.7, 9, 14.4; Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.2, 5-8.). Marcion also produced an original work called the *Antitheses,* which, according to Harnack, demonstrated "the irreconcilability of the Old Testament with the gospel and its origins from a different God…" Harnack, *Marcion,* 17. As such, the *Antitheses* likely functioned as a *regula* of sorts intended to help Marcion's followers rightly interpret his truncated canon against the manner in which other Christians were reading.

differences between the various sects of his opponents—"Gnosticism" and Marcionism in particular—he does not focus on these differences for polemical purposes.[71]

Although I will argue that Irenaeus departs from the Apologists in certain areas, the nature of the Valentinians' influence upon Irenaeus should be distinguished from that of Justin and Theophilus. Justin and Theophilus' influence upon Irenaeus still may be regarded as positive, insofar as their understanding of the faith and their interpretations of Scripture are reflected and passed on in Irenaeus' thought. Conversely, the tenets of his opponents influence Irenaeus' thought only insofar as they lead him to emphasize certain truths about God he might not have emphasized, or at least might have emphasized in a different manner, had he not encountered these schools of thought.

Nonetheless, past scholarship has not acknowledged sufficiently the large amount of convergence between Irenaeus' opponents and the Apologists, specifically in those areas that have a bearing on Trinitarian theology. It is surely the case, given his acumen, that Irenaeus recognized these convergences. He avoided highlighting the convergences due to his respect for the Apologists, and Justin in particular, as authentic witnesses to the teaching of the apostles.[72] Still, his rejection of these aspects of Valentinian theology was a *de facto* rejection of the same tendencies present in the Apologists' theology and offers the best evidence of the progression in Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology from the dominant Christian thought prior to his writing.

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[71] In my treatment of Irenaeus' polemic, I will not give space to deciphering whether Irenaeus is engaged in a specific polemic against Valentinian doctrine or Marcionite doctrine, but, following Irenaeus' intention, assume that they are the same.

[72] The fact that Irenaeus does not mention Theophilus by name suggests that he is not as concerned to preserve him as a faithful witness. Although his silence either way indicates also that he does not lump Theophilus in with a lapsed figure such as Tatian. It may have been Theophilus' role as bishop that saved him on this count.

1.2.4 Philosophy

A brief word needs to be said regarding Irenaeus' indebtedness to Greek philosophy, not so much because these thought forms and methods of argumentation factor predominately in Irenaeus' thought, but because Irenaeus' posture toward Greek philosophy offers an important area of contrast to the Apologists that will resurface continually in this dissertation. On the surface, Irenaeus' assessment of philosophy is quite negative. In the course of his early argument against Valentinianism, he writes, "[The Valentinians] also bring together the things which have been said by all those who were ignorant of God, and who are termed philosophers; and sewing together, as it were, a motley garment out of a heap of miserable rags, they have, by their subtle manner of expression, furnished themselves with a cloak which is really not their own."[73] Following this statement, Irenaeus refers to the beliefs of a number of different Greek philosophers, which he alleges are part of the "Gnostic" system dressed up in different language.[74]

[73] *Haer.* 2.14.2, ANF 1:376.

[74] *Haer.* 2.14 is, thus, by far Irenaeus' most concentrated use of Greek philosophy. Benoît reports that of 35 references to Greek philosophers and beliefs in *Haer.*, 25 occur in *Haer.* 2, and 19 occur in this passage alone. Benoît, *Saint Irénée,* 65-66. With one possible exception, the other citations of philosophers in *Haer.* make the same negative point. In *Haer.* 3.25.5, Plato is cited in a positive manner against Marcion. Irenaeus writes, "Plato is proved to be more religious than these men, for he allowed that the same God was both just and good, having power over all things, and Himself executing judgment…" ANF 1:459. What follows is a quote from *Laws* 4.715e. This is a change from Irenaeus' view of Plato in *Haer.* 2 where Plato falls in the litany of philosophers from whom the "Gnostics" took their heretical ideas (*Haer.* 2.14.3-4). However, I disagree with Benoît that this discrepancy is evidence of a manifest change of heart regarding Plato between the writing of *Haer.* 2 and 3. Benoît, *Saint Irénée,* 71. Rather, it is precisely because Irenaeus maintains a negative view of Plato that the statement in *Haer.* 3.25.5 is so forceful. In effect, he is saying that even as heretical as Plato is, he is still closer to the truth about God than Marcion. Such an argument only shows the degree of apostasy into which Marcion has fallen; it by no means endorses Plato as a positive source for theology. For a similar interpretation, see W.C. Van Unnik, "Two Notes on Irenaeus," *VC* 30 (1976): 201-213. For more on Irenaeus' use of Plato, see below pp. 79-80.

Earlier scholarship took Irenaeus at his word and largely left the question of the influence of philosophy or Greek culture out of discussions of his work.[75] More recent scholarship has softened this position, concluding that Irenaeus is not entirely ignorant of the tools of Greek culture, including philosophy.[76] He seems to have been as capable as others of using philosophical source books, as indicated in the content of *Haer.* 2.14 addressed above. Moreover, as I will show momentarily, Irenaeus is not concerned, as are the Apologists, to identify convergences between Christian doctrine and Greek philosophy. Conversely, to show the convergences between his opponents and Greek

[75] For example, Audet, "Orientations Théologiques" and Enslin, "Irenaeus: Mostly Prolegomena," two otherwise comprehensive studies on Irenaeus' life, do not address the question.

[76] See, for example, Benoît, *Saint Irénée,* 55-73; Daniélou, *Gospel Message,* 357-364; Grant, "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture," *HTR* 42,1 (1949): 41-51, idem, *Irenaeus,* 41-53; Thomas C.K. Ferguson, "The Rule of Truth and Irenaean Rhetoric in Book 1 of *Against Heresies,*" *VC* 55 (2001): 356-375, Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains,* 33-104; Sagnard, *Gnosé Valentinienne,* 70-77, and Schoedel, "Philosophy and Rhetoric in the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus," *VC* 13 (1959), 22-32. Even in most of these works, the thought remains that while Irenaeus shows some familiarity with the conventions of rhetoric, he is still ignorant of philosophy. The evidence for Irenaeus' knowledge of rhetoric and rhetorical forms of argumentation is stronger than the evidence for his knowledge of philosophy. Various rhetorical devices identified by these scholars that are present in *Haer.* 1-2 include the dilemma (*Haer.* 2.3.2, 2.4.1, 2.5.3, 2.12.6), irony or parody (*Haer.* 1.11.4, 1.5.4-5), and the question (*Haer.* 2.6.1, 2.13.5). Grant notes the evidence that Irenaeus was familiar with rhetorical modes of expression in his denial of studying rhetoric at the outset of his work. Irenaeus writes, "You will not expect from us, who live with the Celts and most of the time use the language of barbarians, either the art of rhetoric which we did not learn, or the skill of a writer which we have not exercised, or elegance of language or persuasion which we do not know." *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2-3, quoted in Grant, *Irenaeus,* 47. Such a denial of flair for rhetoric was common in rhetorical writings. Moreover, Grant shows the use of three common rhetorical terms as central to Irenaeus' theological vision, namely, *hypothesis, oikonomia,* and *anakephalaiôs.* See Grant, *Irenaeus,* 47-51. I would add that Irenaeus demonstrates familiarity with Homer, whose writings were fixtures in rhetorical studies. See Grant, "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture," 48. Most telling as to Irenaeus' level of familiarity with the poet is his appearance in *Haer.* 1.9.4. In an attempt to demonstrate the absurdity of the Valentinians' method of interpreting Scripture, Irenaeus strings together ten different Homeric lines from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to compose a rather nonsensical paragraph. He writes, "What simple-minded person would not be misled by these verses and believe that Homer composed them in that manner for that very theme? One who is well-versed in Homeric themes will recognize the verse, but he will not recognize the theme, since he knows that some of them were spoken of Ulysses, others of Hercules himself, others of Priam, others of Menelaus and Agamemnon." *Haer.* 1.9.4, Unger, 48. Leaving aside the effective rhetorical tool Irenaeus employs here, the method itself requires more than a surface knowledge of Homer. Irenaeus clearly presents himself as "one who is well-versed in Homeric themes" and he is able to employ this method only because he is comfortable in the world of Homer. If he was not, he would risk employing the very method of interpretation of which he is so critical. For these reasons, I agree with Grant that "in rhetoric as in Christianity [Irenaeus] was an apt and intelligent pupil." Grant, "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture," 51. The familiarity with rhetoric and rhetorical forms of argumentation serve him well in *Haer.*1-2, the content of which is a rhetorical and logical argument against Valentinian doctrine. See below p. 45.

philosophy proved an effective rhetorical tool for discounting the validity of his opponents' beliefs. Therefore, to conclude based on the lack of philosophical examples and logic that Irenaeus necessarily has little or no knowledge of philosophy fails to consider his occasion for writing. Perhaps the most that I can conclude at this point is that Irenaeus' biography does not indicate a period of formal philosophical training, an observation manifested in his writings. Nevertheless, the difficulties he perceives with his opponents' theology were often the same difficulties resulting from an unthinking combination of the tenets of Greek philosophy and the God of Scripture. As such, Irenaeus' failure to engage philosophy on a large scale might not be the result of ignorance but of understanding—Irenaeus does not utilize Greek philosophy to the degree of the Apologists because he has understood better than them the contradictions with Scripture that such definitions inevitably produce.[77] This level of understanding would not presuppose a formal Greek education but could be gained by serious study of the philosophical source books available to him.[78]

[77] An example of this intentional rejection stemming from understanding, as opposed to ignorance, is Irenaeus' understanding of divine transcendence. As I will argue below, Irenaeus' notion of the divine transcendence is just as "Greek" as that of his Apologist and Middle Platonist counterparts. God the Father is "uncreated, invisible, Creator of all, above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God." *Epid.* 5, Behr, 43. Nevertheless, he rejects the corollary that God cannot, as a result of his transcendence, be intimately involved in material creation, a corollary that the Apologists accept. Instead, he redefines transcendence such that God is able to be involved without infringing upon his unchanging nature. For this argument, see below pp. 84-91. One could argue that his ignorance of philosophy renders him unable to grasp the fundamental inconsistency in his understanding. One could equally argue that Irenaeus' understanding of the philosophical implications of divine transcendence leads him to alter its definition to make the Greek conception compatible with the God of Scripture.

[78] The thesis of this dissertation does not rest on whether or not Irenaeus was competent in philosophy, so I have not engaged this topic to a significant degree. In addition, this list of influences is not exhaustive. For example, other scholars have underscored the importance of such influences upon Irenaeus as rhetoric, Homer, Second Temple Judaism, and other various forms of Jewish thought. I do not discount these influences upon Irenaeus or their importance to his theology in general, but for the purposes of this dissertation, they are of secondary importance. As such, I will engage them where appropriate in the following chapters.

1.3 Irenaeus' Occasion for Writing

As noted above, Irenaeus believed that the various "Gnostic" theological systems were not faithful expressions of the teaching handed down from the apostles. Moreover, he considered these communities dangerous because they were proselytizing actively and leading believers away from the true Church descended from the apostles. Irenaeus begins *Haer.* by stating this problem. He writes, "Certain people are discarding the Truth and introducing deceitful myths and endless genealogies, which, as the Apostle says, promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith. By specious argumentation, craftily patched together, they mislead the minds of the more ignorant…By cleverness with words they persuasively allure the simple folk to this style of searching, but then, absurdly, bring them to perdition by trumping up their blasphemous and impious opinion against the Creator."[79] Irenaeus determines to write against the "Gnostics" in his capacity as bishop in succession from the apostles, in order to save the people belonging to the true Church from falling into error and forfeiting their salvation in Christ.

According to Irenaeus, the "Gnostics" attracted so many people because they did not present their beliefs as dissimilar from those of the Church. They were persuasive in this endeavor first because they were deceptive about their intricate beliefs.[80] Second, they used the Church's materials and outer dressings to ground their alternate doctrine. Thus, they read the Scriptures and taught from the Scriptures. They gave their Aeons

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[79] *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*1, Unger, 21. For more on the active work of "Gnostic" communities in proselytizing, see above p. 31n43.

[80] Irenaeus writes, "Error, in fact, does not show its true self, lest on being stripped naked it should be detected. Instead, it craftily decks itself out in an attractive dress, and thus, by an outward false appearance, presents itself to the more ignorant, as truer than Truth itself, ridiculous as it is to even say this." *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2, Unger, 21.

scriptural titles. They believed in a person called Christ who was the agent of human salvation. They even believed in a historical story of salvation.[81] Nonetheless, their understandings of these doctrinal components bore no relation to the teachings handed down by the apostles and held in the Church's *regula fidei.* In a well known statement, Irenaeus summarizes their error:

> They try to adapt to their own sayings in a manner worthy of credence, either the Lord's parables, or the prophets' saying, or the apostles' words, so that their fabrication might not appear to be without witness. They disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures and, as much as in them lies, they disjoint the members of the Truth. They transfer passages and rearrange them; and, making one thing out of another, they deceive many by the badly composed phantasy of the Lord's words that they adapt. By way of illustration, suppose someone would take the beautiful image of a king, carefully made out of precious stones by a skillful artist, and would destroy the features of the man on it and change around and rearrange the jewels, and make the form of a dog, or of a fox, out of them…And suppose he would through this fanciful arrangement of the jewels deceive the inexperienced who had no idea of what the king's picture looked like, and would persuade them that this base picture of a fox is that beautiful image of the king.[82]

Elsewhere, he says more simply, "[T]hey speak the same language as we do, but intend different meanings."[83] Therefore, the challenge posed by "Gnosticism" demanded that Irenaeus carefully distinguish the true beliefs and scriptural interpretations possessed by the Church's *regula* from the false beliefs and scriptural interpretations proffered by his opponents.[84]

Irenaeus accomplishes his task in two related ways: (1) he exposes the doctrines and variant scriptural interpretations of the various "Gnostic" communities, a task, he

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[81] Fantino believes that Irenaeus' precedent for his notion of οἰκονομία, or the economy of salvation, is found in "Gnostic" theology. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, esp. 98-106.

[82] *Haer.* 1.8.1, Unger, 41.

[83] *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2, Unger, 21.

[84] See Richard A. Norris, Jr. "Theology and Language in Irenaeus of Lyon," *ATR* 76 (1994), 285-295. Although I disagree with Norris' thesis that Irenaeus is uncomfortable with the need for a *regula* and, as such, displays ambivalence in his appropriation of the *regula*, he has discerned correctly Irenaeus' motive for arguing for the Church's rule, namely, the "Gnostics" use of an alternate *regula*.

claims, never accomplished before;[85] and (2) he presents the true faith, the true understanding of Jesus' message in Scripture as passed down in the Church from the apostles and contained in the Scriptures as read through the Church's *regula*. The first task dominates *Haer.* 1 and 2. In *Haer.* 1, Irenaeus carefully describes the various doctrines of multiple "Gnostic" communities, which, as noted above, he claims to have learned through personal interaction with followers of Valentinus and through reading their commentaries on Scripture. Although Irenaeus believes the mere exposure of the "Gnostic" secret doctrines will show their error,[86] in *Haer.* 2, he engages in a logical and rhetorical argument to aid his readers in seeing the internal inconsistencies of the "Gnostic" systems.[87] Irenaeus does not turn to an argument from Scripture in full until *Haer.* 3 because, as I noted above, his opponents used Scripture to ground their beliefs. As such, his opponents first had to be exposed and then refuted by the principles of reason such that Scripture could be freed for a fresh reading according to the Church's *regula.* Although Irenaeus does not refrain from quoting Scripture and the Church's *regula* in places in *Haer.* 1-2, his intent is not to argue from Scripture in these works.

In *Haer.* 3-5 and *Epid.*, Irenaeus' focus is the second, more positive aspect of presenting the true faith passed down from the apostles. This task is required because the "Gnostics" had so badly interpreted Scripture that, to use Irenaeus' metaphor, people

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[85] Irenaeus writes, "[I]t is love that prompts us to acquaint you and all your people with the teachings which up till now have been kept secret, which, however, by the grace of God have at last come to light." *Haer.* 1.*Pref.*2, Unger, 22. Irenaeus believes that the task of exposing these secret "Gnostic" doctrines will reveal the internal errors without engaging in much argumentation.

[86] At the conclusion of *Haer.* 1, he writes, "For this reason we have endeavored to bring out into the open the entire ill-formed body of this little fox and clearly make it manifest. So that there is no longer any need for many words to overthrow their doctrine, since it has been made manifest to all." *Haer.* 1.31.4, Unger, 103.

[87] See above p. 41n76 for a discussion of Irenaeus' familiarity with the conventions of rhetoric.

could no longer recognize the good picture of the king.[88] In the preface of the *Epid.*, Irenaeus writes, "We are sending you, as it were, a summary memorandum, so that you may find much in a little, and by means of this small [work] understand all the members of the body of the truth, and through a summary receive the exposition of the things of God so that, in this way, it will bear your own salvation like fruit…"[89] In these latter books, Irenaeus turns to his proofs from Scripture read through the Church's *regula,*[90] ostensibly arguing first from the teachings of the apostles (*Haer.* 3), second from Christ's parables (*Haer.* 4), and finally from Christ's words (*Haer.* 5).[91]

The unifying feature of the different strategies and tools of the two tasks (rhetoric/logic and Scripture/*regula,* respectively) is Irenaeus' constant object to *distinguish* the true faith from that of his opponents. The last three books of *Haer.* in their entirety, as summarized in the *Epid.,* present the true content of the Church's faith. This faith is manifested largely through an extended exegesis of the Old and New Testaments as read through the *regula fidei* demonstrating the unity of the God of Israel and the Father of Jesus Christ and the subsequent unity of creation and redemption. With the exception of *Haer.* 2, then, Irenaeus primarily relies upon the language of the Church—the Scriptures and the *regula*— to discount his opponents' doctrines.

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[88] *Haer.* 1.8.1, quoted above p. 44.

[89] *Epid.* 1, Behr, 39. Both *Haer.* and *Epid.* are addressed to one person, but Irenaeus clearly intends his recipients to make his arguments known to those persons in their respective charges (*Haer.* 1.*Pref.*3, *Epid.* 1). In this respect, Irenaeus addresses his works to the whole Church, which he viewed as one unified body, although spread out over many lands and encompassing many nations, cultures, and languages (*Haer.* 1.10.1).

[90] In the preface to *Haer.* 3, Irenaeus writes, "I have sent you [certain] books, of which the first comprises the opinions of all these [heretics], and exhibits their customs, and the character of their behavior. In the second, again, their perverse teachings are cast down and overthrown, and, such as they really are, laid bare and open to view. But in this, the third book, I shall adduce proofs from the Scriptures…" *Haer.* 3.*Pref.*1, ANF 1:414.

[91] Irenaeus describes this breakdown in the preface of *Haer.* 5, although the content of each book does not stay within the parameters of the specified portions of Scripture.

2. Apologists

2.1 Lives

Of the three apologists engaged in this study, only Justin provides any information about his life. In the opening of 1 *Apol.*, Justin notes that he is from Flavia Neapolis in Syria-Palestine, making him a Samaritan by birth. Although he refers to himself once as a Samaritan,[92] nothing in his works suggests a familiarity with Samaritan religion.[93] Indeed, everything about Justin suggests a thoroughly Hellenized figure.[94] Although his name is Latin, the name of his grandfather, Bacchius, is Greek.[95] In the *Dial.,* Justin suggests that he is uncircumcised.[96] Moreover, in relating an account of his conversion to Trypho, he includes details of what is arguably a formal Greek education. Justin reports that he studied under several masters from various philosophical schools including the Stoics, the Peripatetics, the Pythagoreans, and the Platonists, with whom he remained the longest.[97] His conversion to Christianity subsequently came about through

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[92] *Dial.* 120.6.

[93] See Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 5. Additionally, Munier notes that Justin appears to know neither Hebrew nor Armenian. Munier, *Apologie*, 12.

[94] By "Hellenized," I mean one who has been brought up in a Greek world and is familiar with the customs, values, and philosophies of the Greeks.

[95] Barnard, *Justin Martyr,* 5. Grant writes, "Diognetus, a teacher of the young Marcus Aurelius, urged him to study philosophy and hear the lectures of another Baccheius. The names thus suggest that Justin's family was fully attuned to Hellenism." Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 50.

[96] *Dial.* 29.1.

[97] *Dial.* 2. Although this account is likely a stylized trope rather than an historical account, Justin's works suggest a kernel of truth in this story, particularly his long stay with the Platonists. Prior to the twentieth century, Justin's account of his philosophical quest usually was accepted as true, while his conversion story was taken as an idealization of Justin's experience. Goodenough first recognized that these two stories formed one narrative account and that the account of Justin's philosophical quest is just as idealized as the account of his conversion. He notes, for example, the parallels between Justin's account and Lucian's *Menippus* 4-6. According to Goodenough, the purpose of the idealized quest is to show that the writer's current beliefs were reached only after a long quest for truth implying the falsehood or inferiority of every other belief system in the quest. Goodenough, *Justin Martyr,* 58-59. Goodenough's theory in general has gained acceptance, although the prevailing opinion asserts that Justin received some formal philosophical training, even if not as thorough as the *Dial.* account implies. Barnard comes to the

the witness of a venerable old Christian who urged Justin to search for truth in the prophets.[98] This stylized account roughly corresponds to the shorter account of his conversion in 2 *Apol.* 12, where Justin states that while a Platonist, he was drawn to Christianity because of the courage he had witnessed in Christians facing persecution, torture, and death. These similarities, along with the content of his writing, which demonstrates familiarity with Greek philosophy, suggests that Justin converted to Christianity after significant exposure to Greek philosophy, likely of the Middle Platonist variety.[99] Scholars traditionally date Justin's conversion to Christianity sometime prior to the Bar-Kochba revolt of 132 C.E.[100]

As noted above, Justin is in Rome sometime after 147 C.E. The *Acta* states that he was in Rome at two different periods in his life, although it is unclear whether he leaves Rome after 147 C.E. or whether he was in Rome as a youth prior to his final arrival and residence. The influence his works have on Irenaeus, Tatian, Athenagoras, and possibly others suggests Justin formed a group of disciples around him—the *Acta* has Justin martyred along with six others who might have been his current disciples.[101] He is

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opposite conclusion as Goodenough based on the latter's identification of the unity of the quest and conversion narratives. Barnard perceives, against the majority of pre-twentieth century interpreters, that the conversion account "has the ring of truth about it and gives an adequate explanation of his later work as a Christian philosopher." Barnard, *Justin Martyr,* 8. As such, Barnard thinks it likely that the quest story reflects a true intellectual journey. Somewhat more convincing are the views of C. Andresen who believes Justin is influenced solely by the Middle Platonists and that the critiques of the schools mentioned in his quest account in the *Dial.* reflect Middle Platonist critiques, as opposed to actual study under these different masters. Andresen, "Justin und der mittlere Platonismus," *ZNTW* 44 (1952-3): 157-195. The truth in Justin's conversion story as related to his capability in philosophy has been more recently restated by Arthur J. Droge, "Justin Martyr and the Restoration of Philosophy," *CH* 56 (1987): 303-319.

[98] *Dial.* 7.1.

[99] Specific examples and evidence of this exposure will come in the body of the dissertation.

[100] This date is established by statements referring to the revolt in the *Dial.* For example, in answering Justin's query as to his identity, Trypho says, "'I am a Hebrew of the circumcision, a refugee from the recent war." *Dial.* 1.3, Falls, 4. See also *Dial.* 9.3, 16.3, 40.2.

[101] Barnard's statement that he "founded his school of philosophical instruction" goes beyond the evidence. Barnard, *Justin Martyr,* 13. Munier's more modest assessment is more accurate. He notes that Justin "presents himself as a man of dialogue [who] addresses himself not only to neophytes and experienced Christians, but also to Jews who accept a debate with him on the Scriptures, and to Pagans,

martyred sometime during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, perhaps due to a confrontation with the Cynic philosopher Crescens to whom Justin refers in 2 *Apol* 3.[102] Although according to Eusebius, Justin wrote a number of different treatises, only three authentic works are extant, namely the two *Apologies* and the *Dial.*[103]

Almost nothing is known of the life of Athenagoras. Eusebius does not mention him in his history, nor does Jerome in his *Lives of Illustrious Men.* Not until the fourth century is Athenagoras' *Leg.* cited and attributed to the Athenian Apologist.[104] The first Christian historian to mention Athenagoras and to provide some details on his life is Philip of Side, a fifth century Constantinopolitan deacon. Unfortunately, Philip's *Christian History* survives only in fragments[105] and generally has been regarded as unreliable.[106] This questionable reputation is confirmed by some discrepancies between his account and the text of the *Leg.*[107] More reliable is the brief biographical material

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interested by the Christian phenomenon." Munier, *Apologie,* 17. Pouderon has shown that Athenagoras was influenced by Justin. See particularly his correlation chart towards the end of his work. Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes: Philosophe Chrétien* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989), 347-350.

[102] The approximate date of Justin's martyrdom is figured from the *Acta,* which names the presiding Roman prefect Rusticus. Rusticus became prefect of Rome in 162/163 C.E. See Grant, *Greek Apologists,* 74.

[103] Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 4.18. Justin's corpus has occasioned much debate. For a long time, the majority of scholars attributed the works *Oratio ad Graecos* and *Cohortatio ad Graecos* to Justin, partly as an attempt to align his corpus with the similar titles Eusebius attributes to Justin. These works now are recognized universally as spurious. Another debate occasioned by Justin's works regards the question of whether the two extant *Apologies* correspond to the two *Apologies* mentioned by Eusebius, or whether the extant writing reflects two parts of one *Apology,* and the original second *Apology* is now lost. This debate lies outside the purview of the present dissertation. For a thorough discussion on the latter issue, see Munier, *Apologie,* 22-24.

[104] Methodius, *On the Resurrection of the Soul,* 37.1.

[105] According to Barnard, the Athenagoran fragment is preserved by a late Greek historian, possibly Nicephorus Callistus. Barnard provides a helpful English translation of the fragment in *Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic, Théologie Historique* 18 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 13-14.

[106] For example, the historian Socrates writes, "[Philip] has grouped together in [his history] (an) abundance of very heterogeneous materials, wishing to show that he is not ignorant of philosophical and scientific learning…By forcing such irrelevant details into connection with his subject, he has rendered his work a very loose production, useless alike, in my opinion, to the ignorant and the learned…he has confounded the chronological order of the transactions he describes…" *Hist. eccl.* 7.27, NPNF2 2:168.

[107] Philip states that Athenagoras lived in the time of Hadrian and Antoninus, but Athenagoras addresses his *Leg.* to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Philip also locates him in Alexandria as Clement's

located in the heading of the *Leg.* and its first line, which together read, "Athenagoras of Athens, Christian Philosopher, A Plea on Behalf of the Christians to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, and, above all, philosophers."[108] Most scholars accept this as the more accurate account, meaning that Athenagoras hailed from Athens and that he wrote sometime during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 C.E.).[109] More importantly, the heading identifies him as a "Christian philosopher," indicating that, like Justin, Athenagoras was familiar with, and perhaps studied, Greek philosophy.[110] The Athens setting would have provided him access to this formal training.[111] There are two extant works by Athenagoras, namely, *Leg.* and *On the Resurrection of the Dead.* Since scholarship is divided regarding the authenticity of the latter work, I will consider only *Leg.*[112]

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predecessor at the catechetical school. The chronology of Alexandrian teachers Philip provides—Athenagoras, Clement, Pantaenus—contradicts the Eusebian order of Pantaenus, Clement, Origen (Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 6.6). The mediocre reputation of Philip along with the silence of Eusebius leads most scholars to conclude that Athenagoras' connection to Alexandria is doubtful. See Barnard, *Athenagoras,* 14-15 and Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes,* 20-35.

[108] *Leg.* 1. The heading is not a part of the text proper of the *Leg.* but is provided by the most ancient manuscript, namely, *Parisinus Graecus* 451 dating to 914 C.E. Pouderon, *Athénagore,* 37-39.

[109] Grant specifically sets the writing of *Leg.* between 176 and 179 C.E., noting that similar titles for the emperors as victors over the Armenians and Sarmatians occur in Egyptian papyri dated to this three year period. Moreover, not until 176 C.E. was Commodus recognized as co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius, making Athenagoras' inscription inaccurate prior to that year. Grant further notes that this time period coincides with Marcus Aurelius' imperial tour where he was accompanied by his son Commodus. During the trip, he likely would have visited Athens, providing the remote possibility that Athenagoras could have presented his *Leg.* to the emperors. Grant, *Greek Apologists,* 80, 100.

[110] The one detail in Philip's account that aligns with the witness of *Leg.* is his note that Athenagoras was a philosopher who began studying the Scriptures in order to debate Christians but in the process was converted to the faith. Barnard, *Athenagoras,* 13. Malherbe argues that the structure of *Leg.* is the product of a writer with a formal education as it follows the same tripartite structure—physics, ethics, and logic—of many Middle Platonic writings, most notably, the *Didask.* Malherbe, "Structure of Athenagoras," 2-4. Grant states that Athenagoras' works display a strong influence of Platonism, best explained by some level of formal education. Grant, *Greek Apologists,* 105-109.

[111] Although the physical Academy was destroyed in the siege of Athens during the Mithridatic War (89-84 B.C.E.), evidence suggests that philosophical learning continued in the city. Dillon asserts that Athens returns as the center of philosophy in the first century C.E. with the appearance of Ammonius, the teacher of Plutarch. Dillon, *Middle Platonists,* 184ff. Middle Platonism continues after Plutarch through Taurus and Atticus, the latter of whom is contemporary to Athenagoras. Dillon, *Middle Platonists,* 233ff.

[112] The difficulty with the treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead* is the absence of external evidence supporting its Athenagoran authorship. This fact has led some notable scholars (e.g., Grant and

Theophilus differs from the other two Apologists in this study due to his role as bishop and his qualification "to speak in some sort of an official manner, in the name of the catholic Church."[113] He is known to Eusebius only in this capacity; Eusebius locates Theophilus' episcopate from 169-177 C.E.[114] While the 169 C.E. date may be accurate, Theophilus' bishopric likely extended beyond 180 C.E., given the mention of Marcus Aurelius' death (180 C.E.) in *Autol.* 3.27-28.[115]

Theophilus' statements on his conversion suggest that he was an adult convert, for he states he was convinced of the existence of the Christian God through reading the Jewish Scriptures, particularly the prophets.[116] Therefore, he may have been led to Christianity, and subsequently influenced in his theology through an encounter with the strong Jewish Christian population at Antioch.[117] The content of Theophilus' extant

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Schoedel) to reject it as an Athenagoran work. Others, e.g. Barnard, Malherbe, and Pouderon, accept its authenticity, noting the similarity in style of the two works. See Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes,* 62-114 for the various arguments for and against Athenagoran authorship.

[113] Gustave Bardy, *Théophile d'Antioche: Trois Livres A Autolycus* (*SC* 20; Paris, 1948), 7.

[114] *Hist. eccl.* 4.20, 24. Eusebius reports that he is the sixth bishop of Antioch. The dates are figured from Eusebius' *Chronology*. See Bardy, *Théophile*, 8n2.

[115] Grant speculates that Eusebius' dates come from a statement in *Autol.* 1, where Theophilus compares Marcus Aurelius to God insofar as he alone is the sole emperor. Grant, *Greek Apologists,* 143. Grant notes that from 161-169 C.E., Marcus reigned with Lucius Verus, and from 177-180 C.E., he reigned with Commodus, leaving 169-177 C.E. as the only period where Marcus ruled alone and where this comparison would have been intelligible.

[116] *Autol.* 1.14. This statement suggests Theophilus was in a place where the Jewish Scriptures would have been readily available, and Antioch, where he spent the last years of his life, is as good a conjecture as any for the setting of his early life. See *Autol.* 2.24, where, in his discussion of the original location of Eden, he remarks that the Tigris and Euphrates "border on our own regions."

[117] The Jewish presence in Antioch following the settlement rights given to Jewish veterans by Seleucus I Nikator is well documented. On this point, see David Ian Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 81-82. Daniélou finds a strong Jewish Christian influence in Antioch. Most notably, Ignatius, at the beginning of the second century, is a Jewish Christian figure. His epistles contain such Jewish Christian themes as the imagery of the Father as a gardener and of the Church as the Father's planting, the use of the doctrine of the descent into hell to address the problem of the salvation of Old Testament figures, and a doctrine of a heavenly hierarchy, to name only a few elements. Each of these emphases finds parallels in Jewish Christian texts such as *The Ascension of Isaiah.* Daniélou, *The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea,* vol. 1, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. and ed. John Baker (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1964), 40-42. Likewise, Grant argues for a Jewish Christian presence in Antioch through the witness of such Antiochene "Gnostics" as Menander and Saturninus. Grant shows how tenets of their theology appear to be formed in reaction to Jewish Christian theology. Moreover, Grant puts Theophilus'

writings betrays a Jewish Christian influence,[118] but many scholars also have noted elements that reflect a formal Greek education, particularly in the area of rhetoric.[119] He also displays a particular affinity for Stoic thought, despite his overt criticism of their philosophy.[120] Eusebius reports that Theophilus wrote several works including three books to Autolycus, a work against Marcion, another work against a certain Hermogenes, and several unnamed instructional books.[121] The collective letters to Autolycus is his only surviving work. Despite his episcopal status, the apologetic nature of these letters has linked Theophilus more with the apologists than with Irenaeus in the judgment of history.

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theology in contrast to Saturninus' to show how the bishop sided with Jewish Christian theology. See Grant's "Jewish Christianity at Antioch in the second century," *RSR* (60 (1972): 97-108.

[118] As has often been noted, Theophilus is the most "Jewish" of the Apologists. In fact, there is little in his treatise that is specifically Christian. For example, he does not address the identity of Christ or christology in any significant degree, and he says nothing of the incarnation. Moreover, the whole of *Autol.* 2 is a *Hexaemeron,* an extended interpretation of the six days of creation in Gen. 1, akin to Philo's *On the Creation of the World*. Theophilus' only specific citation of a New Testament passage is his use of John 1:1-3 in *Autol.* 2.22. Nevertheless, he does not quote John in connection to the incarnation, but in connection to the emergence of the Logos and his subsequent actions in creation. On this point see Grant, "The Problem of Theophilus," *HTR* 43 (1950): 179-196. Moreover, *Autol.* 2.22 is the only occasion when Theophilus refers to the Logos with the specifically Christian appellation "Son." In the vast majority of references, Theophilus is content with the Hellenistic, or Philonic, appellation of "Logos." Theophilus does address resurrection in *Autol.* 1.13. Nonetheless, as J. Bentivegna underscores, he removes all traces of explicit Christianity from the discussion. Bentivegna, "A Christianity without Christ by Theophilus of Antioch," *SP* XIII.2 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975), 108-130.

[119] D. Good, "Rhetoric and Wisdom in Theophilus of Antioch," *ATR* 73 (1991): 323-330; Schoedel, "Theophilus of Antioch: Jewish Christian?" *ILC* XVIII (Scholars Press, 1993), 279-297. Schoedel argues against the more common interpretation of Theophilus as influenced by Jewish modes of thought through Jewish Christianity present in Antioch and posits that the Jewish features of his work are the result of an encounter with a Hellenized form of Judaism, the kind that is witnessed in Philo.

[120] Carl Curry, "The Theogony of Theophilus," *VC* 42 (1988):318-326, K.E. McVey, "The Use of Stoic Cosmogony in Theophilus of Antioch's Hexaemeron" in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective: Studies in Honor of Karl Froelich on His Sixtieth Birthday,* ed. M.S. Burrows and P. Rorem (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 32-51, and Rankin, *Clement to Origen,* 86. The positive estimation of Theophilus' understanding of philosophy is a departure from the older view, which was skeptical as to Theophilus' knowledge of philosophy or even his ability to use properly the philosophical sourcebooks available to him. For an example of this view, see Grant, "Problem of Theophilus," 182-185.

[121] *Hist. eccl.* 4.24.1. In his *Lives,* Jerome reports that these unnamed works were well fitted for the edification of the Church.

2.2 The Apologists' Occasion for Writing

The settings of Irenaeus and the Apologists are quite similar. Regarding the time in which they wrote, Irenaeus can be regarded as a near contemporary of Athenagoras and Theophilus. Moreover, Irenaeus' diverse geographical settings overlap with Justin's Roman setting and Theophilus' Antiochene setting—although Smyrna and Antioch are separated by a large distance, Jewish Christianity is the dominant influence in both locales. Nevertheless, the occasions of the Apologists' respective writings are different from that of Irenaeus. The bishop of Lyons was concerned with variations of Christianity, groups who called themselves Christians, read the same Scriptures, and professed to believe in and worship the same God revealed in Jesus Christ. Although Irenaeus perceived these groups as outside the boundaries of the true faith, his dispute with the "Gnostics" may be described as an internal struggle. The Apologists, on the other hand, were concerned with those groups outside the faith who made no pretense regarding their aversion to Christian belief and who persecuted Christians for their beliefs. Justin and Athenagoras both address their works to the current Roman emperors, the former to Antoninus Pius and his two sons, the latter to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.[122] Theophilus writes not to an emperor, but to an individual who, like the emperors, was an avowed polytheist and who apparently had made it his business to antagonize the Antiochene bishop. Justin's *Dial.* is addressed to a Jew who, although not a pagan, is still

[122] The general consensus asserts that these treatises never reached the emperors and therefore became open letters to pagans, although, notably, Grant in *Greek Apologists* asserts that the time periods in which the various Apologies were written correspond with empire-wide journeys taken by various emperors. This correspondence, Grant argues, makes it plausible that the Apologies could have been presented to the emperors in person. For a specific example of this thesis, see above p. 50n109.

an outsider who likely did not share Justin's beliefs.[123] In other words, the Apologists' dispute with the pagans, and in the case of the *Dial.*, the Jews, was an external struggle.[124]

In each of their works, the Apologists request nothing more than a fair hearing of their beliefs because of the unjust derisions and persecutions the Christians were undergoing. By the middle second century, the Christians had become the subject of much disdain and scorn,[125] primarily because they refused to participate in the pagan and imperial cults. While these rumors were unfounded, they often were accepted as truth by authorities. The Edict of Trajan, issued in 112 C.E., stated that a person could be sentenced to death, apart from any evidence of wrongdoing, simply because he or she bore the name "Christian."[126] Therefore, the Apologists aimed to reveal the beliefs and

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[123] Conversely, Irenaeus could assume that the "Gnostics" and Marcionites attached some sort of salvific significance to Jesus and therefore attributed some revelatory significance to the Christian writings.

[124] Daniélou notes the same difference in different terms. He writes, "The problem of missionary dialogue [i.e. the writings of the Apologists] was concerned with the presentation of the Gospel to the Pagan world; that of tradition [i.e. the writings of Irenaeus] raises the question of the transmission of the deposit of faith within the Church itself." Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 139.

[125] Justin reports that there had been "scattered abroad many false and godless accusations, none of which apply to us." 1 *Apol.* 10.6, Barnard, 29. See 2 *Apol.* 12 where Justin hints that these accusations included child sacrifice, licentious sexual acts, and cannibalism. Somewhat less sensational, although equally as serious, was the charge of atheism, a charge that Justin and Athenagoras spend considerable text refuting.

[126] "[Christians] are not to be sought out; if they are informed against, and the charge [that they are Christian] is proved, they are to be punished, with this reservation—that if any one denies that he is a Christian, and actually proves it, that is by worshipping our gods, he shall be pardoned as a result of his recantation, however suspect he may have been with respect to the past." Trajan's letter to Pliny in *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2d ed., ed., Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 4. Justin specifically addresses this policy when he writes, "By a mere mention of a name, nothing is decided, either good or evil, apart from the actions associated with the name; indeed, as far as the name with which we are accused goes, we are the most gentle people. But we do not think it just to ask to be acquitted on account of the name, if we are convicted as evildoers, so, on the other hand, if we are found to have committed no wrong, either in the appellation of the name, or in our citizenship, you must be exceedingly anxious against incurring righteous judgment by unjustly punishing those who are not convicted. For from a name neither approval nor punishment could fairly come, unless something excellent or evil in action could be shown about it." 1 *Apol.* 4.1-3, Barnard, 24-25. Likewise, Athenagoras writes, "Now if a man can convict us of any evil, great or small, we do not ask to be let off. On the contrary we consider it right that our punishment be severe and merciless. But if the charge stops short at our name—and to this day what is said about us amounts to only the low and untested rumour of the populace, and no

practices of the Christians in order to show the inherent rationality of the religion and its precedence and correspondence to the beliefs of respected Greek philosophical systems. If the pagans, and above all the emperors who were lovers of reason, could see the reasonable truth of Christianity, then they would quell the unfounded persecutions and grant the Christian religion the same respect and leniency as other religions of the Roman Empire received.[127]

Accordingly, the Apologists were not concerned with distinguishing Christian truth from false doctrines, as I argued was the case with Irenaeus; rather, they were concerned with displaying the commonalities between Christianity and the wisdom of the Greeks, which, unlike Irenaeus, the Apologists esteemed.[128] As a result, they largely

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Christian has yet been convicted of evil—then it is your task as mighty, humane, and learned kings to bring an end by law the abuse we suffer…" *Leg.* 2.1, Schoedel, 5.

[127] At this point *Dial.* stands the farthest from the other Apologists' writings. Although the New Testament, notably Acts, provides a record of Jewish persecution of Christians, the content of the *Dial.* does not address persecution as a motivation for the dispute between Justin and Trypho. While there is a general consensus that the content of *Dial.* may reflect accurately the kind of debate that occurred between Jews and Christians in the second century, there is little consensus regarding the historical occasion of the work.

[128] Philosophy for Justin is a source of truth that, when used rightly, leads a person to God. He writes, "Philosophy is indeed one's greatest possession, and is most precious in the sight of God, to whom it alone leads and to whom it alone leads us, and in truth they who have applied themselves to philosophy are holy men." *Dial.* 2.1, Falls, 5. Before Christ, philosophy was the path to God for the pagans in the same way that the Scriptures were for the Jews. Droge writes that for Justin, "'philosophy' is not a special, divine gift to the Greeks; on the contrary, the true and original philosophy which 'was sent down to men' is nothing other than the inspired teachings of Moses and the prophets contained in scripture." Droge, "Justin Martyr," 316. In other words, philosophy and revelation are the same truths from the same God; they only differ because the Greeks do not have access to the Scriptures and, ultimately, the entire Logos when he comes. The greatest example of this potential of philosophy was Socrates, whom Justin reports was a Christian even though he had been thought to be an atheist. The project of the Apologies is based on this positive assessment of philosophy, for the Apologists appeal to their readers' ability to grasp the truth of the Christian message based on natural reason. Justin writes, "Reason dictates that those who are truly pious and philosophers should honor and love only the truth, declining to follow the opinions of the ancients, if they are worthless. For not only does sound reason dictate that one should not follow those who do or teach unjust things, but the lover of truth should choose by all means…to speak and do righteous things. So you [the Roman emperors], then, since you are called pious and philosophers and guardians of justice and lovers of culture, listen in every way; and it will be shown if you are such." 1 *Apol.* 2.1-2, Barnard, 23. Similarly, Athenagoras begins his *Leg.* with a specific appeal to his addressees Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, not to their power or even to their high status as emperors, but to their roles as philosophers. He writes, "To the emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, and, above all, philosophers [τὸ δὲ μέγιστον φιλοσόφοις]." *Leg.* 1. See also *Leg.* 6. Athenagoras, more than any of the Apologists, finds precedent for all Christian beliefs in

avoided particulars of Christian doctrine in favor of a more generic presentation of the transcendent, monotheistic God. Of the three, only Justin mentions Jesus and even in Justin's works, Jesus is presented in the mold of Socrates (a holy man the Greeks could understand).[129] Athenagoras refers to the Christian belief in resurrection but not as an end to itself, but rather as an argument against the charge of cannibalism.[130] Conversely, he finds the precedent for Christian monotheism in the statements of the Greek poets and philosophers. Collectively, the poets affirm that the pagan gods are not eternal but are created entities like humans.[131] Plato said that the true God is one and the Father of all things, the very attributes Athenagoras proclaims the Christians believe.[132] Aristotle affirmed God as the unmoved one who was the cause of motion of everything else.[133] The Stoics proclaimed that God is one and that he pervades the universe.[134] As we have seen, Theophilus is also vague on specifically Christian beliefs, while his doctrine of the Logos employs the language of Stoic discourse. The central figure of both Athenagoras' and Theophilus' account is not Jesus Christ, but the pre-existent Logos, a figure who would have been quite recognizable to the Greeks.

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the Greek poets and philosophers. For more on Athenagoras and philosophy, Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes*, 203-237. Theophilus is more ambivalent on his estimation of Greek philosophy. On the surface, he disparages of the value of Greek wisdom. He summarily calls the ideas of the Greeks, for example, "useless and godless opinions." *Autol.* 3.2. He ridicules the statements of the Greek philosophers and poets about God and the creation of the world (*Autol.* 2.5-7). He criticizes the moral teaching of the Greeks, claiming that they were inspired by the demons. These teachings, Theophilus says, are justified in the minds of the Greeks by the actions of their gods who themselves are said to enact the wickedest deeds (*Autol.* 3.8). Elsewhere, he contrasts the wicked actions of the gods of the philosophers to the righteous God of the Christians (*Autol.* 3.9). He everywhere contrasts the errors of the Greeks to the truth of the prophets who by contrast were inspired by God (*Autol.* 2.9). Despite these strong statements against philosophy, the doctrines of Theophilus are marked by the beliefs of the philosophers more than he would acknowledge and more than is evident in Irenaeus' work. For example, Theophilus finds Stoic language more useful than the language of John's Gospel in explaining his understanding of the Logos doctrine. See below pp. 129-131.

[129] See 1 *Apol.* 5 and 2 *Apol.* 10.

[130] *Leg.* 36.

[131] *Leg.* 6-7.

[132] *Leg.* 6.2.

[133] *Leg.* 6.3.

[134] *Leg.* 6.4.

The Apologists present Christian doctrine not in the language of the Church, as was the case with Irenaeus, but rather in the language of philosophy. Presenting Christian doctrine in the language of the philosophers suited the occasions of the Apologists. They had appealed to the Roman emperors as philosophers and now they attempted to show that Christianity espoused nothing other than the best of Greek philosophy. These differences in occasion and method of argumentation mark the resulting Trinitarian theologies of these figures, and as a result, these differences will continue to come to bear in the present dissertation.

3. Conclusion

In this opening chapter, I have addressed both the historical settings of the Apologists and Irenaeus, as well as the manner in which their respective settings shaped the occasion of their writings and their manner of argumentation. I have shown that the Apologists, with the possible exception of Theophilus, likely have more formal training in Greek philosophy than Irenaeus, thereby resulting in a more positive estimation of its value. I have shown also a difference in the respective historical occasions of the Apologists and Irenaeus. The former were interested only in presenting their understanding of Christianity as a rational religion, akin to the many religions tolerated by the Roman emperors. This led to a method of argumentation that sought to display the commonalities between Greek philosophy and Christian doctrine. The primary tool in this method is the use of philosophical language to relate Christian doctrine. Conversely, Irenaeus was interested in presenting his understanding of Christianity as the true teaching of Jesus Christ handed down from the apostles against the variant interpretations

of Christianity offered in the works of his opponents. This occasion demanded a method of argumentation that, with the language of the Church, distinguished the doctrines and scriptural interpretations of the Church from the same of his opponents. The language of Greek philosophy was relegated to the side of his opponents as a proof of their inaccuracies. With these distinctions in mind, I am now prepared to turn to these figures' respective understandings of God the Father.

Chapter Two: God the Father

In the following chapter, I will address the Apologists' and Irenaeus' understanding of the First Person,[1] the divine being to whom they refer most often as "Father" (πατήρ) and "God" (θεός). My investigation will focus on two broad facets of their respective understandings. The first facet regards the identity of the divine being, or the description of the specific God of Christian belief and worship. The second facet, a more common philosophical inquiry, regards the nature of the divine being, or the description of divinity, itself.[2] I will argue that whereas the Apologists understand the identity and nature of God according to the Middle Platonic vision of God as a transcendent and spatially distant being unable to interact with material creation, Irenaeus alters this understanding in order to reject the unknown, transcendent, and distant God of the Valentinians. First, Irenaeus argues that the title "Father" indicates not what God does, but who God is underscoring the intimate relationship between the First and Second Persons and, as a result, between God and humanity. Second, he alters the common understanding of divine transcendence from a relative transcendence based on a spatial notion of divinity to an absolute transcendence based on a non-spatial notion of divinity sustained by the concept of "spirit." Irenaeus' argument results in a divine being who is transcendent, yet able to interact with material creation by means of the economy.

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[1] The nomenclature of "person" (ὑπόστασις, *persona*) in the technical, Trinitarian sense of the later fourth century is anachronistic in the second century. While all the figures in this study understand a real distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit, they have yet to develop technical terminology to distinguish them other than through the use of different titles. Still, in describing these figures' respective theologies, the terminology of First, Second, and Third Person is useful insofar as it presents a neutral means of reference. Therefore, while I will refer to Father, Son, and Spirit by this traditional nomenclature throughout this study, I do not claim this terminology as descriptive of these figures' Trinitarian theologies. When referring to Father, Son, and Spirit together, I will use the more neutral term "entities."

[2] Although included in the discussion of the nature of divinity in all of these figures' writings are more personal qualities such as love, goodness, and the like, I will limit my treatment to their understanding of the divine being *qua* being.

1. The Apologists

1.1 The Identity of God

As noted in the previous chapter, the primary charge facing Christians that occasioned the Apologists' respective works was that of atheism. This widespread accusation against the Christians was the result of their refusal to take part in pagan rituals and the burgeoning imperial cult, actions expected of all Roman subjects. Thus, in order to refute this charge, the Apologists' first task was to identify the God whom they worshipped and in whom they believed.

The being they identify as God is the one Creator of the entire cosmos. Justin writes, "We are not, therefore, as the atheists, since we worship the Creator [δημιουργός] of the universe…"[3] Likewise, Athenagoras writes that Christians believe in "one God, the Maker [ποιητής] of the universe, who himself does not come into being (because being does not come into being, non-being does) but who has made all things…"[4] Theophilus connects the etymology of the title θεός with the creative act when he writes, "He is called God because he established everything on his own steadfastness and because he runs; the word 'run' means to run and set in motion and energize and nourish and provide and govern everything and *to make everything alive*."[5] To be sure, the Apologists associate other actions with God, but no action is as proper to divinity as the act of

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[3] 1 *Apol.* 13.1. Munier writes, "The conception of a unique God who is the Creator of all things is the unwavering foundation and the necessary point of departure of the religious search and theological reflection of Justin." Munier, *L'Apologie de Saint Justin Philosophe et Martyr* (Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions Universitaires, 1994), 96. According to Munier, the *Apologies* contain five formulas of the faith (1 *Apol.* 6.1-2, 13.1, 61.3, 65.3, and 67.2), and in each case God the Father, Creator of the universe, occupies the first place.

[4] *Leg.* 4.2.

[5] *Autol.* 1.4, Grant, 7, italics added. Elsewhere, Grant notes these same etymologies in both the writings of Herodotus and Plato. Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 168.

creating.[6] This aspect of the Apologists' understanding of God reflects a commonplace characteristic of second century Jewish and Christian thinking.[7]

The Apologists' primary source confirming the identity of God as Creator of the cosmos is the Jewish Scriptures. Occasionally, the Apologists are explicit on this identification.[8] More often, however, they imply the identification with unattributed Old Testament imagery describing the God in whom they believe. For example, Theophilus writes, "This is my God, the Lord of the universe, who *alone spread out the heaven* and *determined the breadth of what is under heaven,* who *stirs up the deep of the sea and makes its waves resound,* who *rules over its power and pacifies the movement of the waves,* who *established the earth upon the waters* and gave a spirit to nourish it."[9] Similarly, Athenagoras writes, "The best sacrifice to [God] is for us to know who stretched out the heavens and gave them their spherical form and established the earth as a centre, who brought together water into seas and divided light from the darkness, who adorned the sky with stars and caused the earth to make every seed spring up, who made

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[6] Pouderon observes this aspect of Athenagoras' understanding of divinity. He writes, "[I]n his [Athenagoras'] eyes, the creative act, like the providential act, is not simply an activity of God, it is his function, *necessary and sufficient for justifying his existence*." Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes*, 116-117, italics added.

[7] Barnes writes, "That God is the creator, and that the creator is God, are fundamental presuppositions shared by late Second Temple Jews and early Christians." Barnes, "The Beginning and End of Early Christian Pneumatology," *AugStud* 39:2 (2008): 169-186.

[8] For example, Justin writes, "[T]here will never be, nor has there ever been from eternity, any other God except him who created and formed this universe. Furthermore, we do not claim that our God is different from yours [the Jews], for he is the God who, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, led your forefathers out of the land of Egypt. Nor have we placed our trust in any other (for, indeed, there is no other), but only in him whom you [Trypho] also have trusted, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob." *Dial.* 11.1, Falls, 20 with minor revisions. Similarly, Athenagoras introduces citations from Baruch and Isaiah by writing, "Now if we were satisfied with considerations of this kind, one could regard our doctrine as man-made. But since the voices of the prophets affirm our arguments—and I expect that you who are so eager for knowledge and so learned are not without understanding of the teachings either of Moses or of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the rest of the prophets…" Theophilus also is explicit with this identification in places, particularly throughout *Autol.* 2, the majority of which is an example of a *Hexaemeron,* as noted in the previous chapter. See above p. 52n118.

[9] *Autol.* 1.7, Grant, 11, italics original marking scriptural citations and allusions. The allusions here come from Job 9:8, 38:18; Pss. 64:8, 88:10, and 23:2.

animals and formed man."[10] The Apologists' lack of concern for consistently identifying their source as Scripture illustrates their collective motive not to align themselves with the Jews nor with the particular Jewish religion but to argue that the God in whom they believe as a result of the revelation of the Jewish Scriptures is the universal God known also to the philosophers. As a result, they underscore those scriptural passages that correspond to the Middle Platonic understanding of creation.[11]

To further the connection of their God with the God of the philosophers, and in particular the Middle Platonists, the Apologists consistently refer to their God as "Father" (πατήρ). In the most influential Platonic treatise upon second century philosophy, the *Timaeus*, Plato had referred to God as "Father" in connection with his act of creating the world. Plato writes, "Now to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men were a thing impossible."[12] This passage, coming in the context of an extended treatise on the origin of

[10] *Leg.* 13.2, Schoedel, 27, 29.

[11] It is noteworthy how little Gen. 1-2 factor into the Apologists' discussions of the creative work of God. Of the three, only Theophilus emphasizes the first chapter of Gen., but his list of allusions in *Autol.* 1.7 (quoted above) is an example of the wide range of scriptural passages to which he alluded or cited in support of his contention that the God in whom he believes is the Creator God of the Jewish Scriptures. Justin cites Gen. 1:1-2 in 1 *Apol.* 59 and 63, but he offers little interpretation of the verses except to claim them as proof that Plato and Greek mythology borrowed from Moses. Elsewhere, he emphasizes Gen. 1:2 to show the presence of the Spirit with God in the beginning (e.g. 1 *Apol.* 60), because the presence of intermediary figures in creation corresponds with the Middle Platonic understanding as I will demonstrate in chapters four and five below. The first chapters of Gen. are nearly absent from *Dial.* There, Justin emphasizes Gen. 1:26-27 to prove to Trypho that the Logos was present with God at creation, as I will show in more detail in chapter three (e.g. *Dial.* 62). Likewise, Gen. 1-2 are absent from Athenagoras' *Leg.* Athenagoras prefers Scriptures that speak of God's power and uniqueness, emphases that correspond to Middle Platonic definitions of God (e.g. Isa. 43:10-11, 44:6 in *Leg.* 9.2). Like Justin, he also prefers those passages that speak of the presence of intermediary figures with God in creation (e.g. Prov. 8:3 and Wisd. 7:25 in *Leg.* 10.4). I will explain the Middle Platonic understanding of creation in the next section. See below p. 69.

[12] *Tim.* 28c. trans. R.G. Bury, LCL 234:51. See also *Tim.* 37c and 41a. G. Schrenk identifies Plato as the first figure to introduce to antiquity a concept that becomes commonplace, namely, Fatherhood as a metaphor for describing God's relationship with the world as its generator or creator. G. Quell and Schrenk, "Πατήρ" *TDNT*, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 5:945-1022. Conversely, this usage rarely is witnessed in the Old Testament. Quell writes, "['Father'] was never recognized [in the Hebrew Bible] as adequate, however, to describe the nature

the universe, was central to Middle Platonic writings on God,[13] and the writers continued Plato's tradition of referring to God as "Father" to describe his identity as Creator. The *Didask.* states, "[God] is Father through being the cause of all things and bestowing order on the heavenly Intellect and the soul of the world in accordance with himself and his own thoughts."[14] Here, and throughout *Didask.* 10, the Middle Platonic author emphasizes the divine acts of creation and providence in connection with the title "Father."

The Apologists' use of the divine title "Father" is consistent with the Middle Platonic interpretation of Plato's *Tim.* 28c passage.[15] "Father" indicates for them God's creative and providential functions; it rarely is used according to the New Testament practice of describing the unique relationship between Jesus Christ and the Creator God.[16] Theophilus never uses "Father" to refer to God's relationship with the Second

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of God or the manner of His relationship to man. When thought of or used in this way, it always found opponents who instinctively felt that this would lead back to worship of the ancient gods which had been abolished from the days of Joshua." Quell and Schrenk, "Πατήρ," *TDNT* 5:970. The same authors note an increase in the use of "Father" as a divine title in later Judaism, but more in the sense of God as the particular, theocratic Father of Israel. Quell and Schrenk, "Πατήρ," *TDNT* 5:978-982. This development lies beyond the purview of the current discussion insofar as the Apologists' source for their use of "Father" emerges not from Second Temple Judaism but instead from Middle Platonist interpretations of *Tim.*

[13] For example, the *Didask.* alludes to the passage in the introductory statement of *Didask.* 10, the chapter that addresses the nature of God. On *Tim.* 28c in relation to the structure of Middle Platonic writings, see Malherbe, "Structure of Athenagoras," 11.

[14] *Didask.* 10.3. trans. Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 18.

[15] Like the Middle Platonists, the Apologists focused on the *Tim.* 28c passage in their discussions of God. Both Justin and Athenagoras directly cite the passage (2 *Apol.* 10.6, *Leg.* 6.2), and Theophilus alludes to it (*Autol.* 2.4).

[16] Luis F. Ladaria notes the novelty of the New Testament's use of "Father" over against the Old Testament's use and considers the Fatherhood of God in relation to Jesus and in relation to humans as adoptive children one of Christianity's distinctive ideas. Ladaria, "*Tam Pater Nemo:* quelques réflexions sur la paternité de Dieu," *Transversalités* 107 (2008): 95-123. Although present in the Synoptic Gospels (*e.g.* Matt. 11:27), this usage of "Father" is evident particularly in the Fourth Gospel. The author of the Fourth Gospel establishes the unique connection in the prologue (John 1:14, 18) and then exploits it in developing his notion of Jesus as the Father's special revelation. For example, in a discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus says, "'I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.' Then they said to him, 'Where is your Father?' Jesus answered, 'You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.'" John 8:18-19, NRSV translation. Similarly, in a discussion with his disciples, Jesus says, "'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the

Person. For the Antiochene bishop, God is Father only in the Middle Platonic sense that he is "before the universe."[17] In all of Athenagoras' uses of "Father," only one reflects a unique relationship between the First and Second Persons. He writes, "[F]or as all things have been subjected to you [Marcus Aurelius and Commodus], a father and a son, who have received your kingdom from above…so all things are subordinated to the one God and the Logos that is from him whom we consider his inseparable Son."[18] Nevertheless, the statement offers no insight into the nature of God; instead, it acts as a means of connecting Christian nomenclature to contemporary Roman affairs (at the time of Athenagoras' writing, Marcus Aurelius was ruling with his son Commodus).

Of the three apologists in this study, only Justin shows an understanding of the unique relationship between the First and Second Persons, reflected occasionally in his use of "Father."[19] Nonetheless, the overwhelming number of his uses of the title follows the Middle Platonist line.[20] In perhaps an intentional imitation of the *Tim.* 28c passage,

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Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works." John 14:6-10, NRSV translation. Schrenk's comments on John's use of "Father" are helpful. He writes, "[In his use of πατήϱ], Jn. differs from the Greek world by taking as his point of departure, not a veneration of the πατὴϱ τῶν ὅλων, but solely and simply the truth that the Son, who is sent, is uniquely related to the Father and is the first to say πατήϱ in the full sense…[t]he whole event of salvation is anchored in the most intimate union between Father and Son." Quell and Schrenk, "Πατήϱ" *TDNT* 5:997, 999. The Apologists do not develop this significance of "Father," but show only the Middle Platonic sense.

[17] *Autol.* 1.4. Theophilus only refers to the Logos as "Son" once but the title "Father" is not linked to the Son in this context (*Autol.* 2.22).

[18] *Leg.* 18.2, Schoedel, 37 with minor revisions.

[19] 1 *Apol.* 12.9, 63.14-15, *Dial.* 102.2, 103.3, 115.4.

[20] For more on Justin's understanding of the Fatherhood of God as derived from a Middle Platonist use, see Goodenough, *Justin Martyr*, 123-139, Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 27-38, Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, 17-28, Munier, *Apologie de Saint Justin*, 97-98 and, most recently, Peter Widdicombe, "Justin Martyr and the Fatherhood of God," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 54, 1 (1998): 109-126. My conclusions align with those of Widdicombe, although he gives more prominence to Scripture's influence in Justin's use of the absolute phrase "the Father" than I would allow. I think that the Middle Platonic interpretation controls Justin's use of "Father" except for the few places he specifies otherwise. Justin's use of "Father" is one of

Justin frequently pairs πατήρ with another descriptor such as "Master" (δεσπότης),[21] "Maker" (ποιητής),[22] and "Creator" (δημιουργός).[23] Each of these titles connects "Father" with the act of creating, thereby suggesting a significance other than a specifically Christian meaning that connects the Father and the Son in a unique relationship for revelatory and redemptive purposes. Therefore, for Justin, as for the Apologists in general, "Father" does not describe who God is, but what God does—he creates and rules.[24] As a result, the divine title "Father" lacks any Trinitarian significance, at least in the immanent sense, for these writers.

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several aspects of the Apologists' theology Lebreton intentionally downplays in order to claim the Apologists, and Justin in particular, for Trinitarian orthodoxy. Although Lebreton acknowledges that Justin's use follows a "Platonist" understanding and is not connected to his relationship to the Son, he quickly observes that Justin knows God "is also, by nature, the Father of Christ, his unique Son, and by virtue of the adoption which he has accorded them, the Father of all the Christians." Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:421. Nonetheless, the texts he cites in support of his contention only tangentially relate to such a claim. For example, the texts he lists from the *Dial.* as evidence of his claim show only that Christians are the new Israel, not adopted *sons* of the Father God. Similarly, Ladaria's study of Justin fails to include any consideration of the influence of Middle Platonism. Ladaria, "*Tam Pater Nemo*," 97-98. He assumes that Justin's understanding of what Ladaria calls God's "universal Fatherhood" is a development from the New Testament understanding explained above (see p. 63n16). In other words, Ladaria contends that for Justin, God is Father of all creation because of his love for all creation, not because of his creative or providential functions. Nonetheless, Justin's use of "Father" has more in common with Middle Platonism, where God's role as Creator and providential Master is not a function of his love for creation, but of his goodness. Justin recognizes that God loves his creation, but he does not use God's Fatherhood to support this point. Ladaria's failure to connect Justin's use of "Father" and that of the Middle Platonists results in his failure to see the clear difference between Justin and Irenaeus on this count.

[21] 1 *Apol.* 12.9, 36.2, 40.7, 44.1, 46.5, 61.3, 61.10.

[22] 1 *Apol.* 26.5, *Dial.* 7.3, 56.1, 6, 60.2, 67.6.

[23] 1 *Apol*. 8.2, 63.11, 2 *Apol.* 10.6. "Δημιουργός" also links "Father" to the act of providence. Repeatedly throughout the *Dial.*, Justin uses πατήρ to refer to God when he describes his providential will. See *Dial.* 43.1, 48.3, 60.3, 61.1 and 3, 63.1, 75.4, 76.1 and 7, 85.1, 88.4, 98.2, 102.5.

[24] Justin's theology of all divine titles confirms his understanding of "Father" as descriptive of his creative function because he believes that no divine title can describe God's nature. He writes, "But to the Father of all, who is unbegotten, a name is not given. For by whatever name He is called, He has as His elder, the one who gives Him the name. But these words Father, and God, and Creator, and Lord and Master, are not names, but appellations *derived from His good deeds and works*." 2 *Apol.* 6.1-2, Barnard, 77, italics added. Here, "Father" describes God's good deeds and works, by which Justin means creation.

1.2 The Nature of God

For the Apologists, God's identity as Creator had a logical consequence for a particular understanding of the divine nature; namely, God is transcendent, far removed from the material world. Athenagoras writes, "We have brought before you a God who is one, the uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, and infinite, who can be apprehended by mind and reason alone, who is encompassed by light, beauty, spirit, and indescribable power, and who created, adorned, and now rules the universe through his Logos that is from him…"[25] The divine transcendence, expressed here by a series of negative attributes, was also central to the Middle Platonic understanding of the divine nature.[26] Athenagoras' passage finds a striking parallel in the *Didask.*: "The primary god,

[25] *Leg.* 10, Schoedel, 21 with minor revisions.

[26] In his summation of Middle Platonism's dominant themes, Dillon writes, "[I]t is common ground for all Platonists that between God and Man there must be a host of intermediaries, that God may not be contaminated or disturbed by a too close involvement with Matter." Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 47. The Middle Platonists often defined their understanding of the divine transcendence in contrast to Stoic belief, which mixed divinity and material. In contrast to the Middle Platonists (and Apologists), the Stoics viewed the entire cosmos, both celestial and material entities, as consisting in a continuous whole united by a divine force or spirit (πνεῦμα) in which all things exist. S. Sambursky writes of Stoic belief, "The cosmos is filled with an all-pervading substratum called *pneuma*, a term often used synonymously with *air*. A basic function of the pneuma is the generation of the cohesion of matter and generally of the contact between all parts of the cosmos." Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), 1. In Stoic thought, the reverse is also true—the divine spirit is immanent within material organisms. Christopher Stead writes, "The Stoics, however, taught that all matter is permeated and controlled by a rational principle, but also conversely, that rationality is always and necessarily embodied in matter." Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 46. Similarly, David Sedley writes, "So strong is the Stoics' commitment to their view of the world as an interactive whole that only items with the power to interact are deemed to constitute it, and these are in turn identified with bodies…[O]nly something of [a bodily] nature could be a party to causal interaction. If the soul interacts with the body…it must itself be corporeal. And since not only our souls but also their moral qualities, such as justice, have the capacity to act upon our bodies, the Stoics infer that they too must be corporeal. The same will apply to the world as a whole: its wisdom and other moral qualities are its primary governing features." Sedley, "Hellenistic physics and metaphysics," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Keimpe Algra *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 355-411. See also Spanneut, *Stoïcisme*, 85-90. This understanding results in a view of the divine spirit as corporeal, since the spirit interacts with everything in the universe. Thus, the Stoics do not make a strict distinction between the divine and the material—everything is in contact with everything else. This belief explains Diogenes Laertius report that Zeno said "the being of God is the whole world and the heaven." Diogenes Laert. VII 148 in *SVF* 1:43. The Apologists align with the Middle Platonists against the Stoics on this count and critique the Stoics for their failure to maintain the distinction between divinity and material. Justin

then, is eternal, ineffable, 'self-perfect' (that is, deficient in no respect), 'ever-perfect' (that is, always perfect), and 'all-perfect' (that is, perfect in all respects)…ineffable and graspable only by the intellect…God is partless, by reason of the fact that there is nothing prior to him…"[27] The only conceptual difference between these two definitions is that Athenagoras includes as a matter of first priority the truth that God creates. As noted previously, this emphasis comes from Athenagoras' knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. Nonetheless, the underlying feature of the divine nature is the same in both statements, namely, transcendence from the material world.

Like the writings of the Middle Platonists, the writings of the Apologists are replete with negative definitions of the divine nature expressing this transcendence. Words such as uncreated (ἀγέννητος), eternal (ἀΐδιος), invisible (ἀόρατος), and inexpressible (ἄρρητος) are common in the Apologists' writings.[28] While all these negative definitions focus on a different aspect of the divine nature,[29] the collective force of all such descriptors offers a hyper emphasis on the divine transcendence, God's

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writes, "And the philosophers called Stoics teach that even God Himself will be resolved into fire, and they say the world is to come into being again by this change; but we know that God, the Creator of all, is superior to changeable things." 1 *Apol.* 20.2, Barnard, 37. Likewise in 2 *Apol.* 7, Justin refers polemically to the Stoics as those who believe "God is nothing else than the things which are ever turning and altering and dissolving into the same things…" 2 *Apol.* 7.9, Barnard, 79. Justin refers in these passages to the Stoic doctrine of cosmic cycles, or more commonly, "the conflagration," a corollary of the Stoic belief in the comingling of divine and material. The doctrine stated that at certain periods of time the whole universe, which as we have seen necessarily included the divine spirit, is consumed by fire and begins again. Michael J. White, "Stoic Natural Philosophy [Physics and Cosmology]," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 124-152. Cf. Athenagoras, *Leg.* 22.5 and Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.4. The Stoics do recognize the existence of incorporeals; four incorporeals are commonly identified, namely, place, void, time, and sayables. The first three are incorporeal because, as Sedley explains, "they provide the dimensions within which bodily movement can occur, and must therefore themselves be independent of body." Sedley, "Hellenistic physics," 400. The more complicated sayables or *lekton* (from λέγειν) do not concern the present discussion. See Sedley, "Hellenistic physics," 400-402. For more on the Stoic notion of place and void, see below p. 71n39.

