

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN
CONTEMPORARY TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

A Critical Appraisal of the Idea of the
Unity of the Economic with the Immanent Trinity,
with Special Reference to Recent Trinitarian Pneumatology

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ABSTRACT

Both Pneumatology and the doctrine of the Trinity have been the subject of renewed interest in recent theology. This study relates these two themes through a critical examination of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in contemporary Trinitarian theology.

Chapter I examines the major factors which have raised the question of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in recent theology. New Testament scholarship on the Spirit, developments in ecclesiology, and the filiogue doctrine in modern ecumenical theology are discussed.

Chapter II provides an account of the basic principle underlying recent Trinitarian theology, the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity. This account involves a treatment of the development of the distinction between the two in patristic theology, and of the contemporary idea of their identity. Barth's doctrine of election and its Trinitarian implications, Rahner's Trinitarian Grundaxiom, and the doctrine of the Trinity conceived "between theism and atheism" are thus considered.

In Chapter III, four recent "models" of Trinitarian Pneumatology are assessed through representative theologians: the "revealedness model," focused on the epistemological role of the Spirit (Barth); the "atonement model," drawn from the theology of the cross (aspects of Moltmann, Jüngel); the "anointing model," where the idea of the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit is made thematic (Mühlen, Kasper, Coffey, Balthasar, Congar); and the "eschatological model," in which the Spirit's orientation to the future consummation of the kingdom of God is central (Pannenberg, Moltmann).

Chapter IV provides a more general philosophical and theological critique of contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology. First, the idea of "dialectical Trinitarianism" is introduced in order to define the theological ontology involved here. This dialectical conception is then critically compared to Hegel's philosophy of the Trinity. Second, the four models of Chapter III are discussed in the light of the diversity of the economy of salvation. The conclusion is that the character of the economic basis requires a careful qualification of the idea of economic-immanent Trinitarian identity, through a recognition of the kenotic quality of the economic Trinity, the apophatic quality of the immanent Trinity, and the analogical quality of Trinitarian theology in general.

In Chapter V, finally, an attempt is made to explore possible directions for future development in Trinitarian Pneumatology. The factors discussed in Chapter I, together with the diversity of the economic basis, suggest first of all that a theology of Spirit-Son reciprocity might be developed. This possibility is then considered more fully in connection with the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. A broadly social doctrine of the Trinity is thus advocated, drawing on Eastern and Victorine Trinitarian themes as well as on the contemporary Trinitarian tradition.

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INTRODUCTION

Two of the prominent tendencies of recent Trinitarian theology underlie the following study. The first is the conviction that in classical forms of Trinitarian theology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is deficient in certain respects, and that, particularly in view of further contemporary theological problems, the doctrine requires fresh treatment. The second is the basic principle common to a variety of contemporary reformulations of the doctrine of the Trinity, deriving from Karl Rahner and ultimately from Karl Barth, that 'the "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity.'¹ The intention of this study is to relate these two themes by providing a critical account of the main ways in which the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been developed in contemporary Trinitarian theology, and to suggest certain possibilities for further development. This will serve to illuminate the doctrines both of the Holy Spirit and of the Trinity in themselves, and help to fill a significant lacuna in recent theological literature.

It should be stated at the outset that no attempt can be made within the limitations of this study to provide a full-scale apology for Trinitarian Pneumatology as such. In what follows, we will be concerned more simply with the

¹Karl Rahner, The Trinity, trans. Joseph Donceel (London: Burns & Oates, 1970), p. 22, italics deleted. Rahner's "basic Trinitarian axiom" corresponds to the Barthian thesis that the being of God is to be understood in his acts, and his acts in his being. On the similarity between Barth and Rahner on this point, see, e.g., John J. O'Donnell, The Mystery of the Triune God (London: Sheed & Ward, 1988), pp. 35ff.

tradition of Trinitarian Pneumatology which has developed in recent years on the basis of the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, where the attempt is not to defend the doctrine of the Trinity so much as to restate it in these terms. In post-Barthian theology in particular, the idea of unity involved here becomes such a central presupposition of theological thought that the apologetic question of the possibility of a Trinitarian theology is effectively by-passed. Although the apologetic approach to the problems of Trinitarian theology is of obvious importance, therefore, the contemporary Trinitarian tradition responds to a different set of questions, and it is mainly with these, as they are reflected in Pneumatology, that we will be concerned in what follows.

Christian theology in general is inherently Christocentric in character, being by nature orientated to the saving act of God in Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is no exception. Historically, as, for example, Hendrikus Berkhof argues in The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Spirit has been understood to be hidden in the work of Christ, following John 14-16, with the result, however, that the "person" of the Spirit has not received the degree of sustained treatment in the history of theology as has the "person" of Christ.² The "hiddenness" of the Spirit in Christ has been accentuated, moreover, for historical reasons involving the reaction of the Church to Montanism and to similar subsequent Pneumatic movements, which have traditionally resulted in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit being closely tied to the doctrine of Christ, of Scripture, or of the Church.³ As Berkhof argues, however, the problem here is that, as a

²Hendrikus Berkhof, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (London: The Epworth Press, 1965), pp. 9-12.

³See, e.g., Jaroslav Pelikan, "Montanism and Its Trinitarian Significance," Church History, 25 (1956), 99-109.

result, the Lordship of the Spirit is effectively compromised, not because of any strictly positive attack upon his person and work, but rather by default, i.e., because the person and work of the Spirit as such has been insufficiently emphasized and clarified theologically.

There can be no doubt that the central focus of Christian theology, as of Christian faith, is Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. At the same time, however, any "Christomonism" in theology needs to be avoided; according to strict Christian teaching, God the Father indeed reveals himself and accomplishes his saving work through Jesus Christ, but also in the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the central theme in, but by no means the whole content of, Christian theology. While, therefore, the fact is that God's saving work in the Holy Spirit cannot be detached artificially from the Christ-event, in which it has its ultimate focus, it remains that the Pneumatological aspect of the Christian faith ought not to be neglected.

The plea for a revitalized theology of the Spirit who "blows where he wills" has been a common feature of Pneumatological theology for a very long time.⁴ As we shall see in Chapter I, however, a variety of contemporary theological and ecclesial factors have currently forced a reassessment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the Trinitarian perspective. In particular, New Testament theology has revealed that, corresponding to the Christocentric focus of Pneumatology in the New Testament, we need also to recognize the strongly Pneumatological aspect of Christology itself in the New Testament. At the same time, ecclesial movements in recent years have challenged the usual domestication of the Holy Spirit to

⁴On this theme in the medieval and modern period, see Yves Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, trans. David Smith (London: Geoffrey Chapman and New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), I, pp. 93-150.

ecclesial structures, while the ecumenical movement is currently pressing the question of the dogmatic definition of the Holy Spirit's relation to the Son in the Trinity in connection with the disputed filioque doctrine.

In the older Trinitarian conception, three related concepts govern the understanding of the Holy Spirit: the homoousion, the procession of the Spirit, and, in the West, the related filioque doctrine. As a basic summary of the content and development of these concepts, it can be said that the homoousion in general establishes that the Trinity is in view in Pneumatology, while the idea of procession (and its elaboration in the filioque) is an attempt to account for the Trinitarian structure involved. The frame of reference in each case is at once Christological and Pneumatological. The homoousion as understood of the Spirit was taken over into Pneumatology from Nicene Christology, on comparable grounds, while the idea of the procession of the Spirit, nominally derived from John 15: 26, came to be understood analogously to the idea of "begottenness" in the Nicene Christological definition.⁵ All these concepts serve in their way to ground the mission of the Holy Spirit ad extra in the understanding of the divinity of the Spirit ad intra, the underlying principle being that the Spirit who is Saviour and Lord in the economy of salvation is also, for that reason, one God with the Father and the Son in the immanent being of the divinity.⁶ In the correlation between the mission and the procession of the Spirit which comes to

⁵This was, of course, chiefly the Pneumatological achievement of Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers. The consubstantiality and begottenness of the Son are defined in the Creed of Nicea as follows: "We believe ... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as Only-Begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father [ek tes ousias tou patros], God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, of one substance with the Father [homoousion to patri]...."

⁶T. F. Torrance, The Trinitarian Faith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), pp. 191-251.

precise expression in the medieval period, this principle is extended to include the idea that the explicit form of the mission has its basis in the divine form of the procession.⁷

The Christian theological tradition has thus never maintained that the immanent Trinity is to be dissociated from the economy of salvation. On the contrary, it is united in its conviction both that God truly gives himself in the saving activity of the Son and Spirit, and, correspondingly, that the only access to the doctrine of the Trinity is through the economy of salvation. The doctrine of the Trinity is thus universally regarded as revealed. The economic Trinity, therefore, is not kept from view in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the theological tradition; indeed, insofar as the ad intra, eternal definitions and distinctions posited have temporal repercussions for the doctrines of salvation, the economic implications of the doctrine provide both the motivation and the criteria for the development of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. At the same time, however, as we shall see more fully in Chapter II, for historical and theological reasons the doctrine of the Trinity in its traditional systematic content has been overwhelmingly a doctrine of the immanent Trinity. In it we are effectively concerned with the triune God as he is in himself, sub specie aeternitatis, removed from the exigencies of finitude and history, and abstracted even from the economy of salvation.⁸

⁷A. Michel, "Trinité (Missions et Habitation des Personnes de la)," in A. Vacant et al., eds., Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1946), 15, cols. 1831-1832: "[La] mission divine comporte essentiellement une procession et une origine éternelle, à laquelle se rattache un terme temporel . . .," (citing Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1a. 43, 2).

⁸This can be seen from even a cursory examination of the main stages, both historical and logical, in the development of the older Trinitarian theology. The most

The new development of the doctrine of the Trinity in recent years, for its part, working as it does from the premise that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa, makes possible a radical reorientation of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity to the economy of salvation, thus offering the potential for the development of a new approach to the problem of a Trinitarian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This is so first of all for the simple reason that, to date, most of the developments in contemporary Trinitarian theology have been Christological in character; the Pneumatological implications of what I shall call here the "contemporary Trinitarian thesis" remain to be fully explored. More than this, however, in the contemporary tradition of Trinitarian theology with which we are concerned, the attempt is made to understand the immanent Trinity explicitly in its unity with the economic Trinity. From the point of view of the form and content of the doctrine of the Trinity, what is involved here is not just the impossibility of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity except in the closest possible connection with the economic Trinity, but also the formal and material unity of the revelation of the triune God and the being of the triune God in his transcendent reality.

basic summary of this development would have to include, first of all, the association of the heavenly Christ of the Pauline and Johannine writings with the Logos of Greek philosophy; secondly, the development of the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Logos; thirdly, the evolution of the homousios dogma; fourthly, the positing of the distinction between the one divine essence and the three divine hypostases; and fifthly, the unfolding of the idea of the procession of the Holy Spirit, culminating in the dispute between East and West concerning the Western filioque clause. These stages do not by any means present the development of the doctrine of the Trinity exhaustively, but they are sufficient to reveal something of the extent to which the older doctrine of the Trinity as such is a doctrine of the immanent Trinity. Cf. W. Fulton, "Trinity," in James Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), XII, p. 458.

The reorientation of contemporary Trinitarian theology to the economy of salvation was largely the achievement of Karl Barth. Barth's specific thesis, however, is that the Christian concept of God as Trinity must directly correspond to and reflect God's own self-revelation in Jesus Christ, without recourse to an alien metaphysical standard.⁹ As such, Barth's position has been of decisive importance for subsequent Trinitarian theology. Robert Jenson, for example, characterizes the development of the doctrine of the Trinity after Barth as a series of attempts "to pursue the metaphysical enterprise, intentionally as explication of the gospel's talk about God and on the explicit assumption that traditional metaphysical doctrines ... have no inherent authority."¹⁰

While acknowledging the contribution of Barth, however, one would have to look also beyond Barth's theology as such in order to understand the contemporary development of Trinitarian theology. Thus, for example, in a recent article, "Problems of a Trinitarian Doctrine of God," Wolfhart Pannenberg argues that since the work of Rahner, the doctrine of the Trinity has increasingly been linked to a polemic against the traditional metaphysical doctrine of God, carried out from the standpoint of the doctrine of the Trinity, but specifically constructed also in connection with the critique of traditional metaphysics in modern thought.¹¹ The critique of traditional metaphysics and of older metaphysical presuppositions in Christian

⁹See, e.g., Barth's discussion of the vestigium trinitatis, in Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance; trans. G. W. Bromiley (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), I/1, pp. 333-347.

¹⁰Robert W. Jenson, "The Logic of the Doctrine of the Trinity," Dialog, 26 (1987), p. 249.

¹¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Problems of a Trinitarian Doctrine of God," trans. Philip Clayton, Dialog, 26 (1987), 250-257.

theology is already implicit in Barth's theology, of course, but in post-Barthian doctrines of the Trinity, the philosophical problem comes to be of direct importance for the substance of Trinitarian theology. As Pannenberg writes, "A considerable number of contemporary theologians ... converge in looking at the doctrine of the Trinity as an inexhaustible resource which allows Christian theology to make constructive use of antimetaphysical and atheistic criticisms of the concept of God..."¹² Of particular significance in this context is the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity thus becomes the locus of a critique, often ostensibly relying on the philosophy of Hegel, of the traditional contrast between an eternal and in himself immutable God and the changes of time and history, or, in Trinitarian terms, between the immanent and the economic Trinity.¹³ As we shall see, this development has indeed been of central importance to recent theologies of the Trinity, and to recent Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit. In Pannenberg's view, the result has been "a deeper appropriation of the specifically Christian concept of God contained in the revelation of Christ."¹⁴ This general claim, certainly, will have to be taken up in what follows. Against Pannenberg, and others, however, I shall argue that there are problems inherent in this approach, and that, both from the point of view of the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, a careful assessment of this aspect of the new Trinitarian position is required.

Within the limits of this study, of course, there can be no question of directly taking up this philosophical problem at length. The philosophical movement which underlies the modern development in Trinitarian thought can

¹²Ibid., p. 250.

¹³Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁴Ibid.

only be discussed here in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity itself. The ultimate justification for proceeding to consider the problem of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity will not, therefore, come from a critical appropriation of the philosophical foundations of the contemporary approach to the Trinity, although this might be possible in principle. Instead, the justification comes from the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity has become the subject of renewed interest in contemporary theology, and from the fact that the economic and the immanent Trinity constitute the key terms of the debate: the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa. Or again, as Jüngel says more enigmatically, "God's being is discussed."¹⁵ It is above all with this tradition, and with its implications for Pneumatology, that we will be concerned.

According to Rahner's axiom, the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity. The most general implication of the axiom for the development of a Trinitarian theology is clear: the immanent and the economic Trinity cannot be considered in abstract isolation, but rather, each is to be understood in unity with the other. This marks an important departure from the older form of Trinitarian theology, where the idea of the immanent Trinity, indeed, was developed self-consciously from revelation, but where also two levels of discourse are to be clearly differentiated, the one "theology" proper, referring to the immanent Trinity, and the other, "economy." In the one case we are concerned in principle with the eternal Trinity in its self-relatedness, and in the other with its historical condescension and manifestation in the incarnation and grace. While from the point of view of its material content there are various

¹⁵Eberhard Jüngel, The Doctrine of the Trinity, trans. Horton Harris (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1976), p. xi.

assessments of what can be known of the immanent Trinity in the history of Trinitarian theology – ranging, for example, from a tentative analogical understanding of the eternal innertrinitarian begetting of the Son and procession of the Spirit to a total apophaticism – it remains that formally, if not materially, we are concerned in the one with the Trinity sub specie aeternitatis, and in the other with the Trinity sub specie temporis.

In the contemporary Trinitarian tradition, the idea of the Trinity sub specie aeternitatis, however, has become problematic, with the older metaphysical theism which to a great extent underlies it, whereas the idea of the immanent Trinity survives and is reasserted. The survival of the idea of the immanent Trinity in contemporary theology, in other words, depends upon a considerable qualification of its form and content. What emerges from Rahner's axiom, and from the tradition I have taken it to represent, is that a theology of the immanent Trinity is possible to the extent that it is itself explicitly constructed sub specie temporis, based, clearly, on the presupposition that a doctrine of the Trinity sub specie temporis can and does yield a doctrine of the immanent Trinity. The Trinity in itself is the revealed Trinity, in short, and vice versa, so that God in his own self-relatedness is in some sense to be identified also with his condescension in creation and redemption.

What this might mean in principle, and what its implications are for concrete Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit, is the primary subject-matter to be explored further in subsequent Chapters. By way of anticipation, however, it is possible to say that when the doctrines of the immanent and the economic Trinity are thus conceived, there follow from the economic basis certain clear implications for the understanding of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity. The resulting theology is in some ways quite different from the traditional Pneumatological position

determined by the ideas of the homoousion, of procession, and of the filioque. While, as we shall see, there are certain gains to be made from the contemporary approach, it will also emerge in the course of our investigation that there are certain weaknesses in the approach as a whole which require critical assessment, and which issue in questionable implications for the Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit.

In what follows, we will discuss first of all in Chapter I the main factors which have raised the question of the place of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the Trinity anew in contemporary theology. In Chapter II, the idea of the identity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, as the systematic principle of contemporary Trinitarian theology, will be examined critically and in detail. Chapter III will be concerned more concretely with four theological "models" drawn from this theology which deal with the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity: what will here be called the revealedness model, the atonement model, the anointing model, and the eschatological model. In Chapter IV, critical philosophical and theological questions will be raised concerning the contemporary Trinitarian position, and Chapter V, finally, will take up the question of future directions for Trinitarian Pneumatology in the light of the critical assessment provided in earlier Chapters.

I
CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP
AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A number of factors have combined to raise the question of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in contemporary theology, and therefore also reflect on the question of a contemporary Trinitarian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Three developments have been of particular importance in this respect. New Testament scholarship on the Spirit, first of all, has raised central questions of relevance to a Trinitarian Pneumatology; since one of the primary points of departure in Pneumatology is the witness of scripture, these questions will need to be taken into account in what follows. Secondly, contemporary ecclesiological concerns, relating to the rise of the pentecostalist and charismatic movements as a "third force" in contemporary Christianity, and to the wider ecclesiological concerns of the ecumenical movement, have forced a theological reassessment of traditional Pneumatology. Thirdly, the renewed discussion of the ecumenical problem of the filioque doctrine in recent theology has clearly been an important factor in heightening the significance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity in contemporary theology. In order to be sensitive to the wider results of recent theological scholarship on the Holy Spirit in subsequent Chapters, we need first of all to take account of these developments.

1. New Testament Scholarship

The main achievement of recent New Testament scholarship on the Spirit has been the recovery of the

concept of Spirit as a New Testament Christological category, both in the synoptic gospels and in the Pauline corpus. C. K. Barrett, for example, argues in his book, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, that despite the relative infrequency of references to the Spirit in the synoptic tradition over against the Pauline and Johannine traditions, the synoptics present the endowment of Jesus with the Holy Spirit at his baptism as the event which marks the installation of Jesus as Messiah.¹ "It is essentially the solemn appointment of the Messiah to his office, the installation of the Son of God, and it stands in the Gospel tradition as an indication of how the ministry, in the form given to it by that tradition, was to be understood."² Eduard Schweizer adds to this the qualification that in Matthew and Mark, Jesus is the Man of the Spirit, whereas in Luke he is more explicitly Lord of the Spirit,³ but Schweizer agrees that Spirit is a Christological concept in the synoptics.⁴

¹C. K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition (2nd ed.; London: S.P.C.K., 1966), p. 44.

²Ibid., p. 115.

³Eduard Schweizer, "[Pneuma, Pneumatikos]," in Gerhard Friedrich, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), VI, 404-405.

⁴Ibid., p. 406. Cf. also, however, I. de la Potterie, "L'Onction du Christ," Nouvelle Revue Theologique, 80 (1958), 225-252. De la Potterie argues that the New Testament writers at no point make a connection between the name (or title) "Christ" and the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit. The baptism narratives of the synoptics refer to a prophetic anointing; Lk. 4: 24 contains, for example, a prophetic self-designation by Jesus which is at the same time an interpretation of his baptismal experience narrated earlier (ibid., pp. 231-234). Acts 4: 27 presents Jesus as the one anointed by God to be the Servant (ibid., pp. 239-246). Within the Christological conception of the New Testament writers, de la Potterie concedes, Jesus is understood both as the eschatological prophet (Deut. 18: 15, 18; Acts 3:22, 7: 37; Jn. 1: 21, 25) and as the Servant of the Father (Is. 42: 1ff.; Mt. 12: 18-21; Acts 3: 13,

New Testament scholars argue that the earliest form of this Spirit Christology appears in the pre-Pauline formula cited in Rom. 1: 3-4, where Christ is characterized as "the one who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness from the resurrection from the dead."⁵ The general tendency of contemporary New Testament scholarship is to trace belief in Jesus' divine Sonship back from its origins in the resurrection through Jesus' life until finally we arrive at a clear pre-existence doctrine; consistent with this, scholars argue that, over

26), these being related to the anointing theme. But nowhere does the New Testament explicitly relate the title "Christ" to his anointing by the Spirit, despite the etymological relation obvious to us and presumably also to them. De la Potterie suggests that this was because Jesus himself resisted the designation "Messiah" or "Christ" throughout his lifetime, and because he was not understood by his followers to be the Messiah until after his ascension (Acts 2: 36). (*ibid.*, p. 238). The Messianic secret (Wrede), however, raises problems for de la Potterie's thesis. The synoptic gospels everywhere presuppose from the standpoint of faith that Jesus is the Christ while not allowing the fact to be openly known. With Jesus, in his teachings and his actions, the Messianic Age was already present, though in hiddenness; as W. G. Kümmel argues in his, Theology of the New Testament, trans. John E. Steely (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), pp. 107-108, the earliest Christian community gathered Jesus' sayings and preserved the traditions of his life on this basis, while his death was understood to be a Messianic fulfilment of Scripture from the earliest times (Lk. 24: 26; Acts 4: 27-28). The ascension of Jesus was therefore not the beginning of Jesus' Messiahship for the earliest Christians, but the exaltation of the one already designated Messiah to his heavenly glory, in order to appear again shortly as the Messiah of the end time (*ibid.*, p. 108). It follows from this that it is entirely appropriate and even necessary to understand the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit at his baptism Christologically.

⁵Joseph A. Fitzmyer, The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX) (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981), pp. 340 ff.; Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), pp. 311-316; and James D.G. Dunn, Christology in the Making (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1980), pp. 34-35, 136-149.

time, the primitive pneuma-sarx Christology associated with the resurrection and represented in Rom. 1: 3-4 was pushed further and further back into the history of Jesus. Mark, the earliest of our gospels, reflects the stage at which Jesus was understood to be Son of God kata pneuma at his baptism; Matthew and Luke both independently attribute Jesus' divine Sonship to his special relationship to the Holy Spirit from his conception (see especially Lk. 1: 35b).⁶ This movement, it is argued, represents a sustained attempt to deal with Jesus' divine Sonship without the concepts of pre-existence and incarnation.⁷ The main evidence for this is found in the synoptic gospels themselves, which bear witness to a time and a place where this level of Christological articulation - a Spirit Christology as opposed to a Logos Christology - had been achieved.⁸

Although certain exegetical points may well be disputed, there is no doubt that Christological thought is pervasively related to Pneumatological thought in the New Testament as a whole. This fact undoubtedly represents a sustained attempt within the primitive Church to deal with Messianic expectations concerning the previously unparalleled activity of the Holy Spirit in the Messianic Age (Joel 2: 28-30).⁹ As James Dunn has argued, it is also

⁶Barrett, op. cit., pp. 5-24; Brown, op. cit., pp. 108, 156.

⁷Dunn, op. cit., pp. 139-141.

⁸Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 340.

⁹The roots of the early Christian movement in Judaism made such a Christological conception inevitable. In this connection, the expectation of the contemporary Judaism which produced the book of 1 Enoch might be cited. It relied heavily on Messianic oracles like Is. 11: 2 in its understanding of the Messiah; see, e.g., 1 Enoch 49: 2b-3, trans. M. A. Knibb, in H. F. D. Sparkes, ed., The Apocryphal Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 230: "... iniquity will pass away like a shadow, and will have [no place to stand]; for the Chosen One stands

almost certainly grounded in the history of Jesus of Nazareth, who apparently underwent a significant religious experience at the Jordan, and in whose preserved sayings are found traces of a highly Pneumatic consciousness of God.¹⁰ Dunn goes so far as to argue for a renewal, although within stricter limits, of the nineteenth century attempt to reconstruct Jesus' inner life - the feature of the older "quest of the historical Jesus" which was singled out for particular criticism by Albert Schweitzer.¹¹ Dunn admits that a biography of Jesus is indeed impossible, but argues that this does not mean that we have no access to Jesus' self-consciousness at any point. "On the contrary," he writes, "it is my contention that we are in a position to see fairly deeply into Jesus' experience of God at certain points, and so may begin to understand how he conceived of his relation to God."¹²

before the Lord of Spirits, and his glory is for ever and ever, and his power for all generations. And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom, and the spirit which gives understanding, and the spirit of knowledge and of power, and the spirit of those who sleep in righteousness."

¹⁰James D.G. Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1975), pp. 41-92.

¹¹Ibid., p. 12.

¹²Ibid., p. 13. Against Dunn, however, it must be said that the same characteristics of the synoptic narratives which make a biography of Jesus impossible must be taken also to render the attempt to reconstruct the psychological life of Jesus futile. The theological concerns of the Church in the preservation and redaction of the sources have conditioned the form and content of the traditions about Jesus which have thus survived. At the same time, however, this does not mean that Dunn's position is to be ignored; rather, the close connection between Christology and Pneumatology in the New Testament presentation of Jesus is related to the character of the primitive Christian movement, in which, according to all the sources we possess, the miraculous presence and activity of the eschatological Spirit of God was considered to be a demonstrable fact (e.g., Rom. 15: 18-19). That presence and activity was considered to have been made possible by the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Jn. 7: 39),

Paul's view of the Holy Spirit perhaps represents the most important example of this process of theological reflection. Although Paul can argue that the Spirit is the Spirit of God which searches the deep things of God (= the Father: 1 Cor. 2: 10ff.),¹³ his characteristic position is that the Spirit is the Spirit of [God's] Son (Gal. 4: 6), the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8: 9), or even the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1: 19), so that the Spirit is also the Spirit of sonship in the religious life of the believer (Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6). In the crucial Pauline Pneumatological texts 1 Cor. 15: 45 and 2 Cor. 3: 17, furthermore, a Pauline version of Spirit Christology appears: the Spirit is here the earthly presence of the

and to be the specific gift of Jesus as the risen and exalted Saviour (Acts 2: 33), to provide for the continuation of his work in and through the Church (Jn. 14-16; Acts). The attempt of New Testament writers to articulate the relation between their Lord and the Spirit can only be interpreted, from this point of view, as a necessary reflective response to the individual and collective life of the primitive Church.