[27] *Didask.* 10.3-4, 7, Dillon, 18-19.

[28] See Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes*, 118-119 for a list of terms Athenagoras uses to describe the divine nature that reflect a Middle Platonic source.

[29] For a study of every negative attribute in the Apologists' writings, see Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 323-335.

distinction from the created world. While matter is created, God is uncreated. While matter is corporeal, God is incorporeal. While matter is seen, God is invisible.

The Apologists express divine transcendence through the belief that God alone is uncreated (ἀγέννητος or ἀγένητος)[30] or without a first principle (ἄναρχος), while everything in the cosmos, including unformed matter, has God as its first principle (ἀρχή). This definition of God logically results in an understanding of creation that will later be known as *creatio ex nihilo* or creation out of nothing. Theophilus, in particular, shows such an understanding of creation. He writes, "[God] made everything out of the non-existent. For there was nothing coeval with God…"[31] Elsewhere, he writes, "God

[30] In more developed Trinitarian thought, these two words will be distinguished with ἀγένητος (uncreated) referring to both the Father and the Son, and ἀγέννητος (unbegotten) referring exclusively to the Father. In some older scholarship, this distinction is read into the second century. Scholars now agree generally that the words were still undifferentiated in the second century. Both descriptors refer to the truth that God is without a beginning and thereby serve to distinguish him from created things. On this point, see Daniélou, *Gospel Message,* 330n21, Lebreton, "*Agennetos* dans la tradition philosophique et dans la littérature chrétienne du II siècle," *RSR* 16 (1926): 431-443, and Prestige, *Patristic Thought,* 39-54. Lebreton shows that the contrasting of the divine and the sensible world by means of ἀγέν(ν)ητος/γεν(ν)ητός distinction was a device common to philosophical schools. He asserts that the Apologists and later Christians differed from the Middle Platonists insofar as they were more restrictive with their use of ἀγέν(ν)ητος. For the Christians, it only properly referred to the divine, whereas many philosophical schools attributed the property of ἀγέν(ν)ητος to the soul or to matter. Lebreton, "Agennetos," 440.

[31] *Autol.* 2.10. Theophilus perceived the need for creation *ex nihilo* more profoundly than either Justin or Athenagoras. Nonetheless, it is not the case, as is commonly asserted, that the earlier two apologists affirm the Middle Platonist belief in eternal unformed matter. For strong arguments in favor of the latter view, see Fantino, "L'Origine de la Création *ex nihilo*: à propos de l'ouvrage de G. May," *RSPHTH* 80 (1996): 589-602 and N. Joseph Torchia, "Theories of Creation in the Second Century Apologists and their Middle Platonic Background," in *SP* 26 (Peeters: Leuven, 1993), 192-199. These scholars assert that Justin and Athenagoras, unlike Theophilus, believe that God creates out of "formless matter." Several statements in Justin and Athenagoras' works seem to support such a view. For example, Justin writes, "And we have been taught that in the beginning He of His goodness, for people's sakes, formed all things out of unformed matter…" 1 *Apol.* 10.2, Barnard, 28. See also 1 *Apol.* 59. Similarly, in *Leg.* 10.3, Athenagoras speaks of matter as "an entity without qualities" which the Logos enters to give form. Despite these statements, several other factors of their respective theologies suggest, to use Osborn's helpful terminology, that although Justin and Athenagoras lack the formula of creation *ex nihilo,* they understand and affirm the concept. Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 65-68. For example, any discussion of matter as a first principle is missing in both Justin's and Athenagoras' works. The Middle Platonists include such a discussion in their works because as an uncreated entity, matter exists along with God as a first principle. More to the point, both Justin and Athenagoras, like Theophilus, acknowledge God as the only uncreated being. See, for example, *Dial.* 5.4 and *Leg.* 8.7. Torchia admits the latter point, writing, "In the writers under scrutiny, we find a well-defined ontological distinction between God and matter or more precisely,

made everything out of what did not exist, bringing it into existence so that his greatness might be known and apprehended through his works."[32] The understanding of creation out of nothing is distinct from the Middle Platonist understanding of creation. The practitioners of Middle Platonism identified two uncreated entities, namely an active Monad and a passive or indefinite Dyad, God and matter respectively.[33] They describe the process of creation as the active Monad, or formal principle, entering the passive Dyad, or material principle, in order to give it form.[34] Both eternal principles are necessary in order for creation to be realized.

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between God and all mutable, corruptible reality. For each, God is the unbegotten, ultimate causal principle for everything which exists." Torchia, "Theories of Creation," 192. He concludes that Justin and Athenagoras are simply inconsistent. Inconsistency must not be ruled out in principle as my study of the Apologists also reveals an inconsistency in their thought in regards to spatiality and the divine nature, as I will address momentarily. Still, the evidence supports the conclusion that, although Justin and Athenagoras speak at times of unformed matter, their emphasis on God as the only uncreated being is their controlling image of the creative act. If God alone is ἀγέν(ν)ητος, then by definition, matter is not eternal.

[32] *Autol.* 1.4, Grant, 7 with minor revisions. Torchia speculates that Theophilus is quoting 2 Macc. 7:28, which reads, "[B]eg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being." NRSV translation. Torchia, "Theories of Creation," 195-196. The presence of the idea of creation out of nothing in 2 Macc. suggests that a Jewish tradition lies behind this emphasis and may explain why Theophilus is clearer than Justin and Athenagoras in articulating the doctrine. Conversely, Fantino claims that this statement from 2 Macc. is simply another means of referring to the primordial chaos referred to in Gen. 1:2 and which other documents stemming from Second Temple Judaism, notably Wisd. 11:17 ("For your all-powerful hand, which created the world out of formless matter…" [NRSV translation]), connect with the formless, eternal matter of Greek philosophy. Fantino, "La théologie de la creation *ex nihilo* chez saint Irénée," *SP* 26 (Leuven: Peeters, 1993): 126-135. The doctrine of creation out of nothing appears in an early Christian writing, *Shepherd of Hermas,* which defines God as follows: "First of all, believe that God is one, who created all things and set them in order, and made out of what did not exist everything that is, and who contains all things but is himself alone uncontained." *Shepherd*, Mand. 1.1 in *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations,* trans. J.B. Lightfoot, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 375. Theophilus may have known and been influenced by at least this section of the *Shepherd,* as his work shows the influence of two ideas both present in *Shepherd,* Mand. 1.1. On the second idea, see below p. 74n46.

[33] Xenocrates, rather than Plato, likely introduces this idea into Middle Platonism. Dillon, *Middle Platonists,* 22-38.

[34] The *Didask.* describes the process as follows: "[Plato] declares that [matter] has the characteristic of receiving the whole realm of generation by performing the role of a nurse in sustaining it, and receiving all the forms, while of itself remaining without shape, or quality, or form, but it can be moulded and imprinted with such impressions like a mould and shaped by these, having no shape or quality of its own…[God] created [the world], then, out of the totality of matter. This, as it moved without order and randomly, prior to the generation of the heavens, he took in hand and brought from disorder into the best order…For he generated it out of all of each of the four elements, all of fire, and earth, and water, and air, not leaving out any part or potency of any of them, on the consideration that, first of all, what came into

The Apologists depart from the Middle Platonists at this point because they believe the eternal existence of unformed matter challenges the scriptural principle that God alone is uncreated, and that all things find their source in him. For example, in criticizing the Middle Platonic understanding of creation, Theophilus writes, "Plato and his followers acknowledge that God is uncreated, the Father and Maker of the universe; next they assume that uncreated matter is also God, and say that matter was coeval with God. But if God is uncreated and matter is uncreated, then according to the Platonists God is not the Maker of the universe…"[35] According to Theophilus' understanding of Middle Platonist philosophy, God is not a creator because he does not make matter. Instead, he merely shapes prime matter in the manner of a human artisan.

Moreover, if matter is uncreated, then it possesses divine qualities and the strict distinction between divinity and material is lost. Athenagoras writes, "If we then attribute one and the same power to the ruled and the ruling, we shall inadvertently make perishable, unstable, and changeable matter equal in rank to the uncreated, eternal, and ever self-same God."[36] Conversely, the Apologists identify the quality of ἀγέν(ν)ητος with the power to create, a power proper to God, alone. Theophilus writes, "But the power of God is revealed by his making whatever he wishes out of the non-existent, just as the ability to give life and motion belongs to no one but God alone."[37] Thus, the affirmation of creation *ex nihilo*, in the Apologists' mind, not only preserved the

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being must be corporeal, and so inevitably tangible and visible. But without fire and earth it is not possible for something to be tangible and visible." *Didask.* 8.2, 12.2, Dillon, 15, 21. For a general overview of the Middle Platonist understanding of creation, see Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 45-49. See also Torchia, "Theories of Creation," 196-198. Likewise, the Stoics believed in two ultimate principles (ἀρχαί), namely, matter and god; in creation, the immanent god acts upon principle matter. The Stoics and the Middle Platonists' respective views on creation differ in that the Stoics believed both principles were material. See Sedley, "Hellenistic physics," 384-390 and Spanneut, *Stoïcisme*, 90-94.

[35] *Autol.* 2.4, Grant, 27.

[36] *Leg.* 22.3, Schoedel, 51.

[37] *Autol.* 2.4, Grant, 27.

scriptural definition of God as sole creator of all things; it maintained the strict distinction between divinity and material, thus protecting the divine transcendence.[38]

In addition to the doctrine of creation out of nothing, the Apologists employ a second method to maintain the separation between God and material, namely, the use of spatial imagery in their conception of divinity. In other words, the Apologists imagine God as physically far removed from the material world such that the divinity is incapable of being in contact with material things. This conception results in the location of God in a literal *place* (τόπος, χώρα) somewhere far "above" the world.[39] For example, Justin

[38] Fantino writes, "According to them [the Greek philosophers], something which is necessarily comes from something which exists before. It is not a matter of a temporal but an ontological priority. That amounts to recognizing a relation that binds God to the universe, even if intermediaries exist. God cannot be truly transcendent to the world. It is precisely this point that the notion of creation *ex nihilo* wants to express." Fantino, "Théologie de la creation," 127. Nevertheless, I will show below that Irenaeus' doctrine of creation out of nothing better grasps this truth and Irenaeus is more consistent than Theophilus, and Justin and Athenagoras, in his understanding of God's transcendence.

[39] Throughout antiquity, the Greek terms τόπος and χώρα both refer to a literal "place" or "space." Stoic writers are an exception. They distinguish the two terms and include them with κενόν to form a tripartition to explain the genus "space." Sextus Empiricus writes, "The Stoics declare that Void (κενόν) is that which is capable of being occupied by an existent but is not so occupied, or an interval empty of body, or an interval unoccupied by body; and that Place (τόπον) is an interval occupied by an existent and equated to that which occupies it ('existent' being here the name they give to 'body'); and that Room (χώραν) is an interval partly occupied by body and partly unoccupied—though some of them say that Room is the Place of the large body, so that the difference between Place and Room depends on size." Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* III.124, trans. Bury, LCL 273:411. Aëtius records a similar statement from Zeno Citius: "διαθέρειν δὲ κενόν, τόπον, χώραν· καὶ τὸ μὲν κενόν εἶναι ἐρημίαν σώματος, τὸν δὲ τόπον τὸ ἐπεχόμενον ὑπὸ σώματος, τὴν δὲ χώραν τὸ ἐκ μέρους ἐπεχόμενον, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ οἴνου πιθάκνης." *SVF* 1:26. For more on Stoic definitions of space, see below p. 73n45. Conversely, the Middle Platonists are not as clear on a distinction, and specifically reject the notion of a void. For example, the *Didask.* states, "Matter, then, being imprinted with these traces (of Forms), moved first of all in a disorderly manner, but was then brought by God to order, through all things being harmonized with each other by means of proportion. However, these (elements) do not remain spatially separated [διακριθέντα κατὰ χωράν], but experience an unceasing agitation, and communicate this to matter, because, as they are compressed and thrust together by the rotation of the world, and are driven against each other, the finer particles are carried into the interstices of the more course-grained spaces [εἰς τὰς τῶν ἀδρομερεστέρων χώρας]. For this reason no space is left empty of body [μηδὲν κενὸν ὑπολείπεται σώματος ἔρημον]…" *Didask.* 13.3, Dillon, 23 with minor revisions. The Apologists follow the Middle Platonists in not admitting of a distinction between τόπος and χώρα. For them, both words refer to a literal place in which God is located. Justin generally prefers χώρα while Athenagoras and Theophilus prefer τόπος, but the words are used for the same purpose, namely, to keep God separated from matter. (Justin can also use τόπος to describe God's place in the heavens [see *Dial.* 64.7]). In chapter five, I will explore a possible metaphorical use of χώρα in Justin's works to refer to the position or rank of the Son and the Spirit in relation to the Father. See below pp. 221-224. Nevertheless, that metaphorical usage is not

writes, "For the ineffable Father and Lord of all neither comes to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor arises, but always remains in his place (χώρᾳ), wherever it may be…"[40] Elsewhere, Justin describes God's place as the "super-celestial region [τοῦ ἐν τοῖς ὑπερουρανίοις] [which] has never been seen by any man" but where God "forever abides…"[41] In a similar vein, Athenagoras argues that a second god logically cannot exist, since there would be no place (τόπος) in which he could dwell—the Creator of the cosmos alone fills the place around and above the world.[42]

While Theophilus exhibits more ambivalence than Justin and Athenagoras about maintaining God's transcendence through spatial imagery, he also reverts to spatiality in his conception of the divine transcendence and even argues that this spatial imagery

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reflected in Justin's quotations regarding God's location. Jewish writings of the Exilic, Second Temple, and Rabbinic periods also use the concept of place (*maqom*, τόπος) to describe the place of God in the world, as in the sense of theophany. This usage is, perhaps, epitomized by the theophanic account where God appears to Moses, Aaron, and the seventy elders on Mt. Sinai. The summary verse, Exod. 24:10 ("And they saw the God of Israel"), is rendered by the LXX as "καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὗ εἵστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεός τοῦ Ισραήλ" ("and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood"). Another example of the use of "place" in relation to a theophany occurs in Ezekiel's chariot vision, which the LXX renders, "Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me the voice as of a great earthquake, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place [ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτοῦ]." LXX, trans. Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton. In some writings, such as Jeremiah, "place" is assimilated to the Temple to indicate where the divine manifestation occurs on earth. See Jer. 7:12. For my purposes, this development is secondary insofar as this Jewish tradition emphasizes "place" as a means of speaking of the divine manifestation *within* the creation. The Apologists, following Middle Platonic assumptions, use τόπος as a means of keeping God separate from creation—he specifically is not manifested in creation, but remains in his own place. The one exception may occur in Theophilus who, as I will show momentarily, refers to a "place of light" within creation. However, even in this instance, the τόπος to which Theophilus refers specifically is not inhabited by God, as a Second Temple writer might claim with the same phrase, but by the spirit which keeps God separated from material creation (*Autol.* 2.13). Something similar occurs with the Apologists' understanding of the Old Testament theophanic texts in general, where the Father, due to his transcendence, is not manifested in creation; rather, the Logos is the being who appears in creation on behalf of the Father. I will return to this interpretation of the theophanies in Justin's theology in chapter three. See below pp. 115-118.

[40] *Dial.* 127.2, Falls, 191.

[41] *Dial.* 56.1, Falls, 83 with minor revisions. See also *Dial.* 60.2. Plato's *Phaedrus* likely serves as the antecedent for the notion of a "super-celestial place" where the divine dwells, as André Méhat has shown. Both Plato and Justin regarded this place with a reverential fear in their respective writings. Specifically, Plato described this place as accessible only to the mind, a thought reflected in Justin's statement that no man has ever seen the place of God. Méhat, "Le 'Lieu Supracélestre' de Saint Justin à Origene," in *Forma Futura: Studi in Onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1975), 282-294.

[42] *Leg.* 8.4. For more on this argument in relation to a similar argument in Irenaeus' work, see below pp. 97-100.

emerges from Scripture's account of creation. He writes, "The unique spirit occupied the place [τόπον] of light and was situated *between* the water and the heaven so that, so to speak, the darkness might not communicate with the heaven, which was nearer to God, before God said: 'Let there be light.'"[43] Here, the transcendent, divine realm is separated from the material realm so that divinity might not be corrupted through mixing with material.[44] Theophilus, unlike Justin and Athenagoras, refrains from saying directly that God is in his own place, but the spatial imagery used in this definition results in the same conclusion—God is in his own place which does not come into contact with the material realm.

The concept of space in relation to the divine nature reveals an incongruity within the Apologists' thought. Namely, the notion that God is located somewhere, even somewhere far away, conflicts with God's incorporeality, which, as noted above, is assumed in their understanding of the divine transcendence.[45] At times, the Apologists'—

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[43] "ἓν μὲν τὸ πνεῦμα φωτὸς τόπον ἐπέχον ἐμεσίτευεν τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἵνα τρόπῳ τινὶ μὴ κοινωνῇ τὸ σκότος τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐγγυτέρῳ ὄντι τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸ τοῦ εἰτεῖν τὸν θεόν· 'Γενηθήτω φῶς.'" *Autol.* 2.13, Grant, 49, italics added.

[44] This notion of a boundary dividing the transcendent and material realms is also a Valentinian idea. Irenaeus speaks of it in his report when he addresses the role of the Aeon 'Limit' who was emitted to separate Sophia from her passion. Limit is so named because through this Aeon the realms are divided and kept apart—Sophia is admitted back into the *Pleroma* while her passion, Achamoth, remains outside. See above p. 35. Thomassen reports that in Eastern Valentinianism, known through the witness of Theodotus and preserved by Clement of Alexandria, the Sophia herself serves as this boundary. He writes, "From Theodotus comes the idea that the Saviour 'came forth through' Sophia when he descended into the cosmos—that is, he passed through the sphere of Sophia that lies between the Pleroma and the cosmos." Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 33.

[45] A philosophical commonplace of the era, originating in Stoicism, asserts that only bodies can occupy space. Chrysippus defined place, in part, as "what is entirely occupied by an existent [i.e. body]." Quoted in Jacques Brunschwig, "Stoic Metaphysics," in *Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, 206-232. Likewise, Sextus Empiricus reports the Stoic understanding of place as "'that which is occupied by an existent and made equal to that which occupies it' (calling body now 'an existent,' as is plain from the interchange of the names)…" *Against the Physicists* II.3, Bury, LCL 311:211. Paradoxically, in locating God far away in order to separate the divine and material, the Apologists introduce properties of material (i.e. the dimensions of space) to the divine. Past scholars have attempted to resolve this inconsistency in the Apologists' work. For example, Goodenough perceives no contradiction in Justin's thought regarding the spatiality of God. He claims that Justin believes spatiality only came into existence when God created. Thus, spatiality cannot be read back into the nature of God, himself. Goodenough has no evidence for this

Theophilus in particular—display their ambivalence with this spatial definition,[46] but their need to keep the divine nature and material creation separated results in an inability to conceive of God apart from space. More troubling than the inconsistency of spatial language and the divine incorporeality is the inability of a spatially transcendent God to

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interpretation from Justin's text; instead, his evidence comes from Philo. While the notion that time and space came into existence at creation may be an aspect of Philo's thought, its presence there in no way proves its existence in Justin's thought. Goodenough, *Justin Martyr*, 124-125. Likewise, regarding Athenagoras, Pouderon rejects any difficulty with the Athenian Apologist's location of God in a place. He argues that the formula "God above matter" equally could be interpreted as hierarchical rather than spatial. While Pouderon admits that Athenagoras' argument for the oneness of God using the notion of place is problematic, he ultimately dismisses the problem. Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes*, 123-125. I engage Pouderon's argument in more detail below 100n122. Other scholars do not shy from the difficulty. For example, Lebreton, although everywhere affirming Justin's orthodoxy, criticizes him at just this point. He writes, "Justin misunderstands the divine immensity; *he locates God in some place*, above the heavens, in a sublime asylum from where it would be necessary for him to leave if he was to appear on earth." Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:426, italics added. Similarly, Quasten writes, "Justin denies the substantial omnipresence of God. God the Father dwells, according to him, in the regions above the sky. He cannot leave his place, and therefore he is unable to appear in the world." Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:208. Barnard writes, "Justin retained the Middle Platonist emphasis on God as the unknowable and transcendent Cause far removed from the world and disconnected with it…Justin had no real theory of divine immanence to complement his emphasis on divine transcendence. His doctrine of the Logos…in fact kept the supreme Deity at a safe distance from intercourse with men and left the Platonic transcendence in all its bareness." Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 83-84.

[46] Elsewhere, Justin and Theophilus maintain that God cannot be confined or circumscribed in a place. For example, Justin writes, "Yet [God] surveys all things, knows all things, and none of us has escaped his notice. Nor is he moved who cannot be contained in any place (ἀχώρητος), not even in the whole universe, for he existed even before the universe was created." *Dial.* 127.2, Falls, 191. Theophilus writes, "[God] is not visible by fleshly eyes because he is unconfined [ἀχώρητον]." *Autol.* 1.5. In one place, Theophilus even articulates the difficulty with ascribing spatial language to God. He writes, "But it is characteristic of the Most High and Almighty God…not to be confined in a place [τὸ ἐν τόπῳ χωρεῖσθαι]; *otherwise, the place* [τόπος] *containing him would be greater than he is, for what contains is greater than what is contained.* God is not contained [οὐ χωρεῖται] but is himself the place [τόπος] of the universe." *Autol.* 2.3, Grant, with minor revisions, italics added. The word these Apologists use to describe the divine attribute of "uncontained" is ἀχώρητος, the privative of χώρα (see above p. 71n39). Unlike the other negative attributes commonly used by the Apologists, this word is not widely used in Greek philosophy. It is absent from Plato and the Middle Platonists. Conversely, it appears in earlier Christian writings as part of a liturgical or rhythmic definition of God. For example, the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas* writes, "First of all, believe that God is one, who created all things and set them in order, and made out of what did not exist everything that is, and who contains all things but is himself alone uncontained [ἀχώρητος]." *Shepherd*, Mand. 1.1, Holmes, 375. Daniélou views the rhythmic refrain of "containing/uncontained," and others like it (e.g. "enclosing, not enclosed" and "containing, not contained") as representing "the purest Judaeo-Christianity" and finds similar expressions in the *Preaching of Peter* (in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.39). Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 325-326. Likewise, Schoedel notes examples of the same rhythmic refrain, and even the appearance of ἀχώρητος, in "Gnostic" literature, particularly the Ptolemaeans. Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology," 90-92. This short history suggests that ἀχώρητος, as a definition of God, was used elsewhere side by side with spatial or topological definitions of the divine nature. Nevertheless, it is unclear from this evidence whether the word ἀχώρητος itself does not negate spatial imagery or whether authors such as Theophilus simply do not resolve the incongruity of the Jewish Christian liturgical word and other spatial definitions of the divine transcendence.

be reconciled with the God revealed in the Scriptures.[47] If God remains in his super-celestial place, as Justin writes, or if the divine realm is divided from the material realm by the place of created light, as Theophilus writes, then the biblical notion of an immanent God active in the affairs of humanity is precluded. Rather, God's actions in the world, as narrated by Scripture, must be attributed to an intermediary agent or agents who, due to their lack of transcendence, are able to enter and move about in the world.[48]

2. Irenaeus

2.1 The Identity of God

Irenaeus exhibits equal concern with the identity of God, although not for reasons characteristic of the Apologists' works. Rather, he needs to establish the identity of the God proclaimed by Scripture and the *regula fidei* in order to distinguish the Christian God from variant understandings of God circulating in rival groups claiming to possess the authentic understanding of Scripture as secretly revealed to them by the apostles. As noted in the previous chapter, the Valentinians and the Marcionites claimed that the God revealed by the Christian writings was not the Creator of the cosmos or the God revealed in the Jewish Scriptures, but a higher, supreme God unknown before Christ. Consequently, they did not believe that creation was good; rather, they believed creation was the evil product of an ignorant, Demiurgic God. This "Demiurge" had no connection

[47] As noted above, the Apologists' use of traditional Christian nomenclature such as "Father" did not resolve this discrepancy.

[48] According to Dillon, this spatial definition of transcendence is the motive behind the Middle Platonist category of intermediary powers, namely, to retain divine action in the world, without contaminating divinity, itself. He writes, "The more transcendent the Supreme God becomes, the more he stands in need of other beings to mediate between him and the material world, over which, in Platonism, he always exercises a general supervision." Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 216. The same motive lies behind the Apologists' use of Logos theology, which must await further comment.

to Christ; the Father of whom the Son speaks in the gospels is the higher, unknown God.[49] This theology severed the unified Godhead into two competing deities and subsequently removed Christians from their Jewish roots and their cherished Scriptures. Thus, Irenaeus intends to demonstrate the oneness or unity of God, and he accomplishes his task by identifying the Most High God whom Christians worship with the Creator of the cosmos revealed in the Jewish Scriptures.

Irenaeus' account of God's identity in *Haer.* 2 commences with a logical argument for the existence of one Creator God and draws largely on the tools of logic and rhetoric.[50] Irenaeus begins by showing the logical inconsistencies in the Valentinian description of the Most High God. First, he accepts as true the Valentinian title of the divine being as "Fullness" (πλήρωμα*, Pleroma*).[51] For Irenaeus, this title logically means that God contains everything in existence, whether created or emanated. He writes, "For how can there be over [God] another Fullness or Principle or Power or another God since it is necessary that God, as the Fullness of all these things, in his immensity contains all things and is contained by none? But if there is anything outside of him, he is no longer the Fullness, nor does he contain all things."[52] Despite the Valentinians' preference for

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[49] See above pp. 34-39.

[50] As I noted in chapter one, Irenaeus does not begin with Scripture because his opponents were adept at interpreting (or in Marcion's case, excising) Scripture passages that challenged their positions so as to remove any potential difficulty. For example, Irenaeus' opponents would assert that any passage referring to God as Creator actually referred to the Demiurgic God rather than the Unknown Father of all. Thus, only after Irenaeus established the existence of one Creator God on premises upon which all parties could agree does he turn to demonstrate where Scripture aligns with this reasonable understanding.

[51] In Osborn's otherwise complete synopsis of the steps of this argument, he does not note that the Valentinians provided the beginning point of Irenaeus' argument with their insistence on "Fullness" as the divine name. This fact, rather than a proposition about God, launches Irenaeus into his rhetorical argument. See Osborn, *Irenaeus*, 55-56. On this point, see Norris, "The Transcendence and Freedom of God: Irenaeus, the Greek Tradition, and Gnosticism," in *Early Christian Literature*, 87-100. For the Valentinian use of *Pleroma*, see above p.33n50. In my explanation of this argument, I will refer to the Valentinian *Pleroma* with its English translation "Fullness" in order to stress the significance Irenaeus draws from the title for his argument.

[52] *Haer.* 2.1.2.

"Fullness" as a divine title, their understanding of material creation as inherently evil necessitates the existence of another being outside the Fullness who created the cosmos.[53]

From this discrepancy—the divine being identified as the Fullness of all things and the presence of another divine being or power outside of him—Irenaeus first forms a *reductio ad absurdum* by claiming that if any god exists outside of the Fullness, then an infinite number of gods and spaces and fullnesses would exist. Irenaeus contends that this view of reality amounts to an absurdity.[54] Therefore, affirming the existence of only one God as the Fullness of all things proves a more logical reality.

Whether the logic of this argument stands, the inconsistency Irenaeus identifies in the Valentinian (and Marcionite) understanding of the Most High God allows him on the basis of his opponents' assumptions to conclude logically that the Most High God must be the Creator.[55] If God is truly the Fullness, Irenaeus continues, then he must encompass all things, including material creation. If God contains material creation, then necessarily, he is the Creator of that material creation, since both Irenaeus and his opponents accepted God the Fullness as the supreme Power. If another power existing within the Fullness is the Creator of the cosmos, then this entity would be more powerful than the Most High

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[53] *Haer.* 1.5.1.

[54] "[I]f there is anything beyond the Fullness, there will be a Fullness within this very Fullness which they declare to be outside the Fullness, and the Fullness will be contained by that which is beyond…or, again, they must be an infinite distance separated from each other—the Fullness [I mean], and that which is beyond it. But if they maintain this, there will be a third kind of existence, which separates by immensity the Fullness and that which is beyond it…In this way, talk might go on for ever concerning those things which are contained, and those which contain. For if this third existence has its beginning above, and its end beneath, there is an absolute necessity that it be also bounded on the sides, either beginning or ceasing at certain points, [where new existences begin.] These, again, and others which are above and below, will have their beginnings at certain other points, and so on *ad infinitum*…" *Haer.* 2.1.3-5, ANF 1:360 with minor revisions.

[55] Irenaeus consistently returns to this discrepancy between God as "Fullness" and the existence of a Demiurge outside the "Fullness" in Valentinian thought throughout *Haer.* 1 and 2. On this point, see Tremblay, *Manifestation,* 32-33. He likewise identifies this "contradiction" in Valentinian thought as the cornerstone of Irenaeus' rhetorical argument.

God.[56] On the other hand, if the Most High God allows this power to create, then the material creation is ultimately due to the will of the Most High God and it becomes meaningless to attribute creation to another god.[57] Therefore, the Most High God alone logically must be the Creator without need of any intermediary Demiurge or angelic being.

Behind this logical argument stands an understanding of the divine identity similar to that witnessed in Theophilus' statement that the power of God lies precisely in his ability to create.[58] Irenaeus frames it as follows: if God is the supreme Power, then he must be the Creator of all things. If the Most High God is the Creator, a need to posit the existence of other gods or divine emanations to account for the presence of the material world no longer remains. These logical conclusions regarding the identity of the divine being connect seamlessly to the God Irenaeus discerns in Scripture, namely, the God who is one and who is the Creator of the cosmos.[59]

As noted above, the Apologists used the title "Father" according to its Middle Platonic sense in order to further their arguments for God's identity as Creator and to display the compatibility between the God proclaimed in the Jewish Scriptures and the God proclaimed by the philosophers. By contrast, Irenaeus' use of the title "Father" has

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[56] *Haer.* 2.2.1.

[57] *Haer.* 2.1.3; 2.3.1-2; 2.4.1. A similar argument occurs when Irenaeus critiques the Valentinian understanding of the created world as an image of the Fullness (*Haer.* 2.17.1-3).

[58] *Autol.* 2.4. Irenaeus will state this explicitly in a later passage where he writes, "Now the work of God is the fashioning of man." *Haer.* 5.15.2, ANF 1:543. I will return to this passage in more detail in later chapters.

[59] *Haer.* 2.35.4; 3.2.1. Irenaeus' scriptural proofs for God as Creator largely consist of showing that the God of the Christian writings and Christian teaching is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Throughout *Haer.* 3, Irenaeus expounds the teaching of the New Testament to demonstrate that the God revealed by Christ and the apostles is not a different God than the God revealed by the Jewish Scriptures, but the same God. For a summary statement of this affirmation, see *Haer.* 3.5.1.

little to do with God's creative work.[60] The absence of the Middle Platonic meaning of "Father" in Irenaeus' work is not due to his ignorance of philosophy. In fact, Irenaeus is aware of Plato's, and by proxy the Middle Platonists', use of "Father" to name God, as he alludes to the *Tim.* 28c passage in the context of an anti-Marcionite polemic. He writes, "But because of this [God's providence], certain ones of the Gentiles, who were less of a slave to enticements and pleasures, and who were not led away to such a degree of superstition with regard to idols, because they were moved, although slightly, by His providence, *they were nevertheless convinced that they should call the Maker of this universe Father* because he exercises providence and arranges all things in our world."[61] Here, Irenaeus connects "Father" to the divine action of providence in the manner of the Middle Platonists and the Apologists.

Nevertheless, although Irenaeus is aware of the philosophical use of "Father" and considers it significant, he does not find in this usage an occasion to praise Greek philosophers, least of all Plato who Irenaeus already had criticized along with a catalog of other philosophers in *Haer.* 2.14.[62] In addition, he does not proceed to develop or adopt

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[60] Studies of the notion of the Fatherhood of God in the Patristic era have been almost silent on the contribution of Irenaeus. The most recent and thorough examination of this topic begins with Origen. Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Widdicombe later published an article on the same topic in Justin's thought (see p. 64n20 above), but he did not allude to the intervening years in either work. In the Richard Lectures of 1965-66, Grant broached the topic, the content of which was later included as chapter one in *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966). Irenaeus receives only a paragraph in the survey (compared to four pages for Justin) in which Grant says nothing, the chapter title "God the Father" notwithstanding, about Irenaeus' notion of Fatherhood. Even Barnes and Fantino are silent on the topic, despite its obvious Trinitarian ramifications. The one exception here is Ladaria's article, which considers Irenaeus in the course of several other Ante Nicene Fathers. Ladaria, "*Tam Pater Nemo*," 98-102.

[61] *Haer.* 3.25.1, italics added. "*[T]amen converse sunt ut dicerent Fabricatorem huius universitatis Patrem.*" The allusion to *Tim.* 28c is suggested by Irenaeus' combination of *Fabricator* and *Pater* which likely correspond to Δημιουργός and Πατήρ of the *Tim.* 28c passage. Unfortunately, no Greek fragment exists for this section. Rousseau's retroversion has Δημιουργός and Πατέρ in this passage. *SC* 211:479, 481.

[62] *Haer.* 2.14.3-4. On this passage in relation to Irenaeus' views on Greek philosophy in general, see above pp. 40-42.

Plato's meaning by supplementing it with Scripture in the manner of the Apologists. Irenaeus only refers to Plato's usage in order to contrast it to Marcion's usage, in which "Father" identified a higher god distinct from the Creator. Therefore, the purpose of the allusion to *Tim.* 28c is to accentuate Marcion's error—even in his ignorance, Irenaeus claims, a Greek philosopher is still more religious than Marcion.[63]

Irenaeus, in accordance with his understanding of Scripture and the *regula,* uses "Father" primarily to indicate the unique relationship between the First and Second Persons—the Father and the Son—and, secondarily, to indicate the potential, salvific relationship between God and his creation as a result of the Son's revealing work.[64] Irenaeus indicates this alternate significance of "Father" at the outset of *Haer.* 2 where he writes, "Moreover, that this God is the Father of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul said of

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[63] Irenaeus reprises the argument a few paragraphs after the allusion to *Tim.* 28c and mentions Plato by name in *Haer.* 3.25.1. Nevertheless, he does not quote *Tim.* 28c in the reprised argument. Here the burden of the argument of Plato's "religiousness" over against Marcion falls not on the philosopher's use of "Father" as a divine title but on his understanding of God's goodness. Irenaeus writes, "Plato is proved to be more religious than these men, for he allowed that the same God was both just and good, having power over all things, and Himself executing judgment…he points out that the Maker and Framer of the universe is good. 'And to the good,' he says, 'no envy ever springs up with regard to anything;' thus establishing the goodness of God, as the beginning and the cause of the creation of the world…" *Haer.* 3.25.5, ANF 1:459-460. The Platonic passage linking God's goodness to his creative work that Irenaeus cites is not *Tim.* 28c, but *Tim.* 29e, a passage in which "Father" does not appear. Nor does Irenaeus refer to Plato's use of "Father" in his summary of the argument. Instead, he combines "Maker [*Fabricator*]" with "Framer [*Factor*])." If Irenaeus wanted to emphasize Plato's understanding of "Father" in the manner of the Apologists, he either should have quoted *Tim.* 28c in this reprisal or at the very least alluded to the passage by pairing "Maker" with "Father" in his summary statement, as he did in the earlier passage. This omission demonstrates that although Irenaeus is aware of the precedent for "Father" as a divine title in Plato's work, he has no interest in exploiting it. His interest is in discrediting Marcion by showing his ignorance of God even when compared to the Greek philosophers whom Irenaeus otherwise regards as the source of all error. Both the philosophers' use of "Father" and their understanding of God's goodness are effective for this argument.

[64] This second component is not the same as Ladaria's concept of God's "universal Fatherhood," by which he indicates Justin's use of "Father" to signify God's relation to all of creation as its creator. Ladaria, "*Tam Pater Nemo,*" 98-99. In Irenaeus' understanding of adoptive sonship, God is "Father" not to all creation, as Justin's understanding of "universal Fatherhood" suggests, but only to those who believe in the Son. For example, Irenaeus writes, "[He is] the God of all—both of the Jews and of the Gentiles and of the faithful. However, to the faithful He is as Father, since 'in the last times' He opened the testament of the adoption as sons…" *Epid.* 8, Behr, 44. Here Irenaeus makes a clear distinction between the titles "God" and "Father"—while God is "God" to all people, only the faithful, that is those who believe in Christ, know God as "Father."

him: 'There is one God the Father, who is over all and through all and in us all.'"[65] The passage comes at the conclusion of Irenaeus' argument against his opponents' belief that a being other than the Most High God created the world.[66] The passage adds nothing to the logical argument, which concluded at *Haer.* 2.2.5, but serves instead to introduce or foreshadow the scriptural argument for the oneness of God that Irenaeus intends to develop in later books, wherein the focus is the intimate connection between the Creator God and Jesus Christ. Following the citation, Irenaeus returns to his rhetorical argument and therefore offers no further interpretation of the passage here.[67]

It is significant to note that Paul does not link the title "Father" to God's unique relationship with the Son in this passage, as Irenaeus' interpretation suggests. Neither does Paul allude to Jesus Christ in this passage, or in its surrounding context. In fact, the verse arguably lends itself more to a Middle Platonist understanding—the reference to God's being "above all" easily could indicate his providential or creative functions. Thus, the only justification for Irenaeus' reference to the Son in his interpretation of the verse is the presence of the divine title "Father." The implication is that Irenaeus understands the divine title "Father," itself to involve a connection or relationship to the Son Jesus Christ. In other words, the title "Father" assumes the presence of a "Son." In his scriptural argument of later books, Irenaeus underscores this implication on the strength of passages

[65] *Haer.* 2.2.6. The verse Irenaeus cites here is Eph. 4:6.

[66] See Rousseau's helpful breakdown of the argument. Rousseau, *SC* 293:123-125.

[67] Irenaeus nowhere presents a rhetorical argument for his understanding of "Father" in *Haer.* 2 because he believes that this significance—God as the "Father" of Jesus Christ—is a revealed truth, not available to everyone on the premises of reason. In contrast, the Apologists all assume their readers could understand the Fatherhood of God through reason. For example, Athenagoras appeals to the emperors' "great wisdom" in understanding the Son's relationship to the Father (*Leg.* 10.3). Theophilus, despite his ire for the philosophers and his consistent claims of their errors, allows, in what is certainly a reference to *Tim.* 28c, that Plato knew God as Father (*Autol.* 2.4). If Irenaeus intended "Father" in the Middle Platonist sense, he, like the Apologists, would have had no trouble arguing for this identity from reason.

such as Matthew 11:27 and uses the unique relationship to develop the Son's revelatory function.[68]

Irenaeus believes that knowledge of the unique relationship between God and his Son, revealed in the divine title "Father," more completely exhausts God's identity than his role as Creator. In a *regula* statement in *Haer.* 1, Irenaeus shows a clear progression in the divine identity from Creator to Father. He writes, "This is he who made the world, indeed the world [which encompasses] all things; this is he who fashioned man; this is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob above whom is neither another God nor Beginning nor Power nor Fullness; this is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ…"[69] Although Irenaeus here distinguishes between the formation of the world and the formation of humanity in order to emphasize the special character of the latter, for my purposes this statement proclaims three truths regarding the divine identity. As indicated by the parallelism of the Latin translator, each truth increases in importance and progressive understanding from the former: (1) God is the one who created the cosmos; (2) God is the one who revealed himself to Israel; and, (3) God is the Father of Jesus Christ. The Apologists emphasize only the first two aspects of the divine identity, but for Irenaeus, God's identity is not known fully apart from the knowledge that he is "Father" of Jesus Christ.

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[68] *Haer.* 4.6.7. I will return to the implications of this unique relationship for the revelatory function of the Son in chapter three. See below pp. 142-150.

[69] "*[H]ic qui mundum fecit, etenim mundus ex omnibus; hic qui hominem plasmavit; hic Deus Abraham et Deus Isaac et Deus Jacob, super quem alius Deus non est neque Initium neque Virtus neque Pleroma; hic Pater Domini nostril Iesu Christi…" Haer.* 1.22.1.

Thus, Irenaeus maintains to know God fully is to know him in relationship with another divine being.[70] This fact suggests a Trinitarian reality in Irenaeus' understanding of God, namely, that in the one divine being called God, there exist two distinct personalities. This insight must await chapter three for further development. The point to stress in this context is that Irenaeus' use of "Father," as opposed to the Apologists' use of the same title, lends itself to this Trinitarian understanding.

Moreover, this knowledge of God's Fatherhood not only entails knowledge of God's unique relationship to Jesus Christ, those who believe in and follow Jesus Christ come to know God as their own, adoptive Father. Irenaeus writes, "For it was for this end that the Logos of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Logos, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God."[71] To know God as an adoptive Father, a person must first know the Son.[72] This knowledge of God as adoptive Father is the identity of God to which all humanity is progressing toward. Irenaeus writes, "For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too,

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[70] Ladaria fails to see this implication of Irenaeus' use of "Father" because he is beholden to the presuppositions of the works of the first trajectory regarding Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. Accordingly, he assumes that Irenaeus aligns with Justin, such that the former must believe the Son is generated from the will of the Father, even though Ladaria only can quote the latter in favor of this position. Moreover, for Ladaria, Irenaeus' beliefs that the Son is visible while the Father is invisible show that the Son cannot be of the same nature as the Father. Therefore, Irenaeus' Father-Son language, like the Apologists', have none of the Trinitarian implications that are present in later figures' use of Father-Son language. Ladaria, "*Tam Pater Nemo*,"101-102. I will address these positions in more detail in the context of my discussion of the nature of the Second Person in chapter three.

[71] *Haer.* 3.19.1, ANF 1:448 with minor revisions. As an example of the prevalence of adoption language in Irenaeus' works, see *Haer.* 2.28.3, 3.6.1-2, 3.16.3, 3.18.7, 3.20.2, 3.21.4, 4.*Pref.*4, 4.1.1, 4.16.5, 4.36.2, 5.12.2, 5.32.2, *Epid.* 8.

[72] For Irenaeus, prior to Son's coming, God was not fully known, precisely because he only was known as the Creator and not as the Father of Jesus Christ or as the adoptive Father of humanity. Only faith in the Son reveals this most intimate identity. See *Epid.* 8 quoted above p. 80n64. Thus, the failure of the Jews to know God as "Father" constitutes their primary error. Irenaeus writes, "Thus the Jews have departed from God, because they have not received his Logos, but have believed they were able to know God as Father by himself without the Logos, that is without the Son." *Haer.* 4.7.4. I will return to the unique ability of the Son to reveal the Father in more detail in chapter three.

adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen *paternally* in the Kingdom of heaven…"[73] In other words, when God finally is seen in his fullness, he will be seen as a Father.[74]

2.2. The Nature of God

Unlike the Apologists, Irenaeus expresses no interest in finding commonalities with Greek philosophy; therefore, he has little reason to define the divine nature in the straightforward manner witnessed, for example, in Athenagoras' *Leg.* 10. In fact, he views this speculative practice as potentially detrimental to a person's faith. Speculative thought regarding the nature of the divine drove the Valentinian protology myth and reiterated the folly of the philosophers.[75] Conversely, Irenaeus believes Christians should limit themselves to the knowledge revealed in Scripture as interpreted through the *regula fidei* and not ponder the subjects on which Scripture is silent.[76] Nonetheless, in the remainder of *Haer.* 2, Irenaeus engages in a series of critiques of the Valentinian theory

[73] *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489, italics added.

[74] Nonetheless, as I will show below in detail, Irenaeus believes firmly in the transcendence of God and therefore asserts the vision and knowledge of God as "Father" is still only partial. Full knowledge of the Father's being will not come until the Kingdom of heaven. Irenaeus maintains that even this knowledge will be ever progressing such that knowledge of God's being never will be exhausted fully. See *Haer.* 2.28.3, 4.11.2. Irenaeus' development of the two orders of knowledge—God is seen according to his love, but not seen according to his power—ensures the protection of God's transcendence in revelation. Irenaeus writes, "[I]n respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, 'no man shall see God and live,' for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love, and kindness, and as to His infinite power, even this he grants to those who love Him, that is to see God…" *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489. Human's ability to see God in any capacity, as we will see in more detail in the next chapter, is always the result of God's self-revelation to humanity in love. He writes, "For man does not see God by his own powers; but when he pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills." *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489. Elsewhere, Irenaeus specifically identifies this loving revelation as a function of God's Fatherhood. See *Haer.* 5.17.1.

[75] *Haer.* 2.14.1ff.

[76] *Haer.* 2.28.2-3, 7.

of divine emanations or Aeons, and in the process he reveals several positive elements instructive to his understanding of the divine nature.

Irenaeus—perhaps following Justin's teaching—understands transcendence as an essential aspect of the divine nature. For example, in a *regula* statement in *Epid.*, Irenaeus writes, "God, the Father, uncreated, uncontainable, invisible, one God, the Creator of all: this is the first article of our faith."[77] This list of negative attributes affirms the transcendence by contrasting the divine nature to that of material, which is created, contained, visible, and compound. In the same vein, the Valentinians affirm the divine transcendence in an effort to keep the Unknown Father untainted by the evil material creation. As was their custom, they did so using many of the same qualifiers as the Church's doctrine used.[78] Thus, according to his occasion and method of argumentation described in the previous chapter,[79] Irenaeus' first task in defining the divine nature is to separate the Church's understanding of divine transcendence from the Valentinian understanding.[80]

As noted briefly in the previous chapter, the Valentinians maintained the divine transcendence through the positioning of 29 emanations or Aeons between the Most High God and the material creation.[81] The Aeons, by nature of their successive emanations from different Aeon pairs, who themselves emanated from the Most High God, existed in a hierarchy of gradating divinity. As Barnes notes, the intervals between the Aeons are

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[77] *Epid.* 6, Behr, 43.

[78] Compare, for example, Irenaeus' descriptions of the Valentinian Most High God in *Haer.* 1.1.1—"invisible and incomprehensible…eternal and unbegotten"—to the *regula* statement on the Christian God in *Epid.* 6 quoted just above.

[79] See above pp. 43-46.

[80] Fantino rightly notes the crucial difference between the "Gnostics" and Irenaeus as their different means of understanding the relation between God and the created world. Although I will use different terminology in the following material, my understanding of the primary difference between the belief schemes is the same. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 263.

[81] See above pp. 32-34.

"the ontological basis (or expression of) the inferiority of each succeeding rank of super-celestial offspring: each degree of separation from the first cause produces offspring of diminished content and dignity compared to its antecedents."[82] Accordingly, only the Nous is able to contemplate fully the mystery of the Supreme God, precisely because, as the third emanation, it emanated directly from, and is positioned relatively close to, the First-Father.[83] The farther an emanation is positioned from the first source, as a result of its emanation order, the less knowledge it possesses of the Most High God until finally the last Aeon falls into error out of complete ignorance. This understanding results in a Most High God literally quite distant from the material creation, spatially separated by 29 Aeons, themselves separated from each other by immense intervals.[84]

Although the Valentinians stressed the divine transcendence in order to keep God unstained by inherently evil matter, Irenaeus discerned that their manner of defining transcendence actually *included* God with his emanations and the material creation in one continuum of being.[85] Irenaeus underscores this implication of Valentinian teaching in his

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[82] Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 76. Similarly, Minns writes, "Fundamental to the concept of the [Valentinian] chain of being is the idea of a lessening or diminishing of whatever is communicated from one Aeon in the chain to the next." Minns, *Irenaeus,* 30. I will return to this fact in my discussion of the nature of the Second Person in chapter three. See below pp. 151-153.

[83] *Haer.* 1.2.1.

[84] *Haer.* 2.1.4. See Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 76.

[85] Minns' recent interpretation here is helpful. He writes, "The gnostics understood all reality to be a continuous whole. Despite the vast distance between them, God and matter stand in the same continuum, the same chain of being. Indeed, it is part of the purpose of the notion of the chain of being to account both for the distance between God and matter and for their connection to one another." Minns, *Irenaeus,* 32. The loss of the distinction between God and matter is manifest also in the Valentinian belief that all events on earth are a shadow or image of events in heaven (e.g. *Haer.* 1.17.1). On this point see Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord* 2:38-39. These interpretations are more nuanced and more accurate than that of Ochagavía, who, citing Irenaeus' use of many negative attributes for the Father (notably invisible and incomprehensible), unites Irenaeus' and the "Gnostics'" teaching on the divine transcendence. The difference that Ochagavía perceives between Irenaeus and the "Gnostics" is neither in the nature of the transcendent God nor in the nature of the mediator but only in the identity of the mediator. He writes, "The gap between God and the world must be filled in by a mediator whose task will be to impart unto men the knowledge of the ungraspable Father. Gnosticism, as we have already seen, bridged this gap with the Aeons. For Irenaeus, it is the Father's own Word who manifests God to man and brings man to the communion with God." Ochagavía, *Visibile Patris Filius,* 21. Ochagavía seems to be following an earlier interpretation made by

critique of their understanding of the *Pleroma* or Fullness. The number of 30 Aeons that constituted the Valentinian Fullness was obtained by numbering the Most High God with his 29 emanations, all of which comprise the divine nature. Irenaeus strongly rejects this understanding. He writes, "For the Father of all should not be counted with the other emissions, he who was not emitted with that which was emitted, the unborn with that which is born, and he whom no one comprehends with that which is comprehended by him…He who is without shape with that which has a definite shape. *For inasmuch as he is superior to the others,* he should not be numbered with them, he who is impassible and not in error with a passible Aeon endowed with error."[86] This understanding, thus, implies only a relative transcendence; God is indeed far away but is not completely different from the entities he produces. Therefore, by their relative understanding of transcendence, the Valentinians do to the divine being what they want most to avoid—they include him with the material creation. This inclusion influences both the manner in which they speak about the Most High God and the manner in which they imagine things to emanate from him.

The other difficulty with a divine being whose transcendence is defined relatively, and what is a more acute challenge to Irenaeus' theology, is the resulting discrepancy with the God revealed by Scripture. If the divine transcendence is defined by spatial

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Smith, who writes, "Irenaeus's own outlook naturally resembles that of the Gnostics in certain respects; both were the product of the same intellectual milieu, and both were ultimately based on the same sound philosophy. For Irenaeus too, as we shall see, the gulf between God and the world had to be filled in; but it was filled in not by intermediate 'emanated' beings, but by God's own Word and Spirit…" Smith, *St. Irenaeus,* 24. Smith and Ochagavía's identical interpretations not only present a misleading interpretation of Irenaeus' description of the divine nature in general, they present problems for discerning Irenaeus' teaching on the nature of the Logos and Spirit. If the Logos and Spirit are of the same nature as the Aeons, then they necessarily are subordinated to the Father, despite Irenaeus' numerous passages to the contrary. (Smith's attempt to reject the obvious implications of his interpretation by rejecting the descriptive "intermediate" of Logos and Spirit does not follow.) I will return to this question in detail in chapters three and five.

[86] *Haer.* 2.12.1, italics added. See *Haer.* 2.17.1-3 where Irenaeus rejects the Valentinian idea that the created world is an image of the Fullness.

distance, then the only means of keeping God separate from matter involves imagining him as remote, that is, as physically far removed from the affairs of humanity and beyond the knowledge of any being. On the contrary, Scripture reveals a God involved intimately with humans and posits him as quite close. According to Irenaeus' reading of Scripture, God's intimate involvement in the world, known by the term "economy" (οἰκονομία), begins with the creation of humans, a fashioning with God's "own hands,"[87] continues through a series of salvific covenants, the climax of which is the incarnation—God's literal presence on earth—and culminates in their restoration in the Kingdom. In other words, God's immanent action spans the existence of creation; Irenaeus believes that no human activity exists outside the reach of God's providence, care, and love.

Therefore, the divine transcendence must be defined in a manner that allows God to be present to his creation both in its formation and in all subsequent activities. Irenaeus accomplishes this task by defining the divine transcendence as absolute rather than relative—for Irenaeus, God exists in a completely different order of being than humanity and material creation.[88] This divine reality means that God is completely different and

[87] *Haer.* 4.20.1, *Epid.* 11.

[88] The terminology of absolute and relative transcendence comes from Minns and offers a helpful way of noting the differences between Christian and "Gnostic" theology. According to Minns, "relative transcendence" means "a matter of distance" whereas "absolute transcendence" indicates that "there is absolutely no continuity of being between God and creation." Minns, *Irenaeus*, 32-33. Minns does not note the similarities between "Gnostic" theology and the Apologists' theology in regards to this relative understanding of transcendence. Norris offers a similar interpretation to that of Minns of Irenaeus' definition of transcendence and puts it in direct contrast to Justin's understanding. He writes, "For Justin, the chasm between generate and ingenerate existence, used to express the transcendence of the Creator over his creation, seems to imply a separation of the one from the other—a separation which is only overcome by the mediating agency of the Logos. Irenaeus, on the other hand, is combating in Gnosticism, a teaching whose major emphasis is on the irreconcilability of the divine Being with material existence. He is in search, therefore, of a way of asserting the transcendent majesty of God which will not seem to exclude him from the world. It is, in part, to this end that Irenaeus uses the notion of God's *limitlessness*, an idea which may well derive from Hellenistic Judaism. For what this notion means to him is not merely that God cannot be measured, but also that nothing sets a limit to his power and presence. What makes God *different* from every creature—his eternal and ingenerate simplicity—is thus, for Irenaeus, precisely what assures his direct and intimate *relation* with every creature." Norris, *God and World in Early Christian Theology: A*

distinct from that which he creates. Irenaeus writes, "For the Father of all is greatly different (*multum distat*) from those affections and passions which appear among men…For he is even beyond these and is therefore indescribable. For he may well and properly be called an understanding, capable of holding all things, but he is not like the understanding of men; and he may rightly be called light, but he is nothing like that light with which we are acquainted. So also in all other particulars, the Father of all will be not at all similar [*nulli similis*] to human weakness."[89] God cannot be numbered with humans for this methodology would imply a continuity of being between the Creator and created that Irenaeus everywhere rejects.[90]

Study in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen (New York: The Seabury Press, 1965), 86. Nevertheless, Norris misses the importance of space to Justin's understanding of the divine transcendence (see p. 60, although even here he waivers, at once claiming God is "ontologically" outside the world and that he is in a "single 'spectrum'" with the world). As such, although he identifies the distinction between Justin and Irenaeus on the divine transcendence, he fails to identify the catalyst for the difference. This argument is repeated in Norris, "Transcendence and Freedom," 87-100. Here, Norris' emphasis on the freedom of God approaches the absolute transcendence I have here identified, but he again waivers saying in one place that Irenaeus does imagine God spatially and therefore is inconsistent. Nevertheless, the passage Norris identifies in support of his claim, *Haer.* 2.6.3, does not refer to Irenaeus' conception of God, as Norris asserts, but to the Valentinian Demiurge, and the occasion of the argument is the Valentinian claim that they know more about God than the so-called ignorant Demiurge. Irenaeus writes, "For it will appear truly ridiculous, if [the Valentinians] maintain that they themselves indeed, who dwell upon the earth, know Him who is God over all whom they have never seen, but will not allow Him who, according to their opinion, formed them and the whole world, although He dwells in the heights above the heavens, to know those things which they themselves, though they dwell below, are acquainted." *Haer.* 2.2.6, ANF 1:366. Here, Irenaeus employs the Valentinian spatial language, and the epistemological assumptions that are tied to it ("according to their opinion"), to demonstrate the inconsistency of their claim to know more about God than the Demiurge, himself. His adoption of their language in this instance is a rhetorical move. In contrast to Norris' claim, it does not indicate that Irenaeus adopts the imagery in his own conception of God.

[89] *Haer.* 2.13.3-4. The ANF's rendering of "*multum distat*" as "a vast distance" specifically misses the argument's point, which defines transcendence by quality rather than by space. This translation is operative in Lawson's understanding of the passage, which interprets the distance in this passage precisely as spatial. Consequently, Lawson criticizes Irenaeus for transporting the conception of the chasm between God and man "out of the Hebraic into the Hellenistic idiom." Lawson, *Biblical Theology,* 57. This interpretation emerges from a false distinction between the Hebraic and Hellenistic mind assumed in earlier scholarship, but increasingly abandoned in more recent treatments. For more on this point, see below p. 134n89. Lawson's interpretation here is also the result of poor methodology, since he comments on Irenaeus' exegesis of certain passages apart from the context of the argument in which it appears. Specifically, he has no treatment of the broader rhetorical argument of *Haer.* 2.

[90] "And in this respect God differs from man, that God indeed makes, but man is made; and truly, He who makes is always the same; but that which is made must receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase." *Haer.* 4.11.1, ANF 1:474. Lebreton notes this distinction between Creator and

When transcendence is defined by quality rather than spatial distance, the divine transcendence remains regardless of the presence of material creation in the divine. Consequently, Irenaeus affirms without equivocation that all things are *in* God as the Fullness and as the one who contains all things, without reversion to Stoic materialism. Although God contains material creation, his absolute transcendence keeps him from mixing with material. Moreover, Irenaeus' understanding of God as the Fullness of all things, maintained through an absolute transcendence, allows him to posit nothing between God and his creation—no "filter," to use Rousseau's image, which hides God from humanity. Even Adam, although cast out of Paradise for his sin, does not leave the Fullness of God. Irenaeus writes, "For never at any time did Adam escape the hands of God…"[91] Material and sinful humanity need not be cast outside God's presence, as with

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created as one of the essential theses of Irenaeus' theological project and draws important Trinitarian insights from it regarding the divine status of the Son and Spirit, namely, that their participation in creation includes them on the side of God in the Creator/creature divide. Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:549-550. Cf. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 339ff, who makes the same point. The divine attribute "uncreated" uniquely serves this purpose in Irenaeus' theology. I will return to the Trinitarian implications of this divide between Creator and creature in chapters three and four below. As shown in the *Haer.* 2.13.3-4 passage quoted above, an implication of this strict distinction between the Creator and the created is Irenaeus' insistence that the inner realities of God cannot be known to humans through analogies drawn solely from human experience. In contrast, Audet states that despite Irenaeus' emphasis on the complete otherness of God, an analogy of being between God and humans remains in his understanding, which allows humans to speak positively about God and to know God to some degree. Audet, "Orientations Théologiques," 48ff. Irenaeus would certainly grant that humans can speak positively about God and know him in a positive manner. Nevertheless, attributing the concept of analogy of being to Irenaeus is anachronistic and circumvents one of the central tenets of his understanding of the divine nature, namely, the strict distinction between the Creator and the created. Irenaeus thinks not in terms of analogy but in terms of revealed knowledge. Humans are able to speak about and know God to some degree only because God has revealed himself in the Son out of his love. Therefore, any analogies drawn from human experience to understand the being of God must be grounded in Scripture. Thus, as I will show in chapter five, Irenaeus ultimately finds the analogy of a human forming with his hands helpful in describing the Triune God and the cooperative Triune act of creation. However, he only utilizes the analogical concept in a clear connection with Gen. 1:26, which he feels adequately grounds the image. Conversely, the Valentinians were drawing on human analogy apart from any recourse to Scripture as understood correctly, that is, through the Church's *regula*. Irenaeus categorically rejects this practice precisely because it assumes too much continuity between God and humanity. Irenaeus' rejection of the Valentinian use of human examples to understand God will become central in my discussion of his understanding of the generation of the Logos. See below pp. 150-167.

[91] *Haer.* 5.1.3, ANF 1:527. Irenaeus writes this passage not to elucidate the closeness of God but to indicate that the God who saved humanity is the same God who created. (This is accomplished by

Valentinian theology, not only because logically no place exists outside of God's Fullness for them to be cast,[92] but also because the divine transcendence, when defined absolutely, cannot be corrupted.

Irenaeus' only scriptural grounding for understanding transcendence as absolute occurs in Isaiah 55:8. In the midst of the argument, Irenaeus alludes to the passage when he writes, "But if they had known the Scriptures, and been taught the truth, they would have known beyond doubt, that God is not as men are; and that His thoughts are not like the thoughts of men."[93] The philosophical argument underlying absolute transcendence is the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo.*

Irenaeus first engages the question of creation out of nothing as a polemic against his opponents whose teachings of coeternal divinity and matter threatened the transcendence of God. The Valentinians did not advance this belief as clearly as did the Middle Platonists, against whom Theophilus formulated the doctrine. Nonetheless, the Valentinian theory of Aeons, the last of which emanated material creation through her passions, resulted in the loss of a definite starting point of matter and consequently, the loss of a clear distinction between God and matter.[94] Therefore, this understanding of

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Irenaeus' use of the "hands of God" image, his preferred means of referring to the Trinitarian act of the creation of the world, as we will see in more detail in chapter five.) Nevertheless, although originally not made in favor of the argument of *Haer.* 2, the image works in this context insofar as it reveals little reticence on Irenaeus' part to speak of the intimate connection between God and created material—even in this case between God and sinful humanity. (As the content of later *Haer.* books will reveal, Irenaeus interprets God's removal of Adam from paradise in Gen. 3 not as a loss of the presence of God, but as a loss of eternal life, a result which itself is interpreted as a merciful act. That God imposed death on Adam put a limit on sin and necessarily meant that he would not have to persevere in sin forever [*Haer.* 3.23.6].) Jean Mambrino draws similar conclusions regarding the proximity or immediacy of the divine nature to created material based on the "hands of God" passages alone. Jean Mambrino, "'Les Deux Mains de Dieu' dans l'oeuvre de saint Irénée," *NRT* 79 (1957): 355-70.

[92] See *Haer.* 2.1.3-5, 4.19.2.

[93] *Haer.* 2.13.3, ANF 1:374.

[94] Osborn's interpretation is helpful. He writes, "[M]yths and philosophical accounts trace the origin of the world to an ultimate divine cause from which, through intermediaries, the world emanates; this impairs the divine transcendence and the freedom of the divine act." Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 71. Moreover,

creation is a by-product of relative transcendence. On the contrary, absolute transcendence, as Irenaeus conceives, results in a clear moment of creation attributed only to the power and freedom of the transcendent God. He writes, "For, to attribute the substance of created things to the power and will of Him who is God of all, is worthy of credit and acceptance…While men, indeed, cannot make anything out of nothing, but only out of matter already existing, yet *God is in this point preeminently superior to men,* that He Himself called into being the substance of His creation, when previously it had no existence."[95] This clear moment of creation, which supports the distinction between the Creator and the created, is the basis for the qualitative difference in being Irenaeus perceives.[96]

Osborn notes that all "Gnostic" theology includes an intermediary in creation. Conversely, creation *ex nihilo* is marked by immediacy in creation. Ibid., 69.

[95] *Haer.* 2.10.4, ANF 1:370, italics added. See also *Haer.* 2.28.7, 2.30.9.

[96] M.C. Steenberg rightly notes a difference between Irenaeus and Theophilus regarding what God first creates. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and the Saga of Redemption*; Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 46ff. For Theophilus, God first creates unformed matter and only then proceeds, in a second stage to give that matter form. Theophilus writes, "These are the first teachings which the divine scripture gives. It indicates that the matter (ὕλη) from which God made and fashioned the world was in a way created, having been made by God." *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 41. His scriptural grounding for this idea is Gen. 1:2, which refers to the earth as "formless." Steenberg claims that, for Irenaeus, the notion of unformed matter "smacks too strongly of Valentinian influence." Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 46. In fact, Irenaeus never speaks of unformed matter. Instead, he asserts that God creates things (πράγματα), or actual living beings—humans. Irenaeus writes, "But we shall not be wrong if we affirm the same thing also concerning the substance of matter—that God produced it—for we have learned that God has supremacy over all things." *Haer.* 2.28.7, ANF 1:401 with minor revisions. Here, the ambiguous phrase "substance of matter" is clarified with "things." Steenberg writes, "For God to create out of nothing is for him to create the actual, individualized entities of the cosmos from a state of non-existence. It is specifically to say that the substance of the being of each existing entity has been called into existence from a state of nothingness, of non-being." Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation,* 48. Steenberg says creation *ex nihilo* in Irenaeus' understanding is clarified in Christ. That is, the creation of living beings allows Irenaeus to assert that Christ incarnates a specific man, instead of unformed matter, resulting in a strong connection between Christ and each individual human being. For a similar argument of the distinctions between Theophilus and Irenaeus on the question of creation *ex nihilo,* see Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée,* 309-312, 316-317, idem., "Théologie de la Création," 128-129 and Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 51-61, 69-73. Although Steenberg cites Orbe approvingly in this context, Orbe's interpretation of Irenaeus implies that God creates unformed matter first, for he attributes to the Father alone the creation of material, while the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit are the form and the perfector respectively of that material. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 134-135 and idem., "San Ireneo y la Creación de la Materia," *Greg* 55.2 (1974), 71-127. Fantino rightly notes Orbe as an opponent to this understanding of creation in Irenaeus. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée,* 348. I will address Orbe's questionable interpretation of the division of the respective roles of Father, Son, and Spirit in the act of creation in the following three chapters.

Next, Irenaeus turns his polemic to the Valentinian understanding of the divine nature proper. Irenaeus asserts that the Valentinian understanding of the divine nature as *Pleroma*, which included not only the Most High God but also all of the Aeons emanating from him, rendered the divine nature a separated and compound being. This fact is manifested in the titles given to the various Aeons, including ἔννοια (idea or thought), νοῦς (mind), ἀλήθεια (truth), λόγος (reason), and σοφία (wisdom).[97] According to Irenaeus' report of Valentinian doctrine, these Aeons are not qualities of God or attributes existing in his mind; rather, they are distinct entities, products of the First Aeon. The inevitable result, Irenaeus discerns, is a separated and compound divine being. Irenaeus writes, "For if [God] produced intelligence, then He who did thus produce intelligence must be understood in accordance with their views, as a compound and corporeal Being; so that God who sent forth [the intelligence] is separate from it, and the intelligence which was sent forth separate [from Him]."[98] In this definition, Irenaeus shows acquaintance with and acceptance of a philosophical commonplace that a compound being is necessarily created; divine, uncreated beings are simple and without parts.[99]

Therefore, in contrast to the Valentinian understanding, Irenaeus affirms, in perhaps his most detailed statement regarding the divine nature, that God is simple. He writes, "[God is] simple, uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to Himself, since He is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and

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[97] For the full list of 30 Aeons, as well as their order of emanation, see *Haer.* 1.1.1-3.

[98] *Haer.* 2.13.5, ANF 1:374 with minor revisions.

[99] Plato made a similar argument against a compound understanding of the One in *Parmenides* 137. The *Didask.*, taking a somewhat different approach, but also in line with Irenaeus' emphasis on the divine simplicity, states, "God is partless, by reason of the fact that there is nothing prior to him. For the part, and that out of which a thing is composed, exists prior to that of which it is a part…" *Didask.* 10.7, Dillon, 19.

wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light…"[100] The simple divine nature stems from Irenaeus' previous argument that the Most High God as the Fullness of all things is necessarily the Creator. By removing the Valentinian intermediaries, he effectively equates these powers (Nous, Logos, etc.) with God, himself. Irenaeus writes, "[God is] all Nous, and all Logos…and has in Himself nothing more ancient or late than another, and nothing at variance with one another…"[101] In this passage, Irenaeus refers these appellations to the Father as opposed to other passages where "Logos" is a clear title for the Son. Nonetheless, Irenaeus is not confused or inconsistent in his use of Logos terminology. Rather, the use of "Logos" here as an appellation of the Father establishes a key truth upon which Irenaeus will later draw to argue for the full divinity of the Son; namely, the divine nature is Logos, itself.[102]

Although expressed in philosophical terminology,[103] the idea of a simple divine nature conforms to the traditional Jewish emphasis on monotheism inherited by the Christians, and Irenaeus' motive for the affirmation more likely emerges from this context.[104] The emphasis on the divine nature's simplicity or uniqueness was present in

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[100] "*…simplex et non compositus et similimembrius et totus ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est, totus cum sit sensus et totus spiritus et totus sensuabilitas et totus ennoia et totus ratio et totus auditus et totus oculus et totus lumen…*" *Haer.* 2.13.3, ANF 1:374. See *Haer.* 1.15.5, 1.16.3, 2.28.4-5 and 4.11.2, the latter of which puts this aspect of God in direct contrast to created humans.

[101] *Haer.* 2.13.8, ANF 1:375 with minor revisions.

[102] See below, pp. 162-167.

[103] In the context of Irenaeus' understanding of God as mind, many scholars, notably Grant, Norris, Osborn, and Schoedel, note a possible connection to the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes to whom is attributed the following phrase: "All of him [God] sees, all thinks, and all hears" (as quoted in Grant, *Irenaeus,* 44). See also Norris, "Transcendence and Freedom," 96, Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 36-38, and Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed," 77.