¹³Schweizer, op. cit., p. 425 argues that "the deep things of God" are here exclusively Jesus Christ and him crucified, after 1 Cor. 1: 17ff., but this conclusion is somewhat forced. For a different view, cf. C. F. D. Moule, The Holy Spirit (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1978), pp. 7-17, who argues that 1 Cor. 2: 10ff. presupposes a kinship between God and humanity, in that the two pneumas mentioned, the divine and the human, are spoken of analogously, and that this theme is central to Pauline Pneumatology. Moule holds that Paul's usage here parallels the thought of Ps. 51: 10-12, 17, where ruach is seen by the Psalmist as something within and part of him, and yet as belonging to God also. The argument is that in both cases, what is in view is the Hebraic notion of Spirit as a mediating power between God and the creation. Moule, however, in his interpretation of the Corinthians passage, misses the eschatological, Messianic point Paul makes: the Spirit is not here simply a mediating concept, understood in continuity with the Old Testament tradition, but rather a divine gift of the new, Messianic age.

exalted Lord, such that, in the Spirit the resurrected Lord is active and manifested in his resurrection power.¹⁴

The work of Ingo Hermann on the relation between Pauline Pneumatology and Christology in Kurios und Pneuma has been particularly influential in this respect.¹⁵ Hermann's central argument is that the resurrected Christ of the Pauline letters is not only the one once delivered over to death for our sake, and a divine figure who is destined to come at the end to "bring to light the things now hidden in darkness" (1 Cor. 4: 5), but the one who presents himself to us in the here and now as life-giving Spirit. The recognition of this fact, he argues, is essential to the full understanding of Pauline theology.¹⁶

Hermann's study of Pauline Pneumatology is focused on 2 Cor. 3: 17a, "ho de kurios to pneuma estin," which he regards as the key to and a summary of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit in Paul.¹⁷ Hermann argues that this important text identifies the pneuma with the risen Christ; kurios here, as in the whole of the passage from 2 Cor. 3: 1 to 4: 6, where Paul defends his Apostleship against those who challenge his authority, refers to

¹⁴Ernst Käsemann, "Geist und Geistgaben im NT," in H. F. von Campenhausen et al., eds., Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (3rd ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), II, col. 1274.

¹⁵Ingo Hermann, Kurios und Pneuma (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1961).

¹⁶Hermann writes, ibid., p. 14: "...die Fülle der paulinischen Theologie wird erst sichtbar, wenn im Bild des erhöhten Kyrios die Züge des Pneuma-Mächtigen hervortreten und dadurch begreifbar wird, wie der Herr der Kirche unter den Seinen wirksam gegenwärtig ist, bis er wiederkommt."

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 17-66. Hermann goes on, however, ibid., pp. 69ff., to argue with particular reference to 1 Cor. 12-15 that the relation posited here between Christ and the Spirit is also essential to a proper understanding of Pauline ecclesiology and his wider understanding of the economy of salvation.

Christ.¹⁸ Paul's thought, however, is not metaphysical at this point, and no speculative identification of essence is strictly intended; rather, according to Hermann, Spirit in Paul is more correctly conceived firstly as a Funktionsbegriff, indicating the means by which Christ is operative in the Church (thus the Church at Corinth becomes the "letter" of Christ), and secondly as an Erfahrungsgegebenheit, which is experienced as a power operating in the heart, differentiating the New from the Old Covenant (which appeared merely as the gramma written on tablets of stone).¹⁹ The phrase "ho de kurios to pneuma estin" in 2 Cor. 3: 17, therefore, means that the life-giving Spirit, who gives Paul his Apostolic authority and who glorifies and liberates the Church in Corinth, is none other than the resurrected Christ.²⁰ The point is that in reference to the experience of Paul and the Corinthian Church, Christ is the Spirit, and the Spirit who is at work is Christ, so that both the authority of the Apostle and the glory of the New Covenant derives immediately from the risen Lord.

Hermann's treatment of Pauline Pneumatology follows in the tradition of Albert Schweitzer. Since Schweitzer's Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus (1930), there has been a strong tendency to understand the Spirit in Paul as a field of divine power which determines the life of the believer.²¹ Schweitzer's work was part of a wider reaction earlier in this century to the liberal-idealist tradition of the nineteenth century, which understood Spirit as that which gives the dual capacity for self-consciousness and for a

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 17-25.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 26-31.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 43-45.

²¹Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, trans. W. Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black, 1931), pp. 425-426, 433.

rational penetration of the world of experience, and interpreted Paul largely along these lines.²²

Schweitzer argues that for Paul, being "in Christ" is to be understood eschatologically as a corporate solidarity of believers with Christ and with one another,²³ through baptism,²⁴ and ultimately as a corporate sharing in the eschatological event of the resurrection.²⁵ For Schweitzer, therefore, Paul's "mysticism" is a "Christ-mysticism" and not a "God-mysticism," the participation in the eschatological event of salvation rather than a Hellenistic sharing in the divine life.²⁶ The Spirit of Christ, in keeping with this, is the principle of the state of existence characteristic of the Messianic kingdom, i.e., of the resurrection. Life in the Spirit, similarly, is entry into the new, eschatological mode of existence as opposed to the life of the "old man" in the flesh, and thus the beginning in the here and now of the process of

²²Ernst Käsemann, "The Spirit and the Letter," in Käsemann, Perspectives on Paul, trans. Margaret Köhl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1971), p. 139. The Pauline life in the Spirit was understood here as the "spiritual life" of moral inwardness. According to Käsemann, this interpretation broke down when it became clear that for Paul and for primitive Christianity in general "Spirit" means the divine energy of miracle and ecstasy. Cf. also Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, trans. Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1952), I, p. 155, who distinguishes between "animistic" and "dynamistic" thinking in New Testament Pneumatology: in animistic thinking, the Spirit is conceived as an independent power which can fall on a person unexpectedly, enabling supernatural manifestations of power; in dynamistic thinking, the Spirit is an impersonal force which fills a person like a fluid.

²³Schweitzer, op. cit., p. 111.

²⁴Ibid., p. 19.

²⁵Ibid., p. 110.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 5-25.

resurrection.²⁷ It is for this reason that the end-time gift of the Spirit follows the resurrection of Christ; the Spirit is "the form of manifestation of the powers of the resurrection."²⁸

James Dunn, also, who has made one of the most recent sustained attempts to address the question of Pauline Pneumatology, belongs with Hermann to this theological and exegetical tradition. Like Schweitzer, Dunn, in Jesus and the Spirit, speaks of Paul's Christ-mysticism.²⁹ For Dunn, as for Schweitzer, the Spirit is "the future good which has become present for the man of faith," and thus a fundamental dimension of the already / not yet tension which lies at the centre of Pauline eschatology.³⁰ Both Dunn and Schweitzer conceive of the Spirit in Paul as the sphere of divine power into which one enters when initiated into the life of the new age, and, as such, as a sphere which is consistently determined or defined by its "Jesus-character."³¹ Dunn, however, together with Hermann, differs from Schweitzer in laying less emphasis on the importance of eschatology as such in shaping Paul's theology, and more on the centrality of religious experience for Paul.³²

While it is possible, according to Dunn, to define the Spirit in Paul in ecstatic, ethical, or eschatological categories,³³ his main argument, like Hermann's, is that the

²⁷Ibid., pp. 160, 167.

²⁸Ibid., p. 166.

²⁹Dunn, op. cit., p. 201.

³⁰Ibid., p. 310.

³¹Ibid., p. 319.

³²Ibid., p. 200.

³³Dunn takes us through three levels of the Pauline consciousness of the Spirit. First, he discusses the charismatic Spirit, by which he means the Spirit which

Pauline theology of the Spirit reaches its climax in the idea that the Spirit is "no more and no less than the Spirit of Jesus."³⁴ In a sense, Paul was forced to this definition out of pastoral necessity, because of the ambiguity, and, in a sense, the religious banality, of charismatic experience and of the related claims of some of his opponents. In order to state what authentic Christian experience of the Spirit is, Paul appeals to the content of the gospel: Christ crucified and risen. The Spirit of God, the eschatological Spirit, is indistinguishable in Paul, according to Dunn, from the Spirit of Jesus, of the Son, or of sonship.³⁵ To be in the Spirit is to be in Christ, and therefore involves sharing both in Christ's sufferings and in his resurrection (2 Cor. 10-13).³⁶

Again, however, the question of the basis of this teaching in Paul must be raised. At one level, Dunn argues that there is an analogy between Jesus' relation to God and that of the Christian in the one Spirit: the Spirit of the Son is the Spirit of sonship (Rom. 8: 9-17; Gal. 4: 6).³⁷ But Dunn's central thesis is that Paul "equates the risen Jesus with the Spirit who makes alive."³⁸ The argument here

operates through various gifts in the Church and the presence and activity of which is understood by Paul to be a mark of God's own eschatological activity (*ibid.*, pp. 205-258). Second, the charismatic community, the Church, is discussed with particular reference to the controversial question of charism and office. Dunn sees an ongoing dialectic in Paul between the two, with the rule of thumb being unity in diversity (*ibid.*, pp. 259-300). Third, Dunn treats the matter of the character of authentic Christian experience of the Spirit as a question of the Jesus-character of such experience (*ibid.*, pp. 301-342).

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 325.

³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 302-307, 319-320.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 326-342.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 320.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 322, italics deleted.

is based on 1 Cor. 15: 45, where it is said that the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, "became life-giving Spirit." Dunn's language is significant:

[Paul] does not say that Jesus by his resurrection became a spiritual body (though that is implied in the context). He does not say that Jesus by his resurrection became a living Spirit (though that would have made a better parallelism in v. 45). He deliberately says that Jesus by his resurrection became that Spirit which believers experience as the source and power of their new life and new relationship with God. As from his resurrection Jesus may be known by men only as life-giving Spirit.³⁹

Dunn immediately goes on to add that this also means, conversely, that the pre-existent Spirit has taken on, as of the resurrection, the character of Christ, and to point out that Paul "is both describing the mode of existence now enjoyed by Jesus, and ... specifying the character of Christian experience...."⁴⁰

The central point made here is that after the resurrection, Jesus becomes the definition, in some sense, of the Spirit's activity in the life of the believer; it is this which makes this experience distinctively Christian. The Spirit and the risen Jesus are, therefore, for Dunn, identified in Paul so far as Christian experience is concerned.⁴¹ The eschatological Spirit, promised by the prophets, has somehow taken on the character both the earthly (Rom. 8: 15 ff.) and the exalted Christ (Rom. 8:

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 323. Dunn puts the point in more reserved terms again in his later book, Christology in the Making, pp. 145-147, where the Spirit is said to be the medium of union between Christ and the Christian.

29; 1 Cor. 15: 49).⁴² According to Dunn, the chief reason for this was Christological: Jesus was the eschatological revelation of God, and hence the older words for the revelatory activity of God in the Old Testament - Wisdom, Word, and Spirit - had to take on the character of Jesus.⁴³ The clear implication is that since, for Paul, the Spirit is the basis of the new life, the eschatological life of the resurrection, the character of that life must be determined by Jesus.

It is not possible within present constraints to comment in detail on the Trinitarian significance of the material we have surveyed. It must suffice to say for the moment that none of these studies is specifically addressed to the question of a Trinitarian Pneumatology, and in fact both Hermann⁴⁴ and Dunn⁴⁵ go out of their way to maintain that the questions addressed in Trinitarian theology are of a different order from and are later than those addressed in their treatment of biblical material. This is undoubtedly correct. However, it remains the case that the Spirit within and the risen Christ beyond are not one but two, and that unless we are prepared to admit that Christ fills the whole sphere of deity in Paul's thought, a plurality in Paul's God and certainly in Paul's religious experience must be admitted. With reference to the thesis of Hermann and Dunn, furthermore, it must be said that in the benediction of 2 Cor. 13: 14, Paul adopts a triadic formula and sees no need, after 2 Cor. 3: 17, not to mention the Spirit because he has already mentioned Christ. The possibility of an abstraction from the content of the Pauline corpus in a Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 325.

⁴⁴Hermann, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

⁴⁵Dunn, op. cit., pp. 325-326.

must therefore be left open, even if, as is generally accepted, the arbitrary dogmatic methods of "quarry exegesis" must be firmly rejected.

The New Testament witness thus presents a great challenge to Trinitarian theology, both regarding the differentiation of the Son and the Spirit and regarding their unity in the economy of salvation. Both the synoptic presentation of the Holy Spirit as a Christological category and the Pauline view of life in Christ as life in the Spirit and vice versa reveal the close connection between Pneumatology and Christology in the New Testament. After the coming of Christ, the Spirit cannot be understood apart from its relation to him, but also, correspondingly, Christ himself is understood in Pneumatic terms. This is particularly clear from the Pauline letters, where the canon of authentic experience of the Spirit is defined Christologically, precisely because the new existence in Christ is Pneumatological. If dogmatic theology must take its departure from the Scriptures, then it follows that the questions relating to Trinitarian Pneumatology cannot be discussed in abstraction from Christology, and vice versa. This conclusion reflects also the judgment of Yves Congar: "If I were to draw but one conclusion from the whole of my work on the Holy Spirit, I would express it in these words: no Christology without pneumatology and no pneumatology without Christology."⁴⁶ We now turn to the second of the factors which have made Pneumatology of particular significance in contemporary theology, and to this same idea again as it emerges in the context of ecclesiology.

2. Ecclesiology

Two ecclesiological factors have also raised the question of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in contemporary

⁴⁶Yves Congar, The Word and the Spirit, trans. David Smith (London: Geoffrey Chapman and San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), p. 1.

theology. The first of these is the pentecostalist or charismatic movement, and the second, and more important, is the ecumenical movement. The rise of the pentecostalist movement in this century, first of all, and the development in the last three decades of the charismatic movement within the institutional Churches, both as world-wide phenomena of explosive growth and enormous proportions, lie very much in the background in recent Pneumatology. The two movements have presented a challenge on many fronts to traditional theology and Church practice, and can be understood as a living critique, mostly from the pews, of the Church's thinking about the Spirit.⁴⁷

The modern pentecostal movement can be traced to its origins in the American holiness revival of the nineteenth century, and specifically to an obscure Bible school in Kansas run by Charles Parham, who taught that the mark of baptism in the Holy Spirit is the gift of tongues.⁴⁸ This teaching was taken up by Parham's followers and developed in the years following up to the Second World War into what Hollenweger has called "classic pentecostalism."⁴⁹ The marks of the movement include highly spontaneous worship, an expectation of the miraculous, ethical rigorism, biblical literalism, a certain amount of theological diversity (on questions of sanctification and the Trinity in particular), and the distinctive teaching that the initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit is the gift of tongues. Through its highly-motivated converts, the movement spread not only through the United States, but effectively world-wide, so

⁴⁷In this respect, of course, the movement is similar to numerous ecclesial movements in the past: the challenge of the Franciscans to the medieval Western Church, for example, or the work of John Wesley and his followers in eighteenth century England might be called to mind.

⁴⁸Walter J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals, trans. R. A. Wilson (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1972), p. 22.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 21-62.

that today the various pentecostal Churches are a very significant force in global Christianity.⁵⁰

Within the institutional Churches, the charismatic renewal movement is generally traced to the experience of the American Episcopalian priest Dennis Bennett and to his congregation in California in 1959.⁵¹ Bennett's experience and that of his followers was understood along classic pentecostalist lines, so that it can be assumed that there was dependence on the earlier movement.⁵² Within the Roman Catholic Church, the phenomenon has been traced to a group of Catholic lay academics at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, who met for prayer and who again were acquainted with classic pentecostalism.⁵³ Their subsequent experience, made known largely through the writing of two of the original members of the group, Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, and certainly encouraged by the reforms of Vatican II, rapidly became a popular movement in the American Roman Catholic Church and subsequently spread to other countries.⁵⁴

Hollenweger noted in 1969 that Protestant charismatics had largely failed to break away from the classic pentecostalist understanding of the work of the Spirit, whereas in Roman Catholic charismatic circles, a more profound integration of the new experience with the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, and with

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 63-74.

⁵¹Peter Hocker, "A Survey of the Worldwide Charismatic Movement," in Arnold Bittlinger, ed., The Church is Charismatic (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981), p. 117.

⁵²Hollenweger, op. cit., pp. 9-14.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴Léon Joseph Suenens, A New Pentecost?, trans. Francis Martin (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1977), pp. 72-76.

social concerns, had been achieved.⁵⁵ As the movement continued to develop within the older, institutional Churches, however, it came to be more integrated with traditional forms of worship and theology on all sides. This process is reflected in the Roman Catholic Church, for example, in the work of Cardinal Suenens, A New Pentecost?, which explicitly attempts to draw together the institutional and charismatic dimensions of the Church. Suenens offers Roman Catholic charismatics a wide vision of the Spirit's activity, and opens up questions, not just of individual religious experience, but of the wider Christian presence in the world in social activity, and of ecumenism.⁵⁶ Within the Anglican Church, Bishop Michael Ramsey's book, Holy Spirit, showed that the charismatic movement need not be fundamentalist in its use of the Bible or narrowly pietistic in its ethic.⁵⁷ Again, the Reformed charismatic theologian Thomas Smail has argued along classical Reformed lines in his book, Reflected Glory, that the Spirit's work must be understood in Christological terms: since God's saving work is indivisible, the role of the Spirit can only be to make real in the life of the believer the victories of the incarnate Son in his humiliation and exaltation.⁵⁸

It remains the case, however, that the pentecostal and charismatic movements remain ecclesial outsiders, exercising a predominantly critical function within the wider Christian community. The challenge presented, however, by the movements to contemporary theology is their claim to have returned to the primitive Christian outlook

⁵⁵Hollenweger, op. cit., pp. 9-15.

⁵⁶Suenens, op. cit., pp. 89-195.

⁵⁷Michael Ramsey, Holy Spirit (London: SPCK, 1977), pp. 117-131.

⁵⁸Thomas Smail, Reflected Glory (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), pp. 37-51, 104-118.

in which the kingdom of God may still be anticipated, but in which it is all the same breaking through into our midst in the present by the power of the Spirit in signs and wonders and in the fulfilment of religious expectation.⁵⁹ In the developing world in particular, where the Christian Church is currently growing at enormous rates, such highly Pneumatic expectations are often the norm rather than the exception, whereas the tendency of Western institutional Churches towards a more stable, rationally-definable ecclesial life ordered through ecclesial office, the sacraments, and the centrality of the Word is to a great extent regarded as culturally alien and religiously undesirable.⁶⁰

The concerns of the ecumenical movement, secondly, have been another key ecclesiological factor underlying recent Pneumatology. George S. Hendry noted this in 1956 in

⁵⁹Suenens, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

⁶⁰Ben Lenturut, a minister from Papua-New Guinea writes as follows ("Charismatic Renewal in Papua-New Guinea," in Bittlinger, op. cit., p. 180): 'This is how I saw the church in [Papua-New Guinea] ... before the Charismatic Renewal.... We faithfully went to church every Sunday, sang hymns, said prayer, heard preaching and gave our offerings. However, this "form of religion" did nothing to change lives and to meet people's needs.... Add to this picture the cultural things of PNG society - e.g. magic for healing, to attract women, to influence people for pay back, in gardens and so on. People within the church were involved.... Why were they involved? Because they could see the power that was there and the church was doing nothing to either challenge or replace these things. In most circles the types of things being done were not even recognized as evil and yet people were held in fear by the men and women able to use this magic.' The theological problem for the writer lies not in the faith and practice of his own Church, but in the neglect of the Holy Spirit in the missionary teaching of the Western, mother Church: "As I look back I remember the large emphasis placed on teaching about God the Father and Jesus his Son being our Saviour. That was fine, but the third person of the Trinity, i.e. Holy Spirit, was largely ignored and unknown. Yet Jesus had said quite clearly that the power we need will come from the Holy Spirit...."

his book, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, where he argued that the modern ecumenical movement has decisively raised the question of the Holy Spirit at the theological level for the Church in the twentieth century.⁶¹ Hendry points out that different ecclesiologies are rooted in different Pneumatologies, and himself provides an analysis and critique of the (pre-Vatican II) Roman Catholic, Reformation, and Radical Reformation or "Enthusiastic" views of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Church.⁶² Hendry also refers to two Faith and Order Reports of the early 1950's, in which it was concluded that it is of fundamental importance for the Church that ecclesiology be understood in the closest possible connection with the question of the relations between the Holy Spirit and Christ, the Word, and the Church.⁶³ One of these, the Report of the Lund conference of 1952, contained the following recommendation:

In our work we have been led to the conviction that it is of decisive importance for the advance of ecumenical work that the doctrine of the Church be treated in close relation both to the doctrine of Christ and to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We believe that this must occupy a primary place in the future work of this

⁶¹George S. Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 11.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 53-71.

⁶³Ibid., p. 53. The Reports cited are: World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, The Church: Report of a Theological Commission on Faith and Order, 1951 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1951); and World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, The Report of the Third World Conference at Lund, Sweden, August 15-28, 1952 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1952).

movement, and so we recommend to the Faith and Order Commission....⁶⁴

Konrad Raiser has recently pointed out how fundamentally the Pneumatological standpoint of the Faith and Order Commission was shifted in its development after Lund; whereas previous ecumenical reports understand the Holy Spirit in terms of his work in the Church and in the individual Christian, Lund focuses attention explicitly on the problem of a Trinitarian economy of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ Here the impact of the Eastern Orthodox Churches on the development of the Faith and Order movement has been crucial, according to Raiser, in expanding the basis of study.⁶⁶

At Uppsala in 1968, the Lund recommendation was carried forward in the report, "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church."⁶⁷ This Report formed part of a broader project of the Faith and Order Commission from 1964-1967 under the title, "Spirit, Order and Organization,"⁶⁸ which was intended to deal from a dogmatic perspective with the question how the Holy Spirit is

⁶⁴Commission on Faith and Order, Lund, 1952, p. 11.

⁶⁵Konrad Raiser, "The Holy Spirit in Modern Ecumenical Thought," The Ecumenical Review, 41 (1989), pp. 376-378.

⁶⁶Raiser, ibid., notes that following Lund, the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi in 1961 in particular was a landmark of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical process, and was of particular importance for the future of ecumenical debate on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit within the World Council of Churches; from then on, the wider Trinitarian context of Pneumatology could no longer ultimately be resisted.

⁶⁷In World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, The Uppsala Report 1968, ed. Norman Goodall (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1971), pp. 11-19.

⁶⁸World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, Louvain 1971 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1971), pp. 116-117.

involved in the Church's one mission to the contemporary world and in proclamation, baptism, and the eucharist.⁶⁹ Catholicity is treated in this context as the gift of God to the Church, and thereby also as a demand by God upon the Church. The Holy Spirit is likewise the basis of the communion of saints, on the one hand, and the power by which the Church reaches out to the suffering, divided, and sinful world on the other.⁷⁰

Unfortunately, the project was hampered by a lack of funds,⁷¹ with the result that its scope was limited. The character of the succeeding report was also altered as the thinking of the committees developed. Whereas the earlier reports had been almost exclusively dogmatic in character, the report of Louvain in 1971 was largely sociological in method and in content.⁷² This was not without its own value, naturally, but the result was of significantly less ecumenical significance, and represented a loosening of the constraints of the recommendation of Lund quoted above.

At its meeting in Nairobi in 1975, however, a return to the Trinitarian basis of Pneumatology and ecclesiology is signalled in the following recommendation:

We ask the churches to undertake a common effort to receive, reappropriate and confess together, as contemporary occasion requires, the Christian truth and faith, delivered through the apostles and handed down through the centuries. Such common action, arising from free and inclusive discussion under the commonly acknowledged authority of God's word, must aim both

⁶⁹Commission on Faith and Order, The Uppsala Report 1968, p. 12.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁷²"Spirit, Order and Organization," Commission on Faith and Order, Louvain 1971, pp. 116-132.

to clarify and to embody the unity and the diversity which are proper to the church's life and mission.⁷³

This was carried forward through the meeting of the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order in Bangalore in 1978 to Lima in 1982, as a result of which the document "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" was produced.⁷⁴ This document recommends as one of the main projects of Faith and Order that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed be studied as the basis for this common expression of faith because of its theological importance⁷⁵ and that the Creed be expounded both dogmatically and in terms of its practical implications for the Churches.⁷⁶ The project continued through international theological consultations in 1984, through the Faith and Order meeting at Stavanger in 1985, to the production in 1987 of the important study document, Confessing One Faith.⁷⁷

In its Pneumatology, Confessing One Faith seeks to hold together the second and third articles of the Creed. Some attention is given to the relation between the first and third articles in the discussion of the Creator Spirit⁷⁸

⁷³World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, "Towards a Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today," in Commission on Faith and Order, Apostolic Faith Today, ed. Hans-Georg Link (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1985), p. 216.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 215.

⁷⁵Ibid., § 3.

⁷⁶Ibid., §§ 17-25 and Recommendation I.

⁷⁷World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, Confessing One Faith (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1987), p. 1.

⁷⁸Ibid., § 184.

and of the Spirit's procession from the Father.⁷⁹ The Spirit, however, is seen in the document primarily in terms of his work in the Church in the economy of salvation. Christology remains of central importance, while the Spirit's role is regarded as one of empowering the Church for the continuing mission of the Son.⁸⁰ The Christological definition of the work of the Spirit is clear in the following section:

The Holy Spirit of God "together with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified". So it is that the most basic Christian prayer is glory and praise of the Triune God. Spirituality is only fully and maturely Christian when it is trinitarian. So Christians in their daily life and especially in their worship pray that the Father send his Spirit that they might be more completely conformed to the life of Christ the Son....⁸¹

The Commission on Faith and Order is currently revising the document on the basis of suggestions made at its meeting in Budapest in August of 1989.⁸²

The ecumenical movement as a whole is now looking ahead to the 1991 Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, with the Pneumatological theme, "Come, Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation." While it is impossible to predict what the outcome of the Assembly is likely to be, it is, perhaps, worth noting that a sustained treatment of the problems of Pneumatology is bound to be directly on the agenda of the ecumenical

⁷⁹Ibid., §§ 188-189.

⁸⁰Ibid., § 195.

⁸¹Ibid., § 190.

⁸²World Council of Churches, Ecumenical Press Service, Year 56/ Issue 28, 89.08.64.

movement for some time to come, well beyond 1991. The basic reason for this is the fact that, as Albert Outler has recently argued, ecumenism itself depends upon a conciliar view of the Church, in which Pneumatology is of crucial importance.⁸³ If this is correct, however, then it follows also that it is with Pneumatology that the best prospect for - and the greatest risks to - a new vitality in the ecumenical enterprise lies.⁸⁴

3. The Filioque

Recent ecumenical discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been concerned above all, however, with the longstanding problem of the Western filioque doctrine, by which the Holy Spirit is understood to proceed hypostatically both from the Father and from the Son. The roots of this position extend far back into the theology of the Western Church, and in particular into the theology of Augustine, upon whose work the characteristic Western development of the doctrine of the Trinity is largely based.⁸⁵ Since the time of the Patriarch Photius of Constantinople (c. 810 - c. 895), the filioque has been the chief point of attack on the West by the Eastern Church,

⁸³Albert C. Outler, "Pneumatology as an Ecumenical Frontier," The Ecumenical Review, 41 (1989), 363-374.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 363.