[104] To be sure, Jewish monotheism likely was not as strict as was once thought. Recent research in Second Temple Judaism has revealed the presence of another power or powers alongside the Most High God who also have some role in creation. See, for example, Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977)*;* Larry W. Hurtado, "First Century Jewish Monotheism," *JSNT* 71 (1998): 3-26, idem. *One Lord and One God: Early Christian*

the Apologists' theology as well, specifically in contexts where they attempted to align the philosophical understanding with the Jewish monotheistic emphasis. Furthermore, the Irenaean formulations find a particular parallel in a passage by Theophilus where the latter writes, "if I call Him Logos, I speak of him as first principle; if I call him Nous, I speak of his Thought; if I call him Spirit, I speak of His breath…"[105] Moreover, Irenaeus' several recitations of the *regula* invariably begin with an affirmation that there is "one God" as opposed to the 30 Aeons that constitute the Valentinian Fullness. These recitations offer another means of affirming the simplicity of the divine nature.[106] As such, the divine simplicity connects with and supports all that Irenaeus has thus far affirmed about both the identity of God and the nature of God. As a simple being, he is the one Creator God who is not separated from his creation by a series of intermediate, ontologically gradated divine beings.

Both the Valentinian understanding of relative transcendence and a compound divine nature are based on a spatial understanding of the divine nature. As Irenaeus observes, "But if they maintain any such hypothesis, they must shut up their Abyss within

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Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism, 2nd ed. (London, New York: T and T Clark, 1988), esp. chapters 2 and 3. What is clear in both Judaism and early Christianity, however, is a distinction, as one Philonic scholar puts it, "between the first cause and the various beings that make up the material cosmos, even the most perfect among them such as the heavenly bodies." Cristina Termini, "Philo's Thought within the Context of Middle Judaism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. and trans. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 95-123. This distinction renders the first cause one, variously called unique or simple, and it is this distinction from which the Valentinians deviated in their theory of semi-divine emanations. Steenberg further notes that the introduction of ignorance into the creative act is original to "Gnostic" theology. In other words, the participation of intermediary beings in creation in Second Temple literature does not equate to an evil creation. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 28-31.

[105] *Autol.* 1.3. Cf. *Leg.* 4.1. As noted in chapter one, I accept Briggman's thesis of the relationship between Theophilus and Irenaeus, which states that Irenaeus does not read Theophilus until sometime in the midst of writing *Haer.* 3. As such, the parallel I underscore here is not the result of direct influence, but rather suggests that both Theophilus and Irenaeus were influenced by common sources or common currents of thought.

[106] See *Haer.* 1.10.1.

a definite form and space…"[107] This spatial understanding is clear from the opening line of his exposition of Valentinianism. He writes, "[The Valentinians] say that there exists in the invisible and indescribable heights, a perfect Aeon who was before [all things]."[108] Irenaeus categorically rejects this spatial understanding of the divine. As Fullness, God cannot be thought of as occupying a certain, far away place; rather, he is the place of all other things—everything in the cosmos exists fully within him. When he creates the cosmos or when he generates the Logos, these entities remain in him because he is the Fullness of all things. Irenaeus writes, "[I]t is a matter of necessity that God, the Fullness of all these, should contain all things in His immensity, and should be contained by no one…"[109] Moreover, as a simple being, God cannot be thought of as a being *out of which* other things emanate. Irenaeus asks rhetorically, "And what place has [the emanation] gone? From what place was it sent forth? For whatever is sent forth from any place, passes of necessity into some other."[110] Such language and images, he says, are inappropriate for the simple God who contains all. The formula of "containing, not contained" runs like a refrain throughout *Haer.* and is a necessary presupposition for the affirmation of the transcendent and intimately involved God revealed in Scripture.[111]

I have already noted similar arguments in the Apologists' writings affirming that the divine cannot be confined or circumscribed in a place, as well as the formula

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[107] *Haer.* 2.13.6, ANF 1:375 with minor revisions. "Abyss" is my translation of the Latin form of βυθός, another name given to the First Aeon by the Valentinians. See *Haer.* 4.3.1, where Irenaeus equates this spatial imagery with both the divine anthropomorphisms of Valentinian theology and more to the point, the general Valentinian ignorance of "what God is."

[108] *Haer.* 1.1.1.

[109] *Haer.* 2.1.2, ANF 1:359.

[110] *Haer.* 2.13.5.

[111] *Haer.* 1.15.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3.1, 2.6.1, 2.30.9, 4.3.1, 4.20.1-2. Schoedel argues, following an earlier claim by Grant, that Irenaeus' source for this "containing, not contained" understanding is the Pseudo-Aristotelian work *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, which has a similar argument for the "placelessness" of God. Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology, 100-101. See also his "Enclosing, Not Enclosed," 75-86 which covers much of the same material.

"containing, not contained." Nevertheless, the Apologists fell into inconsistencies when formulating the divine transcendence by speaking of God located in a "super-celestial" place. In this manner, their understanding of transcendence resembled that of the Valentinians, absent only a set of intermediary Aeons.[112] Still, as the following chapter will suggest, the filter of which Rousseau speaks in the context of Valentinianism is present in the Apologists' theology in the form of the Logos and in Theophilus' theology, the Spirit situated between the water of material creation and the place of God. Irenaeus' notion of absolute transcendence precludes him from locating God in a distant place to secure his transcendence.

Although Irenaeus directs his polemics against the Valentinians' spatial theology, his argument uncovers the weaknesses in the Apologists' theology on this count, as well.[113] The clearest way to underscore the difference between Irenaeus and the Apologists on the spatial understanding of divinity is to compare the similar arguments made by Athenagoras and Irenaeus for the oneness of God using the concept of place (τόπος) in *Leg.* 8 and *Haer.* 2.1, respectively.[114]

Athenagoras approaches the question of God's oneness by logically eliminating the possibility of the existence of two gods. His first clause considers two alternatives in

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[112] For example, compare Justin's super-celestial place of God to Irenaeus' description of the Valentinian belief in the First Aeon in the "invisible and indescribable heights." *Haer.* 1.1.1.

[113] Méhat observes that in Irenaeus' theology, the idea of a "super-celestial" place as the abode of the divine corresponds to "Gnostic" theology and specifically the "Gnostic" *Pleroma*, which is consistent with my findings. Of the eleven times Irenaeus uses the phrase "super-celestial," only two occur outside of the context of reporting "Gnostic" teaching. In the two places where Irenaeus uses the phrase for his own purposes, it is simply equated with "spiritual" (*Haer.* 3.10.4 [ANF 3.10.3], 3.16.6 [Méhat mistakenly cites the latter reference as 3.6.6]). Méhat rightly notes from this evidence that Irenaeus lacks a notion of a super-celestial place where God dwells. Méhat, "Le «Lie Supracéleste»," 286-290.

[114] I already have addressed both of these arguments in this chapter but I have not yet contrasted the two arguments in order to reveal their essential difference. Previous scholars have perceived similarities in the two arguments and compared them; nonetheless, these scholars did not consider the differences in the respective arguments that serve as the focal points of my discussion.

the case of the existence of two or more gods: "either (a) they would be in the same category or (b) each of them would be independent."[115] In the first movement of his argument, Athenagoras rejects the first alternative on the basis that gods by definition are uncreated, and consequently, two uncreated gods are dissimilar since neither were formed after a model, much less the same model.[116] The second alternative leads Athenagoras to introduce the concept of a divine τόπος. He begins this movement with a statement that dictates the logic he follows. He writes, "If on the other hand each of the two or more gods were independent, and we assume that the Maker of the world is above the things created and around what he has made and adorned, where would the other god or the other gods be?"[117] Athenagoras' argument then proceeds as follows: (1) The place of the Creator is "above the things created and around what he has made and adorned…"[118] (2) Two independent gods cannot be located in the same place. (3) There is no place for a second god, for he cannot be in the world "since that belongs to another," nor can he be "around the world since it is God the Maker of the world who is above it."[119] From this logic, Athenagoras concludes that the Creator God is the only god because there is no place in which a second god could be located.

Irenaeus approaches the question of God's oneness by accepting as true his opponents' preferred description or title of the divine, "Fullness," and continues to show the logical inconsistencies with that title and Valentinian belief. Like Athenagoras, he begins his argument with a statement that dictates the logic he follows. He writes, "For

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[115] *Leg.* 8.1, Schoedel, 17 with minor revisions.

[116] The presuppositions here are squarely in the thought world of the Middle Platonists—created objects are alike or in the same category because they are fashioned after the same model or idea, a quality that would not hold for two uncreated Gods because they are fashioned after nothing.

[117] *Leg.* 8.4, Schoedel, 17.

[118] *Leg.* 8.4, Schoedel, 17.

[119] *Leg.* 8.4, Schoedel, 19.

how can there be any other Fullness or Principle, or Power, or God, above Him, since it is a matter of necessity that God, the Fullness of all these, *should contain all things in his immensity, and should be contained by no one?*"[120] Irenaeus' argument then proceeds as follows: (1) God is, by definition, the Fullness of all things. (2) If there are two gods, then either (2a) there are two Fullnesses and each is limited by the other, which is self-contradictory, or (2b) an infinite distance separates them, in which case a third entity is introduced that contains them both. (3) This process logically continues *ad infinitum* and, either way, "[t]he name of the Omnipotent will thus be brought to an end"[121] because no one God will be Fullness of all things. Irenaeus concludes from this logic that the definition of God as "Fullness of all things" precludes the existence of a second god.

Athenagoras and Irenaeus' rational arguments for God's oneness align only insofar as both argue from assumptions regarding the relation of the divine being to space. Nevertheless, the logic of their arguments differs precisely because they do not share the same assumptions. Athenagoras starts with the assumption that God is located in a place, namely the place above and around the world, and he concludes from this assumption that a second god cannot exist because there is no place for that god to be located. The logic depends on God's ability to be located in a place. In contrast, Irenaeus' starting point excludes spatiality from the divine nature. God is the Fullness of all things, meaning he is located in no place, but all things are located in him. A second god logically cannot exist, not because two gods cannot be located in the same place, but because the presence of another god would result in the loss of the very definition of what

[120] *Haer.* 2.1.2, ANF 1:359 with minor revisions, italics added.
[121] *Haer.* 2.1.5, ANF 1:360.

it means to be God—he would no longer be the Fullness of all things because another god would exist outside of him.[122]

[122] Past scholarship has negated the differences in these arguments in two ways. The first argument claims Athenagoras was not literal in his assertion that God is located in a τόπος. Malherbe, for example, claims that when Athenagoras assigns God to a particular place in *Leg.* 8, he is speaking only "hypothetically" because space carries a notion of corporeality and Athenagoras asserts elsewhere that God is incorporeal. Malherbe, "Athenagoras and the Location of God," in *TZ* 26 (Heft I, 1970), 46-52. (Malherbe is developing an earlier treatment of Athenagoras' argument by Grant who reduces the use of τόπος to metaphor, its ultimate intention to demonstrate that there can only be one first principle. Grant, *Doctrine of God*, 108-110.) The argument from metaphor is flawed because it merely begs the question. One could just as easily argue that Athenagoras is speaking hypothetically when he says that God is incorporeal because he elsewhere affirms that God occupies a place—it is not at all clear which is the controlling image. Furthermore, Athenagoras nowhere indicates that he has slipped into a "hypothetical" means of speaking in *Leg.* 8, nor does he elsewhere employ a "hypothetical" method. Rather, the logic of Athenagoras' rational argument, as I have argued, actually depends upon a non-hypothetical understanding of space—if God cannot inhabit a space, then Athenagoras' conclusion that there is no place for a second god to be located is meaningless. Thus, Malherbe's interpretation too easily dismisses a real difficulty in Athenagoras' thought. The second way in which these differences have been disregarded is the argument that Irenaeus, like Athenagoras, assumes God could inhabit a place. Schoedel, for example, considers the two rational arguments of Athenagoras and Irenaeus essentially the same. Schoedel, "'Topological' Theology," 99-100. Irenaeus' argument that two fullnesses would limit one another, in other words, is tantamount to arguing that two gods cannot be located in the same place. Irenaeus' phrase "containing, not contained", according to Schoedel, is itself an example of what he calls "topological theology" because it assumes that God fills everything just as Athenagoras assumes God can fill a certain space. Missing from Schoedel's account is a larger discussion of "Fullness" as a definition of God in Irenaeus' understanding. Instead, he interprets Irenaeus' rational argument in isolation from his larger concerns. Consequently, Schoedel imports an assumed meaning of the phrase "containing, not contained" onto Irenaeus that the latter specifically rejects. For Irenaeus, God does not fill the space of the cosmos, nor is he over and around the cosmos, to use Athenagoras' phrase. Instead, as I have shown, Irenaeus believes the cosmos is in God who is its Fullness, in which and apart from which there is no space—God's spiritual nature, as I will develop momentarily, enables him to contain all things apart from the notion of τόπος. (Schoedel does not consider the concept of "spirit" in Irenaeus' thought.) Therefore, Schoedel's interpretation has not grasped the larger import of the rational argument to Irenaeus' thought. Unlike Malherbe and Schoedel, Pouderon acknowledges the difficulty in Athenagoras' thought. Particularly, he acknowledges that the argument in *Leg.* 8 is difficult to reconcile with Athenagoras' definition of God as ἀχώρητος, and he refuses to dismiss Athenagoras' statement that God is located in a place as metaphorical. Nonetheless, Pouderon avoids the implications of materialism in Athenagoras' understanding by separating the concepts of space and place—God cannot be circumscribed or limited in space, but he is in a place because he circumscribes the space of the world by surrounding it. Ultimately, for Athenagoras, Pouderon claims that God's "place" is everywhere, allowing him to be without parts. He is "above the world, in the measure where the transcendence is necessarily tied to the creative function of God; around the world, because in a spherical universe, the transcendence is expressed by an encircling; in the world, finally, because God is immanent to the world by his Providence and his Logos." Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes*, 124. This last statement reveals the flaw in Pouderon's argument. Pouderon speaks of "God" in terms of an anachronistic Trinitarian conception—God the Father is above the world, while God the Logos and Spirit are in the world. Nevertheless, Athenagoras' use of God in *Leg.* 8 refers to the Father, alone. God the Father is not everywhere; rather, in Athenagoras' mind, he is above and around the world. As I have said, not until the Valentinians took this spatial idea to its logical conclusion was the fundamental incompatibility between transcendence and God in the super-celestial place revealed; Irenaeus' response represents an early attempt to maintain the divine transcendence apart from τόπος.

The concept uniting these three concerns and supporting Irenaeus' entire understanding of the divine nature—absolute transcendence, a simple divine nature, and the absence of spatial categories to describe the divine nature—is the ancient, revealed truth that God is spirit.[123] This concept is so fundamental to his understanding of the divine nature that its denial constitutes a "fall into the greatest blasphemy…"[124] Therefore, I agree with Barnes that "spirit" is "the single most important concept for understanding Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology."[125] Spirit establishes the logic within which Irenaeus will define the key components of his Trinitarian theology. In the context of his understanding of the First Person, Irenaeus' emphasis on God's spiritual nature allows him to affirm both God's transcendence and God's immanent involvement with humanity, apart from the tension discerned in the Apologists' thought.[126] As spirit, God exists in a different category of being than corporeal humanity; his simple nature contrasts with the compound nature of humanity. Nonetheless, no spatial distance exists between him and his creation, for all things that come from him remain in him and are contained in him as the Fullness. The spiritual nature of God allows this containment to be conceived apart from spatial imagery. If all of creation is always in God the "Fullness," then from the human perspective, God is always "close."

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[123] John 4:24.

[124] *Haer.* 2.13.7.

[125] Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 76. Iain M. MacKenzie hinted at the importance of this concept for Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, but he fails to develop the idea to any significant degree. MacKenzie, *Irenaeus's* Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: *A theological commentary and translation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 81-84. Fantino's lack of acknowledgement of this aspect of Irenaeus' Trinitarian understanding constitutes one of the primary weaknesses of his account and stems from his method of focusing on the economy.

[126] Prestige's comments are instructive. He writes, "[I]n connection with God and nature, the idea of the penetrative quality of divine being, as not only externally framing and supporting, but also as permeatively sustaining the created universe, afforded yet more immediate assistance. It provided, in modern language, a theory that God is immanent as well as transcendent, the immanence no less than the transcendence being based on the actual nature of the divine mode of existence, *or 'spirit.'*" Prestige, *Patristic Thought*, 34. Prestige refers his comments to the Trinitarian writers of the fourth century. He has not perceived that this argument was anticipated in Irenaeus.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings regarding the identity and nature of God the Father. Although no specifically Trinitarian texts have yet been studied, this chapter has revealed key differences between the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings of the divine nature which serve as the basis for their differences in more specifically Trinitarian contexts. Both the Apologists and Irenaeus understand God as the only God who created the cosmos and who was revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. Irenaeus extends this identity to include Fatherhood, meaning that knowing God fully entails knowing him as the Father of Jesus Christ. Both the Apologists and Irenaeus understand God as transcendent and removed or separated from matter. Irenaeus maintains this transcendence in such a manner that allows God to remain intimately involved in the affairs of his creation. He does this by redefining transcendence from relative to absolute, avoiding any spatial understanding of God and keeping his language and imagery consistent with the spiritual nature of God. As a result, as God is spirit, God can be the Fullness of all things. In connection to his Trinitarian theology, the removal of spatiality from the divine is the most important advancement Irenaeus makes upon the thought of the Apologists. This advancement allows for a different understanding of God's work in the world, the generation of the Logos/Son, and the immanent relationship between the First and Second Persons.

Chapter Three: The Logos of God

In the third chapter, I turn to the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings of the nature of the Second Person. This inquiry will consist of two parts. The first part features a general survey of the Logos theology operative in their works. Here I will focus solely on the work of the Logos in the economy prior to his incarnation.[1] The second part will analyze the manner in which each figure understands

[1] Works abound addressing the work of the Logos/Son in his incarnate state in Irenaeus' thought. Prominent examples include Andia, *Homo Vivens*; Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*; Houssiau, *Christologie*; Osborn, *Irenaeus*; and Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation* (see above p. 3n4 for full bibliographic references). Conversely, the pre-incarnational work of the Logos is underrepresented in scholarship. For example, Houssiau avoids a discussion of the pre-incarnational work of the Logos for fear of obscuring the distinction between the unique God and his Son (Houssiau, *Christologie*, 63-65). Houssiau proceeds to study the identity of Christ in terms of the incarnation alone, keeping separate the knowledge of Father (to which, in his interpretation, the pre-incarnational work belongs) and the knowledge of Son. Consequently, he does not consider the eternal relation of the Logos/Son to God or of the divine identity of the Logos/Son. I do not disagree with Houssiau and the majority of Irenaean scholars that the incarnate work of the Logos/Son is the central tenet of Irenaeus' theology. Nevertheless, I will limit my treatment in this chapter to the pre-incarnational work of the Logos/Son for several reasons. First, the pre-incarnational work of the Logos lies within the limited space of the present study. Second, the Trinitarian insights gained from studying the incarnate Logos do not differ substantially from those insights gained from the study of the pre-incarnational work of the Logos. Finally, as two of the three apologists in this comparative study say nothing of the work of the Logos in his incarnate state, only Irenaeus' understanding of the Logos' pre-incarnational work offers the comparison crucial to my methodology. Nonetheless, I will address certain aspects of the work of the Logos in the incarnation in chapter five. On a different note, the restrictions of the scope of the present chapter's inquiry allow me to focus solely on the divine title "Logos," as this title represents Irenaeus' primary means of referring to the Second Person in his pre-incarnational state. On this count, I agree with Houssiau against the works of the second trajectory and adopt for my own purposes the distinctions he draws between the title, "Logos," by which Irenaeus refers to the eternal person acting with God, and the title, "Son," by which he refers to the historic person of Jesus Christ. See Houssiau, *Christologie*, 28-31. The distinction is helpful in reading certain passages in which Irenaeus is not entirely clear regarding the aspect of the economy to which he refers. Houssiau pushes the distinction too far, however, and ultimately fails to affirm Irenaeus' concern with the unity and continuity of the pre-incarnate Logos and incarnate Son, a fact better emphasized by Lebreton, *et al.* Fantino's works feature more sophistication than the works of the second trajectory on this point. He argues that for Irenaeus, "the Word is the Son of the Father." The unity of the two entities is an anti-"Gnostic" argument insofar as the "Gnostics" assumed a heavenly Logos and an earthly Logos. For Irenaeus, Fantino writes, no trace of this dualism exists. Instead, there is one world and one economy. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 285. The point of unity of the Logos/Son against the dualism of the "Gnostics" is necessary to remember, since here I am pushing the distinction between the titles. As such, at times I will engage these figures' use of the divine title "Son" (υἱός), but only as it illuminates a particular aspect of their Logos theology. The reader should note that the pronouns with which I refer to the Logos will change according to the state of the personhood of the Logos. In general, when referring to the Middle Platonic Logos, I use "it" and when referring to Irenaeus' Logos, I use "he." With the Apologists' Logos, the pronoun will vary according to the Logos' stage of existence. The reason for this apparent inconsistency will become clear through the course of this chapter.

the generation of the Logos.[2] I will argue that the Apologists largely follow Middle Platonic logic in their understanding of the work of the Logos, exemplified by his generation, which results in a diminished divinity of the Logos/Son. Conversely, Irenaeus rejects the logic inherent to the Apologists' Logos theology by arguing for the eternal distinctness of the Logos/Son, an understanding which is, likewise, exemplified by his veiled understanding of the generation.

1. The Apologists

1.1 Logos Theology

The Apologists' intention to correlate Christian belief with Greek philosophy explains their preference for the title "Logos" when referring to the pre-existent being identified both explicitly and implicitly with the earthly figure Jesus of Nazareth.[3] By the

[2] The generation as a particular topic of study within the more general Logos theology is appropriate here because it is the decisive topic for understanding the eternal relationship of the Logos to God, and in turn, the nature of the Logos, and because it is the area where Irenaeus most clearly departs from the understanding of the Apologists. Admittedly, the order in which I address these topics seems juxtaposed. I intentionally have chosen this order to be faithful to these figures' respective theologies. As I will show below, none of them address the generation for its own sake but rather to support the work of the Logos. My placement of the pre-incarnational work before the generation is meant to reflect this aspect of their collective thought.

[3] Justin uses λόγος as a title of the Second Person 55 times, the majority (44) coming in the *Apologies.* (Falls' otherwise fine English translation of the *Dial.* gives the false impression that Justin uses λόγος to refer to the Second Person in that work more times than he actually does. Falls renders λόγος by the divine title "Word" in many places where Justin more likely is referring to "Scripture" as opposed to the Second Person (e.g. *Dial.* 49.2, 57.2, 58.4, 68.5, 77.4, 121.2, 7, 141.2). Moreover, Falls is inconsistent in this method, since often in the same passage he translates λόγος as "Word," "Scripture," or "prophecy," with no indication from the text that Justin switches the referent (e.g. *Dial.* 56.4-6). Although Justin's work presents a few ambiguous uses of λόγος, for the most part he is clear when he means to refer to the Second Person with his use of λόγος. Athenagoras employs λόγος 12 times and Theophilus employs the title 27 times. These figures are illuminating when compared to the uses of other common christological titles such as υἱός, Ἰησοῦς, or Χριστός. Neither Athenagoras nor Theophilus use the titles Ἰησοῦς or Χριστός to refer to the Second Person. (Theophilus intentionally avoids Χριστός as suggested by his claim that the name "Christian" comes not from a person's status as a follower of Christ but from the fact that they are "anointed with the oil of God" [*Autol.* 1.12, Grant, 17].) Theophilus uses υἱός only once in connection with a quotation from the Fourth Gospel (*Autol.* 2.22). Athenagoras uses υἱός 14 times, more than his use of

mid-second century, Logos had become standard parlance among various philosophical groups referring to a cosmic and pervasive, semi-divine force or being at work in the universe. Its provenance is in Stoicism where it described both the governing faculty of the human and the pervasive, divine force that created the material world, was immanent within it, and imposed order on it.[4] In Middle Platonism, this latter meaning is assumed and becomes the term for Plato's all-pervasive World Soul as described in the *Timaeus.*[5] As recent scholarship has argued, Logos theology also has precedent within some strands of Jewish theology, in particular with the Jewish emphasis on the Word of God as above

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λόγος. Nonetheless, this discrepancy is due to several repetitive uses of υἱός—in actuality, he only uses υἱός as a title for the Second Person at four separate points in his argument (*Leg.* 10, 12, 18, and 24). Significantly, Athenagoras never uses υἱός apart from λόγος, although he uses λόγος apart from υἱός in three places (*Leg.* 4, 6, and 30). Athenagoras' use of υἱός on so many occasions is strange, as his context seems to offer no value for such a title, unlike Theophilus' Jewish Christian context in which υἱός would have had some cache. (In a Greek context, υἱός more likely would cause problems by implying that God had children in the manner of the Greek gods. Indeed, in several places Athenagoras has to define his use of υἱός against this anthropomorphic notion [e.g. *Leg.* 10.2.]) These figures are even more strange considering that Athenagoras draws from the title no insight regarding the nature of the Second Person. In only one place, already noted in the context of his use of πατήρ, does Athenagoras' use of υἱός carry any significance regarding the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons (*Leg.* 18.2). Therefore, Athenagoras uses υἱός only as a conventional or technical title in accordance with his Christian community. Athenagoras continually equates and explains υἱός according to the philosophical meaning of λόγος (e.g. *Leg.* 10.3). Justin does use Ἰησοῦς and Χριστός as titles for the Second Person, although rarely in the Second Person's pre-incarnational state. Justin uses υἱός as a title of the pre-existent being some 82 times, although 25 of these uses are quotations from Scripture, and several more come in the exegesis of those same passages. Despite his openness to the use of these other christological titles, his preferred title for the Second Person in his pre-incarnational state is λόγος. The Apologists were not the first Christians to use Logos as a title for Christ. This distinction belongs to the writer of the Fourth Gospel, who claimed that the Logos was in the beginning with God and that all things were created through the Logos, statements with which Theophilus, and likely Justin, were familiar (only the former explicitly cites the Johannine passage). Ignatius of Antioch also used it once to refer to the Son: "…Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Logos which came forth from silence." *Magnesians* 8.2, Holmes, 155. The content of both of these passages reflects the Apologists' use of the same title. Without question, the Apologists infused this title with the content that would affect all subsequent Logos theology. On this point, see Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 108-113.

[4] A.A. Long, "Stoic Psychology," in *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 560-584.

[5] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 45-49. Although Stoic scholarship often highlights the divine aspect of Logos, there the term is used more often to refer to the human faculty of reason and speech. Therefore, whether the title Logos would have had such value for the Apologists had the Middle Platonists not first emphasized the divine aspect of Logos is questionable. Moreover, as I have already noted, the Stoic notion of the divine Logos had material connotations, which was abhorrent to the Middle Platonists and the Apologists, alike. Thus, the Middle Platonists offered precedence to the Apologists for the use of the title "Logos" devoid of material implications.

the angels and below the Creator.[6] Thus, to explain the person of Christ in terms of the Logos served to connect Christianity with a number of ancient and honored philosophical and religious traditions.

The Logos theology of the Apologists not only offered a means of correlating Christian belief with Greek philosophy, it alleviated a difficulty raised by the Apologists' understanding of the divine nature. As noted last chapter, the Apologists spoke of God primarily in terms of a unique, uncreated, transcendent being who, consequently, was located in a place spatially removed or distant from material creation. The challenge this definition produced was whether and in what manner such a transcendent and spatially distant God could be reconciled with the creative and active God revealed in the Scriptures.[7] Logos theology provided the answer—the Logos, like the Stoic Logos or the Platonic World Soul, becomes in the Apologists' thought the active force or agent of the transcendent God in the material world.

The Apologists manifest their understanding of the Logos as the active force of the transcendent God through a pervasive insistence that God does not create without mediation; rather, God creates through the agent or medium of the Logos. Justin writes, "But his [God's] Son, who alone is called Son in the proper sense, the Logos who, before all the things which were made, was both with him and was begotten when at the beginning he made and ordered all things through him…"[8] Commenting on the creation

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[6] See Edwards, "Justin's Logos and the Word of God," *JECS* 3:3 (1995): 261-280. For example, in rabbinic literature perhaps contemporary with Justin, the *Memra* often takes on characteristics of a superhuman, pre-existent being second only to God in majesty.

[7] This difficulty is often referred to as the "cosmological problem" and long has been recognized by scholars as one of the primary reasons for Logos theology's appeal to the Apologists. For discussions representative of twentieth century scholarship, see Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 88-91 and Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 345ff.

[8] 2 *Apol.* 6.3. See also 1 *Apol.* 59.5, 64.5, *Dial.* 61.3 (in conjunction with a quotation of Prov. 8:21ff), 84.2.

account in Genesis 1, on two occasions Justin notes the significance of God's creating with a word and links this speech to the person of the Logos (1 *Apol.* 59.2-5, 64.5).[9] In the second occasion, he identifies the Logos of God with the Greek Logos through a familiar mythological story when he writes, "[S]ince [the philosophers] knew that God conceived and made the world through the Logos, they spoke of Athena as the first thought…"[10] In the *Dial.,* Justin uses the language of ἀρχή to express the same truth. For example, he writes that the Logos "was begotten both as a beginning [ἀρχή] before all his works, and as his offspring."[11] His use of ἀρχή as a description of the creative work of the Logos likely is indebted to the long philosophical tradition behind ἀρχή. In various philosophical schools, ἀρχή referred to "principle" or "cause" and was central to the philosophical discussions of the origins of the world.[12] However, he might have been

[9] "'In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. And the earth was invisible and unfurnished, and darkness was over the abyss; and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said, let there be light. And it was so.' So that both Plato and his followers and we ourselves have learned, and you may learn, that the whole Universe came into being by the Logos of God out of the substratum spoken of before by Moses." 1 *Apol.* 59.2-5, Barnard, 65 with minor revisions.

[10] 1 *Apol.* 64.5, Barnard, 69-70 with minor revisions.

[11] *Dial.* 62.4, Falls, 96. See also *Dial.* 61.1.

[12] J.C.M. Van Winden writes, "The basic problem of Greek philosophy is that of the ἀρχή: only by the ἀρχαί can the world exist and be grasped." Van Winden, "In the Beginning: Some Observations on the Patristic Interpretations of Genesis 1, 1" in *ARCHE: A Collection of Patristic Studies by J.C.M. Van Winden,* ed. J. De Boeft and D.T. Runia (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 61-77. Previously published in *VC* 17 (1963): 105-21. Thus, as the same author notes elsewhere, a large number of philosophers wrote works on how everything comes into existence and the writings centered on identifying the ἀρχή. Van Winden, "'In the Beginning': Early Christian Exegesis of the Term *archè* in Genesis 1:1," inaugural address, Leiden 1967 (translated from the Dutch) in *ARCHE*, 78-93. Ἀρχή is used first in the sense of "principle" in the pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Thales of Miletus, where it was identified with the elements, from which all material derives. Van Winden, "Early Christian Exegesis," 81. In Plato's *Tim.*, it has a general sense of "cause" and specifically is equated with "cause" in connection to the Cause of the universe in *Tim.* 28b. Plato writes, "Now the whole Heaven, or Cosmos, or if there is any other name which it specially prefers, by that let us call it,—so, be its name what it may, we must first investigate concerning it that primary question which has to be investigated at the outset in every case,—namely, whether it has existed always, having no beginning of generation, or whether it has come into existence, having begun from some beginning (ἀρχῆς τινὸς ἀρξάμενος). It has come into existence; for it is visible and tangible and possessed of a body; and all such things are sensible, and things sensible, being apprehensible by opinion with the aid of sensation, come into existence, as we saw, and are generated. And that which has come into existence must necessarily, as we say, have come into existence by reason of some Cause (ὑπ᾽ αἰτίου τινός)." *Tim.* 28b-c, Bury, LCL 234:51. In this passage, Plato begins by asking whether the cosmos came into existence

drawn to the concept because of its appearance in connection with the personified figure of Wisdom in Proverbs 8:22ff.[13] Justin alludes to the passage in this context through referring to Solomon.

In his definition of the nature of God, which I discussed in the previous chapter, Athenagoras emphasizes the truth that God "created, adorned, and now rules the universe through the Logos that is from him."[14] Another Athenagoran statement in the same vein closely parallels John 1:3. Athenagoras writes, "…since for him [the Logos] and through him all things came into existence…"[15] Nevertheless, Athenagoras does refer to John; the only scriptural source he identifies to support the mediatory, creative work of the Logos is Proverbs 8:22.[16]

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by some ἀρχή and concludes by answering that its existence is the result of some cause (αἴτιος), which he immediately equates with the "Father and Maker of the Universe." Elsewhere, Plato writes, "They [the young gods] took the immortal principle (ἀθάνατον ἀρχήν) of the mortal living creature, and imitating their own Maker, they borrowed from the Cosmos portions of fire and earth and water and air, as if meaning to pay them back, and the portions so taken they cemented them together…" *Tim.* 42e, Bury, LCL 234:95. For the Middle Platonists, following Plato, ἀρχή again refers to "principle," of which three are generally listed, namely matter, the forms, and God. For example, see *Didask.* 8-10. Ἀρχή may have meant something similar in Valentinianism as well, for according to Irenaeus, the first Aeon is described as the Προαρχή, or the "First-Beginning" while the third Aeon emitted from the First-Father, principally called Νοῦς, is also called Αρχή. *Haer.* 1.1.1. Both names indicate a beginning principle. Irenaeus writes of the Valentinian understanding of Νοῦς/Αρχή, "But when this Only-begotten perceived for what things he was emitted, he in turn emitted Word and Life, since he was the Father of all who were to come after him and *the beginning* [ἀρχή] *and formation of the entire Fullness.*" *Haer.* 1.1.1, Unger, 23, italics added. See also *Haer.* 1.11.3-4.

[13] "The Lord made me the beginning [ἀρχή] of his ways for his works. He established me before time was in the beginning, before he made the earth: even before he made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth: before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me." Prov. 8:22-25, LXX, Brenton. References to a personified agent, called "Wisdom," who was present with God before the world are prevalent in the Jewish Wisdom literature. For example, see Ps. 104:24, Prov. 3:19, Wisd. 7:22, 9:2, 9:9, Sir. 1:4, 24:9, 33:7-9. The presence and work of Wisdom in creation becomes prominent in Second Temple Jewish literature. See James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 44-45. For more on the personified agent Wisdom in Jewish traditions, see below p. 110n22.

[14] *Leg.* 10.1. The same doctrine appears in *Leg.* 4.2, 6.2, and 10.5.

[15] *Leg.* 10.2. Compare the δι᾽ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐγένετο of *Leg.* 10.2 with the πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο of John 1:3.

[16] "The prophetic Spirit also agrees with this account. 'For the Lord,' it says, 'made me the beginning of his ways for his works.'" *Leg.* 10.3, Schoedel, 23. Schoedel's index mistakenly identifies this citation as Prov. 8:3. The use of Prov. 8:22 to support the presence of an agent in creation reflects Second

Theophilus also relates the idea that God uses a mediator in creating the world to Scripture, namely Psalm 33/2:6 ("God made all things through his Logos and Wisdom, for by his Logos the heavens were made firm and by his Spirit all their Power")[17] and John 1:1-3 ("He had this Logos as a servant in the things created by him, and through him he has made all things").[18] Like Justin, Theophilus finds the agent of the Logos in the Genesis account of creation, with its emphasis on the speech of God as the locus of the creative act. Accordingly, Theophilus writes, "Therefore the Command of God, his Logos, shining like a lamp in a closed room, illuminated the region under the heaven, making light separately from the world."[19] Theophilus in effect has personified the command of God, since this speech, the active Logos, literally brings about God's creative intentions.

Like Justin, Theophilus also calls the Logos the ἀρχή, drawing on the Jewish Wisdom tradition of a personified agent present with God in creation. Although strictly referring to the Father, Theophilus first makes the connection between ἀρχή and λόγος in *Autol.* 1.3 where he writes, "If I call him Logos, I speak of him as Beginning [ἀρχή]."[20] In *Autol.* 2.10, he returns to the association of ἀρχή and λόγος in relation to the Second Person. Here, he develops Justin's account of the Logos as God's personified speech in Genesis by connecting the personified ἀρχή of Proverbs 8:22ff with the ἀρχή of Genesis 1:1 ("In the beginning [ἐν ἀρχῇ] God created…"). In the original context of

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Temple Jewish uses of the verse. Athenagoras may have acquired the tradition from Justin as he elsewhere demonstrates little influence from Second Temple exegetical traditions.

[17] As quoted in *Autol.* 1.7.

[18] *Autol.* 2.10. See *Autol.* 2.22 for the direct quotation of John 1:1-3.

[19] *Autol.* 2.13, Grant, 49.

[20] *Autol.* 1.3.

Genesis, ἀρχή likely indicates an element of time ("in the beginning"),[21] but Theophilus employs the ontological connotation to indicate the Logos as the "principle" of the universe. He writes, "And Moses, who lived many years before Solomon—or rather, the Logos of God speaking through him as an instrument—says: 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth.' First he mentioned Beginning [ἀρχή] and creation, and only then did he introduce God…to show that by his Logos God made heaven and earth and what is in them…[He is] called ἀρχή because he leads and dominates everything fashioned through him."[22] For Theophilus, the Logos is present with God in creation not only through the metaphoric connection of God's speech to the title Logos, but through his textual presence in Moses' description of the account.[23]

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[21] Although ἀρχή can take a temporal connotation ("beginning"), as opposed to an ontological connotation ("cause" or "principle"), Van Winden notes that "the Greek mind links the meaning of the two terms much more closely than the English words 'beginning' and 'origin', and, consequently, passes more easily from the temporal sense of ἀρχή to that of 'cause.'" Van Winden, "Patristic Interpretations," 61.

[22] *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 41. Theophilus' interpretation of Gen. 1:1 is representative of a wider movement within Second Temple Judaism that found the personified Wisdom of Prov. 8:22 in Gen. 1:1 through the presence of ἀρχή. According to Kugel, the impetus for this exegetical tradition was to align the accounts of creation offered in Wisdom Literature, which held that God creates the world through the personified Wisdom (e.g. Prov. 8:22) with the older creation account of Gen. 1. The double appearance of ἀρχή in Gen. 1:1 and Prov. 8:22 provided the means to reconcile the two accounts. Kugel writes, "[I]nterpreters came to the conclusion that not only was wisdom the first thing God created, but the phrase 'In the beginning' in Gen. 1:1 was intended to imply that it was *by means of*, or with the help of, wisdom that God had created the world." Kugel, *Traditions,* 46. Several examples of the tradition exist in the Targums, as well as in Philo who writes in one place, "By using different names for it, Moses indicates that the exalted, heavenly wisdom has many names: he calls it 'beginning' (ἀρχή), 'image,' and 'appearance of God.'" Philo, *Allegorical Interpretations* 1:43 quoted in Kugel, *Traditions,* 46. Although Justin had connected the Logos with the personified Wisdom of the Jewish tradition through the use of ἀρχή in the *Dial.,* he did not make the connection to the ἀρχή of Gen. 1:1. As noted above, his interest in the Gen. account focused on God's speech and the implied connection to the title Logos. Theophilus' Jewish setting in Antioch makes it possible that he was familiar with a Jewish exegetical tradition of identifying the ἀρχή of Prov. 8:22 to that of Gen. 1:1. However, his motivation is not to reconcile Proverbs and Genesis, so much as it is to demonstrate the textual evidence of the presence of a personified Logos with God in the beginning. Theophilus' use of Prov. 8:22 to refer to the pre-existent Logos creates an inconsistency in his pneumatology, as I will show in chapter four. See below pp. 186-187.

[23] Theophilus includes an additional image, not present in Justin or Athenagoras, to express this mediating and creative function of the Logos. The Logos and the Sophia (most often identified as the Holy Spirit) are the "hands of God" by which he creates the world (*Autol.* 2.18). Although Theophilus employs this image to express the instrumentality of the Logos, it has more bearing for the present work in its implications for the inner relationships of God, Logos, and Sophia. As such, I will reserve comment on this

Despite their claims regarding the presence of the Logos' mediatory work in Scripture, the Apologists' language and manner of argumentation suggests a Middle Platonic influence as the primary source of the idea. The Middle Platonists spoke of an effectual or active power of God in the world through the use of "power" (δύναμις) and "energy" (ἐνεργεία) language.[24] This active, immanent power was contrasted, and ontologically subordinated, to the static, transcendent nature of the One, which enabled the Middle Platonists to affirm a creative and providential function of God in the world while keeping the divine nature free of mixture and contact with material creation.[25] Likewise, Justin continually describes the Logos as the Power (δύναμις) of God in the

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passage until chapter five. Likewise, as I have said, I will reserve comment on the numerous "hands of God" statements in Irenaeus' work.

[24] Δύναμις played a crucial role in Plato's philosophy. See Barnes, *The Power of God:* Δύναμις *in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press), 2001, 54-93. According to Daniélou, however, δύναμις did not acquire the meaning of the effectual or active power of God until the writings of the Middle Platonists. Daniélou, *Gospel Message,* 347 (see 346-354 in relation to the current discussion). Daniélou's crucial example from Middle Platonism highlights a text from Atticus quoted by Eusebius: "Plato holds that the world is the fairest work, and has attributed to the creator of the universe a power by means of which he created the world which did not exist before." Eus. *Praep. Ev.* 15.6 as quoted in Daniélou, *Gospel Message,* 347. Conversely, Roberto Radice argues the theological concept of power or powers as God's work in the world comes from Stoicism, the writers of which assumed the term and concept from Aristotle. Radice, "Philo's Theology and the Theory of Creation," in *Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 124-145. Spanneut also notes the Stoic provenance of many of these terms and concepts, but attributes their presence in the Apologists, particularly Athenagoras, to a philosophical eclecticism that incorporated both Stoic and Platonic aspects. Spanneut, *Stoïcisme,* 296-297. Although by Justin's time, a general convergence of many philosophical schools and distinctives had occurred, and, thus, the method of locating the original provenance is not necessary, there is arguably a more discernable Middle Platonist influence in the Apologists' use of power due to their pervasive concern to remove material from the notion of power.

[25] Stead's overview is instructive for identifying the influence of Platonism on Christian figures in general (with regard to the Logos) but also for showing some continuity with developing strands of Jewish thought. He writes, "the influence of Platonism (as opposed to Stoicism) is much more marked: the Logos for instance is identified with the mind of God in which his creative Ideas or prototypes are assembled, and again presides over the division of things into genera and species, which makes up the permanent structure of the world. All this probably shows the endeavours of several generations of Jewish thinkers attempting to adapt contemporary Platonism to the basic postulates of their religion. The Logos acts as mediator, undertaking the tasks for which the Almighty is ultimately responsible, but which could seem to impair his transcendent holiness." Stead, *Philosophy,* 150. What links the Apologists with the Middle Platonists beyond this general conception of a mediating Logos is the Middle Platonic language with which they make the argument. See also Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes,* 130.

world.[26] He writes, "Jesus Christ alone has truly been begotten as Son by God, being His Logos and First-Begotten and Power…"[27] Further, he writes, "The Spirit and the Power from God cannot therefore be understood as anything else than the Logos…"[28] Although Logos language is rare in the *Dial.*, the same equation between Logos and Power appears there when Justin writes, "My statements will now be confirmed by none other than the Word of Wisdom, who is this God begotten from the Father of all, and who is Word and Wisdom and Power and Glory of him who begot him."[29] In another place, Justin connects the δύναμις specifically to the creative work of God when he claims, "God has generated from himself [ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ] a certain rational power as a beginning for all creatures."[30] Elsewhere, Justin contrasts this use of δύναμις as the creative force in the world with the God who is above the workings of the world. He writes, "He is the Power of the ineffable

[26] In general, Justin classifies the Logos and the Spirit with the powers (δυνάμεις), a category which also includes numerous intermediary beings, such as the angels and the demons. My interest in Justin's power language is not in relation to this category, but in connection to its Middle Platonic indebtedness. This use of power language does not discount or contradict Justin's understanding of the Logos as in the category of "powers"; it only asserts that Justin speaks of the Logos as "the Power" of God in a manner he does not of any other celestial being, including the Spirit. I will not discuss the former use, as it has received treatment elsewhere (see Goodenough, *Justin Martyr*, 155-159, 182, 185, Christian Oeyen, "Die Lehr der göttlichen Kräfte bei Justin," *SP* 11.2, TU 108 [Berlin, 1972], 215-221, and more recently Bogdan G. Bucur, "The Angelic Spirit in Early Christianity: Justin, the Martyr and Philosopher," *JrnRel* 88 (2008): 190-208) and Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 38-50. In any case, Justin sufficiently distinguishes the Logos from the other intermediate powers to avoid any difficulty with the Logos being classified in the same category with other intermediate beings.

[27] 1 *Apol.* 23.2.

[28] 1 *Apol.* 33.6, Barnard, 46 with minor revisions. The context of the latter statement is an exegesis of Luke 1:31-35, a section of the annunciation of the angel to Mary. Luke records the angel's words as follows: "'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power [δύναμις] of the Most High will overshadow you…" Luke 1:35, NRSV translation.

[29] *Dial.* 61.3, Falls, 94. Bobichon notes that "Power" is the only non-scriptural title in this list. Bobichon, *Dialogue* 2:745. He fails to note here that Paul uses δύναμις of Christ along with σοφία in 1 Cor. 1:24 or that Justin reads the δύναμις in Luke 1:35 as a title of the Logos (see above p. 112n28). Arguably, Theophilus also is familiar with Paul's statement (see *Autol.* 2.22 where he likewise equates δύναμις and σοφία). Nonetheless, Bobichon ultimately is correct to find the context of meaning for the title in Middle Platonism.

[30] *Dial.* 61.1.

[ἄρρητος] Father."[31] The descriptor ἄρρητος underscores the contrast between a transcendent, spatially distant, and static God with an immanent, present, and active Logos, which mirrors the contrast witnessed in the Middle Platonic use of δύναμις. The adjective ἄρρητος has a semantic connection to speech, as in "unutterable." In other words, the Father who does not speak has the Logos (Word) as his voice.[32]

Athenagoras invokes Middle Platonic meaning through his use of the words ἰδέα and ἐνέργεια. He states, "the Son of God is the Logos of the Father in Ideal Form [ἰδέα] and Energizing Power [ἐνέργεια]…"[33] Although he prefers these terms to δύναμις when describing the active work of the Logos, elsewhere Athenagoras states that the Son and

[31] 2 *Apol.* 10.8 (see also 2 *Apol.* 13.4). Justin uses δύναμις in other ways as well. For example, he states that Christ is not only the Power of God but is himself a power alongside the God's own power (1 *Apol.* 32, 40, 60). He simultaneously can claim that Christ was conceived by the power of God and that he was conceived by the power of the Logos (1 *Apol.* 32-33, 46). He even says that the word (λόγος) coming from the mouth of the Christ who walked on earth is the power of God (1 *Apol.* 14; cf. *Dial.* 49.8 where Justin claims that the power of God is hidden in Christ on earth). These varied uses of power language within the same argument demonstrate the degree to which the meaning of δύναμις in reference to Christ had yet to be determined. These various options coalesced to one generally accepted use in the pro-Nicenes of the later fourth century. Barnes is to be credited with refocusing attention on δύναμις as a Trinitarian title as well as identifying the debt to philosophy regarding the meaning for this term in Christian Trinitarian discourse in general and Gregory of Nyssa in particular. Barnes, *Power of God,* esp. 125-172. His overview of the use of δύναμις in the early common era (pp. 94-124) does not address its use in the apologists, as he is interested only in showing that the precedence for the use of power language is available prior to the fourth century. Still, his work is crucial for a general understanding of the philosophical background of δύναμις.

[32] This sort of contrast is purely Middle Platonic, as the Scripture writers do not shy from saying that God speaks in and to the material world.

[33] *Leg.* 10.2. I follow Schoedel, both here and in *Leg.* 10.3 in translating ἰδέα and ἐνέργεια as "Ideal Form" and "Energizing Power," respectively, both to bring out the Middle Platonic influence of these terms and to note the connection that exists between ἐνέργεια and δύναμις. Crehan's rendering of "thought and power" is technically correct, but it misses the Middle Platonic import of meaning. Crehan, *Athenagoras,* 40. In Athenagoras' formula, the Logos appears to take the place of the Platonic ideas as the ideal likeness in which God creates the visible world. Something similar is operative in places of Philo's corpus where the Logos is synonymous with all of the ideas. For example, Philo writes, "[W]hen the substance of the universe was without shape and figure God gave it these; when it had no definite character God moulded it into definiteness, and, when He had perfected it, stamped the entire universe with His image and an ideal form [εἰκόνι καὶ ἰδέᾳ], even His own Word [τῷ ἑαυτῷ λόγῳ]." Philo, *On Dreams,* 2.46, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, LCL 275:463. Accordingly, as with Philo, Athenagoras' Logos is both the form and the power that actuates that form.

the Spirit are themselves Powers in the same way as the Father is a Power[34] and that the Son and the Father share the same power.[35] Theophilus speaks simply of the Logos (and Spirit) as the Power of God,[36] which he explicitly equates to ἐνέργεια.[37]

The Middle Platonic influence upon the Apologists' conception of the Logos as the active Power of God in the world results in a similar contrast between the transcendent, static God and the immanent, active Logos in their thought.[38] Theophilus writes, "[T]he God and Father of the universe is unconfined and is not present in a place, for there is no place of his rest. But his Logos, through whom he made all things, who is his Power and Wisdom, assuming the role of the Father and Lord of the universe, was

[34] *Leg.* 12.3

[35] *Leg.* 10.2, 5; 24.2, 30.6. Athenagoras, more than either Justin or Theophilus, uses the notion of power as an argument for the unity of the three, a discussion to which I will turn in detail in chapter five. See below pp. 226-229.

[36] *Autol.* 2.10, 22.

[37] Theophilus writes, "[I]f I call him Power, I speak of his energy…" *Autol.* 1.3, Grant, 5.

[38] Dillon interprets the development of the contrast between a transcendent, static god and an active god at work in the world in Middle Platonism as the result of their adoption of the Stoic Logos. He writes, "The reason for the vacillation as regards the status of [the World Soul] seems to lie in another development characteristic of Middle Platonism, deriving not from the Old Academy but rather arising as a development from Stoicism, that is, the distinguishing of a first and second God. The distinction is between a completely transcendent, self-intelligizing figure, and an active demiurgic one. The later Platonists adopted the Stoic Logos into their system as the active force of God in the world, and when they reinstated a transcendent immaterial First Principle…they arrived at two entities, one basically the *Demiurge* of the *Timaeus,* the other the Good of the *Republic* and the One of the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides.*" Dillon, *The Middle Platonists,* 46. The contrast between the two gods, and the attribution of the work of creation to the second, active god, is evident in *Didask.* in the following passage: "[The First God] is Father through being the cause of all things and bestowing order on the heavenly Intellect and the Soul of the World in accordance with himself and his own thoughts. By his own will he has filled all things with himself, rousing up the Soul of the World and turning it towards himself, as being the cause of its intellect. *It is this latter that, set in order by the Father, itself imposes order on all of nature in this world." Didask.* 10.3, Dillon, 18 with minor revisions, italics added. Edwards traces the same distinction of the transcendent, static god and immanent, active god in the thought of Numenius in comparison to Justin's understanding of the Logos. Edwards, "Platonic Schooling," 22-29. Likewise, Barnes notes the witness of Numenius specifically to show that he raised an opposition between the divine essence, or divinity itself (οὐσία), and the divine activity (δύναμις or ἐνέργεια). Barnes writes, "The fact that in this passage Numenius groups δύναμις and ἐνέργεια together, such that δύναμις (like ἐνέργεια) stands over against οὐσία (not grouping power with essence) shows a distinctive understanding of the ontological status of δύναμις…This set of distinctions, with its implicit boundaries of unity, situates all divine activity on the side of what is not divinity itself, leaving the real divinity (οὐσία) unengaged. The divine οὐσία stands above and apart from matter, but its δύναμις or ἐνέργεια can join with matter." Barnes, *Power of God,* 102-103.

present in paradise in the role of God and conversed with Adam."[39] For an entity to be at work *in* the world implies that the entity is located in the world, which is impossible to affirm of the Most High God who, due to his transcendence, cannot be in this material world.[40] Accordingly, the Logos works on behalf of God in the world. Theophilus continues, "[W]henever the Father of the universe wills to do so he sends [the Logos] into some place where he is present and is seen and is heard. He is sent by God and is present in a place."[41] The result of this conception for the Apologists is a Logos who functions primarily as an intermediary between God and material creation and whose ability to work in the world is predicated upon his diminished divinity.[42] In other words, the Logos can work in the world because he is not transcendent and invisible to the same degree as the Father.

This contrast between God and the Logos is displayed most clearly in Justin's interpretation of the Old Testament theophanies to which he refers in 1 *Apol.* 63 and develops in detail in *Dial.* 48-62.[43] Justin believes the subject of the Old Testament theophanies is the Logos rather than the Father.[44] He introduces the theophanies to

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[39] *Autol.* 2.22, Grant, 63.

[40] For a discussion of God's transcendence as spatially or relatively conceived in the Apologists' works, see above pp. 71-75. There, I noted the inconsistency with which the Apologists spoke of the relation of God and place. Nonetheless, whether they imagine God to be in his own place far above the world, as is their normal manner of speaking, or whether they imagine him to be unable to be confined in a place, the result for the logic of identifying the Logos as God's agent is the same—the Logos works in the world because God is unable to be in the world.

[41] *Autol.* 2.22, Grant, 65.

[42] On this point, see P. Gervais Aeby, *Les Missions Divines: De Saint Justin a Origène* (Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1958), 10-15.

[43] Justin's description of the work of the Logos in the theophanies comes in the context not of the Logos' work as agent of creation, but in the Logos' work as revealer of the purposes and identity of God the Father to the material world. For Justin in particular this theme represents a crucial aspect of his Logos theology. (Conversely, neither Athenagoras nor Theophilus give much attention to the revelatory function of the Logos.) There is not the space to develop this function in Justin's Logos theology here and, in any case, its implications for Justin's understanding of the nature of the Logos—and his Trinitarian theology in general—do not differ substantially from the insights gained by a study of the Logos' creative function.

[44] Philo also understands the subject of the theophanies to be the Logos and the motive driving his interpretation is similar, although not identical, to Justin's, namely that the anthropomorphisms attributed to

answer the critique made by Trypho at the beginning of *Dial.* 48, namely, that the belief in a divine Christ who becomes flesh is illogical.[45] To argue that a divine Christ could become flesh, Justin must first prove the existence of another God testified in Scripture.[46] For Justin, the theophanies show another God in addition to the God in heaven because Scripture refers to the figure that appeared on earth as "God" and "Lord." Ostensibly, Justin uses Scripture to prove this point by showing from the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Psalms 45/4 and 110/109 that Scripture speaks of two different Gods and Lords. Nevertheless, the logic and force of the argument depends upon Justin's philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of God as transcendent and unable to appear in and work in material creation. This logic is displayed in his interpretation of the theophany of Exodus 3, where he writes, "[N]o one with even the slightest intelligence would dare assert that the Creator of all things left his super-

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God in the theophany stories are blasphemous to his divine nature. See, for example, Philo's interpretation in *On Dreams* 1.231-236. The question of whether Philo is a source of Justin's interpretation on the theophanies has been the subject of ongoing debate. Goodenough proposed Philo as the source for Justin's interpretation. Goodenough, *Justin Martyr*, 114ff. Conversely, Lebreton argues that, despite the apparent similarities, little connection between the two authors exists as Justin uses the theophanies ultimately as proof that the Logos himself is God whereas Philo has no such motive. Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:668-677. More recently, D.C. Trakatellis, who generally sides with Goodenough on all matters, argued Goodenough's position. Trakatellis, *The Pre-Existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr*; Harvard Dissertations in Religion 6 (Scholars Press: Missoula, Mont.: 1976), 53-92. Although his argument is more sound and detailed than Goodenough's argument, Trakatellis is answered by Oskar Skarsaune on all points. Skarsaune rightly observes that despite Justin and Philo's superficial similarities in interpretation, these two individuals are far removed from one another. Indeed, many of Justin's exegetical conclusions actually contradict those of Philo, e.g., the interpretation of the three angels. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 409-424. The primary difference between the two figures concerns Justin's use of the theophanies to show the independence of the Logos from God—Justin has in mind a second entity, distinct from God the Father. Philo's Logos is not so clearly distinguished from God.

[45] Trypho's question is occasioned by the various Messianic proofs given in the preceding chapters where Justin claims, without argumentation, that the Messiah is divine (*Dial.* 36.2ff). Trypho thinks this belief is illogical and states the common Jewish understanding that the Messiah will be a human (*Dial.* 49.1). Falls' translation divides this section into two parts at chapters 54 and 55. While the interpretation of the theophanies proper is not addressed until *Dial.* 55, the theophanies are introduced as part of a larger argument answering the original question that opens *Dial.* 48. Thus, the entire passage should be seen as a unity and the theophanies as proof of the divinity of the Son.

[46] Trypho demands such a proof with his interjection in *Dial.* 50.1. He says, "Tell me, then, first of all, how you can prove that there is another God besides the Creator of the world…" Falls, 76.

celestial realms to make himself visible in a little spot on earth."[47] This characteristic of the Most High God requires that the one who literally appears on earth in the theophany accounts must be a different being, even though Scripture calls this being "God."[48]

This different being, Justin continues, is the δύναμις λογική of God, indicated by different titles, "sometimes the Glory of the Lord, other times Son, or Wisdom, or Angel, or God, or Lord, or Word [λόγος]."[49] This language reveals an amalgam of scriptural and philosophical imagery to describe the Second Person. As with the creative function of the

[47] *Dial.* 60.2. Likewise, in a summary statement in *Dial.* 127.1-2, Justin writes, "And I presume that I have shown sufficiently that when God says, 'God went up from Abraham'…you should not imagine that the Unbegotten God himself went down or went up from any place. For, the ineffable Father and Lord of all neither comes to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor arises, but always remains in his place…" Falls, 191. Despite Justin's argument in favor of the divinity of the Messiah, Aeby sees the defense of the transcendence of God defined according to Platonism as the principle reason for the connection of the theophanies to the Logos. See Aeby, *Missions Divines*, 7-10. He writes, "[F]or saint Justin, a theophany is incompatible with the nature of God the Father" which leads him to "postulate another God beside and below the Father." Aeby, *Divines Missions*, 9. This interpretation agrees with my understanding because it emphasizes the difference between the natures of God and the Logos on the basis of Justin's interpretation of the theophanies.

[48] The text includes a sudden shift in Trypho's interpretation of the theophanies. When first asked to describe his interpretation of the appearance of God to Abraham in the three men at Mamre, he answers that the three men are angels and that God's appearance was "before the vision…" *Dial.* 56.5. Justin rejects this understanding and indicates one of the men's promise to return when Sarah had her son, a promise later fulfilled when God visits Abraham, as Scripture says, "And God said to Abraham…" Gen. 21:12 as quoted in *Dial.* 56.6. Trypho replies that he was mistaken when he described the three men as angels and now agrees that "he who appeared to Abraham on earth in human form, as did the two angels who accompanied him, was in fact the God who existed before the creation of the universe…" *Dial.* 56.10, Falls, 85. This shift can be explained by observing that Justin likely is countering two different Jewish interpretations of the theophanies at work in the second century. The first is represented by Trypho's statements in *Dial.* 56.5, consonant with Justin's Middle Platonic assumptions that the God of the universe could not appear on earth—thus, the men must be angels. Perhaps this interpretation could be related to Philo's interpretation of the theophanies (see above p. 115n44). The second Jewish interpretation, called by Justin the "common doctrine of [the Jewish] people" is represented by Trypho's statements in *Dial.* 56.10, where he unapologetically states that the God of the universe did appear to Abraham accompanied by two angels (*Dial.* 56.10, Falls, 85). Conversely, Skarsaune has shown that both Jewish interpretations of the three angels are represented in Philo's interpretation of Gen. 18 in *On Abraham* 107-141. Skarsaune, *Proof*, 410-411. This view suggests that the sudden shift could be two parts of one coherent view, although Trypho seems cognizant of switching interpretations. Either way, Justin is compelled to reject both views. Although Justin would agree with the philosophical assumptions of the first interpretation, his agreement does not bring him closer to proving his original point of the reality of another God besides the Most High God. Thus, he counters the interpretation by noting that one of the men in Gen. 18 returns in Gen. 21 where he is subsequently called "God." Having rather superficially discarded of an interpretation that is not at odds with his philosophical assumptions of the divine, namely, that all three men are angels, Justin can focus the discussion on the common Jewish interpretation and use the Middle Platonic logic that the static, transcendent God must have a distinct and active Power or Logos to work on his behalf in the world in order to argue for the existence of a second God in Scripture.

[49] *Dial.* 61.1, Falls, 94.

Logos, then, Justin attributes the contrast between God and the Logos in his revelatory work in the theophanies to Scripture, but what drives his interpretation are the philosophical assumptions of Middle Platonism.[50]

[50] One additional aspect of Justin's description of the Logos' revelatory function deserves brief attention in order to establish a key difference with Irenaeus below, namely, Justin's understanding of the revealing work of the Logos apart from his manifestation in Scripture, which is contained in his doctrine of the *Spermatikos Logos.* In the *Apologies,* Justin states that the Logos reveals the truth about God to all human beings by virtue, it would seem, of their humanity. For example, although the Greek philosophers did not know Christ, their humanity allowed them awareness of partial truths that align in certain ways to the revealed truth of the Scriptures. Justin writes, "For each person spoke rightly having understood that which was related to him, according to the part present in him of the divine Logos…For all the writers were able to see realities darkly, through the presence in them of an implanted seed of the Logos." 2 *Apol.* 13.3, 6, Barnard, 83-84 with minor revisions. Elsewhere, he writes, "And those of the Stoic school, since they were honorable at least in their ethical teaching, as were also the poets in some particulars, on account of a seed of the Logos implanted in every race of men and women…" 2 *Apol.* 8.1, Barnard, 79 with minor revisions. See also 1 *Apol.* 5, 44, 46. These passages imply the Logos reveals some part of the truth, albeit partial, to all humans by virtue of their humanity—the Logos is literally implanted into every human being. Still, the implanted Logos exists only partially in humanity as "seeds." These seeds are, as Norris explains, "those rudimentary moral and religious conceptions which are the common stock of human piety." Norris, *God and World,* 54. While the implanted seeds of the Logos give philosophers access to truth, Justin believes the incomplete nature of the Logos within humanity leads to the errors, disagreements and contradictions that exist among the various philosophical schools. By contrast, Christians have received the whole Logos in the person of Jesus Christ. He writes, "What we have, then, appears to be greater than all human teaching, because the whole rational principle became Christ, who appeared for our sake, body, and reason, and soul." 2 *Apol.* 10.1, Barnard, 80. Therefore, the Christians do not err in the same way as the philosophers because they have met and known the Logos in his whole and complete person. The question of the *Spermatikos Logos* is a long debated facet of Justin's thought. I have offered the traditional understanding that seeds of the Logos are literally implanted in humanity. Other scholars, for example Edwards, claim that even the revelation to the Greeks in Justin's understanding is tied to the scriptural revelation, explained by Justin's insistence that Plato read and copied Moses. Edwards, "Justin's Logos," 261-280. Edwards' interpretation fails to do justice to the pertinent texts of the *Apologies* by reading them through a prior understanding of Logos in the *Dial.* In the *Apologies,* Justin never suggests that the Logos is implanted in the Scriptures, but he says quite clearly that the Logos is implanted in the race of humans (2 *Apol.* 8) and each individual human (2 *Apol.* 13). Edwards' interpretation is driven by a need to unify the respective theologies of the *Dial.* and the *Apologies,* which he believes have been interpreted according to an inaccurate dualism that sees Justin as a Jew when speaking to Trypho and a Greek when writing the *Apologies.* While I agree with his efforts in principle, Edwards does not give adequate consideration to Justin's purpose and audience in the *Apologies.* As I argued in the first chapter, Justin attempts to reach the Greeks according to their categories and their language. Therefore, it makes more sense (especially given the truth of Justin's Hellenistic—as opposed to Jewish—background) to search for the primary meaning of Logos within the Greek and not the Jewish idiom. In this interpretation, I am not committing the mistake Edwards calls the "fallacious modern axiom that an author must address himself entirely to the comprehension of his present audience," for even with his adoption of the *Spermatikos Logos,* Justin challenges aspects of the Greek conception. Edwards, "Justin's Logos," 279. Nevertheless, he accomplishes this task not by rejecting the Greek conception altogether but by maintaining that the Greek conception is inadequate and *incomplete.* The implanted seed, as I noted, gives access only to a partial knowledge of the Logos. The whole Logos, Justin maintains, has come in its fullness as a human being, a truth to which no Greek would have ascribed. Justin's unification of the two revelatory functions to Jew and Greek in Christ, the whole Logos, does not preclude a natural part of the Logos inherent to all humans, by which Justin could make his claim that everything the Greeks said well is the property of the Christians. Droge's thesis

The use of Logos theology in the Apologists' writings, indicated by both the philosophical precedents identified here as well as the manner in which the Apologists argue for the presence of the Logos in Scripture, raises two observations critical to the nature of the Second Person. First, the Apologists believe the Logos is divine. This truth is discerned from the Apologists' insistence both that the Logos acts as God in his role in creation[51] and appearance in the theophanies, and that he is called such in Scripture.[52] Nevertheless, the divine nature of the Logos is not equal to the divine nature of God. Rather, the nature of the Logos is a diminished or lesser divinity confirmed by the Middle

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is more balanced than Edwards' thesis. He writes, "It is quite correct that Justin believes that all humans possess a certain innate capacity for ethical and religious knowledge insofar as they possess a share of the *logos*…But it also should be recognized that Justin never identifies a single idea or doctrine that has been derived from the exercise of *logos.*..Thus, those truths which do exist among the philosophers are almost exclusively the result of their dependence on Moses." Droge, "Justin Martyr," 314. Nonetheless, Edwards is right to underscore that Justin does emphasize the role of Scripture, particularly the prophets, in his description of the revelatory function of the Logos alongside the *Spermatikos Logos* in the *Apologies.* The Logos reveals certain truths about God to the prophets, and these truths are reserved for those persons familiar with the Scriptures and who will know the Logos as a person. Justin writes, "And that the prophets are inspired by none other than the divine Logos, even you, as I think, will agree." 1 *Apol.* 33.9, Barnard, 46-47 with minor revisions. Elsewhere he writes, "But when you hear the sayings of the prophets spoken as in the person of someone, you must not suppose that they are spoken by inspired persons themselves, but by the divine Logos who moves them." 1 *Apol.* 36.1, Barnard, 48 with minor revisions. Standing apart from humanity, the distinct (and whole) Logos speaks to certain individual humans revealing the truths of God. The special revelation of the Logos to the prophets comes to the forefront in the *Dial.* Justin writes, "The Logos of God, through Moses, stated exactly the same thing, when it was revealed to us that at the creation of man God spoke to him (who was pointed out by Moses) in the same sense." *Dial.* 62.1, Falls, 95. See also *Dial.* 53.1 where the Logos prophesies about his own coming. The role of the Logos in revealing God's truth to the prophets again creates some confusion in Justin's pneumatology, as I will show in chapter four. See below pp. 174-176.

[51] In the previous chapter, I showed that the Apologists understood the work of creation as the power proper to divinity. Theophilus' statement on this point is worth repeating here. He writes, "But the power of God is revealed by his making whatever he wishes out of the non-existent, just as the ability to give life and motion belongs to no one but God alone." *Autol.* 2.4, Grant, 27. For more on this point, see above pp. 60-62 and 68-71. If only God can create, then the Logos' ability to create on behalf of God implies his divine nature.

[52] Segal's *Two Powers in Heaven* is instructive for determining how the rabbis would have understood the sort of power arguments made by the Apologists. According to Segal, the rabbis saw this argumentation as heretical precisely because it emphasized a second divine figure in heaven alongside the Most High God. In regard to Justin, Segal shows how the texts upon which the Martyr relies to prove the divinity of Christ in *Dial.* (e.g. Gen. 1:27, 3:22, Ps. 45:7-8, and Dan. 7:9) are the very texts that the rabbis put into the mouths of those espousing the two powers heresy. Segal, *Two Powers,* 221-225. Moreover, Justin is clear that the revelatory work of the Logos prior to the incarnation occurs by virtue of his divine status. Justin writes, "[I]f you had understood the words spoken by the prophets, you would not deny that he is God, Son of the one, unbegotten, ineffable God." *Dial.* 126.2, Falls, 189. This theme particularly is prominent in the *Dial.*, where Justin is concerned with proving the divine status of the Logos.

Platonic precedence of the diminished divinity of the World Soul, as compared to the Primary God, and the ability of the Logos to work in the world in creation and to be seen in the world in the scriptural theophany accounts. Second, the Logos is not a mere extension of the Most High God or a mode of his working, but he is a distinct entity separate from the Father. The revelatory function of the Logos in the works of Justin is particularly illuminating for the second point. The theophanies reveal that the entity of the Logos in the world is not an impersonal, spiritual power; instead, the Logos is a real, concrete entity who can be seen and who can interact with humanity.[53] The logic establishing this argument again implies that while the Logos has a divine status, it is necessarily a diminished divinity since the Logos is able to appear physically and to be present in a place, a quality denied of the transcendent, invisible Father.[54] The divine and

[53] Justin specifically raises the potential misunderstanding that the Logos is not a real entity distinct from the Father in his summary of his interpretation of the theophanies near the conclusion of *Dial.* He writes, "But some teach that this power is indivisible and inseparable from the Father, just as the light of the sun on earth is indivisible and inseparable from the sun…It has also been shown at length that this power…not only is numbered as different by its name (as is the light of the sun), but is something distinct in real number." *Dial.* 128.3-4, Falls, 193-94. In other words, the Logos as witnessed by those individuals was real, and if it was real, it could not have been the God/Father, because he "neither comes to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor arises, but always remains in his place…" *Dial.* 127.2, Falls, 191. The real distinction of the Logos from the Father also is evident in the revelatory aspect of a *Spermatikos Logos.* That the seeds of the Logos are within everyone suggests the presence of a concrete, identifiable entity. In other words, it is not the result of a prophecy or some preaching heard, but a concrete entity existing in each person. This conjecture is supported by Justin's argument for the distinction between the *Logos Spermatikos* and the Logos grasped by the Christians. He does not say that only the Christians grasp the real entity of the Logos as opposed to a hearing of a prophecy only by the Greeks. Instead, he argues that the Christians have received the Logos in his entirety while the Greeks have received him only in part (2 *Apol.* 10). To exist in part (that is, as a seed) still implies the presence of a concrete entity.

[54] Munier vindicates Justin of the accusation of subordination based on passages that are routinely raised in support of this interpretation, namely those passages that place the Logos in second place after the Father (e.g. 1 *Apol.* 13.3) because he understands them to be inspired by the incarnate Son's place in the liturgical statements as after the Father. According to my interpretation which has accounted more thoroughly for the influence of Middle Platonism, passages such as 1 *Apol.* 13.3 reflects not only the liturgy, but also the subordinated divinity of the Son—he has second place because of his gradated divinity. I will offer this interpretation of passages like 1 *Apol.* 13.3 in chapter five. See below pp. 219-225. Nevertheless, Munier admits that the Logos is necessarily subordinated to the Father as a result of his mediating role and his generation from the Father's will. According to Munier, Justin avoids di-theism only by subordinating the Father to the Son. In other words, the Son is divine, but only the Father is the one God of the universe. Munier, *Apologie de Saint Justin*, 103-104. I agree with Munier's statement here, but will

distinct nature of the Logos is confirmed and developed in the Apologists' understanding of the generation of the Logos from God.

1.2 The Generation of the Logos

The Apologists do not address the generation of the Logos for its own sake; rather, they address the generation as part of a larger discussion on the question of the nature of the Logos.[55] In fact, the number of pertinent texts regarding the generation in the Apologists' writings is relatively small.[56] They address the generation in order to explain how the agent of God's action in the world relates to God—a proper explanation of this relationship needed to account both for God's oneness and the existence of a separate, divine agent alongside God.[57] The explanation the Apologists offer identifies the Logos as God's own rationality existing internally or as a part of God from eternity that is generated into a separate entity at some point before the creation of the world in order to serve as God's active Power. The generation is important for the Apologists

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reserve further comment and argumentation until chapter five because the argument involves the nature of the Holy Spirit as well.

[55] The generation as a topic of theological interest for its own sake becomes standard practice a century later with Origen, and in the fourth century, the generation of the Logos becomes one of the primary battlegrounds of the protracted Nicene controversy.

[56] Justin touches the subject in several places, the most in depth and important of which are 2 *Apol.* 6 and *Dial* 61-64. Athenagoras only addresses the generation once, in the course of his description of Christian belief in *Leg.* 10. Schoedel's translation gives the impression that Athenagoras speaks of the generation quite often through the repeated phrase "the Word that issues from him [God]" (e.g. *Leg* 4.2, 10.1, 10.5, 12.3, 18.2). In each case Schoedel's phrase "the Word that issues from" translates τοῦ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ λόγου, which is better rendered "the Word that is from him." While this statement affirms that the Logos has his source in God, it implies nothing about the generation as Schoedel's translation suggests. Theophilus speaks of the generation in two places, *Autol.* 2.10 and 22.

[57] Aeby finds the purpose of the explanations of the generation specifically related to the theophanies and, ultimately, to the understanding of certain Jewish Scriptures in relation to the transcendence of God. Aeby, *Missions Divines,* 19-20. Although the divine transcendence is certainly a factor in the theophany discussions, Aeby's interpretation is ultimately too narrow. The specific problem that the existence of a second God raised was not the transcendence of the Father, but the relation of the two Gods given the broader constraints of monotheism, a tenet that none of the Apologists were willing to sacrifice. The generation provided them a means of construing this relationship.

because it marks the distinguishing of God and the Logos and accounts for both the oneness of God (from eternity, prior to the generation), and the distinctness of the divine agent (following the generation).

Logos language proved particularly useful in this explanation of the relationship between the two Gods because the Apologists' intended audience would agree with the supposition that the divine being was eternally reasonable. As a result, Logos language offered the Apologists a means to speak of the generation apart from the implication of a beginning.[58] Nonetheless, this explanation implies that the Logos has two distinct stages

[58] This effect of Logos theology is weakened somewhat by the language the Apologists commonly use to describe the generation. Although each Apologist avoids the title υἱός in their passages on generation, instead preferring the nomenclature of λόγος, they imply a beginning to the Logos with the use of γεννάω to explain the process. Γεννάω is the common Greek term meaning, in its passive form, "to be born, begotten, or generated." In all but two of his descriptions of the generation, Justin uses γεννάω (2 *Apol.* 6.3, *Dial.* 61.1, 62.4, 76.1, 105.1, 128.4). In *Dial.* 62.4, he uses the verb προβάλλω, which connotes "uttering a word" as he indicates in *Dial.* 61.2, a passage I will discuss in detail below. From the context of *Dial.* 62.4, Justin uses this term as synonymous with γεννάω, which describes the generation alongside προβάλλω in the same passage. Still, Falls' rendering of both terms as "to beget" is unhelpful. (Bobichon's rendering of προβάλλω as «*émis du Père*» is more accurate. Bobichon, *Justin Martyr,* 351.) In *Dial.* 100.4, Justin uses προέρχομαι ("to go out from"), which again has less of a human begetting connotation as it does one of human speech. Theophilus uses the passive form of γεννάω in both *Autol.* 2.10 and 2.22. Only Athenagoras avoids the word for its human connotations and opts instead for a word more consistent with the λόγος image, namely, προέρχομαι ("to go out from"). (Incidentally, Justin's use of the same word may reflect a similar tradition to that which influenced Athenagoras' use.) In agreement with their use of γεννάω, the Apologists often give the Logos the titles πρωτότοκος or πρῶτον γέννημα ("first born" or "first begotten") which amount to the same meaning as υἱός. Justin uses πρωτότοκος as a title for the Logos 11 times (1 *Apol.* 23.2, 33.6, 46.2, 53.2, 63.15; *Dial.* 84.2, 85.2, 100.2, 116.3, 125.3, 138.2). (In one place he uses the variant πρωτόγονος, which translates the same, 1 *Apol.* 58.3.) He also uses γέννημα as a title of the Logos (*Dial.* 62.4, *Dial.* 129.4) and once in conjunction with πρῶτον (1 *Apol.* 21.1). Athenagoras does not use πρωτότοκος but does use τρῶτον γέννημα once (*Leg.* 10.3), although he clarifies that he does not mean that God either has a child in the human sense or that the Logos has a beginning. Theophilus uses πρωτότοκος as a title of the Second Person once as well (*Autol.* 2.22). He also uses γέννημα once, without πρῶτον, but refers it not to Logos but to Wisdom (*Autol.* 1.3). Nothing in either the word γεννάω or the title πρωτότοκος and its cognates suggests a uniqueness to the person of the Logos or the quality of his generation. Often the term is used repeatedly in the human genealogies in the Septuagint. In *Dial.* 105.1, in fact, Justin uses γεννάω both to refer to the Logos' generation and a human birth. In *Dial.* 91.1, πρωτότοκος appears in the course of a citation from Deut. 33:13-17 to refer to the firstborn of a bullock. Theophilus neither has difficulty using γεννάω to refer to human generation (*Autol.* 2.24) nor even to refer to stories regarding the begetting of the Greek gods (*Autol.* 2.22). The use of these terms despite the Apologists' need to maintain the uniqueness of the generation may indicate that language had yet to become codified and technical, as would occur in the fourth century. Additionally, it might reflect the influence of Scripture, since a scriptural precedence exists for both these terms. For example, the title πρωτότοκος is used of Christ in Col. 1:15 and Heb. 1:6. In fact, four of Justin's uses (*Dial.* 84.2, 85.2,

of existence, the first from eternity as an impersonal power internal to God, and the second, following its generation, as a separate divine personality free to work on behalf of God both in creating and working in the world. The generation of the Logos, then, marks a qualitative difference in the mode or manner of the existence of the Logos—only after his generation is the Logos a personal being—and this personal existence is logically dependent upon his work in the world.[59] Scholars have identified this manner of speaking of the Logos as "two-stage Logos theology" to note the difference in the Logos' stages of existence before and after his generation. Two-stage Logos theology pervades nearly all the writers of the second century and even into the early third century.[60]

125.3, 138.2) reflect the larger construction of Col. 1:15, "the firstborn of all creation." (Only in *Dial.* 85.2 and 138.2 is the exact wording, "πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως," reflected.) Justin does not use the title regarding the Son's resurrection ("firstborn of the dead"), as is intended by the use of the title in Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:18 and Rev. 1:5. Theophilus also follows the Col. 1:15 use ("πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως"). Additionally, a form of γεννάω is used in Ps. 2:7: "The Lord said to me, You are my Son, today I have begotten you…" Justin cites this verse several times (1 *Apol.* 40.14; *Dial* 88.8, 103.6, 122.6), interpreting it as the divine Father speaking to the Son. As such, is possible that he has this verse in mind when choosing γεννάω as the primary verb to describe the origin of the Son from the Father. On the other hand, one scriptural title, μονογενής ("Only Begotten"), did indicate uniqueness. This title appears several times in the prologue of John, where it indicates that Christ is a special offspring of the Father, the only one of his kind. Of the three, only Justin uses μονογενής as a title for the Logos. This usage comes in *Dial.* 105.1, where Justin interprets the title from Ps. 22/1 as referring to the Logos. (Falls' use of the English title in his rendering of *Dial.* 102.2 does not reflect the presence of the title in the Greek.) Thus, even this usage is indirect, and apparently Justin equates the title to πρωτότοκος. (He notes in *Dial.* 105.1 that he has already shown the Son is the μονογενής, even though to that point he has only referred to the Son as πρωτότοκος.) Therefore, any force μονογενής may have carried for uniqueness in John is not present in Justin.

[59] Tixeront's succinct description is helpful. He writes, "God needs the Logos to create, produce, and reach what is contingent, external, imperfect, and mutable. Hence He draws it from His bosom as it were; He begets and brings It forth (utters), that It may be His instrument and organ in the act of creation." Tixeront, *History of Dogmas* 1:217.

[60] The recognition of two-stage Logos theology in the apologists goes back at least as far as K.G. Semisch's 1840s work on Justin. (Orbe mistakenly identifies Otto as the originator of the idea. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo*, 570. Semisch predates Otto by nearly 40 years.) Semisch claims that Justin adopted from Philo the interior/exterior distinction in the existence of the Logos, which resulted in a distinction in the type of that existence. He writes, "As long as the Logos rested in God, it was essentially identical with his substance…by coming forth from the divine essence, it first attained a personal self-subsistence." Semisch, *Justin Martyr: His Life, Writings, and Opinions*, trans. J.E. Ryland, Biblical Cabinet Series, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: 1843), 181. Although scholars in general did not follow the identification of Philo as the source of this thinking, most agreed with Semisch's interpretation of two distinct stages in the Logos' existence. Harnack, who believed that the Logos theology of the apologists was essentially unanimous, widened the perspective to include the apologists as a whole. In so doing, he gave a suitable definition of two-stage Logos theology, operative throughout the majority of twentieth century scholarship. He writes,

The Apologists show this understanding of the two-stage existence of the Logos with an increasing degree of clarity.[61] Justin is not explicit, but implies a two-stage existence through the causal connection he draws between the generation of the Logos and his mediating role in creation. In other words, for Justin, the Logos came forth in order to serve the Father in this manner. The unavoidable result, as most commentators note, is the location of the generation at a specific point in time, which, given the Logos' eternal nature, suggests an eternal stage of existence prior to the generation.[62] The key

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"[The apologists] required a formula capable of expressing the transcendent and unchangeable nature of God on the one hand, and his fullness of creative and spiritual powers on the other…From this arose the idea of the Logos, and indeed the latter was necessarily distinguished from God as a separate existence, as soon as the realization of the powers residing in God was represented in the beginning. *The Logos is the hypostasis of the operative power of reason, which at once preserves the unity and unchangeableness of God in spite of the exercise of powers residing in him, and renders this very exercise possible.*" Harnack, *History of Dogma* 2:243, italics original. This two-stage understanding of the existence of the Logos, in the apologists in particular and the second century in general, has been adopted by a majority of scholars, including Aeby, Barnard, Daniélou, Grant, Grillmeier, Kelly, Lebreton, Loofs, McVey, Orbe, Osborn, Otto, Pfättisch, Prestige, Quasten, Spanneut, Tixeront, Veil, and Zahn. Perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of two-stage Logos theology in relation to the apologists comes from H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1: *Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 192-196. Wolfson also traces it into later centuries through Tertullian, Novatian, and Lactantius. Wolfson, without reference to Semisch, interprets Philo as having a similar "stage" understanding of the Logos, although he identifies three different stages. The first two correspond to the stages present in the apologists' works, while the third consists of the Logos immanent in the world. Wolfson, *Philo*, vol. 1, *Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 3rd rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 239ff. Unlike the apologists, Philo does not have passages where the stages appear side by side. The interpretation is implied from material where Philo speaks of the Logos as the mind of God, others where he is a separate, active instrument, and still others where he is in the world. As with other aspects of their theology, citing Philo as an immediate source for the apologists' understanding proves problematic.

[61] This statement is in contrast to Kelly's argument that Justin is the clearest of the two-stage Logos theologians. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 96ff. His statement is the result of confounding the Stoic distinction between a λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and a λόγος προφορικός with the Stoic notion of the λόγος σπερματικός. In point of fact, the two have little relation in connection to the generation of the Logos and the resulting two stages of its existence; only the former bears on the question of the generation. While Justin is clearest on the notion of a λόγος σπερματικός, he is not as clear as later writers, notably Theophilus, of the ἐνδιάθετος / προφορικός distinction.

[62] Commenting on 2 *Apol.*6, for example, Barnard writes, "Justin implies that the logos was begotten not long before the creation—although He is essentially a unity with the Father. He was not a creature, in the later Arian sense, nor an emanation from God like the rays of the sun; nor did he proceed from God by abscission such that the being of the Father was diminished. The logos was, however, essentially generated for the purposes of creation and revelation." Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr*, 190-191. This understanding opposes the more developed understanding of an eternal generation of the Second Person present in Origen and the Nicenes of the fourth century, which did not allow for speculation regarding a mode of existence prior to the Logos' generation.

text here is 2 *Apol.* 6, which states, "But his [God's] Son, who alone is called Son in the proper sense, the Logos who, before all the things which were made, was both with him and was begotten when at the beginning he made and ordered all things through him…"[63] The ὅτε clause indicates the timing of the generation and its connection to the creation. The detail that the Logos was with God before he created suggests that the Logos came forth from God just prior to the creation of all other things for the purpose of creating.

In the *Dial.*, this two-stage understanding is present despite a significant downplaying of Logos theology. Justin writes, "But this Offspring, who was truly brought forth from the Father before all the things which were made, was with the Father and with this one the Father communed…"[64] Here, the communing that occurs between the Father and his Offspring only occurs after the generation, once the second stage has been inaugurated.[65] Likewise, Justin writes: "God has generated from himself a certain rational power as a beginning for all creatures…"[66] The phrase ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, which will reappear in the more developed statements of the other Apologists, indicates a prior, internal stage from which the Logos emerges—one where, as Barnard notes, the Logos is essentially indistinguishable from the Father. Moreover, Justin here stresses the reason for the generation as the work of the Logos in creation. These statements agree with others in the *Dial.* where Justin asserts that an act of the will of God brings forth the Son.

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[63] "Ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ἐκείνου, ὁ μόνος λεγόμενος κυρίως υἱός, ὁ Λόγος πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ συνὼν καὶ γεννώμενος, ὅτε τὴν ἀρχὴν δι᾽ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἔκτισε καὶ ἐκόσμησε…" 2 *Apol.* 6.3.

[64] "᾽Αλλὰ τοῦτο τὸ τῷ ὄντι ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς προβληθὲν γέννημα πρὸ πάντων τῶν ποιημάτων συνῆν τῷ πατρί, καὶ τούτῳ ὁ πατὴρ προσομιλεῖ…" *Dial.* 62.4.

[65] See Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo*, 571. For Orbe, this is the key passage that shows two-stage Logos theology in Justin. The 2 *Apol.* 6 passage, in Orbe's mind, is too ambivalent. See below p. 127n71 for more on this point.

[66] "[Ἀ]ρχὴν πρὸ πάντων τῶν κτισμάτων ὁ θεὸς γεγέννηκε δύναμίν τινα ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ λογικήν…" *Dial.* 61.1. The standard translation of πρό is "before." This translation is reflected in most English translations and is a correct interpretation given the context. Nevertheless, using the secondary rendering "for," to mean "on behalf of," as I have done here, better expresses the mediating action indicated by Justin's use of ἀρχή.

This understanding seems to indicate that the generation (and thus separate existence) of the Logos was not necessary and that the Logos' existence as a separate divine entity is not eternal.[67]

In the same context, Justin also offers two human analogies to describe the generation. He writes, "But, does not something similar happen also with us humans? When we utter [προβάλλω] a word, it can be said that we beget [γεννάω] the word, but not by cutting it off, in the sense that our power of uttering words would thereby be diminished. We can observe a similar nature when one fire kindles another without losing anything, but remaining the same; yet the enkindled fire seems to exist of itself and to shine without lessening the brilliancy of the first fire."[68] Here Justin claims that God does not cease to have Logos after the generation in the same way that humans who utter words do not cease then to have the capacity to speak and fire, once it begins to burn, does not cease then to be fire. The force of the analogies turns on the interior/exterior distinction of the stages of existence—Justin is compelled to clarify his description of generation that the "going out" of the Logos from God does not result in an irrational God. Only if he truly believed that the interior Logos separated from God at his generation and became exterior would he need to offer such a clarification. Whether this means God has his own separate Logos or he remains in contact with the separated Logos is unclear.

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[67] Regarding the generation of the Logos from the will of God, see *Dial.* 60.3, 61.1, 100.4, 127.4. It should be noted that Origen affirmed the existence of an eternal generation of the Logos and that the generation was an act of the Father's will. This combination was not deemed incompatible until the fourth century. In the early Trinitarian debates, Alexander and Athanasius claimed that the Son's generation was eternal and therefore necessary and of the substance, not the will, of God. Their opponents claimed that the Son's generation was not eternal and therefore was not necessary but an act of the Father's will. Justin's lack of explicit references to an eternal generation makes it likely he belongs in the latter trajectory.

[68] *Dial.* 61.2, Falls, 94. The analogy of the light in explaining the origin of the Logos appears in Philo and applies both to the Logos and to the Spirit. See Philo, *On Dreams* 1.72-91.

In the summation of his argument in the *Dial.*, Justin returns to these analogies and acknowledges their intrinsic problems; namely, they blur the real distinction between God and the Logos.[69] Because of his interest in locating the Logos in creation and identifying the Logos with Jesus of Nazareth who walked the earth, Justin denies this implication of the analogies, as noted above.[70] Nonetheless, he ultimately does not reject them as helpful analogies as long as they remain consistent with a true distinction of entities. Thus, even in the face of difficulties, Justin does not reject the interior/exterior two-stage model. While I acknowledge, as some scholars do, that Justin generally remains silent about the stage of existence prior to the Logos' generation, even having to account for an earlier stage provides evidence that Justin belongs in this "two-stage" school of thought.[71]

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[69] Philo's use of the analogy, for example, did not imply a real distinction between God and the Logos.

[70] See above pp. 120n53.

[71] Scholars are divided regarding the presence of two-stage Logos theology in Justin more than other apologists. For example, although Lebreton accuses Tatian and Theophilus of this formula, he does not include Justin in his critique. *Histoire* 2:422ff. While Orbe identifies the distinction of the stages in Justin's thought, he downplays its importance in Justin's work and does not see any similarity, as he does with Theophilus, to the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός distinction. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 574. (For more on this distinction in relation to its Stoic provenance and Theophilus, see below pp. 129-132.) Similarly, Osborn is insistent of two-stage Logos theology's presence in Theophilus but is vague regarding its presence in Justin. Osborn, *Justin Martyr,* 30-31. Goodenough made the most sustained argument against the presence of two-stage Logos theology in Justin. He argued that Semisch's original argument was based on a faulty interpretation of 2 *Apol.* 6.3 (for Greek, see above p. 125n63). Goodenough observes that Semisch mistakenly takes the ὅτε clause only with γεννώμενος, indicating that the συνών and γεννώμενος are opposed to one another, the former implying the impersonal, eternal stage and the latter implying a second stage following the generation (for this argument in Semisch, see his *Justin Martyr,* 181n2). Goodenough argues that the two words are not contrasted grammatically, rather, they are set in parallel by the double καί structure, indicating only one stage of existence and, apparently, an eternal generation. Goodenough writes, "The passage seems only to mean that when God created the world the Logos was already in existence and dwelling with Him, and was of assistance in the process of creation." Goodenough, *Justin Martyr,* 154. While I grant that Goodenough's reading of 2 *Apol.* 6 is more accurate (Semisch himself notes that the interpretation he gives of the passage is "verbally concealed"), finding eternal generation in this verse is more of a stretch than two-stage Logos theology. Here, and elsewhere, Justin always speaks of the generation of the Logos in causal connection to the role as agent in creation. The Logos' generation is dependent on the creation and, thus, the Logos only came forth shortly prior to it. Eternal generation, as implied in the fourth century definitions, means that the generation of the Logos is necessary—that his external existence would have happened whether or not God created.

For Athenagoras, the difference in the two stages is more pronounced. Athenagoras writes, "He is the first begotten of the Father, not as one who came into being, for from the beginning God, being eternal mind, had in himself his Logos [λόγος] since he is eternally rational [λογικός], but as one who came forth to be the Ideal Form and the Energizing Power of everything material…"[72] This statement contains all the characteristics of two-stage Logos theology. The Logos exists from eternity inside God as his rationality (λογικός).[73] His generation was not necessary; rather, he came out in order to serve as the mediating agent in creation ("who came forth *to be* the Ideal Form and Energizing Power…"). Henceforth, the Logos is separate from God/Father. Athenagoras expresses what Justin merely implies, particularly regarding the quality of existence of the Logos as impersonal in the first stage. Moreover, an additional characteristic is operative in Athenagoras' understanding, namely the spatial conception of the generation. Athenagoras uses the word προέρχομαι, "to go out," to indicate the generation of the Logos.[74] This manner of conceiving the generation, as opposed to γεννάω, underscores

[72] "…πρῶτον γέννημα εἶναι τῷ πατρί, οὐχ ὡς γενόμενον ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ὁ θεός, νοῦς ἀίδιος ὤν, εἶχεν αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῳ τὸν λόγον, ἀιδίως λογικὸς ὤν, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τῶν ὑλικῶν ξυμπάντων…ἰδέα καὶ ἐνέργεια εἶναι, προελθών…" *Leg.* 10.3.

[73] The word play of λόγος and λογικός suggests that the Second Person is not yet separate from God or distinguishable as a rational entity in the first stage. Rather, in this stage, the Second Person is merely the λογικός of the Father. Only after he comes forth can he be called λόγος properly in his own right. Crehan's translation avoids this implication by rendering λογικός as "Word" when he writes, "[F]or God was from the beginning being eternal mind, and had His Word [λόγος] within Himself, being from eternity possessed of a Word [λογικός]." Crehan, *Athenagoras*, 40. He offers no reason for translating two different Greek descriptions with the same English word or for rendering an adjective with a noun. The plain translation indicates that λογικός refers to something other than the Second Person proper; Crehan's lack of justification here suggests there is none available. Pouderon's French translation is closer to the meaning of the passage: «*car dès l'origine Dieu, qui est intelligence éternelle, portrait en lui son Verbe* [λόγος], *pusiqu'il est éternellement raisonnable* [λογικός]…» Pouderon, *Athénagore*, 103.

[74] Athenagoras' use of προέρχομαι here stands in specific contrast to γίνομαι ("to be born, created") in order to avoid the connotation of procreation, and hence a beginning, indicated with the former word. As noted (see above p. 104n3), he also attempts to avoid the same connotation with the title υἱός by equating the title with Logos. The above explanation of the generation of the Logos is introduced with the following phrase: "If in your great wisdom you would like to know what 'Son' means, I will tell you in a

the spatial separation—from eternity the Logos exists *within* God and at the generation separates or *goes out* from him to work in creation. This spatial conception is facilitated by the spatial location of God functioning in all three Apologists' definition of the divine transcendence as noted in the previous chapter.[75]

Two-stage Logos theology reaches its zenith with Theophilus, who wrote, "Therefore God, having his own Logos innate [ἐνδιάθετος], that is in his own bowels, generated him, along with his own Sophia, vomiting him out before everything else. He used this Logos as a servant in the things created by him, and through him he made all things."[76] In this statement, the spatial implications of two-stage thinking come to the forefront. The use of two phrases, ἐνδιάθετος and ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγχνοις, emphasizes the interior nature of the Logos prior to its generation. Ἐνδιάθετος is a linguistics term, likely Stoic in origin, indicating "interior" in the manner of a thought (as opposed to an uttered word).[77] The phrase ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγχνοις is added for emphasis and, for the first time, to assign a specific place of dwelling for this interior Logos. The word σπλάγχνον indicates the deepest part of a person, (e.g., "the bowels") but the term also can connote love or affections.[78] These details indicate that at this stage, the Logos is not separate from the Father but instead is an intricate part of him, a truth finally emphasized by the phrase τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ("his own logos"). Nevertheless, at

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few brief words…" *Leg.* 10.3, Schoedel, 23. Justin used προέρχομαι to describe the generation once, but this was not his preferred description. The word is absent from Theophilus' descriptions, although he underscores this spatial aspect of the generation as well.

[75] See above pp. 71-75.

[76] "Ἔχων οὖν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐξερευξάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὅλων. τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔσχεν ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ γεγενημένων, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν." *Autol.* 2.10.

[77] I will return to this term, specifically its relation to προφορικός in Stoic and Theophilus' thought momentarily.

[78] Theophilus does not seem to suggest a literal interpretation here, since later he uses a different part of the body to explain the same closeness between God and his logos. See below p. 130n81.

its generation this interior logos is made exterior. Although Theophilus uses the more common term for begetting (γεννάω), with the participle ἐξερευξάμενος he interprets the process of generation with a rather graphic, spatial connotation ("he vomited out"). What was interior to God has been separated from him in a forceful way and is now exterior, enabled to act as the agent of and in creation.[79]

Theophilus offers even more detail in a second passage where he explains whose voice spoke to Adam in the garden. He writes, "[It is] the Logos who is continually innate [ἐνδιάθετος] in the heart of God. For before anything was created he was having this [logos] as his counselor, since he was his own mind and thought. But when God wished to make what he willed, he generated this logos as external [προφορικός], as the firstborn of all creation…"[80] Here, Theophilus offers the strongest contrast yet between the two stages. Prior to the generation, the Logos is interior or innate to God. Theophilus again uses ἐνδιάθετος with a specific interior location, this time the heart of God, for emphasis.[81] The logos is clearly not a personal agent at this point; instead, it exists as

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[79] All of these qualifiers have the same effect that Athenagoras accomplishes with his description of the generation as a "going out of" the Father. Theophilus' failure to use the verb while possessing the meaning suggests he is following traditional language. Curry claims the use of the imagery of vomiting out "is an added and unnecessary detail which seems to be forced into service." Curry, "Theogony of Theophilus," 321. In fact, the image works quite well for emphasizing the distinction of the Logos from God, Theophilus' primary point, and both the internal and external nature of the matter being vomited up. (The vomited matter exists internally in the body prior to its externalization as vomit.)

[80] "…τὸν λόγον τὸν ὄντα διὰ παντὸς ἐνδιάθετον ἐν καρδίᾳ θεοῦ. πρὸ γὰρ τι γίνεσθαι τοῦτον εἶχεν σύμβουλον, ἑαυτοῦ νοῦν καὶ φρόνησιν ὄντα. ὁπότε δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἐβουλεύσατο, τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἐγέννγσεν προφορικόν, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως…" *Autol.* 2.22.

[81] The switch to the heart from the bowels of *Autol.* 2.10 indicates Theophilus' search for a term that implies the closest possible connection between God and his logos in the first stage, perhaps to indicate that the logos is not yet distinguishable from God. Something similar occurs in the prologue of John, where the Logos is described as existing in the bosom of the Father (although this existence is not relegated explicitly to the time prior to the generation by the writer of the Fourth Gospel). The word used in the Fourth Gospel is κόλπος, and it also can indicate the closest of associations. Given Theophilus' familiarity with the Johannine Prologue, it is strange that he does not employ κόλπος to describe the interior dwelling place of the Logos. Curry makes the same observation and suggests that Theophilus is here influenced by the Stoic-Hesiodic fragment 343. Curry, "Theogony of Theophilus," 322. If Curry is right, it is further

God's own mind and heart, and thus as God's counselor.[82] Theophilus further indicates by both the διὰ παντός phrase as well as the imperfect form of ἔχω the meaning that Athenagoras said expressly, namely that the Logos existed in this first stage from eternity. The generation, then, marks the end of that stage and the beginning of another, as the Logos comes forth or out of God and is made external (προφορικός), a word that stands in direct opposition to ἐνδιάθετος. As is often noted, these two terms originally appear in Stoic discussions of language where they mark the distinction between an interior thought existing within the mind (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) and that same thought existing as an exterior, spoken word (λόγος προφορικός).[83] The Apologists are the first figures to give the distinction cosmic, ontological significance, thereby emphasizing a spatial conception of the existence of the Logos—the logos was interior to God from eternity and in its generation comes out of God; after its generation, the Logos is henceforth external, free to move and act in creation, in this case as the voice of God.

Finally, Theophilus clarifies another point that Justin implied but Athenagoras did not address; namely, the generation of the Logos does not render God without his Logos or irrational. Theophilus writes, "He did not deprive himself of the Logos, but generated

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evidence of the presence of Stoic imagery and terminology throughout Theophilus' discussion of the relationship between God and the Logos.

[82] The word σύμβουλος implies an advisor or an equal, fitting with the idea that in this stage the logos is the very mind and thought of God—the attribute or power, in other words, that thinks. When this internal and impersonal logos is generated and becomes external, the word shifts from σύμβουλος to the adjective ὑπουργός (*Autol.* 2.10), thereby implying a more subordinated servant role.

[83] Aeby, *Missions Divines,* 19; Bentivegna, "Christianity without Christ," 117-118; Curry, "Theogony of Theophilus," *VC* 42.4 (1988): 318-26; Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus," *HTR* 40, 4 (1947): 227-256, Spanneut, *Stoïcisme,* 310-312. Daniélou has noted that by the second century this contrast is likely "a language common to all philosophical schools, without any association with Stoicism." Daniélou, *Gospel Message,* 354. Other scholars have traced its origin to Aristotle. The specific provenance of the distinction is not of immediate concern here, except to recognize that Theophilus has identified a convention in Greek philosophy that helps him hold in tension both the generation and the eternal nature of the Logos. The difficulty with the language, as I will suggest more fully momentarily, is that it does not offer a means of distinguishing the Logos from God in the first stage and, therefore, cannot maintain an eternally distinct, which is to say personal, existence of the Logos.

the Logos and constantly converses with his Logos."[84] This statement implies that God and the separated Logos continue in communion through their conversation, a truth that is shown in Genesis 1:26, which Theophilus interprets as God speaking to his Logos and Sophia.[85] Their separation at the generation allows them to be in conversation as pictured in the account of the creation of humans.[86]

Two-stage Logos theology in the Apologists may be defined as the manner in which the Apologists hold in tension the eternity of the Second Person with his generation that otherwise would imply a beginning point. As such, two-stage Logos theology entails a shift in the quality of existence from the impersonal rationality of God to a separated, personal, divine entity. Further, two-stage Logos theology is predicated

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[84] *Autol.* 2.22, Grant, 63.

[85] "[God] said 'Let us make' to none other than his own Logos and his own Sophia." *Autol.* 2.18, Grant, 57. I will return to Theophilus' interpretation of Gen. 1:26, and the role of the Sophia in creation, in chapter four. See below pp. 181-186.

[86] Although Theophilus often is considered the two-stage Logos theologian *par excellence*, even in his case, the interpretation is not unanimous. For example, Rick Rogers rejects the two-stage interpretation of Theophilus on the grounds that Theophilus writes that the Logos is both with God and in God, thus neutralizing the spatial connotations underscored in the present interpretation. Theophilus, Rogers says, is not concerned with the "grammatical propriety of his prepositions" and therefore "the expression that the Logos was 'with' God seems to be for Theophilus the same as saying the Logos was 'in' God." Moreover, he emphasizes that Theophilus maintains that God does not lose his Logos after the generation to support his theory that for Theophilus the Logos remains in God. Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch: The Life and Thought of a Second-Century Bishop* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000), 96. In his argument, Rogers overlooks the importance of the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός distinction and the spatial connotations they carried in their linguistic use. Despite the prepositions Theophilus used, these words, not to mention the likening of the generation to the action of vomiting, indicate a shift from an internal to an external state of the Logos. Regarding Rogers' second point, in the generation Theophilus clearly states that God "did not deprive himself of the Logos but generated the Logos and constantly converses with the Logos." *Autol.* 2.22, Grant, 63. Nonetheless, Theophilus' desire to maintain the closest contact between God and the Logos does not indicate that the Logos remains somehow internalized. This is suggested by both the rhetoric Theophilus uses (God is now able to *converse* with the Logos) as well as the role of the Logos post generation of being localized in the creation. Rogers's failure to grasp two-stage theology in Theophilus ultimately stems from his quasi-modalist interpretation of Theophilus' Logos. He writes, "I do not think [Theophilus] took them [Sophia, Pneuma, and Logos] to be real self-sustaining entities, that is angels or demigods. Rather, I think it is much more likely that he saw them as literary fictions useful in describing God's power, God's revelation of himself and God's actions in the world…" Rogers, *Theophilus*, 74. Rogers correctly notes an ambiguity not present in Justin in the manner in which Theophilus speaks of the agents. Theophilus does not equate the Logos to Jesus of Nazareth; thus, he has no reason to ensure a separate personhood of the Logos. Nonetheless, as I have argued, the logic of God's transcendence, spatially or relatively defined, and divine agency demands that the Logos was truly separated, for unless he is truly separated from God, he cannot work in the world. If he is truly separated, then the Logos cannot be relegated to a "literary fiction."

upon a spatial conception of God, such that the Logos can be conceived as physically coming out of God to work in the world and thereby to bridge the gap between God and the world. The strengths of two-stage Logos theology for the purposes of the Apologists' occasion lie in the precedence for such language in philosophical sources, as well as the construct's ability to speak of God/Father and Logos/Son at once as one (in their eternal relationship) and distinct (in relation to creation). This latter point in turn allows for the identification of the earthly Messiah with the divine, eternal Logos, a connection best witnessed in the *Dial.* Justin already had shown that the Logos is divine and distinct in its pre-existent state, so he is able to argue in support of the divinity of Jesus the Messiah. The latter argument depends on the former argument's establishment via two-stage Logos theology.[87] Nonetheless, from a Trinitarian perspective, the weaknesses in this scheme are palpable. First, although the Apologists can account for the eternity of the Logos, the Logos does not exist eternally as a separate personality. Indeed, the separated, personal Logos has a beginning point in time, sometime shortly before the creation of the world.[88] Concurrently, the generation of the Logos depends upon his work as agent of creation. If God had not willed to create the world, he would not have needed to generate his internal Logos.

Thus, the Apologists' speculation on the generation of the Logos results in the Logos' diminished or lesser divinity when compared to the divinity of God. This conclusion aligns with the conclusions drawn from my study of the Apologists' Logos

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[87] The missing step, of course, is the question of how the pre-existent Christ becomes incarnate in a man, a difficult subject for Trypho to be sure, but a subject that goes beyond the limits of the current discussion.

[88] Daniélou calls this conception a "measure of modalism." Daniélou, *Gospel Message,* 352. Ultimately, the problem is not modalism—when the Logos works in creation, he works as a separate entity. The problem instead, as I have already suggested above, and will reiterate in chapter five below, is the implication of subordinationism.

theology in general. The Logos is divine, and as such, he can work on behalf of God in the world. Nevertheless, it is precisely the lesser or diminished divinity of the Logos, resulting from his temporal and spatial generation, that allows him to appear in the material cosmos as the agent of its creation, the voice in Eden, or the presence in the burning bush.

2. Irenaeus

2.1 Logos Theology

Despite the prevalence of the title "Logos" in his work, Irenaeus is rarely considered a Logos theologian. The reason for this neglect in early twentieth century scholarship was an assumption that Logos theology, as a product of a "Hellenistic mind," was out of place in the "biblical thought" of Irenaeus.[89] In more recent studies, the

[89] For example, Tixeront states, without qualification, that Irenaeus "prefers generally the name *Son* to that of *Word*." Tixeront, *History of Dogmas* 1:233. The reason he cites for his lack of Logos theology is Irenaeus' stated rejection of "speculation." Similarly, Jaroslav Pelikan writes, "Although Irenaeus was not unacquainted with the apologetic doctrine of the Logos, he made relatively little use of it. The use of the idea of Logos in Revelation 19:13 should have shown that there was a place in the language of the church for a conception of this idea which owed very little to philosophical speculation." Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, repr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 187. Pelikan's second sentence implies that Irenaeus avoided Logos theology because of its obvious philosophical overtones. Lawson admits that there is a Logos doctrine present in Irenaeus, but concludes from what he identifies as Irenaeus' thoroughly biblical understanding of God that Irenaeus should have no need of it. He writes, "[I]f the Living God be in intimate contact with the world of men one may well ask what need there is for a Mediator of Creation and Revelation." Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 135. Thus, its presence is superfluous and reflects a contradiction of which Irenaeus was unaware. Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 136-137. Deciding, almost arbitrarily, that the biblical idiom represents the "real Irenaeus" Lawson leaves Irenaeus' Logos theology virtually untouched, focusing instead on the doctrine of recapitulation and the Second Person's work in the incarnation. Somewhat more surprising is the absence of a consideration of Irenaeus' Logos theology in Grillmeier's *Christ in Christian Tradition.* While he too addresses Irenaeus' Logos theology in his brief treatment of Irenaeus' christology, Irenaeus' name is conspicuously absent when Grillmeier addresses the development of Logos doctrine in particular. He moves from Theophilus to Hippolytus, addressing none of the innovations Irenaeus makes that would represent a variant tradition on two-stage Logos theology. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 108-113. The bias against speculative and philosophical motives in Irenaeus' Logos doctrine is best displayed in Irwin W. Reist, "The

exclusive focus on the work of the Second Person in the incarnation has marginalized Irenaeus' Logos theology, a factor not unrelated to the lack of interest in his Trinitarian thought. The difficulty with Irenaeus' Logos theology is the lack of a clear motive for its use. As previously noted in accord with the majority of scholarship, the Apologists were drawn to Logos theology because it provided a point of contact with the Greeks and because of its ability to answer the question of how a transcendent and spatially distant God could work in the world. With Irenaeus, these motivating factors are not present. His purpose is not to show where Christianity aligns with the assumptions of Greek philosophy, and his understanding of God does not result in the same need for a mediating figure.[90] In order to understand Irenaeus' Logos theology, one must first identify a motive for its presence. I contend that Irenaeus is drawn to the title because of its prior use within Valentinianism.[91]

According to Irenaeus' exposition in the first chapters of *Haer.* 1, the Valentinians used "Logos" as a title for two central figures within their convoluted protological drama. First, "Logos" is a title of one of the original 30 Aeons of the divine *Pleroma* or Fullness. Specifically, he is the fourth emanation in order from the First-Father, and as such, he

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Christology of Irenaeus," *JETS* 13.4 (1970): 241-251. Reist denies any philosophical implications of Irenaeus' use of Logos and instead attempts to align his use of Logos with that of Ignatius, which Reist considers more in line with the meaning of Logos in the Fourth Gospel. Reist's efforts to align Irenaeus with Ignatius (as opposed to Justin) in order to display the biblical character of Irenaeus' thought are wholly different than my own. I do not accept the strict dichotomy between a Hebraic and Hellenistic mind that drives these conclusions. As more recent scholarship has noted, the lines between the two ways of thinking were more blurred than this caricature allows. On this point, see Stead, *Philosophy,* 148-151.

[90] I argued in chapter two that Irenaeus understands God as the Fullness in whom dwells the material world; as a result, Irenaeus does not need to affirm a spatial gap between God and the material creation in order to maintain the transcendence of God because he interprets transcendence absolutely as opposed to relationally. In theory, God is free to work in creation apart from a mediator. See above pp. 84-91.

[91] This is Fantino's primary thesis. He finds a Valentinian precedent for Irenaeus' work, not just with Logos theology but also with nearly every aspect of Irenaeus' theology. Most notably, he emphasizes the "Gnostic" understanding of economy. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée,* chapter 3. In general, I am in agreement with Fantino's attempts, although I will disagree with an aspect of his thesis in relation to the Holy Spirit. See below p. 204n100.

stands at an ontological and epistemological distance from the First-Father.[92] Additionally, Logos is an alternate title for the Aeon principally called Savior, the product of all 30 Aeons.[93] In some interpretations, this latter figure, working through the Demiurge, serves as the instrumental cause of an unintended and inherently evil material creation.[94] Irenaeus found both versions of this Logos theology at odds with the traditional use of Logos as handed down from the apostles, most notably its use in the Fourth Gospel. Nonetheless, since the title was part of the apostolic inheritance, Irenaeus does not intend to relinquish it to his opponents anymore than he wants to relinquish the Fourth Gospel. Therefore, Irenaeus employs "Logos" as a christological title, and the concomitant Logos theology, in order to reclaim the title as the rightful property of the Church.

For Irenaeus, as for Justin, the Logos is a mediating agent who works in the world prior to the incarnation in two primary ways, as Creator and as revealer. Texts that attest to the instrumental use of the Logos in the work of creation, or to the Logos as Creator, abound throughout the five books of *Haer.* and *Epid.*, showing the fundamental importance of this pre-incarnational work to the nature of the Logos in Irenaeus' understanding. Irenaeus writes, "[God] formed all things that were made by His Logos that never wearies."[95] Elsewhere he writes, "[W]e should know that he who made and formed and breathed in them the breath of life, and nourishes us by creation, establishing all things by his Logos, and binding them together by his Sophia—this is he who is the

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[92] *Haer.* 1.1.1-2.

[93] *Haer.* 1.2.6.

[94] Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 171-175. Fantino's primary text for this understanding comes not from Irenaeus' report but from a fragment of Heracleon. Nonetheless, aspects of *Haer.* 1 also tend towards this interpretation of the creative work of the "Gnostic" Logos, notably *Haer.* 1.4.5.

[95] *Haer.* 2.2.4, ANF 1:361 with minor revisions.

only true God…"[96] In certain contexts, a statement of the creative work of the Logos occurs in a statement of fundamental Christian belief. For example, in a *regula* statement in *Haer.* 1, Irenaeus writes, "For God needs none of all these things, but is He who, by His Logos and His Spirit, makes, and disposes, and governs all things, and commands all things into existence…"[97] Similarly, he writes in *Haer.* 3, "[T]here is but one God, who made all things by His Logos."[98] Other examples include, "[H]e who from the beginning founded and created them, the Logos" and "For the Creator of the world is truly the Logos" and "God is verbal, therefore he made created things by the Word…"[99] To these examples, others could be added, but these texts, drawn from each of the books of *Haer.* and *Epid.* suffice to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the Logos as Creator theme in Irenaeus' works.

The underlying truth expressed in these texts was witnessed also in the Apologists' Logos theology, namely, God is the Creator proper, but he creates through the medium or agent of the Logos, an action which, subsequently, shows the divine status of the Logos. Furthermore, Irenaeus likewise is adamant that the presence of a divine agent through whom God creates is witnessed in the Scriptures, and he employs many of the same passages as the Apologists in support.[100] Nonetheless, the use of δύναμις language which marked the Apologists' argument in favor of this truth is absent from

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[96] *Haer.* 3.24.2.
[97] *Haer.* 1.22.1, ANF 1:347 with minor revisions.
[98] *Haer.* 3.11.1.
[99] *Haer.* 4.10.2, ANF 1:474, *Haer.* 5.18.3, ANF 1:546, and *Epid.* 5, Behr, 43.
[100] For example, Irenaeus predominantly uses John 1:1-3 (*Haer.* 2.2.5, 3.8.3) and Ps. 33/2:6 (*Haer.* 1.22.1, 3.8.3, *Epid.* 5) both of which Theophilus cited. Irenaeus also has the same interpretation of the ἀρχή in Gen. 1:1 as referring to the Logos that was witnessed in Theophilus' work (*Epid.* 43). See above p. 110n22 for the Jewish background of this interpretation. I will return to the controversial passage of *Epid.* 43 in more detail below p. 160n167.

Irenaeus' argument, and this absence represents a central divergence between the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings of the nature of the Logos.

The reason for the lack of "power" language in Irenaeus' discussion of the Logos' creative work again can be traced to his polemic with the Valentinians. Δύναμις, most often rendered *virtus* by the Latin translator,[101] was a fixture to the vocabulary of Valentinianism, or at least, in the vocabulary Irenaeus uses to describe Valentinian thought. Primarily, "power" language occurs repeatedly in Irenaeus' description of the Valentinian topological understanding of the Divine Fullness. For example, this term in the singular often refers to the First-Father[102] or to one of the Aeons of the Fullness in Valentinian teaching.[103] Used in the plural form, it also refers to the Aeons or to a certain number of Aeons as a whole.[104] The Valentinians may have used the term of the Demiurge. For example, Irenaeus writes, "But they believe that angels, or some power [*Virtus*] separate from God, and who was ignorant of Him, formed the universe."[105] Regardless of whether power language is original to Valentinian vocabulary, this evidence demonstrates that in Irenaeus' mind, δύναμις is linked to Valentinian descriptions of the Aeons.[106]

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[101] Reynders, *Lexique*, 60.

[102] *Haer.* 1.12.4, 1.13.6, 1.15.2, 5, 1.16.3, 1.21.2, 4, 123.3. This is not an exhaustive list (as with ns103 and 104).

[103] *Haer.* 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 1.11.3-4, 1.12.1, 1.14.5, 1.24.4, 2.20.1.

[104] *Haer.* 1.11.1, 1.18.1, 3.16.1. In *Haer.* 1.21.3, this use is evident in the liturgy Irenaeus records of a "Gnostic" induction or baptismal ceremony. He writes, "Others, again, lead them to a place where water is, and baptize them, with the utterance of these words: 'Into the name of the unknown Father of the universe—into truth, the mother of all things—into him who descended onto Jesus—into union, and redemption, and communion with the powers." ANF 1:346. Thomassen notes Irenaeus' prevalent use of δυνάμεις in *Haer.* 1.11.1 to describe the spiritual beings most often called Aeons in *Haer.* 1.1.1-3 as evidence of a distinctive Valentinian tradition in *Haer.* 1.11.1. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 204-205. The observation suggests a real preference for δύναμις language in some Valentinian communities, as opposed to Irenaeus' personal preference for δύναμις as a description of Valentinian doctrine.

[105] *Haer.* 2.11.1, ANF 1:370.

[106] According to Irenaeus' account, the Valentinian use of δύναμις diverges somewhat from the use of δύναμις in the Middle Platonists and the Apologists. As noted above, the latter two groups employed

While not opposed to taking a title or term characteristic of Valentinian theology and rehabilitating it for his own thought, as demonstrated with his use of "Father," "Logos," and as we will see in the next chapter with "Sophia," Irenaeus does not employ the same rehabilitation tactic with δύναμις. Unlike the Apologists, he never describes the Logos as a Power or the Power of God.[107] In contrast, Irenaeus more often associates δύναμις language with entities that are created by God. He writes, "God stands in need of nothing and…He created and made all things by His Logos, while he neither required angels to assist Him in the production of those things which are made, *nor of any power* [*Virtute*] *greatly inferior to Himself…*"[108] Elsewhere, he writes, "It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor anyone else, except the Logos of the Lord, nor any power [*virtus*] remotely distant from the Father of all things."[109] The absence of δύναμις language suggests that it is not in virtue of a lesser divinity that the Logos creates.[110] Possibly, Irenaeus leaves this

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δύναμις as a title, not of the Most High God, but of his agent(s) working in the world. For the Valentinians, δύναμις can apply equally to the Most High God, the First Aeon, or to the lower Aeons working in the world. The prevalence of the term throughout Valentinian theology, whether applied to the Most High God or the lower Aeons, led Irenaeus to reject δύναμις as a useful title for the Logos, despite the tradition of its use as a title for the Logos in the Apologists' works.

[107] In several places, Irenaeus speaks of God having power and of God creating by his power (e.g. *Haer.* 2.10.4, 2.30.9, 4.38.3). These passages could be interpreted as referring to the Logos as the Power of God in a Middle Platonist context, particularly as they show a similar structure to other passages where Irenaeus speaks of God creating by his Logos. Nonetheless, in the passages that refer to God's creative power, Irenaeus avoids linking this power and the entity he has elsewhere called the Logos. Likewise, in passages where he speaks of God creating through the Logos, he does not use the language of power.

[108] *Haer.* 2.2.4, ANF 1:361 italics added. Likewise, in several uses of Ps. 33/2:6, Irenaeus speaks of the Logos (and the Sophia) *creating* the powers, in conformity with the Psalmist's use of the word (*Haer.* 3.8.3; *Epid.* 5).

[109] *Haer.* 4.20.1, ANF 1:487 with minor revisions. Here the language of "remotely distant" invokes the Valentinian understanding of the Aeons as spatially separated from the First-Father, as I described above pp. 31-34 and 85-86. I will focus further on this understanding below.

[110] As Barnes has shown in the context of the fourth century in general, and of Gregory of Nyssa in particular, δύναμις language eventually emerges as the primary means of identifying the oneness of the three divine persons: the Father and Son are one because they have the same power. Barnes, *Power of God*, esp. chapter six. Although Irenaeus does not argue in this manner, he may be moving in this direction with his rejection of language identifying the Logos as the Power of God. Briggman makes the same point regarding the creative agency of the Logos and Spirit in the *regula* statement in *Haer.* 1.22.1. He writes,

divine title to the Valentinians because he is aware of the Middle Platonic (and Apologist) significance of δύναμις and deems it inadequate to describe the nature of the Logos. Another possibility explaining the absence of δύναμις language is that Irenaeus does not find a good scriptural precedence for "Power" as a divine title, as he did for "Father" and for "Logos."[111] Whatever the reason, the lack of δύναμις language suggests that Irenaeus' Logos theology ought not to be interpreted along the same lines as the Middle Platonists' and Apologists' use of Logos, which, as we saw, implied a contrast between God and the Logos and ultimately affirmed the Logos' diminished divinity.

Unfortunately, Irenaeus does not give a good reason or argument (corresponding to the δύναμις argument of the Apologists) as to why God creates, or needs to create, through a mediator. In a sense, he has more of a need to explain the presence of mediators than the Apologists do because, as opposed to the Apologists' spatially distant God who could only work through a lesser, intermediate power, Irenaeus' understanding of God allowed him to affirm that material creation could be in God, as its Fullness, without compromising his transcendence.[112] Thus, the transcendent God in Irenaeus' understanding could create all things without the use of a mediator.

"The logic that enables the reference to the creative agency of the Word and the Spirit to be polemically effective entails the understanding that the Word and the Spirit stand united with the Father—unlike the angels and powers 'which have been separated from his thought.'" Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 62. Nevertheless, Briggman fails to identify the distinction between Irenaeus and his Apologist sources on this count. As I have argued above, the Apologists' logic works in the opposite direction—the Logos' and Spirit's separation from God allows them to be his creative agent.

[111] Although a scriptural precedence indeed exists, namely I Cor. 1:24, Irenaeus never uses this verse in his works. The lack of this verse is significant given that it also calls Christ the "Wisdom of God," a title Irenaeus attributes to the Spirit.

[112] I suspect that this observation of Irenaeus' theology is the reason Lawson leaves Irenaeus' Logos theology unexplored (see above p. 134n89). Conversely, Briggman argues that Irenaeus uses the intermediary figures of the Logos and Sophia in order to limit humanity's knowledge of the essence of God, according to the distinction in the two modes (power and love) of knowing God referred to by Irenaeus in *Haer.* 3.25 and, above all, in 4.20.5. According to Briggman's argument, Irenaeus utilizes a Middle Platonic notion of Logos as instrument. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 140-149. Briggman has no consideration of Irenaeus' understanding of the divine transcendence, which makes this conclusion

Although Irenaeus does not provide a reasoned argument for the presence of an agent in creation, his likely motive for adopting the mediating language is because he finds it in Scripture. For example, he identifies the presence of the mediating Logos as a mark of Paul's theology when he writes, "[T]he apostle [Paul] did, in the first place, instruct the Gentiles…to worship one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Framer of the whole creation; and that His Son was His Logos, by whom he founded all things…"[113] Likewise, he cites John as a scriptural authority to this truth, writing, "For this is a peculiarity of the pre-eminence of God, not to stand in need of other instruments for the creation of those things which are summoned into existence. His own Logos is both suitable and sufficient for the formation of all things, even as John, the disciple of the Lord, declares regarding him: 'All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made.'"[114] Furthermore, the mediation of the Logos in creation is traditional, indicated by its strong presence in the *regula* passages, above all, that of *Epid.* 6. Irenaeus writes, "And this is the order of our faith, the foundation of [the] edifice and the support of [our] conduct: God, the Father, uncreated, uncontainable, invisible, one God, the

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problematic. Additionally, the notion that the Logos and Sophia are limiters or filters of the knowledge of the Father runs counter to Irenaeus' argument of the revelatory functions of both.

[113] *Haer.* 4.24.1, ANF 1:495 with minor revisions.

[114] *Haer.* 2.2.5, ANF 1:361-362 with minor revisions. See also *Haer.* 3.8.3. Irenaeus' only attempt at justification for the apparent contradiction that the God who stands in no need of instrumentality creates through the Logos is his reference to Scripture. Irenaeus' work is replete with passages containing the conflicting ideas that God creates by himself and that he creates through the Logos with, likewise, no explanatory comment. For example, he writes, "[I]f…[God] made all things freely, and by His own power, and arranged and finished them and His will is the substance of all things, then He is discovered to be the one only God who created all things, who alone is Omnipotent, and who is the only Father founding and forming all things, visible and invisible, such as may be perceived by our senses and such as cannot, heavenly and earthly, 'by the Logos of his power'…" *Haer.* 2.30.9, ANF 1:406; and "For the Son, who is the Logos of God, arranged these things beforehand from the beginning, the Father being in no want of angels in order that He might call the creation into being, and form man, for whom also the creation was made; nor again, standing in need of any instrumentality for the framing of created things, or for the ordering of those things which had reference to man…" *Haer.* 4.7.4, ANF 1:470 with minor revisions. The same truth resides in Irenaeus' "hands of God" passages where Irenaeus affirms that God creates by himself, but explains this as a creation with God's two hands the Son and the Spirit (see, for example, *Haer.*4.20.1, 5.28.4).

Creator of all: this is the first article of our faith. And the second article: the Word of God, the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, who was revealed by the prophets according to the character of their prophecy and according to the nature of the economies of the Father, by whom all things were made…"[115] Unlike the Apologists, then, the mediating work of the Logos in creation stems not from a Middle Platonic notion imposed upon Scripture; instead, Irenaeus' source for the language is scriptural. As such, the notion of mediation is not dictated by the use of philosophy, and Irenaeus is free to make the language work for him in other ways. Notably, the logic of the mediation of the Logos in creation does not force Irenaeus to posit a diminished divinity of the Logos/Son in relation to God/Father. In fact, given Irenaeus' understanding of God, his participation in creation suggests the Logos' full and equal divinity with the Father.[116]

The second pre-incarnational function of the Logos in Irenaeus' work is his role as the sole revealer of God/Father. Irenaeus believes that the unique identity of the Second Person as the divine Logos/Son of the Father gives him this ability, both prior to and during the incarnation:

> For no one can know the Father, unless through the Logos of God, that is, unless by the Son revealing [Him]; neither can he have knowledge of the Son, unless through the good pleasure of the Father. But the Son performs the good pleasure of the Father; for the Father sends, and the Son is sent, and comes. And his Logos knows that his Father is, as far as regards us, invisible and infinite; and since he cannot be declared [by any one else], he does himself declare him to us; and on the other hand, it is the Father alone who knows His own Logos. And both these

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[115] *Epid.* 6, Behr, 43.

[116] Cf. *Haer.* 4.11.2: "And in this respect God differs from man, that God indeed makes, but man is made; and truly, He who makes is always the same; but that which is made must receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase." ANF 1:474. On the basis of this passage (and others like them), Fantino interprets the work of the Son (and the Spirit) in creation as proof of their uncreated natures. Likewise, Steenberg writes, "[Irenaeus] is happy to allow that there should be multiple 'who's' involved in the process of creation, but there is no option but for these 'who's' to somehow be God himself." Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 72.

> truths our Lord has declared. Wherefore the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation.[117]

As the manifestation of the Father, elsewhere the Logos/Son is called the "knowledge of the Father,"[118] the "measure of the Father"[119] "the comprehensible" and "the visible" of an "incomprehensible" and "invisible" Father,[120] and the one who "did show the Father's brightness."[121] In each case, the justification of the unique revelatory role of the Logos/Son is his unique relationship to God/Father that allows those who look at the Logos/Son to see and know God/Father.[122]

I noted in chapter two that the logic of this unique relationship is provided by Father/Son language.[123] Irenaeus' understanding of "Father" indicates not the creative function of God, but that he has a unique relationship with the Son. In this context, Irenaeus adds Logos imagery to certain interpretations of Scripture passages that invoke only Father-Son language. He adds such imagery in order to emphasize the continuity of the revealing work of the pre-incarnational Logos and those actions performed by (or rather manifested in) the incarnate Son of God. For example, he writes, "For the Son is the knowledge of the Father; but the knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and has been revealed through the Son; and this was the reason why the Lord declared: 'No man knows the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomever the

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[117] *Haer.* 4.6.3, ANF 1:468 with minor revisions.
[118] *Haer.* 4.6.7
[119] *Haer.* 4.4.2
[120] *Haer.* 3.11.5.
[121] *Haer.* 4.20.11.
[122] I will describe in more detail below the nature of this relationship as a reciprocal immanence, both the Father and the Son mutually and fully interpenetrating one another (see below pp. 162-165). This mutual interpenetration provides the logic that supports Irenaeus' contention that when humans look upon the Logos/Son, they see God/Father. While Irenaeus often speaks of this reciprocal immanent relationship in terms of Father/Son language, the image works because of Irenaeus' Logos theology—the Father and Son can mutually interpenetrate one another because both have a Logos and a spiritual nature.
[123] See above pp. 80-84.

Son shall reveal [Him].' For 'shall reveal' was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Logos had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time."[124] Additionally, Logos theology is better able to support Irenaeus' contention that the Second Person has full knowledge of the First Person, a truth that Father-Son language does not immediately suggest.

As a result of the continuity Irenaeus discerns between Logos and Son (and the corresponding stages of the economy), he often is vague regarding the time period of the economy to which he refers when addressing the revelatory function of the Second Person. Nevertheless, the Logos' pre-incarnational revelatory work can be identified clearly in those passages that refer to the manifestation of the Logos in the theophanic passages of the Jewish Scriptures. He writes, "And the Logos of God Himself used to converse with the ante-Mosaic patriarchs, in accordance with His divinity and glory…"[125] Likewise, in the *Epid*, he states, "[it is not] this One [God the Father] who, standing in a very small space, talked with Abraham, but the Logos of God, who was always with mankind and who foretold the things of the future, which were to come to pass, and taught men things of God."[126] These passages reveal that, like Justin, Irenaeus

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[124] *Haer.* 4.6.7, ANF 1:469 with minor revisions. The scriptural quotation here is from Matt. 11:27, which his opponents used to show that the Son brought knowledge of an utterly new and heretofore unknown God. See Aeby, *Missions Divines*, 45-47. In response, Irenaeus equates the Son with the pre-incarnate Logos to emphasize that the same God is being revealed. Elsewhere, he writes, "Therefore the Son of the Father declares [Him] from the beginning, inasmuch as he was with the Father from the beginning…the Logos [did] become the dispenser of paternal grace for the benefit of men." *Haer.* 4.20.7, ANF 1:489 with minor revisions. At other times, he can drop the Logos language altogether, even when referring to the Second Person in his pre-incarnate state: "[A]ll who have known God from the beginning, and have foretold the advent of Christ, have received the revelation from the Son Himself." *Haer.* 4.7.2, ANF 1:470. Unlike the creative function, then, the revelatory work of the Logos traverses both the pre-incarnational and the incarnational work of the Second Person, although, per the limits of the present chapter, I will focus the majority of my inquiry on the former.

[125] *Haer.* 3.11.8, ANF 1:428-429 with minor revisions.

[126] *Epid.* 45, Behr 70.

understands the subject of the theophanies as the Logos, and the theophanies, like the words of the prophets, as works of revelation.

As noted in the first chapter, Justin influenced Irenaeus' interpretation of the theophanic passages, namely the identification of the Logos as the entity who is seen or present on earth.[127] Nonetheless, the significance that Irenaeus attaches to the presence of the Logos and the motivations for finding the Logos, as opposed to the Father, in these passages is distinct from Justin's interpretation. Whereas for Justin, the presence of the Logos in the theophanies was the physical presence of a separated, lesser divine power, for Irenaeus, these visions are not the physical presence of the Logos, but are *prophetic* and as such, by his own definition, non bodily.[128] Accordingly, they foretell of the coming reality of a physical manifestation of the Logos, but they are not a physical reality in and of themselves. Passages where Irenaeus indicates the manner in which Old Testament figures, primarily the prophets, "see" God infer this interpretation. For example, Irenaeus writes, "[T]he prophets, receiving the prophetic gift from the same Logos, announced his advent according to the flesh…foretelling from the beginning that God should be seen by men, and hold converse with them upon earth, should confer with them, and should be present with his own creation…"[129] Irenaeus here emphasizes the future aspect of this physical appearance. If this physical manifestation occurs in the future, then the visions recorded in the Old Testament are qualitatively different than the visions of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament. Irenaeus writes, "The prophets,

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[127] In addition to the passages already cited, see *Haer.* 4.5.2-5, 4.4.7, 4.9.1, 4.20.9, and *Epid.* 44-46 for examples of Irenaeus' interpretation of the theophanies. On the influence of Justin's interpretation on Irenaeus, see above p. 24.

[128] Irenaeus offers his programmatic definition of prophecy in this context when he writes, "For prophecy is a prediction of things future, that is, a setting forth beforehand of those things which shall be afterwards." *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489.

[129] *Haer.* 4.20.4, ANF 1:488.

therefore, did not openly behold the face of God, but [they saw] the dispensations and the mysteries through which man should afterwards see God."[130] In other words, God is only physically seen when the Logos is made flesh.

The link from these prophetic passages to the theophanic texts is the figure of Moses who in *Epid.* 46 is said to have spoken with the Logos, a vision which Irenaeus interprets according to the episode in Exodus 33:20-22 in which God permits Moses only to see a part of his glory because "no man sees my face and shall live."[131] Irenaeus then contrasts Moses' prophetic vision in the Exodus account with the physical vision of the incarnate Christ given to the disciples on Mt. Tabor and recorded in the gospels. Irenaeus chooses the account of the Transfiguration as a contrast not because of the radiance/glory shown through Jesus—for Irenaeus emphasizes everywhere that the Logos manifests God in his plain humanity—but because the presence of Moses with Jesus on Mt. Tabor underscores the contrast between the *kind* of seeing that occurs before and after the incarnation. Moses "sees" God in both accounts; nevertheless, only in the second account was a physical manifestation of the Logos involved. Irenaeus writes of the vision on Mt. Tabor that Moses conferred "with [Jesus] face to face on the top of a mountain, Elias being also present, as the Gospel relates, [God] thus making good in the end the ancient promise."[132] The physical presence of the incarnate Logos/Son on Mt. Tabor (and in the whole of the incarnation) fulfills the promise of the prophetic vision that God will one

[130] *Haer.* 4.20.10, ANF 1:490. In another place, Irenaeus likens the visions of the Old Testament to the heralds of a coming king. He writes, "For the advent of the King is previously announced by those servants who are sent [before Him], in order to the preparation and equipment of those men who are to entertain their Lord." *Haer.* 4.34.1, ANF 1:511.

[131] Exod. 23:22 as quoted in *Haer.* 4.20.9.

[132] *Haer.* 4.20.9, ANF 1:490.

day be seen. Thus, continuity exists between the two visions, against the Valentinians and the Marcionites, but they are not identical.

Elsewhere, Irenaeus highlights the partialness of the theophanic visions by emphasizing their literary character. Accordingly, he alters the notion of the *Spermatikos Logos* he found in Justin's work.[133] He writes, "[I]mplanted [*inseminatus est*] everywhere in his Scriptures is the Son of God, one time, indeed, speaking with Abraham, another time with Noah while giving him the measurements, another time while asking after Adam, another time while inducing judgment on Sodom, and again when he is seen [*cum videtur*] and directs Jacob on the journey, and speaks with Moses from the bush."[134] Unlike Justin's understanding, Irenaeus does not believe the Logos has been implanted as partial seeds in human beings any more than he has been seen physically in the theophanic accounts.[135] By contrast, Irenaeus claims that the location of the implanting of the Logos is neither history nor humanity, but Scripture. Insofar as Christ is "seen" in his fullness prior to the incarnation, he is "seen" in the Scripture that testifies about him.

Irenaeus' language suggests that the Old Testament patriarchs did see something in the theophanic/prophetic manifestations of the Logos. In the previous example, Irenaeus does not negate Scripture's account that Moses "saw" the backside of God in the Exodus account. Nevertheless, the content of the vision differs between

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[133] For Justin's doctrine of the *Spermatikos Logos,* see above p. 118n50.

[134] *Haer.* 4.10.1. The ANF translates *cum videtur* as "when he becomes visible," which implies a distinction between the final two appearances and the first four appearances in which he merely speaks (and presumably only is heard). Irenaeus notes no distinction but finds in all of these examples places where the Logos is witnessed or "seen" in the text.

[135] Edwards' interpretation of Justin's *Spermatikos Logos* suggests that Justin's understanding of the theophanies were non-physical, tied as they are to the written word of God. Nevertheless, Justin never qualifies his understanding of the theophanies directly with a reference to the Logos in Scripture as Irenaeus has done here. This contrast between the two figures' understandings of an implanted Logos is indicative of the difference between their interpretations of the theophanies. Behr notes the contrast between Justin and Irenaeus on this count, but in an apparent misinterpretation of Edwards' article, Behr claims Edwards as a source for his understanding of Justin's *Spermatikos Logos* as a physical appearing or implanting. Behr, "Irenaeus on the Word of God," in *SP* 36 (Peeters: Leuven, 2001), 163-167.

theophanic/prophetic visions and incarnational visions. The Logos is "seen" in both instances, but in the former, the Logos is not seen in his humanity. In *Haer.* 5, Irenaeus clarifies his understanding of the object seen in the theophanic/prophetic visions by likening them to the "docetist" christologies of his opponents:

> Vain indeed are those who allege that [Christ] appeared [in the incarnation] in mere seeming. For these things [the actions of the incarnate Christ] were done not in appearance only, but in actual reality…But I have already remarked that Abraham and the other prophets beheld him after a prophetical manner, foretelling in vision what should come to pass. If, then, such a being has now appeared in outward semblance different from what he was in reality [as docetic christologies hold], *there has been a certain prophetical vision made to men*; and another advent of His must be looked forward to…[136]

In other words, if the spiritual Christ truly did not assume flesh, but only "appeared human," then humans living at the time of Jesus Christ "saw" him in the same manner in which the prophets "saw" him, which is to say, not physically or in reality. This comparison suggests that Irenaeus understands a theophanic/prophetic vision as a sight of something perceived to be "out there" but which in fact is not. That which is "seen" is a mental or spiritual vision as if it were sensible, but in reality it is an interior vision through the eyes of the mind.

Conversely, according to Irenaeus' understanding, the incarnation marks the foretold time when the Logos would fully and physically appear in reality. In the incarnation, the Logos fully assumed flesh such that humans can see God in reality, that is physically, for the first time. Irenaeus writes, "What then did the Lord bring us by His

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[136] *Haer.* 5.1.2, ANF 1:527, italics added. Barnes offers a similar interpretation of the type of "seeing" of Christ prior to the incarnation, although the difference in the quality of seeing is muted insofar as Barnes emphasizes the unity of the *materiality* of the visions. He writes, "God can be known only through sensibles, which range from the created cosmos to his actions in history to his imperfect image (man), and, finally, to his perfect Image, the Word in flesh." Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 89. The emphasis on the materiality of the visions is noteworthy and certainly "Irenaean," but Barnes fails to note the degree to which Irenaeus qualifies the materiality of the pre-incarnational visions with Irenaeus' understanding of the nature of prophecy and his comparison of these visions to the docetic christologies of his opponents.

advent? He brought all possible novelty, by bringing Himself who had been announced."[137] For Irenaeus, despite the continuity of the economy through the Old and New Testaments, the incarnation marks an unprecedented revelatory event.