⁸⁵On the general development of the filioque doctrine in Western theology, see H. B. Swete, On the History of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit, from the Apostolic Age to the Death of Charlemagne (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1876; for an excellent systematic treatment, see also J.-M. Garrigues, L'Esprit qui dit «Père» et le problème du filioque (Paris: Téqui, 1982).

and since 1054 the chief dogmatic point officially dividing East and West.⁸⁶

The historical and theological problems surrounding the filioque dispute are extremely complex and of such far-reaching consequences for Trinitarian theology that no more than a brief summary can be attempted here. What follows, therefore, is more an orientation to the contemporary ecumenical problem than a contribution to the debate, the goal being in large measure to discuss the filioque in the light of contemporary Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit rather than vice versa, and thus, so far as possible, to by-pass the filioque dispute as the "main" way into the question of the Spirit in the Trinity. The problem of the filioque as such will not be taken up again directly until Chapter V. In this section, therefore, I propose to deal first of all with ecumenical discussion of the filioque over approximately the past century, and secondly to discuss briefly certain of the main theological "landmarks" of treatment of the filioque doctrine in recent scholarship.

Modern ecumenical discussion of the filioque clause began with the "Bonn Reunion Conferences" of 1874-1875, which involved representatives of various Churches, including Old Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox theologians.⁸⁷ One of the important documents to emerge from these discussions was a series of theses concerning the

⁸⁶"Orthodox Church, The," in F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (2nd ed., revised; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 1013.

⁸⁷Kurt Stadler, "The Filioque Clause in the Old Catholic Churches: The Chief Phases of Theological Reflection and Church Pronouncements," in World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, ed. Lukas Vischer (Geneva: World Council of Churches and London: SPCK, 1981), p. 97.

filioque by the Russian Orthodox theologian B. Bolotov.⁸⁸ Bolotov's most significant arguments are that both the Orthodox (Photian) view that the Spirit proceeds "from the Father alone" and the Western formula "from the Father and the Son" are properly theologoumena; that the doctrine that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son is likewise a theologoumenon, but of greater authority than the Western filioque because of its antiquity and because it reflects more accurately the inner-trinitarian taxis whereby the Spirit is the third and the Son the second person of the Trinity; and that because the Eastern and Western Churches lived in communion down to 1054, long after the filioquist understanding of the Trinity had become normative in the West, and long after even Photius' attack on the filioque in the East, the filioque neither caused the schism of 1054, nor should it be considered an impediment, as a theological opinion, to the reunion of the Churches (Bolotov refers only to Orthodox and Old Catholics in this context). Bolotov's theses have since been of considerable importance in the internal debate concerning the filioque in the Russian Orthodox Church in particular, with, for example, Vladimir Lossky's harsh rejection of Bolotov's position⁸⁹ and Paul Evdokimov's acceptance of the

⁸⁸Originally published anonymously as "Thesen über das Filioque (von einem russischen Theologen)," in Revue internationale de Théologie, 7, No. 24 (1898), 681-712; more recently reprinted, in French translation, B. Bolotov, "Thèses sur le «Filioque»,," Istina, 17 (1972), 261-289 (to which I have referred); the text of the most significant theses is also available in Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, III, pp. 194-195.

⁸⁹Vladimir Lossky, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Triadology," trans. Edward Every, The Eastern Churches Quarterly, 7, Supplementary Issue 2 (1948), 31-53.

theses as an important ecumenical and theological starting-point⁹⁰ serving as the representative poles of the debate.⁹¹

In the Report produced by the Bonn Conference, however, another tentative series of theses concerning the filioque appeared, which contain the seed of much later ecumenical discussions.⁹² These included the acknowledgement that the addition of the filioque to the text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the West was made in an illegitimate way, and a rejection of the idea that there are "two principles" in the Trinity, serving as the eternal origin of the Spirit. A range of further affirmations, drawn from the theology of John Damascene, was attached to these, largely to support the first point and to stress also at the same time that though the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the source of the Godhead, it is nevertheless necessary to speak of the Spirit as eternally the Spirit of the Son. In particular, attention is drawn to John Damascene's contention that the Spirit proceeds not from the Son, according to the filioque paradigm, but rather from the Father through the Son, or per Filium. It is thus that the Spirit is the image of the Son, just as also the Son is the image of the Father.

Of more ecumenical and theological significance is the attention given to the problem of the filioque in the work of the World Council of Churches, in particular in the context of the increasing encounter in the past three decades between the Eastern and Western Churches in the Faith and Order movement. Berkhof looked forward to the fruit of this discussion in 1965 in The Doctrine of the

⁹⁰Paul Evdokimov, L'Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), pp. 74-75.

⁹¹So Congar, op. cit., pp. 193-194.

⁹²Report of the Reunion Conference at Bonn, 10-16 August 1875, cited by Stadler, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

Holy Spirit,⁹³ while today the important 1981 Faith and Order Paper Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, is the direct product of this ecumenical dialogue.⁹⁴ Genuine theological dialogue between the Churches cannot take place as long as the different and differing theologies remain contentedly self-enclosed, and the encounter at the ecumenical level has naturally lent a certain urgency to the theological problem. Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ is, in keeping with this, at once a new confrontation of filioquist Pneumatology with non-filioquist Pneumatology, and an attempt to show how and where attempts have been made or might be made to mediate between the two positions.⁹⁵

The Faith and Order consultations of 1978 to 1979 which were the basis for Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, produced an important memorandum for the Churches on the filioque dispute, "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective."⁹⁶ This document recommends that the Churches today return to the original wording of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, omitting the filioque as a later theological interpretation.⁹⁷ The report goes beyond this, however, to argue that the problem of the relation between

⁹³Berkhof, op. cit., p. 12.

⁹⁴Commission on Faith and Order, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, pp. v-vi.

⁹⁵See, e.g., the contributions to Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ by André de Halleux, "Towards an Ecumenical Agreement on the Procession of the Holy Spirit and the Addition of the Filioque to the Creed," pp. 69-84; Herwig Aldenhoven, "The Question of the Procession of the Holy Spirit and its Connection with the Life of the Church," pp. 121-132; Boris Bobrinskoy, "The Filioque Yesterday and Today," pp. 133-148; and Dumitru Staniloae, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and His Relation to the Son, as the Basis of our Deification and Adoption," pp. 174-186.

⁹⁶Commission on Faith and Order, "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective," ibid., pp. 3-18.

⁹⁷Ibid., § VI.

the Son and the Spirit, which the filioque can be taken to address, requires a new theological treatment, and recommends that this task be taken up by the Churches.⁹⁸

The argument of the report is based primarily on the fact that the New Testament presents Jesus as both Spirit-filled and Spirit-giving, and that the fundamental reciprocity which is thus given in the New Testament requires dogmatic explication. It argues that this reciprocity is fully expressed neither in the filioque doctrine nor in the Eastern (Photian) doctrine that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone.⁹⁹ A new treatment of the question, which amounts to a new thrust forward in Pneumatology and Trinitarian doctrine from an ecumenical perspective, is therefore recommended.

The second main point made by the report is that such a new and constructive approach to the problem will only be possible to the extent that theology acknowledges both that its references to the Trinity are doxological rather than definitive, and that the living God who is encountered in historical revelation as the "economic Trinity" is not something other in his own being from eternity to eternity as the "immanent Trinity."¹⁰⁰ Thus the communion of the Church with and within the Trinity in the mystery of salvation and the doctrine of the Trinity in itself cannot be separated (although a logical, formal distinction is possible).¹⁰¹

The memorandum, "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective," appears to offer different grounds for ecumenical consensus in Pneumatology than the later Faith and Order report, Confessing One Faith. It upholds the

⁹⁸Ibid., § IV, B.

⁹⁹Ibid., §§ V, VI, B.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., § III, D.

¹⁰¹Ibid., III, B-C.

reciprocity of Son and Spirit both in the history of Jesus Christ, in the Church, and in the Trinity to be of fundamental importance, and thus, in intention at least, makes room for both sides in the debate.¹⁰² At the same time, like Confessing One Faith, it does not allow that the person and work of the Spirit can be separated from the person and work of Christ, this time, however, because of the reciprocity between them. Just as the Spirit is not to be subordinated to Christ, so Christ is not to be subordinated to the Spirit; just as the Spirit is inseparable from Christ, so Christ is inseparable from the Spirit.¹⁰³

The vision of the report, finally, is that a new ecumenical formula for the procession of the Spirit is both required and possible. Its provisional preference is for a formula reflecting the view that the Spirit proceeds from the Father of the Son, and not from the Father conceived in abstract isolation.¹⁰⁴ The report also addresses the question whether the generation of the Son logically precedes the spiration of the Spirit (the preference of Western theology) or takes place eternally in logical simultaneity with spiration (the preference of Eastern theology).¹⁰⁵ It does not, however, offer an answer to this question. What it does do, finally, is to offer for the consideration of the Churches a number of older, established formulae:

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

¹⁰²Ibid., § III, B.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., § IV, B, 2.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., § IV, B, 2, d.

the Son; - the Spirit proceeds from the Father and shines out through the Son.¹⁰⁶

Without further elaboration, however, none of these are either capable of reflecting the reciprocity of the Son and Spirit which the memorandum earlier seeks to establish, or likely to serve as the point of convergence for the Churches. A more thoroughgoing penetration of the third article, in the context of the doctrines of the Trinity and God, on the one hand, and of salvation and the Church on the other, would still appear to be required.

The efforts of individual theologians in this area has also been extremely important for the ecumenical enterprise, and a brief survey of this material is also necessary. This work has led to an important clarification of the positions of the separate theological traditions, particularly on the part of the East.¹⁰⁷ One of the key works here is Vladimir Lossky's, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, which is an attempt to re-state for Western ears what is distinctive about the spirituality, ecclesial life, and Trinitarian doctrine of the Eastern Church.¹⁰⁸ For Lossky, the difference between Eastern and Western ecclesiology has its root in the disputed Western filioque doctrine: as we have seen, Eastern theology unambiguously understands the procession of the Holy Spirit to be from the Father alone.¹⁰⁹ The implication of this is that Eastern theology, in contrast to Western theology, can

¹⁰⁶Ibid., § IV, B, 2, e.

¹⁰⁷Alexander Schmemmann, e.g., The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy, trans. Lydia W. Kesich (London: Harvill Press, 1963), p. v, writes: "Without exaggeration the twentieth century may be called the century of the discovery of the Christian East by the Christian West."

¹⁰⁸Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, trans. Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1957).

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 44-66, 169-170.

abstract the work of the Spirit and the Spirit himself from the work of the Son and the Son himself. The result is that the East, for Lossky, avoids the Western error of drawing Pneumatology into Christology, and further that Eastern ecclesiology is more firmly rooted in both Christology and Pneumatology than is Western ecclesiology.

Lossky makes an important distinction in his discussion between two gifts of the Spirit in the New Testament.¹¹⁰ The first is ecclesial, and referred to Jn. 20: 19-23, and the second is personal, and referred to the Pentecost account in Acts 2. According to Lossky, it is precisely the hypostatic independence of the Holy Spirit from the Son which makes this personal gift of the Spirit, and therefore Pentecost itself, possible. The ecclesial gift of the Spirit to the Church is Christocentric in character. The personal gift of the Holy Spirit, however, manifests in the individual not just Christ but the common divinity of the three Persons. The Spirit is here abstracted from Christ as such, and serves the function of enabling, by grace, the human participation in the divine nature (2 Peter 1: 4) which is central to the Eastern understanding of the economy of salvation.¹¹¹ This distinction, in turn, is the basis of the separation of baptism and chrism in the Eastern rite; in the first, the Spirit incorporates us into Christ and the Church, whereas the second is a sign of our lifelong deification by the Spirit according to the divine energies.¹¹²

Lossky's argument is therefore that the Church in Eastern theology is rooted in both Christology and Pneumatology. In its Christological aspect, the Church enters into union with God in the hypostasis of the Son,

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 167-170.

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 69-87.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 170.

through union with him in his humanity.¹¹³ This is effected by the Spirit in baptism and maintained by the Spirit's presence in the Church. This side of the Church has a certain objectivity in that here the grace of Christ is mediated through the sacramental life of the Church, by the power of the Spirit.¹¹⁴ In its Pneumatological aspect, however, the Church is more dynamic in character, for here separate individuals are in question in their union with God through the personal gift of the Holy Spirit and through their consequent mystical return to God.¹¹⁵ Here the Holy Spirit does not mediate the incarnate Son to the Church, but rather the individual appears as the throne of the whole Trinity in its divinizing energies.

Lossky summarizes his view of the relation between East and West in one astonishing passage which it would be worthwhile to quote in full:

The cult of the humanity of Christ is foreign to Eastern tradition; or, rather, this deified humanity always assumes for the Orthodox Christian that same glorious form under which it appeared to the disciples on Mount Tabor: the humanity of the Son, manifesting forth that deity which is common to the Father and the Spirit. The way of the imitation of Christ is never practiced in the spiritual life of the Eastern Church. ... For Eastern spirituality the only way which makes us conformable to Christ is that of the acquisition of the grace which the Holy Spirit confers. No saint of the Eastern Church has ever born the stigmata.... But, by contrast, Eastern saints have very frequently been transfigured by the inward light of uncreated grace, and have appeared resplendent, like

¹¹³Ibid., pp. 181-182.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 181-187.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 186-195.

Christ on the mount of Transfiguration.¹¹⁶

Lossky's claim here is that Eastern spirituality is primarily Pneumatocentric and that since Pneumatology is liberated in the East from Christology, Eastern spirituality can be abstracted from the humanity of Jesus as Son. Instead, we share in the glorification of humanity by virtue of the gift of the Spirit, and thus, by the gift of the Spirit rather than by incorporation into Christ, become like Christ in his transfiguration, deified by the divine Spirit.

It must be said that Lossky's argument, and especially his distinction between the two gifts of the Spirit in the New Testament, the ecclesial and the personal, is constructed on doubtful exegetical foundations. The even more obvious objection to Lossky's position, however, is that theology and spirituality can only by-pass the humanity of Jesus at their peril. As we have seen from our previous survey of recent Pauline scholarship on the Spirit, the cross is the central Pauline canon of authentic experience of the Spirit: Jesus' life of lowly service, obedience, and self-sacrificial love which leads to his death serves as the measure of authentic human existence under God. It would have to be asked of Lossky whether or not the New Testament picture of Jesus is not, for him, too human. Paul's scathing attack on the Corinthian "super-apostles" (2 Cor. 10-13) might be called to mind at this point, whom Paul charged precisely with leaving aside the cross of Christ.¹¹⁷ It was, for Paul, his own life of suffering obedience which validated his claim to be a true apostle. Paul's theology and spirituality in 2 Cor. 10-13

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 243.

¹¹⁷C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), pp. 36-50, 243ff.

thus appears as a theologia crucis, but for this theology and spirituality Lossky apparently has little or no room.¹¹⁸

It is true at the same time, however, that a theology of the cross without a theology of glory is itself too limited and that it itself by-passes the definite note of glory which is sounded in the New Testament, including the Pauline corpus. Lossky's position is therefore also something of a corrective to the strangely enthusiastic emphasis on suffering which characterizes some Western theology. Clearly also, Lossky's confrontation of the Western Church with the vision of the relation between the Spirit and the Son in the life of the Eastern Church is a challenge to Western theology and ecclesial life, and provides in itself an ecumenical critique of Western patterns of thought in these areas.

Yves Congar addresses Lossky's argument and this general question in I Believe in the Holy Spirit, where he argues that the effective difference between the Eastern and the Western Churches is in fact minimal, and dismisses Lossky's thesis about the filioque as exaggerated.¹¹⁹ In both the East and the West, he argues, there is an attempt made to complement Christology with Pneumatology and Pneumatology with Christology. Congar argues through a careful analysis of the Eucharistic theologies and rites of the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions, for example, that the mediation of grace through the sacraments has a Christological and a Pneumatological basis in both communions.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, as Congar concedes, Western Eucharistic theology since Augustine has been characterized

¹¹⁸Lossky's insistence that the East knows no spirituality of the imitation of Christ can also be questioned on the grounds that it is contradicted at least by the existence of the "holy fools" of Russian Orthodoxy.

¹¹⁹Congar, op. cit., III, pp. 208-212.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 228-274.

by the central role of the words of institution, the verbum, whereas Eastern theology places its accent upon the epiclesis.

The question raised by this debate is extremely complex and raises a number of important questions. It can be asked, for example, whether or not the mediation by the Spirit of the saving humanity of Christ to the Church has its basis in the Spirit's relation to the human or to the divine nature of Christ, or to both. It can further be asked whether or not the history of the human Jesus in his relation to the Spirit through his birth, baptism, ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation has any bearing on this question. Congar, for one, holds that it does: in keeping with his suggestions for a Pneumatological Christology and his overall ecumenical intention, Congar suggests that the Christ we receive (in the Eucharist) is the "pneumatized Christ," the Christ who received the Spirit and who returned to the Father in the power of the Spirit to become, as man, the Son of God.¹²¹ We shall return to this position again later in this study.

Congar also attempts to mediate directly between the Eastern and Western theological traditions in his discussion of the problem of the filioque. Congar argues that the Eastern and Western views are best seen as complementary rather than as contradictory, and that the way into the future lies in recognizing that the formulae dia tou huiou and filioque amount to much the same thing within the competing Trinitarian theologies of East and West.¹²² As we have seen, there are internal disputes within the Eastern Church over the dia tou huiou formula, and Congar does not ignore this problem. At issue here is the question of the Eastern differentiation of the divine ousia from the divine energeia; Lossky, for example, makes this

¹²¹Ibid., p. 264.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 174-214.

point with particular force in his discussion of the filioque controversy.¹²³ Lossky argues, against Bolotov, that the Eastern doctrine of the procession of the Spirit is unambiguously from the Father alone, while agreeing at the same time with Bolotov's view¹²⁴ that the expression dia tou huiou as used of the Holy Spirit in Eastern patristic texts cannot be understood simply to refer to the Spirit's temporal mission. Lossky reconciles these views systematically by appealing to the Eastern distinction between the essence and eternal energies of the Trinity; Bolotov, as we have seen, had argued more simply that the dia tou huiou is an Eastern theologoumenon. For Lossky, the dia tou huiou refers to more than the temporal manifestation of the Trinity, but to something other than the divine essence. On the latter level, since the three persons, as consubstantial, are in a sense the divine essence,¹²⁵ the "personal" procession of the Spirit is from the Father alone; on the former level, however, the Spirit is eternally manifested in his "energetic" procession as from the Father, through the Son (dia tou huiou).¹²⁶

Congar does not think that it is possible for the Eastern and Western positions to converge entirely on this point.¹²⁷ Congar argues, however, that since in the Eastern

¹²³Lossky, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit," pp. 46-52.

¹²⁴Bolotov, op. cit., thesis 3.

¹²⁵Lossky, op. cit., p. 40.

¹²⁶Ibid., pp. 48-49.

¹²⁷Congar, op. cit., III, p. 201: "What we have to aim at and what can, in fact, be reached is a recognition both of the unity of faith on both sides of Catholicity and of the legitimate difference between the two dogmatic expressions of this mystery. Each expression is consistent in itself, and each is impossible in the categories and vocabulary of the other side. In the course of ten centuries of discussion, neither side has succeeded in convincing the other or in persuading it to accept its

doctrine of the divine energies, we are dealing, not with a created effect, but rather with God, both East and West do relate the Spirit to the Son in the immanent Trinity, in an analogous way within the different terms of the two overall Trinitarian positions.¹²⁸ The particular problem, as he sees it, is that the Latin understanding of the Trinity is less differentiated than the Eastern, and so the theology of divine ousia and energeia is foreign to the West, and often misunderstood. In addition, the East differentiates between the ekporeusis and proïenai of the Spirit, corresponding to the incommunicable hypostatic existence of the Spirit and the Spirit's perichoretic existence in the eternal divine energeia with the Father and the Spirit; whereas the West speaks only of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, the East speaks of an ekporeusis from the Father alone, and a proïenai from the Father and the Son.¹²⁹ It is possible, particularly in view of the difficulties which, as we shall see, emerge in contemporary Trinitarian theology regarding the being of God in itself in relation to the economy, and the sheer diversity of the economic material with which we have to deal, that a more differentiated theology of God in himself in the West is in fact required.

Congar's general recognition that Eastern and Western Pneumatology must be understood in the context of the divergent characteristic Trinitarian emphases of the respective Churches, rather than in isolation, is an important insight. The view that within these divergent wider Trinitarian theologies, the two formulae, whether "theologoumena" or no, serve to tie the Spirit to the Son

point of view. There is no chance that this goal will be reached in the future. In fact, we may say quite unambiguously that this is not a goal to be pursued."

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 213.

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 199-201.

both in the economy and in the Trinity itself, must also be seen as an opportunity for further ecumenical reflection.

In keeping with this, Congar argues for intelligent recourse to the Council of Florence, for although the outcome of the Council was unnecessarily one-sided, the proceedings of the Council show that its debate was perhaps the most open and important between East and West on this subject in theological history, and that considerable theological common ground emerged between the two sides.¹³⁰ This common ground was, Congar argues, that the ex Filio and the dia tou huiou are equivalent within the broader competing theologies, so long as the Western position is understood in the light of the tangam ab uno principio qualification.¹³¹ The monarchy of the Father is thus preserved, there is only one principle or arche of the Spirit in the Godhead, and the Son is nevertheless truly and completely involved in the Spirit's procession. Congar is, however, almost alone in arguing that the Council of Florence can have any role to play in discussion of the filioque in the contemporary ecumenical context, since Florence is universally renounced by the Eastern Church.¹³²

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 184-191, 214.

¹³¹Cf. also Alasdair Heron, "'Who Proceedeth from the Father and the Son': the Problem of the Filioque," Scottish Journal of Theology, 24 (1971), 149-166.

¹³²Schmemmann, e.g., op. cit., p. 254, writes: 'The celebration by Catholics in 1939 of the jubilee of the union in Florence is evidence of profound misunderstanding of the real ecclesiastical conception of the Orthodox Church. Pope Eugene IV showed greater penetration at the time when he asked, on being joyfully informed by his bishops that all the Greeks had signed the union, "Did Mark of Ephesus sign, too?" Receiving an answer in the negative, he is traditionally supposed to have said, "Well, that means we have achieved nothing." In fact, all signed except one, but that one, St. Mark of Ephesus, became the expression of faith, experience, and tradition for the Eastern Church. When the Greeks returned to Byzantium, they immediately repudiated ... the union that had been forced upon them.'

From the Eastern side, Dumitru Staniloae makes a further important attempt to develop the potential significance for the filiogue controversy of the distinction between the essence and energies of God in Eastern Trinitarian theology.¹³³ Staniloae constructs his thesis in explicit connection with the Western objection to this feature of Eastern Trinitarian theology. The danger here, for the West, is one of introducing a rift between God in himself and God in his revelation - a rift which easily slips over into what is, from the Western point of view, a soteriologically suspect, quasi-docetic view of the economy of salvation. Staniloae's argument is that this accusation is quite false: "In the East the trinitarian relations are seen as the basis for the relation of the Trinity to creation and for the salvation of creation."¹³⁴

In effect, Staniloae reverses the accusation, arguing that it is Western (i.e., Roman Catholic) theology which keeps God at a distance by speaking of "created grace" rather than of the uncreated energies as the basis for human life in fellowship with God in Christ.¹³⁵ He develops his argument by appealing to the Eastern Pneumatological tradition which speaks of the Son as the resting-place of the Spirit, and of the Son as the eternal "Treasurer" of the "Treasure" of the Spirit (Gregory Nazianzen).¹³⁶ The Byzantine theologians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and especially Gregory Palamas and Gregory of Cyprus, developed this theology through their doctrine of the eternal divine energies to make it clear that there does exist an eternal, theologically definite relationship

¹³³Staniloae, op. cit., pp. 178-184.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 178.

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 178-179.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 179.



between the Son and the Holy Spirit which, although not one of procession, is the basis for the temporal economy.

Thus Eastern theology, according to Staniloae, insists both that the Father is the principle of the Godhead, but at the same time that the Son and Spirit are eternally related as Treasurer and Treasure.¹³⁷ Staniloae is particularly concerned to draw attention to the implications of this for the work of salvation:

In this perspective, the sending of the Spirit by the Son to men ... signifies that the Spirit rests in those who have been united with the Son, since he rests in the Son. The Spirit does not go beyond the Son, even when we say improperly that he is sent to men. The Son is the only and ultimate resting-place of the Spirit. The Spirit dwells in us insofar as we are raised up in the Son. This safeguards us from a theological rationalism on the one side and a purely sentimental enthusiasm on the other.¹³⁸

At the level of Trinitarian formulae, Staniloae argues, language about the Spirit as hypostatically "proceeding" from the Father and "going out from," "shining out from," or being "manifested by" the Son according to the divine energies could thus form the basis of a reconciliation of the West with the East, since it clearly makes the Spirit the Spirit of the Son, both eternally and in the economy, while at the same time preserving the monarchy of the Father. Staniloae's argument that the boldness of Byzantine theology in this respect has not been taken with full seriousness in the West (and, it might be added, in the East) is an important argument which adds another dimension

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 184.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 179.

to the claim of Congar that both East and West attempt to express the same mystery in different ways.

Neither Eastern nor Western theology, however, have traditionally advocated the idea of reciprocity between the Son and the Spirit in the economy of salvation and in the immanent Trinity which the Faith and Order memorandum "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective" supports. As we shall see, contemporary Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit have not generally attempted to develop this idea either. In this sense, the recommendation of Faith and Order, if it were to be developed, would demand a radical reassessment of Trinitarian Pneumatology. In view of the witness of the New Testament, however, along with the contemporary problems of ecclesiology, the theological recommendations of the Faith and Order movement, and the principle that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, such a procedure may well be precisely what is required. In Chapter V, we will return to consider this possibility. We turn first, however, to the question of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity.

II
THE ECONOMIC AND THE IMMANENT TRINITY

In the Introduction, I noted the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity in the theological tradition is in character and content a doctrine primarily of the immanent Trinity. Positive knowledge is traditionally claimed of the Trinity sub specie aeternitatis, in the sense that this knowledge, though derived from revelation, is asserted of the Trinity in itself from all eternity, in abstraction from the question of its economic outreach to the world. As it relates specifically to the Holy Spirit, the traditional doctrine can thus be summarized in terms of the three related ideas of the homousion, procession, and the disputed filioque. The older doctrine in this respect contrasts sharply with contemporary Trinitarian theology, which is characterized by an attempt to orientate the doctrine more directly to the economy of salvation, and which yields what I have called a doctrine of the immanent Trinity sub specie temporis.

Two related themes underlie the contemporary approach. First of all, it presupposes the soteriological thesis that unless God truly has given himself in his revelation, the economy is left with no adequate theological basis, and so can no longer be regarded as unquestionably the "economy of salvation." This theme has been taken over directly from the theological tradition into contemporary Trinitarian theology, although it is interpreted more radically in the latter than in the former. Secondly, there is a related, more clearly modern argument which develops the doctrine of the Trinity in conjunction with a philosophical critique of

the idea of the immutable, atemporal, and impassible God.¹ This ultimately opens the way to a doctrine of Trinitarian temporality and suffering, taking the divine outreach to the finite world through Christ and in the Spirit to be essential to the Trinity in itself.

The contemporary Trinitarian thesis that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, in fact, has deep roots in the overall movement of thought in the modern era. This is an important point, for it could be argued, as indeed it has been argued, for example by Emil Brunner, that the contemporary thesis concerning the economic Trinity, and the co-ordinate rejection of much traditional talk about the immanent Trinity, represents a pure return to revelation.² In part, of course, this is true. However, in a more fundamental sense the contemporary position is also conditioned by the thought-forms of nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy and theology. Rather than constituting a return to a pure reliance on the data of revelation and a rejection of the categories of philosophy, therefore, contemporary Trinitarian theology can be seen to be broadly related to the development of modern philosophy and to be, in particular, part of the wider intellectual reaction to the Western tradition which is, one might say, constitutive of contemporary thought.³ While, therefore, the contemporary Trinitarian standpoint is characterized by the turn to the economy of salvation, and thus by its treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity as "a mystery of salvation,"⁴ what is involved here is not simply a return to revelation;

¹Pannenberg, loc. cit.

²Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), pp. 137ff.

³See, e.g., Eberhard Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, trans. Darrell L. Guder (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1983), pp. 141ff.

⁴Rahner, op. cit., p. 21.

rather, contemporary Trinitarian theology is rooted also in the broader problems of modern philosophy.

In this Chapter, I propose to provide a critical account of the idea of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity which is thus asserted in recent theology. Since, however, the distinction between the two which emerges in the theological tradition is the presupposition of this assertion of unity, we begin with an account of the development of the distinction in patristic theology. We then move on to discuss the main arguments which support the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity in contemporary theology. This will serve as a critical introduction and orientation to the treatment of the various specific Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit with which we shall be concerned in Chapter III.

1. Patristic Background

The technical theological distinction between the "economic" and "immanent" Trinity derives chiefly from modern historical scholarship, and the attempt to differentiate between the different types of Trinitarian speculation characteristic of the pre-Nicene and post-Nicene eras.⁵ The Fathers themselves do not, in other words, draw the distinction at the level of Trinitarian theology as neatly as we do. At the same time, however, the distinction between God as experienced in the economy and God in himself is implicit in Christian theology from a very early stage. The term "economy," for example, has a long history in Christian theology which can be traced as

⁵Adolf Harnack, for example, summed up the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the patristic era in his History of Dogma, trans. James Millar (London: Williams & Norgate, 1897), III, p. 8, as "the history of the substitution of the immanent and absolute trinity for the economic and relative," and judged the result to be, from the standpoint of modern consciousness, a piece of "complicated and artificial speculation."

far back as Ephesians 3: 9 in the New Testament, which refers to the "oikonomia" of the mystery hidden in God for ages but now made known in Jesus Christ and preached by Paul.⁶ Although there is a variety of usage in the New

⁶The precise meaning of the term in the context of Ephesians is disputed, as a variety of meanings for oikonomia in the New Testament can be adduced: for example, the management of a household, as in Lk. 16: 2, and as a metaphor for the apostolic office, as in 1 Cor. 9: 17. In Ephesians, however, it seems probable that already, the "economy" refers in some sense to a temporal realization of the eternal plan or purpose of God. Markus Barth, however, in his Ephesians 1-3 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), pp. 342-343, 86-88, has taken exception to this position, arguing that on lexical and theological grounds, such an interpretation must be excluded from the thought of Ephesians, and the idea of the "administration" of God's grace by the Apostle alone accepted. Barth adduces five arguments in support of his position. First, the textual parallel in Ephesians 1: 10 (which is where Barth's main comment on oikonomia in Ephesians is located) speaks of an uncompleted performance rather than of an eternal blueprint; the latter would require the reading "according to the oikonomia," which is not supported in the manuscript tradition. Second, no indication is ever given in Ephesians of the idea of a revelation of the oikonomia. Third, there is no evidence from the Septuagint or from anywhere in the Pauline corpus that any meaning other than "administration" could have served as the precedent for the use of the idea of oikonomia in the deutero-Pauline Ephesians. Fourth, the parallel in Col. 1: 25 clearly requires the translation "administration" rather than plan. Fifth, oikonomia as a temporal realization of God's eternal purpose tends to rob Christ of his active, personal agency in the Christology of Ephesians, and to reduce it to the carrying out of an impersonal plan. Barth's five points, however, fail to address the proper question, for what is in dispute is not whether or not oikonomia refers to such an "impersonal plan," but rather whether or not it refers to a divine "dispensation" in time. The latter is the sense of oikonomia in the Ephesians passage, and actually includes the sense accepted by Barth (the "administration" of God's grace by the Apostle). But that the oikonomia referred to should not be primarily Christological is inconceivable in view of the Christological and predestinarian themes of Ephesians 1. Barth's arguments, therefore, are not conclusive; even if he is correct in his thesis that the word "economy" itself cannot be taken here to refer specifically or technically to a projection into time of the eternal plan of God, it still must be admitted that

Testament and in the patristic tradition,⁷ the word "economy" was associated in Christian theology from a very early stage with God as revealed and experienced in salvation history, and specifically in the sending of his Son and the giving of the Holy Spirit. This specific use of the word reflects a concern even within the New Testament itself to distinguish the divine "dispensation of grace" in its concrete historical manifestation from the God who acts out of grace in this history.

The concept of the "economic Trinity," and of "economic Trinitarianism," can be understood as a basic extension of this usage in Christian theology to connote the fact that this concrete manifestation of grace in the economy is broadly triadic in character, involving the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The evolution of this economic Trinitarianism in the history of early Christian theology has been treated by a number of historians of doctrine, and is a complex subject, so that no more than a brief treatment of this development can be expected here.⁸

just such a projection into time of the plan of God is presupposed throughout Ephesians, not least in its Christological and predestinarian themes. Although the word refers in secular and New Testament usage to "administration," it has also other New Testament connotations and cannot be taken in its context in Ephesians to exclude the idea of "God's plan of salvation which He has undertaken to execute in the fullness of times," and which is currently being fulfilled (Otto Michel, "OIKONOMIA," in Friedrich, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 151-153).

⁷"OIKONOMIA," in G. W. H. Lampe, ed., A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 940-943; and W. Gass, "Das patristische Wort OIKONOMIA," Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie, 17 (1874), 465-504.

⁸Cf., e.g., G. L. Prestige, God in Patristic Thought, 2nd ed. (London: S.P.C.K., 1952), pp. 57ff., 62f., 98-102; J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, 5th ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977), pp. 83-108; and R. A. Markus, "Trinitarian Theology and the Economy," Journal of Theological Studies, 9 (1958), 89-102.

As, however, J. N. D. Kelly argues in Early Christian Doctrines, early economic Trinitarianism developed largely out of the early Church's Christological reflection.⁹ (The word "Trinity" is generally used in this context, although the preponderance of discourse concerning the Father and the Son or the Word, and the relative absence of talk about the Spirit, suggests that a "Binity" is often what is effectively in view.¹⁰) While, for example, the Apologists and Irenaeus are able to distinguish between the Father who has his Word (and Spirit) and the Father who works by his Word (and Spirit) in the world, the accent in their theologies falls very much on the latter, while the former remains largely undeveloped.

This concern for the economic aspect of the divinity stems from both major hermeneutical schemes to which appeal was made. On the one hand, the primitive Palestinian Judaeo-Christian religious tradition by its very nature dealt with God in what we would call salvation-historical or economic categories. On the other hand, when the Hellenistic impulse led to the posing of metaphysical questions, there lay at the disposal of early Church theologians, as already for the Hellenistic Judaism of the book of Wisdom¹¹ and the Hellenistic Jew Philo,¹² the whole

⁹Kelly, loc cit.

¹⁰Cf., however, R. S. Franks, The Doctrine of the Trinity (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1953), pp. 71-72: "The Apologists do little for Pneumatology. All stand on the baptismal confession, and all regard the Holy Spirit as pre-existent. Athenagoras calls him an effluence from God (Leg., 10), while Theophilus identifying the Spirit with Wisdom, clearly distinguishes Him from the Logos (Ad. Autolyicum., I,7, II,15): in II.15 [sic] he speaks of the Triad ... God, His Logos, and His Wisdom. This is the first definite theological mention of a Trinity."

¹¹Wisdom 6:9 - 9:18.

¹²James P. Mackey, The Christian Experience of God as Trinity (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), pp. 116-118.

wealth of the philosophical and theological achievement of pagan antiquity. Middle Platonism in particular provided a key hermeneutical tool for early Christian speculative thought. From it, and perhaps in the light of the precedent set by the book of Wisdom and by Philo in relation to the earlier Hellenistic tradition, Christian theologians were able to derive the idea that God is one (or the One), that this God is utterly immutable and unknowable, and that insofar as human beings can approach the one God, it can only be by way of mediation through the divine logos.¹³ This logos, which was called a "second God" in Middle Platonism,¹⁴ was understood specifically to mediate between divine and worldly reality in the concrete metaphysical scheme of things. In contrast to the One, the second God was conceived to be polymorphous, changing in relation to the world.¹⁵ Given the axiomatic immutability and hiddenness of God, the logos of necessity was understood to belong to a lower level of reality in the divine being than the One; it was still divine, admittedly, but it was clearly subordinate. Logos in this tradition, as in certain of its early Christian adaptations, including those of the Apologists and Irenaeus, refers primarily to "that of God which in and through his creative and ruling powers is active in the world and makes sense of it to rational creatures."¹⁶

Consistent with this, the binitarian and increasingly trinitarian schemes of Middle Platonism are to be understood in our terms as "economic" philosophical and theological systems. They are intended to make sense both

¹³Ibid., pp. 105-134.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁵Christopher Stead, Divine Substance (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 106-107.

¹⁶Mackey, op. cit., p. 119.

of the absoluteness of God on the one hand, and, on the other, of the fact that there is a divine approach to the world which is the basis of the world's return to God - the basis of the whole rational order of the cosmos and therefore the foundation of the rational spirituality of the characteristically Platonic world-view. While God is thus, in principle, recognized here to be the One immanently in himself, the accent falls very much on the economic aspect, since it is from the One, out of the intrinsic goodness of the One, that the whole of the differentiated economic order, the "many," emanates.

The influence of the philosophical systems which loosely comprise Middle Platonism (and later, of Neoplatonism) on pre-Nicene Christian theologians was undoubtedly profound. While the New Testament provided the language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and while the overall Christian soteriological scheme and the baptismal formula in particular enshrined the idea of salvation as a Trinitarian reality, it was this philosophical outlook which provided them with a conceptuality enabling an intelligible articulation of the broadly triadic structure of God. At the same time, however, the philosophical conceptuality in question prevented them from understanding this internal structure of the Godhead in a strictly Trinitarian way, at least as it was later to be conceived. The Godhead, for the Apologists and Irenaeus, for example, is the Father, who has his Word and Wisdom, not as equals with himself in the fellowship of the divine life, but as subordinate levels of his own being which serve different functions in his economic approach to the world. It is one person who is in question and not three; in itself, the divine reality is fundamentally a self-sufficient monad (the One). Following the insights of Middle Platonism, the Apologists and Irenaeus primarily conceive of the Trinity economically, in terms of the approach of God to what is not himself in creation and redemption.

At the same time, however, it would be fair to say that the basis for this economic Trinitarianism is a series of real distinctions in God himself, so that, to use the later category, the ground is already prepared in the Apologists and Irenaeus for a non-modalistic view of the Trinity. Justin Martyr, for instance, understands the Logos on the one hand as the Father's immanent intelligence, and on the other as generated by the Father in the beginning with a view to creation and redemption.¹⁷ Tatian, Justin's disciple, made a more definite distinction between the Logos immanent in God before the creation and the Logos as the firstborn of all creation, generated from the Father as the mediator between him and the created order.¹⁸ In the background here lies the Stoic distinction between the logos endiathetos and the logos prophorikos, which had already taken the relation between the human faculty of reason and its external expression in language over analogously into theology, and which was assumed by the Apologists.¹⁹ It is the Father's "expressed Word," however, with which we are concerned as creatures set historically in the economy of creation and salvation; the "immanent Word," as such, would appear to belong to the Father alone, prior to his economic outreach.

Irenaeus in particular lays a more explicit basis for the distinction. Irenaeus' achievement was to consolidate the theology of the Apologists and to improve upon it, particularly by adopting a more strictly triadic

¹⁷Justin Martyr, Dial., 61, 1; cf. Kelly, op. cit., pp. 96-98.

¹⁸Tatian, Or., 5, 1f.; 7, 1f.; cf. Kelly, op. cit., p. 98.

¹⁹The Stoic terms themselves were, according to Kelly, ibid., p. 99, taken up and used explicitly in this way for the first time by Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autol., 2, 10; 2, 22.

understanding of God in the economy.²⁰ Irenaeus also actually employs the word "economy" in a technical way to distinguish God as he exists in his intrinsic being from God as he manifests himself in the ordered process of his self-disclosure.²¹ From one point of view, God is the Father, containing within himself eternally his Word and his Wisdom; from the economic point of view, in creation and redemption, God, as Kelly says, "extrapolates" or "manifests" these as the Son and the Spirit: hence Irenaeus' vivid image of the Son and the Spirit as the two "hands" of God.²²

The doctrine of the immanent Trinity, as it is called, which was later to emerge in Christian theology is certainly indebted to this tradition, but it arose more particularly out of the polemical struggle against Arianism in the fourth century, and its resolution at Nicea.²³ The

²⁰Kelly, op. cit., pp. 104-108.

²¹Irenaeus, Haer., 4,20,4-10; cf. Kelly, op. cit., p. 104; and Markus, op. cit., pp. 92-97.

²²Irenaeus, op. cit., 5,1,3; 5,5,1; 5,6,1; cf. Kelly, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

²³In certain respects, however, this understanding was already achieved, in outline at least, in the work of Tertullian. In his Contra Praxeas, Tertullian develops the notion of a distinction between the "monarchy" and the "economy." The monarchy, he argues, is the oneness of God which is rooted in the oneness of God the Father; this monarchy, however, is in no way compromised by the threefoldness of God in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One authority remains, because the Son and the Spirit exercise the one authority of the Father. So far, Tertullian's argument is thoroughly economic. However, Tertullian goes on to develop an important and unique understanding of the economy in this context. The economy, he argues, is not simply expressive of the data of revelation, and therefore of the divine approach to the world in Jesus Christ and in the gift of the Spirit; rather, the economy refers to the eternal relations of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit in the life of the Godhead. Tertullian still is unable to admit that the Word exists as the Son before the Incarnation, but there is in his theology a developed idea of an internal order of transmission within the divine

development of the Nicene doctrine of the homoousion in this respect marks a decisive shift in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, in that a new emphasis on what God is in himself is now discernable, over against what he is in his economic outreach. As Pelikan notes, the distinction, via the homoousion, is clearly implicit in the Creed of Nicea itself:

The Creed ... followed its statement of the "divinity" [the homoousion and its attendant clauses] with one about "economy" (God in his plan of salvation) in the confession that "for the sake of us men and for the purpose of our salvation" Christ had come down, had become incarnate, had suffered and risen again on the third day, had ascended to the heavens, and would come again to judge the living and the dead.²⁴

There can be little doubt, of course, that the immediate intention of the Nicene Fathers was to shield the economy of salvation itself from the implications of a deficient (Arian) Christological ontology. In so doing, however, they also effectively accepted the conclusion that a Christological ontology, by which the relation of the Son to the Father was dealt with in terms of the divine ousia, could not be avoided.²⁵ This conclusion, and the homoousiite

life, by which the divine "substance" is communicated among the "persons," and not just an order of transmission indicative of the divine outreach to the world. Cf. Prestige, op. cit., pp. 98-106; Kelly, op. cit., pp. 110-115.

²⁴Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), I, pp. 228-229.

²⁵With the homoousion, the Arian controversy was thus resolved for the orthodox party, but only, as Mackey argues, op. cit., p. 169, at great cost to them as well. The homoousiite solution, first of all, jeopardized the previous Christian (and pagan) theological consensus which

solution to the problem which was defined at Nicea, transformed the subsequent character of the doctrine of the Trinity, rendering it in character and in content a

allowed the Father, Son, and Spirit to be distinguished intelligibly on the basis of the order of transmission in the divine approach to the world. The emanationist tradition had been the common inheritance of both the Arian and the Orthodox parties, but its limitation was that theological discourse was effectively restricted to the divine outreach to the world. For that very reason, however, the danger of subordinationism was a constant feature of Christian appropriations of the emanationist tradition (*ibid.*, pp. 123-172). Christian theologians had to reckon both with a doctrine of creation in which God is more obviously distinct from the universe, and, more importantly, with the independent persona of Jesus, the incarnate Word and Saviour. Even leaving aside the doctrine of creation, the philosophical system, framed as it was in terms of the outreach of the invisible God to the world in successively decreasing levels of divinity, thus threatened to translate in a Christian reinterpretation into a subordinationist theology. For the Greek philosopher, the emanation of the divine ousia led to no queries about subordinationism, since the whole systematic conception involved a divine emanation in which successively diminishing levels of the divine being reach out, as it were, beyond God in himself to the farthest edges of being in the material world. (On this question, cf., e.g., A. H. Armstrong, "Emanation" in Plotinus, ' Mind, 46 (1937), 61-66; Philip Merlan, "Emanationism," in Paul Edwards *et al.*, eds., The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (London: Collier Macmillan Limited and New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967), II, pp. 473-474; and R. T. Wallis, Neo-Platonism (London: Duckworth, 1972), pp. 61-72.) All of this ultimately forced its rejection. The problem therefore arose again how one is to distinguish the three. More importantly, however, as Mackey, *loc. cit.*, points out, the net result of the Arian controversy was that the doctrine of the Trinity became increasingly remote from the actual historical content of the economy of salvation. Mackey's judgement is therefore that as a result of the Arian controversy "the relationship of a 'pre-existent' Word (and Spirit) to the Father ... displaced from the centre of Christian theology that relationship of Jesus (and his co-heirs) to the Father with which the Christian Bible is concerned and which is revealed in the life and death of the same Jesus." One might wish to emend this statement slightly to take account of the fact that the "displacement" mentioned was already well under way before the advent of Arius, but the substance of Mackey's conclusion is nevertheless difficult to resist.

doctrine, admittedly not exclusively, but certainly primarily of the immanent Trinity. The further theological and philosophical presuppositions of this shift in perspective, particularly as they relate to the problem of intelligent access to the immanent Trinity, remain to be considered.

In fact, the historical development of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is problematic. The perennial problem which Trinitarian theology faces is whether or not and how it is possible to move from the economic level of the divine outreach to the world, however this is conceived, to the divine in itself. In short, do the Trinitarian distinctions which are discerned in the economy between the Father of Jesus Christ and the Creator of the world, Jesus Christ his Son who redeems the world, and the Holy Spirit who indwells and sanctifies the creation, obtain also in some sense in God immanently?

The question of the possibility of this movement is bound up with the theological meaningfulness and the epistemological and metaphysical basis of the attempt to enter into rational discourse about God in himself over against God as he is for us. If the idea of the immanent Trinity were metaphysically, epistemologically, and theologically meaningless, then the whole enterprise of Trinitarian dogmatics as known in the tradition would be of no more than antiquarian interest. If, on the other hand, it is admitted that a movement towards the eternity of the eternal God must be made, then the question of the theoretical possibility of this movement must be raised. This is basically a question of theological epistemology, but it is, as such - as we shall see - also deeply rooted in a doctrine of salvation which seeks to trace the saving act of God retrospectively into God in himself. The issue at stake here is therefore of considerable theological importance, and requires careful treatment.

Lying behind the new emphasis which entered into the

development of the doctrine of the Trinity after Nicea is the fact that the Arian controversy and its resolution in the homoousion formula decisively shifted Christian theology from its close reliance on the emanationist tradition of Greek philosophy, and established for the first time a doctrine of God in which, on the basis of revelation, God is truly asserted to be known in himself.²⁶ In the ensuing development, by which the homoousion came to be referred finally to the Holy Spirit through the work of Athanasius, Didymus, Epiphanius, and the Cappadocians,²⁷ the doctrine of the Trinity became primarily a doctrine of the

²⁶Ghislain Lafont, Peut-on connaître Dieu en Jésus-Christ? (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), p. 17, writes: "Par sa proclamation solennelle de l'homoousios ... le Concile de Nicée a en effet orienté pratiquement la spéculation théologique vers le Mystère intra-trinitaire: en affirmant la pleine identité de nature entre le Père et le Fils ... il posait à la théologie la question du «comment» de cette identité; il était alors logique que la réflexion, d'une part se détournât de la notion du Verbe comme médiateur de la création et du salut (car l'idée de médiation enveloppe quasi naturellement celle de subordination, qu'il fallait précisément rejeter) et, d'autre part, s'appliquât à trouver les termes susceptibles de signifier en Dieu la parfaite égalité du Père et du Fils. ... la tendance immanente aux précisions de foi qui ... caractérisent [le Symbole de Nicée] en propre allait pousser la réflexion dans le sens d'une distinction toujours plus accusée entre la «Théologie» doctrine de Dieu contemplé en lui-même, et l'«Economie», doctrine du salut en Jésus-Christ.... Il y a là un paradoxe qui vaut d'être souligné: la formule de Nicée, dans la contexte historique et théologique où elle a été rédigée, était (et demeure) une nécessaire clef de lecture de l'Évangile; l'arianisme, en effet, prétendait établir entre le Père et son Verbe une distinction essentielle, ne tendait finalement à rien d'autre qu'à ruiner la réalité du salut.... En ce sens, la formule de Nicée a jalonné la seule perspective selon laquelle une évaluation fidèle de l'«Economie» est possible."

²⁷H. B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1912), pp. 211-254.

"immanent" Trinity.²⁸ Just as Christian theology thus committed itself to the view that the immanent Trinity is in some sense accessible to faith and thought, so too it effectively became convinced that the locus of questions of real theological importance is the being of God in himself. This was the result, not of any programmatic devaluation of the notion of the economic Trinity, but rather of the theological conviction which emerged from the Arian controversy that the events of salvation history either have their basis in the eternal being of God or else they have no specifically saving basis at all.²⁹ In other words, just as the doctrine of the economic Trinity here becomes a projection into time of the God who saves and who in himself is a Trinity, so also the "immanent" Trinity becomes the necessary eternal basis of the temporal events of the Christian revelation. The immanent Trinity becomes, in short, a necessary presupposition because otherwise the economy of salvation would no longer be an economy of salvation; without such an eternal basis in God himself, it could no longer be seen with sufficient clarity to be a truly saving event.

The effect of the new Nicene theology, in consequence, was to reduce significantly the importance of the economic Trinity. Because the economic Trinitarianism of the third century had been tied to the Greek emanationist model of

²⁸Correspondingly, a shift in the understanding of the threefoldness of God as apprehended in the economy of salvation takes place; whereas earlier the doctrine of the economic Trinity appeared as an articulation of the twofold outreach of the Father to the world by means of his two "hands," now it became more strictly a reflection in time of the eternal being of God. As I have argued, the sense of a projection into time of the inherent threefoldness of God was not altogether foreign to the earlier theological tradition, but it was only now that a doctrine of the immanent Trinity had been developed through the Arian controversy that such a clear understanding of the economic Trinity as a revelation of the eternal became possible.

²⁹Torrance, op. cit., pp. 110-145.

the divine life, and because the latter was effectively abandoned in the wake of Arius, economic Trinitarianism of the old sort was likewise effectively abandoned. In the subsequent theology of the post-Nicene era, indeed, the word "theology" itself came to be referred technically to what we would call the doctrine of the immanent Trinity.³⁰ Of course, the actual economy of salvation as portrayed in the message of the Scriptures was not set aside in all of this, any more or – it needs to be said – any less than it already had been in the older emanationist Trinitarianism. It was, however, given a rather different theological interpretation through the new doctrine of the (immanent) Trinity.

In keeping with what was said earlier about the content of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity as it relates to the Holy Spirit, it is possible to treat the doctrine of the Spirit in the older tradition and the general problem of its basis in terms of the two poles within this conception, namely, the homousion on the one hand and the procession of the Spirit (with the related filiogue doctrine) on the other. These correspond to some extent to the twin concepts under which the doctrine of the Trinity emerges in the patristic period down to the Cappadocian Fathers, and which determines the content of subsequent theology: one ousia, three hypostaseis.³¹ In the

³⁰M.-J. Congar, "Théologie," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, 15, cols. 343-345.

³¹The two-sidedness of this formula is constitutive of the final patristic Trinitarian position. Since the work of T. de Régnon in the nineteenth century, it has been customary to distinguish the characteristically Western from the characteristically Eastern doctrine of the Trinity according to which side of this duality is most prominent in the Trinitarian system: ousia in the West and hypostaseis in the East (T. de Régnon, Études du théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité (Paris: Retaux, 1892), I, pp. 433-434; cited by Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, III, p. xvi).

case of the Nicene homoousion, there is presupposed, first of all, a long and extremely varied history of the concept of ousia (and even of homoousios) in the philosophical and theological traditions of pagan antiquity.³² It was, of course, largely this complex history which led to the variety of interpretations given to the homoousion in the early years of its reception.³³ Furthermore, the lack of a

³²Stead, op. cit., passim.