This argument regarding the nature of the pre-incarnational visions of the Logos as merely prophetical exists elsewhere. Nonetheless, the implication of such an interpretation for the nature of the Logos/Son in a Trinitarian scheme often remains unobserved. Irenaeus' argument that the Logos remained unseen prior to the incarnation eliminates the logic resulting in a diminished divinity of the Logos/Son at work in the Apologists' writings, in particular Justin's interpretation of the theophany passages. In Irenaeus' understanding, the Logos did not appear on earth because he could be contained and the Father could not be contained. In fact, the Logos, like the Father, is invisible by nature. Irenaeus writes, "[God's] Logos, invisible by nature, was made palpable and visible among men…"[138] The Logos is the subject of the theophanies because he is the

[137] *Haer.* 4.34.1, ANF 1:511. The interpretation of Irenaeus' understanding of the pre-incarnational appearances of the Logos is an open question in scholarship. My position has been argued by Aeby, *Missions Divines,* 44-49, Behr, *The Way to Nicaea,* 114-120, Houssiau, *Christologie,* 80-104, and Tremblay, *Manifestation,* 71-76. Conversely, Orbe states that the appearances of the Son in the Old Testament are not qualitatively different from the appearance in the incarnation. The sameness of the appearances, he says, is Irenaeus' primary means of uniting the Old and New Testaments. According to Orbe, the interpretation of these appearances as prophetic does not account for the anti-Valentinian and anti-Marcionite polemic in which Irenaeus' discussion of the theophanic appearances are located because the Valentinians and Marcionites believed that the Son did not appear until the New Testament. Therefore, the force of Irenaeus' argument for the continuity of the Testaments, Orbe says, depends on the literal appearance of the Logos/Son in the Old Testament. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 657-658. Orbe's argument works only on the level of theory and fails to address the actual texts. Although Orbe makes a strong argument, the multitude of texts I cite above support a prophetic understanding of the pre-incarnational visions, as opposed to a physical vision. Finally, besides the numerous texts for which he cannot account, Orbe's interpretation presents several difficulties. First, he has no way of showing the newness of the incarnation in Irenaeus' scheme. Without a qualitative difference in the appearances of the Logos before and after the human birth, the incarnation cannot be the special, unique revelation that Irenaeus everywhere emphasizes. (This problem drives Houssiau's interpretation.) Second, Orbe's interpretation forces an ontological subordination understanding of the relationship between Father and Son that mirrors what I found in the Apologists' work—the Logos/Son is able to be seen because of his diminished divinity. I will argue that such a position does not fit with Irenaeus' understanding of the nature of the Logos in the next section.

[138] *Haer.* 4.24.2, ANF 1:495 with minor revisions. See also 3.29.2, 5.16.2, and 5.18.3.

same subject who is incarnated in Jesus Christ and continues the work of revelation that started in the beginning. This interest in the continuity of the Logos/Son working as the revealer of God/Father in all parts of the economy leads Irenaeus to affirm the Logos as the subject of the Old Testament theophanies, even though his reading of Justin's work may have suggested this affirmation.

2.2 The Generation of the Logos

Absent from Irenaeus' works is any explanatory passage or straightforward account of the generation of the Logos in the manner witnessed in the Apologists' works. The reason for such an absence seems clear: Irenaeus believed that Scripture was silent regarding the generation of the Logos. As a result, such consideration was beyond the scope of proper theological inquiry. He writes, "If any one, therefore, says to us: 'How then was the Son produced by the Father?' we reply to him, that no man understands that production or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable."[139] Accordingly, unlike the Apologists Irenaeus does not discuss the generation in order to explain the contradiction of the belief in one God and the belief in a second and distinct divine figure in the Logos, although this difficulty proved as acute for Irenaeus. Apparently, he leaves this difficulty, along with the generation, a mystery. The Scriptures only say, "'Who shall describe his

[139] *Haer.* 2.28.6, ANF 1:401. "*Si quis itaque nobis dixerit: Quomodo ergo Filius prolatus a Patre est? dicimus ei quia prolationem istam, siue generationem, siue nuncupationem, siue adapertionem, aut quolibet quis nomine vocaverit generationem eius inenarrabilem exsistentem, nemo novit…*" I provide the Latin to show that Irenaeus includes a catalogue of the language that his opponents have used to describe the generation of the Logos—*prolatio, generation, nuncupatio, adapertio*—rejecting all of them as inadequate. As we will see below, in his few allusions to the generation, he remains true to this statement by avoiding these descriptors, commonplace in Valentinian theology.

generation?'"[140] For Irenaeus, the Valentinians represent prime examples of the folly of probing such mysteries. I have touched briefly upon the Valentinian protology myth, which entailed the belief in a divine Fullness comprised of a set of 30 Aeons.[141] A short review will be helpful.

The Valentinians believed that the Aeons were emanations or productions from successive Aeon pairs ultimately stemming from the First Aeon, the First-Father. This theory of emission or emanation (προβολή) implied the separation that supports this system, since each Aeon emanated or physically separated out of the Aeon pair preceding it in time and space from the Father,[142] thereby resulting in significant spatial and epistemological distance between the Aeons one to another and between each of the Aeons and the First-Father, and a corresponding lessening of the ontological quality of divinity.[143]

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[140] Isaiah 53:8 as quoted in *Haer.* 2.28.5. Irenaeus often contrasts the birth of Jesus from Mary with the Logos' generation from the Father, a generation, he says, which cannot be declared. See *Haer.* 4.33.11.

[141] See above pp. 31-34.

[142] See above p. 33. In the previous chapter I noted how this theory of emanation resulted in a compound Godhead—the entire Fullness constituted the divine nature for the Valentinians. I also noted how this theory provides the basis of the epistemological distance between the Aeons—the farther away the Aeon from the Most High Father, the less ability it possessed to contemplate his vastness. This privilege of contemplation is given only to the first production, namely the Mind, as a result of his physical proximity to the Most High Father. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the last emanation, who stands the farthest spatially and epistemologically from the Most High God, caused the mistake of creation.

[143] *Haer.* 1.1.1, 2.1.4. Barnes statement, quoted above, is worth repeating: "This 'interval' is, in radical dualist theology, the ontological basis (or expression of) the inferiority of each succeeding rank of super-celestial offspring: each degree of separation from the first cause produces offspring of a diminished content and dignity compared to its antecedents." Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 76. Thomassen underscores the gradual degrading of the divinity of the successive Aeons through noting that the second Aeon in each pair is the "weaker" member or the "female." He writes, "In all pairs, however, the second member is the weaker, 'female,' one, representing by itself the division of duality, and the unity of the pair is implicitly conceived of as the unification of the second member with the first, rather than as a union of two equal partners." Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed,* 198. Moreover, the grouping of 12 Aeons (or the Duodecad) produced by the union of Man/Church represents an imperfect number reflecting the less than perfect natures of their generating Aeons (particularly as compared to the First-Father). *Haer.* 1.1.1. See Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed,* 199.

From this protological myth, Irenaeus correctly discerned that the Valentinians based their theory of the process of emanation on the human noetic process, an analogy provided them by the various names of the Aeons (νοῦς, λόγος, σοφία and the like). Irenaeus writes, "[T]hey conceive of an emission of Logos, that is, the Word after the analogy of human feelings, and rashly form conjectures respecting God, as if they had discovered something wonderful in their assertion that Logos was produced by Nous."[144] Thus, according to Irenaeus' understanding, the Valentinians taught that the Aeons emanated from the Most High God according to the logical sequence of that human noetic process: one thinks a word prior to speaking it, and the action of utterance constitutes that word's separate beginning from the speaker.[145] In this respect, the emanation order of the Aeons is crucial. Nous (mind) is the first emanation from the unknown Father and his Thought. Subsequently, Logos and its partner Zoe (Word and Life) and Anthropos (Man) and its partner Ecclesia (Church) emanate from Mind and its partner Truth.[146] All of reality flows from these eight fundamental components. Mind precedes all emanated and created reality in the same way that thinking precedes all other

[144] *Haer.* 2.13.8, ANF 1:375.

[145] Irenaeus writes, "These things [noetic processes] may properly be said to hold good in men, since they are compound by nature and consist of a body and a soul. But those who affirm that Ennoea [Thought] was sent forth from God, and Nous [Mind] from Ennoea, and then, in succession, Logos from these, are, in the first place, to be blamed as having improperly used these productions; and, in the next place, as describing these affections, and passions, and mental tendencies of men (*hominum adfectiones et passions et intentiones mentis*), while they [thus prove themselves] ignorant of God. By their manner of speaking, they ascribe those things which apply to men to the Father of all…" *Haer.* 2.13.3, ANF 1:373-374.

[146] *Haer.* 1.1.1. According to Irenaeus, this system is the Ptolemaic expression of Valentinianism. Although other Valentinian systems follow a different logic, the connection to the human noetic analogy remains constant. The noetic analogy is most clear in the doctrine of the followers of Colorbasus. Irenaeus writes of their doctrine, "When the First-Father conceived the thought of producing something, he received the name of *Father.* But because what he did produce was *true,* it was named Aletheia. Again, when he wished to reveal himself, this was termed Anthropos. Finally, when he produced those whom he had previously thought of, these were named Ecclesia. *Anthropos, by speaking, formed Logos: this is the first-born son." Haer.* 1.12.3, ANF 1:333, italics added.

human processes in the human analogy.[147] Irenaeus believed the Valentinians' principle error involved this detailed description of emanation. Thus, Irenaeus' thoughts regarding the generation of the Logos result from his rejection of the Valentinian emanation theory. This polemic provides the necessary starting point for the present inquiry.[148]

Irenaeus' entire polemic rests upon a categorical rejection of the human noetic or speech analogy as useful in understanding the generation of eternal beings.[149] He rejects the analogy for several reasons. First, it implies a beginning or starting point to the existence of the emitted being. If the Logos comes forth from Mind in the same way that an uttered word comes forth from a previous thought, then the Logos is necessarily later in time than the Mind. This formula is contradictory to the divine nature, which has no such variance according to time. Irenaeus writes, "But in Him who is God over all, since

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[147] *Haer.* 1.1.1. I am making a similar point to that of Barnes, although he inverts the "Gnostic" order by placing Life before Thought (he writes, "for what is lifeless cannot think") to make his point. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 82. The Valentinians do not follow this logic; rather, Irenaeus asserts this fact of the relation between mind and life in his polemic against the Valentinians' faulty logic in *Haer.* 2.13.9. Nevertheless, Barnes' primary point that the "Gnostic" theory of emanation follows the logic of the human noetic process still stands and I am indebted to his observation.

[148] By not commenting extensively on the generation of the Logos in Irenaeus' theology, Barnes accurately reflects the lack of texts in the Irenaean corpus addressing the topic. Nonetheless, the information he gleans emerges from the same methodology used here. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 81-85. See also Lebreton, *Histoire*, 2:551ff. Conversely, Orbe severs the polemic of *Haer.* 2 from any positive notion of the generation in Irenaeus. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo*, 640ff. Despite a helpful discussion of that polemic, particularly concerning the possibility of a consubstantiality of the Father and Son in Irenaeus' thought, Orbe refuses to draw these inferences and instead takes Irenaeus at his word that he does not consider the generation of the Logos. Orbe's position is difficult to maintain. The presence of such a detailed critique of a theory of emanation necessitates, in my mind, some base positive understanding from which the alternate understanding can deviate. Likewise, Rousseau draws inferences from the polemic for Irenaeus' positive understanding of the relationship between the Father and Son. In commenting on Irenaeus' critique of the Valentinian theory of emanation that creates a compound divine being (*Haer.* 2.13.8), Rousseau writes, "One cannot conclude, as has sometimes been done, that Irenaeus is unaware here of the distinction of God and of his Word, of the Father who begets and of the Son who is begotten—how could Irenaeus forget a distinction that he discovers from one end to the other in the Scripture, as we will see by the following Books?—, but what Irenaeus suggests implicitly in the present paragraph, is that the distinction of God and of his Word ought to be such that it introduces no composition in the infinitely simple divine reality." Rousseau, *SC* 293:250-251. My discussion of Irenaeus' understanding of the distinction between Father and Son works within the boundaries set by Irenaeus' polemic and here identified and aptly articulated by Rousseau.

[149] For Irenaeus' rejection of the use of human analogy, apart from Scripture, as related to the strict distinction between the Creator and the created, see above p. 89n90.

He is all Nous, and all Logos, as I have said before, and *has in Himself nothing more ancient or later than another,* and nothing at variance with another, but continues altogether equal, and similar, and homogenous, there is no longer any ground for conceiving of such production…"[150] The implications of this analogy for a Christian understanding of the generation of the Logos are evident. Irenaeus writes, "[T]hose who transfer the generation of the word to which men give utterance to the eternal [*aeternus*] Logos of God [assign] a beginning and course of production [to Him], even as they do their own word."[151] Irenaeus, then, does not understand the generation of the Logos as a beginning of the divine Logos. Irenaeus' poignant use of the adjective *aeternus* to describe the Logos and to distinguish him from the Valentinian Aeon of the same name underscores this truth.

Irenaeus returns to the Valentinian human noetic or speech analogy in the later summary chapters of *Haer.* 2 to draw out a second difficulty implied in the human speech analogy, namely, its implications for the nature of the Logos contradicts the understanding of God as a simple being. As noted in chapter two, simplicity is fundamental to Irenaeus' understanding of the divine nature:[152]

> [You Valentinians] reserve nothing for God, but you wish to proclaim the nativity and production both of God Himself, of His Thought, of His Logos, and Life, and

[150] *Haer.* 2.13.8, ANF 1:375, italics added. Orbe claims that one cannot find in this passage an argument for the eternal nature of the Logos/Son because Irenaeus is only rejecting the anthropomorphism implied in comparing the divine Logos to the human word. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 122-123. I grant that Irenaeus is concerned with the anthropomorphism, but Orbe's interpretation implies that Irenaeus is concerned with the anthropomorphism on principle, that is, because anthropomorphisms are unworthy of the divine nature. However, the context of this passage shows that this is not an argument against anthropomorphisms in general but against the specific anthropomorphism that compares the generation of divine beings to the utterance of human words. Therefore, Irenaeus' critique cannot be removed from its connection to his polemic against the Valentinian theory of emanation, as Orbe's interpretation necessarily does. Here, as Irenaeus makes explicit a few lines later, he is concerned that this specific anthropomorphism results in a starting point to the divine Logos. Only if Irenaeus understands the Logos/Son as eternal does his stated reason for rejecting the noetic analogy make sense.

[151] *Haer.* 2.13.8, ANF 1:375 with minor revisions.

[152] For a discussion of Irenaeus' understanding of God's simple nature, see above pp. 93-95.

> Christ; and you form the idea of these from no other than a mere human experience; not understanding, as I said before, that it is possible, in the case of man, *who is a compound being*, to speak in this way of the mind of man and the thought of man…But since God is all mind, all reason, all active spirit, all light, and *always exists one and the same*, as it is both beneficial for us to think of God, and as we learn from the Scriptures, such feelings and divisions [of operations] cannot fittingly be ascribed to Him.[153]

In other words, assigning these noetic processes to God in effect partitions God's essence into so many different parts such that he is rendered compound—one part is Logos, one part is Mind, and the like. In contrast, God as a simple being means that his Mind is not one thing and his Logos another; instead, each of these describe the simple nature of God in its entirety. Irenaeus writes, "But God being all Mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself."[154] For Irenaeus, the generation cannot be conceived of as a division of the nature of God into parts, one assigned God and one assigned Logos.

Related to this second critique is a third not connected directly with the human noetic analogy. Instead, this third critique relates to the "topological theology" of the Valentinians. For Irenaeus, the generation cannot be understood as a literal separation of the Logos out of God—"a coming out from"—because this idea assumes a spatial understanding of the divine nature. God's nature, according to this interpretation, would be understood as both containing space in which the different divine components stand at a distance from one another and as located in a specific place out from which these components can come. Such a conception ultimately denies the spiritual nature of God

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[153] *Haer.* 2.28.4, ANF 1:400 with minor revisions, italics added.
[154] *Haer.* 2.28.5, ANF 1:400.

and the understanding of the divine Fullness as encompassing all things.[155] Irenaeus writes, "But if they affirm that intelligence was sent forth from intelligence, they then break apart [*praecidere*] the intelligence of God, and divide it into parts [*partire*]. And where has it gone? From where was it sent forth?"[156] In the same critique, Irenaeus briefly offers his alternate understanding of the result of generation understood according to a simple divine nature. Irenaeus writes, "Moreover, this emission [the Nous], as well as the Logos who is [emitted] from him will still be inside the Father, and similarly the rest of the Aeons [emitted] from the Logos."[157] As spiritual beings, all Aeons should remain in one another, despite the fact that Nous has its source in Father, Logos in Nous, and the like. Only if these beings are not separated by space can the divine nature remain simple.

Irenaeus insists that the divine nature topologically understood is ultimately equivalent to a compound nature. He writes, "For if [God] produced intelligence, then He who did thus produce intelligence, must be understood, in accordance with their views, as a compound and corporeal Being; so that God, who sent forth [the intelligence referred to], is separate from it, and the intelligence which was sent forth separate [from Him]."[158] This connection comes through specifically in Irenaeus' rejection of another human analogy for emanation, namely that which relates it to human birth. He writes, "[A]ccording to this principle, each one of [the Aeons] must be understood as being completely separated from every other, even as men are not mixed or united one to the other, but each having a distinct shape of his own, and a definite sphere of action, while each of them, too, is formed of a particular size—*qualities characteristic of a body and*

[155] As I noted in the introduction and again in chapter two, Barnes' identification of the fundamental concept of spirit to understanding Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology cannot be overstated.
[156] *Haer.* 2.13.5, ANF 1:374 with minor revisions.
[157] *Haer.* 2.13.5.
[158] *Haer.* 2.13.5, ANF 1:374.

not a spirit."[159] These human analogies will not work, as this specific example makes clear, because they deny the spiritual nature of the divine.

Before turning to Irenaeus' own understanding, it is worthwhile to pause here and note the striking similarities between the Valentinian theory of emanation and the two-stage Logos theology of the Apologists. First, both rely on an analogy to human psychology in order to explain the process of generation. This analogy is operative in the Apologists' thought in the form of the interior/exterior distinction implied in Justin's analogy of the generation to human speech[160] and fully expressed in Theophilus' λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός distinction. As a result, both the Valentinians and the Apologists conclude that the separate existence of the Aeon or Logos has a beginning point and is not an eternally distinct, or personal, being.[161] Second, both Valentinian emanation theory and two-stage Logos theology rest upon a spatial understanding of

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[159] *Haer*. 2.17.3, ANF 1:381 italics added. This passage occurs in the context of an extended discussion of three specific theories of emanation, typified by the examples (1) rays from the sun or light from light, (2) humans from other humans, and (3) branches from a tree. Nonetheless, such discussion proves of secondary interest for the present chapter since my earlier arguments establish the logic by which Irenaeus rejects all three theories as inconsistent with Valentinian theory. In principle, Irenaeus categorically eliminates all uses of such human analogies in his rejection of the human speech analogy, for there he noted, above all, the inability of compound humans to approximate a simple God. The discussion of the three theories at all is indicative of the exhaustive detail to which Irenaeus is accustomed: although he rejects all human analogies of emanation in principle, he systematically shows how any possible theory is still inconsistent with the Valentinian system. Nevertheless, of the three theories, as Orbe has noted, Irenaeus does not reject specifically the "light from light" analogy so much as he finds it inconsistent with Valentinian thought. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 651. As such, this theory highlights his views on the generation. As a result, I will return to this analogy in more detail. See below p. 167n184.

[160] Justin expressed reservations in the implications of the human analogy as well. Nonetheless, his reservations do not correspond to Irenaeus' reasons for rejecting it. Justin was concerned that the analogy did not distinguish adequately between God and the Logos. Irenaeus shows no concern for this problem, which indicates that Irenaeus' opponents indeed believed that the Aeons were distinct beings and were separated one from another, for Irenaeus, unlike Justin, does not have to argue for the distinction. What concerns Irenaeus is the implication that, by this analogy, the Logos has a starting point or, in other words, that he is not eternal.

[161] Two-stage Logos theology differs from the Valentinian theory of emanation regarding a stage of interior existence prior to the emanation or generation. Whereas the Apologists did emphasize an eternal aspect of the Logos through its eternal existence as an impersonal power interior to God, Irenaeus does not indicate that the Valentinians were concerned to show the eternal existence of any Aeon but the Most High God.

divinity: generation is understood as a literal and physical separation of the generated being out of the one who generates. These similarities rendered two-stage Logos theology useless for Irenaeus in his polemic because Valentinian theology exposed its difficulties by carrying two-stage Logos theology's spatial implications to their logical end. Therefore, Irenaeus was forced to forge a new path of understanding the relationship of God and his Logos, specifically in relation to the generation.[162]

The critiques Irenaeus levels on the Valentinian theory of emanation (and, by proxy, two-stage Logos theology) provide two insights into Irenaeus' understanding of the generation of the Logos from God. First, for Irenaeus, unlike the Valentinians and Apologists, the generation of the Logos from God does not involve an element of time. Specifically, the Logos' generation does not equate to a starting point to his separate, personal existence. Irenaeus never speaks of the generation as a beginning of the Logos, nor does he ever imply that the Logos has a beginning even if only a beginning as an entity separate from the Father.[163] Rather, he consistently refers to the Logos/Son as

[162] Irenaeus' move from a two-stage to a single stage understanding of the existence of the Logos has been recognized in past scholarship, notably Harnack, *History of Dogma* 2:303-304, Prestige, *Patristic Thought,* 124-125, 127-128 and Wolfson, *Philosophy,* 198-201, but not always with the result of identifying an eternal existence of the Logos. Conversely, Orbe vacillates on the question. He claims several times that Irenaeus rejects the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός distinction (e.g. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 123) upon which two-stage Logos theology is based. Nevertheless, Orbe's understanding of the nature of the Second Person leads him ultimately to conclude that Irenaeus sides with the Apologists in the distinction and, as far as I can tell, he never reconciles the two claims. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 137. Stead argues that the movement away from the analogy that likens the Logos' generation to the contrasting unspoken and spoken word is a significant development in the Christian understanding of the Trinity, but fails to mention Irenaeus' name in connection with the development; he has Origen in mind. Stead, *Philosophy,* 156. Barnes sees Irenaeus' rejection of two-stage Logos theology as a significant aspect of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 76, 86-87.

[163] Orbe argues that the existence of the Logos/Son is not eternal, but only begins "before time." Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* esp. 117-128. He, again, employs a questionable method to reach his conclusion as he does not bring forward any Irenaean texts to support his position. Instead, he addresses the numerous texts that seem to support an eternal existence of the Logos, texts which I will adduce momentarily, in order to show how they *could* be interpreted as only supporting an existence that begins "before time." In the process, he inadvertently demonstrates the lack of Irenaean texts that would directly support a temporal starting point of the Logos. The lone text Orbe refers to in order to positively show the

being present always with the Father. Irenaeus makes several statements to this end. He writes, "It has been shown that the Logos, who existed in the beginning with God…"[164] Further, "And again [Moses] says, 'Blessed is He who was before He became man,' since, for God, the Son is [in] the beginning before the creation of the world…"[165] Perhaps clearest of all, he states, "But the Son, who *always coexisted* with the Father, formerly and from the beginning always revealed the Father to angels and archangels and powers and virtues and all who God willed to be revealed."[166] Such statements imply that the Logos existed eternally with God/Father prior to the creation of the world, a positive

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non-eternal existence of the Logos/Son is *Epid.* 43. For my alternate interpretation of the passage, see below p. 160n167.

[164] *Haer.* 3.18.1.

[165] *Epid.* 43, Behr, 68. Irenaeus mistakenly attributes this phrase to Moses, although it never appears in the Pentateuch. See Behr, *On the Apostolic Preaching,* 110n123 for a discussion regarding the original location of this quotation. Cf. Robinson, *Demonstration,* 101ff. Irenaeus frequently uses this language of the Logos/Son as present with God/Father "from" or "in the beginning" (*in principio, in initio,* ἐν ἀϱχῇ). This "beginning" in reference to the Logos/Son does not mark a starting point as such; rather, it represents a shorthand way of referring to the existence of the Logos prior to the creation of the world. Irenaeus never says the Logos/Son "has a beginning," as he does with created things, but only that he is with God in the beginning or, like the Apologists, that he himself is the beginning (ἀϱχή). This difference in the use of "beginning" with the Logos and creatures is underscored in the following passage: "[I]n the same proportion as he who was formed but today, and received the beginning of his creation, is inferior to Him who is uncreated, and who is always the same, in that proportion is he, as respects knowledge and the faculty of investigating the causes of all things, inferior to Him who made him. For you, O man, are not an uncreated being, nor did you always co-exist with God, as did His own Logos…" *Haer.* 2.25.3, ANF 1:397 with minor revisions. Irenaeus' use of "beginning" to refer to the existence of the Logos and God in the eternity prior to the creation of the world has precedence in the prologue of John, which Irenaeus claims to refer to the generation of the Logos. He writes, "For that according to John relates [the Word's] original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'" *Haer.* 3.11.8, ANF 1:428.

[166] *Haer.* 2.30.9, italics added. "*Semper autem coexsistens Filius Patri olim et ab initio semper revelat Patrem et Angelis et Archangelis et Potestatibus et Potestatibus et Virtutibus et omnibus quibus vult revelari Deus."* See also *Haer.* 4.14.1. Orbe interprets this passage as only affirming the Logos' existence before time, as opposed to an eternal existence. He understands the passage to address the Logos' "reason for being," namely, to reveal the Father to the created beings. As such, Orbe believes the passage only proves that the Logos has existed as long as there were entities to whom he revealed the Father. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 119. Orbe's interpretation repeats an earlier position by Harnack that interpreted the existence of the Logos as functional based only on his role as revealer of the Father. Harnack writes, "The Son then exists because he gives a revelation…Irenaeus is [not interested] in saying anything about the Son, apart from his historical mission…" Harnack, *History of Dogma* 2:304. These interpretations simply ignore Irenaeus' words, namely "eternal coexistence." Nowhere does Irenaeus suggest that the Logos exists *in order to* reveal the Father—Orbe's inference is not grounded in Irenaeus' text. Moreover, Orbe does not identify the logic that supports Irenaeus' understanding of the Logos' role as unique revealer of the Father. For Irenaeus, the equality of the Logos with God qualifies him for the work of revealing the Father (and presumably necessitates their eternal coexistence). In Orbe's reading, this logic is lost and Irenaeus' Logos lacks any quality that justifies him as revealer of the Father.

understanding of the Logos' generation in line with his polemical rejection of the Valentinian theory of emanation. Moreover, Irenaeus nowhere links the generation of the Logos to his role in creation or revelation in the manner witnessed in the Apologists' theology.[167] The Logos does not come forth *in order to* be the agent of creation; rather, he is eternally present with the Father, and in that eternal presence, he acts as both agent of creation and revealer of the Father.

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[167] Orbe makes the opposite point both in his *Procesión del Verbo* and in his article "San Ireneo y la creación de la material." In the previous chapter, I showed how Orbe interpreted the Father as the source of material while the Logos is the form of the material (see above p. 92n96). As a result, the Logos comes forth in order to give the unformed material a form. Orbe writes, "*Tanto vale decir que para otorgar a las cosas su primer ser, echo mano de su Virtud y Querer; y aun ahora las sustenta en él de igual forma."* Orbe, "San Ireneo," 85. Thus, according to Orbe, Irenaeus can speak of the Father as the sole, unbegotten creator of the universe without any mention of his hands the Son and Spirit—their work only comes later in the formation of humanity. Orbe, "San Ireneo," 75. Nonetheless, the logic here does not follow, since in other places Irenaeus refers to the Logos/Son as Creator without mention of the Father (*Haer.* 5.18.3). Moreover, Orbe's interpretation of creation depends on a link to the Middle Platonic understanding of creation with the Triad *materia-paradigma-demiurgo,* which he claims is reflected in Irenaeus' God-Logos-Sophia triad. Orbe, "San Ireneo," 77. He does not argue for the connection, and in fact, he provides no texts to substantiate it. Conversely, above I have described a conspicuous lack of Middle Platonic language in Irenaeus' understanding of creation. Additionally, if Fantino and Steenberg's interpretation of Irenaeus' understanding of creation as the creation of *things* is right, then Irenaeus' understanding of creation *ex nihilo* precludes the parallel to a Middle Platonic triad of creation. Elsewhere, Orbe argues his point using the controversial passage *Epid.* 43. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 133-136. This argument is taken up and expanded by Ochagavía, who follows Orbe in virtually all aspects. Ochagavía accepts Smith's translation of *Epid.* 43 which he rendered, "And that there was born (*elanel*) a Son of God, that is, not only before the world was made, Moses, who was the first to prophesy, says in Hebrew: BARESITh BARA ELOVIM BASAN BENUAM SAMENThARES, of which the translation is: *A Son in the beginning God established then heaven and earth*." Ochagavía, *Visibile Patris Filius,* 100. Ochagavía equates the two phrases "there was born a Son of God" and "a Son in the beginning God established" to conclude that Irenaeus means that God created a Son in the beginning in order to make heaven and earth. Nonetheless, as many scholars have previously noted, this interpretation proves problematic. First, as Rousseau has demonstrated, the original Greek of the verb rendered by the Armenian verb *elanel* could be either γίνομαι ("to be born") or ὑπάρχω ("to be"). Given the content from *Haer.* regarding the eternal nature of the Logos/Son, the latter is more likely the original indicating not that the Son is born but simply that he "is" in the beginning. Rousseau, "La Doctrine de S. Irénée sur la preexistence du Fils de Dieu dans *Dem.* 43," *Le Muséon* 89 (1971): 5-42. (Both Robinson's and Behr's translations reflect the original use of ὑπάρχω here.) Second, and more importantly, in the crucial phrase "a Son in the beginning God established then heaven and earth," there is no punctuation in the Armenian leaving no textual motivation to take "Son" as the object of the verb "established", as Smith himself noted. Smith, *St. Irenaeus,* 180n205. Indeed, the text just as easily can be rendered with "heaven and earth" as the objects of "established." The resulting translation from this punctuation would affirm nothing more than that the Son was with the Father in the beginning when he established the world, a thought quite consonant with the content from *Haer* as I have shown. (The latter translation is, again, reflected in the translations of Robinson, Rousseau, and Behr.) Since the text is unclear and could rightly be translated either way, the decisive factor ought to be consistency with *Haer,* which supports an eternal existence of the Logos/Son. In any case, given these factors, *Epid.* 43 is a questionable passage upon which to base an entire thesis, as Ochagavía, Orbe, (and Smith) attempt.

While it is true that Irenaeus never states that the Logos is generated from the essence of the Father, a formula that, according to later Trinitarian theology, would support an eternal existence of the Logos/Son, neither does he say that the Logos is generated from the will of the Father, a formula that would certainly exclude an eternal existence of the Logos.[168] Conversely, Irenaeus removes the need for a generation from or by the will of God by severing the link between the Logos' generation and the functions he performs in the economy. Such action demonstrates Irenaeus' understanding of the existence of the Logos not as functional, but as necessary. Although begotten of the Father or having his source in the Father, the existence of the Logos/Son is necessary and, thus, eternal in nature.[169] Although Irenaeus does not exploit the language in the manner of later Trinitarian writers, this interpretation is supported by Irenaeus' use of the divine title "Father," as noted in the previous chapter.[170] If for Irenaeus the divine title "Father" indicates not just something about the Father—that he is the Creator, for example—but the unique relationship between the First and Second Persons, then the existence of the Son is necessary to the essence of God.

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[168] The generation of the Logos from the will of the Father was common to the Apologists' theology. Orbe claims that Irenaeus follows Justin in the understanding that the Logos is generated from the will of the Father. Again, he fails to substantiate his position with any texts where Irenaeus makes such a claim. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 672. The position, rather, is an inference on Orbe's part based on a previous understanding of creation, which I have sufficiently addressed and rejected above.

[169] One might make the same claim of Justin's theology. Justin generally is silent on the first stage of the existence of the Logos. Nevertheless, the difference between Irenaeus and Justin is that the former never links the generation of the Logos to his work in the economy. The lack of this connection suggests that for Irenaeus, unlike Justin, the existence of the Logos is necessary, dependent, that is, upon his divine nature as opposed to the Father's will. Moreover, Irenaeus' severing of the generation of the Logos and his work in the creation precludes the existence of a first stage. If the existence of the Logos is necessary, in other words, then there is no need for him to separate from the Father in a second stage—he is a distinct entity from eternity. Wolfson is helpful here. He writes, "But the fact that Irenaeus explicitly denies a beginning of generation to the Logos and interprets the words 'in the beginning was the Logos' to mean that the generation of the Logos was from eternity and the fact also that he never uses any of the expressions that are characteristic of the twofold stage theory, which certainly must have been known to him, indicate that he did not believe in the twofold stage theory." Wolfson, *Philosophy,* 1:200.

[170] See above pp. 80-84.

The affirmation of the eternity of the Logos/Son in connection with his generation from the Father suggests that Irenaeus understood it to be an eternal generation in the manner explicitly formulated by Origen and which, subsequently, would become the basis for the early pro-Nicene arguments. Indeed, some past scholars have claimed as much.[171] Nevertheless, while the logic would suggest such an understanding, Irenaeus never makes eternal generation explicit as do later writers.[172] Instead, in accordance with Scripture, he simply affirms both that the Logos/Son is generated from the God/Father and that the Logos/Son is eternally present with the God/Father.

Second, Irenaeus' anti-Valentinian polemic provides insight into his understanding that the generation of the Logos does not imply a spatial separation, either ontological or epistemological, between God and his Logos, unlike the respective understandings of the Valentinians and the Apologists. Rather, because God is simple, and is himself wholly Logos, the generation of the Logos is by no means a partition of that Logos.[173] The Logos that is the Second Person remains in the First Person eternally because the First Person is himself Logos in his nature.

Positively, this conception results in Irenaeus always speaking of God/Father and Logos/Son as closely united—not only is the Son eternally *with* the Father, but also he is eternally *in* the Father:

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[171] Aeby, *Missions Divines*, 57-58; Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:581; Wolfson, *Philosophy*, 1:200.

[172] Nor does he exploit the language to argue for the eternity of the Son. Houssiau has sufficiently demonstrated these points. Houssiau, *Christologie*, 30. Rather, Irenaeus addresses these points in the context of his Logos theology, which he found sufficient to demonstrate both the eternity of the Second Person and the veiled positive understanding of his generation.

[173] Barnes draws the connection of this reality to Irenaeus' understanding of the properties of spirit. He writes, "Whatever is said about God cannot run contrary to the reality or nature of Spirit. In particular, if we think about the generation of the Word we cannot think of a transition in the life of the Word from "in" God to "out" of God, since these are spatial notions which cannot be applied to Spirit. As spirit, the Word is always entirely "in" God and "outside" of God. We must completely purge our thoughts of any place-related notions of causality. The Word is so completely and perfectly present "here" and "there" that we must think of a continuous presence, distinguished not according to place by activity, not in any sort of either/or localization." Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology,' 83.

> [T]he God who made the earth, and commanded it to bring forth fruit, who established the waters, and brought forth the fountains, was He who in these last times bestowed upon mankind, by His Son, the blessing of food and the favor of drink: the Incomprehensible [acting thus] by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible; since there is none beyond Him, but *He exists in the bosom of the Father*. For 'no man,' he says, 'has seen God at any time,' unless 'the only-begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared [Him].' For He, the Son who is in His bosom, declares to all the Father who invisible.[174]

In this passage, Irenaeus quotes John 1:18, and the meaning he extracts from it is consonant with the meaning in the Johannine context—both use "the Father's bosom" language to assert the deep connection that exists between God and Logos, Father and Son.[175]

Elsewhere, Irenaeus describes the close relationship as the Father's dwelling in the Son when he writes, "God has been declared through the Son, who is in the Father, and has the Father in Himself—He who is, the Father bearing witness to the Son, and the Son announcing the Father."[176] Thus, Irenaeus considers the relationship as not only the Son dwelling in the Father but as a mutual indwelling with the Father and the Son interpenetrating one another. Lebreton calls this interpenetration the "*immanence réciproque*" of the Father and the Son,[177] and I have argued that the unique relationship

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[174] *Haer.* 3.11.5-6, ANF 1:427 with minor revisions, italics added.

[175] The Latin translator renders the key word here as *sinus.* Greek Fragment 10, retained in Theodoret's *Eranistes*, reproduces the Johannine κόλπος. Rousseau, *SC* 211:128. On Greek Fragment 10, see Doutreleau, *SC* 210:66, 79-82. Irenaeus' language here is also reminiscent of Theophilus' description of the unity of God and his Logos (*Autol.* 2.10, 2.22) with one major exception. Theophilus used this language to describe only the first stage of existence of the Logos; Irenaeus used this language to describe the Logos in his incarnate state. For Theophilus, the Logos comes out of the interior of the Father when he is generated, and this action allows the Logos to be present on earth. For Irenaeus, there is no transfer of location—the Logos/Son is in the Father from eternity, even when he is on earth. This is possible because, as I asserted above, there is no change of stages in his existence. The Logos is generated from eternity and remains in the Father in his distinguished existence from eternity.

[176] *Haer.* 3.6.2, ANF 1:419. Although Irenaeus states here that the Father is in the Son, Barnes correctly notes that Irenaeus is interested more in the witness of John 1:18, that the Son is in the Father. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 81.

[177] Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:555. Barnes follows him in the use of this phrase. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 78ff. Prestige provides a good summation of the relationship envisioned in this

between the Father and the Son provides the basis for the Son's full knowledge of the Father and subsequent revelation of the Father to the world.[178] Moreover, as I suggested in the previous chapter, this reciprocal immanence of Father and Son is the Trinitarian reality in the essence of God that Irenaeus suggests, or at least leaves open, with his use of "Father" as a divine title.[179]

This formulation contrasts directly with the topological theology of the Valentinians, whose spatial conception of the divine nature resulted in a distance that denied the Aeons full knowledge of their Father. Conversely, for Irenaeus, since the Logos/Son is one with the Father and one in the sense of no separation, he has full and complete knowledge of the Father. In the same way, as I alluded to above but now make clear with the logic of Logos theology, it is because the Logos/Son has God/Father in him that people can see the Father when they look upon the Son. In this way, knowledge and the vision of the Son is the same as knowledge and the vision of the Father.[180] Irenaeus

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reciprocal immanence or, what he calls, "mutual penetration." Prestige, *Patristic Thought*, 33-34. Again, he relates this description to the thought of Gregory of Nyssa and fails to identify its presence in Irenaeus.

[178] See above pp. 142-143. This reciprocal immanence is manifested also in the dual revelatory role of Father and Son. Irenaeus writes, "To these men, therefore, did the Lord bear witness, that in Himself they had both known and seen the Father…[H]ow could Peter have been in ignorance, to whom the Lord gave testimony, that flesh and blood had not revealed to him, but the Father, who is in heaven…the Son indeed leading them to the Father, but the Father revealing to them the Son." *Haer.* 3.13.2, ANF 1:437. See also *Haer.* 4.6.3, 7.

[179] See above pp. 80-82. I use "Trinitarian" here proleptically. Technically this is a "binitarian" reality at this point, since Irenaeus only refers here to the reciprocal immanence of two entities. Nevertheless, as I will show in the following two chapters, Irenaeus will later include the Spirit in this interpenetrating relationship.

[180] Although beyond the boundaries of this chapter, this truth further demonstrates that the ability of the Logos to become incarnate is not a virtue of a lesser divinity. In the "seeing" of the Logos on earth, Irenaeus is always at pains to affirm that both God and the Logos are seen and both of them remain invisible. Accordingly, he writes, "And through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father." *Haer.* 4.6.6, ANF 1:469. Nonetheless, the divine transcendence is maintained, because by nature, God and his Logos remain invisible, but because of his love, God allows himself to be seen, and he is seen in his Logos/Son. The incarnation is a limiting of this transcendence out of love, but the limiting happens to both God/Father and Logos/Son insofar as both are *seen.* Irenaeus writes, "For man does not see God by his own powers; but when [God] pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and as He wills." *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489.

writes, "And again, the Lord replied to Philip, who wished to behold the Father, 'I have been so long a time with you, and yet you have not known me, Philip? He that sees Me, sees also the Father; and how do you say then Show us the Father? For I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; and henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him.'"[181] Far from necessitating a diminished divinity of the Second Person, this logic asserts that the Logos/Son can only reveal the God/Father because he is the *same*.[182]

Tremblay connects the significance that God the Father is "seen" to the polemical context, namely, that the Valentinians believed their Father is never manifested to the eye. For Irenaeus to affirm the same point, as the Apologists had, brings Christianity too close to the Valentinian position. The double aspect (according to greatness, according to love) allows him a middle position. Tremblay, *Manifestation*, 60-65. Likewise, Daniélou writes: "[For Irenaeus,] the Father and the Son are equally invisible, because they are equal in transcendence, and equally visible by virtue of the communication of *themselves* which they make through love." Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 357, italics added. Although I have concurred with Houssiau through this chapter, at this point our interpretations diverge. As I briefly noted above, Houssiau understands the "novelty" in Christianity to lie in the knowledge and vision of the Logos/Son who appears in a different way than his appearance in the theophanic/prophetic visions. According to Houssiau's interpretation, there is nothing new that is revealed in regards to the knowledge of the Father. He makes this claim in reaction to works on Irenaeus' Trinity coming from the second trajectory which claimed that the newness brought by Christ was the revelation of God as Trinity. Houssiau claims that this reading is anachronistic. Instead, Irenaeus preached two tenets of Christianity: belief in one God *and* salvation through Jesus Christ his Son. Houssiau, *Christologie*, 66ff. Houssiau's interpretation does not take into account the degree to which for Irenaeus the knowledge of the Son is a knowledge of the Father and as the knowledge of the Son is new, it necessarily means that there is a new knowledge of the Father. The new knowledge is precisely Trinitarian in nature, namely, that the one God is to be known in relationship to another. Houssiau misses this significance because he downplays the importance of Irenaeus' Logos theology and barely brings *Haer.* 2 into his discussion. As such, he overlooks the logic of reciprocal immanence.

[181] *Haer*. 3.13.2, ANF 1:437 with minor revisions.

[182] If Father and Son are the same, then the Son must be spirit in the same manner that the Father is spirit. Indeed, Irenaeus affirms the spiritual nature of the Son in several places. He writes, "For he is indeed Savior, as being the Son and the Logos of God; but salutary, since [he is] spirit; for he says: 'The Spirit of our countenance, Christ the Lord.'" *Haer.* 3.10.2, ANF 1:424. The scriptural citation comes from Lam. 4:20: "πνεῦμα πρωσώπου ἡμῶν χριστὸς κυρίου…" Interpreting the same verse from Lamentations, Irenaeus writes, "The Scripture announces that, being Spirit of God, Christ was going to become passible man…" *Epid*. 71, Behr, 86. So united are God/Father and Logos/Son in Irenaeus' understanding that he has in the past been interpreted as a "functional modalist." Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 437. Such an interpretation would imply that the Logos/Son is not a distinct entity from the Father, but is merely the presence of the Father or the mode of the Father's existence on earth. For a modalist interpretation of Irenaeus in relation to the "hands of God" image, see below p. 251n86. The interpretation of Irenaeus as a modalist is ultimately misguided, however, given the eternal presence of the Son with and in the Father. The Second Person not only begins to work when he appears on earth, as a modalist theology would claim, but, as I sufficiently covered in the previous section, he has been working from the beginning both in creating and in revealing. There is an unresolved difficulty in Irenaeus' thought insofar as Irenaeus has not developed a category by which to speak of two "somethings" which are together one Logos and one spiritual divine essence (or as I noted above, Irenaeus has no category of "person"). As Barnes notes, the lack of this aspect in Irenaeus' thought marks Irenaeus' theology as pre-Monarchian. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 81n56. Nevertheless, the absence of this category in Irenaeus' thought does not

These two insights regarding Irenaeus' understanding of the generation of the Logos confirm the implications of his understanding of the nature of the Logos/Son drawn from his discussion of the Logos' pre-incarnational work: for Irenaeus, God/Father and Logos/Son are equal and one, not in the sense that they are indistinguishable, but in the sense that they are both of the same divine substance. This statement does not mean that Irenaeus understood the Father and the Son to be ὁμοούσιος in the fourth century sense of the term, but in a more primitive construction, he believed that because the Son was generated from the Father, he was of the same sort or kind as the Father.[183] He

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render him a modalist. For Irenaeus, the distinction of God/Father and Logos/Son (and Sophia/Spirit as we will see in later chapters) is evident. What needs defining, according to his polemic, is the nature of their relationship. For his purposes, he needs only to focus on their unity or oneness. I will suggest in chapter five that the "threeness" in his theology can be understood according to the distinct, economic functions of Father, Son, and Spirit. Nevertheless, the logic of their distinct functions demands a prior, eternal distinction of entities within their essential unity or reciprocal immanence.

[183] Lebreton makes a similar point and likewise uses guarded language: «*D'ailleurs cette origine divine ne sépare point le Fils du Père; il est né du Père, et il reste dans le Père, de meme que le Père est en lui…*» Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:555. This is the context in which Lebreton introduces his notion of reciprocal immanence discussed above. Nonetheless, I think the logic works the other way in Irenaeus' mind. One can conclude that the Son is of the same substance as the Father in Irenaeus' understanding because there is no ontological distance between them. Orbe's insistence that Irenaeus did not use ὁμοούσιος or think that the Son was ὁμοούσιος with the Father obscures the issue. It is anachronistic to assume that he would have thought in these terms and so the state of his Trinitarian theology must not be judged on the lack of the term, itself. This anachronism is manifested by Orbe's method of arguing against the possibility that Irenaeus used this word or thought in this manner on the basis of the fourth century Eusebian claim that uses of ὁμοούσιος prior to the fourth century had been connected to material and, therefore, were indicative of "Gnostic" understandings of the generation. Orbe, *Procesión del Verbo,* 660-663. This manner of argumentation, although working in the opposite direction, mirrors that of the works of the second trajectory discussed in the introduction above. If we are to place Irenaeus within a theological trajectory leading to the fourth century, which itself should be secondary to understanding Irenaeus in his own context, the question should not be whether Irenaeus would have accepted or rejected the fourth century use of ὁμοούσιος in the second century, but rather, whether his understanding of the eternal relationship between the Father and Son approximated the meaning to which the fourth century figures put ὁμοούσιος, a term which itself evolved and was never as uniform as often is assumed. I suggest that Irenaeus' formulation of the reciprocal immanence of Father and Son, as well as the spiritual nature of both, approaches the logic of the fourth century. Orbe's only way around this conclusion, as I have already mentioned, is to sever the link between Irenaeus' polemic and his positive theology. His treatment of Irenaeus' understanding of the generation and nature of the Second Person, as with that of Ochagavía's and Smith's, ultimately suffers from a lack of appreciation for the subtleties of Irenaeus' understanding of the divine transcendence. These scholars include Irenaeus with the Apologists in assuming that there is a spatial distance between God and the created world which must be filled by an intermediary who is the Logos/Son. This results not only in the diminished divinity of the Logos but also in his generation for the purpose of mediation. Conversely, the interpretation of the divine transcendence as absolute does not result in the need for a mediator because God is the Fullness of all things and in whom can dwell all things

writes, "[T]he Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, and the Father is God and the Son is God, since *He who is born of God is God*…"[184] While his inference of equality is based on the generation in this passage, his use of Logos theology in general supports such a claim. Both the Father and the Son are, in their very nature, Logos.[185] As Logos, the Second Person is also spirit like God. The mutual interpenetration of the two divine, spiritual beings allows Irenaeus to maintain belief in a simple divine nature despite the presence of distinct personal beings within that same nature.[186]

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without a filter. Consequently, the existence of the Logos/Son (and the Sophia/Spirit) does not rest on God's need for a mediator in creation and is therefore not functional. I will return to Irenaeus' lack of need for intermediary agents, and its implications for the respective natures and functions of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit in chapter five.

[184] *Epid.* 47, Behr, 71, italics added. Barnes states that this is one of Irenaeus' strongest statements for the full divinity of the Second Person. Barnes, "Irenaeus' Trinitarian Theology," 87. That Irenaeus assumes the sameness (in their common Logos and spiritual nature) of the Father and Son is suggested further in his implicit acceptance of the "light from light" analogy of emanation. In *Haer.* 2.17.2-4, Irenaeus poses this analogy, along with two others, as a possible means of understanding the Valentinian emanation. He rejects the "light from light" analogy not because of its inability to approximate the divine generation, but because it does not fit with Valentinian logic. The Valentinians believed that the Aeons were of a different nature than the First-Father from whom they emanated, as shown in the passibility of the last Aeon Sophia. According to the "light from light" analogy through which the emanated light and the emanating light are one and the same, the emanated Aeons should be "of the same substance with the principle of their emission ["*autem substantiae cum sint cum principe emissionis ipsorum*]…" *Haer.* 2.17.4. That Irenaeus never specifically rejects this analogy in the manner of his clear rejection of the human noetic analogy suggests that he finds in this analogy a positive means of understanding the generation of the Logos from God. Specifically, since the Logos is generated from God, he is of the same nature as God.

[185] Barnes writes, "It is not because the Second Person is "God's Word [Logos]" that he is God, but because he is Word he is God, for only God is Word." Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 75.

[186] The identification of God/Father and Logos/Son in one unity is evident in relation to the creation which, unlike uncreated divinity, has a beginning. Irenaeus writes, "And in this respect God differs from man that God makes, but man is made; and truly, He who makes is always the same; but that which is made must receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase." *Haer,* 4.11.2, ANF 1:474. I have already demonstrated that Irenaeus supports belief in the divinity of the Logos through attributing the act of creation to him, a move paralleled by the Apologists. Here he attributes to the Logos/Son the eternal, unchanging nature of God, which finds no parallel in his predecessors. Likewise, he writes, "He indeed who made all things can alone, together with His Logos, properly be termed God and Lord: but the things which have been made cannot have this term applied to them…" *Haer.* 3.8.3, ANF 1:422. One of Fantino's primary means of arguing for the equality of the Father and Son is along these lines, namely that in the division between God and creatures or the uncreated and the created, Irenaeus clearly places the Logos on the side of God. Fantino even claims that the Logos/Son, in virtue of the fact that he is the one who inaugurates the participation of the creation with God, is himself uncreated. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée,* 344-345. In chapter five, I will argue something similar and will suggest that Irenaeus has begun a redefinition of the title θεός to apply not to God the Father alone but to apply to the divine nature common to both Father and Son in order to support the distinction he makes between the Creator (Father, Son, Spirit) and the creation (everything else). See below pp. 244-246.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the respective understandings of the Apologists and Irenaeus regarding the nature of the Logos/Son by means of his pre-incarnational work and his generation from God/Father. I found them united in their understanding of the Logos as the agent of creation and revealer of the Father, thereby making the Logos both divine and distinct from the God/Father. Nevertheless, a key difference emerged in their respective motivations for attributing the mediatory work of creating and revealing to the Logos. For the Apologists, the understanding of mediation is dictated by Middle Platonic belief of the inability of the transcendent God/Father to be present and active in the material world. This understanding resulted in a Logos whose ability to work in the world is predicated upon a diminished divine nature. Conversely, Irenaeus embraced a scriptural argument regarding the mediation of the Logos; God creates through the Logos because John testifies to it. Due to an absence of Middle Platonic terminology, Irenaeus is not beholden to a logic that necessitates the diminished divinity of the mediator. As a result, he makes the equality of the First and Second Persons the basis of his discussion of the pre-incarnational revelatory work of the Logos. The Logos is equal with God; therefore, the Logos can manifest him to the world.

These figures' variant understandings of the generation of the Logos confirm these conclusions regarding the nature of the Logos. The Apologists understood the generation of the Logos in terms of two-stage Logos theology, meaning that the Logos is not an eternally distinguished and personal entity. He is eternal, but only inasmuch as he is an impersonal power of God. At his generation, he comes out of the Father and from

that point on is the personal Logos who works in creation. This distinction is based primarily on the Stoic distinction of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός. As a result, the generation of the Logos resembles the utterance of a human word, predicated on the will or intention of the Father and connected to his role as agent of creation. In other words, for the Apologists, the existence of the Logos was not necessary. Conversely, Irenaeus attempts again to be purely scriptural, and because he deems Scripture silent on the speculative question, he urges silence on the matter. Nonetheless, his detailed polemic against the Valentinian theory of emanation provides insights into his understanding. Namely, the Logos/Son eternally coexists with the Father, that is, he does not have a beginning to his existence, and there is no spatial or epistemological distance between the two entities.

These differences ultimately suggest that a variant understanding of the nature of the Logos/Son is at work in the respective theologies of the Apologists and Irenaeus. For the Apologists, the Logos/Son is divine but not of an equal divinity with the Father. His diminished divinity results from his generation from the Father's will, precludes his eternally separate existence, and justifies his ability to be visible and active in the material world. For Irenaeus, the Logos/Son is also divine, but he is of an equal divinity with the Father. His equal divinity is demonstrated through his eternal coexistence with the Father, his eternal presence in the bosom of the Father (or their reciprocal immanence) shown in that they are both Logos, and his unique ability to reveal the Father. The only difference between the two divine entities appears to be the respective roles they play within the economy; above all, the Father begets while the Son is begotten. These distinctions will provide the focus of the final chapter. Before I can

assess the economic manifestation of the Trinity, I must focus on these figures' respective understandings of the Holy Spirit proper.

Chapter Four: The Sophia of God

In the fourth chapter, I turn to the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings of the nature of the Third Person, called "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) and "Wisdom" (σοφία). As with the third chapter's study of the Second Person, space here precludes an exhaustive treatment of all aspects of these pneumatologies. Therefore, I will address only those aspects that serve to establish the state of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology.[1] These aspects are (1) the degree to which the Holy Spirit is a distinct, divine entity alongside the Logos/Son and the logic by which this truth is established, and (2) the functions the Holy Spirit performs in his capacity as a divine entity.[2] I will argue that when compared to the undeveloped and inconsistent pneumatologies of the Apologists, Irenaeus shows an advanced understanding of the personhood of the Holy Spirit and his divine functions. Moreover, Irenaeus supplies the logic, absent in the Apologists' pneumatologies, whereby the Holy Spirit is equal to the Logos in his position relative to God.

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[1] I will not address aspects by which the Holy Spirit affects anthropology or soteriology. While these aspects are indeed important to Irenaeus' pneumatology, they have little bearing on the state of his Trinitarian theology. In any case other works have addressed these aspects adequately. A.D. Alès, for example, focuses solely on those aspects of Irenaeus' pneumatology that touch anthropology. Alès, "La doctrine de l'Esprit en S. Irénée." *RSR* 14 (1924): 497-538. Other more recent works regarding various aspects of Irenaeus' pneumatology include Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 86-127, Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 76-94, 226-276, and Hans-Jochen Jaschke, *Der Heilige Geist im Bekenntnis der Kirche,* Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie 40 (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1976). Briggman's work, the most recent and most comprehensive study of Irenaeus' pneumatology, will serve as my primary dialogue partner in the present chapter.

[2] As with the chapter on the Logos, here I will limit my discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit to the time prior to the incarnation of the Son. Although the form of the Holy Spirit does not change at the incarnation, as it does with the Son, Irenaeus believes the Holy Spirit is given to the Church in a new way at Pentecost. See below p. 211n117.

1. The Apologists[3]

1.1 Justin

As the earliest of the Apologists, Justin shows the most ambiguity and inconsistencies regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit.[4] While Justin's belief in a personal entity named the Spirit (πνεῦμα)[5] that is distinct from the Logos/Son and God/Father seems certain, his manner of describing the entity is not consistent. Indicative of the undeveloped state of his pneumatology, Justin lacks a distinct role for the Holy Spirit in the economy. This lack of role distinction leads him at times to subsume the person of the Holy Spirit into the person of the Logos. Barnard's oft-quoted summary still offers a succinct statement of the difficulties with Justin's pneumatology: "In strict

[3] Unlike the topics studied in previous chapters, a development in pneumatology occurs within the three Apologists. Therefore, I will not consider them together according to similar themes in their respective pneumatologies. Instead, I will consider the person and work of the Holy Spirit according to each Apologist in turn. Something analogous happened in the Apologists' development of two-stage Logos theology. The development of two-stage Logos theology crystallized in Theophilus' thought, but I interpreted that "development" as retroversion. In Irenaeus' rejection of two-stage Logos theology, he comes closest to Justin. With pneumatology, the opposite occurs. From Justin to Theophilus, the natural progression of pneumatological thought leads right to Irenaeus, who further develops and expands the pneumatology he finds in Theophilus. In his pneumatology, Irenaeus stands closest to Theophilus.

[4] Although scholarship is varied regarding Justin's understanding of the Spirit, the majority position agrees with the early work of H.B. Swete, who concluded, "Justin's difficulty lay in differentiating the functions of the Second and Third Persons; of their personal distinctness he was clearly cognizant." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers*, repr. (London: MacMillon and Co, Ltd., 1912), 38-39. Cf. the similar positions by Semisch, *Justin Martyr*, 207-235, Goodenough, *Justin Martyr*, 181 (Goodenough limits the distinctiveness of the Spirit to the *Apologies*), Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:476-77, Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 101-104, and José Pablo Martín, *El Espiritu Santo en los Origenes del Christianismo: Estudio sobre I Clemente, Ignacio, II Clemente y Justino Mártir* (Zürich: Pas-Verlag, 1971), 167-176. A minority position holds that Justin does not perceive a clear distinction between the persons of the Logos and the Holy Spirit. Notable scholars of this opinion include Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 102-106, Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, 32-36, 44 and most recently Bucur, "Angelic Spirit," 190-208.

[5] Justin speaks variously of "the Spirit," "the holy Spirit," "the divine Spirit," "the prophetic Spirit" or some combination of these titles. For an exhaustive list, see Martín, *Espiritu Santo*, 316-320.

logic there is no place in Justin's thought for the person of the Holy Spirit because the logos carries out his functions."[6]

Justin's belief in the Holy Spirit as a real and distinct entity emerges in numerous statements in which he names three distinct entities as objects of Christian belief. For example, in a summary of Christian teaching given early in 1 *Apol.*, Justin writes, "[W]e worship the Maker of this Universe…Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ…and we will show that we worship Him rationally, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in second place and the prophetic Spirit in the third rank."[7] Justin repeats the same language in his attempt to correlate a passage regarding the divine being from Plato to Christian belief. He writes, "Plato, reading these things and not accurately understanding…said that the power next to the first God was placed *Chi-wise* in the universe. And as to his speaking of a third, since he read, as we said before, that which was spoken by Moses, 'the Spirit of God moved over the waters.' For he gives second place to the Logos who is with God, who, he said, was placed *Chi-wise* in the universe, and the third to the Spirit who was said to be borne over the water, saying, 'And the third around the third.'"[8] Significant also in this regard are numerous liturgical passages in which the Spirit appears alongside the Father and Son. In a discussion on baptism, for example, Justin describes new believers as washed "in the name of God the Father and Master of all," and "in the name of Jesus Christ" and "in the name of the Holy

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[6] Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 106.

[7] 1 *Apol.* 13:1, 3, Barnard, 30-31. I will return to this passage in the next chapter to discuss the issues regarding the hierarchical relationships between the three entities. See below pp. 219-224. In this context, the passage's interest lies in its proclamation of the Spirit as an object of worship alongside the Father and Son.

[8] 1 *Apol.* 60.5-7, Barnard, 65 with minor revisions. Droge put to rest considerable confusion regarding the original location of the Platonic citation by showing that it comes from the Pseudo-Platonic *Second Epistle* 312e. Droge, "Justin Martyr," 309. The current scholarly debates on the authenticity of that work are irrelevant for my purposes because Justin believed it to be an authentic Platonic epistle and thus a faithful witness of his teaching.

Spirit."[9] Likewise, Justin shares what appears to be an early form of a Eucharistic prayer when he writes, "Over all that we receive we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit."[10] These passages demonstrate that Justin's Christian experience testifies to the active presence of a Holy Spirit distinct from the Father who creates and the Son who appeared on earth.[11]

Despite this conviction, Justin fails to assign a unique function to the Spirit in the economy that would justify the Spirit's separate existence next to the Logos. This omission likely stems from Justin's interest in establishing the Logos as a divine being alongside the Most High God in order to affirm God's creative and salvific purposes.[12] By his Logos theology, Justin shows how the transcendent God (fully compatible with the God of Greek philosophy) is identified with the loving God of Scripture; the Logos, rather than the Most High God, works in the material creation. Justin accomplishes his purpose by ascribing every divine work in the economy—creating, revealing, etc.—to the Logos.[13] For example, Justin most often associates the Spirit with the work of prophecy,[14] but because he understands prophecy as a divine work,[15] he also attributes that function

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[9] 1 *Apol.* 61.10, 13.

[10] 1 *Apol.* 67.2, Barnard, 71.

[11] On Justin's understanding of the experience of the Spirit in his Christian community, as opposed to the Spirit's personhood or work in Justin's theology, see J.E. Morgan-Wynne, "The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience in Justin Martyr," *VC* 38 (1984): 172-177.

[12] In this assessment, I am not far from Martín's conclusion that Justin displays "a profound tendency to concentrate in the λόγος every manifestation of the Father." Martín, *Espiritu Santo,* 184.

[13] For Justin, the Logos alone is the agent of creation and the addressee of Gen. 1:26 to whom God says, "Let us make…" See *Dial.* 62.1-2. Justin also recognized the presence of a Spirit in the creation narrative, namely Gen. 1:2, but he does not use the passage to refer to a creative work of the Holy Spirit. The presence of a hovering spirit in Gen. 1:2 tells Justin only that Plato must have read Moses in order to form his understanding of three powers. See 1 *Apol.* 60.5-7 quoted above.

[14] Texts in which the Spirit is named as "prophetic" or as the agent of prophecy include 1 *Apol.* 6, 12, 13, 31, 33, 35, 38-42, 47-48, 51, 53, 59, 60, 63; *Dial.* 25, 28, 32, 34, 38, 43, 49, 52, 56, 61, 73-74, 78, 91, 114, 124. For the origin of this phrase, see Graham N. Stanton, "The Spirit in the Writings of Justin Martyr," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D.G. Dunn,* ed. Stanton, Bruce W. Longnecker, and Stephen C. Barton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 321-334.

[15] Justin writes earlier, "[T]his is the work of God, to announce something before it happens, and as it was predicted, so to show it happening." 1 *Apol.* 12.10, Barnard, 30.

to the Logos in order to show the Logos' divine nature. This attribution of prophecy to both the Logos and the Spirit results in general confusion and inconsistency of language. Justin can say both, "the Holy Spirit…through the prophets foretold all the things about Jesus,"[16] and "the prophets are inspired by *none other* than the divine Logos…"[17] In the *Dial.,* Justin consistently attributes prophecy to the prophetic Spirit, perhaps in order to emphasize a shared understanding of the agent of prophecy with his Jewish interlocutor.[18] Nevertheless, even there he randomly interchanges the prophetic agent with the Logos.[19] The confusion is underscored by those times in which the interchange of prophetic agents occurs in the midst of one passage.[20]

Ultimately, Justin's pneumatology suffers because of an ill-defined place for the Spirit in the economy. His Christian experience and participation in the Christian liturgy informs him of the existence of a Holy Spirit, but his primary intent to establish the Logos/Son as a divine being alongside the Most High God precludes any perception on his part of a unique work of the Spirit which would have better defined the Holy Spirit and established him as a distinct entity alongside the Logos/Son. Any work that could

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[16] 1 *Apol.* 61.13, Barnard, 67. Martín claims that this statement is the first in the history of the Triadic Christian formulas that "the Holy Spirit of the formula of faith is expressly identified with the Spirit of God who inspired the Prophets." Martín, *Espiritu Santo,* 177.

[17] 1 *Apol.* 33.9, Barnard, 46-47, italics added. See also 1 *Apol.* 36.1, 2 *Apol.* 10.

[18] Trypho states in *Dial.* 55.2, "To convince us of this the Holy Spirit said through David…" Falls, 82. On this point, see Martín, *Espiritu Santo,* 174 and Barnes, "Early Christian Pneumatology," 169-170.

[19] See, for example, *Dial.* 52.4, 62.1.

[20] *Dial.* 56.4-5, 114. Martín attempts to clarify Justin's language by delineating different aspects of prophecy to the Logos and the Spirit, respectively. For example, he argues that Justin understands the Logos as the author of prophecy and of all revelation, whereas the Spirit is bound only to the prophecy of the Old Testament. Martín, *Espiritu Santo,* 173-176. Martín makes this argument in order to reject the conclusion of some scholars that Justin sees the Spirit and the Logos as the same entity. I agree with him that Justin does not equate these figures; however, I think he attempts more systematization than Justin's texts allow. Still, his insight reveals another significant weakness of Justin's pneumatology, namely, that the Spirit's work is limited to the Old Testament. Justin does not have a concept of the ongoing revelatory work of the Holy Spirit in the Church because once the one whom he predicted to come has come, no need for prophetic work exists.

prove divinity to an entity other than the Most High God is ascribed to the Logos; therefore, the Spirit remains for Justin an undefined afterthought.

1.2 Athenagoras

Like Justin, Athenagoras reveals a strong conviction in the existence of a distinct and personal entity called the Spirit. Additionally, his pneumatology shows an important development that allows him to establish the Spirit's personality to a degree not present in Justin's work, namely, his discussion of the generation or origin of the Spirit from God. This discussion results in a parallel status of the Spirit and the Logos in relation to God that subsequently enables Athenagoras to give the Spirit his own work in God's economy.

In *Leg.* 10.4, the passage following his detailed statement on the generation of the Logos, Athenagoras writes, "Furthermore, we claim this same Holy Spirit, who works in those who cry out prophetically, to be an effluence of God, who flows forth and returns like a ray of the sun."[21] Several similarities between this passage and his passage describing the generation of the Logos suggest that Athenagoras intentionally parallels the two accounts.[22] First, the Spirit has his source in God, from whom the Spirit emerges. Second, the Spirit, like the Logos, comes forth to perform a function, namely prophecy, described with the same word as that used to describe the function of the Logos (ἐνεργέω

[21] "καίτοι καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργοῦν τοῖς ἐκφωνοῦσι προφητικῶς ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἀπόρροιαν εἶναί φαμεν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀπορρέον καὶ ἐπαναφερόμενον ὡς ἀκτῖνα ἡλίου." *Leg.* 10.4. The Holy Spirit here refers back to the Spirit of the previous statement where Athenagoras writes, "The prophetic Spirit also agrees [συνάδει] with this account [τῷ λόγῳ] [of the generation of the Logos]. 'For the Lord,' it says, 'made me a beginning of his ways for his works.'" *Leg.* 10.4, Schoedel, 23.

[22] For a discussion on Athenagoras' passage on the generation of the Logos, see above pp. 128-129.

compared to ἐνέργεια). Third, Athenagoras uses Scripture to support the account of the Spirit's origin, as he did with the generation of the Logos. The passage on the Spirit's generation in *Leg.* 10.4 contains an allusion to Wisdom of Solomon 7:25, which reads, "For she (Wisdom) is a breath [ἀτμίς] of the power of God, and a pure emanation [ἀπόῤῥοια] of the glory of the Almighty…"[23] The key word here is ἀπόῤῥοια, which functions almost as a title for the Third Person analogous to the title λόγος for the Second Person. Later, Athenagoras writes, "the Son [is] the Mind, Logos, and Sophia of the Father, and the Spirit [is] the effluence [ἀπόῤῥοια] [of the Father] as light from a fire."[24] Here, ἀπόῤῥοια stands in parallel position to the titles of the Son.

Nevertheless, ἀπόῤῥοια falls short of establishing an eternal relationship between the Father and the Spirit. The lack of the eternal, distinct nature of the Spirit arguably is confirmed with Athenagoras' use of the analogy that the Spirit "flows forth [from God] and returns [to God] like a ray of the sun."[25] This statement mirrors Justin's "light from light" analogy used in his description of the generation of the Logos/Son.[26] As with Justin's use of the analogy, Athenagoras' use of the analogy in this context potentially

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[23] Wisd. 7:25, NRSV translation. Most scholars making this connection argue that the ἀτμίς of Wisd. 7:25 is reflected in Athenagoras' use of ἀκτίς (ray); the Apologist simply mixed the words. See Malherbe, "The Holy Spirit in Athenagoras," *JTS* 20 (1969): 538-542 and Pouderon, *Athénagore*, 102-103n3.

[24] *Leg.* 24.2.

[25] *Leg.* 10.4.