³³On the question of the understanding of the homoousion in the Nicene and post-Nicene eras, cf. Bernard Lonergan, The Way to Nicea, trans. Conn O'Donovan (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), pp. 88-104. Lonergan notes not only that the ideas of ousia and homoousios had a varied philosophical history before Nicea, but also that a profound development in the understanding of the ideas was required within Christian theology in the aftermath of Nicea. In the Creed of Nicea, the homoousion is already understood in terms of the mode of the generation of the Son by the Father ("begotten ... ek tes ousias tou patros, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created"). The Nicene Fathers thus commonly understand the homoousion on the analogy of, e.g., the brightness emanating from the sun, where one and the same light is in the sun and in its brightness. Thus Athanasius, De decretis nic. syn., 20, as cited by Lonergan, op. cit., p. 99, following in an older tradition of Alexandrian theology, writes: "...not only is [the Word] similar to the Father's substance, but he cannot be divided from it; for he and the Father are one, and the Word is always in the Father, and the Father in the Word; so that Son is related to the Father as its brightness is related to the Son...." According to Lonergan, ibid., pp. 102-104, however, in the Nicene era itself the homoousion is "comprehended" apophatically, i.e., in the consciousness that one has finally to prescind from the images and concepts with which one began, whereas in subsequent theology, a more strictly metaphysical interpretation appears. According to Lonergan, the "terminal notion of consubstantiality" in the Nicene era, formulated by Athanasius, is more regulative than strictly ontological. Here the idea comes to mean that "what is said of the Father is also to be said of the Son, except that the Son is Son and not Father" (ibid., p. 103). Increasingly, he argues, this rule comes to be elaborated after Athanasius himself in terms of ontological considerations. However, it is questionable whether or not the regulative definition of the homoousion involved in Athanasius' principle could ever have been developed, or ever be understood, without reference to ontological

developed and commonly-accepted understanding of both the homoousion and the hypostaseis within a single Trinitarian conception led to considerable opposition to the Nicene position; opponents feared that the homoousion prejudiced the distinct character of Father and Son (and later, of Spirit as well), and so opened the way to a new form of Sabellianism.³⁴ It was for this reason, both historically and logically, that the form in which the homoousion came to be codified was the doctrine of the Trinity, in the sense that the doctrine of the Trinity finally drew together the various strands of soteriological and metaphysical concern into the relatively coherent position embodied in the linguistic formula of the one ousia and the three hypostaseis.³⁵

If the historical development of the concept of the homoousion is thus complex, it is nevertheless the case that the meaning it came to be given in the tradition, and the reasons for its ultimate triumph, are relatively clear. The sheer fact that, for example, Christ was worshipped in the liturgy as Saviour and Lord, and that in baptism the

considerations about the identity of ousia between the Father and the Son, since this is what the rule presupposes. What Lonergan understands to be the later ontological understanding of the homoousion, therefore, by which "it is given a systematic grounding and a technical expression: in God there is the one ousia, the one divinity, the one power and the one operation, but there are three divine persons ... distinguished from each other by their personal properties of relationship," (*ibid.*, p. 103) is in fact already implicit in the Nicene conception itself. At the same time, however, it is clear that the understanding of the homoousion in the Nicene era itself and in its later systematic elaboration, e.g., in medieval theology, do differ: in the earlier theology, we deal with the homoousion and with its interpretation as the final conclusion of the whole, whereas in later theology, it is often presupposed and developed as the starting-point of the dogmatic enterprise.

³⁴Pelikan, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 211, 219-220.

Holy Spirit was honoured as the agent of regeneration, meant that underlying the concern for theological formulae was a profound concern for the ultimate character and basis of human salvation. Pelikan, for example, writes:

The faith confessed at Nicea, both in its own original formulation and in its interpretation by its defenders, was a cosmological confession and a soteriological confession simultaneously. Underlying it was the conviction that only he who had created the universe could save man, and that to do either or both of these he himself had to be divine and not a creature.³⁶

Indeed, it is precisely because the homoousion formula embodied this central conviction among its supporters that a consensus on its meaning as a formula became possible – a consensus which otherwise would certainly have been evasive in view of the ambiguous philosophical history of the word and its cognates.

In formal terms, the argument which establishes the homoousion here is the same as the characteristically Platonic move from, for example, the human consciousness of the true, the good, and the beautiful as universally binding on the human mind, to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful themselves, as the absolute basis of our finite but distinctively rational consciousness. It is, of course, true that to a considerable extent, the homoousion doctrine draws on the biblical witness for support, particularly in its underlying insistence that it is God who saves. However, the biblical tradition itself does not attempt to achieve what the homoousion explicitly does; at no point does it seek to trace an economic reality into eternity on the grounds that the finite cannot ground itself in the

³⁶Ibid., p. 203.

absolute sense. This, however, is precisely the move made in the argument for the homoousion. The point which lends support to the homoousion is not simply, in other words, that human beings can rely on God alone for salvation rather than on flesh, or the law, or, as in the older biblical tradition, on another god; rather it is that, intrinsically, there can be no other possible basis of the historical revelation of God in Christ, or of the salvation to be experienced by the saints, than God himself, immediately intervening in the sphere of human existence. It is for this reason that the possibility of, for example, an angelic mediation of salvation is resisted. Given the reality of salvation through Jesus Christ, therefore, it is difficult to resist the inference, within the terms of this formal principle, that the Son and Holy Spirit who are active in the economy are also of one substance with the Father.

In the case of the idea of the procession of the Holy Spirit, a rather different question is in view and, correspondingly, a rather different foundation underlies the answer given. The problem, of course, is how to reconcile the threefoldness of the economic manifestation with the unity of substance, in such a way as to present the divinity as in itself both three and one. The danger of the loss of the distinction in a new Sabellianism was very real in the aftermath of Nicea, and in the case of the Holy Spirit, the problem (which arose only because the question of the homoousion of the Spirit had already been raised) was both to distinguish the Spirit from the spiritual nature of divinity ("God is spirit" - Jn. 4: 24), and in particular to distinguish the Spirit from the Son, the two being closely associated in the economy. The idea of the Spirit's procession, nominally derived from Jn. 15: 26, developed in relation to the idea of the eternal begetting of the Son which already had been developed through the Arian crisis; its passage into the formal theological

position of the Church was thus somewhat smoothed, while at the same time the intellectual labour required for its formulation was enormously reduced.

What is important for our purposes, however, is the foundations on which Pneumatological speculation concerning the procession is established. This, again, had already been provided by Christology, where the identification of the divine Son with the Logos of Greek philosophy, already to some extent at least foreshadowed if not explicitly formulated by the Fourth Gospel, provided the model. Clearly, the Greek philosophical tradition had a profound influence on the interpretation of this text and on the development of this theology, but the biblical understanding was also of decisive importance here. The idea of the Logos itself, as expressed in the Fourth Gospel in particular, already had firmly established the whole question of analogy in the centre of Trinitarian speculation, while at the same time the Christology which had worked with the biblical category of Wisdom from the very earliest period provided a theological precedent to the new understanding. What is particularly significant in this conception is the fact that if the Father can be said to have his Logos, or Wisdom in the binitarian sense, then already the immanent divine being has been understood analogously to the human being who has his reason. Analogous knowledge of this sort may be a weak form of knowledge, but a form of knowledge it is all the same.

In this sense, one has to regard with suspicion the attempt to argue that the procession of the Holy Spirit is incomprehensible, expressed classically by Gregory Nazianzen, who argues that while the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, it is no more possible to say what this procession is than it is possible to define the Father's agennesia or the Son's begottenness.³⁷ Even in the East,

³⁷Gregory Nazianzen, Or., 31, 8.

where the Augustinian analogical procedure is regarded with distrust, alternative analogies are presented: the idea of the Holy Spirit as the eternal "unction" of the Son, which appears in certain Eastern Trinitarian theologies,³⁸ for example, makes a temporal image derived from the economy into an eternal inner-trinitarian relation. Certainly it is possible to place in question the attempt made in the Western (Augustinian) theological tradition to comprehend the procession of the Holy Spirit, given its basis in a particular psychological theory (that the two characteristic acts of a spiritual substance are knowing and willing)³⁹ rather than in the events of the biblical economy as such.⁴⁰ However, in the older theological

³⁸Cf., e.g., Gregory of Nyssa, C. Maced., 18; C. Eunom., II, 2; and John of Damascus, De fid. orth., I, 7-8.

³⁹Augustine, De Trin., VIII, 5; and Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a. 27, 4 & ad 1; 30, 2 ad 2; and 35, 2. See also Michael Schmaus, Die Psychologische Trinitätslehre des Hl. Augustinus (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuch-handlung, 1927).

⁴⁰Augustine's "psychological analogy," however, is at the same time to be understood in terms of his rejection of the emanationist model, which had helped to differentiate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in pre-Nicene theology. The problem Augustine took up in the De Trinitate (I, 4) was how to distinguish the three within the context of the Nicene homoousion. The Arians were able to differentiate the Father from the Son, and the Son from the Spirit, on the basis of the emanationist model: for them, the three terms represent different levels in a hierarchy of divinity, which, in turn, represent three different agents. Such a hierarchical understanding, of course, was precisely what the Nicene position was framed to avoid; Augustine, consequently, was forced to take up the remaining problem of how one actually does distinguish the three. Driven by the rejection of the emanationist model, for example, he addresses in Books II-III of the De Trinitate the problem of how it is that the three, though of one substance and being one agent, are not all sent. While the Father has an economic role as the creator and saviour of the world, and indeed can appear in the various theophanies with which Augustine is concerned in Books II-III, only the Son and the Spirit can be said to have been sent into the world for the sake of our salvation. As the Arians knew well, this

tradition, it would appear that there is in the end no such thing as a doctrine of the immanent Trinity drawn entirely from the economy of salvation; rather, metaphysical assumptions of various sorts have been brought to bear upon the economic data in developing doctrines of the immanent

raises the question how the three are equal, or, to use the language of Nicea, of the same ousia, if two are sent and one is the sender. Augustine treats this problem in Book IV, where he argues that in order to be sent, the divine person has to proceed; only the Son and the Spirit proceed, therefore only they are sent. According to Augustine, therefore, the apparent subordinationist element here is to be referred to the processions of the persons, which we see immediately in Book V to be a problem of relational predication rather than of substantial predication. His answer to the problem of the distinction of the persons, therefore, is that the three are distinct, not by virtue of substance, for the three are of one substance, and not by virtue of accidents, for there is nothing accidental in God, but are distinct by virtue of their different mutual relations. It is here that Augustine locates not only the terms "Father," "Son," and "Spirit," but also the corresponding terms, "Unbegotten," "Begotten," and, with much more difficulty, the Spirit as "Gift" and as "Love." The Arians had treated the terms "Unbegotten" and "Begotten" in particular as distinctly substantial categories, connoting the ousiai involved in the two cases; in considering the terms "Unbegotten" and "Begotten," they worked with the Aristotelian distinction of substance and accidents, arguing that the terms must be understood either in one sense or the other. Since God has no accidents, they claimed, the terms are substantial (Kelly, op. cit., pp. 274-275). Augustine's innovation in Trinitarian theology was to adopt the notion of real subsistent relations and to treat these terms accordingly as relational categories. The psychological analogy, which is developed as an aid for the understanding of the previously-developed theory of the relations of the persons (Augustine, op. cit., VIII, 5), is thus intended more as an explication of these relations than as a purely abstract theory of the Trinity developed "out of the blue," so that it must be seen in its context as a response to one of the central problems thrown up by Nicea. In the East, the Cappadocians responded to the same problem by stressing the relations of origin, where the principle of distinction lies in the eternal origin of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the hypostasis of the Father; Augustine, on the other hand, determines the course of Western Trinitarian theology by emphasizing the relations of the persons as such.

Trinity. It is these assumptions which set up, explicitly or implicitly, the kind of analogical relation within which the movement from the economy to the immanent Trinity is made possible and intelligible.

Despite all of this, however, it is striking that the development of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity in the patristic era coincides with an elaboration of the idea that God in himself is unknowable. Athanasius, for example, states of the unity of substance between the Father and the Son that it would have been better to remain silent about it had not the heretics compelled him to speak.⁴¹ Likewise, one of the basic presuppositions of the Cappadocian Fathers in their discussion of the Trinitarian relations is that the mysteries of the inner-divine processions remain undisclosed to us, in the sense that we do not and cannot know what they are. Gregory Nazianzen's dictum on the incomprehensibility of the procession of the Holy Spirit could similarly be cited.⁴² This insight was evidently taken over into Christian theology from the Middle and Neoplatonic traditions, where it was considered axiomatic, but it received authentically Christian theological elaboration, once assumed, and became a major influence on the whole subsequent development of Christian theology.⁴³

⁴¹Athanasius, Ad Ser., I, 16.

⁴²See above, p. 74.

⁴³It is difficult to isolate the occasion precisely, particularly because the whole movement of thought from the origins of the doctrine of the Trinity through the Arian crisis is presupposed. However, one of the main moments in the explicit formulation of this thesis in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity was the conflict with late Arianism, and specifically with Eunomius, who held a linguistic theory in which names, including those referring to the divinity, express the essence of the reality named (Roberta C. Bondi, "Apophatic Theology," in Alan Richardson & John Bowden, eds., A New Dictionary of Christian Theology (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), p. 32; Kelly, op. cit., pp. 249, 487). His critics derided this as a "technology," and against it, the Cappadocians Basil the Great and Gregory of

The basic approach to the mystery of God here rests, essentially, on the conviction that the immanent being of God remains hidden from finite, fallen humanity in a way that the economic outreach of God to the world does not.

In the ancient tradition of Christian Platonism, therefore, the incomprehensibility of God is presupposed as a prime datum of theology. In the Pseudo-Dionysius, for example, in which this tradition reaches its supreme expression, every determination of the divine is taken to be a limit, which, in view of the divine transcendence, is therefore in the strictest sense inadmissible. The knowledge of God is here to be understood as the knowledge of what God is not - in-finite, im-passible, a-temporal, in-comprehensible, and so on.⁴⁴ The Pseudo-Dionysius, therefore, relying on a long tradition of theological speculation in Middle and Neoplatonism, articulates and establishes a tradition of Trinitarian theology which still dominates Eastern theology and which prevailed at least down to the end of the medieval period in the West, the tradition of the via negativa which permeates even the Christian Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas.⁴⁵

While it is possible to distinguish broadly between an apophaticism of the divine ousia in the Trinitarian tradition, and an apophaticism of the immanent Trinity as such,⁴⁶ the latter is the mainstream form of Trinitarian apophaticism, to which we can therefore limit ourselves here. The paradox in the development of the doctrine of the

Nyssa argued that the essence not only of God, but also of creatures, is unknowable.

⁴⁴Lossky, op. cit., pp. 23-43.

⁴⁵Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a. 12-13. For a recent study of the Neoplatonic influences on Thomas' doctrine of God and of the Trinity, see W. J. Hankey, God in Himself (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁴⁶Mackey, op. cit., pp. 173-180.

immanent Trinity is that it did in fact develop precisely in the context of this apophaticism. Of course, all apophaticism as such presupposes that there is that which one cannot speak intelligibly about - because it is more than our language and thought can accommodate, and not because it is less than real - so that in Christian theology it does not of itself exclude the idea of the immanent Trinity. But the apophatic restriction is problematic; in the Trinitarian tradition, knowledge of the immanent Trinity is most certainly asserted, however much it may be qualified through apophatic restrictions. Precisely this knowledge constitutes the fundamental shape of the doctrine of the Trinity in the tradition, and what is thus known cannot be strictly unknowable.

In fact, therefore, the incomprehensibility motif appears to be exaggerated, in view of the extensive development of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity which effectively constitutes the Trinitarian tradition.⁴⁷ We are

⁴⁷Walter Kasper notes this in The God of Jesus Christ, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1984), pp. 126-130, where he argues, following Rahner, that in maintaining the presupposition of divine incomprehensibility while at the same time developing an understanding of the divine mystery, the theological tradition effectively adopts the view that the human mind does in some way reach beyond itself into that mystery (cf. Karl Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," in his Theological Investigations, ed. and trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore, Helicon Press and London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), IV, pp. 36-73). Kasper, with Rahner, attempts to make what he regards as the hidden epistemological structure of the traditional approach into an explicit theological presupposition. In doing so, however, he significantly alters the sense in which God is to be seen as unknowable. The point, for Kasper, is no longer that God is strictly incomprehensible in the non-rational or supra-rational sense, but rather that God is hidden in what he understands to be the biblical sense: in his very revelation of himself, God is a mystery in that he is a personal freedom which, in a manner analogous to that commonly experienced in human intersubjectivity, is not within our grasp or control. Here Kasper echoes also Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance; trans. T. H. L. Parker et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T.

in this sense, therefore, obliged to regard it with suspicion. At one point Hegel notes the contradiction here: in the Christian religion, God cannot be unknown, for its content is precisely that God is revealed to human beings.⁴⁸ Hegel's philosophy undoubtedly lays too much emphasis at this point on the knowledge given in revelation, since the events of revelation have more to do with, for example, the overcoming of sin and death than they do with the question of rational access to God, but his point nevertheless has to be taken seriously. God loses nothing by communicating himself, and "is not jealous to the point of not communicating himself";⁴⁹ moreover, if there is literally no sense in which the received doctrine of the Trinity can be understood rationally, however provisionally, then there can be, by definition, no sense in which it can be grasped as true.

The strength and the weakness, finally, of the traditional theology of the Trinity lies in the specific form of dualism which it presupposes. This dualism is admittedly Hellenistic or "philosophical," as the word is often used in this connection in the pejorative sense, but it is also drawn from Hebraic sources in the Old Testament.

Clark, 1957), II/1, pp. 181-184, 283-284.

⁴⁸G. W. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, ed. Peter C. Hodgson; trans. R. F. Brown et al. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984-1985), I, p. 382.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 382-383. Cf. also, G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), § 564: "The old conception - due to a one-sided survey of human life - of Nemesis, which made the divinity and its action in the world only a levelling power, dashing to pieces everything high and great - was confronted by Plato and Aristotle with the doctrine that God is not envious. The same answer may be given to the modern assertions that man cannot ascertain God. These assertions (and more than assertions they are not) are the more illogical, because made within a religion which is expressly called the revealed...."

On the one hand, therefore, it is allied with the typically "Platonic" view that the true = the eternal = the heavenly (in which, however, the finite world and the finite intellect participate) with the implication that the true Trinity = the eternal Trinity = the heavenly Trinity;⁵⁰ on the other hand, it is also allied with the Old Testament distinction between the Creator and his creation, who is at once both transcendent to and immanent in the created order. The transcendence of Yahweh in this sense is integral to the later Old Testament world-view in particular, and constitutes there the theological basis, for example, of the polemic against idolatry.⁵¹ This, however, raises the question of the philosophical and theological basis of the contemporary approach to the

⁵⁰To the extent that the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the patristic and medieval periods does rely on such a philosophical outlook, furthermore, it is an open question whether or not the latter can be taken as an adequate philosophical starting-point. Certainly it is insufficient simply to assume, without further ado, that the Platonic position is antiquated, as this begs the philosophical and theological question. One cannot proceed here merely by assumption and a philosophically uncritical faith in contemporary forms of thought.

⁵¹Traditional dogmatics understands the transcendence of Yahweh in relation to nature in the Old Testament to be one of the prime data of Old Testament revelation. This view is reflected in, e.g., Herman Bavinck, The Doctrine of God, trans. William Hendriksen (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), p. 15: "By virtue of this revelation it is first of all established that God is ... not shut in by the narrow confines of this universe but highly exalted above nature." Yahweh's transcendence is taken here to be a fundamental tenet of Hebrew monotheism. Bavinck notes that this traditional thesis has been challenged to some extent by the Religionsgeschichte school, which treats Old Testament monotheism from an evolutionary point of view (ibid., pp. 15-16), but in the end there can be no doubt that a transcendent monotheism is finally established in Hebrew thought as represented in the Old Testament. On the twin ideas of Yahweh's transcendence to and involvement with his creation in the Old Testament, see, e.g., Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. John Baker (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), II, pp. 98-117.

doctrine of the Trinity, in which the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity is asserted. This is all the more so because of the fact that the traditional Trinitarian and Pneumatological concepts of the homousion, procession, and the filioque reappear in the contemporary context. It is with this in mind that we turn now, beginning with the theology of Barth, to contemporary Trinitarian theology.

2. Karl Barth: The Trinity and Election

The importance of Karl Barth's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity for the contemporary renewal of interest in Trinitarian theology can hardly be overestimated. As G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance maintain, it was Barth above all who forced theological thinking in the twentieth century back to the Trinity; Barth's doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1, they argue, when studied in connection with his later doctrine of God, can be regarded as the greatest contribution to Trinitarian theology since Augustine's De Trinitate.⁵² We will find that Barthian themes recur constantly in subsequent Trinitarian theology, and that, from this point of view, there is a great deal to justify Bromiley and Torrance's judgment. There can be no doubt also that Barth's theology has in fact led to a deepening of the doctrine of the Trinity. As we will see, however, Barth's position is also problematic in a number of important respects, while many of the weaknesses of subsequent Trinitarian theology stem from problematic themes taken over from his theology.

Commentators on Barth's Trinitarian theology commonly focus on one of these two central themes: either the idea of the Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness itself which

⁵²G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, in their editorial Preface to Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. viii-ix.

appears as the basis of the Trinitarian theology of Church Dogmatics I/1; or the doctrine of election, which is the central expression of Barth's doctrine of God in Church Dogmatics II/1 and II/2, and which underlies the deepening of Barth's Christology in later volumes, and, implicitly, of his Trinitarian theology.⁵³ Both are clearly of central significance for Barth's overall position. Barth's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1, for example, determines the fundamental content of the "revealedness model" of Trinitarian Pneumatology to which Barth is committed, and will serve as the basis of our discussion of Barth in Chapter III. Barth's doctrine of election, on the other hand, has proven to be of greater importance for post-Barthian Trinitarian Pneumatology, as the revealedness paradigm has tended to be abandoned.

Unlike Rahner (who, however, in many ways follows Barth), Barth does not provide an explicit discussion of the problem of the relation of the economic and the immanent Trinity as such; rather, he formulates his position in his discussion of these theological themes. From this point of view, however, it is Barth's doctrine of election which is of primary importance for us in this section, since it reveals how, for Barth, the economic and the immanent Trinity are concretely related in the Trinitarian life of God. Although we will begin with Barth's formal treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1 in what immediately follows, and return to it again in Chapter III, the main focus of our discussion in this section will be the doctrine of

⁵³On the former, see, e.g., R. D. Williams, "Barth on the Triune God," in S. W. Sykes, ed., Karl Barth - Studies of His Theological Method (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 147-193; on the latter, Jüngel, The Doctrine of the Trinity, pp. 61ff.; and R. W. Jenson, God after God (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), pp. 95ff.

election, and the accompanying doctrines of God as "event" and of divine choice.

The doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1 begins with a discussion of its basis in what Barth understands to be the biblical idea of revelation.⁵⁴ Barth's claim is that the doctrine is rooted in the sheer fact that God has spoken his Word, and that men and women hear and give witness to it. The crucial point for Barth is that in the notion of the Word of God in Christian revelation, we deal with something utterly authoritative, precisely because it is not simply God's revelation, but the presence ad extra of God himself.⁵⁵

Not only does the biblical idea of revelation involve the notion of the self-grounded authority of the Word as such, but also, for Barth, the determination by the Word of the existence of those men and women who miraculously hear the Word of God and obey it.⁵⁶ Taken together, these factors constitute the peculiar character of Christian revelation, in which, according to Barth, the doctrine of the Trinity has its root. Trinitarian theology, for Barth, is in essence an exegesis of these factors, in the sense that, in Christian revelation, the question, "Who is the God who reveals himself?" is inseparable from two further questions, "What is he doing?" and "What does he effect?" As Barth puts it, "God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself through Himself. He reveals Himself."⁵⁷ Hence the fundamental Barthian Trinitarian paradigm of the Revealer,

⁵⁴Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. 295-304.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 304-306, 320-324. According to Barth, this authority can be seen in the notion of the prophetic word of the Old Testament, or again in the exousia of Jesus in the New, and once more, significantly, in the authority of the Holy Spirit in decisions taken by the Apostles and the primitive Church (ibid., p. 306).

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 324-332.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 296.

his Revelation, and its Revealedness.

In a sense, the basis of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity is already present in this idea of revelation, being determined by the movement of thought from what Barth understands to be the actuality of God's revelation to its ground or possibility in God in himself.⁵⁸ Robert Jenson argues that the principle involved here, that where the actuality exists the possibility of that actuality must also be presupposed, is fundamental to Barth's entire theological enterprise.⁵⁹ The point is that while Barth begins with the datum of what God has already done in Jesus Christ, he poses the further question what God is "antecedently in himself" in order for him also to be what he is in the economy. The importance of this idea can be seen from the three theses with which he begins his discussion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively in Church Dogmatics I/1: "The one God reveals Himself according to Scripture as the Creator, that is, as the Lord of our existence. As such, He is God our Father because He is so antecedently in Himself as the Father of the Son."⁶⁰ "The one God reveals Himself according to Scripture as the reconciler, i.e., as the Lord in the midst of our enmity towards Him. As such He is the Son of God who has come to us or the Word of God that has been spoken to us, because He is so antecedently in Himself as the Son or Word of God the Father."⁶¹ "The one God reveals Himself according to Scripture as the Redeemer, i.e., as the Lord who sets us

⁵⁸A parallel movement of thought will be seen in Rahner's later "transcendental theological deduction" in Trinitarian theology, which similarly asks about the conditions of the possibility of the incarnation and Pentecost.

⁵⁹Jenson, op. cit., p. 103.

⁶⁰Barth, op. cit., I/1, p. 384.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 399.

free. As such He is the Holy Spirit, by receiving whom we become the children of God, because, as the Spirit of the love of God the Father and the Son, He is so antecedently in Himself."⁶²

The presupposition of the whole procedure, of course, is that God has indeed truly given himself in the economy, and that, in some sense, it is possible and necessary to move from the economy to the immanent Trinity. The fact that Barth not only considers it possible to move from the economy to the immanent Trinity, but also necessary, helps us to understand what Barth must mean at this point by the claim that God truly "gives himself" in the economy. There must be, in effect, a level of divine being "behind revelation" for Barth, so that God in himself is different from his revelation as such; the point seems to be simply that this God is emphatically not, for Barth, another God. This, however, as we will see shortly, appears to be inconsistent with what is often asserted of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, and, moreover, with what apparently can be legitimately asserted of the doctrine of the Trinity, on the basis of the doctrine of election.

The clearest expression of Barth's position on the relation between the economic and immanent Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1 appears in the context of his defence of the filioque doctrine⁶³ and is worth quoting at some length:

...we have consistently followed the rule, which we regard as basic, that statements about the divine modes of being antecedently in themselves cannot be different in content from those that

⁶²Ibid., p. 448.