[26] *Dial.* 128.3-4. As noted in chapter three, Justin addressed the potential problems with the analogy in order to affirm a real distinction between God and the Logos (*Dial.* 128.3-4). See above p. 120n53. Athenagoras nowhere combats such a potential misunderstanding; in fact, he encourages it with his added description that the Spirit goes forth from *and returns* to the Father. Moreover, Athenagoras does not display the same careful concern to establish the eternal nature of the Spirit that he did with the Logos. As such, there is nothing analogous to the two-stage Logos theology in relation to the Spirit in Athenagoras' work. More akin to the Valentinian theory of emanations, Athenagoras' pneumatology implies that the Spirit commences his existence when he emanates from the Father and arguably ends his separate existence when he returns to the Father. With his use of Wisd. 7:25 in reference to the Spirit, one might expect Athenagoras to use the title "Sophia" of the Spirit, which would have helped establish both the eternal nature and the distinction of the Spirit, but he does not use this title. This identification is a pneumatological development that will occur after the Athenian Apologist.

negates the real distinction between God and the Spirit, for the Spirit is not separated from the Father for eternity, but only for a certain amount of time. Still, Athenagoras' insights on the generation of the Spirit, and its parallels with his account of the generation of the Son, suggest that Athenagoras understood, although imperfectly, the nature of the Holy Spirit as distinct from the Logos.

Although imperfectly established, Athenagoras' understanding of the separate nature of the Holy Spirit allows him to attribute the work of prophecy to the Spirit, alone because he nowhere confuses the persons of the Spirit and the Logos as Justin had.[27] For Athenagoras, roles for the Second and Third Persons are distinct—the Logos is the agent of creation, while the Spirit is the agent of prophecy. Athenagoras establishes this distinction of roles by connecting one function—or one category of functions[28]—with each of the three divine entities in his outline of Christian doctrine in *Leg.* 10: God the Father "created, adorned, and now rules the universe…" He creates through the Logos, the "Ideal Form and Energizing Power for everything material…" Subsequently, the Holy Spirit "is active in those who speak prophetically…"[29] These works are united in their shared status as works of the power of God (expressed by the verb ἐνεργέω),[30] but Athenagoras keeps them distinct through his precise language—he nowhere attributes to

[27] This consistent attribution also may result from Athenagoras' failure to address the incarnation. Both Justin's and Irenaeus' writings show the need to demonstrate the continuity between Jesus Christ the incarnate Son and the pre-existent Logos of God, a continuity demonstrated by the Second Person's continual work of revelation to the patriarchs and prophets as the Logos of the theophanies, and in recent times, to the disciples and gospel writers through the Logos' incarnation. Without attention to the incarnation, Athenagoras has no need to demonstrate this continuity. As such, prophecy can be limited to the work of the Spirit in accord with the traditional title "the prophetic Spirit."

[28] Athenagoras' description of God the Father creating, adorning, and ruling in *Leg.* 10.1 could be taken as three functions, but they all refer to the same general category of providential creating.

[29] *Leg.* 10.1, 3, and 4.

[30] For more on Athenagoras' understanding of the Logos and Spirit as possessing the same power of God, see below pp. 226-231.

the Spirit the work of creation, and he nowhere attributes to the Logos the work of prophecy or revelation.

Scholars often interpret Athenagoras' statement in *Leg* 6.2, "all things have been created by his [that is, God's] Logos and sustained by the spirit from him" as an indication that Athenagoras assigns the Holy Spirit a role in creation.[31] Several problems exist with this interpretation. First, *Leg.* 6.2 is the only passage in the entire work that notes a creative function of the Spirit, despite several other passages where Athenagoras describes the process of creation.[32] These creation passages all contain a version of the statement "God creates through his Logos," but they lack any mention of a creative work of the Spirit. Far from establishing a doctrine of the work of the Spirit in creation, then, *Leg.* 6.2 offers an exception from Athenagoras' standard formula. Second, in the *Leg.* 10 passage in which Athenagoras addresses each divine entity in turn as well as the work that distinguishes one from another, he says nothing about the Spirit's role in creation, thus limiting the Spirit's work to prophecy. If the Spirit's functions included sustaining the creation, this important work likely would be repeated in *Leg.* 10.4, the only passage that addresses the distinct identity of the Spirit as compared with the other two divine beings.[33] Third, the context of the *Leg.* 6.2 statement shows that Athenagoras here does

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[31] "…οὗ λόγῳ δεδημιούργηται καὶ τῷ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ πνεύματι συνέχεται τὰ πάντα…" *Leg.* 6.2. Scholars who show this understanding of the Spirit's work in Athenagoras include Barnard, *Athenagoras,* 107, Barnes, "Early Christian Pneumatology," 173, Crehan, *Athenagoras,* 36, Malherbe, "Holy Spirit," 538-539, Prestige, *Patristic Thought,* 88-89, Schoedel, *Athenagoras,* xviii, 15.

[32] For example, *Leg.* 4.2, 10.1, 3, 25.3.

[33] Malherbe argues that the Prov. 8:22 reference in *Leg.* 10.4 should be taken not as a reference to the Logos, as is normally understood, but as a reference to the Spirit, thus providing an additional text to support the Spirit's creative work. His argument is as follows: 1) the use of ἀπόῤῥοια to describe the Spirit in *Leg.* 10.4 is inspired by Wisd. 7:25; 2) the figure of Prov. 8:22 and Wisd. 7:25 both refer to a pre-existent Sophia/Wisdom figure; 3) for Athenagoras to refer the Sophia of Prov. 8:22 to the Logos and the Sophia of Wisd. 7:25 to the Spirit is contradictory. Accordingly, Malherbe takes the dative form of λόγος in *Leg.* 10.4 to refer to the Second Person, as opposed to "account" as I have rendered it (see above p. 176n21), and the verb συνᾴδω ("to agree") to refer to the agreement of the Logos and the Spirit in their work of creation. Malherbe, "Holy Spirit," 538-540. Malherbe's argument has several difficulties. First,

not intend to explain the Christian understanding of creation (which does not come until *Leg.* 10); rather, in this passage he intends only to give occasional examples of the parallels between Christian and Greek beliefs regarding the divine nature. Accordingly, Athenagoras writes that "God's spirit" is active in the creation in order to correlate Christian doctrine with the Stoic belief in a spirit who moves through all "permutations of matter."[34] Most likely, then, Athenagoras' use of πνεῦμα in *Leg.* 6.2 refers not to the Holy Spirit but to a generic spirit of God that permeates and sustains creation, a use of πνεῦμα, which is paralleled in Theophilus' work.[35] Thus, the Holy Spirit, the ἀπόῤῥοια of the Father in *Leg.* 10.4, has no function in creation; his work is strictly prophetic.

Athenagoras nowhere else refers to the Spirit as Sophia, but he specifically refers to the Logos as Sophia (*Leg.* 24.2) where the title juxtaposes with that of the Spirit who is not the Sophia but the ἀπόῤῥοια of God. Thus, if Athenagoras is appropriating the Jewish Wisdom tradition in order to establish a pre-existent figure in creation, the figure with which he is concerned is more likely the Logos. However, even if Athenagoras associates Sophia with the Spirit (by, for example, attributing the figure in Wisd. 7:25 to the pre-existent Spirit), this does not necessitate him attributing the figure in Prov. 8:22 to the Spirit as well. Indeed, Theophilus regards the Spirit as Sophia and yet he refers to the figure in Prov. 8:22 as the Logos (*Autol.* 2.10). In neither Athenagoras' quotation of Prov. 8:22, nor his allusion to Wisd. 7:25, does he refer to the pre-existent figure called Sophia by name—Malherbe has provided the name. Second, Malherbe overlooks the adjective προφητικός used to describe the Spirit in *Leg.* 10.4. Its presence signals not a creative function of the Spirit but a prophetic function—the Spirit prophesies to the presence of the Logos with God and his actions in creation in Prov. 8:22. In the next line, Athenagoras underscores this prophetic function only as characteristic of the Spirit. Moreover, the only other use of the adjective in connection with the Spirit (*Leg.* 18.2) likewise underscores his function of speaking through the Scriptures. This prophetic action of the Spirit explains both the verb συνᾴδω and the change of the referent of λόγος from the Second Person in *Leg.* 10.2-3 to an "account" in *Leg.* 10.4. The prophetic Spirit "agrees" with Athenagoras' "account" of the generation of the Logos insofar as he prophesied of the same generation in Prov. 8:22. My translation of the first sentence of *Leg.* 10.4, then, is a transitional statement—in *Leg.* 10.2-3, Athenagoras addresses the Logos. In the first sentence of *Leg.* 10.4, he offers the scriptural proof of his statements, inspired by the Spirit, which then leads him to speak of the Spirit in the remainder of *Leg.* 10.4. Thus, *Leg.* 10.4 does not refer to a creative function of the Spirit, making the interpretation of *Leg.* 6.2 as witnessing to the Spirit's creative function less likely.

[34] *Leg.* 6.4.

[35] Although he did not develop his idea, Grant observed that the sustaining agent in *Leg.* 6.2 is the pre-existent Christ, and he located the source of the idea in Colossians and Ephesians. Grant, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 92. Apparently he had in mind a spirit of the Logos; therefore, he united the two functions in the one person of the Logos. Grant's interpretation springs from the absence in Athenagoras' work of a notion of Spirit as Creator. In his *Greek Apologists*, Grant says nothing of a creating or sustaining function of the Spirit in Athenagoras' understanding, despite his generally high view of the Athenian Apologist's Trinitarian theology. Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 92. Unfortunately, the most prolific Athenagoran scholar, Pouderon, is unclear on his interpretation of the potential creative function of the Spirit. Although his translation of *Leg.* 6.2 favors the position of Malherbe, *et. al.* (*Athénagore*, 91), Pouderon fails to address the passage in his larger treatment of Athenagoras' pneumatology (*Athénagore d'Athènes*, 140-142). In the

Despite the Spirit's distinct role of prophecy, his work is limited. Athenagoras, like Justin,[36] does not address the question of an ongoing role of the Spirit in the present life of the Christian community. His lack of attention to this point stems from his failure to address any aspect of the incarnation or the life of the Church. Thus, for all his advances upon Justin's ill-defined notion of the Spirit, Athenagoras fails to attribute to the Spirit a lasting role in God's economy.

1.3 Theophilus

Theophilus exhibits two important pneumatological advances from both his predecessors. Both developments are the result of a Second Temple Jewish influence gained from Theophilus' strongly Jewish/Jewish Christian setting in Antioch.[37] The first of these developments is his identification of the Third Person with the hypostasized Wisdom or Sophia (σοφία) of God present in Jewish Wisdom literature. This identification denotes a significant change from Justin, Athenagoras, and other early

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latter treatment, Pouderon notes that Athenagoras is capable of using πνεῦμα not to refer to the Holy Spirit but to refer to a general attribute of God, which would appear to favor my reading. However, his chart categorizing Athenagoras' uses of πνεῦμα according to his schematization inexplicably omits the use of πνεῦμα in *Leg.* 6.2. Interestingly, Pouderon notes a use of πνεῦμα with possible connections to the Spirit's creative function overlooked by other scholars, namely, *Leg.* 5.3, which he renders «*(Dieu) tient les rênes de la creation par son Esprit.*» Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes*, 140. Nevertheless, Pouderon rejects this passage as a reference to the Holy Spirit because Athenagoras attributes the thought to Euripides. Given Pouderon's limiting of the work of the Spirit to prophecy and his general ambivalence toward Athenagoras' doctrine of the Holy Spirit regarding his distinct personhood, the scholar likely does not ascribe a creative function to the Spirit in Athenagoras' thought. Unfortunately, his failure to address the key passage makes it impossible to be certain of his thoughts.

[36] See above p. 175n20.

[37] See above p. 51n117. On the Jewish background of the images that follow, as related to Theophilus, see Bardy, *Théophile*, 43-45, Daniélou, *Jewish Christianity*, 110-114, Grant, "Problem of Theophilus," 188-196, idem., "Theophilus to Antioch," 234-242, Kretschmar, *Frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie*, 28-31, 59-61, and Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:570. Two of these images are present in Barnes' schematic of the "four traditions of Jewish Christian pneumatologies," namely, "Spirit as creator" and "wisdom pneumatology." The other two traditions Barnes identifies are angelic pneumatology and consort pneumatology. Barnes, "Early Christian Pneumatology," 170. Of the four great sources of Jewish Christian pneumatology Barnes identifies, Prov. is the most important for Theophilus. Barnes, "Early Christian Pneumatology," 177.

writers who universally identified this Sophia figure with the Son.[38] The second development is his attribution of the work of creation to the Holy Spirit alongside the Son. According to the second century Jewish Christian understanding of God, this attribution gives to the Spirit a divine function, and as a result, the divinity of the Holy Spirit is clearest in Theophilus' works.

Theophilus makes the identification of the Holy Spirit and Sophia in two places. First, he interprets Psalm 33/2:6 to say that two agents are at work in creation, as opposed to the standard one agent (the Logos) proclaimed by the Fourth Gospel and assumed by Justin and Athenagoras. Theophilus understands this second agent, called πνεῦμα by the Psalmist, as the Sophia of God. He writes, "God made all things through his Logos and his Sophia, for 'by his Logos the heavens were made firm and by his Spirit all their power.'"[39] In Theophilus' interpretation that introduces the Psalm, Sophia replaces the Psalmist's use of Spirit. Theophilus' parallel placement of Logos indicates that he does not intend to introduce a fourth agent called πνεῦμα into the equation. Since the first agent is the same in both Theophilus' statement and the Psalm with which he supports his statement, it follows that the second agent is the same, despite a change in titles. Second, when he refers to the prophetic work of the Holy Spirit, Theophilus interchanges Spirit and Sophia. He writes, "The men of God, who were possessed by the Holy Spirit [πνεύματος ἁγίου] and became prophets and were inspired and instructed by God himself, were taught by God and became holy and righteous. For this reason they were

[38] Although Athenagoras alludes to Wisd. 7:25 in his discussion of the Spirit, which could have constituted an identification of Spirit and Sophia, he does not develop the idea to any significant degree, and he never makes explicit the connection between Spirit and Sophia. For Athenagoras, following Justin, the Sophia of God is the Logos.

[39] "ὁ θεός διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς σοφίας ἐποίησε τὰ πάντα· τῷ γὰρ λόγῳ αὐτοῦ ἐστερεώθησαν οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ." *Autol.* 1.7

judged worthy to receive the reward of becoming instruments of God and containing Sophia [σοφίαν] from him. Through Sophia they spoke about the creation of the world and about everything else…"[40] In this passage, the Sophia acts as the agent who inspires prophecy, and the same is implied, both here and elsewhere, of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the two figures are equated by their identical function.[41]

The identification of the Holy Spirit with Sophia represents a significant development in pneumatology because it provides Theophilus the logic establishing the Spirit as a distinct person alongside the Father and the Logos. With Theophilus, the Spirit is no longer an ambiguous, vague figure subsumed into the person of the Logos (as was witnessed with Justin) or an entity emerging from and returning to the Father like a ray of the sun (as was witnessed in Athenagoras). As the Sophia of God, the Spirit parallels the Son's identity as the Logos of God. Both entities are eternal attributes of the Father and both stand in equal relationship to the Father (allowing Theophilus elsewhere to refer to them as the "hands of God").[42]

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[40] *Autol.* 2.9, Grant, 39 with minor revisions.

[41] In Grant's understanding, Theophilus never equates πνεῦμα and σοφία in the manner I have here suggested. Instead, Grant sees σοφία in Theophilus' understanding refers to the entity nearest to the Third Person, whom I have been calling the Holy Spirit, while πνεῦμα refers to either the breath of God (*Autol.* 1.7) or a "medium of revelation, though not quite a personal agent like Logos or Sophia…" Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch," 251. He discounts the second example I have drawn in favor of the identification of πνεῦμα and σοφία because of the lack of a definite article with πνεύματος ἁγίου (admittedly, my adding the definite article is an interpretive rendering). Nonetheless, with the first example Grant admits that the Sophia is identified with this medium of revelation. He rejects πνεῦμα as a title for the Third Person, however, because "the identification is not systematic or thoroughgoing." Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch," 252. Other scholars with similar interpretations include Kretschmar, *Trinitätstheologie,* 32 and Rogers, *Theophilus,* 81-89. I think the tradition of the Holy Spirit as the agent of prophecy in both Jewish and Christian traditions is too strong and Theophilus' references to the Holy Spirit as the agent of prophecy too many to sustain the argument that Theophilus does not consider the πνεῦμα in some places as the Third Person, also called σοφία. In any case, Grant's interpretation is too circuitous to sustain the division he perceives between πνεῦμα and σοφία. His interpretation begs the question, "what does it mean to say that the πνεῦμα is impersonal but is sometimes identified with the personal σοφία?" I offer a potential solution below, in which I suggest that πνεῦμα, like σοφία, is fluid and can refer to multiple entities, one of which is the Third Person.

[42] *Autol.* 2.18.

Moreover, Theophilus demonstrates the parallel natures of the Second and Third Persons through their comparable generations from the interior heart of God. Regarding the generation of the Holy Spirit, Theophilus writes, "Therefore God, having his own Logos innate in his own bowels, generated him *together with his own Sophia*, vomiting him forth before everything else."[43] Due to Theophilus' inclusion of the Spirit with the Logos in this statement, all the aspects of distinct personality given to the Logos based on his generation ought to be given to the Spirit as well.[44] Accordingly, the Spirit is eternal, although he exists from eternity as an impersonal attribute of God, indistinguishable from God and (presumably) indistinguishable from the Logos. At his generation before the creation of the world, he comes forth from the Father with the Logos allowing both entities to work as the agents of God in the world.

For Theophilus, the Spirit performs the same functions as the Logos in the material creation; namely, the Spirit reveals the purposes of the Father, and most importantly, he is the agent of creation. Like Justin and Athenagoras, Theophilus believes that the Spirit functions as the prophets' agent of inspiration. He writes, "All these things are taught us by the Holy Spirit which spoke through Moses and the other prophets…"[45] Elsewhere he writes, "It is obvious how agreeably and harmoniously all the prophets spoke, making their proclamation by one and the same Spirit concerning the sole rule of God and the origin of the world and the making of man."[46] Again, in the third book, he writes, "[T]he teaching of the prophets and the gospels is consistent with [justice]

[43] *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 39, italics added.
[44] See above pp. 129-132.
[45] *Autol.* 2.30, Grant, 75. For a similar statement, see *Autol.* 3.23.
[46] *Autol.* 2.35. For a similar statement, see *Autol.* 3.17

because all the inspired men made utterances by means of the one Spirit of God."[47] Two observations emerge from Theophilus' passages regarding the prophetic function of the Spirit. First, the prophetic function is normally associated with the title πνεῦμα as opposed to σοφία.[48] Second, unlike the previous two Apologists, Theophilus does not limit the prophetic/revelatory function to the prophets; instead, he understands this function as ongoing in the Christian community. The Holy Spirit spoke through the New Testament writers in the same way he spoke through the Old Testament writers,[49] and he continues to speak to Christians. Theophilus writes, "For this reason it is plain that all the rest were in error and that only the Christians have held the truth—we who are instructed by the Holy Spirit who spoke in the holy prophets and foretold everything."[50] These passages are noteworthy insofar as Theophilus says little about theological matters beyond the Old Testament.

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[47] *Autol.* 3.12, Grant, 117. See also *Autol.* 1.14, 16. Theophilus, like Justin, also attributes the function of prophecy to the Logos. For example, he writes, "Solomon—or rather, the Logos of God speaking through him as an instrument—says…" *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 41. As with Justin, this tendency could be interpreted as confusion or inconsistency. Nevertheless, given Theophilus' more defined understanding of the Sophia/Spirit as equal to the Logos, Theophilus likely intends to show their cooperation in this manner—both agents speak the prophetic words of God because both were with God in the beginning.

[48] One exception occurs in *Autol.* 2.9 quoted above. Theophilus makes this exception possibly in order to solidify the identification between the Spirit and the figure he calls Sophia. Two other possible exceptions exist. First, in *Autol.* 2.10, Theophilus writes, "For the divine Sophia knew in advance that some persons were going to speak nonsense and make mention of a multitude of non-existent gods. Therefore, in order for the real God to be known through his works, and to show that by his Logos God made heaven and earth and what is in them, he said: 'In the Beginning God made heaven and earth.'" Grant, 41. Here Sophia is credited with speaking these words of Scripture. However, the meaning Theophilus draws from this passage is not prophetic—the Logos is not prophesied to work in creation so much as he is described as an agent of creation. Instead, Theophilus contrasts the meaning of the Holy Spirit's statement in Gen. to those people who "speak nonsense." Thus, the title "Sophia" better underscores this contrast than does the title "Spirit" for it contrasts the wisdom of God to the foolishness of the pagans. The second exception comes from *Autol.* 3.15 in which Theophilus writes, "God is acknowledged, truth controls, grace preserves, peace protects, holy Logos leads, Sophia teaches, Life controls, God reigns." Grant, 121. Theophilus regularly describes the words of Scripture as "the teachings" leading to the conclusion that he means here to indicate the Sophia as the one who speaks in the Scriptures. Nonetheless, once again the import of the passage is not prophecy *per se* so much as the teachings of Christianity in general, which, again, are more appropriately a function of the title "Sophia," insofar as Theophilus considers Christian teachings as full of wisdom.

[49] *Autol.* 2.22 notes that John spoke by the same Holy Spirit.

[50] *Autol.* 2.33, Grant, 82.

If πνεῦμα is associated most often with the work of prophecy, σοφία is associated most often with the work of creation. This association likely is due to its Jewish origins as well as the parallel it establishes between the Third Person as God's eternal Wisdom and the Second Person as God's eternal Word. Therefore, like the Logos, the Sophia is with God in the beginning—God has two agents of creation. Theophilus writes, "For the prophets did not exist when the world came into existence; there were the Sophia of God which is in [God] and his holy Logos who is always present with him."[51] Regarding the work of creation itself, Theophilus writes, "God is found saying: 'Let us make man after the image and likeness' as if he needed assistance; but he said 'Let us make' to none other than his own Logos and his own Sophia."[52] In contrast, Justin's interpretation of the same verse—Genesis 1:26—identified the Logos alone as the recipient of God's statement. Theophilus elsewhere writes, "He is God, who heals and gives life through Logos and Sophia."[53] Theophilus also speaks of the Sophia apart from the Logos in this work when he writes, "His Sophia is most powerful: 'God by Sophia founded the earth; he prepared the heavens by intelligence; by knowledge the abysses were broken up and the clouds poured forth dews.'"[54] These passages demonstrate Theophilus' conviction that the Sophia is an equal agent of creation with the Logos. In fact, Theophilus nowhere distinguishes the kind of work they do in creation; the work is, evidently, identical.

As important as Theophilus' identification of Spirit and Sophia and his attribution of the work of creation to the Spirit is for the development of pneumatology in general,

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[51] *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 41.
[52] *Autol.* 2.18, Grant, 57.
[53] *Autol.* 1.7, Grant, 11.
[54] *Autol.* 1.7, Grant, 11. The Scripture passage here quoted comes from Prov. 3:19. On this point, see also *Autol.* 1.13.

and Irenaeus' pneumatology in particular, two factors limit their significance and produce confusion in Theophilus' pneumatology. First, "Sophia" is not solely a title for the Third Person; it describes the Second Person as well. For example, in *Autol.* 2.10, shortly after distinguishing Logos and Sophia into two distinct entities by means of their parallel generations, Theophilus uses the title "Sophia" of the Logos. He writes, "[God] used this Logos as his servant in the things created by him, and through him he made all things. He is called Beginning because he leads and dominates everything fashioned through him. It was he, Spirit of God and Beginning and Sophia and Power of the Most High, who came down…"[55] Theophilus makes the same identification between the Second Person and Sophia and Power in a later passage when he writes, "But his Logos, through whom he made all things, who is his Power and Sophia, assuming the role of God and conversed with Adam."[56] Theophilus likely is influenced by Paul in these passages, who called the Son the "power and wisdom of God" in 1 Corinthians 1:24. Although he does not cite the scriptural reference, it might explain the change of referent for "Sophia" in both instances. Still, the change of reference shows that the Spirit-Sophia identification has yet to be fully established.

Second, although Theophilus distinguishes between Spirit and Sophia at *Autol.* 1.7 and 2.9, it is not at all clear that every time Theophilus speaks of God's πνεῦμα, he intends the personal figure of Sophia.[57] Several uses of πνεῦμα suggest that he is referring to an impersonal, all pervasive spirit more akin to the Stoic πνεῦμα or Middle

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[55] "Τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔσχεν ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ γεγενημένων, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν. Οὗτος λέγεται ἀρχή, ὅτι ἄρχει καὶ κυριεύει πάντων τῶν δι᾽ αὐτοῦ δεδημιουργημένων. Οὗτος οὖν, ὢν πνεῦμα θεοῦ καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου, κατήρχετο…" *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 39, 41.

[56] *Autol.* 2.22, Grant, 63 with minor revisions.

[57] This statement is in contrast to the assumptions of older scholarship in representative works such as Bardy, *Théophile*, 43-45 and Swete, *Holy Spirit*, 46-47.

Platonic World Soul than to the Third Person.[58] For example, he writes, "the air and everything under heaven is anointed, so to speak, by light and spirit."[59] Elsewhere he writes, "the whole creation is surrounded by the spirit of God and the surrounding spirit, along with the creation, is enclosed by the hand of God."[60] Perhaps clearest of all is his interpretation of the πνεῦμα of Genesis 1:2, which he does not understand to be the Holy Spirit proper, as indicated in Justin, but this generic, Stoic πνεῦμα. He writes, "The 'spirit borne over the water' was the one given by God to give life to the creation, like the soul in man, when he mingled tenuous elements together (for the spirit is tenuous and the water is tenuous), so that the spirit might nourish the water and the water with the spirit might nourish the creation by penetrating it from all sides."[61] In *Autol.* 1.7, Theophilus equates this all-pervasive spirit with the breath of God. He writes, "This is my God, the Lord of the universe, the one who alone spread out the heaven…who established the earth upon the waters and gave a spirit to nourish it. His breath [πνοή] gives life to everything; if he held back the spirit for himself everything would fail."[62] The equation of πνεῦμα and πνοή confirms the impersonal nature of this πνεῦμα and adds to the confusion of Theophilus' intended referent with his use of πνεῦμα.

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[58] Here I agree with the first of Grant's two interpretations of πνεῦμα in Theophilus. He writes, "[Spirit] is the breath of God, which we ourselves breathe; it sustains the world and surrounds everything, like the anima mundi of the Stoics. But the idea is essentially derived from the Bible; if God held his breath, the world would perish." Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch," 251. As indicated, Grant distinguishes this impersonal entity from the personal Sophia. Theophilus may at times use σοφία to refer to this cosmic World Soul as well (*Autol.* 1.6, 13), but these passages equally could refer either to the Son or the Holy Spirit. The difficulty with identifying the referent of these uses of σοφία illustrates Theophilus' lack of clarity.

[59] *Autol.* 1.12, Grant, 17.

[60] *Autol.* 1.5, Grant, 7.

[61] *Autol.* 2.13, Grant, 49.

[62] "Οὗτός μου θεὸς ὁ τῶν ὅλων κύριος, ὁ τανύσας τὸν οὐρανὸν μόνος…ὁ θεμελιώσας τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων καὶ δοὺς πνεῦμα τὸ πρέφον αὐτήν, οὗ ἡ τνοὴ ζωογονεῖ τὸ πᾶν, ὃς ἐὰν συσχῇ τὸ πνεῦμα παρ᾽ ἑαυτῷ ἐκλείψει τὸ πᾶν." *Autol.* 1.7.

The fluency with which Theophilus uses the titles "Spirit" and "Sophia" as well as the indistinct functions of the Sophia/Spirit in creation and prophecy from those of the Logos suggests that Theophilus' pneumatology lacks consistency despite its crucial developments. Moreover, the lack of a unique role of the Sophia/Spirit (both functions he performs are identical to functions of the Logos) in Theophilus' pneumatology indicates he lacks the logic to support the presence of two agents in the economy. The logic supporting the presence of a third entity in the economy did not develop until the work of Irenaeus, and this subsequent development grounds Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology to a previously unmatched degree.

2. Irenaeus

The previous chapter demonstrated that Irenaeus develops his understanding of the nature of the Second Person largely in the context of his anti-Valentinian polemic, particularly regarding the eternal relationship of God/Father and Logos/Son, since their reciprocal immanence countered the topological theology of the Valentinians. Irenaeus' understanding of the nature of the Third Person does not receive a parallel treatment in these early books of *Haer*.[63] The Spirit is present in Irenaeus' early writings, but he

[63] Barnes writes, "The strong account in the first three books of *Against Heresies* of the Word as 'mapping' or containing the whole content of God, as the single offspring, and as co-creator is not matched by a comparable account of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Irenaeus's arguments that the Word contains the whole content of God and is the single offspring of God make it difficult for him to speak in similar terms of the Holy Spirit, if he wanted to." Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 94. On this point, see also Jaschke, *Heilige Geist*, 175-176. One consequence of the lack of developed pneumatology in the first two or three books of *Haer.* is a general neglect or undervaluing of Irenaeus' pneumatology in scholarship. Harnack's influential and negative appraisal and Loofs' influential thesis, which identified the true genius of Irenaeus' pneumatological features as Theophilus, fuelled this general neglect. Harnack believed the Holy Spirit was obscure in Irenaeus' thought, as neither his personality nor his function was well defined. This interpretation is due in part to Harnack's focus on Irenaeus' christology and in part to his drawing largely from the early books of *Haer.* His summary statement, "even the personality of the Spirit vanishes with [Irenaeus]" is occasioned only by *Haer.* 3.18.3, in which Irenaeus speaks of the Spirit as the unction of

remains largely undefined and devoid of a developed work necessitating his existence alongside of the Logos. When the aspects of Irenaeus' high pneumatology—the Spirit as Sophia and Spirit as Creator traditions, respectively—appear at the end of *Haer.* 3, they have already been developed apart from any polemic. Thus, identifying why Irenaeus develops his pneumatology alongside of his Logos theology or tracing this development in connection with his opponents' theology proves difficult.[64]

Two factors, distinct from Irenaeus' polemic against his opponents, explain this development. The first factor is his firm conviction that belief in a personal entity called "the Spirit" alongside God/Father and Logos/Son is a traditional article of the faith handed down to the Church from the apostles. The Spirit's presence in the two *regula*

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the Son. Harnack, *History of Dogma* 2:353n556. Harnack's conclusions are largely paralleled by Orbe whose various writings on the Spirit in Irenaeus often render the Spirit an impersonal power uniting the Father and the Son. Moreover, like his understanding of the Logos, Orbe interprets Irenaeus as saying the Spirit comes forth for the purpose of creation, thus subordinating him to the Father (and the Son). See, for example, Orbe, *La Teología del Espiritu Santo,* Estudios Valentinianos 6 (Rome, 1966), 464-467. There have been some exceptions to this generally negative appraisal, notably Swete who speaks of the Spirit as divine and co-equal to the Son in Irenaeus' theology. Swete, *Holy Spirit,* 84-94. More recently, Jaschke has argued for a basic unity of Irenaeus' pneumatology (against Loofs' thesis) and more importantly a centrality of pneumatology to Irenaeus' theological vision from its foundations as the third article of the "*Glaubensformeln*." Jaschke, *Heilige Geist,* esp. 160-180. Many of his arguments on this count are formed in specific contrast to Orbe's understanding. Several recent works have argued for a well-developed and "high" pneumatology in Irenaeus, notably those by Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 93-104 and Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit,* esp. 95-225. Both Barnes and Briggman perceive the development in Irenaeus' pneumatology identified here, which allows them to subordinate those passages that display an undeveloped pneumatology in the early books of *Haer.* to the more developed pneumatology of the later books of *Haer.* and *Epid.* I will follow the same method.

[64] Irenaeus does not develop his pneumatology completely apart from polemic. Indeed, his understanding of the coming of the Spirit upon the Son at the baptism, which he develops in the middle chapters of *Haer.* 3, counters the "Gnostic" conception that the heavenly Christ came down upon the earthly Jesus at the baptism (see, for example, *Haer* 3.9.3, 10.4, 17.1-4). He claims that with this interpretation, his opponents "set the Spirit aside altogether…" which leads him to develop certain pneumatological aspects against their absence of pneumatology. Aeby develops this point well. See Aeby, *Missions Divines,* 60-62. I will return to this aspect of Irenaeus' pneumatology in chapter five in relation to its Trinitarian implications. See below pp. 253-256. My statement here refers only to the high aspects of Irenaeus' pneumatology. Conversely, Fantino claims that Irenaeus does develop these high pneumatological aspects, particularly the work of the Sophia alongside God and the Logos in creation, in response to "Gnostic" theologies. See Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée,* 279-287. I am unconvinced by his argument and will counter it in the text that follows (see below p. 204n100).

statements of *Haer.* 1 indicates this conviction.[65] While the existence of a personal Holy Spirit offers Irenaeus' polemic nothing additional to his consideration of the nature of the Logos/Son, his belief in the Holy Spirit as part of the teaching passed down from the apostles ensures that he will give the Spirit some attention and development. He demonstrates this attention and development when he turns to his own exposition of Scripture in *Haer.* 3.[66] The second factor is Irenaeus' encounter with Theophilus' *Autol.* at some point during his writing of *Haer.* 3.[67] As Briggman has observed, in the first two and a half books of *Haer.*, Irenaeus' pneumatology resembles Justin's—the Holy Spirit is the agent of prophecy and appears alongside the Father and the Son in certain liturgical statements, but does not have a distinct role in the economy. Conversely, in the last two

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[65] The first reference to the Holy Spirit occurs in the *regula* statement of *Haer.* 1.10.1, in which Irenaeus argues that the Church, although scattered throughout the world, is one in her belief in God the Father and in Jesus Christ the Son, "and in the Holy Spirit [*Spiritum Sanctum*, Πνεῦμα ἅγιον], who through the prophets preached the Economies…" *Haer.* 1.10.1, Unger, 49. The Greek fragment comes from Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 31, 9-32. See Rousseau and Doutreleau, *SC* 263:64-73. A second reference to the Holy Spirit, although less clear, comes in a *regula* statement near the end of *Haer.* 1, where in the midst of the article on God the Father, Irenaeus writes, "These [God] did not make through Angels or some Powers that were separated from His thought. For the God of all things needs nothing. No, He made all things by His Logos and Spirit [*Spiritum*], disposing and governing them and giving all of them existence." *Haer.* 1.22.1, Unger, 81 with minor revisions. Irenaeus refers to the Spirit here not as an object of Christian belief, but as a description of the means by which God/Father creates.

[66] Briggman notes that *Haer.* 3 marks the beginning of Irenaeus' pneumatological expansion. In the first two books, Irenaeus' pneumatology does not factor largely into his theology. Starting at *Haer.* 3, Irenaeus develops multiple images for the Spirit, some of which continue to dominate his work (including the Spirit as Sophia and Spirit as Creator themes) and some which do not have a lasting impact on his work. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 76-150. Briggman does not offer much exploration regarding causes for the expansion. My understanding suggests that as Irenaeus turns from the polemic of *Haer.* 1-2, where the focus was on the unification of the Godhead through Logos theology, to his exposition of the economy of salvation in *Haer.* 3-5, he is less concerned with showing the uniqueness of the Logos/Son and more concerned with interpreting Scripture, where he consistently sees the work and presence of the Spirit. This expansion of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of Jesus and beyond in turn encourages him to develop his understanding of the Spirit as Creator because, for Irenaeus, the economy begins at creation, and the same God who works in creation works in salvation. Steenberg means something similar when he writes, "[T]he distinction of creative roles is bound up, fundamentally, in the distinction of salvific actions wrought by the Father, Son and Spirit in the one economy of redemption, and it is here that one must look in order to understand their delineation in the protology." Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 72.

[67] Kretschmar finds the roots of Irenaeus' pneumatology (and Trinitarian theology) not in a response to Valentinianism but in the influence of Theophilus. Kretschmar, *Trinitätstheologie*, 44-45. His thesis generally is correct, although he lacks attention to the clear places in which Irenaeus alters Theophilus' understanding. Instead, he often glazes over the differences by assuming that certain aspects of Irenaeus' understanding not evident in *Autol.* must have come from Theophilus' lost work. Thus, his ideas present merely a chastened form of Loofs' thesis.

books of *Haer.* and in the *Epid.*, Irenaeus' pneumatology is more akin to Theophilus'—the Spirit is the Sophia of God, who like the Logos, is an agent of creation with an integral role in the economy. This change suggests that Irenaeus' reading of Theophilus sparked his pneumatological development.[68]

The rather undeveloped pneumatology of the first two and a half books of *Haer.* suggest that Irenaeus likely would have approved of Theophilus' pneumatology, since it would have confirmed the Jewish ideas of the Spirit as Sophia and the Spirit as Creator, two pneumatological themes to which Irenaeus alludes but does not develop in the early books.[69] Theophilus' pneumatology likely would have encouraged Irenaeus to develop these themes further in his own exposition of Scripture (which he immediately proceeds

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[68] In chapter one, I mentioned the thesis put forward by Briggman; namely, that Irenaeus reads Theophilus sometime in the midst of writing *Haer.* 3. Here I will revisit the thesis in detail, since I will assume its truth in the discussion that follows. Briggman's argument rests on two primary points. The first is Irenaeus' interpretation of Ps. 33/2:6, "τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυριοῦ οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματου αὐτοῦ…" (LXX). Irenaeus quotes Ps. 33/2:6 three times, in *Haer.* 1.22.1, *Haer.* 3.8.3, and *Epid.* 5. In the first two uses, Irenaeus quotes the verse in full and applies it only to the one agent of the Logos, both by the presence of λόγος in the passage and by the image of God's mouth and its implied connection to speech. As a result, the πνεῦμα of the verse refers not to "spirit" but to "breath." In the last use, Irenaeus quotes a variant of the verse—the same variant that occurs in Theophilus' *Autol.* 1.7—which leaves off the last three words, τοῦ στόματου αὐτοῦ, consequently dissociating πνεῦμα from the image of "mouth" and its concomitant sense of "breath." Irenaeus is then free to interpret the πνεῦμα of the passage not as the Logos but as a second agent called the Spirit. The *Epid.* 5 use of the passage parallels Theophilus' use while the former two do not, suggesting both that Irenaeus gains the unique interpretation from Theophilus and that he is not aware of it until sometime after writing *Haer.* 3.8.3. Briggman's second point is that the concentration of parallels between Theophilus' and Irenaeus' respective works occuring between *Haer.* 3.22.4 and 3.24.1 suggest a proximity between Irenaeus' acquisition of Theophilus' work and his writing *Haer.* 3.22.1 through 3.24.1. These parallels include Adam and Eve's creation as innocent children, their disobedience that caused the fall, and the remedial value of death. (Although my interpretation of Theophilus' distinction between the Holy Spirit and the impersonal πνεῦμα of God, a distinction which Briggman does not recognize, would discount the parallel he finds in *Haer.* 3.24.1, his thesis remains persuasive.) Thus, Irenaeus likely read Theophilus' *Autol.* sometime between writing *Haer.* 3.8.3 and 3.22.4. For the entire argument, see Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 151-159.

[69] The Spirit as Creator tradition appears as part of the *regula* in *Haer.* 1.22.1 (see above p. 191n65). The first identification of the Holy Spirit of the *regula* with the Sophia of God comes in *Haer.* 2.30.9, quoted below. The presence of these ideas in Irenaeus prior to his acquaintance with Theophilus confirms that Theophilus is not his original source for the ideas. Rather, he is drawn to the notion through contact with Jewish or Jewish Christian sources, similar to those influencing Theophilus, which he acquires perhaps from his time in Smyrna. On the Jewish character of this material in general, see above p. 181n37. On the Jewish character of this material in relation to Irenaeus, see Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 198-200 and Kretschmar, *Trinitätstheologie*, 34-36, 27-35, 59-61. (Although Kretschmar, largely following Loofs, believes that Irenaeus acquired these ideas, with relatively little alteration, from Theophilus.)

to do). Nonetheless, Irenaeus also may have found many of Theophilus' pneumatological ideas unsatisfactory in light of several identifiable differences between the two figures' use of the same traditions and ideas. Irenaeus develops certain aspects of Theophilus' pneumatology—the Spirit as Sophia and the Spirit as Creator traditions—into a more cohesive system by providing the logic and consistency missing from Theophilus' account.

2.1 The Holy Spirit as the Sophia of God

Prior to reading Theophilus, Irenaeus refers to the Holy Spirit of the *regula* as the Sophia of God only once.[70] Near the end of *Haer.* 2, he writes, "This one alone is found to be God, who has made all things, alone Omnipotent and alone Father, founding and

[70] I do not take the *sapientia* (σοφία) in *Haer.* 2.25.1-2 as a reference to the Third Person. There, Irenaeus writes, "[W]ith great wisdom [*sapientia*] and diligence, all things have clearly been made by God, fitted and prepared [for their special purposes]; and His Logos formed both things ancient and those belonging to the latest times…" ANF 1:396. The difficulty with taking *sapientia* as a reference to the Third Person in this passage is the presence of the word *diligentia*, which is connected to *sapientia* with *et* indicating that both words function in the same manner. As *diligentia* nowhere else refers to a separate entity, the use of both words more likely refer to qualities of God, for certainly Irenaeus believes that God is wise apart from the presence of Sophia in him. *Haer.* 2.25.1, then, is a passage espousing a single agent of creation, much more indicative of Irenaeus' theology in *Haer.* 1 and 2. The same can be said of the reference to God's *sapientia* in *Haer.* 2.30.3. For a similar interpretation of these passages, see Jaschke, *Heilige Geist*, 262. Likewise, Briggman interprets the *sapientia* in these passages not as the Third Person, but as an inherent quality of God. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 203-207. However, because Briggman sees a similarity in the kind of work attributed to this quality of God and the work later attributed to the Sophia/Spirit, Briggman argues for continuity between the two concepts. He writes, "The partial overlap and general semantic agreement of these terms [ascribed to the Sophia/Spirit in *Haer.* 2.30.9] with those ascribed to the wisdom of God in 2.25.1-2 and 2.30.3 shows that in the expansion of his wisdom language, from wisdom as a quality or attribute of God to also include Wisdom as the third member of the Godhead, Irenaeus ascribes to Wisdom the activity originally used to characterize the wisdom of God in creation." Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 207. I agree with Briggman's assessment, particularly because the continuity between the concepts helps us to understand the nature of the creative work Irenaeus envisions for the Sophia. On this point, see below p. 203n98. However, Briggman tends to blur the distinction between this impersonal wisdom of God and the Sophia/Spirit (as seen on pp. 208-209 when he includes those verbs associated with the wisdom of God in *Haer.* 2.25.1 and 2.30.3 with the list of verbs Irenaeus associates with the Sophia/Spirit) giving the impression that Irenaeus has developed a creative work for the Sophia distinct from the creative work of the Logos already in *Haer.* 2. The evidence, as I will argue below, suggests that Irenaeus does not develop a distinct creative work for the Sophia/Spirit until the later books of *Haer.*, after he has read Theophilus' *Autol.*

making all things—both visible and invisible, both perceptible and imperceptible, both heavenly and earthly—by the Logos of his power, he both fitted and arranged all things by his Sophia…he is Father, he is God, he is Founder, he is Maker, he is Creator, who made those things by himself, that is, by his Logos and his Sophia—heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them…"[71] The passage is notable insofar as it makes the Spirit and Sophia identification, suggested by the parallel placement with Logos that mirrors the *regula* structure of Son and Spirit, but the indentification remains undeveloped. First, Irenaeus provides no scriptural references to support the identification. Second, he does not use the entity of Sophia (or the implied meaning of the name) to further his argument in the immediate context.[72] Despite an expanded role for the Spirit in *Haer.* 3, the use of "Sophia" as a pneumatological title is absent until a

[71] "*[S]olus hic Deus invenitur, qui omnia fecit, solus Omnipotens et solus Pater, condens et faciens omnia, et visibilia et invisibilia et sensibilia et insensate et caelestia et terrene, Verbo virtutis suae, et omnia aptavit et disposuit Sapientia sua…hic Pater, hic Deus, hic Conditor, hic Factor, hic Fabricator, qui fecit ea per semetipsum, hoc est per Verbum et per Sapientiam suam, caelum et terram et maria et omnia quae in eis sunt…*" *Haer.* 2.30.9. Although this passage makes no specific mention of the Holy Spirit, the *Haer.* 1.22.1 passage quoted above implies the identification between Sophia and the Spirit. The argument of both passages is the same; namely, God does not need any other entity to create, but he created through his own attributes. In *Haer.* 1.22.1, Irenaeus wrote that God created everything through his Logos and his Spirit. Here, Irenaeus makes the same statement, but substitutes *Sapientia* (Σοφία, Wisdom) for *Spiritus.* (Though we lack the original Greek for these passages, my methodology will continue to refer to the Spirit in Irenaeus' work according to the Greek "Sophia," as opposed to the Latin "Sapientia." Sophia is universally accepted as the original.)

[72] From the first part of the statement, Irenaeus appears to identify two distinct creative works for the Logos and Sophia respectively—the Logos "founded and made" while the Sophia "fitted and arranged." Such is Briggman's interpretation of the passage. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 206-207 (see above p. 193n70). Such an interpretation would serve to mark an important pneumatological development, suggesting that Irenaeus has grasped the significance of the Spirit as Sophia tradition for his work in creation apart from his reading of Theophilus. However, the end of the statement reveals that Irenaeus has yet to fully assimilate a distinction in creative works, for there he speaks of the creative work of the Logos and Sophia with the same term (*fecit*), a statement that parallels that of *Haer.* 1.22.1 and fits better with the logic of one agent in creation that generally dominates the theology of *Haer.* 1-3 (although there are two agents in *Haer.* 2.30.9, they perform the same work). Additionally, after the apparent distinction in creative works, which would necessitate two agents for a complete creation, Irenaeus returns to a one-agent theology in the beginning chapters of *Haer.* 3. See especially *Haer.* 3.4.2, 3.8.3 and 3.11.1-2. This vacillation between one and two agents of creation, coupled with the general underuse of the Spirit as Sophia tradition in the first three books of *Haer.* suggests that, despite the reference to Sophia in *Haer.* 2.30.9, Irenaeus had yet to assimilate it as a pneumatological title or understand the advantages it could give his traditional understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

passage near the end of the book, written at a point after which Irenaeus has read Theophilus' *Autol*.

The first identification Irenaeus draws between the Holy Spirit and Sophia after reading *Autol.* occurs near the end of *Haer.* 3, and immediately shows the influence of Theophilus. Irenaeus writes, "[W]e should know that he who made and formed and breathed in them the breath of life, and nourishes us by creation, establishing all things by his Logos, and binding them together by his Sophia—this is he who is the only true God…"[73] Here, Irenaeus uses two separate verbs to describe the creative work of the Logos and Sophia respectively—the Logos "establishes" (*confirmare*) all things, while the Sophia "binds together" (*compingere*) all things. Nonetheless, unlike the possible distinction of creative works in *Haer.* 2.30.9, Irenaeus makes the distinction permanent insofar as after this reference he never again conflates the Logos' and Sophia's respective creative functions without a specific reason. In other words, from this point onward, all general descriptions of the creative act in Irenaeus' work feature two agents with two distinct creative functions. Although I will reserve detailed comment on this point and other points related to the work of the Sophia/Spirit for the next section, I note the development here in order to show that Irenaeus, by the end of *Haer.* 3, has assimilated the Spirit as Sophia tradition and begins to develop its potential to understanding the nature of the third entity of the traditional *regula*.

The fourth book of *Haer.* displays Irenaeus' greatest use of the Spirit as Sophia tradition. Irenaeus now is able to incorporate the tradition to a greater degree because he

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[73] "*[U]t sciremus quoniam qui fecit et plasmavit et insufflationem vitae insufflavit in eis et per conditionem nutrit nos, Verbo suo confirmans et Sapientia compingens omnia, hic est qui est solus verus Deus…" Haer.* 3.24.2. In general, Irenaeus, like Theophilus, believes that the Holy Spirit and the breath of life are two different entities (cf. *Haer.* 5.12.1). This is one aspect of his pneumatology that will not concern the present discussion.

has acquired from Theophilus the scriptural passages lacking in his passing reference to Sophia in *Haer.* 2.30.9, in order to ground the tradition.[74] The first of these passages, Genesis 1:26, states, "And God said, 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness…" The second passage, Proverbs 3:19, states, "God by Sophia founded the earth, and by prudence he prepared the heavens."[75] Irenaeus makes the most use of the Genesis 1:26 verse.[76] Although the Genesis passage does not make specific mention of Sophia, Theophilus provides the interpretation that Irenaeus accepts as authoritative. Theophilus writes, "[God] regarded the making of man as the only work worthy of his own hands. Furthermore, God is found saying: 'Let us make man after the image and likeness' as if he needed assistance; but he said 'Let us make' to none other than his own Logos and his own Sophia."[77] The interpretation of the presence of two agents to whom God speaks in Genesis 1:26 is opposed to Justin's interpretation of Genesis 1:26 as referring to one agent. Following Theophilus, Irenaeus writes, "For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined within Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For

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[74] Briggman writes, "Irenaeus' identification of the two [Spirit and Sophia] comes from an oriental Jewish Tradition of which he was aware, a tradition that Theophilus probably used as well. His later contact with Theophilus, then, provided the hitherto-lacking textual basis and intellectual categories to further develop the Spirit-Wisdom identification that Irenaeus already held." Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit,* 199.

[75] A third passage that Irenaeus gains from Theophilus is Ps. 33/2:6, which I will explore in more detail in the next section.

[76] Irenaeus quotes Gen. 1:26 twice before reading Theophilus, both times in the course of his exposition of "Gnostic" theology (*Haer.* 1.24.1, 1.30.6). He quotes the verse for his own purposes in *Haer.* 3.23.2, after having read Theophilus, but in the context of speaking of Adam—neither the Logos/Son or Sophia/Spirit are mentioned in this interpretation. From *Haer.* 4 on, Irenaeus returns to Gen. 1:26 several times and uses Theophilus' interpretation of the presence of two agents to whom God speaks. See *Haer.* 4.*pref.*4, 4.20.1, 5.1.3. He also quotes the verse several times to refer to the Logos, alone. See *Haer.* 5.15.4 and *Epid.* 55. Nonetheless, in both the latter passages, the context is not a general description of creation, in which case the absence of Sophia would be problematic given his integral role to the process, but an explanation of the nature of the Logos made flesh. In these contexts, Irenaeus suggests through Gen. 1:26 that the one who created in the beginning assumed his own creation in the incarnation. The Spirit's presence is not needed in these contexts. As such, these passages do not suggest that Irenaeus reverts to a one agent understanding of creation.

[77] *Autol.* 2.18, Grant, 57.

with Him were always present the Logos and the Sophia, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also he speaks: 'Let us make man after our image and likeness…'"[78] Apparent similarities exist between the two passages: both Theophilus and Irenaeus argue that God did not need an intermediate being to create, but that he created through his Logos and Sophia who connect to God in a particular manner through the "hands of God" metaphor.

Nevertheless, Irenaeus' passage shows a precision in language that Theophilus' passage lacks.[79] Irenaeus makes the connection between titles in the same passage—"the Logos and the Sophia, the Son and the Spirit"—leaving no doubt regarding the identity of the Sophia and Spirit as the same being, the third entity alongside God/Father and the Logos/Son in the teaching of the apostles. Elsewhere, Irenaeus makes a similar identification when he writes, "For His offspring and His likeness do minister to Him in every respect; that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Logos and the Sophia; whom all the angels serve, and to whom they are subject."[80] Again, in the *Epid.*, he writes, "This God, then, is glorified by His Word, who is His Son, continually, and by the Holy Spirit, who is the Wisdom of the Father of all."[81] Theophilus never made the identification between Sophia and the Holy Spirit obvious, which resulted in disparate interpretations as to the identities of the Sophia and Spirit as well as a fluidity of both terms. No such

[78] *Haer.* 4.20.1, ANF 1:487-488 with minor revisions.

[79] Robinson came close to this thesis when he writes with regard to Theophilus' pneumatology, "Is it possible that it is in view of the indistinctness of this very teaching [viz. that the Spirit is Sophia] that Irenaeus so often reiterates that the Word and Wisdom are the Son and the Spirit, and that these are the Hands of God? Theophilus has almost said it himself: but he has stopped short of saying it…Irenaeus was not on wholly new ground in this particular matter, even if he trod it much more firmly than his predecessor." Robinson, *Demonstration*, 59-60.

[80] *Haer.* 4.7.4, ANF 1:470 with minor revisions. See also *Haer.* 4.20.3 quoted below.

[81] *Epid.* 5, Behr, 43.

fluidity exists in Irenaeus' usage of the divine title. In Irenaeus' mind, Sophia is linked with the Holy Spirit to the same degree that Logos is linked with the Son.

Irenaeus' clear identification of the Holy Spirit with Sophia allows him to place more restrictions upon his application of the title. In Theophilus' understanding, "Sophia" could refer to both the Holy Spirit and the Son (and possibly the impersonal World Soul). For Irenaeus, "Sophia" consistently and unambiguously is identified with the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the *regula*. The consistency is displayed both by the precise language he uses in the passages quoted above and in his consistent employment of Jewish Wisdom literature, notably Proverbs 8, to refer to the Holy Spirit and not to the Son. For example, Irenaeus writes, "And that the Logos, who is the Son, was always with the Father, we have demonstrated many times. Moreover, since the Sophia, who is the Spirit, was also with him before all creation, he says through Solomon…"[82] Irenaeus does not support his statement regarding the eternity of the Logos/Son here, since this argument consumes a majority of *Haer.* 2. Accordingly, he can assume that his reader is convinced of the Logos' eternal nature. However, as I have noted, the Spirit did not receive the same attention in the early books of *Haer.* 2. Therefore, Irenaeus offers for the first time in this passage several texts (beyond Genesis 1:26) supporting the eternity of the Sophia/Spirit. Following the previous statement, he quotes Proverbs 3:19-20, the second verse he acquires from Theophilus, and Proverbs 8:22-25 and 8:27-31, the latter of which Theophilus had used in regard to the Logos.[83] In each case, Irenaeus identifies the pre-existent Sophia figure of Jewish Wisdom literature with the Holy Spirit.

[82] *Haer.* 4.20.3.
[83] *Autol.* 2.10.

This interpretation of Proverbs is remarkable considering the strong tradition (Paul, Justin)—a tradition with which Irenaeus otherwise identifies—that interpreted the personified Sophia figure in Proverbs as the Son. This tradition is so strong that even those figures prior to Irenaeus sympathetic to the identification between the Holy Spirit and the Jewish Wisdom figure (Athenagoras, Theophilus) still attributed the figure of Proverbs 8 to the Son. Irenaeus' departure from this tradition resulted from his firm belief in the personal, pre-existent figure of Sophia/Spirit who (if not earlier, at least by the later books of *Haer.*) is parallel in nature and stature to the Logos/Son.[84]

Although the application of the title "Sophia" allows Irenaeus a means by which to speak of the work of the Holy Spirit as Creator, as I will develop in the next section, the primary advantage the pneumatological title offers Irenaeus is its inherent logic that establishes the Spirit as a distinct, eternal person alongside the Father and the Logos.[85] As

[84] In *Haer.* 5.24.1, Irenaeus refers to the figure of Prov. 8:15 as the Logos. Fantino sees this passage as evidence of Irenaeus' inconsistencies regarding the identification of the Third Person with the Sophia of God. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 289-290. Although the reference of the pre-existent figure of Prov. 8 to the Logos represents a departure from Irenaeus' normal manner of speaking, the reference does not prove inconsistent with his identification of the Spirit and the Sophia. In *Haer.* 4.20.3, where Irenaeus uses Prov. to make the Sophia/Spirit identification, he does so on the strength of either Prov.'s use of Sophia for the pre-existent figure (Prov. 3:19) or the reference to the creative work of that personified being apart from the title (Prov. 8:22-25, 27-31). Prov. 8:15 does not identify the speaking figure with Sophia or with the work of creation, nor does Irenaeus invoke the verse to speak of the Logos as Sophia or to speak of the creative work of the pre-existent figure of Proverbs. In fact, *Haer.* 5.24.1 provides a different context, altogether. In accord with his emphasis on recapitulation, Irenaeus desires to show in *Haer.* 5.24.1 that the devil is a liar both in the beginning and in the end. Prov. 8:15 fits with this argument because of its reference to kings, princes, and chiefs—the passage proves that God through his Logos is in control of the leaders of the world. Therefore, the devil is a liar in his wilderness temptations when he claimed authority over all earthly kingdoms. The identification of the pre-existent figure of Prov. makes little difference to Irenaeus' argument in this context. In contrast to Theophilus, Irenaeus nowhere calls the Logos "Sophia." As such, the reference to the Logos as the figure of Prov. 8:15 in *Haer.* 5.24.1 does not show an inconsistency in Irenaeus' identification so much as a variant context in which the pre-existent figure of Prov. is invoked.

[85] This conclusion opposes Briggman's argument that the Holy Spirit's work in completing/perfecting/governing, as a function of his title Sophia, offers the primary reason for Irenaeus' use of Sophia as a title for the Third Person. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 208. While I agree that Irenaeus continues to exploit the pneumatological title in its abilities to secure a separate work alongside the Logos in creation, and will develop this aspect of the pneumatological title in the next section, it cannot be the primary reason Irenaeus uses the title. First, Irenaeus speaks of the Spirit's work in creation apart from the title "Sophia," by using πνεῦμα alone (see *Haer.* 1.22.1 and 4.*pref.*4). Second, "Sophia" cannot be

the Sophia of God, the Holy Spirit exists as an eternal, personal attribute of God parallel to the eternal Logos. Both entities have their source in God, both eternally exist with God, and both do the work that God wills them to do. Irenaeus writes, "For with [God] were always present the Logos and the Sophia, the Son and the Spirit…"[86] A few paragraphs later, he elaborates on this point when we writes, "I have also largely demonstrated, that the Logos, namely the Son, was always with the Father; and that Sophia also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation."[87] In the same way that Theophilus paralleled the two entities and concluded that the Sophia came out of the Father along with the Logos, so Irenaeus concludes that the Spirit eternally coexists with the Father alongside the eternally co-existent Logos/Son.[88]

The implication from Irenaeus' conviction in the eternal coexistence of the Sophia/Spirit with God/Father, and more generally from the parallel positions of the Logos and Sophia relative to God is that Irenaeus understands the Holy Spirit as divine in the same degree that the Son is divine. Put another way, both entities possess the same quality of divinity, which in turn, is the same as the divinity of the Father.[89] Irenaeus has already argued for the lack of spatial distance between God/Father and Logos/Son; rather, as spirit, they interpenetrate one another in a relationship of "reciprocal immanence." By virtue of the eternal Sophia/Spirit's parallel nature with the Logos/Son, the Sophia/Spirit

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used only by virtue of its ability to establish a distinctive creative work for the Spirit because Irenaeus uses the title "Sophia" prior to his development of a distinct creative work of the Spirit (*Haer.* 2.30.9).

[86] *Haer.* 4.20.1, ANF 1:487-488.

[87] *Haer.* 4.20.3, ANF 1:488.

[88] MacKenzie writes, "The Word is *semper co-existens,* 'continually existent with, the Father', and, in the context of such observations, Irenaeus not only takes it for granted that the Spirit is likewise *semper co-existens,* but indeed explicitly states this around the theme of the Self-sufficiency of God who does not stand in need of anything." MacKenzie, *Irenaeus's* Demonstration, 83.

[89] Prestige writes, "[T]he mere fact that [Wisdom] was put forward at all indicates that the being of the Spirit and that of the Son were felt to be associated and analogous, and that both needed some measure of definition of a similar kind. Both Son and Spirit belonged in some manner to the godhead, and though the exact relation of each to the Father (so far as it was as yet conceived with any precision) was clearly different, yet the difference was rather functional than qualitative." Prestige, *Patristic Thought,* 92.

must interpenetrate God/Father as well.[90] In turn, this conviction makes intelligible the teaching handed down from the apostles that described belief in the Spirit as an article of faith alongside the articles addressing the Father and the Son[91] and named the Spirit as the third name, along with the Father and the Son, into which new believers are baptized.[92] Although Justin possessed similar liturgical and traditional statements, he lacked the logic necessary to make these statements intelligible. Irenaeus provides that logic through his development and application of the Spirit as Sophia tradition.

Irenaeus nowhere expresses this conviction of the Sophia/Spirit in the same straightforward manner as his description of the Logos/Son. As previously indicated, such statements regarding the Logos/Son occurred in the midst of the polemic of *Haer.* 2 prior to Irenaeus' development and full application of the Spirit as Sophia tradition. Once he concludes the polemic proper and turns to his own exposition of Scripture in *Haer.* 3, he does not revisit the fine points of his anti-Valentinian argument.[93] Nonetheless, despite Irenaeus' development of his pneumatology in a different context and for a different

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[90] Jaschke writes, "Since Irenaeus said directly before [the statement in *Haer.* 4.20.3] that Word and Wisdom are always with the Father, and now he wants to retrieve for the Spirit what he already proved for the Son, then [the formula] kept strictly for the Son, stated *always-being-in-the Father*, also refers to the Spirit." Jaschke, *Heilige Geist,* 204. Irenaeus does not need to argue for the spiritual nature of the Third Person, as he did for the First and Second Persons in order to justify his positing of their reciprocal immanence, because the Third Person's spiritual nature is implied by his traditional name, πνεῦμα. Although, as Barnes observes, Irenaeus' broad use of πνεῦμα language presents many limitations, this implication for the nature of the Holy Spirit is one of its advantages. For Irenaeus' broad use of πνεῦμα language, see Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 91-93. I will have more to say about the inclusion of the Spirit in the reciprocally immanent and interpenetrating relationship of Father and Son in chapter five. See below pp. 239-244.

[91] *Haer.* 1.10.1, *Epid.* 6.

[92] "For this reason the baptism of our generation takes places through these three articles, granting us regeneration unto God the Father through His Son and by His Holy Spirit." *Epid.* 7, Behr, 44.

[93] In the same way, Irenaeus does not explore the generation/origin of the Sophia/Spirit as he did with the Logos/Son. Given Irenaeus' relatively "high" pneumatology, this omission has perplexed some commentators. Nonetheless, in my reading, Irenaeus remains fully consistent. His normal method seeks to avoid such speculative matters because they reach beyond the bounds of revelation. He makes an exception with the generation of the Logos/Son in order to critique the Valentinian emanation theory. Once that polemic is complete, he does not need to return to these speculative matters in reference to the Spirit. For these reasons, neither of these differences between Irenaeus' discussion of the Logos/Son on the one hand and that of the Sophia/Spirit on the other result in a diminished divinity of the Holy Spirit.

purpose than his Logos theology, later passages regarding the work of the Sophia/Spirit demonstrate that Irenaeus includes the Spirit along with the Logos/Son as a divine figure existing in God/Father:

> It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God nor any one else, except the Logos of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined within Himself should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Logos and Sophia, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things…[94]

The inclusion of the Spirit with the Father and the Son appears elsewhere in specific contrast to temporal and created humanity on the strength of statements in Isaiah. Irenaeus writes, "Thus does [Isaiah] attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God, which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created. Now what has been made is a different thing from him who makes it. The breath, then, is temporal, but the Spirit eternal."[95] The logic of these arguments suggests that the Sophia/Spirit, like the Logos/Son, is neither a creature with a starting point nor a "remotely distant power" from the Father. He is in the Father with the Logos from all eternity and shares with these two entities the same quality of divinity. Therefore, as he is included with the Creator in contrast to those who are created, the Spirit, like the Logos, participates in the act of creation.

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[94] *Haer.* 4.20.1, ANF 1:487-488.

[95] *Haer.* 5.12.2, ANF 1:538. See Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 378. Immediately prior to this statement, Irenaeus quotes Isaiah 42:5, "Thus says the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it" and 57:16, "For the Spirit shall go forth from me, and I have made every breath." These passages are not cited because they support an eternal Holy Spirit, but because they establish a distinction between Spirit (Πνεῦμα, *Spiritus*) and breath (πονή, *afflatus*), a distinction that Irenaeus exploits in order to demonstrate the eternal nature of the former.

2.2 The Holy Spirit Creates

For Irenaeus, the Holy Spirit, like the Logos/Son, is an agent of creation. While Irenaeus justified the eternal relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father by attributing to him the title of "Sophia," he justifies the presence of the Sophia/Spirit as a second agent of creation by attributing to him a creative work in the economy distinct from the work of the Logos/Son. As noted, Irenaeus first makes definitive this distinction of creative works in *Haer.* 3.24.2, after having read Theophilus' *Autol.* At the end of *Haer.* 3, Irenaeus writes, "[W]e should know that he who made and formed and breathed in them the breath of life, and nourishes us by creation, establishing all things by his Logos, and binding them together by his Sophia—this is he who is the only true God…"[96] According to this passage, the Sophia completes God's creative work by binding together the work God established through the Logos.

As Irenaeus develops in later passages, this "binding together" work of the Third Person, a function of the very meaning of the title "Sophia,"[97] entails uniting the individual pieces or parts of creation into a coherent whole.[98] In other words, scattered

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[96] *Haer.* 3.24.2. For Latin, see above p. 195n73.

[97] Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit,* 210. Similarly, MacKenzie writes, "The peculiar office of the Spirit is thus set out, and it bears a relation to creation with regard to its form, its order and its beauty." MacKenzie, *Irenaeus's* Demonstration, 81.

[98] Briggman has shown that this creative, perfecting work of the Sophia developed in the later books of *Haer.* was originally attributed to the impersonal wisdom of God and developed through the image of a lyre. Irenaeus writes, "But since created things are various and numerous, they are indeed well fitted and adapted to the whole creation; yet, when viewed individually, are mutually opposite and inharmonious, just as the sound of the lyre, which consists of many and opposite notes, gives rise to one unbroken melody, through means of the interval which separates each one from the others. The lover of truth therefore ought not to be deceived by the interval between each note, nor should he imagine that one was due to one artist and author, and another to another…but he should hold that one and the same person [formed the whole], so as to prove the judgment, goodness, and skill exhibited in the whole work and *[specimen of] wisdom.*" *Haer.* 2.25.2, ANF 1:396, italics added. Similarly, he writes in a later book, "[God's] wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole." *Haer.* 4.38.3, ANF 1:521. Irenaeus understands throughout his works that it is a mark of wisdom that the creation fits together into a meaningful whole, a creative work which seamlessly transfers to the

and disparate parts created through the Logos, take a perfect and complete form of creation through the Sophia. Thus, no longer does the Logos perform everything that the Sophia could do in the work of creation, as was the case with Theophilus' understanding and that of the first two books of *Haer*. According to this passage, both the Logos and the Sophia have their respective, creative duties; thus, creation is no longer complete without the creative agency of the Sophia.[99] Given the likely proximity of Irenaeus' reading of *Autol.* to this passage, the possible impetus for Irenaeus to distinguish the creative works of the Logos and Sophia is Theophilus' failure to do so.[100] Irenaeus has perceived the

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Third Person—the Sophia—once he perceives the need for a separate creative work to justify two agents in creation. For the Hellenistic background of the image of the lyre, see Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 215-221.

[99] Although his role is different, the Spirit is as much a creator or creative agent as the Son is. Conversely, some scholars use the distinction of works to deny that the Spirit creates in Irenaeus' understanding. For example, Daniélou writes of Irenaeus' thought, "Of the three major works of God, creation is attributed particularly to the Father, revelation to the Son, and sanctification to the Spirit." Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 362. Daniélou's statement mirrors Orbe's more detailed theory of the progressive works of Father, Son, and Spirit. Arguing that Irenaeus counters Trinitarian speculations in Ptolemaic Valentinianism, Orbe claims on the strength of *Haer.* 4.7.4 and 4.20.1 that Irenaeus connects the work of giving matter form with the Logos alone (corresponding to the static "image" of 4.20.1) and the work of sanctifying with the Spirit alone (corresponding to the dynamic "likeness" of 4.20.1). Orbe, *Espiritu Santo*, 464-467. Orbe's thesis ultimately leads him to deny the high pneumatological aspects I have developed and, consequently, the Spirit's distinct personhood. In contrast to Orbe (and Daniélou), Jaschke has effectively argued that if the Spirit is the sanctifier alone, then he is not a creator. Jaschke, *Heilige Geist*, 189-190n16. I would add that according to Orbe's interpretation the strength of the evidence of the Spirit's parallel status to the Logos in relation to the Father disappears (indeed, Orbe interprets the Spirit in Irenaeus' writings often as impersonal, a power common to the Father and Son). However, the very passages Orbe used to support a theory that removes the creative function from the Spirit (*Haer.* 4.7.4 and 4.20.1) actually combine the creative works of both agents into one, the reasons for which I will address momentarily. Irenaeus never says, as Orbe claims, that the Spirit perfects the man the Son already created; rather, Irenaeus holds that both agents cooperate in the formation of humanity, a statement supported by the parallel titles of "Logos" and "Sophia."

[100] Fantino argues that Irenaeus develops the distinct creative roles of the Logos and the Sophia as a polemical response to the Trinitarian schema of "Gnostic" understandings of creation, using approximately the same figures (the "Gnostic" scheme is Logos-Sophia-Demiurge). Fantino writes, "Thus, the critique of Gnosticism is a decisive factor which has led Irenaeus to formulate the Trinitarian scheme Father-Word-Wisdom to the work in the creation and in the economy." Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 284-285. See also idem., "Théologie de la Création," 124ff where Fantino makes an earlier version of the same argument. In his argument, Fantino conflates the *Haer.* 2.30.9 and 3.24.2 passages, implying that Irenaeus distinguishes the work of the Logos and the Sophia in both passages. Nonetheless, as I have suggested, Irenaeus does not make the distinction of works permanent until *Haer.* 3.24.2. If the division of roles in creation was occasioned by the "Gnostic" Trinitarian understanding of creation, as Fantino claims, one would expect the *Haer.* 2.30.9 passage, situated in the midst of the polemic, to maintain this distinction of works or at least develop it to a greater degree. That Irenaeus does not develop or utilize the distinction

need for a logic that would necessitate the creative actions of Sophia alongside the Logos better than Theophilus. The work of the Sophia in "binding together all things" provides that logic, and consequently, Irenaeus maintains the distinction through the remainder of his works.

Following *Haer.* 3.24.2, Irenaeus continues to speak of two agents in creation, emphasizing the forming work of the Logos and the completing or perfecting work of the Sophia. For example, he writes, "God who made [*fecit*] all things by the Logos, and adorned [*adornavit*] [all things] by the Sophia…"[101] Likewise, following the three quotations of Proverbs regarding the creative agency of the Sophia/Spirit noted above, Irenaeus writes, "Therefore, [there is] one God, who by the Logos and Sophia made and arranged all things."[102] Here, the parallelism of the two phrases "Logos and Sophia/made and arranged" establishes the distinct works. In *Haer.* 4.38.3, Irenaeus writes, "…the Father planning everything well and giving his commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [*nutriente et augente*]…"[103] In each of these passages, Irenaeus uses distinct verbs in relation to the Logos and Sophia. Those verbs associated with the Sophia (*adornare, aptare, compingere, nutrire, augere*) are located in the same semantic field, suggesting a developed notion of a creative work of the Sophia separate from that of the Logos.

This distinction of works and the developed notion of the Sophia's creative work exists most clearly in the *Epid.*, in which Irenaeus produces a scriptural passage, Psalm

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until the later books of *Haer.*, after he has completed the rhetorical polemic proper, suggests that something other than the polemic with "Gnosticism" occasioned the development from the earlier passage. Irenaeus' acquisition of Theophilus' *Autol.* better accounts for the development.

[101] "*Deo qui omnia Verbo fecit et Sapientia adornavit…*" *Haer.* 4.20.2.

[102] "*Unus igitur Deus, qui Verbo et Sapientia fecit et aptavit omnia.*" *Haer.* 4.20.4.

[103] ANF 1:521-522 with minor revisions.

33/2:6, in order to substantiate both the Spirit as Creator tradition and the distinction of his creative work from that of the Logos to which Irenaeus has consistently alluded since *Haer.* 3.24.2. As with Genesis 1:26 and Proverbs 3:19-20, Irenaeus acquires this verse and its interpretation from Theophilus, who wrote, "God made all things through his Logos and his Sophia, for 'by his Logos the heavens were made firm and by his Spirit all their power.'"[104] Irenaeus provides a similar interpretation when he writes, "And God is verbal, therefore He made created things by the Word; and God is Spirit, so that He adorned all things by the Spirit, as the prophet also says, 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all their power by His Spirit'. Thus, since the Word 'establishes', that is, works bodily and confers existence, while the Spirit arranges and forms the various 'powers', so rightly is the Son called Word and the Spirit the Wisdom of God."[105] Theophilus' interpretation of Psalm 33/2:6 is the clearest of any of the verses Irenaeus cites in favor of the two agent understanding of creation, for it alone references both a λόγος and a πνεῦμα/σοφία in the creative process.

Nevertheless, the scriptural passage says nothing in support of Irenaeus' peculiar theology of a distinction of creative works. Irenaeus adds this component to align Theophilus' interpretation with the theology he has developed since *Haer.* 3.24.2. Nevertheless, Irenaeus implies that he distinguishes between the creative works of the Logos and the Sophia on the strength of the Psalm. In order to do this, he associates the verb "to establish" with the Logos, alone. He then interprets the work of establishing as bringing about the existence of the world, the work attributed only to the Logos in *Haer.* 4 and 5. At this point, his understanding of the Psalm is plausible. However, to develop a

[104] *Autol.* 1.7. For Greek, see above p. 182n39.
[105] *Epid.* 5, Behr, 43.

second work for the Spirit Irenaeus has to augment the Psalm with the works "arranging and forming," which he then associates with the Spirit. Although these verbs are absent from the Psalm, Irenaeus superficially connects his addition of the verbs to the content of the Psalm by describing the object of the Spirit's "arranging and forming" as the δύναμεις (compare δύναμις in the Psalm). Irenaeus' interpretation, then, is as follows: the Logos establishes the creation by bringing it into existence, and the Spirit arranges/forms that creation.

While the theology of the distinct works of the Logos and Sophia is consistent with that which he develops in *Haer.* 4 and 5, Irenaeus' rather convoluted interpretation of the Psalm does not reflect the intention of the scriptural passage, itself. This interpretation, then, is more evidence of Theophilus' positive and negative influence on Irenaeus. Irenaeus acquires from Theophilus the interpretation of Psalm 33/2:6 that refers to two agents in creation (prior to Theophilus, Irenaeus used the verse twice to speak of the agency of the Logos alone).[106] Nevertheless, having perceived that Theophilus lacks the logic making a second agent necessary (Theophilus' interpretation, closer to the intent of the passage, holds that both agents do the same general work of "establishing"), Irenaeus imposes his own understanding of the distinction of creative works onto the Psalm through less than convincing exegesis. The result is the lone Scripture passage in Irenaeus' arsenal that supports the distinction of creative works of the two agents.[107]

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[106] See above p. 192n68.

[107] One of the peculiarities with Irenaeus' description of the work of the Sophia/Spirit in creation is the conspicuous lack of Gen. 1:2 in his work: "…and the Spirit of God moved over the water." Irenaeus refers to the verse only once in the midst of explaining the Marcosian numerical system in which the Spirit is included with the water, the abyss, and the darkness as a second Tetrad parallel to the first Tetrad of God, Beginning, Heaven, and Earth named in Gen. 1.1 (*Haer.* 1.18.1). Given Irenaeus' concern to demonstrate the presence of the Spirit alongside the Logos at the creation of the world, Gen. 1:2 seems ideal for his purposes. Although it cannot be known with certainty, I suggest that the influence of Theophilus is the reason why Irenaeus passes over this verse in silence. Theophilus used Gen. 1:2 to speak of an impersonal

As shown in the previous section, Irenaeus makes the most use of Genesis 1:26 in support of the Spirit's work in creation, but his uses of this verse represent the only times in his work (after the definitive distinction of creative works in *Haer.* 3.24.2) that Irenaeus unites the respective creative works of the two agents into one. The prime example is his statement at the outset of *Haer.* 4, "Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and molded by His hands, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom also He said, 'Let us make man.'"[108] Unlike the passages quoted above, Irenaeus does not use two separate verbs to describe the respective works, nor does he speak of a creation theology whereby the Son establishes material creation and the Spirit completes it. Rather, in this passage, and others that cite Genesis 1:26, the Son and Spirit cooperate in the same work of forming humanity.

Irenaeus unites the respective creative functions of the Logos and Sophia in his interpretation of Genesis 1:26 for two reasons, both of which are attributable to Theophilus. First, their cooperation in the same creative function makes the "hands of God" metaphor work within Irenaeus' developed theology of creation. As with its function in Theophilus' *Autol.*, from which Irenaeus acquires the metaphor,[109] the image does not describe the right hand performing one function and the left performing another. Rather, Irenaeus, like Theophilus, understands both of God's hands as cooperating in the

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spirit, an attribute of God. Irenaeus also shows an understanding of an impersonal, life-giving breath of God distinct from the Holy Spirit (see *Haer.* 5.12.1). Possibly, he accepted Theophilus' interpretation of Gen. 1:2 as referring to this impersonal entity as opposed to the Holy Spirit. As such, this verse would not support the presence of the Third Person in creation, so he neglects the verse in favor of Gen. 1:26 and Ps. 33/2:6.

[108] *Haer.* 4.*pref.*4, ANF 1:463 with minor revisions. See also, *Haer.* 5.1.3, 5.6.1, 5.28.4.

[109] Irenaeus does not employ the "hands of God" image in relation to the creative work of the Son and the Spirit until the later books of *Haer.* The first reference comes in *Haer.* 4.*Pref.*4 after he has read Theophilus. The absence of the image in the early books of *Haer.* compared with the frequency with which Irenaeus uses the image in the later books suggests that he acquired the image from Theophilus and offers more evidence that Irenaeus does not read Theophilus until sometime towards the end of writing *Haer.* 3.

same work of forming humanity. Second, the cooperation of the Son and the Spirit in the formation of humanity allows Irenaeus to emphasize humanity as special within the creation.[110] Only at the creation of humanity does God speak to the Son and the Spirit together and say, "Let us make…" and only in the creation of humanity do the Son and the Spirit come together to perform the same work.[111] Although, as I have shown, Theophilus does not distinguish between the works of the two agents, he still emphasizes the special quality of the formation of humanity in the order of creation when he writes, "For after making everything else by a word, God considered all this as incidental; he regarded the making of man as the only work worthy of his own hands."[112] Despite his subtle critique and change of certain aspects of Theophilus' pneumatology, Irenaeus accepts these components from Theophilus (the "hands of God" metaphor, the special character of the creation of humanity, and the use of Genesis 1:26) without modification.

The creative work of the Holy Spirit confirms my conclusions regarding his divine status from an analysis of Irenaeus' use of Sophia language. Irenaeus includes Sophia/Spirit with God/Father and the Logos/Son in the act of creation, because like the latter two, the Sophia/Spirit is divine.[113] Moreover, Irenaeus' peculiar understanding of

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[110] Steenberg makes a similar point when he refers to Irenaeus' "anthropocentric notion" of the divine economy in Irenaeus' approach to cosmology. Humans are the crown of creation and Irenaeus uses Gen. 1:26-27 to make this point. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation,* 74-80.

[111] *Haer.* 4.20.1 combines the work of the two agents in relation to "all things," not just the formation of humanity. This passage could be interpreted as referring to the general work of creation, in which case, it would represent the lone example (after the definitive distinction at *Haer.* 3.24.2), in which Irenaeus does not speak of two separate works of the Logos and Sophia in the creation of all things. However, immediately following *Haer.* 4.20.1, Irenaeus quotes Gen. 1:26, and in the same context he refers to the two agents as God's "hands." If Irenaeus is consistent with his normal use of the "hands of God" imagery, he has in mind here the formation of humanity, even though he says "all things." This intention, then, accounts for the cooperation, as opposed to distinction, of works in this context in accord with his normal interpretation of Gen. 1:26.

[112] *Autol.* 2.18, Grant, 57.

[113] Fantino writes, "Thus, the uncreated-created distinction marks the difference between the Creator and his creatures, but at the same time it expresses the metaphysical opposition between being and becoming, between the uncreated who is and the created who becomes. It is in function of this opposition

distinct creative works provides the logic by which the Sophia's presence in the beginning with the Logos becomes intelligible. According to Irenaeus' understanding, only with the distinct yet cooperative works of two creative agents (who both work according to the Father's will) can the creation be complete. As the next chapter will indicate, this Trinitarian scheme of creation aligns well with Irenaeus' understanding of the divine work of the economy in general.

2.3 The Holy Spirit Reveals

Before concluding this chapter, I must briefly engage a second pre-incarnational work of the Sophia/Spirit. For Irenaeus, like all of the Apologists, the Holy Spirit is the agent who spoke through the prophets regarding divine matters and in particular regarding the coming of Christ. Unlike the Sophia/Spirit's creative function, which Irenaeus develops in previously unparalleled directions in order to support the divine and eternal nature of the Third Person, the Spirit's prophetic function represents a strong component of the traditional faith handed down to Irenaeus, who adds little to the teaching he received.

In *Haer.* 1, prior to his pneumatological development and expansion, Irenaeus writes, "the Church believes in one Holy Spirit who through the prophets preached the Economies…"[114] Similarly, in *Epid.* 6, after his development of the person and role of the Holy Spirit as a fully divine person alongside the Logos/Son, he reports the third article

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that the Son and the Spirit ought to be situated." Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée,* 342. Likewise, Jaschke makes a similar interpretation on the basis of *Haer.* 5.12.2, quoted just below, writing: "On the one side stands the work, all of creation, on the other stands the life giving Spirit, ascribed to God, the work in contrast to the one who works, the eternal one contrary to the temporal ones. The Spirit is the creator, the eternal power of God." Jaschke, *Heilige Geist,* 205.

[114] *Haer.* 1.10.1, Unger, 49.

of the Christian faith as belief in "the Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied and the patriarchs learnt the things of God and the righteous were led in the path of righteousness…"[115] Despite his expansion of the Holy Spirit's function, Irenaeus never removes or diminishes the importance of this aspect of the Spirit's work. Like the Apologists, he consistently refers to the Third Person as the "prophetic Spirit."[116] Like Theophilus, and unlike Justin and Athenagoras, Irenaeus also expands the Spirit's revelatory role to the Church and the New Testament writers and even the interpretations of the elders, or the generation after the apostles,[117] thus providing another argument for the continuity of the Scriptures—as the same Logos who creates is incarnate on earth, so also the same Spirit spoke through the writers of both testaments.[118]

However, as important as the prophetic role is to his understanding of pneumatology, it is not clear that Irenaeus believes the Spirit performs this role by virtue of his divine nature, or at the very least, a divine nature that must be equal to that of the Father in order to perform the work.[119] First, Irenaeus never uses the title "Sophia" of the

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[115] *Epid.* 6, Behr, 44.

[116] *Haer.* 3.11.8-9, 4.20.6.

[117] "For the one and the same Spirit of God, who proclaimed by the prophets what and of what sort the advent of the Lord should be, did by these elders give a just interpretation of what had been truly prophesied." *Haer.* 3.21.4, ANF 1:452. See also *Haer.* 3.7.2, 11.8, 16.1, 16.9, 24.1. Irenaeus is the first of the early Christian writers to emphasize the Lukan story of the day of Pentecost as the point in which the Holy Spirit is given to the Church and specifically to the apostles. He writes, "For after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [his gifts], and had perfect knowledge…" *Haer.* 3.1.1, ANF 1:414. See also the references to Pentecost in *Haer.* 3.11.8, 12.1 and *Epid.* 6. For later Christians, Irenaeus emphasizes the importance of baptism as the conduit of the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Haer.* 3.17.1, *Epid.* 7). On this latter point, see Aeby, *Missions Divines*, 62-64.

[118] A good summary statement of this comprehensive revelatory work of the Spirit comes in the later chapters of *Haer.* 4 where Irenaeus writes, "…the Spirit of God, who was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past…" *Haer.* 4.33.1, ANF 1:506. This passage occurs in the context of an anti-Marcionite argument.

[119] Robinson notes that regarding the prophetic function of the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus' pneumatology resembles that of Justin, except that Irenaeus expands the revelatory role of the Spirit to the Church. Robinson, *Demonstration*, 34-36. This interpretation implies that Irenaeus does not speak of the Spirit's prophetic function by drawing upon the Spirit's full divinity (for, as we have seen, Justin did not

Spirit in connection to the prophetic role.[120] This omission is noteworthy since the title "Sophia" establishes the divinity of the Spirit alongside the Logos and since Irenaeus subsequently develops it to speak of the creative function of the Spirit, a function that the Spirit certainly performs by virtue of his divine status equal to that of the Father.

Second, while Irenaeus clearly affirms that the Logos performed his revealing role by virtue of his divinity and specifically through his reciprocal immanence with the Father, no parallel argument exists with the prophetic function of the Spirit. The *Epid.* provides an example of how the Logos reveals the Father because of his divinity. There, Irenaeus writes, "Therefore, the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, and the Father is God and the Son is God, since He who is born of God is God, and in this way, according to His being and power <and> essence, one God is demonstrated: but according to the <economy> of our salvation, there is both Father and Son; since the Father of all is invisible and inaccessible to creatures, it is necessary for those who are going to approach God to have access to the Father through the Son."[121] Irenaeus emphasizes the Son's divinity here because he desires to underscore the soteriological truth that through contact with the divine Son humans have contact with and access to the Father—if the Son were not divine, the Father would not be made manifest. The Spirit's absence in this potential Trinitarian text does not indicate that Irenaeus does not view the Spirit as fully divine.

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have a conception of the full divinity of the Spirit that would allow such an argument). My argument here does not imply that prophecy must not be a divine act. Indeed, it is difficult to posit another justification for the Spirit's ability to prophecy. I am merely demonstrating, to prepare for chapter five, that prophecy/revelation for Irenaeus is not a Trinitarian act in the same manner as creation and redemption. Whereas in the latter two works, all three divine entities cooperate to perform the same general work, although their individual tasks within that work vary, with revelation/prophecy, Irenaeus stresses only the Son's role as the revealer of the Father. As I showed in chapter three, the Son's revelatory role is fully dependent upon his equal divine status with the Father. As I will suggest momentarily, the Spirit's prophetic role is to witness to the coming of the Son, a function which does not lead Irenaeus to speculate any further on the Spirit's divine status. For more on Trinitarian works in the economy related to this question, see below pp. 247-259.

[120] Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit,* 222.

[121] *Epid.* 47, Behr, 71.

Rather, the absence of the Spirit here demonstrates only that the prophetic/revelatory function of the Spirit—the function that occasions an affirmation of the Son's divinity in this passage—is not performed by virtue of the Spirit's equal divine nature. Irenaeus simply does not find in the work of prophecy an occasion to develop the Spirit's nature or the Trinitarian nature of the act, itself.

This conclusion suggests that in Irenaeus' understanding, the role of the prophetic function of the Spirit is not to bring humanity into contact with God. The role of the Spirit's prophetic function is to prepare for the coming of Christ. For example, Irenaeus refers to the "Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men, according to the will of the Father."[122] Elsewhere, he writes, "Thus, the Spirit demonstrates the Word, and, because of this, the prophets announced the Son of God, while the Word articulates the Spirit, and therefore it is He Himself who interprets the prophets and brings man to the Father."[123] Nothing in the Spirit's prophetic function in these passages requires his full and equal divinity with the Father and Son.[124]

Far from a detriment to his pneumatology, this distinction in revelatory roles of the Son and the Spirit demonstrates a level of clarity in Irenaeus' pneumatology unmatched in the Apologists. I demonstrated above how Justin confused the revelatory roles of the Logos and the Spirit, at times referring to the Spirit as the being who spoke through the prophets, at other times referring that duty to the Logos. Although Irenaeus

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[122] *Haer*. 4.33.7, ANF 1:508.

[123] *Epid.* 5, Behr, 43.

[124] This is not to suggest that the Holy Spirit does not have a function in the redemptive process. As I will show below, the Spirit plays an intricate role in this process and, like the Logos, he performs this role in virtue of his divinity. See below pp. 253-259. Nevertheless, the redemptive role the Spirit plays in the economy is distinguished from his prophetic role.

likewise assigns a revelatory role to both the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit, he has a separate prophetic or revelatory role for each of them—the Spirit prepares the world for the Son, who in turn reveals to the world the Father. Irenaeus writes, "For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall be seen paternally in the Kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son of God, the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers upon him incorruption for eternal life, which comes to every one from the fact of seeing God."[125] Further explanation of these points requires an inquiry into Irenaeus' understanding of the relationship of the three divine entities as they are expressed in the economy. This inquiry will be the subject of the final chapter.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the respective understandings of the Apologists and Irenaeus regarding the nature of the Sophia/Spirit. I found Irenaeus, in his mature thought of *Haer.* 4 and 5 and the *Epid.,* much clearer than the Apologists regarding the status of the distinct and eternal personhood of the Holy Spirit through his clear identification of the Holy Spirit as the eternal Sophia of God. This language paralleled his Logos theology, resulting in a parallel position of the Spirit to the Son in relation to the Father—from eternity, the Spirit exists as the Sophia of God. Since the Spirit is parallel to the Logos in Irenaeus' theology, I concluded that the Spirit possesses the same quality of divinity as the Logos and that the Sophia, as spirit, likewise exists in a reciprocally

[125] *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489.

immanent relationship with the Father and the Son. By contrast, Justin and Athenagoras lacked a category by which the Holy Spirit could be equal to and distinct from the Logos, much less to the Father. Although Theophilus made the Spirit-Sophia identification, Irenaeus shows a consistency and explicitness in language that Theophilus lacked. He provides a theological structure by which the Spirit as Sophia tradition becomes consistent and effective.

Furthermore, I found Irenaeus to affirm the Holy Spirit as a second creative agent of God. The Spirit, in accord with the lexical sense of his title "Sophia," is the agent who completes and perfects the work established by the Logos. The Spirit performs this distinct creative work alone, and this work justifies his presence in the work of creation—without the Spirit, the work of creation is not complete. Neither Justin nor Athenagoras affirmed the work of the Spirit in creation. Theophilus did affirm the creative work of the Spirit, but he lacked the logic to sustain the presence of a second agent. For Theophilus, the Logos and the Sophia perform the same general work of creation, a formula that prefigures Irenaean theology but again lacks the logic that justifies the presence of a second agent alongside the Logos. Once again, Irenaeus has supplied the crucial component lacking in Theophilus' thought.

In his understanding of both the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus shows clear advances upon the theology of the Apologists. Furthermore, these advances likely were inspired by his reading of the Antiochene Apologist. The pneumatological advances result in a theology of the Spirit that makes the traditional belief and worship of the Sophia/Spirit alongside God/Father and the Logos/Son tenable, and establishes a true Trinitarian theology.

Chapter Five: God, Logos, Sophia

The preceding chapters have focused on Irenaeus' understanding of the Triune God considered apart from his economic manifestation.[1] As I noted above, I approached the question from this angle in order to fill a lacuna in Irenaean scholarship, which has, for the most part, neglected the immanent aspects of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. I consider this task accomplished. Nonetheless, to stop here would result in an incomplete, and thus, inadequate picture of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology for two reasons. First, Irenaeus' understanding of the immanent, eternal Trinity results in a thoroughly Trinitarian understanding of the God who is manifested through his various works in the economy; while I have argued that this economic manifestation does not exhaust Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, it none the less remains crucial if not central to understanding that theology. Therefore, any substantive account of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology must address God's economic manifestation. Second, while I have considered the inner relationships of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit to God/Father individually, I have yet to consider the relationships of all three divine entities to one another or to analyze the nature of the hierarchy that emerges when Irenaeus discusses the cooperative work of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the economy.

Therefore, in the present chapter I will turn from the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings of the natures of the three divine entities individually and analyze their respective understandings of the relationships among all three entities

[1] Occasionally, I have deviated from this method. For example, in chapters three and four, my sections addressing the creative and revelatory functions of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit respectively necessitated addressing their manifestation in the economy. Nevertheless, my goal in these sections was to discern what the divine agents' respective economic functions revealed about their natures and eternal relationships to God/Father apart from their work in the economy.

through studying the passages in which Father, Son, and Spirit appear together. For the Apologists, these passages primarily occur in contexts where they correlate Christian belief with contemporary philosophical beliefs. Accordingly, these Trinitarian passages reveal an ontological hierarchy among the three entities that posits the Son and the Spirit as ontologically subordinate to the Father in the manner of the Middle Platonic hierarchy of first principles.[2]

Irenaeus' Trinitarian passages occur in two contexts. First, he briefly considers the inner relationships of Father, Son, and Spirit apart from the economy by expanding the arguments he made in *Haer.* 2 for the relationship of the Father and the Son to include the Spirit, as well. Second, and most prominently, Irenaeus addresses the relationships of Father, Son, and Spirit in discussing their cooperative work in the economy.[3] Like the Apologists, Irenaeus' thought reveals a hierarchy that posits God as the source of the work of the economy and the Logos and Sophia as the agents who perform the work according to God's will. Nonetheless, I will show that, as opposed to the ontological hierarchy of the Apologists, Irenaeus' hierarchy is functional only.[4] While the divine entities have different roles in the economy, they exist in an ontological unity from eternity, a unity upon which the economic work of Father, Son, and Spirit is predicated.

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[2] By "first principles," I mean God, the forms, and matter, all of which the Middle Platonists understand as eternal, but of varying degrees of quality. See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 45-49.

[3] Unlike material covered in previous chapters, Irenaean scholarship has covered extensively much of the material regarding the Triune nature of the divine work of the economy. The difference in my treatment of this content and the pertinent Irenaean passages is my demonstration of the manner in which the economic manifestation of the Trinity corresponds with Irenaeus' understanding of the immanent Trinity. Past treatments omit this first step. Fantino, as I noted in the introduction, includes a discussion of the immanent Trinity only after thoroughly discussing its manifestation in the economy. My study works in the opposite direction. Barnes' treatment lacks a thorough discussion of the economic component of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology.

[4] By "functional," I refer to their respective works or functions within the economy. The hierarchy emerges insofar as God alone is the source, while the Logos and Sophia alone carry out God's will in complete obedience. A functional hierarchy differs from the ontological hierarchy of the Apologists' because the differences between Father, Son, and Spirit are not the result of varying levels or degrees of divinity.

1. The Apologists[5]

1.1 Justin

Justin's Trinitarian passages occur in two broad contexts. The first is a liturgical context that features Justin's descriptions of the Christian practices of baptism and Eucharist.[6] The second is a philosophical context in which Justin explains the Christian understanding of God in order to correlate Christian and philosophical beliefs.[7] In the Trinitarian passages occurring in a liturgical context, Justin simply lists the names of the three entities in the traditional order. For example, when he describes the Christian ritual of baptism, Justin writes, "…for they then receive washing in water in the name of God

[5] As with chapter four, I will proceed in my study of the Apologists' Trinitarian passages according to each figure's work. This structure is necessitated not by a development in their respective understandings, as was the case with their pneumatologies, but by the lack of discernable patterns or themes into which their respective Trinitarian passages may be grouped.

[6] For a discussion of the liturgical passages in relation to Justin's understanding of the Spirit, see above pp. 173-174.

[7] W. Rordorf, following an earlier schematic proposed by P. Hamann in relation to early Christian Trinitarian thought in general, claims that Justin's Trinitarian theology is rooted in four contexts: baptism, Eucharist, Christian prayer, and martyrdom literature. Rodorf, "La Trinité dans les écrits de Justin," *Aug* 20 (1980): 285-297. The schematic is not a helpful classification of Justin's Trinitarian passages. First, the first three contexts do not differ in any degree that would affect interpretation of Justin's thought. Second, in order to incorporate Hamann's fourth context of martyrdom, Rodorf has to cite the story of Justin's martyrdom, which did not come from the hand of Justin and therefore cannot be included as his own work or as an example of his own thought. Finally, and most importantly for my purposes, the schematic does not account for the most important context in which Justin's Trinitarian passages appear, namely, the philosophical context I develop below. This context is marked by Justin's efforts to correlate Christian and philosophical beliefs to reject as unreasonable the charge of atheism. Rodorf groups clear philosophical passages, such as 1 *Apol.* 13.3, in the liturgical context of baptism, claiming that Justin describes here the formula that Christians affirm at their baptism. He offers no evidence to support his conjecture that 1 *Apol.* 13.3 is a baptism passage. In fact, Justin says nothing about baptism in this context. Rather, he includes the Trinitarian formula to bolster his argument against the charge of atheism. Even more confounding is Rodorf's failure to address the 1 *Apol.* 60.5-7 passage, arguably the clearest of all Justin's Trinitarian passages. This oversight likely emerged because the 1 *Apol.* 60.5-7 passage does not fit Hamann's schematic that Rodorf has adopted for Justin. When these passages are removed from the liturgical contexts in which Rodorf placed them, the result is the lack of evidence for his larger claim, namely, that in his Trinitarian passages, "Justin is referring to an already existent tradition." Rodorf, "Trinité," 286. Rather, as I have argued throughout the present dissertation, Justin develops the Trinitarian formula for the purposes of correlating Christian and philosophical belief, making it more likely that Justin's Trinitarian passages are original to him. This observation is significant insofar as it suggests that the subordination that results from Justin's Trinitarian formula, which I will detail below, is not inherent to the traditional Father, Son, Spirit liturgical formula of ancient Christian usage. Rather, it results from the import of Middle Platonist philosophy and Justin's attempt to correlate the two belief systems.

the Father and Master of all, and of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."[8] This order of naming the divine objects of belief has deep roots in Christian memory and likely dates back to the earliest Christian communities.[9] Nevertheless, the traditional formula indicates nothing of the inner relationships among the three entities, and its repetition at this early date does not constitute a developed Trinitarian theology.[10]

The Trinitarian formulas that occur in a philosophical context convey Justin's Trinitarian theology more clearly than those formulas that occur in a liturgical context. In these passages, Justin indicates that while all three divine entities are the objects of Christian belief and worship, God the Father is alone the Most High God, identified both with "the One" of Middle Platonism and the Creator of the Jewish Scriptures. The Son and the Spirit, as a result of their later generation from the will of the Father and their diminished divinity,[11] are lesser divine Powers who exist alongside the Most High God of the Jewish Scriptures. As such, in relation to the Father, the Son and Spirit exist in second and third place or position, respectively. For example, Justin writes, "Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ…and we will show that we worship Him rationally, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in second place [δευτέρα

[8] 1 *Apol.* 61.3, Barnard, 66.

[9] The Gospel of Matthew records this traditional formula as coming from Jesus who, after his resurrection, commands his disciples as follows: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…" Matt. 28:19, NRSV translation. The same traditional, baptismal statement is recorded in *Didache* 7.

[10] The one, possible Trinitarian development from a Trinitarian passage occurring in a liturgical context is Justin's record of an early Eucharistic prayer. He writes, "Over all that we receive we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit." 1 *Apol.* 67.2, Barnard, 71. Here, the Son and the Spirit serve as mediators to the Father, functions consistent with their individual natures and functions addressed in previous chapters and paralleled in the formula developed in the philosophical context. According to this prayer, the Father is the source of the gifts, and all thanksgiving is due to him, alone.

[11] For a discussion of these aspects of the Son and the Spirit, see above pp. 124-127, 132-134 and 173-176.

χώρᾳ] and the prophetic Spirit in the third rank [τρίτῃ τάξει]."[12] Discerning Justin's precise meaning with use of the words χώρα and τάξις in relation to the Second and Third Persons, respectively, proves difficult. This difficulty emerges because he does not define the terms; instead, he uses them as if they were a standard aspect of traditional discourse regarding the Godhead. Scholarly interpretations of χώρα and τάξις in Justin's work range from well-developed, technical terms defining the relation between the divine entities according to the philosophical meanings of the terms,[13] to casual, imprecise terms of "Christian experience and worship rather than doctrinal definition."[14]

While there is no question that χώρα and τάξις lack the technicality of later fourth century Trinitarian terms such as οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, the decisive factor in determining Justin's meanings is the philosophical context in which the terms are located. In *1 Apol.* 13.3, and other statements like it, Justin does not seek to describe Christian belief, relate what Christians affirm at their baptism, or express his own inner experience. In these passages, Justin attempts to correlate Christian belief with accepted philosophical beliefs in order to dispel the charge of atheism. In so doing, his language attempts a definition he believed and intended to be recognizable or understandable to his readers.[15] As such, these terms likely indicate truths about the divine entities approaching their technical use within Middle Platonism.

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[12] 1 *Apol.* 13.3, Barnard, 31.

[13] Andresen, "Justin," 190ff.

[14] Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr,* 116-117n77. Barnard perceives no difference in the context of the formula of 1 *Apol.* 13.3, and others like it, and those formulas appearing in liturgical contexts. His interpretation is similar to Rodorf's interpretation (see above p. 218n7).

[15] For example, in the same context as the Trinitarian passage quoted above, Justin notes that the accusation of Christian "madness" is not the belief in three related divine figures, but only the Christian insistence that this second God is a human being. He writes, "For they charge our madness to consist in this, that we give to a crucified man second place after the unchangeable and eternal God, begetter of all things…" 1 *Apol.* 13.4, Barnard, 31. This passage implies Justin's apparent assumption that his readers will recognize and find reasonable the concept of three related divine figures.

As noted above, χώρα is commonly used by the Middle Platonists, and throughout antiquity, to refer to a literal place or space in which an entity is located, and this is the manner in which Justin employed the word to refer to the location of God relative to the world (*Dial.* 127.2).[16] If this spatial meaning transfers to Justin use of χώρα to describe the Son's place relative to the Father in the 1 *Apol.* 13.3 passage, the meaning would be that the Son is in a different place or space than the Father. This meaning works with Justin's understanding of the subordinate nature of the Logos/Son as shown in chapter three because I noted there that the Son's lesser or lower divinity allowed him to act in the place of the world.[17]

Nevertheless, the location of the Son in a *permanently* different "place" than the Father, as the spatial interpretation of χώρα in 1 *Apol.* 13.3 would suggest, is problematic insofar as Justin believes, following traditional Christian teaching, that the Son ascends to the "place" of the Father following his incarnation and there reigns with him continually.[18] In the *Dial.*, Justin often cites the ascension of the Son to the same place as the Father as evidence for the divinity of the Son.[19] For Justin to elsewhere insist that the Son is permanently in a different literal place than the Father negates the effectiveness of this argument for the Son's divinity. Moreover, the description of the Son in a different literal place than the Father is incongruent with Justin's use of the adjective "second" (δευτέρα) to describe χώρα in the same passage. If Justin intended a spatial significance

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[16] See above pp. 71-72. As noted there, the *Didask.* reflects this use of χώρα. See *Didask.* 8.2, 13.3.

[17] See above pp. 119-121.

[18] See 1 *Apol.* 21, 31, 42, 45, 46, 50; *Dial.* 17, 32, 36, 64, 82, 84.

[19] For example, Justin writes, "Keep in mind, too, from the other words of David which I cited above, it can be proved that he would come forth from the highest heavens and was to ascend again to the same place [τόπος], in order that you may know that he came forth as God from above, and became man in the midst of men, and will one day return to earth, when they who pierced him will look upon him and weep." *Dial.* 64.7, Falls, 100.

of χώρα here, it would have made more sense for him to use an adjective that described space, such as "lower." For these reasons, it is unlikely that Justin intends a literal, spatial meaning in his use of χώρα to describe the Son's place in relation to the Father in 1 *Apol.* 13.3.

Χώρα has a secondary meaning in antiquity that is more metaphorical in nature; it is sometimes used to indicate the proper "position" of a person or entity.[20] Often, this usage reflects the status of that place or position relative to the position of another person, as in the sense of "rank."[21] If Justin has this secondary, metaphorical meaning of χώρα in mind, the 1 *Apol.* 13.3 passage would indicate that the Son is in second position or rank to the Father, thus indicating not a lower, physical place in which the Son dwells, but a lower "status" of the Son. This metaphorical meaning of χώρα aligns with Justin's understanding of the subordinate or lesser divinity of the Son. Moreover, this usage better aligns with the adjective "second"—the Son is in second rank to the Father because he possesses a lesser divine nature than the Father. Finally, the metaphorical meaning of χώρα corresponds with τάξις, the word Justin uses in the same passage to refer to the position of the Spirit. The primary meaning of τάξις in antiquity is this same sense of "rank" or "order" and is most often used to refer to the proper ordering or position of people or entities.[22]

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[20] Often χώρα is used in military contexts to describe the proper position or post of a soldier. For example, Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 5.24, Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 78, Thucydides, *History* 4.126, 2.87.

[21] The *Didask.* reflects this usage: "The aim of physics is to learn what is the nature of the universe, what sort of an animal is man, and what place [χώρα] he has in the world, if God exercises providence over all things, and if the gods are ranked beneath him, and what is the relation of men to gods." *Didask.* 7.1, Dillon, 13. The place of humanity here is related to its position *vis-à-vis* the gods. The metaphorical usage meaning "rank" in relation to something or someone else also is reflected in Plato, *Theaetetus*, 153e, Theognis, 152, and Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 5.6.13.

[22] Notably, this usage appears in Plato, *Critias* 109d, *Tim.* 71a, 83b, *Theaetetus*, 153e (where it appears as a synonym with χώρα), *Didask.* 26.1. Plato also uses τάξις several times in the *Tim.* to describe

Taken into Justin's argument, therefore, these terms indicate an ontological difference and subordination of the Son and Spirit to the Father in the same way that the various Middle Platonist systems subordinated eternal entities such as the World Soul or the Forms or Thoughts of God to the Primary God.[23] The Son and the Spirit are in second

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the proper order that God imposes on the unformed matter in the act of creation. For example, he writes, "For God desired that, so far as possible, all things should be good and nothing evil; wherefore, when He took over all that was visible, seeing that it was not in a state of rest but in a state of discordant and disorderly motion, He brought it into order out of disorder [εἰς τάξιν αὐτὸ ἤγαγεν ἐκ τῆς ἀταξίας]…" *Tim.* 30a, Bury, LCL 234:55. The *Didask.* employs this meaning of τάξις several times. See *Didask*. 12.2, 13.1, 3, 29.2. Elsewhere, the same Middle Platonic writer specifies that the τάξις of the universe implicitly involves a ranking of separate entities. He writes of the order of celestial entities, "The sun is the leader of them all, indicating and illuminating everything. The moon is regarded as being in second place [τάξει δεύτερᾳ] as regards potency, and the rest of the planets follow each in proportion to its particular character." *Didask.*, 14.6, Dillon, 24. Like χώρα, τάξις often is used specifically in military contexts to refer to the position or rank of soldiers. For example, Plato, *Menexenus* 246b, Thucydides, *History*, 5.68, 7.5 and Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 2.1.7. I note this military usage of both words (see above p. 222n20) to show that there is precedence for linking and equating the terms as Justin does in the 1 *Apol.* 13.3 formula. They are equated insofar as both words are used to describe the position of the Son and the Spirit in relation to God—χώρα in relation to the Son and τάξις in relation to the Spirit. Moreover, in a reprisal of the formula in 1 *Apol.* 60.5-7 quoted just below, Justin describes the relationship of both Son and Spirit to the Father with the word χώρα. Munier's translation of 1 *Apol.* 13.3 correctly reflects the equivalence of these terms in Justin's thought. He renders the passage as follows: «*…nous savons qu'il est le fils du vrai Dieu et nous le plaçons au second rang, et l'Esprit prophétique au troisième.*» Munier, *SC* 507:161. While the metaphorical meaning of χώρα fits well in the context of 1 *Apol.* 13.3, it does not transfer to Justin's description of the Father's place relative to the world, as I interpreted χώρα in chapter two, for several reasons. First, in those passages where χώρα is used in relation to the place of the Father, Justin specifically interprets the word using spatial imagery. For example, he writes, "[The Father] always remains in his place [χώρα], *wherever that may be* [ὅπου ποτέ]…" *Dial.* 127.2, Falls, 191 italics added. It is difficult to interpret the meaning of ὅπου given the metaphorical significance of χώρα. Second, Justin does not describe the literal location of the Father in a place with the use of χώρα alone, but he uses other devices and terms, such as his description of the super-celestial regions (*Dial.* 56.1) or with his use of τόπος (*Dial.* 64.7), which has no metaphorical connotations. Therefore, the spatial significance of χώρα in *Dial.* 127.2 is corroborated by other passages independent of χώρα.

[23] Something approaching this usage occurs in the *Didask.*, the writer of which refers to the highest God as πρῶτος θεός. Dillon shows that although the entities in the Middle Platonic system of first principles varied from author to author, the second and third entities always are subordinate to the First God. Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 45-49. The reason that the second and third entities necessarily were subordinated, as I suggested in chapters two and three above, is that the transcendent nature of the First God precluded his action in the material world. In Middle Platonism, this function is rather the property of the World Soul. The writer of the *Didask.*, for example, writes, "Since intellect is superior to soul, and superior to potential intellect there is actualized intellect, which cognizes everything simultaneously and eternally, and finer than this again is the cause of this and whatever it is that has an existence still prior to these, this it is that would be the primal God, being the cause of the eternal activity of the intellect of the whole heaven." *Didask.* 10.2, Dillon, 17. In this statement, the Primal God is the cause, but the activity is attributed to the World Soul. Previous studies have noted that the ontological difference between the First God and the World Soul or Forms in Middle Platonism influences the Apologists' understanding of the hierarchy of Father, Son, and Spirit. For example, see Andresen, "Justin," 190, Daniélou, *Gospel Message*,

and third place/rank not because they are named after him in a traditional formula, but because they derive their being from him and are dependent on his will in both their existence and in everything that they do, as I have shown elsewhere.[24]

A second Trinitarian passage located in a philosophical context confirms the subordinating sense of these terms. Justin writes, "[Plato] said that the power next to the first God was placed *Chi-wise* in the universe. And as to his speaking of a third, since he read, as we said before, that which was spoken by Moses, 'The Spirit of God moved over the waters.' For he gives second place [χώραν] to the Logos who is with God, who, he said, was placed *Chi-wise* in the universe, and the third to the Spirit who was said to be borne over the water, saying, 'And the third around the third.'"[25] According to this statement, which like its Middle Platonic counterparts has Plato as its primary source, Justin affirms the existence of three distinct, divine beings, each deserving of worship and each existing according to its own divine category. The terms χώρα and τάξις, in combination with the scheme of descending numbers, indicates a difference of quality among the divine categories.[26] Thus, for Justin, while the Logos indeed is divine, he is "another God and Lord under the Creator of all things."[27] The Son rightly is called God,

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346-347, Edwards, "Platonic Schooling," 22ff, Munier, *Apologie*, 160n4, and Schoedel, "Neglected Motive," 366.

[24] See above pp. 124-127.

[25] "…τὴν μετὰ τὸν πρῶτον θεὸν δύναμιν κεχιάσθαι ἐν τῷ παντὶ εἶπε. Καὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν αὐτὸν τρίτον, ἐπειδή, ὡς προείπομεν, ἐπάνω τῶν ὑδάτων ἀνέγνω ὑπὸ Μωσέως εἰρημένον ἐπιφέρεσθαι τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα. Δευτέραν μὲν γὰρ χώραν τῷ παρὰ θεοῦ Λόγῳ, ὅν κεχιάσθαι ἐν τῷ παντὶ ἔφη, δίδωσι, τὴν δὲ τρίτην τῷ λεχθέντι ἐπιφέρεσθαι τῷ ὕδατι πνεύματι, εἰπών· 'Τὰ δὲ τρίτα περὶ τὸν τρίτον.'" 1 *Apol.* 60.5-7, Barnard, 65 with minor revisions. For more information regarding this Platonic passage in its original context, see above p. 173n8.

[26] The closest nominally Christian equivalent to Justin's Trinitarian formula in the mid second century is the Valentinian formula. This formula, although not limiting the number of divine entities to three, parallels Justin's understanding of the diminishing divinity of entities that came forth after the First-Father. As we saw in chapter three, this understanding results from a topological theory of divine generation that approximates two-stage Logos theology prevalent in Justin and the other Apologists. See above pp. 151-158.

[27] *Dial.* 56.4, Falls, 84.

but "he is distinct from God the Creator; distinct, that is, in number [ἀριθμός], but not in mind [γνώμη]."[28] The distinction between God and Logos (and Spirit) necessarily creates the subordination. Therefore, Justin's Trinitarian formula does not redefine the one God of the Jewish Scriptures with a nuanced understanding of the divine substance.[29] Rather, he supplements the God of the Jews with the distinct Powers of the Son and Spirit who work in the world on his behalf, the precedent for which is the Middle Platonic system of first principles and the relationship of the Logos/World Soul to the Most High God.

While Justin's Trinitarian formula effectively correlates Christian and Platonist beliefs through asserting the real distinction between three divine entities, it fails to identify any mechanism for maintaining the divine unity. Rather, Justin's concern for the divine unity ceases once the Logos separates out of the Father at his generation.[30] In connection with Justin's strong arguments in favor of the divinity of the Son, his lack of

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[28] *Dial.* 56.11, Falls, 85.

[29] Conversely, Osborn claims that for Justin, the Father and Son are not distinct in substance. Nevertheless, Justin's location of the unity of Father and Son in the passages Osborn cites in support of this statement refer not to the unity of the substance of Father and Son, but to the conformity of the will of the Father and Son. Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, 32. Using many of the same passages as Osborn, Goodenough correctly shows that the unity Justin envisions is one of the Son's conforming to the will of the Father, as opposed to any unity of substance. Goodenough concludes, "[I]n general, Justin found his Philonic figures of the unity of the οὐσία much less important than the dual divine Personalities, and consequently he makes the real basis of his argument for monotheism not the unity of οὐσία but the subordination of rank of the Second God." Goodenough, *Justin Martyr*, 155. For Goodenough's full argument, see pp. 155-157. As I will show momentarily, the unity of the divine entities in the will or in the agreement of the entities better aligns with Middle Platonic unity formulas. See below p. 228n38.

[30] This lack of concern for the unity of the three entities is displayed in Justin's ability to insert other celestial beings between the three divine entities in traditional Trinitarian statements. For example, he writes that Christians "worship and adore both Him and the Son who came from Him, and taught us these things, and the army of the other good angels, who follow Him and are made like Him, and the prophetic Spirit, giving honor [to Him] in reason and truth…" 1 *Apol.* 6.2, Barnard, 26. Despite claims of certain scholars, this passage does not reflect a complete lack of Trinitarian theology, but only a stronger emphasis on the distinction of the three entities than their unity. The fact that the angels accompany the Son show not that they are divine but that the Son is a real entity, distinct from both the Father and the Spirit. Justin has not developed a mechanism to maintain the divine unity in tension with the distinction he is so concerned to show. For a comprehensive listing of scholarly interpretations of the 1 *Apol.* 6.2 passage, see Martín, *Espíritu Santo,* 244-250.

concern for the divine unity results in a forfeiture of monotheism in any traditional sense of the word. Justin maintains the continuity with Judaism not through redefining the Godhead or in particular, what it means to say that God is one, but by maintaining belief in one Most High God, Creator of the universe, to which he adds belief in two other lesser divine beings.[31] God the Father remains supreme because of a superior divinity and because both the other beings conform to his will, which is the source not only of their existence, but also of all their work in the economy.[32] This imperfect solution, thus, allows Justin to say at once that God is one and God is three, but it precludes an understanding that the three divine entities together constitute the one God.

1.2 Athenagoras

For Athenagoras, whose primary task is to refute the charge of atheism by correlating Christian doctrine and philosophical beliefs, the philosophical context is the only context in which his Trinitarian passages occur. As I have shown in past chapters,

[31] "Trypho, there will never be, nor has there ever been from eternity, any other God except him who created and formed this universe. Furthermore, we do not claim that our God is different from yours…We have been led to God through this crucified Christ, and we are the true spiritual Israel, and the descendents of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, who, though uncircumcised, was approved and blessed by God because of his faith and was called the father of many nations. All this shall be proved as we proceed with our discussion." *Dial.* 11.1, 5, Falls, 20-21.

[32] Although Justin never brings his understanding of the work of the three divine entities in the economy together into one Trinitarian passage, as Theophilus and Irenaeus will do, he consistently maintains that all the events of the economy of salvation originate in God's saving plans and that Jesus Christ's obedience obeys and conforms to the Father's will. For example, he writes, "[H]ow can we doubt and refuse to believe that, in conformity with the will of the Father of all, he could also be born of a virgin, particularly when we have so many Scriptural texts which clearly show that even this has taken place according to the will of the Father?" *Dial.* 75.4, Falls, 118. Elsewhere, Justin writes, "[H]e who is said to have appeared to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, and is called God, is distinct from God, the Creator; distinct, that is, in number, but not in mind. For I state that he never did or said anything other than what the Creator—above whom there is no other God—desired that he do or say." *Dial.* 56.11, Falls, 85. Goodenough writes that Justin here means "that though the Second God is a distinct personality He yet has no impulsive power in His thinking, for there is only one such centre of the Godhead…" Goodenough, *Justin Martyr,* 156. Accordingly, this formula exhibits the beginnings of a "one power" argument for the unity of Father and Son; nonetheless, Justin fails to develop it. As we shall see, the "one power" argument is developed first by Athenagoras who may have gotten the idea in its embryonic form from Justin.

Athenagoras, like Justin, employs Middle Platonic terms toward this end. Nonetheless, Athenagoras' Trinitarian formula shows a deeper concern than Justin's Trinitarian formula for maintaining the unity of the divine agents with the Most High God, even after the respective generations of the Logos and Spirit out of God. This concern results in an added component to Athenagoras' formula not present in Justin's. For example, in his explanation of Christian belief, Athenagoras writes, "Who then would not be amazed if he heard of men called atheists who bring forward God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit and who proclaim both their power in unity [τήν ἐν τῇ ἑνώσει δύναμιν] and their diversity in rank [τήν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν]."[33] In this passage, Athenagoras not only underscores the distinction of the three entities, as witnessed in Justin's use of χώρα and τάξις, he emphasizes their continuing unity. The mechanism of unity Athenagoras identifies here is the three entities' possession of the same power (δύναμις). Athenagoras does not state explicitly the nature of this power, but it appears to be the capacity of divine action possessed by Father, Son, and Spirit that manifests itself both in creation (by the work of the Son) and in prophecy (by the work of the Spirit). In other words, insofar as the Son and the Spirit perform the divine work in the world, they are one with God.

This concern for the unity of the divine entities is not manifest in Justin's formula[34] and, as such, represents an important Trinitarian development. Nonetheless, in

[33] *Leg.* 10.5, Schoedel, 23. Athenagoras reprises the formula later in the work, writing, "We say that there is God and the Son, his Logos, and the Holy Spirit, united according to power [κατὰ δύναμιν] yet distinguished according to rank [κατὰ τάξιν] as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, since the Son is mind, reason, and wisdom of the Father and the Spirit is an effluence like light from fire." *Leg.* 24.2, Schoedel, 59 with minor revisions.

[34] As noted above, Justin only is concerned to show the unity of the three entities prior to the generation of the Son and Spirit. He emphasizes only the real distinctions among the entities following their generations.

contrast to the position of a number of scholars who find in this formula of unity an early example of developed Trinitarian thought,[35] Athenagoras' argument for unity does not equate to an argument for one essence or nature shared by Father, Son, and Spirit.[36] On the contrary, in chapter three, I showed how Athenagoras' understanding of the Son's ability to work in the world is predicated upon his lower or lesser divinity: whereas the Father's transcendent nature precludes him from working in the world, the Son's nature allows him to act in the world—or to be in the place of the world—on God' behalf.[37] As a result, the Father and Son cannot share one divine essence or the Logos would lack the ability to work in the world as well, and Athenagoras' argument for divine action in the world would break down.[38] Concomitantly, Athenagoras' two-stage Logos theology

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[35] Notably, Barnard, *Athenagoras,* 101-103 and Grant, *Greek Apologists,* 109. In a similar vein, Swete finds the formula quite advanced for the time period, particularly when compared to Justin's formula. He writes, "There is unity in the Divine life, and there is also diversity. The unity consists in the possession of the same Divine power; the diversity in a distinction of rank or order…It will be realized that this is a great advance upon all that we have found so far in post-canonical writings, and a remarkable result to have been reached before the year 180." Swete, *Holy Spirit,* 44. More recently, Pouderon calls Athenagoras' Trinitarian formula an "original rationale for reconciling the divine monarchy with the trinity, by the distinction (vaguely subordinationist) of the power or capacity and rank or role." Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes,* 131. I agree with these scholars' assertion that Athenagoras shows an important Trinitarian development from Justin by his attempt to maintain the unity of the distinct entities after the generation of the Logos and Spirit. Nonetheless, by taking this formula of unity out of the context of Athenagoras' entire thought, these scholars overestimate its sophistication. As I will show momentarily, Athenagoras' Trinitarian formula is closer to Justin's than is often assumed.

[36] This argument most recently is made by Monica Giunchi. Her comments assume the self evident nature of this equation. For example, she writes, "[Athenagoras] does not insist on this subordination but rather on the equality and on the unity in essence of the Father and of the Son. *Naturally*, when he speaks of the abilities of the three persons in their unity and of their distinction in order, he seems to imply such a nuance…" Monica Giunchi, "*Dunamis* et *taxis* dans la conception trinitaire d'Athénagore," in *Les Apologistes Chrétiens et la Culture Grecque,* ed. Pouderon et Joseph Doré, Théologie Historique 105 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996), 121-134, italics added. Likewise, Pouderon, although raising the specter of subordinationism, ultimately interprets Athenagoras' formula as affirming "not a hierarchical distinction, which would raise a heresy, but a functional distinction, with each of the persons having a proper role…" Pouderon, *Athénagore d'Athènes,* 132.

[37] See above pp. 128-129, 132-134.

[38] Despite Giunchi's assumption that the identification of power and essence in Athenagoras' formula of unity is "natural," nowhere does Athenagoras suggest an equation of divine δύναμις and divine οὐσία. Athenagoras' meaning is not at all clear—like Justin, Athenagoras assumes the meaning of these terms as a standard aspect of traditional discourse regarding the Godhead. The closest Athenagoras comes to an argument of a unity of οὐσία, and by implication a definition of δύναμις, centers on the unity of the Father and the Son. There, Athenagoras writes, "Now since the Son is in the Father and the Father in the

results in a temporal beginning to the separate existence of the Logos/Son (and Spirit). Put in other terms, at the generation the essence of the Logos separates out of the essence of God, meaning that only God's essence is eternal. These aspects of Athenagoras' thought exclude a unity of essence of Father, Son, and Spirit.[39]

While locating the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit in one shared power, Athenagoras follows Justin in affirming the real distinction of the three entities. Like Justin, he locates their distinction according to their differing "ranks" (τάξες). This affirmation forms the second part of his Trinitarian formula—Father, Son, and Spirit are "unified according to power [κατὰ δύναμιν] yet distinguished according to rank [κατὰ

Son by a powerful unity of spirit [ἑνότητι καὶ δυνάμει πνεύματος], the Son of God is the mind and the reason of the Father." *Leg.* 10.2, Schoedel, 21, 23. While Athenagoras clearly identifies the common spiritual nature of the Father and Son as the basis of their unity here, the context of the statement reveals that this binitarian formula is governed by the unity of δύναμις in his Trinitarian formula quoted above. Just prior to this statement, Athenagoras writes, "[For] in [the Son's] likeness and through him all things came into existence, which presupposes that the Father and the Son are one." *Leg.* 10.2, Schoedel, 21. In other words, in explaining the spiritual unity of Father and Son, Athenagoras identifies the Son's power to act in unison with the Father as the rationale for their spiritual unity. Consequently, Athenagoras' statement that the Father and Son are united in a unity of spirit is not an argument from the oneness of nature or essence; rather, this argument depends on the more fundamental argument that the Father and Son share the same power, which, as we have seen, cannot logically equate to essence given Athenagoras' assumptions of transcendence and divine work in the world. Crehan, although failing to comment on Athenagoras' unity in power, diversity in rank formula, discerns in the *Leg.* 10.2 statement a developed Trinitarian formula that anticipates Augustine's understanding that the Holy Spirit is the bond of unity and love between Father and Son. According to Crehan, the πνεῦμα in this passage refers to the distinct Third Person, resulting in his statement that "[t]he idea of considering the Spirit as the uniting power of the Father and the Son is here set forth for the first time in Christian theology." Crehan, *Athenagoras,* 133. This interpretation is questionable given Athenagoras' failure to develop this formula. In fact, this is the only example of Athenagoras' use of spirit as the unifying factor of Father and Son. Rather, Athenagoras prefers the unity in power, diversity in rank formula, perhaps because of its capabilities to affirm a distinct Holy Spirit. Crehan's failure to comment on this latter formula, given his proclivity to see Athenagoras as an early Trinitarian thinker, is surprising. (For more on the argument of a unified essence of Father, Son, and Spirit in Athenagoras' thought, specifically as it relates to the meaning of τάξις, see below p. 230n41.) In contrast to Crehan and Giunchi's attempt to find in Athenagoras a unity of essence in Father, Son, and Spirit, Schoedel has shown precedence for Athenagoras' common power argument in several Middle Platonic sources. Schoedel, "Neglected Motive," 362-365. As Schoedel correctly shows, the unity of power in these sources is not a unity of essence, but a unity of purpose.

[39] Previous scholarship's failure to read this Trinitarian formula in the context of Athenagoras' entire thought leads to an oversimplified as well as an over enthusiastic interpretation of Athenagoras' Trinitarian formula.

τάξιν] as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit…"[40] As noted above with Justin's formula, τάξις refers to "rank" and, in accord with Athenagoras' assumptions of the respective natures of the Son and Spirit, indicates their lesser divinities in relation to the Father. As I have argued elsewhere, according to Athenagoras' logic, the Son and the Spirit are enabled to work in the world because of lesser divine natures, which are themselves a consequence of their generation from the will of the Father. As a result, the differing τάξες of the Son and Spirit are a function of their gradated divine natures, a usage that is in line with the use of τάξις both in Justin and Middle Platonism.[41]

When Athenagoras' thought on the nature of the divine work in the world and on the nature of the two stages of the Logos are considered, his Trinitarian formula of "unity

[40] *Leg.* 24.2.

[41] Schoedel, "Neglected Motive," 360-361, 366. Conversely, Barnard renders τάξις in Athenagoras' formula as "order," claiming that it does not imply an ontological, and therefore subordinationist, distinction. He writes, "Rather, for the apologist, the logos is divine, immanent in God as 'idea' and 'power' yet economically distinct as the creative agent of the cosmos. The logos has two relationships with the Father, immanent in the Godhead, and expressed in procession when He presides over the ordering of the universe. This is a difference of function rather than nature and, properly understood, does not lend itself to a subordinationist interpretation." Barnard, *Athenagoras,* 101. Barnard's argument has several difficulties. First, Barnard, like the scholars noted above (see p. 228ns 35, 36, 38), equates the formula unity of power with a unity of essence. This interpretation results from a failure to distinguish adequately between the two stages of the Logos' existence. Barnard's argument rather implies that the Logos is at once eternally immanent in God and separated from him as his agent in the economy. This blurring of the stages allows Barnard to argue that the differing τάξες occur even in the first stage when the Son is interior to the Father. However, I have shown that the two stages of the Logos' existence in Athenagoras' understanding are quite distinct—in the first stage the Logos is indistinguishable from the Father while at the generation the Logos separates from the Father in essence. Thus, the differing τάξες, in which Athenagoras locates the distinction of Father and Son (and Spirit) can only be a function of the second stage. The distinction, then, is one of essence, for as I have said, the lower rank, or subordinate essence, of the Son allows him to work in the world. As more evidence of the blurring of the stages, Barnard argues that the Logos is immanent in God (referring to the first stage) by virtue of his status as the "idea" and "power" of God. However, the Logos' status as the "idea" of God occurs in his economic manifestation as the idea of creation, which occurs after his generation and separation from the Father ("[the Logos] came forth to serve as Ideal Form and Energizing Power…" *Leg.* 10.3). As such, if idea is equivalent to power, as Barnard insists, then the formula of unity in a common power refers to the Father, Son, and Spirit in the economic manifestation and, therefore, cannot be one of essence. If the unity is not in essence, then Barnard's rendering of τάξις as "order" does not make sense. Second, although Barnard argues for Athenagoras' dependence on Justin as well as Justin's subordinationist language in his Trinitarian formula, Barnard fails to note the appearance of τάξις in both authors' respective formulas. If Athenagoras follows Justin, the correct assumption would be that he intends the same meaning with his use of the same word, unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary. Barnard does not provide this evidence.

in power, diversity in rank" is closer to Justin's formula than is often assumed. As such, Athenagoras' formula features an ontological subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the Father and possesses the same difficulty maintaining continuity with Jewish monotheism. Athenagoras' concern for their unity following the generation of the Son and the Spirit is the only difference between the two formulas.[42] The Logos and Spirit are united to the Father and to one another by their one δύναμις, but they are subordinated to the Father and distinguished from one another by their differing τάξες which are a function of their distinct, and graduated, divine essences.

1.3 Theophilus

As shown in previous chapters, Theophilus stands apart from the other two Apologists in this study in several ways, most notably regarding the Jewish imprint of his writings.[43] The Jewish influence also is evident in his Trinitarian formulas, which while emphasizing similar truths to those of Justin and Athenagoras, do so in a completely different medium. The formulas of Justin and Athenagoras establish the beginnings of the development of technical Trinitarian vocabulary, notably δύναμις and τάξις, which describe the relationships among the three divine entities according to the form of Middle

[42] The reason for Athenagoras' greater concern than Justin's concern regarding the subsequent unity of the divine entities is unclear. Perhaps Justin's concern to identify the pre-existent Logos with the human person of Jesus demands he maintain a persistent distinction between God and Logos (and Spirit) that Athenagoras is not as concerned to emphasize.

[43] Theophilus is not devoid of a Hellenistic influence. Indeed, his doctrine of the Logos belies a profound Stoic influence. Additionally, Justin and Athenagoras are not devoid of a Jewish influence, as both stress the continuity of the Christian God with the Creator God revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. Still, Theophilus' context places him in the closest proximity to a strong Jewish community in Antioch. This Jewish influence comes to the forefront in his understanding of the Spirit as Sophia, as I argued in chapter four, and in the expressions of his Trinitarian formula precisely because they occur in the context of a *Hexaemeron*. As Grant observes, "Almost everything in [Theophilus'] exegesis can be paralleled in Jewish haggadic literature." Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch," 237.

Platonic literary sources. Conversely, the Trinitarian formulas of Theophilus come in the form of metaphorical pictures or images that describe the inner relationships of the three divine entities according to analogy with an anthropomorphic image of God rooted in Scripture.

When Trinitarian formulas were formalized in the fourth century, they took a medium much closer to that of the first two Apologists. As such, Theophilus' images are more difficult to recognize as Trinitarian formulas. Still, his Trinitarian images are crucial to the theological development of the Trinity as they present two new elements Irenaeus will incorporate into his understanding of the relationships among Father, Son, and Spirit. These elements are (1) the use of the anthropomorphic image of God creating with his hands, the Logos and Sophia, to interpret the Genesis creation narratives and (2) the preference for the alternate Trinitarian formula of God, Word (Logos), Wisdom (Sophia) as opposed to the more traditional Father, Son, Spirit formula.

Theophilus invokes the image of the "hands of God" in the context of his *Hexaemeron* in *Autol.* 2 and in particular, in his interpretation of the Genesis 1:26 passage. He writes, "For after making everything else by a word, God considered all this as incidental; he regarded the making of man as the only work worthy of his own hands. Furthermore, God is found saying: 'Let us make man after the image and likeness' as if he needed assistance; but he said 'Let us make' to none other than his own Logos and his own Sophia."[44] Theophilus does not introduce the image of the "hands of God" to elucidate the respective natures of the Second and Third Persons. Instead, he uses the image to affirm the importance of humanity in the scheme of creation. Accordingly, he stresses that of all the works of creation, only humanity is created by the intimate touch

[44] *Autol.* 2.18, Grant, 57.

of God. Furthermore, the conversation present in Scripture ("[t]hen God said, 'Let us make…") marks a pause in the course of the narrative that heightens the uniqueness of humanity's creation. God speaks, as he has at every other point in the creation narrative, but in this case, God's speech does not create. Rather, according to Theophilus' interpretation, God converses with his hands, the Logos and the Sophia, who subsequently form human beings.

As has been noted elsewhere, the use of the "hands of God" image to describe God's creation of human beings comes from a Jewish tradition[45] perhaps most clearly represented in the retelling of the Genesis creation account in 4 Esdras, which states, "O sovereign Lord, did you not speak at the beginning when you planted the earth—and that without help—and commanded the dust and it gave you Adam, a lifeless body? Yet he was the creation of your hands, and you breathed into him the breath of life, and he was made alive in your presence."[46] Elsewhere, the same work unites "hands" language and "image" language: "But people, who have been formed by your hands and are called your

[45] See, for example, Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 102. Grant refers to parallels in Rabbinic literature, notably Abot de-R. Nathan. Grant, "Theophilus of Antioch," 237-238. Numerous biblical passages, particularly the Pss., attribute creation to the hands of God, frequently using the phrase "the works of his hands." Some examples include Job 10:8-12, Pss. [LXX] 8:3-8, 19:1, 28:5, 92:4, 95:4-5, 102:25, 119:73, and 138:8, Wisd. 11:17. Similarly, another tradition describes the Lord stretching out the heavens with his hands. See, for example, Isa. 45:12 and Sir. 43:12. P. Joseph Titus reports that the word "hand" is used in the figurative sense of God's working power in over 300 passages in the Hebrew Bible, alone. Titus, "'The Hand of God': Inquiry into the Anthropomorphic Image of God in Gen 2-3" *ITS* 45 (2008): 421-447. For a concise discussion of the biblical nature of this image, see Mambrino, "'Deux Mains de Dieu,'" 355-358. The difference with the imagery in the Jewish literature and Theophilus' use of the tradition, as Barnes observes with Irenaeus, is that the Hebrew Bible refers "the work of God's hands" to all aspects of creation. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology,"103-104. Theophilus limits the phrase to the formation of humanity, thus employing the image to a different end. The Jewish usage reveals something about God; Theophilus' usage reveals something about humanity. An earlier Christian use of the same image is motivated by the same concern to highlight the priority of humanity in God's creation. Moreover, it also represents a midrashic tradition that has reconciled the two creation accounts of Gen. 1 and 2. The writer of *1 Clement* writes, "Above all, as the most excellent and by far the greatest work of his intelligence, with his holy and faultless hands [God] formed man as a representation of his own image. For thus spoke God: 'Let us make man in our image and likeness. And God created man; male and female he created them.'" *1 Clement* 33.45, Holmes, 65.

[46] 4 Esd. 3:4-5, NRSV translation.

own image because they are made like you, and for whose sake you have formed all things—have you also made them like the farmer's seed?"[47] These passages reveal the likely origin of the "hands of God" image, namely the midrashic connection of the two creation accounts of Genesis 1:26 and 2:7, the first of which emphasizes the image of God in humanity created through God's command and the second of which emphasizes the dust in which humanity is created by God's hands. The writer of 4 Esdras makes the two stories a composite narrative by combining God's creative command and forming hands in the same creative act. Oddly, however, the object of the command referred to in 4 Esdras 3:4 is the dust, which dutifully gave forth Adam. Although the passage refers to God's hands in v. 5, the emphasis on the dust as obedient to the command of God makes the action of God's forming hands superfluous. Presumably, in 4 Esdras, as in the Genesis 1 account, God's speech is the creative action.

Theophilus' use of the Jewish "hands of God" tradition in his exegesis of Genesis 1:26 resembles the usage in 4 Esdras in that Theophilus also connects the commandment of Genesis 1:26 with the forming action of God's hands in Genesis 2:7. However, in Theophilus' interpretation, the object of God's command is not the dust, but God's own hands; thus, this interpretation makes the combination of the disparate creation accounts intelligible. Theophilus can make this interpretive move because he understands the hands of God as separate and distinct creative agents able to receive and respond to God's command. By the time he uses the image in *Autol.* 2:18, Theophilus already has established the existence of two distinct agents—the Logos and the Sophia—who have

[47] 4 Esd. 8:44, NRSV translation. See also 4 Esd. 8:7.

separated from God in their generation in order to act as agents in the creation.[48] As such, the Jewish image of the "hands of God" in creation suited Theophilus' description of the creation of humanity perfectly. The image of the "hands of God" allowed him to underscore the intimacy of the creation of humanity in order to elevate humans above the other aspects of creation, while at the same time maintaining God's transcendence, since the Logos and the Sophia rather than God himself, touch material.

This image represents a Trinitarian formula inasmuch as it affirms three distinct entities—namely, God and his two "hands," the Logos and Sophia. Theophilus affirms the distinction of the Logos and Sophia from God by their ability to receive God's command as separate dialogue subjects and by their ability to work *in* the material creation according to the will of God.[49] Nonetheless, all three distinct entities are unified in one creative act of making humanity. At this point, the formula approaches that of Athenagoras. The Athenian Apologist asserted the truth of distinction in unity of action through technical, Middle Platonic terms; the Antiochene Apologist asserts the same truth through the Jewish picture of an anthropomorphic God—God the Father is united with his "hands," the Logos and Sophia, who together as one being form humanity.

The resulting scheme establishes a triad with God at the top, in whom and from whom all divine action originates and under whom the Logos and the Sophia stand in

[48] Theophilus first makes the distinction definite in *Autol.* 2.10. For a discussion on Theophilus' understanding of the generation of the Logos, see above pp. 129-132.

[49] Theophilus writes, "Since the Logos is God and derived his nature from God, whenever the Father of the universe wills to do so he sends him into some place where he is present and is heard and is seen. He is sent by God and is present in a place." *Autol.* 2.22, Grant, 65. Although Theophilus' understanding of the work of the agents in the economy lacks the detail of Justin's understanding, this small insight demonstrates that his understanding of the agents' works aligns with Justin's teaching, namely, that the Son and Spirit conform wholly to the will and intention originating in the Father.

relationship, equal to one another, although together subordinated to the Father.[50] This formula aligns well with Theophilus' understanding of the nature of each individual divine entity. His two-stage Logos theology presumes that God is eternal, and that the Logos and Sophia both separate from him at a point in time, thus commencing their respective separate existences in subordination to the Father. Theophilus writes, "Therefore God, having his own Logos innate in his own bowels, generated him together with his own Sophia, vomiting him forth before everything else."[51] Nonetheless, no distinction in time exists between the generation of the Logos and the Sophia; therefore, unlike Justin and possibly Athenagoras, no subordination exists between the Logos and Sophia.