⁶³Barth's central defence of the filioque is that the Spirit who is the Spirit of the Father and the Son in the economy must also be the Spirit of both in the immanent Trinity; the latter is the condition of the possibility of the former. See below, Chapter III, section 1.

are to be made about their reality in revelation. All our statements concerning what is called the immanent Trinity have been reached simply as confirmations or underlinings or, materially, as the indispensable premises of the economic Trinity. ... The reality of God in His revelation cannot be bracketed by an "only," as though somewhere behind his revelation there stood another reality of God; the reality of God which encounters us in His revelation is His reality in all the depths of eternity. This is why we have to take it so seriously precisely in His revelation.⁶⁴

Barth repeatedly insists that we must not allow ourselves to go beyond revelation in theology. This does not mean, however, that it is only appropriate to ask the question about what God is ad extra, or for us. Rather, revelation itself, according to Barth, indicates that in himself, God is precisely "for us"; the latter, therefore, cannot be understood in its reality apart from the former. Not going beyond revelation, therefore, means for Barth to take the reality of revelation itself with full seriousness, in the precise sense that we cannot suppose that God hides behind his revelation, for in it, according to Barth, God truly gives us himself. The thoroughgoing way in which Barth works out this principle in his theology has led T. F. Torrance to characterize Barth's central contribution to modern theology as a reassertion, within the terms of Trinitarian theology, of the homoousion: what God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is in his revelation is, as it were, consubstantial with what he is in himself.⁶⁵

If it is his understanding of revelation which leads Barth to posit the root of the doctrine of the Trinity as

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Thomas F. Torrance, "The Legacy of Karl Barth (1886-1986)," Scottish Journal of Theology 39 (1986), 289-308.

the idea of God as the Revealer, his Revelation, and its Revealedness, it is Barth's doctrine of God and especially his doctrine of election in Church Dogmatics II/1-2 which constitutes Barth's concrete development of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity. In his doctrine of election, Barth breaks with the Reformed dogmatic tradition, which understands election more generally as God's choice of human beings in general on the basis of his absolute decree, to understand election as the eternal choice of God to be our God in Jesus Christ.⁶⁶ According to Barth, it is Jesus Christ in the biblical witness who is the true chosen one from among the chosen people of Israel. It is he who is the covenant partner of God, by God's own eternal choice to be God in him, while the rest of humanity is chosen in him, i.e., as God chooses himself, the Son, in the man Jesus.

This understanding of election deepened Barth's Christological views over time, and implicitly, his overall doctrine of the Trinity as well. In the doctrine of election, Barth effectively presents the immanent Trinity as containing within itself the economic Trinity, since he understands the election of Jesus Christ as an innertrinitarian act which provides the basis for both creation and of reconciliation, i.e., the economic outreach of God to what is not himself in its twofold aspect.

Barth's central argument in his development of the doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1 is that God is who he is in his triune being in his act of revelation. In his doctrine of God in Church Dogmatics II/1-2, that act is understood more systematically to be his free decision of love to be God in Jesus Christ, and thus to be the God who chooses this definite relationship to the creature for

⁶⁶Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance; trans. G. W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), II/2, pp. 51-58.

himself.⁶⁷ For Barth, God must be conceived both ad extra and ad intra as the living God of the Bible, and his life as "expressed and attested in concrete decision...."⁶⁸ He therefore rejects all positions which do not allow such movement, life, or decision in God in himself, on the precise grounds that this movement is actually revealed in Jesus Christ. All of this is summed up in the conception of the being of God as "event":

We are dealing with the being of God: but with regard to the being of God, the word "event" is final, and cannot be surpassed or compromised. To its very deepest depths God's Godhead consists in the fact that it is an event - not any event, not events in general, but the event of his action, in which we have a share in God's revelation.⁶⁹

Barth's position here has had a profound influence on the development of the doctrine of God in contemporary theology. His intention is to understand the being of God from his act of revelation as such rather than from a general concept of being.⁷⁰ We are concerned, therefore, according to Barth, fundamentally with the "reality" of God, a concept which 'holds together being and act, instead of tearing them apart like the idea of "essence."⁷¹ Thus, while Barth's theology is thoroughly ontological, his theological ontology is intended to be fundamentally

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 6-7, 76-77.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 79.

⁶⁹Barth, op. cit., II/1, p. 263.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 260-261.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 262. Jüngel, op. cit., p. 64, footnote number 9, notes a similarity between Barth and Heidegger on this point.

structured by God's act in Jesus Christ.⁷² His understanding of God is therefore to be sharply distinguished from those deriving from abstract metaphysical ideas of, for example, supreme substance or absolute being. God's being, for Barth, is a "being in act,"⁷³ the living event of God's decision to be God for us in Jesus Christ, so that God's being cannot be marked off and abstracted from what God does: God is who he is, therefore, not only for us but also for himself, in Jesus Christ. Thus God is not so much a substance with attributes for Barth as he is a deed: "God does his godhead...."⁷⁴

All of this means, however, that the doctrine of God in Barth's theology is Trinitarian: "there is no possibility of reckoning with the being of any other God, or with any other being of God, than that of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as it is in God's revelation and in eternity."⁷⁵ Because the doctrine of God is drawn from the event of God's revelation, in other words, it cannot by definition be concerned with anything other than the God known in revelation as the Revealer, his Revelation, and its Revealedness. More than this, however, Barth's doctrine of God shows God to be relational, since God's act is relational, involving not only the concrete relation between the Father and the Son, but also God's relation to mankind, since from all eternity he has chosen to be related to us in Jesus Christ. Both relations are encompassed in the doctrine of God, with the result that, through the doctrine of election, God's very self-relatedness is understood to involve his relatedness to

⁷²Ibid., pp. 62-63.

⁷³Barth, op. cit., II/1, pp. 257ff.

⁷⁴Jenson, op. cit., p. 110.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 261.

mankind.⁷⁶

Barth's doctrine of God as event, therefore, and his corresponding doctrine of election, have clear implications for Trinitarian theology. The Trinitarian point made is that there is no Word of the Father other than Jesus Christ,⁷⁷ in the sense that by the eternal divine election, Jesus Christ is in the beginning with God.⁷⁸ On the basis of the Trinitarian principle of perichoresis, therefore, we can say that the election of Jesus Christ is an eternal act on the part of God the Father, Son, and Spirit which literally determines what the triune God is:

In the beginning it was the choice of the Father Himself to establish this covenant with man by giving up His Son for him, that He Himself might become man in the fulfilment of His grace. In the beginning it was the choice of the Son to be obedient to grace, and therefore to offer up Himself and to become man in order that this covenant might be made a reality. In the beginning it was the resolve of the Holy Spirit that the unity of God, of Father and Son, should not be disturbed or rent by this covenant with man, but that it should be made the more glorious, the deity of God, the divinity of His love and freedom, being confirmed and demonstrated by this offering of the Father and His self-offering of the Son.⁷⁹

The Pneumatological suggestion in this passage in particular is intriguing; it is that the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the immanent Trinity is from all

⁷⁶Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 99-101.

⁷⁷Barth, op. cit., II/2, pp. 94-99.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 104.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 101-102

eternity deepened by the eternal election of Jesus Christ, that the Spirit's role in uniting the Father and the Son in love - as the hypostasis of their mutual love⁸⁰ - is made more profound by the eternal decision for the incarnation, where God determines that it should include also the man of the covenant. The divine function of the Spirit in the life of the Trinity is thus, as Barth presents it here, made more inclusive, as God the Father and God the Son from the beginning now confront one another, in principle, across the divide which separates the Creator from Jesus Christ as man in the incarnation. Unfortunately, however, Barth does not develop this Pneumatological suggestion at length either in his doctrine of election, which is primarily Christological in content, nor, indeed, elsewhere in the later chapters of the Church Dogmatics.⁸¹

Nevertheless, the importance of Barth's doctrine of election for the problem of the relation of the economic and the immanent Trinity is clear, since it serves to draw the two together: in it the humanity of Jesus which was assumed by the Word in the incarnation is brought into connection with the Trinity in itself, for because of the eternal election of Jesus Christ the eternal Word must be understood already in himself as the incarnate Word.⁸² It is true that this eternal decision is made on behalf of the

⁸⁰Barth's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the immanent life of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics, I/1 is here presupposed. See above, footnote 12 and the discussion of the filioque in Barth in Chapter III, section 1.

⁸¹The only possible exception I have been able to find is Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance; trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), IV/1, pp. 306-9, where the resurrection of Jesus is treated as the work of the Spirit overcoming the chasm represented by the cross. For a more detailed development of the latter theme, see Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, pp. 374-376, and below, Chapter III, section 2.

⁸²Barth, op. cit., II/2, pp. 100-104.

human creature, and therefore that the election of Jesus Christ is specifically characterized by Barth as the beginning of all the ways and works of God ad extra.⁸³ But for Barth, this cannot be taken to mean anything other than that "eternal election which as it concerns man God made within Himself in his pre-temporal eternity,"⁸⁴ and which is, as such, not itself an act ad extra but an act ad intra which constitutes the basis of all God's work ad extra.⁸⁵

If one asks, therefore, on what principle one is able to relate the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity in Barth's wider theology, and to affirm the unity of the two, then the answer is that the economic Trinity is what the Trinity is determined in the divine freedom and choice from all eternity to be, not merely "economically," as if the divine choice could be detached from what God is in himself, but also "immanently." There is, Barth will later argue, no "Logos asarkos";⁸⁶ in himself, God is already in a quite literal sense the one who has determined himself to be who he is in Jesus Christ.

Barth's doctrines of God and election, therefore, are of profound importance to the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity. Jüngel, for example, in his adaptation of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, is able on this basis to minimize the distinction between the two:

⁸³Ibid., pp. 94-95: "...it is God's free grace that in Him He elects to be man and to have dealings with man and to join Himself to man. He, Jesus Christ, is the free grace of God as not content simply to remain identical with the inward and eternal being of God, but operating ad extra in the ways and works of God."

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 104.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 94; cf. also pp. 100-104. Thus Jüngel, The Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 69, characterizes the election of Jesus Christ in Barth as at once an "opus Dei ad extra externum" and an "opus Dei ad extra internum."

⁸⁶Barth, op. cit., IV/1, p. 52.

...because for Barth God's work and essence are not of two different kinds, it is for him impossible that the reality of God and the reality which owes its existence to God's work should be related to each other as two different ontological strata and even less that they should fall apart as two worlds separated through a [chorismos] (division). If one wanted to let the reality of God 'be tacked on to earthly reality as an additional reality', then all talk of God could then be only supplementary and therefore superfluous talk. And it would then be again time to remember Schleiermacher's criticism: 'But whoever makes a distinction between this and that world deludes himself.'⁸⁷

Jüngel, together with a number of other theologians, goes so far as to develop a theology of the suffering of God on the basis of the Barthian doctrine of God: the specific act in which the intrinsic being of God "is" in this sense comes to be seen as the act of giving himself over to suffering and death.⁸⁸

The question which needs to be raised here, however, concerns the theological meaningfulness of the category of divine freedom or decision which underlies the whole of Barth's doctrine of God, and which relates to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in post-Barthian theology. It is because the immanent Trinity "chooses" to be the economic Trinity of the Christian revelation, in effect, that the economic and the immanent Trinity constitute a unity in Barth's theology; the divine

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 83-88; and Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, pp. 218-221. See also below, Chapter III, section 2. For Barth, on the other hand, the crucifixion of Jesus is understood in more straightforwardly traditional terms. Cf., e.g., Barth, op. cit., IV/1, p. 254, over against Jüngel's highly selective reference to the passage in The Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 85.

decision, according to Barth, determines what God is. The language of "decision," however, is problematic. The divine being, according to Barth, is a "being in act", and so is not to be understood as an abstract absolute essence removed from movement and change.⁸⁹ The latter, as Barth understands it, is a philosophical notion of deity quite distinct from that of the biblical God. Barth's position is that the divine being is fundamentally characterized by activity, and that this activity is a movement which can only adequately be understood as self-movement; it is not caused in any sense by anything other than or external to God himself, else God's divine freedom, his Lordship, would be called in question: God, in short, would not be God.⁹⁰ Such self-movement, for Barth, denotes the spontaneity and freedom of personality, and thus excludes the notion of a static determinacy from the being of God; what God is must instead be God's own "decision:"

The fact that God's being is event, the event of God's act, necessarily ... means that it is His own conscious, willed and executed decision.... It is His conscious decision, and therefore not the mechanical outcome of a process of rationality of which, in so far as we can speak of such a thing, will have to be sought outside himself. It is executed once for all in eternity, and anew in every second of our time....⁹¹

Barth's language of decision can even find more extreme expression, as his position tends more and more to present God in such exclusively existential terms: "No other being

⁸⁹Barth, op. cit., II/1, pp. 257-272.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 268, 297-321. Barth thus implicitly excludes the central thesis of process philosophy and theology.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 271.

exists absolutely in its act. No other being is absolutely its own, conscious, willed and executed decision."⁹²

Certainly, there is no novelty in the idea that God is pure act, but Barth's understanding of that act is problematic. Expressed in philosophical terms, his position is that God's existence precedes his essence, where God's existence, God's being, is characterized by the personal qualities of free self-movement, of decision, while his essence, the "what" of his being, does not determine the former but rather follows from it. Barth's position here cannot be qualified by any claim that the language of decision is necessary for our sake or from our point of view, and is intended merely to preserve God from any necessity to be God in Jesus Christ. Such qualifications are inadequate theologically at the best of times, but in Barth's case the argument cannot be raised in principle, since the language of choice in his theology does far more than preserve the freedom of God in the eyes of the creature. It rather is specifically intended to express the reality of the being of God himself, the being of the living God which is, he claims, known to be such in revelation.

I do not propose at this point to enter into a discussion of the general problem of the active God of Barth versus the allegedly static, unmoved, philosophical absolute essence of the tradition. Rather, I wish only at this point to note certain of the difficulties which inhere in Barth's general position, and then to move on to the discussion of Rahner. The most basic problem, perhaps, is the fact that the idea of decision is a strictly existential category which requires a real "before" and "after" in time to be meaningful. The capacity for decision in the strict sense presupposes temporality, which cannot be asserted of God without either raising the question of

⁹²Ibid.

the limitations of human language in theology or else calling into doubt the divine transcendence. The divine election cannot simply involve divine decision, understood as such without further ado; at best, the concept of election can only be a metaphor or analogy for a divine act which we are unable to understand directly.

The second difficulty is closely related to the first, but relates to the specifically philosophical implication of Barth's position, outlined above, that God's existence, or his freedom, logically precedes His essence. The problem here is that to assert, as Barth does, that God is "absolutely [his] own, conscious, willed and executed decision," and to attempt to detach this decision, as Barth seems to do, from any rational necessity, appears to allow that God can choose the irrational, that God's decision can be reduced to mere impulse, and in principle, that the divine decision from all eternity for fellowship with mankind in Jesus Christ might have been a capricious, irrational act of sheer will - a capricious choice of love and the covenant which, however, might just as easily have been a decision for damnation.

It is clear that Barth does not wish to maintain this; according to Barth, "God's freedom is not merely unlimited possibility or formal majesty and omnipotence, that is to say empty, naked sovereignty."⁹³ He does not, therefore, admit that his view of divine freedom can be reduced to caprice. Furthermore, Barth would undoubtedly resist the inference drawn in the above criticism that God could have decided for something other than the salvation of mankind through the incarnation, death and resurrection of his Son. Since God has in fact acted as he has in Jesus Christ, all such speculation is in Barth's view irrelevant and unwarranted, in particular because we only know of the

⁹³Karl Barth, "The Gift of Freedom," trans. Thomas Weiser, in Barth, The Humanity of God (London: Collins, 1961), p. 71.

divine freedom, of election, and of God's being in act through Jesus Christ and no other.

In spite of this, however, it is difficult to see how Barth can avoid the criticism made. One is surely entitled to ask whether or not the doctrine of God developed on the basis of revelation is intelligible in itself, and not simply whether or not it corresponds in some sense to revelation. The idea that the divine being itself is determined by divine choice in the existential sense clearly has implications extending beyond how we understand the economy; what we are concerned with here is a fundamental metaphysical principle which is predicated of no less than God and is intended to serve as the basis for a whole theology. As such, it will have systematic implications extending beyond the doctrine of God into the whole of our theological system, including, for example, theological anthropology. The question whether or not it can be sustained in the metaphysical sense cannot be avoided so easily.

The fact is, therefore, that if God shows himself to be love, and so is love in himself, then the language of the divine decision should be abandoned, or at least qualified analogically, since there could have been no other alternative for God than love. As we have seen, however, Barth appears to hold that the idea of the divine decision obtains in a quite literal sense. On the other hand, Barth does treat the "perfections of the divine loving" prior to the "perfections of the divine freedom" in Church Dogmatics II/1, and makes the case that each is complete in itself, containing all the others.⁹⁴ God's love, therefore, is his freedom, and his freedom is his love. However, if this is the case, again, then the language of decision is inappropriate; the conclusion is not that God simply chose to be "for us," but that - if Barth is right

⁹⁴Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, pp. 351-677.

in suggesting that what God is ad extra he is ad intra - God's being "for us" is his being "for himself," so that God, in fact, made no choice at all. While the idea of the Word as the eternal man might still be able to survive, therefore, it could only do so by being divorced from the radical voluntarist conceptuality Barth employs.

These questions will be taken up in more detail in Chapter IV, where we shall see that Barth's understanding of the divine freedom, of God as event, and of election, together with its problematic nature, derives from his attempt to avoid the Hegelian view that the relation of the economic to the immanent Trinity can be apprehended in speculative logic. Despite the fact that Barth's position has questionable theological implications, however, it has been taken up extensively in post-Barthian Trinitarian theology. The problematic character of this theology of divine freedom is here, however, if anything, more obvious. This will become clear in our discussion of contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology. For the moment, however, we turn to the second major source of the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity in contemporary theology, the theology of Karl Rahner.

3. Rahner's Axiom

By way of further orientation to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in contemporary theology, we turn now to Rahner's axiom that the economic is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, which had considerable influence on subsequent Roman Catholic Trinitarian theology. Rahner's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity also reflects in many ways the central Trinitarian concerns of Barth's theology, so that his axiom serves as common ground in various contemporary Protestant treatments of the doctrine of the Trinity as well. In this sense, Rahner's position is representative of the specific Trinitarian

theologies with which we will be concerned in Chapter III.⁹⁵

The position against which Rahner's axiom is formulated is precisely the post-Nicene, and in particular, the Augustinian (Latin) understanding of the Trinity, where the distinction between the idea of the Trinity in itself, with three eternally consubstantial hypostaseis, and the Trinity of the economy of salvation, is fundamental to the whole conception. Rahner's dictum is directed in particular against the idea that the immanent Trinity is by definition truly God as he is in himself, over against the God who creates and redeems ad extra, and who, because and to the extent that he is involved with what he is not by nature, is a more metaphysically ambiguous reality.

Rahner's axiom thus marks an attempt to unify what traditional theology distinguishes. At the same time, however, it also presupposes the distinction already drawn in the older tradition, and therefore in some sense also the validity of the distinction. In his Trinitarian axiom, in other words, Rahner works within the terms of the distinction in order to formulate, not an undifferentiated view of the Trinity, but one in which two (still) differentiated aspects are somehow held together. For this reason, i.e., because Rahner's position is constructed in the light of the post-Nicene theology of the Trinity, the question arises whether or not Rahner's Trinitarian axiom confuses the eternal and the temporal, and ultimately God's own self-relatedness with his gracious condescension to what he is not by nature. If what we see in God's gracious acts in Jesus Christ is given only under the mode of kenosis, in other words, can Rahner's axiom be sustained?⁹⁶

⁹⁵It must be said, however, that Rahner's axiom can also be quoted in a variety of theologies for the simple reason that the logical force of the copula "is" in the formula "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa," is ambiguous.

⁹⁶Cf. Congar op. cit., III, pp. 3-17.

In this sense, Rahner's theology raises certain of the central problems which appear again in contemporary Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit. If the distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity is to be maintained, first of all, then one has to ask on what philosophical and theological basis. The problem here is that the older philosophical basis of the distinction, in particular, has largely disappeared in the philosophy of the modern era in general and of the past two centuries in particular. Secondly, the question of the precise meaning of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity which is asserted must be raised: what, in short, is the meaning of the "is" in Rahner's axiom and in its reinterpretation in the context of contemporary Trinitarian theologies?

Rahner's dictum must, therefore, be read as a polemical and radical thesis, directed against certain aspects of the older tradition of Trinitarian theology. His axiom states that the economic Trinity "is" the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, so that the point is in some sense to identify or to assert the fundamental unity of the economic and immanent aspects that the theological tradition, in effect, holds apart. The revolutionary character of Rahner's position in this sense is important to remember, and for this reason, its presuppositions and implications should be carefully examined.

Rahner's positive argument concerning the Trinity is essentially that the mysteries of grace or salvation and of God himself in his Trinitarian reality must be understood as one mystery, in such a way that the doctrine of the Trinity can be seen explicitly to live out of the existential concern for salvation.⁹⁷ His understanding of this new approach is clearly formulated in the place where he first states his Trinitarian axiom, directly characterizing it as the "basic thesis which establishes

⁹⁷Rahner, The Trinity, p. 39.

[the] connection between the treatises [on the doctrines of salvation and the Trinity] and presents the Trinity as a mystery of salvation (in its reality and not merely as a doctrine)...."⁹⁸ To say that the economic is the immanent Trinity and vice versa is therefore to say, for Rahner, that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be understood as a basic and essential expression of the reality of salvation.

Rahner's axiom, as a result, is also negatively orientated to certain aspects of the metaphysical tradition underlying Roman Catholic theology. This can be seen when its polemical presuppositions and implications are brought into view. Rahner's thesis is a theological protest against what he sees as the tendency in Christian piety and specifically in the older textbook theology of the Roman Catholic tradition to monotheism at the expense of a fully developed Trinitarianism.⁹⁹ The doctrine of the Trinity is here effectively isolated both from Christian spirituality and from the rest of the dogmatic system, with the result that, in the ordinary Christian consciousness, at least, the Trinity becomes simply a mystery which we know something about through revelation, but with little or no other relation to ourselves.¹⁰⁰ The systematic expression of this doctrinal isolation of the Trinity, for Rahner - and the real symbol, as it were, of its grip on the theological imagination - is the customary (Thomist) theological separation between the dogmatic treatises De Deo Uno and De Deo Trino.¹⁰¹ Rahner observes that what is in question in the former is the divine essence common to the three persons, but abstracted from them and conceived in a metaphysical manner. He then distinguishes this from the biblical (and

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 21-22, italics deleted.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 9-15.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 15-21.

Eastern) approach to the mystery of God which begins with the one unoriginate divinity, the Father; this one God is understood from salvation history as the God who begets, breathes forth, and sends his Son and his Spirit, thus introducing the basic content of the doctrine of the Trinity from the outset.¹⁰²

Rahner's argument is that an analogous approach in the contemporary context is required in order to resolve the doctrinal isolation of the Trinity in Western theology. First, the doctrine of God would be given a basically Trinitarian structure from the beginning, thus mitigating the excessively metaphysical content of the traditional doctrine of God and orienting the doctrine more directly towards salvation history.¹⁰³ Second, the doctrines of God

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 17-18.

¹⁰³In The Trinity, Rahner does not explicitly address the question what should become of the metaphysical God of Thomas Aquinas and of the subsequent tradition within the new approach. The question is, however, taken up elsewhere, for example, in his essay, "Observations on the Doctrine of God in Catholic Dogmatics," in Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, trans. Graham Harrison (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), IX, p. 133, where he argues that the traditional order of the treatises On the One God and On the Triune God is to be maintained, but that the content of the former must be modified in such a way as "to include the experience of salvation history." Cf. also Rahner, "Trinity in Theology," in Rahner et al., eds., Sacramentum Mundi (London: Burns & Oates, 1970), VI, p. 305: "For if the treatise De Deo Uno is to be real theology and not mere metaphysics, it cannot speak of the one God and his nature without speaking of the God of history and of a historical experience of him, of the God of a possible revelation and self-communication. Hence it is already orientated to the treatise De Deo Trino, which deals with such a God in salvation history." Thus we arrive at a doctrine of God which, in intention at least, is less strictly metaphysically conceived, and which is instead constructed retrospectively from the event of revelation in Christ, from which the specifically Christian knowledge of God is taken to begin. In addressing the question of the oneness of God with which we are largely concerned in the De Deo Uno, therefore, we must in fact be concerned with the unity of the Trinity as such. That unity, Rahner argues, must be understood with the biblical and Greek tradition as founded

and of the Trinity could be constructed directly in relation to the doctrines of salvation, so that both the ordinary Christian consciousness of the mystery of God and its formal dogmatic elaboration as well would no longer be isolated from the basic Christian proclamation of God's grace.

Rahner's critique of the standard Thomist position is thus that the doctrine of God in himself is here insufficiently related to salvation history and to the concrete life of faith. His claim is, in fact, that if the doctrine of the Trinity were to be abandoned, very little would have to change from a systematic point of view: in the ordinary Christian consciousness and in the "textbook theology" to which Rahner refers, it is, in effect, God who is understood to have become flesh in the incarnation rather than the Logos specifically; indeed, according to Rahner:

...starting from Augustine, and as opposed to the older tradition, it has been among theologians a more or less foregone conclusion that each of the divine persons (if God freely so decided) could have become man, so that the incarnation of precisely this person can tell us nothing about the

in the Father as the unoriginate source of the other two persons: "... if the title De Deo Uno is taken seriously, we are not dealing merely with the essence and attributes of God, but with the unity of the three divine persons. It is the unity of Father, Son and Spirit and not merely the unicity of the godhead, the mediated unity, of which the Trinity is the proper fulfilment, and not the immediate unicity of the divine nature which if considered as one numerically is of itself far from providing the foundation of the three-fold unity in God. But if one begins with the treatise De Deo Uno and not with De Divinitate Una, one is concerned at once with the Father, the unoriginated origin of the Son and the Spirit. And it is then strictly impossible to place one treatise after the other in the disjointed fashion which is still so common today." (Karl Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise 'De Trinitate'," in Rahner, Theological Investigations, IV, p. 102.)

peculiar features of this person within
the divinity.¹⁰⁴

What the Trinity is in itself thus appears in substance to be unrelated to the economy of salvation.

Against this, Rahner's thesis is that the Trinity is "a mystery of salvation, otherwise it would never have been revealed."¹⁰⁵ Behind this lies Rahner's key soteriological thesis that the basis of human salvation is a real divine self-communication to men and women by which we come to share in the divine life: salvation has its basis in God, in the precise sense that the grace of salvation is not created grace, but rather God himself in his saving activity in the creation.¹⁰⁶ The point is that if God has not communicated himself in the economy of salvation, then the whole economy breaks down as having no adequately theological basis. His argument here is essentially constructed on the model of the anti-Arian polemics of the patristic era, being specifically intended to exclude the idea that the Son and the Holy Spirit, the agents of the economy, are merely "provisional and incomplete mediations" between the Father and creation.¹⁰⁷ A genuine self-communication of God, he argues, is therefore necessary for an adequate soteriology.

Two questions arise in this context, one concerning the meaning of the "self-communication" of God mentioned, and the other, its relation to the economic-immanent Trinitarian identity asserted in Rahner's axiom. To take the question of meaning first, it is possible, clearly, to exclude from Rahner's theology the idea of an economic

¹⁰⁴Rahner, The Trinity, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 21, italics deleted.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 34-35.

¹⁰⁷Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise 'De Trinitate'," p. 97.

self-communication of the Father through the Son and in the Spirit along Middle or Neoplatonic lines (the path taken by Augustine in the De Trinitate, which presupposes the theory of illumination and of the mind's participation in God¹⁰⁸); Rahner explicitly restricts the idea of the economic Trinity to the biblical accounts of Jesus and the continuing life of grace in the Church, through the sacraments, etc. Rahner, therefore, clearly means by the divine self-communication in the economy the temporal coming of the Son of God in Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Only thus can the doctrine be truly conceived as "a mystery of salvation," as we have seen.

Beyond this, however, problems remain. It is possible, for example, for God to reveal something without, strictly

¹⁰⁸The distinction between scientia and sapientia which occupies Augustine in Books XIII and XIV of the De Trinitate is important in this context; the theory of illumination is to be associated with the latter. Scientia, which is the first form of intellection in Augustine's theology of the Trinity, deals with the God of biblical revelation, and is characterized as the knowledge of temporal things pertaining to faith. In scientia the supreme grace is that mankind is united with God in the unity of one person, Jesus Christ, who has released us from death and opened the way to immortality. In sapientia, by contrast, we contemplate the eternal as eternal. Temporal knowledge of the incarnation, mediated through Scripture and tradition, therefore, is finite, whereas sapientia is knowledge of the eternal, the possibility of which is grounded in the fact that the mind is in essence a created being which already participates in God by virtue of an immediate illumination by the eternal Word. That the mind is such, of course, is a direct result of the creative activity of God, by which we are not only given existence, but are also given a glimpse of the eternal divine Wisdom, reaching out to the creation by virtue of the divine goodness. Here we meet, in effect, another economic Trinity beyond the God of biblical revelation in Augustine's theology, in which, at the level of sapientia, the Trinity is discerned in the mind itself, in its being, intelligibility, and love, which reveal something of the being, intelligibility, and love of the God in which the mind participates, and which is the very basis of the mind's own rational reality.

speaking, revealing himself, much less communicating himself in the sense of literally passing over into a finite presence so that the latter can be truly designated as "God." One cannot, therefore, move immediately from the idea that Jesus Christ reveals God to the idea that God has communicated himself in Jesus Christ in this strict sense, although on other grounds, this view could be shown to be required. The idea of communication, in short, does not necessarily involve the idea of self-communication; human communication, at least, is not self-communication in the sense employed by Rahner, but is rather, in general, a linguistic or practical phenomenon which involves only the communication of an idea or attitude within a given shared framework of interpretation, or language. While there is, perhaps, a very partial revelation of the self in language, it remains the case that by my words I formulate and concretize my own thought and ensure that others understand what I have in mind in a particular situation, but in language I do not literally objectify my complete self or communicate what I literally am.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹Cf. also Karl Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," in Rahner, Theological Investigations, IV, p. 225, where Rahner defines symbolic representation as the "most primordial manner in which one reality can represent another," and continues: "...we call this supreme and primal representation, in which one reality renders another present (primarily 'for itself' and only secondarily for others) a symbol: the representation which allows the other 'to be there'." The humanity of Christ, Rahner argues, is such a symbol; it is that which renders the eternal Word of God present in the most immediate sense (ibid., pp. 236-240). The presupposition of this, however, according to Rahner, is that the humanity cannot be considered to be merely something in which the Word "dresses up and masquerades," but rather that "when God, expressing himself, exteriorizes himself, that very thing appears which we call the humanity of the Logos" (ibid., p. 239). In other words, the relation between the eternal Word of God and the humanity assumed in the hypostatic union cannot be simply external, as if the Word could have been expressed perceptibly in any number of created realities; if this were so, Rahner argues, the humanity would be merely a "signal" rather than a symbol in the sense

Despite these difficulties, however, it is clear that by "self-communication," Rahner means to denote the fact that God has given himself in a literal sense to human beings in the economy of salvation. The idea, as such, is drawn from the theological tradition, and is intended to represent the view that only such a real presence of God, through the Son and Spirit, in the saving economy is sufficient to guarantee its soteriological significance. From this point of view, the idea of self-communication would appear to be an attempt to express in more dynamic, relational terms, what is essentially given in the homousion: that the one who is present with mankind in Jesus of Nazareth is true God, and not a lesser mediator between the Creator and his creation.

If, secondly, only a self-communication of God in the economy of salvation will do, it further follows for Rahner that there must also be a real self-communication in the immanent life of the Trinity. 'The Trinity ad extra and ad intra is identical, because one would not be speaking of a self-communication of God unless the two missions and the two persons thus there for us, in whom God comes to us, were "part" of God himself.'¹¹⁰ If the self-communication of the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit constitutes the essential content of the Trinitarian dynamic of the economy of salvation, in other words, then this self-communication must also likewise be fundamental in the immanent Trinitarian life. Otherwise, Rahner argues, not only our sonship, but also the Sonship of the incarnate Son, would be unrelated to the immanent life of the

defined, and thus an incomplete self-communication of the Word (ibid., p. 237). If, however, the idea of self-communication as employed in Rahner is problematic, then Rahner's theology of the symbol, which depends upon that theory of interpersonal communication, is also put in question.

¹¹⁰Karl Rahner, "Trinity, Divine," Sacramentum Mundi, VI, p. 300.

Trinity, while our experience of grace in the Church, which is appropriated to the Holy Spirit in the economy, could not be understood to have its eternal grounding in the Holy Spirit in the Trinity itself.¹¹¹

Within this conception, Rahner develops his understanding of the innertrinitarian processions of the Son and Spirit in terms of the modalities of the ad extra divine self-communication. The latter, according to Rahner, occurs in two distinct but related ways: insofar as it happens in history, it occurs as "truth"; insofar as it opens this history to transcendence and towards the future kingdom, it occurs as "love."¹¹² These two modalities are, of course, in a certain sense grounded in the anthropological conditions of the possibility of the divine self-communication, in the sense that they presuppose temporality and the existential historicity of human beings. But in the deeper sense, they correspond to the events of revelation: in Jesus, God's self-communication appears as truth in the sense that Jesus is the concrete historical revelation, objectively represented in human history, of the personal character of God; in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the moment of the subjective realization of this divine self-offering is in question, in the sense that it comes to determine the future in the existential sense. It is not, according to Rahner, that the divine self-communication only appears under these modes to us. Rather, they can only be understood as the self-communication of God if they also belong, prior to their economic expression, to God in himself.

Thus a transcendental theological deduction, in which the immanent Trinity is posited as the condition of the possibility of the economic, yields, for Rahner, the following basic immanent Trinitarian structure. There is

¹¹¹Rahner, The Trinity, p. 30.

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 82-85; 98-99.

innertrinitarian distinction, in the sense that there is the unoriginate Father who mediates himself to himself, the Son who is uttered by the Father in existential fidelity to himself, and the Spirit who is the reception and love of the other for himself.¹¹³ There is a double procession corresponding to these distinctions, in which there is utterance and the reception of the utterance, while that which is communicated here can 'rightly be called the divinity, hence the "essence" of God.'¹¹⁴ The Holy Spirit, finally, is conceived as the relational bond between the unoriginate self-communicator and his utterance, or between the Father and the Son.

Walter Kasper, in his critique of Rahner in The God of Jesus Christ, notes the remarkable fact that the theology Rahner develops here effectively mirrors that of the Augustinian-Western Trinitarian tradition, in that Rahner's theology represents the two processions in terms of knowledge and love.¹¹⁵ Kasper writes:

In the final analysis, by means of this transcendental theological deduction Rahner has renewed the essentials of Augustine's trinitarian speculation, although in doing so he has proceeded not by way of the analogia entis but by way of a synoptic presentation of the history of salvation itself. ... We cannot but admire the coherent way in which with the economic Trinity as his starting point Rahner attempts a theology of the Trinity from within; how at the same time he theologizes on the Trinity in the context of the modern philosophy of subjectivity; and how, last but not least, he succeeds in doing justice to the meaning and formulas of the classical tradition. The result is undoubtedly a bold and

¹¹³Ibid., pp. 101-103.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 102.

¹¹⁵Kasper, op. cit., p. 301.

successful design that can only be classed with other great productions of Christian theology and that can best be compared with Anselm's deduction of the doctrine of the Trinity from rationes necessariae.¹¹⁶

Kasper goes on immediately, however, to criticize Rahner on three principal grounds.¹¹⁷ First, the basic orientation of Rahner's Trinitarian theology towards the doctrine of salvation means that the doctrine of the Trinity can no longer play a structural role within Rahner's wider theology. Instead, in Rahner the doctrine of the Trinity has "handed its structuring role over to theological anthropology and is now studied only as a condition of the possibility of the doctrine of grace."¹¹⁸ Second, the loss of its structuring role leads to certain alterations in the internal meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity, most notably in that it loses its doxological character when it is developed entirely soteriologically. Thus, according to Kasper, the otherness of God as "Thou" is "in danger of being lost in Rahner's thematizing of the subjectivity of man in his theology of the Trinity."¹¹⁹ Third, Rahner places so much stress on the economic self-communication of God that it is difficult to arrive from this at a real inner self-communication within the Trinity. But the further implication of this weakness, for Kasper, is that if there is a deficient doctrine of the immanent Trinity, then there will necessarily be also a deficient doctrine of the economic Trinity. If, in short, it is difficult to speak of the divine hypostaseis as subjects in the divine eternity, then it is difficult to see how it

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 302-303.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 302.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

will be possible to speak of them as subjects in the history of salvation. This shows up, according to Kasper, in Rahner's Christology, where it is not clear that it is the Logos in whom the humanity of Christ subsists. In fact, Kasper argues, Rahner sees the hypostatic union as an unsurpassable mode of a self-communication in principle promised to everyone.¹²⁰

All of this, however, misses what is perhaps the fundamental problem inherent in Rahner's position. Rahner's theology of the Trinity is intended as an attempt to construct the doctrine in explicit relation to the economy of salvation as such, without external philosophical presupposition or prejudice. While, as Rahner admits, philosophical and metaphysical thinking can never be by-passed in theology (for any thinking which is systematically self-critical is philosophical and any which poses fundamental questions concerning what is ultimately real is metaphysical),¹²¹ his Trinitarian theology is nevertheless an attempt to by-pass the philosophical presuppositions of the tradition in order to establish the doctrine on separate, soteriological, ostensibly economic grounds. Kasper accepts this claim, which is, as we have seen, partly substantiated by Rahner's discussion of the treatises De Deo Uno and De Deo Trino.

The problem is, however, that Rahner's soteriological presuppositions are themselves highly metaphysical. The view, for example, that partial or incomplete mediations of the divine serve as an inadequate basis for salvation is an exact representation, although expressed materially in terms of the modern idea of the self-communicating subject, of the formal basis of the homoousion in the tradition - which is, as we have seen, anything but non-metaphysical.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 302-303.

¹²¹Rahner, "Observations on the Doctrine of God," pp. 143-144.

Secondly, the view that the doctrine of the Trinity must be formulated on the basis of the historical revelation of God in Jesus Christ and in the sending of the Spirit to the Church, rests upon the view that God is in himself something other than this historical revelation, for only in this way can he be understood to be revealed in it. And finally, the modes under which Rahner understands the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit cannot be said to be directly drawn from the economy itself. Contrary to what Kasper argues, the analogia entis is not abandoned; the "transcendental theological deduction" of the immanent Trinity from the economic is only rendered possible by the presupposition of an analogy of being (or perhaps, better, of an "analogy of existence") in the sense that the modes under which we experience God's self-communication - "truth" and "love" - could not be inferred to hold for God also in himself without the presupposition of an analogical relation. This is clear above all from the fact that Rahner's notions of truth as existential fidelity and of love as an opening towards transcendence and the future cannot, in themselves, apply to God in a literal sense, but only analogically - else the divine is reduced to temporal existentiality. The idea of the immanent Trinity as the exemplar of the economic, so central to the whole analogical procedure, has been retained; indeed, only in this way has the immanent / economic Trinitarian structure been sustained.

Ghislain Lafont's detailed critique of Rahner in Peut-on connaître Dieu en Jésus-Christ? raises a further question about Rahner's Trinitarian Grundaxiom, concerning the general meaning of the assertion that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa.¹²² Lafont argues that while Rahner's Trinitarian axiom recognizes the necessity of a duality in language used of the Trinity, in

¹²²Lafont, op. cit., pp. 190-228.

that it distinguishes between the economy and the Trinity in itself, Rahner's theology as a whole is insufficiently self-critical about such language, and as a result lacks conceptual precision.¹²³ Lafont, for example, argues that while Rahner attempts to return to a Greek model of the Trinity by conceiving of the Father as the principle of Trinitarian unity, he unfortunately does not take account of the difference between pre-Nicene and post-Nicene Greek Trinitarian theologies; in fact, according to Lafont, Rahner effectively conflates a post-Nicene homoousiite position, in which the three Subsistenzweisen are seen as perfectly equal, with a characteristically pre-Nicene "linear" understanding of the relation between the internal and external unfolding of God, in which a certain subordinationism is inevitable.¹²⁴ In the latter, what God is in his outreach to the world is taken to be simply an overflow of the internal relations between the Father and the Son and Spirit. The homoousion, by contrast, involves a clearer dualism than either the pre-Nicenes or Rahner allow between the economic and the immanent Trinity, since in principle it focuses theological attention on the immanent Trinity abstracted from the economy of salvation.¹²⁵

The conceptual imprecision here, according to Lafont, leads to fundamental ambiguities in Rahner's view of the economic-immanent Trinitarian unity as such, with the result that the Trinitarian axiom itself is not fully

¹²³Ibid., p. 226.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 190-197. According to Lafont, ibid., pp. 191-192, Rahner in effect adopts the pre-Nicene concepts of the logos endiathentos and the logos prophorikos in his view of the identity of the immanent and the economic Trinity.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 23-24.

justified.¹²⁶ Lafont argues that while the statement that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity can be accepted, so long as the economic Trinity is understood in terms of the historical economy of the Christ-event and Pentecost, the vice versa which accompanies this in the Rahnerian axiom cannot be sustained. To affirm that the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity would be, for Lafont, to jeopardize the freedom of God, and so the grace of God, by introducing the idea that the self-communication of the Father to the Son and in the Spirit necessarily issues in the creation of the world, and finally in the incarnation and Pentecost. According to Lafont, the great weakness which is implicit in this is that it would seem to be impossible that God, by nature, should do or be anything other than what he does and is in the economy.¹²⁷ As we have already seen, this also appears to be implied by Barth's doctrine of election. We will return to this question more formally in Chapter IV.

4. The Trinity "Between Theism and Atheism"

The contemporary Trinitarian thesis has also been increasingly linked in recent theology with the critique in modern philosophy of traditional metaphysical presuppositions.¹²⁸ This has resulted in a critique of the older Christian doctrine of God as immutable and impassible, which dates from the patristic era,¹²⁹ in favour

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 226.

¹²⁷Ibid., pp. 217-220.

¹²⁸Pannenberg, loc. cit.

¹²⁹Pelikan, e.g., op. cit., p. 229, writes: "...the early Christian picture of God was controlled by the self-evident axiom, accepted by all, of the absoluteness and the impassibility of the divine nature. Nowhere in all of Christian doctrine was this axiom more influential than in christology, with the result that the content of the divine

of what is intended to be a more explicitly Trinitarian doctrine of God, at once encompassing and geared to the economic events of the incarnation and Pentecost. This results in the common theme in contemporary theology of a doctrine of the Trinity which no longer relies on the older tradition of Christian theism - since this has become philosophically suspect, and has led, in fact, to philosophical atheism over the past two centuries - but which is constructed "between theism and atheism," as another current Trinitarian slogan puts it.¹³⁰

John O'Donnell notes that there are two main types of atheism in view in this overall position.¹³¹ The first is protest atheism, which stems largely from the problem of theodicy and the critical philosophy of, for example, Ernst Bloch, while the second, and, I shall argue, the more important, is the atheism of human freedom, deriving more generally from the broad development of thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These draw upon the two major movements of thought in the latter half of the nineteenth and arguably the whole of the twentieth century: humanism on the one hand and existentialism on the other, or what John Macquarrie speaks of in Twentieth Century Religious Thought as the Hegel-Marx-Bloch and the Kierkegaard-Nietzsche-Heidegger lines of thought.¹³² In what

as revealed in Christ was itself regulated by the axiomatically given definition of the deity of God. No one wanted to be understood as setting forth a view of Christ in which this definition was in any way compromised or jeopardized."

¹³⁰Cf. Kasper, op. cit., pp. 3-64; Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 3-104; and Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), pp. 200-207.

¹³¹O'Donnell, op. cit., pp. 11-15.

¹³²John Macquarrie, Twentieth Century Religious Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 378-379. Macquarrie's inclusion of Hegel in the humanist line, however, is questionable, since Hegel's own philosophy of "subjective

follows, I shall be concerned for the most part with the latter rather than with the former, since, while the distinction remains valid, the underlying idea in both streams which is of concern to us is the idea of freedom, so that the movement of thought in protest atheism can for our purposes here be broadly reduced to that underlying the atheism of freedom.

In the theological appropriation of protest atheism, the claim is sometimes made that contemporary theology must be developed as a "theology after Auschwitz," and thus that the Christian understanding of God can no longer be abstracted from the problem of suffering in human history.¹³³ The alternative, it is argued, would be for theology to lose relevance and credibility in the modern world: God cannot be isolated from the finite by means of a via negativa, for example, in a world where the evil of Auschwitz occurred and is a continuing possibility, without himself becoming irrelevant to the needs of the world. This, it is argued, is precisely the weakness of traditional Christian theism; by positing a God who is in himself impassible, it insulates the divinity from the pain of the world, and in so doing, isolates the world from God.

Over against protest atheism, which rejects the God of Christian theism in the face of human suffering, one of the prominent tendencies of recent theology has been the development of a theology of the suffering of God, "between theism and atheism."¹³⁴ The basic presupposition of this theology is derived from Barth: that God is to be understood in himself as the God who chooses fellowship

spirit" arguably underlies the existentialist tradition as much as his philosophy of "objective spirit" underlies the humanist tradition.

¹³³Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 1-6.

¹³⁴Cf., e.g., ibid., pp. 249-252; and Paul Fiddes, The Creative Suffering of God (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 1-45.

with his creation.¹³⁵ This choice, however, is understood to entail suffering, not as a choice of suffering for its own sake, as it were, but because the choice of fellowship with the creation involves suffering with the creation. At the centre of this theology stands the cross, since this reveals what the choice of fellowship entails for God himself, and since it is here, for Christian theology, that God is most fully revealed. In Moltmann's words. "A God who is conceived of in his omnipotence, perfection and infinity at man's expense cannot be the God who is love in the cross of Jesus ... who 'became poor to make many rich'."¹³⁶

Significantly, the specific form in which this doctrine has appeared has been as a doctrine of the Trinity; its foundations in the event of the cross requires such a differentiated view of God in the "persons" of the Father and the Son at least. (We shall see in Chapter III how the Holy Spirit also appears in this theology.) According to Moltmann, for example:

With a trinitarian theology of the cross faith escapes the dispute between and the alternative of theism and atheism; God is not only other-worldly by also this-worldly; he is not only God, but also man; he is not only rule, authority and law but the event of suffering, liberating love.¹³⁷

The argument is that what God is in his immanent Trinitarian being cannot be isolated from what he is in the economy of salvation. This leads, as we shall see later in this study, to a basically "dipolar," or better, "dialectical" doctrine of God, and to a specifically Trinitarian doctrine of God, where the idea of the unity of

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 100-109.

¹³⁶Moltmann, op. cit., p. 250.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 252.

the economic with the immanent Trinity is fundamental. In this way, an attempt is made to reconcile God with suffering, so that an answer can be given to protest atheism, and so that God, in fact, can be specifically understood as the triune God who, in his gracious condescension to us in Jesus Christ, takes the part of the suffering and who is thus himself a partisan in the human struggle against suffering.

In the theological tradition, of course, God does indeed suffer on the cross, but only as man, i.e., through the communicatio idiomatum in the incarnation. The conflict with Arianism, within the terms of the classical presupposition that God in his ousia is impassible, forced this conclusion, for the Arians argued that the Son who suffered could not be equal in divine status and being to the Father, who did not suffer.¹³⁸ The Greek idea of the divine as the immutable and of the non-divine as the mutable was the shared presupposition of both the Arian and the orthodox parties. When translated into Christological terms, this meant either that the Son of God suffered on the cross and was not divine, or at least not divine in the same sense as the Father, or else that the Son in himself also did not suffer on the cross, and so can still be God in the full sense – despite, as it were, the cross.

While, therefore, the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of protest atheism in contemporary Trinitarian theology proceeds from the point of view of God's own condescension to mankind in Jesus Christ, and above all in the cross, it also depends upon the collapse of the older metaphysical view which upholds the idea of divine immutability. Just as patristic Trinitarian theology was conceived in terms of philosophical concepts such as divine immutability and ousia which were the common inheritance of all Christian theologians, so the very

¹³⁸Mackey, op. cit., pp. 125ff., 171.

collapse of the philosophical conceptions underlying the patristic doctrine has made the development of a new Trinitarian theology inevitable. Indeed, from this point of view, it is the same philosophical movement underlying the collapse of those older categories which also underlies the contemporary concern to assert the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity.

This, in effect, introduces the atheism of human freedom, which even more directly rests upon the collapse of the older metaphysics as appropriated in the Christian theological tradition. The metaphysical tradition is tremendously varied in its emphases, of course, but in general, it was united in the basic conviction that truths and values are absolute in some sense, and that it is only by virtue of a rational or spiritual relation to those absolutes, and ultimately to God, in whom all such truths and values are summed up, that our distinctive humanity is realized. Even the rise of modern philosophy in the seventeenth century and in its subsequent development can be seen to have left this presupposition essentially intact, although it must be said that it attempted to establish it on a new foundation, namely, the Cartesian cogito.¹³⁹

It would no doubt be possible to trace the development of the atheism of human freedom from the origins of modern philosophy in Descartes¹⁴⁰ through the Enlightenment down to

¹³⁹This is certainly true in the case of Rationalism. Empiricism, particularly as represented in the philosophy of Hume, does challenge this thesis, but even so remains a relatively minor phenomenon over against the wider philosophical development of post-Cartesian philosophy. This is seen in the fact that the Kantian philosophy is the overcoming of Hume, and the establishing again of the possibility of a priori knowledge, even if more rigorously on the basis of the subjective consciousness.

¹⁴⁰A number of theologians argue that the philosophy of Descartes marks the beginning of the development of modern atheism, in the sense that Descartes' achievement in founding a system of philosophy and science on the sheer

Kant, and finally into the more radical existential and humanist philosophies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This has, however, been done at length by others, and there is no need here to rehearse the familiar material.¹⁴¹ What is, after all, of particular significance in all of this is relatively simple: contemporary cultural thinking about God in the post-Christian era presents a profound crisis to Christian theology. The so-called "death of God," which refers primarily to the death of the cultural significance of God, but which has, as such, deep intellectual roots in the course of modern thought, raises questions of the significance of God also for contemporary Christian theology, which shares the same cultural traditions.

Jüngel's starting-point in God as the Mystery of the World, for example, is the assumption that the God of Christian theism is indeed dead.¹⁴² In this, he follows not only Hegel, who spoke in his own day of the cultural death of God (and fought against it), but also Nietzsche, and Heidegger, who hold that the Christian metaphysical tradition reached its logical conclusion with the death of God; the idea of God as transcendent, absolute, impassible, timeless, and, in a word, "over us," has simply come to be seen in this tradition as a dangerous abstraction on the one hand and as a philosophical absurdity on the other, in

act of thought as such issued, albeit unintentionally, in the development of the anthropocentric philosophy and theology of the Enlightenment. Chief among these is Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 111-126, whose judgment on Descartes is extremely severe: that in his philosophy God is totally relativized by man. This judgment can, however, be questioned from the point of view of the Cartesian philosophy itself.

¹⁴¹Probably the best account in the context of Trinitarian theology is given by Kasper, op. cit., pp. 16ff.

¹⁴²Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 3ff.

view of the sheer finitude of human thought.¹⁴³ Here we have, in essence, a denial of the metaphysical idea of the transcendent God of the Western tradition, carried out in the name of the metaphysical primacy and ultimacy of this-worldly life, taken as the starting-point of Trinitarian theology.¹⁴⁴

From the point of view of the history of ideas, the crucial period in this whole development was undoubtedly the nineteenth century, when the idea of the necessity of a rational or spiritual human relation to the transcendent was put in question. This occurred on a cultural level largely as a result of factors such as the achievements of nineteenth century empirical science, the positing of the theory of evolution by Darwin, and the remarkable sense of confidence in humanity which emerged as a result of rapid technological development. More importantly, however, it occurred specifically in the nineteenth century philosophical tradition.

Karl Löwith, for example, has traced this development in his study of nineteenth century philosophy, From Hegel to Nietzsche.¹⁴⁵ Löwith begins his discussion with the philosophy of Hegel, for whom essentially the human destiny of freedom is still realized only in the context of the human relationship with God.¹⁴⁶ Thus, for Hegel the truth of mankind does not merely lie in ethical or bourgeois political life, and much less in individual sensuous existence, but rather in God: the truth of mankind is spirit, and spirit is a theological category of

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 45-49, with reference to Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche's Wort 'Gott ist tot'," in his Holzwege (4th ed.; Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1963), pp. 193ff.

¹⁴⁴Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 49-55.

¹⁴⁵Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche, trans. David E. Green (London: Constable, 1965).

¹⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 19-20.

relationship.¹⁴⁷ It is the anthropological understanding which is important to grasp here, for although Löwith notes that the radical philosophers of the nineteenth century regarded Hegel's philosophy as the end of metaphysics in the old sense, what was important to them was not the end of traditional metaphysical thought per se, but that the end of metaphysics in this sense must herald a decisively new, and radical, understanding of what human nature is, and so of what it is to be distinctively human:

Hegel [in the interpretation of the radicals of nineteenth century philosophy] brings to an end the truly metaphysical definitions of man, which define him from the standpoint of something absolute. Starting with Feuerbach, man was considered anthropologically, from the conditional standpoint of the finite individual. Only this individual man, based upon himself, gives rise to an actual problem of man.¹⁴⁸

The importance of Löwith's analysis lies in particular in his understanding of the distinctively anti-Hegelian and, via Hegel, the anti-metaphysical character of the philosophical revolution of the nineteenth century. Löwith notes, for example, the fact that the rejection of the traditional notion of humanness, defined in Christian theology in terms of the human relation to God, meant also that the idea of humanness itself was effectively called into question once its older theological foundation had been lost:

At first, the nineteenth century believed it possible to replace Christianity with humanity and humanism (Feuerbach, Ruge, Marx), but with the

¹⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 307-308.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 308-309.

result that faith was finally lost in humanity (Stirner, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche). A further consequence of the doubt in a humanity emancipated from Christianity is the present "dehumanization" of man. The inner logic of this development can be traced step by step in the characteristic representatives of the historical movement of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁹

Over against the older metaphysical anthropology represented by Hegel (and which Löwith understands, significantly, as the "Christian" view in the above quotation), which understands humanity primarily in relation to the Absolute, the nineteenth century revolution begins with the assumption that what is distinctively human – human spirituality and human freedom in all its concrete associations – is indeed a purely human reality, grounded, not in a transcendent divine being or order of existence, but rather in finite human existence as such. But this is to say also that the old, supposedly "absolute" order of truth and value is fully given in the finite. As the philosophical revolution proceeds, therefore, the sense of literally absolute truth and value is lost, while the absoluteness, as it were, of sheer human facticity is preserved. It is this problem which continues to haunt Western philosophy, Western culture, and Western theology, and as a cultural phenomenon, it is precisely this which constitutes the atheism of human freedom.