I already have addressed Theophilus' use of the titles "Logos" and "Sophia" and the implications of the titles for the nature of the Second and Third Persons, respectively. These titles, when brought together, produce a Trinitarian formula distinct from the traditional Father, Son, Spirit formula. For example, Theophilus writes, "Similarly the three days prior to the luminaries are types of the triad [τριάς] of God and his Logos and his Sophia."[52] This alternate Trinitarian formula displays a more intrinsic[53] connection between all *three* entities than does the traditional formula. Whereas the titles of the traditional formula emphasize the close relationship of Father and Son only, leaving ambiguous how the Spirit fits into their filial relationship, Theophilus' formula envisions both the Second and Third Persons existing in an equally intimate relationship to the First

[50] In addition to the "hands of God" image, the equality of the Logos and the Sophia is suggested by their common functions in creation, as well as the timing of their generation, as I noted in chapter four. See above pp. 183-185. Theophilus asserts both the Logos and Sophia separate from the interior of God at the same time and for the same purpose. See *Autol.* 2.22.

[51] *Autol.* 2.10, Grant, 39.

[52] *Autol.* 2.15, Grant, 53.

[53] By "intrinsic" I mean a formula that possesses a logic in which all three entities are necessary to the common relationship.

Person, for both exist as God's personified, intellectual qualities. As such, both Logos and Sophia equally are eternal (God could no more be devoid of his wisdom than he could be devoid of his reason), equally valued, and in equal status under God. Thus, this alternate Trinitarian formula again underscores the equality of Second and Third Persons in hierarchical relationship to God as pictured in the "hands of God" image discussed above.[54]

The Trinitarian formulas of the Apologists, including both the technical definitions of Justin and Athenagoras and the metaphorical pictures of Theophilus, are

[54] The intrinsic relationship of all three entities, heightened by the God, Logos, Sophia formula, may offer a reason for Theophilus' collective reference to them as a τρίας (*trinitas*, Trinity). Past scholars have attributed much importance to Theophilus' use of the term τρίας. For example, Quasten, representing a commonly held notion, deems Theophilus a significant figure in the development of the Trinity because he is the first figure to use this term of Father, Son, and Spirit, together. Quasten, *Patrology* 1:239. Even Harnack makes much of the word, specifically when assessing Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. In Harnack's estimation, Irenaeus' failure to use any word like τρίας to describe the Godhead puts the state of his Trinitarian theology in doubt. Harnack, *History of Dogma* 2:353n556. Certain scholars' emphasis on Theophilus' use of the word implies that he must have intended a significance approaching fourth century (if not modern) understandings of the Trinity, thus marking him as an important figure in the development of the Trinity. Nevertheless, a word can be defined only by the theology with which it is infused; to draw significance from the word, itself, is to anachronistically read later uses of the term into Theophilus' use. According to my conclusions of previous chapters regarding the individual natures of God, Logos, and Sophia in Theophilus' theology, notably the absence of an eternal distinction between the Logos and Sophia on the one hand and God on the other, Theophilus likely did not intend his use of τρίας to indicate anything like a fourth century use of the term. Although I think Rogers ultimately undervalues the state of the Trinity in Theophilus' writings, his observation that "all of this trinitarian language [in the scholarly interpretation of τρίας] is derived from the modern historian's anticipation of later theological developments and, therefore, is anachronistic when directed towards Theophilus" is correct. Rogers, *Theophilus*, 75. Theophilus may use the word to indicate nothing other than a grouping of three entities, as Prestige notes. Prestige writes, "The word triad simply means a collection of three objects. It would be quite wrong to translate it here by 'Trinity.' There are three days to be explained, and they represent the group of three entities or 'powers' that were to be reckoned on the divine side of the catalogue of existing beings." Prestige, *Patristic Thought*, 91. Prestige's interpretation is supported by Theophilus' statement following the use of τρίας: "In the fourth place is man, who is in need of light—so that there might be God, Logos, Sophia, Man." *Autol.* 2.15, Grant, 53. Here, the triad becomes a tetrad with no theological significance. Grant comments, "This 'triad' is not precisely the Trinity, since in Theophilus' mind man can be added to it." Grant, *Theophilus*, 53n15. In another place, the same writer in regards to the same passage makes an important, although undeveloped, statement for the present dissertation: "a triad which by the addition of 'man' becomes a tetrad is hardly what Irenaeus, for example, would have regarded as a Trinity—had Irenaeus used the word." Grant, "Problem of Theophilus," 188. For a similar interpretation, see Swete, *Holy Spirit*, 47. That Theophilus can add humanity to the triad shows how far removed his use of τρίας is from modern Trinitarian sensibilities. The importance of Theophilus' Trinitarian theology lie not in the use of a certain word, but in the formulas I have raised here; that he chooses a word that will later acquire Trinitarian significance to describe one of the formulas is of little consequence.

consistent with their understandings of the respective natures of God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit. Each Apologist envisions the three entities in a subordinating, ontological hierarchy, with God the Father as the source of both the being of the other two as well as the work they perform. Theophilus stands apart from Justin and Athenagoras in that he alone understands the Son and Spirit as equal with one another, although both are equally subordinate to the Father. While all three authors are concerned to maintain the unity of the three distinct entities prior to the generation of the Logos, only the respective Trinitarian formulas of Athenagoras and Theophilus maintain this unity after their generations; Justin alone shows no concern for the ongoing unity of the distinct, divine entities. While these primitive formulas can be considered Trinitarian insofar as they represent an effort to maintain the distinction of the three entities as well their respective divinities, they are plagued with difficulties for Christian theology not fully perceived until the advent of developed "Gnostic" theologies.

2. Irenaeus

Irenaeus' Trinitarian passages occur in two contexts corresponding to the two facets of his polemic against the various "Gnostic" theologies. The first context, largely comprising the first two books of *Haer.*, puts forth a logical and rhetorical argument in which Irenaeus considers the nature of God as he is in himself. The second context, largely comprising *Haer.* 3-5 and *Epid.*, presents Irenaeus' exposition of the work of God

in the economy, works which Irenaeus interprets as Trinitarian involving the cooperative work of God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit.[55]

2.1 The Triune God in Himself

In *Haer.* 2, Irenaeus' description of the divine nature as spirit emphasized the truth that God is a simple being who is "all mind, all Logos, all active spirit, all light, and always exists one and the same…"[56] in contrast to the Valentinian *Pleroma* composed of numerous, spatially separated divine emanations. As described in chapter three, Irenaeus understands the nature of the Logos and his relation to God through the lens of this definition of the simple, spiritual divine nature. Accordingly, the Logos, who "always co-

[55] My analysis will not include the various *regula* passages. Despite their Trinitarian structure, they offer nothing substantially different from that provided by an analysis of the work of the three entities in the economy. Additionally, I will not consider one notoriously difficult Trinitarian passage that occurs in *Epid.* 10: "This God, then, is glorified by His Word, who is His Son, continually, and by the Holy Spirit, who is the Wisdom of the Father of all. And their power<s>, of this Word and of Wisdom, who are called Cherubim and Seraphim, glorify God with unceasing voices, and everything, whatsoever that is in the heavenly realm, gives glory to God the Father of all." *Epid.* 10, Behr, 46. I avoid this passage without comment not because I view it as non-Trinitarian, but because the history of scholarship on the passage reveals its complexity and the difficulty with arguing from its content for or against a Trinitarian theology. The passage has garnered much attention, particularly in relation to the apparent identification of the Son and the Spirit with the angelic figures Cherubim and Seraphim. This identification has raised the specter of angelomorphic christology and pneumatology. See, for example, D.E. Lanne, "Cherubim et Seraphim: Essai d'Interpretation du Chapitre X de la Démonstration de Saint Irénée," *RSR* 43 (1955): 524-35. More recently, however, Briggman has argued on the basis of the Armenian translation that the Cherubim and Seraphim are not the Son and Spirit, but are created beings and therefore ought to be identified with the lower powers. Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 295-308. See also Briggman, "Re-Evaluating Angelomorphism in Irenaeus: The Case of Proof 10," *JTS* 61.2 (2010) 583-95. His argument is persuasive, but he does not acknowledge the possibility that the Armenian translator could have altered Irenaeus' original text, which did equate the Son and Spirit with angels, in order to remove from Irenaeus' theology an angelomorphic understanding of the Second and Third Persons no longer acceptable at the time of the translation. Because we do not possess a Greek fragment for this important paragraph, absolute certainty is impossible. Therefore, despite the preponderance of scholarship on the text, the results are inconclusive, and basing any account of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology on such a dubious text would prove unwise. Therefore, I will focus my attention on other texts that prove a substantial Trinitarian theology in Irenaeus' thought. While I do not have the space or the need to develop this statement further, I contend that such an understanding of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology in the later books of *Haer.* necessitates a reading of the *Epid.* 10 passage more in line with Briggman's reading than previous angelomorphic readings.

[56] *Haer.* 2.28.4, ANF 1:400 with minor revisions.

existed with the Father," exists in a reciprocally immanent relationship with the Father.[57] As both Father and Son possess the same quality of divinity instead of the gradated divinity of the Valentinian Aeons, and as both Father and Son are spiritual in nature, they interpenetrate one another wholly such that the divine nature remains one and simple. Although Irenaeus is aware of the existence of the Holy Spirit at this point in his thought, as indicated by the Spirit's presence in the *regula* statements of *Haer.* 1, the polemic of *Haer.* 2 offers a binitarian, rather than Trinitarian, argument.

Nonetheless, following the pneumatological expansion in *Haer.* 3 and 4, where the Spirit emerges as an equal entity alongside Father and Son, Irenaeus refers back to the argument of *Haer.* 2 and retroactively includes the Spirit in the reciprocally immanent relationship of the Father and Son. He writes, "And that the Logos, who is the Son, was always with the Father, we have demonstrated many times. Moreover, since the Sophia, who is the Spirit, was also with him before all creation…"[58] I already have engaged this passage in connection with the nature of the Holy Spirit.[59] In the following material, I will engage the passage as a Trinitarian statement in order to understand the nature of the relationships among the three entities.

First, the presence of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit with God/Father here is eternal, devoid of a time element or a reason for their separate existence alongside the Father. Irenaeus simply notes that their presence with the Father is *semper*.[60] Absent is a

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[57] *Haer.* 2.30.9. See above pp. 162-165.

[58] *"Et quoniam Verbum, hoc est Filius, semper cum Patre erat, per multa demonstravimus. Quoniam autem et Sapientia, quae est Spiritus, erat apud eum ante omnem constitutionem…" Haer.* 4.20.3. The reference to the divine existence prior to and apart from the creation suggests that this statement refers to the logical argument of *Haer.* 2.

[59] See above pp. 198-199.

[60] Technically, *semper* references only the Logos/Son, but the presence of *autem*, which introduces the second phrase about the Sophia/Spirit, parallels the two statements and indicates that the *semper* refers to both Logos and Sophia. As I suggested in the previous chapter, the quotations from Proverbs following

reference to their work in creation to justify their separate existence alongside God, as was the case with the two-stage Logos theology of the Apologists.[61] Irenaeus' point, opposite of the Apologists' and, to a certain degree, Valentinian thought, asserts the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit's eternal existence with the Father regardless of the presence of creation. For Irenaeus, the existence of the Son and Spirit is necessary in the same manner that the existence of the Father is necessary.

Irenaeus' paralleling of the respective statements on the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit coupled with the summary reference to the rhetorical argument of *Haer.* 2 suggests that he intends the fruits of his earlier rhetorical argument, which addressed the immanent relationship between Father and Son alone, to apply to the immanent relationships of all three divine entities. In other words, Irenaeus' statement in *Haer.* 4.20.3 makes the binitarian argument of *Haer.* 2 a Trinitarian argument. Consequently, every truth affirmed of the Son's relationship to the Father now is affirmed of the Spirit's relationship to the Father, as well as of the mutual relationship between the Spirit and the Son. Therefore, the Trinitarian formula represented by *Haer.* 4.20.3 affirms the existence of three eternally divine and personal entities, independent of the roles they perform in the economy, who exist as spirit and fully interpenetrate one another.

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the reference to the Spirit also support the eternal nature of the Spirit and are given precisely because the Spirit originally was not included in the *Haer.* 2 rhetorical argument.

[61] In the Apologists' understanding, the occasion of the Second and Third Person's separation from the Father is their work in creation (see above pp. 121-134). Irenaeus' mention of "creation" in *Haer.* 4.20.3 does not entail the work of creating, but the entity of creation, and is mentioned in order to provide a reference point in time in which to contrast the eternality of Father, Son, and Spirit. The temporal reference to creation recalls another passage in *Haer.* 2, which I have already addressed, namely, Irenaeus' statement that "[i]f, for instance, anyone asks, 'What was God doing before he made the world?' we reply that the answer to such a question lies with God himself.'" *Haer.* 2.28.3, ANF 1:400. Irenaeus does not contradict this strong statement in referring to the time prior to creation in the *Haer.* 4.20.3 passage because he does not speculate regarding God's activity during this time. He simply notes that the God who exists before the creation of the world exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Trinitarian formula resulting from this retroactive alteration of the binitarian argument of *Haer.* 2 is quite advanced from the ontologically subordinate hierarchy witnessed in the Apologists' formulas. Unlike his sources, Irenaeus does not rank the three divine entities in descending order. In fact, the argument of *Haer.* 2 indicts Valentinian theology on just this count for this understanding would render the divine nature compound and therefore comprised of gradated and spatially separated divine beings.[62] Rather, in Irenaeus' formula, the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit exist in a reciprocally immanent relationship with the Father and with one another, such that the same divine nature encompasses all three entities. The one divinity, or the one spiritual nature that comprises all three entities, makes Father, Son, and Spirit one.

Irenaeus' emphasis on the equality of divinity of the Father, Son, and Spirit explains, in part, his reluctance to address the respective generations of the Second and Third Persons from God.[63] For the Apologists, the generation of the Second and Third Persons served as the basis for their lesser, subordinate divine natures insofar as their generations displayed a temporal beginning to their personal existences. Therefore, in the Apologists' understanding, only the Father was eternally personal and equated with the God of Israel. As noted earlier in this chapter, the subordinate natures of the Son and Spirit allowed the Apologists to maintain some semblance of monotheism.

As opposed to the Apologists' emphasis on the generations, Irenaeus underscores the distinction between the eternal divine nature—equally shared by Father, Son, and

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[62] Irenaeus writes, "But God [is] all Mind, and all Logos…So, again, with respect to Logos, when one attributes to him the third place of production from the Father…he is ignorant of his greatness." *Haer.* 2.25.5, ANF 1:400 with minor revisions.

[63] As noted in chapters three, Irenaeus' understanding of the generation of the Logos is implicit in his polemic against the Valentinian theory of emanation, but never directly addressed. As I showed in chapter four, Irenaeus never addresses the generation of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit—and created material things. While this distinction is a consistent theme throughout Irenaeus' works, two passages offer particular emphasis. The first passage, from *Haer.* 2, addresses the Father and Son. Irenaeus writes, "[I]n the same proportion as he who was formed but today, and received the beginning of his creation, is inferior to Him who is uncreated, and who is always the same, in that proportion is he, as respects knowledge and the faculty of investigating the causes of all things, inferior to Him who made him. For you, O man, are not an uncreated being, nor did you always co-exist with God, as did His own Logos…"[64] In a second passage, from *Haer.* 5, Irenaeus includes the Spirit with the Father and the Son in their distinction from created beings. He writes, "Thus does [Isaiah] attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God, which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created. Now what has been made is a different thing from him who makes it. The breath, then, is temporal, but the Spirit eternal."[65] For Irenaeus, the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit are included in the uncreated nature of God/Father because they are eternal.[66] While Irenaeus also believes the Son and Spirit are generated from the Father, his removal of the time element from this generation allows him to maintain the Son and Spirit's eternal natures.[67] Therefore, Irenaeus remains a monotheist insofar as all three entities are equally God and share one divine, spiritual nature. As Barnes has observed, Irenaeus does not have a category by

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[64] *Haer.* 2.25.3, ANF 1:397 with minor revisions.

[65] *Haer.* 5.12.2, ANF 1:538.

[66] Although Irenaeus does not use technical language, this line of argumentation is a primitive form of the distinction between "uncreated" and "ungenerated" that will become central to the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. Irenaeus anticipates the argument by asserting that the Son and Spirit are generated while at the same time strongly maintaining their uncreated nature. See Fantino, *Théologie d' Irénée,* 344ff.

[67] See above the discussion on Irenaeus' understanding of the generation of the Logos/Son, pp. 158-162.

which to identify the separate existence of the Son and Spirit.[68] Irenaeus believes Father, Son, and Spirit are distinguished, as indicated by the differing roles they play in the economy, but he is much more interested in their unity, such that he fails to develop a separate category approximating "person."

Irenaeus understands the Son and the Spirit to share the same uncreated, divine nature with the Father, so his work shows an increasing awareness that the term "God" (θεός, *Deus*) is inadequate as a title for the Father alone, for insofar as all three entities are uncreated, all three are God. As such, Irenaeus begins to explore a redefinition of the title "God" to refer not only to the Father (or to the Son or Spirit for that matter), but rather, to refer to the uncreated, divine nature that all three entities equally possess. Following the rhetorical argument of *Haer.* 2, he first expands the divine title "God" to include the Son:

> But the things established are distinct from Him who has established them, and what have been made from Him who has made them. For He is Himself uncreated, both without beginning and end, and lacking nothing. He is Himself sufficient for Himself; and still further, He grants to all others this very thing, existence; but the things which have been made by Him have received a beginning. But whatever things had a beginning, and are liable to dissolution, and are subject to and stand in need of Him who made them, must necessarily have a different term [applied to them]…so that He who made all things can alone, together with His Logos, properly be termed God and Lord.[69]

In a later statement, he includes the Spirit with the Father and Son under the title "God." He writes, "[M]an, who is a created and organized being, is made according to the image and likeness of the uncreated God, of the Father who plans and commands, of the Son who assists and accomplishes, and of the Spirit who nourishes and completes, but with

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[68] Barnes writes, "Here it may be useful to make an apparently minor point about Irenaeus's Trinitarian theology: it has no word to answer "two (or three) *what*?" The need which drives that question does not appear in Irenaeus's thought, much less does an answer." Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 84.

[69] *Haer.* 3.8.3, ANF 1:422.

the man making progress every day and ascending towards the perfect, becoming near to the uncreated One."[70] The parallel structure of the Latin (and Greek) version demonstrates that Irenaeus includes Father, Son, and Spirit in his definition of the uncreated God. As a result, humans are being conformed daily into the image of this Triune being, as opposed to the image of the Father alone.

Irenaeus' redefinition of the title "God" to refer not to the Father alone, but to the one divine nature of Father, Son, and Spirit is displayed most clearly in the juxtaposition of two alternate interpretations he provides of Ephesians 4:6. In *Haer.* 2, Irenaeus writes, "Moreover, that this God is the Father of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul said of him: 'There is one God the Father, who is over all and through all and in us all.'"[71] In this interpretation, *Deus* refers to the Father alone, and the verse is significant because for Irenaeus it proves that the Creator God is the Father of Jesus Christ, thus eliminating the "Gnostic" and Marcionite notion that Jesus Christ revealed a previously unknown God.[72] In *Epid.* 5, following the rhetorical argument of *Haer.* 2 and the pneumatological expansion of *Haer.* 3 and 4, Irenaeus offers a Trinitarian reading of the same passage. He writes, "Hence, His apostle Paul also well says, 'One God, the Father, who is above all, and through all and in us all'—because 'above all' is the Father, and 'through all' is the Word—since through Him everything was made by the Father—while 'in us all' is the

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[70] "ὁ γενητὸς καὶ πεπλασμένος ἄνθρωπος κατ᾽ εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν γίνεται τοῦ ἀγενήτου θεοῦ, τοῦ μὲν Πατρὸς εὐδοκοῦντος καὶ κελεύοντος, τοῦ δὲ Υἱοῦ ὑπουργοῦντος καὶ πράσσοντος, τοῦ δὲ Πνεύματος τρέφοντος καὶ αὔξοντος, τοῦ δὲ ἀνθρώπου ἠμέρα προκόπτονος καὶ ἀνερχομένου πρὸς τὸ τέλειον, πλησίον τουτέστι τοῦ ἀγενήτου γινομένου." *Haer.* 4.38.3. The Greek fragment comes from John Damascene's *Sacra Parallela.* See Rousseau, *SC* 100:56, 73-74. I have chosen to translate the Greek here, although the Greek does not differ significantly from the Latin. The two versions diverge in the final sentence, where the Greek repeats "the uncreated One" but the Latin has *Deus.* The difference actually illustrates the point I am trying to make here; namely, for Irenaeus, "God" means uncreated, and because Irenaeus considers the Son and Spirit uncreated along with the Father, he necessarily considers them God.

[71] *Haer.* 2.2.6.

[72] For the use of this passage in the context of my discussion on the Fatherhood of God, see above pp. 80-82.

Spirit, who cries 'Abba, Father,' and forms man to the likeness of God."[73] In this passage, Irenaeus argues that the Father alone no longer encapsulates the title "God." In fact, the title refers to the Father, Son, and Spirit together. Thus, while God is above all, through all, in all, the Father alone is above, the Son alone is through, and the Spirit alone is in all.

Irenaeus' references to "above," "through," and "in" indicate the different functions of the three entities in relation to the Triune God's work in the economy. This definition implies that while this one divine nature of Father, Son, and Spirit is best expressed in its distinction from created material ('uncreated' verses 'created'), the cooperative work of the three entities within this created material best displays their distinction.[74]

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[73] *Epid.* 5, Behr, 43. In *Haer.* 5, Irenaeus offers a similar exegesis of the passage. He writes, "And thus one God the Father is declared, who is above all, and through all, and in all. The Father is indeed above all, and He is the Head of Christ; but the Logos is through all things, and is Himself the Head of the Church; while the Spirit is in us all, and He is the living water…" *Haer.* 5.18.2, ANF 1:546. While this passage initially seems to support a subordinationist reading of Irenaeus insofar as the Father is the "Head of the Son," when read in connection with his earlier exegesis of the same Pauline verse, the verse actually equates the Father, Son, and Spirit under the one title "God." This equating is justified because Irenaeus has proven through rhetoric and Scripture that all three possess one divine nature. Conversely, Norris claims that Irenaeus' interpretation of this passage is inspired by a Middle Platonist "distinction between the world-transcending supreme Mind and the immanent World Soul." Norris, *God and World*, 87. Thus, the Father is above all while the Logos is in all. This interpretation has several difficulties. First, the contrast that Norris perceives between the Father and Son here is foreign to Irenaeus' thought. As I have shown elsewhere, Irenaeus everywhere equates the two entities, striving to demonstrate that they are of the same spiritual and Logos nature. Second, Norris' interpretation runs counter to Irenaeus' use of the verse in both *Haer.* 5 and *Epid.* 5. In *Epid.* in particular, Irenaeus emphasizes the identity of the entities by arguing that each deserves the name "God," not their distinction, as Norris' interpretation assumes. The Ephesians verse gives Irenaeus three different ways of referring to one God—the actual prepositions ("above," "through," and "in") are secondary. Third, given Norris' reading, Irenaeus' motive for mentioning the Spirit disappears. If Irenaeus is inspired by the Middle Platonist distinction between the Supreme Mind and the World Soul, then he has no need to include the Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit is an intricate part of Irenaeus' interpretation of the passage and the truth that there are three divine entities, as opposed to two according to Norris' interpretation, is what draws him to the Ephesians passage in the first place. Norris does note the insufficiency of his interpretation in light of other statements Irenaeus makes regarding the nature of the Logos.

[74] Elsewhere, Irenaeus explicitly refers to this point regarding the Father and the Son when he writes, "Therefore, the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, and the Father is God and the Son is God, since He who is born of God is God, and in this way, according to His being and power <and> essence, one God is demonstrated: but according to the <economy> of our salvation, there is both Father and Son…" *Epid.* 47, Behr, 71. Fantino reads the Spirit into this verse by identifying the Spirit as one who, like the Son, is born of God. Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 380-381. I agree with Fantino that the Spirit is born of God,

2.2. The Triune God in Relation to the Economy

Irenaeus believed the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit, as eternally with God and as God themselves, cooperated with God/Father in every divine act.[75] Two primary acts demonstrate the Trinitarian nature of the work of God in the economy, namely, creation and redemption.

2.2.1 The Trinity in Creation

As early as *Haer.* 2, where he is only concerned with the relationship of Father and Son, Irenaeus speaks of the creation of the world as a Trinitarian act. He writes, "[God] is Father, he is God, he is Founder, he is Maker, he is Creator, who made all those things by himself, that is, through His Logos and His Sophia…"[76] Two observations can be drawn from this passage regarding the nature of the cooperative work of the Triune God. First, God is the source of the creative work, while the Logos and Sophia are agents of the creation. In other words, the creative work originates with the Father, properly

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although I do not think it necessary to turn every binitarian statement in Irenaeus' work into a Trinitarian statement.

[75] This reality is the centerpiece of Fantino's treatment of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology and what, for him, justifies studying Irenaeus as a Trinitarian theologian. For example, he writes, "All the creation indeed, and as we will see, all the economy are the work of the Father, of the Word, and of the Wisdom who acts according to this scheme; no other person intervenes in this process and *it is for this reason that the Irenaean scheme perhaps legitimately qualifies as Trinitarian*." Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 293, italics added. I already have addressed several works of the economy where the three divine entities cooperate—namely, creation and revelation. Nonetheless, because the Spirit does not perform his revelatory/prophetic function by virtue of an equal divinity with the Father, revelation does not appear as a Trinitarian act when defined as all three divine entities cooperating to perform the same general work by virtue of their equal divinity. On the Spirit's prophetic role and its relation to his divinity, see above pp. 210-214. Thus, I will not readdress the revelatory act in this chapter. I will revisit the creative act insofar as I have yet to address Irenaeus' understanding of the cooperative work of all three entities or his primary image in addressing this Trinitarian act, namely, the image of the Son and Spirit as "the two hands of God."

[76] "*[H]ic Pater, hic Deus, hic Conditor, hic Factor, hic Fabricator, qui fecit ea per semetipsum, hoc est per Verbum et per Sapientiam suam…*" *Haer.* 2.30.9.

called "the Creator" in this passage, but he enacts this creative intention through (*per*) two agents named the Logos and Sophia.

The initial implication of such a scheme suggests a hierarchical subordination of the agents to the source similar to the hierarchy witnessed in the Apologists' Trinitarian formulas. Like the Apologists' understanding, Irenaeus believes that the Logos and Sophia do everything in obedience to God's will. Nevertheless, a second observation from this Trinitarian passage suggests an alternate interpretation. In this passage, Irenaeus closely unites the Logos and Sophia with God, such that he can say at once that God created all things *by himself* and that he created all things *through the Logos and Sophia*. This formula, unlike that of the Apologists, implies that Irenaeus does not stress the Son and Spirit as agents, which would necessarily emphasize a subordinate relationship with the Father, but the immediacy of God in the act of creation.[77] The rhetoric of "by himself" is an anti-"Gnostic," anti-Marcionite phrase directed against theologies that would attribute creation to a lesser, demiurgic God. Therefore, whatever the Logos and

[77] In this context, Lebreton has grasped the crucial development of Irenaeus from the Apologists, which as I have said before, he downplays elsewhere. His observation is significant enough to relate in full: "Certain apologists of the second century, insisted on the role of the Word, creator or revealer, in the concern to safeguard the divine transcendence. It is difficult for these theologians to avoid subordinationism; indeed, the essential [thing], for them, is to bring God and his work or his faithful ones closer by an intermediary which assures his transcendence, while carrying out his will or while carrying his messages…an intermediary, if one intends the proper sense, necessarily implies subordination. In Irenaeus, the path of his thought is inversed: what he rejects is the same notion of an intermediary; what he wants to safeguard, is this thesis that the Creator God acts immediately, by himself." Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:578. Anatolios also identifies Irenaeus' development on this count. He writes, "This succinct synopsis of the Christian narrative in terms of the dramatic interplay of the three *dramatis personae* of Father, Son, and Spirit is received rather than constructed by Irenaeus. What Irenaeus contributes, in response to the confrontation with Gnosticism, is the emphatic stress on the notion that the *personae* of Son and Spirit, insofar as their role in the Christian narrative is to be *mediators* of the creative and salvific activity of God, are themselves *immediately* related to the divine realm. In this way—and only in this way—does their mediation not detract from the immediacy of the divine presence." Anatolios, "Immediately Triune God," 169. Missing from both these accounts, however, is the logic by which Irenaeus can affirm both a transcendent and immediate God. Despite Anatolios' statements, Irenaeus is as interested in maintaining the transcendence of God as are his Apologist counterparts. The roles of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit as creative agents of the Father do not necessitate a subordinate nature, as they do in the Apologist and Valentinian understandings, because Irenaeus defines the divine transcendence as absolute in *Haer.* 2 (as opposed to the relative transcendence of the Apologists and "Gnostics"). See above pp. 84-91.

Sophia are in Irenaeus' understanding, they are not another or a second God.[78] Still, the variant functions of the Father, Son, and Spirit serve eternally to distinguish them. Therefore, as I have shown in previous chapters, only the Father is the source, only the Son forms/establishes, and only the Spirit completes/perfects.[79]

As noted above, Irenaeus reads Theophilus' *Autol.* at some point during his writing of *Haer.* 3.[80] Theophilus provides him with a metaphorical image that illustrates well the Trinitarian act of creation described in *Haer.* 2, namely, the image of God creating humanity with his hands, the Son and the Spirit:[81] "Now man is a mixed

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[78] Elsewhere, Irenaeus emphasizes that God creates apart from any other god. For example, he favorably quotes an authoritative, unnamed presbyter who says, "[T]here was no other God besides Him who made and fashioned us, and that the discourse of those men has no foundation who affirm that this world of ours was made either by angels, or by any other power whatsoever, or by another God." *Haer.* 4.32.1, ANF 1:505. This manner of speaking of the creation contrasts with that of Justin, who imagines the Son as spatially remote from the Father and calls him "another God." Irenaeus never uses this sort of language to refer to the Logos. For Irenaeus, the Logos, along with the Spirit, is God Himself.

[79] For a discussion of the distinction of the creative works of Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit, see above pp. 203-207.

[80] For the specifics of this argument, see above p. 192n68.

[81] Every scholar who has described the status of the Trinity in Irenaeus has addressed Irenaeus' use of the "hands of God" motif and more often than not has deemed it the central Trinitarian image. Some of the more prominent examples include Lebreton, *Histoire* 2:579-582, Mambrino, "'Deux Mains de Dieu,'" 355-70, Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 122-125, Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation*, 21-23, Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 306-309, and more recently, Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 80-84, Barnes, 'Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 101-104, and Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 161-192. Two issues normally consume treatments of the "hands of God" image in Irenaeus. First emerge the questions of showing the "biblical nature" of the image and, more specifically, identifying Irenaeus' source of the Gen. 1:26 exegesis tradition that produced the image. Following Loofs' work, the latter issue increasingly has been a question of whether that source was Theophilus or a separate Jewish source. I assert Theophilus as Irenaeus' likely source for the image, a point that Briggman has argued thoroughly quite recently. See Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 165-183 and "Dating Irenaeus' Acquisition," 397-402. Unlike Irenaeus' use of the Apologists in other contexts, his use of the "hands of God" image is remarkably similar to Theophilus' employment of the image. Both utilize it for the same purpose and in connection with similar Scriptures and Jewish midrashic traditions (see the discussion in relation to Theophilus' use of the image above pp. 232-236). Nonetheless, as the preceding discussion has displayed, Theophilus and Irenaeus have variant understandings of the hierarchy within the Godhead. Therefore, the difference of the significance for the hierarchy within the Trinity is not provided by the "hands of God" image itself, but by each figure's understanding of the respective natures of the three divine entities overlaid upon the image. Put another way, for Theophilus the image supports an ontological hierarchy within the Godhead (insofar as the hands are not the source of the creative work), and for Irenaeus the image supports an eternal equality of divinity within the Godhead (insofar as the hands are themselves God). The question of whether Theophilus is Irenaeus' source, then, has no bearing upon my interpretation of the image, and I do not need to explore this question in any further detail. The second issue dominating treatments of the "hands of God" image is ascertaining the significance of the image for the status of the Trinity in Irenaeus, primarily in

organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and molded by his hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also He said, 'Let us make man.'"[82] Following this mention of the "hands of God" image in the *Haer.* 4 preface, Irenaeus uses the image frequently and always in conjunction with a citation from Genesis 1:26.[83]

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terms of its economic manifestation. The image has been so central to past treatments of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology that one might assume that this metaphor, alone, encapsulates Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. (Steenberg mistakenly identifies Fantino as the source for this line of thinking. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation,* 81. Even if Fantino were an example of this use of the image, an assertion with which I do not agree, examples of this use of the image occur at least as early as Swete and Hitchcock.) The presumption that Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology is epitomized in the "hands of God" trope is problematic because, as I have said, the image is quite flexible. This flexibility is demonstrable not only in my readings of Theophilus and Irenaeus, but also in variant scholarly interpretations of Irenaeus' use of the metaphor. For example, Hitchcock reads the image as supporting Irenaeus' view of the consubstantiality of Son and Spirit with God. Hitchcock, *Irenaeus of Lugdunum,* 109ff. Conversely, Orbe uses the image to demonstrate the mediatory (and subordinate) nature of the Son and Spirit to the transcendent Father. Orbe, "San Ireneo," 76-78. I already have shown adequately that Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology is manifest apart from his use of the "hands of God" image, and assuming Briggman's thesis of the relationship between Theophilus and Irenaeus, it develops long before he becomes acquainted with the "hands of God" metaphor. As such, Irenaeus' use of the "hands of God" metaphor ought to be read through the lens of his Trinitarian theology as developed in earlier parts of his work as opposed to reading the image as the primary expression of his Trinitarian theology. Thus, my goal in addressing Irenaeus' use of the "hands of God" image is to show it as an expression of Irenaeus' economic Trinitarian theology consonant with his understanding of the immanent Trinity.

[82] *Haer.* 4.*Pref.*4, ANF 1:463 with minor revisions.

[83] *Haer.* 4.20.1-2, 5.1.3, 5.5.1, 5.6.1, 5.28.4, *Epid.* 11. When Irenaeus does not use Gen., he speaks of the creation apart from this image, although he maintains the Trinitarian nature of the act. Two prominent examples reveal this truth. First, he writes in *Haer.* 4.38.3, "[M]an, who is a created and organized being, is made according to the image and likeness of the uncreated God, of the Father who plans and commands, of the Son who assists and accomplishes, and of the Spirit who nourishes and completes, but with the man making progress every day and ascending towards the perfect, becoming near to the uncreated one." Despite the reference to image and likeness language, this passage does not use the forming language of Gen. 2:7 that suggests the "hands of God" metaphor. In addition, Irenaeus' concern in this passage is less on the creation of humanity and more on its growth following creation. Second, in *Epid.* 5, he writes, "In this way, then, it is demonstrated [that there is] One God, [the] Father, uncreated, invisible, Creator of all, above whom there is no other God, and after who, there is no other God. And as God is verbal, therefore He made created things by the Word; and God is Spirit, so that He adorned all things by the Spirit, as the prophet also says, 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all their power by His Spirit.'" Behr, 43. In addition to the lack of the Gen. narrative, two reasons explain the absence of the 'hands of God" image in this passage. First, this is a *regula* passage; thus, Irenaeus likely is adapting a traditional statement to his purposes. The "hands of God" image never appears in *regula* material. Second, Irenaeus employs Ps. 33/2:6 to justify the presence of the Son and the Spirit in creation. This Psalm plays on the titles of Logos and Sophia as opposed to the anthropomorphic image of God and his hands, and Irenaeus underscores the meaning of the titles Logos and Sophia in his explanation of the passage. He writes, "Thus, since the Word 'establishes', that is, works bodily and confers existence, while the Spirit arranges and forms the various 'powers', so rightly is the Son called Word and the Spirit the Wisdom of God." *Epid.* 6, Behr, 43. These Trinitarian texts offer more examples that Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, even in its economic manifestation, is not limited to the "hands of God" passages alone.

Scholars traditionally draw out two implications from the image. First, by situating the image in the context of his polemic with "Gnosticism," scholars often observe that the image affirms God's active presence in the material world, as opposed to the distant, unknown God of the "Gnostics,"[84] the truth seen as central to Irenaeus' polemical argument of *Haer.* 2 and the Trinitarian passage of *Haer.* 2.30.9. The following "hands of God" passage particularly emphasizes this truth: "For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined within Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Logos and the Sophia, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also he speaks: 'Let us make man after our image and likeness.'"[85] Additionally, scholars note that the image aptly describes Irenaeus' understanding of the nature of that divine, creative work as the cooperative action of a three-in-one God. The "hands of God" image clearly shows the Father (the person who speaks the command "Let us make…" in Genesis 1:26) as the source of the creative work and the agents who carry out this work as the Son and Spirit.[86]

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[84] For example, Lawson, *Biblical Theology,* 122-125, Mambrino, "'Deux Mains de Dieu," 357-360. More recently, Osborn writes, "The hand of God is a symbol of the descending love by which God is known. For we do not merely meet God face to face, but are formed by God's hands in ineffable proximity. God does not merely talk and appear: he touches, grasps, shapes, and models." Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 92.

[85] *Haer.* 4.20.1, ANF 1:487-488 with minor revisions.

[86] For example, Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology,* 38-40, Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation,* 64-71. An exception here is Minns who finds in this image the paradigm of the manner in which God encounters humanity in the economy, but he interprets the image in a non-Trinitarian manner. He writes, "[W]hen it is said that God fashions the earth creature from clay by his Word and his Wisdom we are not to understand that God's Word and his Wisdom are distinct from him, but that the economy of salvation is the work of the one indivisible God who is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Minns, *Irenaeus,* 51. This interpretation suggests that Irenaeus is a modalist or at the very least has modalist tendencies, in line with Bousset's interpretation of Irenaeus addressed above p. 165n182. Additionally, Minns' interpretation is yet another example of the fluidity of the "hands of God" image. However, when the image is read in connection with the eternal distinctions of the Triune God, as manifested throughout *Haer.* 2, Minns' interpretation clearly becomes problematic.

Secondary scholarship often ignores the effectiveness of the image for describing the functional hierarchy of the three divine entities, necessitated by the act of creation, without contradicting Irenaeus' understanding of the eternal, ontological unity of the three divine entities.[87] In relation to the individual natures of the Son and the Spirit, the creative actions of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit are predicated on the fact that they are themselves God, for Irenaeus believes that only God can create.[88] The "hands of God" image demonstrates how God's creative agents, despite their status as agents, are eternally God insofar as a person's hands enact the will of his or her mind, while at the same time remaining an integral part of the person himself or herself.[89] Put another way, just as God, when imagined as divine nature, can never be devoid of reason or wisdom ("for God is wholly Logos, and wholly Sophia"), the Father, when imagined anthropomorphically, can never be without his hands, nor do the hands come into existence simply for the purpose of working. Thus, the work of the hands can be attributed at once to God himself and to the Son and the Spirit (as Irenaeus noted in *Haer.* 2.30.9).

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[87] The following insights often are present in works from the second trajectory, as I categorized Irenaean scholarship in the introduction. The difference between my approach and those works of the second trajectory is that I have proven these elements of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology apart from the "hands of God" image; the use of the "hands of God" image merely confirms these insights. The *modus operandi* of works in the second trajectory is to argue these points from the "hands of God" image, itself. For example, Swete writes of the image, "As the Hands of God, [the Son and the Holy Spirit] are Divine and coequal; of the eternal relations of the two to one another and to the Father Irenaeus does not speak…" Swete, *Holy Spirit,* 88. Swete concedes, incorrectly in my reading of Irenaeus, that his only textual evidence for his profound conclusion of a "Divine and coequal" Son and Spirit is the "hands of God" image.

[88] I have addressed this supposition of Irenaeus' at several points in this work. It is manifest in both his understanding of the divide between Creator and creation, where the Son and the Spirit are placed with the Creator, as well as a poignant statement in *Haer.* 5 where Irenaeus writes, "Now the work of God is the fashioning of man." *Haer.* 5.15.2, ANF 1:543. Significantly, in the "hands of God" metaphor, Irenaeus underscores the involvement of the Son and Spirit specifically in the forming of humanity.

[89] Steenberg's observations are helpful: "An individual's hands are dependent upon the will and being of that individual in order to function; and, conversely, all the activities of the hands can be said accurately to be directly the activities of the whole individual and not the hands alone. Whilst the three entities may remain individual or conceptually separate, there is an inherent unity among them that makes into a single, concrete being the reality they comprise." Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 81.

The image of God working with his hands, beyond the insight it provides into the cooperative work of the Triune God, is consonant with Irenaeus' understanding of three eternally distinct divine beings interpenetrated in one divine and spiritual nature. Therefore, while the image does not encapsulate Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, the "hands of God" passages provide a powerful witness to its developed nature.

2.2.2 The Trinity in Redemption

In Irenaeus' understanding, the cooperative work of the Triune God in creation continues into the divine, salvific work that occurs throughout the incarnation. This continuity is a function of his anti-Marcionite and anti-Valentinian polemic to unite the God of creation and the God of salvation, whom both groups had separated. Whereas in *Haer.* 2 Irenaeus argued for the unity of God using logic and rhetoric, in *Haer.* 3-5 and *Epid.*, Irenaeus' primary source is the Scripture narrative. Thus, in the same way that Irenaeus' model for the Trinitarian work of creation was tied to a reading of the Genesis creation narratives (particularly Genesis 1:26 and 2:7), his primary model for describing the cooperative work of the incarnation comes from a scriptural passage, namely, the account of John's baptism of Jesus.[90] Irenaeus writes, "For Christ did not at that time descend upon Jesus, neither was Christ one and Jesus another: but the Logos of God—

[90] As with the "hands of God" image, Irenaeus' understanding of the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism has been the subject of much discussion. Some of the more important studies for my purposes include, Aeby, *Missiones divines*, 58-67, Andia, *Homo vivens*, 185-223, Briggman, *Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 96-122, idem., "The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus," *JTS* 61 (2010): 171-193, E. Fabbri, "El bautismo de Jesús y la unción de Espirítu," *CyF* 12/45 (1956): 7-42, Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 378-81, Houssiau, *Christologie*, 173-86, K. McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 57-60, 116-123, Orbe, "El Espíritu en el bautismo de Jesús (en torno a san Ireneo)" *Greg* 76 (1995): 663-99, idem., 'San Ireneo adopcionista? En torno a adv. haer. III.19,1' *Greg* 65 (1984): 5-52, D. Smith, "Irenaeus and the Baptism of Jesus," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 618-642, and D. Vigne, *Christ au Jordain: Le baptême de Jésus dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1992), 78-81.

who is the Savior of all, and the ruler of heaven and earth, who is Jesus, as I have already pointed out, who did also take upon Him flesh, and was anointed by the Spirit from the Father—was made Jesus Christ…"[91] Despite its implications for christology, and in particular the relationship between the humanity and the divinity in Christ, for which Irenaeus' account of Jesus' baptism has been studied most often, the force of the image is soteriological. Irenaeus uses the account to elucidate the way in which God saves humanity, and the description is profoundly Trinitarian.[92]

First, Irenaeus uses the account of Jesus' baptism to argue for the unity of the heavenly Logos and the man Jesus as one person "Jesus Christ," a unity that

[91] *Haer.* 3.9.3, ANF 1:423. See also *Haer.* 3.12.7.

[92] The interpretation of Irenaeus' understanding of Jesus' baptism as Trinitarian depends on whether Irenaeus understood the descending Spirit as the Holy Spirit or as an impersonal spirit or power of God, a question debated in scholarship. Not surprisingly, the divide occurs along the same lines as the divide over the status of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology in general, and his pneumatology in particular. For those scholars who think that Irenaeus lacks a real understanding of the Trinity (even in its economic manifestation), the entity descending upon Jesus at his baptism is an impersonal spirit of God (*e.g.* Fabbri, Harnack, Orbe, and Smith). On the contrary, for those scholars who perceive in Irenaeus' work the presence of a real Trinity (at least in its economic manifestation), the descending figure is the personal Holy Spirit (*e.g.* Aeby, Andia, Briggman, Fantino, Jaschke, McDonnell). The scholarly divide suggests that, like the "hands of God" passages, the interpretation of the baptismal passages as Trinitarian or not depends on the Trinitarian assumptions gained from elsewhere in Irenaeus' work. Nonetheless, Briggman recently has argued definitively from the passages themselves that Irenaeus understands the descending agent as the Holy Spirit and that the refusal to see a personal Spirit in this passage results in intractable interpretive problems. For the entire argument, see Briggman, "Unction of Christ," 180-186. The key to his argument is his interpretation of *Haer.* 3.12.7. This passage is the foundation of a non-Trinitarian reading of the baptism story (*e.g.* Fabbri and Orbe) because its use of Acts 10:58 ("Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit [*Spiritu sancto*] and with power [*virtute*]…") supposedly shows that Irenaeus understands *Spiritu sancto* to be equated or modified by the more impersonal *virtute.* Accordingly, those scholars in favor of a non-Trinitarian interpretation understand the passage as affirming nothing other than that the power in which the human Jesus ministered was an impersonal power of God, a power that came upon him at his baptism. Conversely, Briggman links Irenaeus' Acts 10:58 citation to Irenaeus' explanation of the passage later in the same paragraph, which reads, "Jesus was himself the Son of God, who also, having been anointed with the Holy Spirit, is called Jesus Christ." *Haer.* 3.12.7, Briggman, "Unction of Christ," 182. The lack of *virtute* in Irenaeus' explanation of the passage reveals its ancillary nature to Irenaeus' understanding of the passage. Thus, by *Spiritu sancto,* Irenaeus does not indicate an impersonal power. Instead, he indicates the same figure to whom he referred in the third article of faith in the various *regula* statements (*Haer.* 1.10.1, *Epid.* 6). This figure, alternately called Sophia, is an agent of creation alongside the Logos/Son (*Haer.* 2.30.9, 4.*Pref.*4, 4.20.1), the same figure who speaks through the prophets (*Haer.* 3.21.4), the same figure promised by Jesus in John (*Haer.* 3.17.1-2), and the same figure poured out on the Church at Pentecost (*Haer.* 3.1.1, 3.12.1). Fabbri and Orbe both miss the clear link between the use of Acts 10:58 and its explanation, an oversight that can only be the result of a bias against finding a developed pneumatology in Irenaeus, a bias traceable to Harnack.

accomplishes humanity's salvation.[93] This understanding contrasts with various "Gnostic" theologies that denied the true union of the divine with flesh, teaching instead that the human Jesus was merely a receptacle for the heavenly Christ as supported by the account of the descent of the heavenly Logos on the man Jesus at his baptism.[94] Irenaeus' identification of the descending entity as the Holy Spirit instead of the Logos discounted the primary "Gnostic" proof text for this variant christology and thus supported his own contention that the point of union of the Logos with flesh occurred at the conception in Mary's womb.[95] Second, Irenaeus interprets the baptism as an anointing that consecrated Jesus as Messiah and empowered him in his humanity to fulfill his mission,[96] a mission that finally entailed his passing on the Spirit to the rest of the human race, resulting in their redemption and communion with God.[97]

Therefore, from this account emerges a paradigm for the divine work of redemption which involves the cooperative work of three figures, namely God/Father, the

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[93] See Houssiau, *Christologie*, 177. I will return to Irenaeus' understanding of salvation momentarily.

[94] For an example of Irenaeus' exposition of this theology in the Marcosian system, see *Haer.* 1.15.3.

[95] "[T]he Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High did overshadow her: wherefore also what was generated is a holy thing, and the Son of the Most High God the Father of all, who effected the incarnation of this being…" *Haer.* 5.1.3, ANF 1:527.

[96] Irenaeus is clear that Jesus is anointed in his humanity alone, for his divinity is without need of empowering. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit, who is himself divine, does not need to become accustomed to the divinity of Christ, but only his humanity. Irenaeus writes, "For inasmuch as the Logos of God was man from the root of Jesse, and son of Abraham, *in this respect* did the Spirit of God rest upon Him, and anoint Him to preach the Gospel to the lowly." *Haer.* 3.9.3, ANF 1:423 with minor revisions, italics added. See Houssiau, *Christologie*, 175-177, 179, Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 380-381, and Briggman, "Unction of Christ," 173-180. Smith misunderstands Fantino's interpretation of the baptism account here, claiming that Fantino does not offer a Trinitarian account of the passage. Smith, "Baptism of Jesus," 624n26. Fantino does see the Trinity in the baptism account insofar as he identifies the descending Spirit with the Holy Spirit. His comments on these pages are against Orbe's interpretation of the anointing of Jesus as a transcendental event; instead, for Fantino, this event occurs only in the economic relationships of the Second and Third Persons. Fantino's interpretation aligns with my own interpretation insofar as I propose the unction passages as a model for understanding the cooperative economic work of the Trinity, not for understanding their inner relationships apart from their work.

[97] "Therefore did the Spirit of God descend upon [Jesus], [the Spirit] of Him who had promised by the prophets that He would anoint Him, so that we, receiving from the abundance of His unction, might be saved." *Haer.* 3.9.3. See also *Haer.* 5.17.2. On this point, see Andia, *Homo Vivens*, 191-192 and Vigne, *Christ au Jordan*, 79.

source of redemptive work, and Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit who execute this work as agents. Their real distinction is evident from their different salvific functions within the economy. The Father sends the Son, the Son unites his divinity to flesh, and subsequent to his life, death, resurrection and ascension, he pours out the Spirit, who remains with humanity. Besides the effective polemical move of discounting his opponents' primary proof text, the baptism account remains the paradigm for these distinct, yet cooperative works because Irenaeus finds these *three* distinctions represented in the *one* action of the anointing. He writes, "For in the name of Christ is implied, He that anoints, He that is anointed, and the unction itself with which He is anointed. And it is the Father who anoints, but the Son who is anointed by the Spirit, who is the unction."[98] In other words, only the Father anoints, only the Son is anointed, and only the Spirit is the anointing agent. The economic manifestation of God, represented in the anointing, demonstrates the distinctions within the Godhead.[99]

Despite the functional distinctions necessitated in the act of anointing, Irenaeus' metaphor implies a prior unity. For although the metaphor stresses three separate components (an anointer, an anointed, and the entity with which he is anointed), they are united in one image or act. Indeed, Irenaeus' understanding of salvation logically necessitates a prior unity of the three divine entities that is located in one divine and spiritual nature.

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[98] *Haer.* 3.18.3, ANF 1:446. See also *Epid.* 47. In *Haer.* 3.6.1 the Father and Son are distinguished according to the anointing. The Spirit is not named the unction in this passage, but appears as the one who witnesses that both are God because of the anointing.

[99] As with the "hands of God" image and creation, Irenaeus is not tied always to the anointing metaphor to describe the cooperative work of redemption. Elsewhere, Irenaeus describes these distinctions without recourse to the metaphor. He writes, "Thus, therefore, was God revealed; for God the Father is shown forth through all these [operations], the Spirit indeed working, and the Son ministering, while the Father was approving, and man's salvation being accomplished." *Haer.* 4.20.6, ANF 1:489.

Irenaeus understood humanity's salvation as accomplished through its union with God. He writes, "And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility."[100] According to Irenaeus, this union is accomplished through the work of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit. The Logos unites with humanity through the incarnation, and God subsequently joins with humanity through the outpouring of the Spirit after Jesus Christ ascends. Both acts are essential to the completion of humanity's salvation. Irenaeus writes, "[T]he Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by his own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God…"[101] Only if the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit are themselves God does this understanding of salvation cohere.[102] For the agents do not unite humanity to God by bringing them to the Father; they unite humanity to God insofar as they themselves are God. Irenaeus writes, "[I]n the end, the Logos of the Father and the Spirit of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam's formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural we all were dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive."[103] In this

[100] *Haer.* 3.18.2, ANF 1:448.
[101] *Haer*. 5.1.1, ANF 1:527.
[102] Fantino, *Théologie d'Irénée*, 378-379.
[103] *Haer*. 5.1.3, ANF 1:527 with minor revisions. *Haer.* 5.1.3, ANF 1:527. See also *Haer.* 5.5.1. Some scholars assert the opposite, namely, that the Spirit and Son bring humanity to the Father, the ultimate source of their redemption. See, for example, Andia, *Homo Vivens*, 139-143. The passages cited in favor of this position feature Irenaeus describing the orderly progression of humanity's sanctification and growth. For example, Irenaeus writes in one place that humans "ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up his work to the Father." *Haer.* 5.36.2, ANF 1:567. Nonetheless, this interpretation results from a failure to grasp Irenaeus' understanding of the immanent Trinity apart from the economy, for the assumption that the end goal is unity with the

context, Irenaeus stresses the continuity between the Triune God who creates and the Triune God who saves by illustrating salvation with the same image and scriptural passage he used to illustrate creation. Irenaeus continues, "For never at any time did Adam escape the hands of God, to whom the Father speaking said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.' And for this reason in the last times, not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but by the good pleasure of the Father, His hands formed a living man, in order that Adam might be created [again] after the image and likeness of God."[104] The reprisal of the "hands of God" image in the redemptive context emphasizes the point that the God who created with his hands is the God who redeems with his hands.

The implication of this logic is clear, and it works in the reverse direction of the Apologists' logic. The Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit act as creative and salvific agents of God/Father in the economy because they uniquely share one divine and spiritual nature

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Father *alone* misses Irenaeus' inclusion of the Son and the Spirit with the Father as, by nature, uncreated. As such, in uniting with the uncreated one, humans are uniting with the divine nature encompassed by Father, Son, and Spirit. Accordingly, he writes, "[M]an, who is a created and organized being, is made according to the image and likeness of the uncreated God, of the Father who plans and commands, of the Son who assists and accomplishes, and of the Spirit who nourishes and completes, but with the man making progress every day and ascending towards the perfect, becoming near to the uncreated one." *Haer.* 4.38.3. The passages which describe humanity's progress from Spirit to Son to Father are significant in that they underscore Irenaeus' understanding of salvation as a process of growth from immature child to Godlike adult. The passages indicate nothing about the nature of the Triune God other than that Father, Son, and Spirit have different functions in the economy. Accordingly, Irenaeus understands that humanity first sees the Spirit, through whom they see the Son, through whom they see the Father. He writes, "For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son of God, and the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life, which comes to everyone from the fact of his seeing God." *Haer.* 4.20.5, ANF 1:489. (The significance of the paternal vision of God in this passage, as I suggested in chapter two, is not that the Father is the ultimate source of redemption, but that salvation entails adoption, that is, seeing God and knowing him as Father—but insofar as this vision is the effect of redemption, it presupposes the work of Father, Son, and Spirit.) Nevertheless, the reciprocally immanent Godhead assures that in seeing one divine person, humans see all three, whether or not they realize this. Irenaeus writes, "[W]ithout the Spirit it is not [possible] to see the Word of God, and without the Son one is not able to approach the Father; for the knowledge of the Father [is] the Son, and knowledge of the Son of God is through the Holy Spirit…" *Epid.* 7, Behr, 44.

[104] *Haer.* 5.1.3, ANF 1:527. See also *Haer.* 5.5.1.

with him enabling the cooperative divine works. Although a hierarchy emerges in the economic manifestation of the Triune God insofar as only the Father is the source and insofar as the Son and Spirit only do what the Father wills them to do, this hierarchy is functional only. As such, it should be understood in light of an eternal and ontological unity of divinity enabling the Son and Spirit to accomplish the divine work of creation and redemption.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have engaged the Apologists' and Irenaeus' respective understandings of the relationships among Father, Son, and Spirit as manifested in those passages in which all three entities are discussed. My study has judged these Trinitarian relationships as consonant with the figures' respective understandings of the individual natures of each person, as developed in previous chapters.

The Apologists addressed the relationships of all three entities in order to correlate Christian belief with Middle Platonist belief. Accordingly, the Son and the Spirit exist in an ontologically subordinating hierarchy to the Father in the same way that the intermediary figures of Middle Platonism are subordinate to the One or the Most High God. This subordinating hierarchy is expressed by terms such as χώρα and τάξις, but more importantly, the hierarchy serves as a function of their overall understanding of the Father's transcendent relation to the world. As the transcendent essence of the Father precludes him from working in the world, the lesser divinities of the Son and Spirit allow for these mediating roles. The Apologists only avoid being tri-theists by identifying the God of Israel with the Father alone.

Conversely, Irenaeus addressed the relationships of all three entities in continuation of his anti-Valentinian polemic. He displays a profound development from the Apologists insofar as he understands that Father, Son, and Spirit share one spiritual nature and consequently, the same quality of divinity. Irenaeus' transformation of the binitarian argument of *Haer.* 2 to a Trinitarian argument by his retroactive inclusion of the Spirit in the reciprocally immanent relationship of Father and Son serves as the basis for this conclusion. Accordingly, the three entities fully interpenetrate one another such that, although they are three distinct entities, only one simple divine nature remains. Furthermore, the Son and Spirit's possessing of this same divine nature with the Father qualifies them for the titles "uncreated" and "God," and moreover, this possession qualifies them to be agents of God in the cooperative work of creation and redemption. In both economic works, a hierarchy manifests itself whereby the Father is the source of the work and the Son and Spirit are the agents of that work in accord with the Father's will. However, this hierarchy is not ontological, indicative of distinct and gradated divinities, but functional, indicative only of distinct works. The Son and Spirit, although subordinate to the will of the Father, are equal to him in divinity insofar as their economic work is predicated on their divine essence. They are enabled to create and to redeem humanity precisely because they possess one spiritual and divine nature with the Father and are themselves "God." Irenaeus is a monotheist because he believes in only one divine nature, encompassed equally by Father, Son, and Spirit.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have sought to communicate Irenaeus of Lyons' Trinitarian theology through a study of his understanding of the respective natures of God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit, as well as through a study of the relationships among them, in both their immanent and economic manifestations. In order to avoid the errors of past scholarship that with few exceptions have prevented an accurate assessment of his Trinitarian theology, I placed Irenaeus' thought in the context of the second century through a comparative methodology that connected Trinitarian themes in his thought with the thought of Justin, Athenagoras, and Theophilus, as well as in polemical response to Valentinian theology. According to my guiding thesis, the Apologists' theology, known to Irenaeus through the works of Justin and Theophilus, was insufficient to meet the challenge posed by Valentinianism, particularly in its variant conceptions of the divine nature, the relationship of God to other divine beings, and the relationship of God to the world—in other words, in the very areas that bear on Trinitarian theology.

The differences between the Apologists and Irenaeus stem from the logic established in the latter's rhetorical polemic of *Haer.* 2, insofar as the Valentinian understanding of God that Irenaeus presents and rejects can be understood as a radicalization of the Apologists' understanding. Several convergences may be identified. Both the Apologists and the Valentinians conceive of the divine nature spatially, which manifests itself both in their description of transcendence (God is in a distant place, God is separated from the material world, and the like) and in their understanding of the generation/emanation of divine beings (they physically separate or come out of God). Both the Apologists and the Valentinians bridge the spatial gap between God and the

world with lesser divine beings who consequently serve as a filter between God and the world. For the Valentinians, these beings are the 29 Aeons of the divine *Pleroma,* with the actions of the last Aeon resulting in the existence of an unintended, inherently evil material creation. For the Apologists, these beings are the Logos and the Spirit. (That the Apologists, in accord with Scripture, do not think of material creation as inherently evil is of little consequence for their understanding of the respective natures of the Logos and Spirit.) They came out of the Father at their respective generations for the expressed purpose of working in the world on behalf of the Father, whose transcendence precludes such immanent action. Both the Valentinians and the Apologists understand the generation of these lesser divine beings to involve both a spatial separation from the Most High God and a time element—prior to their generations, they did not exist as personal beings, distinct from the Father. Thus, they are divine but of a different and lesser divine nature than the Father. They are eternal but not eternally personal. They pre-exist creation but can be located and seen in it. In other words, like the Valentinian Aeons, the Logos and Spirit in the Apologists' understanding exist in relationship with the Father in an ontologically subordinated hierarchy of gradated divinities.

The Apologists' theology may be considered Trinitarian in the sense that they speak of three divine entities in accord with the tenets of the eclectic philosophy they attempt to correlate with Christian belief. Nevertheless, the Apologists do not account adequately either for the distinct personalities of the three divine entities or their unity in distinction. The Apologists only maintain their unity, in the stage prior to the generation of Logos and Spirit, with a loss of their distinct personalities. Likewise, once the Apologists establish the distinctions of God and his agents by means of the generation,

they forfeit any claim to the continuing unity of the three. The Apologists remain monotheists only in the sense that they identify the Father alone with the Creator God of the Jewish Scriptures. The Logos and the Spirit are divine beings, but they are subordinated to the Father, who alone properly is called God. The demands of the Apologists' understanding of God's transcendence and active work in the world necessitate such a formulation.

Unlike the Apologists, Irenaeus explicitly states that correct thinking about God must be tied to the teaching of the Church in Scripture and as passed down from the apostles in the Church's *regula fidei.* His interests lie neither in speculative theology nor in aligning Christian beliefs with philosophical doctrine. He is interested only with faithful interpretation of the Church's teaching, and he found the topological theology of the "Gnostics," and the Valentinians in particular, incommensurate with this teaching. First, a spatially distant God could not be reconciled with the active and immanently present God of Scripture. Second, a spatially distant God, and a series of semi-divine Aeons, conflicted with the properties of spirit, which Irenaeus understands as the central description of the divine nature.

The difficulty he faced in arguing against Valentinian theology is the inadequacy of his immediate sources of the apostolic tradition to address these errant interpretations. Namely, the Apologists' interpretation of the *regula's* Father, Son, and Spirit as a spatially distant Creator God and two intermediate, lesser divine beings could not reject adequately and fully either the Valentinian topological understanding of the divine *Pleroma* or the corresponding theory of emanation. Consequently, without impugning the writers who had passed on key aspects of the Church's teaching to him and who, in some

cases, had proved their faith either through martyrdom or through possession of an apostolic office, Irenaeus departs from their conception of God. Using Scripture as read through the lens of the *regula* and the logic of the traditional definition of God as spirit, Irenaeus took on the Valentinians, and as a result, he took Trinitarian theology in a new direction.

In contrast to the spatially distant God of the Valentinians (and Apologists), Irenaeus defines God's transcendence as "absolute." As such, God is of a higher order than his creatures, as the prophets proclaimed (Isaiah 55:8) and as Irenaeus understands the creation account in Genesis (*ex nihilo*). Only God is "uncreated," while every other being is defined by being created or having their source in him. Consequently, Irenaeus understands all material creation to exist in God, who contains all things as the "Fullness." (Irenaeus uses "containing" language apart from any notion of spatiality because of his guiding principle that God is spirit.) The theological upshot of this understanding of transcendence is the absence of a need for any barrier or filter separating God from his creation, as was necessitated by the Valentinians' (and Apologists') understanding. As "absolutely" transcendent, God's nature cannot be infringed upon by material creation. He is free to move and work in creation in accord with the God to whom Scripture testifies. To use Irenaeus' language, the God who creates with his hands always keeps his creation in his hands.

For Irenaeus, God's hands are the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit, two figures he finds in Scripture and in the Church's *regula*; for that reason, he incorporates these figures into his understanding of God and the divine work in the economy. Following Scripture, and the Fourth Gospel in particular, Irenaeus understands the Logos/Son and

Sophia/Spirit's respective works in the world, both prior to, during, and following the incarnation, as mediatory in nature—they perform the work and will of God/Father who alone is the source of the work of the economy. Nevertheless, since Irenaeus does not need to keep the transcendent God physically separated from material creation, the respective natures of Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit are not required to be lesser or of a different quality than that of God/Father in order to perform this work. Instead, Irenaeus understands better than his predecessors that the agents of God's work must themselves be divine in the same way that God is divine—the agents of God's work are included with God in his "uncreated" nature over against everything else that has their source or beginning in God.

In order to align this understanding of the relationship of God/Father and his two agents with the principle of a simple divine nature (stemming from the properties of spirit), Irenaeus conceives of an enduring unity among the three divine entities located in one divine and spiritual nature. According to the properties of spirit, all three divine entities fully and completely interpenetrate one another such that Irenaeus can say both that the Son is in the Father and that the Father is in the Son (and in later books, the Spirit is included in this reciprocal, interpenetrating relationship). The relational unity is eternal insofar as the eternally reasonable and wise God can never be without his Logos and his Sophia. Thus, their existence with and in the Father is maintained apart from any mediating work they may perform in the economy.

While God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit exist in an eternal unity of spirit, Irenaeus does not consider them indistinguishable. Again taking his cue from Scripture, Irenaeus believes that the Father generates the Logos/Son and the Sophia/Spirit. Although

he says little directly regarding the generations because of Scripture's silence on the matter, his polemical argument against the Valentinian theory of emanation reveals his understanding of generation as dictated by the spiritual and eternal unity he envisions among God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit. First, he removes any time element in the process. Although Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit are generated from God/Father, this generation does not result in a beginning point to their existence. As Logos and as Spirit, they are always with God in a spiritual unity and in agreement with a simple divine nature. Second, he removes any spatial connotations in the process. Although Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit are generated from God/Father, they do not separate from him or come out of him. They remain in a spiritual and interpenetrating unity with God at all times, even when the Son is incarnate upon earth.

Irenaeus further argues for the eternal distinctions of God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit by their distinctive economic functions. Only God/Father is the source of the work; only Logos/Son establishes or brings the work into existence; only Sophia/Spirit arranges or forms that work. In the context of the redemptive work of the incarnation, the Father alone sends the Son, the Son alone unites his divinity to flesh, and the Spirit alone remains with humanity after the Son's departure. Put metaphorically, the Father anoints, the Son is anointed, and the Spirit is the anointing agent. Nonetheless, these distinctive works do not depend upon the lesser divinities of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit who work in the world on behalf of a God who cannot undertake such work by virtue of his transcendence. Quite the opposite, the work of Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit in the world is based on the truth that they are divine in the same manner that the Father is divine (literally, they are "God," according to Irenaeus' mature

interpretation of Ephesians 4:6). Accordingly, it is the nature of God to create and not to be created—both Logos and Sophia create and are not created. The Logos, who is invisible by nature, reveals the Father in the economy such that when humanity sees the Son (prophetically and literally), they see the Father. Likewise, the work of redemption involves the uniting of divine with material, a union affected by the work of the Logos/Son and Sophia/Spirit by virtue of their divine status. The result is a functional hierarchy—God/Father is the source of the work and the two agents perform that work—that assumes a prior spiritual or ontological unity. To put this understanding in modern Trinitarian terms, for Irenaeus, the economic manifestation of the Trinity depends on the reality of an immanent Trinity, which exists from eternity regardless of the presence of creation.

Irenaeus' theology thus may be considered Trinitarian in the full sense of the word. He believes in the existence of three divine and eternally distinct beings, named God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit. He accounts for both their eternal unity through a common possession of one spiritual nature and their eternal distinction through the generation of the Son and Spirit from the Father and through their different functions in the economy. In Irenaeus' understanding, the two agents' equal divinity with the Father allows them to perform these economic functions.

I have argued that the lack of an accurate account of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology in secondary scholarship to this point has precluded an appreciation of Irenaeus' important place in the narrative of the development of the Trinity from its nascent presence in the New Testament to its full flowering in the fourth century. The goal of this dissertation was to produce an accurate account of Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology. Having

accomplished this task, I will offer a few brief remarks on Irenaeus' place in the development of the Trinity as a way of concluding. What follows is intended not to be comprehensive but to serve as the opening remarks for potential future studies comparing Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology to the theologies of Trinitarian writers of later centuries.

Significantly, the areas in which Irenaeus departs from the Apologists point toward emphases in later Trinitarian thought. In particular, five areas are worth exploring. First, while Irenaeus does not utilize Father/Son language to argue for the eternity of the Son, as in the manner of Origen and Athanasius, his use of the title "Father" to describe God in relationship to the Son prepares for this later argument. Second, while Irenaeus does not speak of an "eternal generation" of the Son, as the Alexandrians do, his rejection of the connotation of a temporal starting point (and the resultant "two-stage" Logos theology) is consonant with this later understanding. Third, while Irenaeus does not describe a generation of the Spirit, as the Cappadocians will develop, his arguments for the parallel, eternal natures of the Spirit and the Logos, using "Sophia" as a pneumatological title, affirms the logic necessary for understanding an eternally processing Spirit. Fourth, while Irenaeus does not specify that the Son is of "one essence" (ὁμοούσιος) or of "one power" with the Father, as the Nicenes and pro-Nicenes insist, his emphasis on the one divine and spiritual nature and mutual interpenetration of the three entities anticipates if not fully expresses an argument of unity in essence. Fifth, while Irenaeus lacks a category (i.e. "person") to describe the distinctions of Father, Son, and Spirit, his redefinition of "God" to name what is shared among the three and his emphasis on their titles to express their distinct functions, encapsulates the truth of a unity in essence, distinction in persons affirmation unknown prior to Irenaeus. These areas need

further explanation and development, and they are not, perhaps, exhaustive of Irenaeus' contribution.

Regardless of the areas in which Irenaeus may have influenced later Trinitarian writers, I hope that this work has revealed Irenaeus' importance and genius in shifting the course of the second century's dominant theological trajectories with regard to the natures and interior relationships of God/Father, Logos/Son, and Sophia/Spirit, and their resulting expressions in the economy. The shift was occasioned by the historical need to reject the variant understandings of God in "Gnosticism," in much the same way that Irenaeus' understanding of the economy was occasioned by the historical need to reject variant understandings of the relation between the Old and New Testaments in Marcionism. Irenaeus' understanding of the immanent Triune God deserves as much praise, recognition, and scholarly attention as is traditionally assigned his understanding of the economy of salvation.

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