The position represented here by Jüngel in particular in response to this movement is essentially an attempt to by-pass the atheistic critique of God in the name of freedom on two counts. First of all, it takes the content of the Christian faith itself as an implicit critique of the theistic God who is removed from the finitude of the world, by understanding the economy as integral to the

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 310.

divine life. Secondly, it preserves the idea of the freedom of humanity as conceived philosophically by no longer making God a threat to it; it is, in short, no longer the case for Jüngel and for the theological tradition he represents, either that the true, the good, and the beautiful are absolutes which, in consequence, are theological in character in that sense, or that God himself is absolute as in the older tradition. From this point of view, rather, God is neither foreign to finite historicity, nor finite historicity foreign to God. The two, in fact, are brought together in the Christ-event, and, for Jüngel in particular, above all in the event of the cross, where the deity of God is defined.¹⁵⁰ Here God's existential unity with finitude defines his own essential unity with finitude, so that to think of God no longer demands, for example, that one think of the supreme essence, "than which none greater can be conceived," which the finitude of human thought as now conceived cannot accommodate, but rather that God is found in the finitude which characterizes the totality of human being itself.

The idea of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity, from this point of view, is not merely an accidental by-product of this line of reasoning, but rather follows from the basic principle upon which the whole scheme rests. For it is not simply the case here that the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity are separate, but correspond in some ill-defined sense; instead, what God is as immanent Trinity is what he is in the economy, in the sense that the unity of God with Jesus Christ and the continuing mission of Christ through his Spirit in the Church is what God is. Thus, out of the rejection of classical Christian theism there springs a new direction in Trinitarian theology, Trinitarian theology itself being the

¹⁵⁰Jüngel, op. cit., p. 202. See also below, Chapter III, section 2.

means by which the very concept of God is, as it were, "rehabilitated" after the collapse of the older metaphysical tradition. God not only cannot be conceived as the absolute "other," according to the atheism of freedom which finds the concept unthinkable, but God, in the Christian conception, according to the new line of theological thought, must not be thought as such, since God is revealed in Jesus Christ, not as the transcendent God of the older tradition, but rather as the God who "identifies himself" with the finite in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

It is thus the doctrine of the Trinity itself, as a doctrine of the unity of the economic and immanent Trinity, which enables contemporary theology to find a way beyond both classical theism and contemporary atheism. Through the idea of the unity of God in himself and in his economic condescension, the isolation of God as metaphysically absolute and thus the view of God as philosophically inadmissible and culturally irrelevant can be banished, while this issues in a new form and role for the doctrine of the Trinity as such. Instead of serving as a guarantee of the saving efficacy of the work of the Son and Spirit, as in patristic theology, or an abstract doctrine of God in himself which is accepted on the basis of authority and which remains only to be logically clarified, as in later scholastic theology, the doctrine of the Trinity as such becomes the Christian concept of God in the face of the theological problem of contemporary atheism, and an expression of the idea that God is not to be conceived in glorious isolation from the world, but is himself in some sense one with the finite order of human experience, which is, for contemporary thought, the real locus of religious meaning, as of everything else that is practically and intellectually significant.

Very large theological and philosophical questions thus surround the development of the theology of the

Trinity in the contemporary era. It would, for example, be possible to discuss the problem of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity in the context of the general theological and philosophical question of the concepts of time and eternity, or, again, with the concepts of passibility and impassibility explicitly in view in this sense. In fact, much of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the contemporary era is closely bound up with these specific problems. In the present context, however, certain limitations are obviously required, and for this reason, it is necessary to restrict discussion as much as possible to the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, as it appears in formal discussions of Trinitarian theology and in concrete contemporary Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen that the contemporary attempt to reorientate the doctrine of the Trinity to the economy of salvation, and to develop the doctrine of the immanent Trinity from the economic, "sub specie temporis," as it was put in the Introduction, involves a radical reformulation of Trinitarian theology. By way of anticipation, we will see further in Chapter IV that contemporary Trinitarian theology can broadly be characterized as "dialectical," since the relatedness of the immanent Trinity to the economic is here held to be not only soteriologically necessary, but ontologically necessary to the very constitution of the Trinity as such. Certain of the problems involved in this conception will also be discussed in Chapter IV. First, however, we turn to the question of the place of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the Trinity in contemporary Trinitarian theology.

III
FOUR TRINITARIAN
THEOLOGIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this Chapter, four contemporary Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit, drawn from the economy of salvation and developed on the basis of the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, will be considered. Since, in principle, any Pneumatological aspect of the economy might be developed in this way, the "models" to which we shall limit ourselves cannot be taken to be exhaustive of all the possibilities. Nevertheless, the four to be considered represent the main lines of the recent development of Trinitarian Pneumatology. There will, of course, be points at which the various theological positions overlap; since all are, in intention at least, derived from the economy of salvation and are developed in relation to the theological tradition, particular themes recur in the different models. However, as we shall see, the characteristic emphases of the various theologies justify the separate categorizations.

The first of our models, the "revealedness model," represents the Pneumatology of Barth himself, along with others, including Rahner. This theology of the Holy Spirit begins with the Pauline and Johannine understanding of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, who brings people to faith and who in some sense mediates the saving significance of Christ to the believer. The term "revealedness model" is derived from Barth's Pneumatology, in which the Spirit appears as the "Revealedness" of "Revelation," i.e., the Spirit of the subjective realization of the objective

revelation which has occurred in the Christ-event.

I have called the second the "atonement model," since it is primarily concerned with the role of the Holy Spirit in the event of the crucifixion. The theology of the cross has recently come to the fore in a great deal of Trinitarian theology, raising questions, for example, of the suffering of God and the nature of the divine unity in face of the dereliction of the crucified Son of God. Here the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the vinculum caritatis has been appropriated with new vigour in the new theology of the Trinity as the "atoning" principle both in the Trinity itself, and, by implication, also in the salvation of men and women.

The third, the "anointing model," takes up the Trinitarian significance of the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, and thus also, by implication, of the dependence of Jesus as man upon the Spirit in his life and ministry. This is in large measure a Christological question, of course, to the extent that it concerns the relation of the Holy Spirit together with that of the Logos to the human nature of Jesus. However, if the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, as contemporary Trinitarian theology asserts, then this aspect of the Trinitarian economy in the Christ-event itself must in some sense be susceptible to such a treatment.

The fourth Trinitarian model with which we shall be concerned can be called the "eschatological model." In this case, we are not concerned with the Trinitarian significance of a specific salvation-historical event, but rather more with the problem of the Trinity and salvation history as such. The Trinitarian theology in view here takes its rise from the fact that the economy of salvation, and thus the work of the Trinity ad extra, is not yet complete, but is orientated to the future consummation of the kingdom of God. The eschatological aspect of the economy of salvation can be associated particularly with

the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, and in particular in the Pauline literature, the Spirit appears as the "arrabon" which guarantees the future glorification of the children of God (2 Cor. 1: 22; Eph. 1: 13-14).¹ In the theological tradition, correspondingly, the present and future work of salvation is appropriated to the Holy Spirit; in the classical Creeds, for example, the confession of faith in the Holy Spirit involves also the Church, the resurrection, and the life of the world to come. If, however, the economic basis of the doctrine of the Trinity, thus conceived, is in essence incomplete, and if the economic and the immanent Trinity are to be identified, then the question arises whether or not the immanent Trinity is in itself orientated to the eschaton, and is thus itself incomplete. Here the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is of particular Trinitarian significance.

The four models thus represent four major theological problems which the attempt to develop a Trinitarian doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the economy has to face, and bring into focus four crucial issues for contemporary Trinitarian theology: the role of the Spirit in theological epistemology; the role of the Spirit in the suffering of Jesus on the cross, together with its soteriological significance; the relation of the Holy Spirit to the humanity of Christ; and the Spirit's role in the eschatological aspect of the economy of salvation.

1. The Revealedness Model

In Chapter II, Karl Barth's primary Trinitarian analogy of the Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness was examined briefly in connection with the idea of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity. In this section, the implications of this analogy for Trinitarian

¹See, e.g., Neill Q. Hamilton, The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1957).

Pneumatology will be examined more fully. Barth is, of course, predominantly a theologian of the Word, whose main contribution to theology, and specifically to the doctrine of the Trinity, undoubtedly stems from his Christology. At the same time, however, Barth's theology is not "Christomonistic" in this sense; although Barth is not known for the strength of his Pneumatology, he is profoundly aware of the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and devotes long sections of the Church Dogmatics to its characteristic themes.² The comparative Pneumatological weakness of Barth's theology does not represent so much a failure to examine the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, therefore, as a failure on Barth's part to develop as profound a Pneumatology as his Christology. Despite this Pneumatological weakness, however, Barth's position has been extremely influential, and represents a profound and important tendency in recent Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit.³

Unfortunately, the Pneumatology of the Church Dogmatics remains materially incomplete, in that Barth's projected Pneumatological treatment of the "Doctrine of Redemption" in a volume V was never realized. However, even in its author's own estimation, the Church Dogmatics is not only materially, but also theologically incomplete. This can be seen above all from the well-known autobiographical article which Barth wrote near the end of his life, in which he speaks frankly of the possibility of a theology "predominantly and decisively of the Holy Spirit."⁴

²Philip J. Rosato, The Spirit as Lord (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981), pp. 3-43, shows the extent to which Barth was concerned throughout his theological career with the problem of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

³Cf., e.g., Claude Welch, "The Holy Spirit and the Trinity," Theology Today, 8 (1951), 29-40.

⁴Karl Barth, "Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher," in Barth, The Theology of Schleiermacher, ed. Dietrich Ritschl; trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T.

"Everything", he wrote, "which needs to be said, considered, and believed about God the Father and God the Son in an understanding of the first and second articles might be shown and illuminated in its foundations through God the Holy Spirit, the vinculum pacis inter Patrem et Filium."⁵ Barth's statement here is all the more remarkable for being set in an essay in which he characterizes his Christocentrism as directed against the subjectivism of Schleiermacher and the liberal tradition, and in which he argues that the new theology of the Spirit of which he speaks might, in fact, rehabilitate Schleiermacher's theology, although within the terms of Barth's Christological corrective. However, Barth did not himself succeed in developing such a theology of the Holy Spirit.⁶

& T. Clark, 1982), pp. 277-278.

⁵Ibid., p. 278.

⁶See Rosato, op. cit., pp. 47-128, for a survey of Barth's nonetheless important treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Rosato argues that Barth's overall doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Church Dogmatics can be outlined under four headings. The first is the idea of Revealedness which appears in the context of Barth's development of the doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics I/1. Here the Holy Spirit is understood as the divine ground of our subjective incorporation into the event of God's revelation in Christ, and an essentially soteriological argument (of the sort we have already seen) is presented for the classical Pneumatological doctrines of the homousion and the filioquist understanding of the procession. This lays the groundwork for the basic conception of the Holy Spirit in Barth's overall Pneumatology. Barth's position here, however, is deepened over time through the themes which follow, which requires that these be taken into account as well. The second, according to Rosato, is the theme of God's ontic revelation in Christ assuming noetic form by the work of the Spirit in the Church, which Rosato treats as part of the problem of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of election; this comprises Church Dogmatics I/2 and II/1-2. Thirdly, there is the doctrine of the Spiritus Creator which appears in III/1-4 in the context of the problem of ethics and the question of human freedom, and fourthly, there is the Pneumatology of Church Dogmatics IV/1-4, in which Barth is primarily concerned with the Holy Spirit, the Church, and

Barth's primary paradigm for the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church Dogmatics is the idea of the "Revealedness" of "Revelation." The Revealedness idea, as has been said, derives immediately from the central Trinitarian analogy of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Revealer, his Revelation, and its Revealedness which appears in the first half-volume of the Church Dogmatics.⁷ It also clearly and emphatically reflects his desire, carried out through subsequent volumes, to provide a Christological foundation and explication of the work of the Holy Spirit. These themes underlie the whole development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Barth's theology, both in its economic aspect (to which the themes themselves immediately refer) and in respect of the Pneumatological content of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity.

In what follows, two related aspects of the Revealedness model, drawn from Barth but applicable to the paradigm as a whole, will be discussed.⁸ First of all, Barth

the question of sanctification.

⁷Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. 304-333.

⁸Rahner's Pneumatology, e.g., although more restricted in scope and less profound theologically than Barth's, is comparable to Barth's on these points. Not only do Barth and Rahner operate in their Trinitarian theologies with a similar view of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity, but also with analogous models of the economic and the immanent Trinity themselves. (On Rahner's Pneumatology in general and its role in his wider theology of the Trinity, cf. also Barbara Ann Finan, "The Mission of the Holy Spirit in the Theology of Karl Rahner," (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1986), pp. 86-87, 229-253.) On the one hand, we have in Barth the economic idea of the Revealer, the Revelation, and its Revealedness, and the filioquist model of the Father who begets himself as Son from all eternity, who as Son is so begotten by the Father, and who is also in that very distinction the negation of isolation, i.e., the Holy Spirit as the love which unites them. On the other hand, in Rahner we have the self-communication of the Father in history as truth and love, transposed into the Trinity ad intra as the movement

maintains the homousion of the Spirit for soteriological reasons explicitly in connection with the Revealedness idea; the Revealedness of Revelation, according to Barth, is integral to the economy of salvation, and its absolute authority only explicable on the grounds that that Revealedness, i.e., the Holy Spirit in his work ad extra, is one in authority, glory, and being with the Father and the Son.⁹ Secondly, Barth maintains the Western view of the procession of the Spirit through the filioque doctrine, which, in his view, provides the internal Trinitarian basis of the fact that, ad extra, the Holy Spirit is precisely the Spirit of Christ or the Revealedness of Revelation.¹⁰ The question which will be posed here relates both to Barth's understanding of the Spirit as Revealedness and to the filioque in themselves, and to the connection Barth

from "the unoriginate who mediates himself to himself (Father), the one who is in truth uttered for himself (Son), and the one who is received and accepted in love for himself (Spirit)...." (Rahner, The Trinity, p. 102). Rahner's central Pneumatological thesis is that the Holy Spirit ad extra is the reality of "uncreated grace" in the life of faith, making possible an immediate unity of the created spirit with God; this is both prior to and the presupposition of the love and knowledge of God which we have through the gifts of "created grace" in this life (William J. Hill, "Uncreated Grace - A Critique of Karl Rahner," Thomist, 26 (1963), 339). The Holy Spirit's mission ad extra, therefore, is understood by Rahner to be the condition of the possibility of the graced union of the spiritual creature with the Triune God. Underlying this specific understanding of the work of the Spirit, however, is the basic self-communication model of the Trinitarian life ad extra and ad intra which we have already encountered, in which the Father communicates himself both eternally and temporally, in the economy, under the modalities of "truth" and "love" (Rahner, op. cit., p. 99). By the work of the Holy Spirit, and so under the modality of love, we are drawn into the divine life, to the "truth," and finally to the Father who is the source both of the divine self-unfolding in itself and of the Trinitarian outreach into which we are incorporated.

⁹Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. 469-473.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 473-487.

draws between the two themes. We shall see that both the Revealedness idea in Pneumatology, and the case for the filiogue on the basis of the idea of the Spirit as Revealedness, are problematic in significant respects.

Barth's treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in terms of the Revealedness idea can be clarified and summarized by a brief survey of an early representative subsection on Pneumatology from Church Dogmatics I/2. In "The Holy Spirit the Subjective Reality of Revelation,"¹¹ the basic Pneumatological problem is presented as the problem of how men and women can be the object of God's revelation, how God can be revealed to us, and how we can be free for God. The terms of the discussion, therefore, are how the revelation which is objectively real in Jesus Christ can become subjectively real in men and women. Barth's answer is that this subjective reality of revelation is based on the reality of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Because salvation is wholly the work of God, Barth argues, it can only be by an act of God that we become open to receive God's self-revelation in his Son, the Word. This revelation cannot be complete until it has been so received, and so its reception is properly to be conceived as a moment within the whole event of revelation rather than as an external response to it.¹² According to Barth, "Not God alone, but God and man together constitute the content of the Word of God attested in Scripture."¹³

It is because the work of the Holy Spirit is thus to make men and women part of the one whole event of revelation that the work of the Spirit can never be

¹¹Barth, op. cit., I/2, pp. 203-242.

¹²Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance; trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), pp. 531-539 relates the work of the Spirit more concretely to a genuine freedom given to people to say "no" to sin and "yes" to the direction and calling of God.

¹³Barth, op. cit., I/2, p. 207.

divorced from the "objective reality and possibility of revelation," Jesus Christ the Word. It is in this event and no other that God and mankind meet; in Barth's subsequent treatment of the Church as the place where revelation has reached men and women to become subjective reality, therefore, the life of the Church is characterized entirely in terms of Christ, the Word.¹⁴ It can be no other way for Barth at this point: he has defined Pentecost teleologically as the making subjectively real of the objective event of revelation in Christ - the awakening, confirming, and establishing of Christian faith in the subjective life of the Church. "Subjective revelation can only be the repetition, the impress, the sealing of objective revelation upon us; or, from our point of view, our discovery, acknowledgement and affirmation of it."¹⁵

Through the Revealedness idea, the Holy Spirit is, therefore, fundamentally conceived by Barth as the guarantor of the subjective reality and possibility of revelation. Barth can thus write: "The event of revelation has clarity and reality on its subjective side because the Holy Spirit, the subjective element in this event, is of the essence of God Himself."¹⁶ The point Barth makes here is epistemological as well as soteriological, since it is the work of the Spirit to reveal Christ and to awaken faith in the believer.¹⁷ The role of the Spirit here lies on the level of the subjective basis of the human relationship with God in faith, where the active agent is the Holy Spirit, and not men and women understood to be capable of making their own response to God's revelation of

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 214-232.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 466.

¹⁷Barth, op. cit., II/1, pp. 12-13, follows Calvin in understanding faith as a species of knowledge.

themselves. The Revealedness of Revelation is, and is not merely the external effect of, the Holy Spirit.

A number of criticisms have been made of the idea of Revealedness in Barth's Pneumatological conception. Philip Rosato, first of all, argues in The Spirit as Lord that Barth's view of the Holy Spirit ultimately involves too limited a role for the Spirit in Barth's soteriology and ecclesiology.¹⁸ Since everything of ontic significance has been done by Christ, and is essentially comprehended in the whole dynamic of the et homo factus est of the second article of the Creed, Barth's Pneumatology virtually becomes a subsidiary of his Christology. Rosato complains in particular that the Trinitarian notion of Revealedness restricts the Spirit of God to a merely noetic role in salvation and in the Church.¹⁹ According to Rosato, there is, for example, no room for eschatology in Barth's Pneumatology, because the Holy Spirit always points back to the decisive "then" of Jesus Christ, and that only in such a way as to confirm noetically the ontic accomplishment given in the mission of Jesus as the incarnate Word.²⁰ Against Barth, therefore, Rosato attempts to establish "a case for the ontic validity of the Spirit's mission,"²¹ and argues that the work of the Spirit must be seen to extend to the times before and after the incarnation, and to be life-giving in itself.²² Rosato argues that Barth's proscription against such an "ontic" role for the Holy Spirit in soteriology in particular militates against the

¹⁸Rosato, op. cit., pp. 157-158, 160-166. Rosato's criticism, however, conflicts with his own survey of Barth's Pneumatology, outlined above, footnote number 6.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 158-160.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 159, 161.

²¹Ibid., pp. 160ff.

²²Ibid., p. 162.

divine freedom, and that, in Barth's theology, the Holy Spirit effectively no longer blows where he wills.²³

George Hendry makes a similar criticism of Barth's Pneumatology in The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology.²⁴ Hendry again makes the point that the weakness of Barth's doctrine of the Creator Spirit is related to the predominance of the Revealedness idea in Barth's thought, since the former has nothing whatever to do with human subjectivity or the problem of faith. The sustaining activity of the Spirit in creation, Hendry maintains, is a movement from God to the world which takes place whether the world accepts it or not, and, on its anthropological side, whether people know or believe it or not. The Revealedness idea therefore effectively excludes the doctrine of the Creator Spirit from consideration, and narrows the scope of the work of the Spirit in Barth's conception.

These criticisms also reflect Gustaf Wingren's wider assessment of Barth's position in Theology in Conflict, where he argues that Barth's theology is fundamentally flawed in being concerned with the modern problem of knowledge rather than with the authentically biblical problem of sin and righteousness.²⁵ Wingren complains in particular that Barth sees the incarnation as a manifestation, under the category of revelation, rather than as a dramatic conflict between God and evil. Barth does go some way towards correcting this imbalanced emphasis on manifestation in Church Dogmatics IV/1, he concedes, with his acknowledgement there that in his

²³Ibid., p. 161. Barth himself, of course, contends that the divine freedom is expressed precisely in the role he accords the Holy Spirit.

²⁴Hendry, op. cit., pp. 42-52.

²⁵Gustaf Wingren, Theology in Conflict, trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), pp. 23-44.

obedience Christ perfects our failed obedience. Unfortunately, however, for Wingren, even here the emphasis is largely on how this obedience reveals an aspect of the ad intra life of the Trinity, rather than on how it vicariously rescues us from sin and death. Wingren thus concludes that Barth's theology ultimately remains determined by the modern problem of knowledge, and that, in sum, "'Revelation" stands in the place where "justification," or "forgiveness of sins," i.e., the gospel in the essential meaning of that word, ought to stand.'²⁶

All of these criticisms derive from the fact that Barth's doctrine of the Trinity is structured by the problem of revelation. The result is that Barth's Pneumatology is formulated as an answer to the problem of how sinful mankind, which has no capacity for the Word of God, nevertheless does hear the Word and obey.²⁷ According to Barth, not only does God speak his Word, but God is also the Word spoken, and thirdly himself again as the God who brings his revelation to fruition in its subjective realization in the faith of the believer. The fundamental importance of this Trinitarian thesis in Barth's theology leads to the idea that the Holy Spirit does not and cannot bring the revelation of anything independent of or beyond Christ, but is to be regarded "in every sense as the instruction, illumination and stimulation of man through the Word and for the Word."²⁸

The noetic restriction in Barth's Pneumatology thus has deep roots in his wider Trinitarian and Christological thought. We have already seen the connection Barth made in his later years between a possible, future Pneumatology and the possibility of a rehabilitation of the theology of

²⁶Ibid., pp. 28-29.

²⁷Barth, op. cit., I/1, p. 407.

²⁸Ibid., p. 453.

Schleiermacher. Hans Urs von Balthasar has argued that the basic framework of Schleiermacher's theology is already reflected in Barth's, and, in particular, that the "point of absolute intensity" in Schleiermacher, the feeling of absolute dependence, is transposed in Barth's theology to become the point of human contact with the Word of God, in faith, understood as a Pneumatological event.²⁹ Balthasar's point needs to be taken seriously, for while the context of Barth's treatment of the Holy Spirit is the doctrine of the Trinity, its primary concern, particularly in the early volumes of the Church Dogmatics, is the problem of how it is that sinful mankind can hear the Word of God – a problem of theological anthropology.

As Rosato points out, Barth's Pneumatology is so conceived as a polemic against his main intellectual rivals in the old Liberal tradition, who, in Barth's view, effectively placed Pneumatology above Christology and eventually placed the human spirit, with which they confused the Holy Spirit, over the divine Word.³⁰ But by framing his position in opposition to his understanding of the older position of the Liberal tradition, Barth did not alter the noetic terms of the older Pneumatological standpoint; he merely reversed the priority by setting Christology above Pneumatology, and by placing Christology and Pneumatology also above the human spirit in the whole question of the knowledge of faith. Indeed, from this point of view, the criticism of Barth that is often made, that he telescopes the whole of theology into Christology, appears to be mistaken. In fact, the dominance of the Word in Barth's Christology is such that the Holy Spirit is accorded little or no strictly Christological significance;

²⁹Hans Urs von Balthasar, The Theology of Karl Barth, trans. John Drury (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1972), pp. 160-161.

³⁰Rosato, op. cit., p. 161.

rather, the Holy Spirit, because of the idea of Revealedness which determines the shape of Barth's Pneumatology, is orientated primarily to the problems of faith and the Church, so that the Pneumatological restriction is more properly designated as ecclesiological than Christological.

Barth's Pneumatology at this point, furthermore, appears to lead to the loss of a genuine human role, under the Holy Spirit, in salvation history. It is true that Barth attempts to hold God and mankind together in the event of revelation, but in fact Barth's Christology, as Rosato argues, is the one arena of true ontic significance. The difficulty here is not only that Barth adopts a doctrine of human depravity, but that Barth, consistent with his doctrine of election, regards Jesus Christ alone as the true man.³¹ The truth of our own existence is our reconciliation to God in him, by virtue of his reconciled humanity and our participation in him. Barth adopts here the characteristically Reformed theology of the participatio Christi, but its implication is that only insofar as we do participate in Jesus Christ are we true men and women - in ourselves, in effect, we are docetic. Even under the Holy Spirit, therefore, we can in ourselves

³¹This point is related to Brunner's critique of Barth's "objectivism" in Brunner, op. cit., pp. 346-352, where he argues that the fact that everything of importance for human salvation has already been decided in the divine eternity necessarily means that faith and the human decision for or against Christ are merely incidental, since no decision we can make can be of any real importance. Barth at times attempted to move beyond such criticisms by asserting that the idea of the divine decision for mankind makes room for mankind and the whole sphere of human culture in theology. Cf. in particular Karl Barth, "The Humanity of God," trans. John Newton Thomas in Barth, The Humanity of God, pp. 35-65. The specific Pneumatological implications of this were, however, never worked out, and would, in fact, appear to belong not to Barth's own theology but to the new theology of the Holy Spirit for which he called at the end of his life.

have no positive role in salvation history, for it is, in the end, Jesus Christ alone who is the true human actor in the theatre of salvation, and not we ourselves, while even our response to him is in a quite literal sense the effect of the personal presence of the Holy Spirit. In Barth's theology, therefore, it is not so much we who hear the Word of God as it is the Holy Spirit as the Revealedness of Revelation. An authentic human response to the Word is precluded: homo peccator non capax verbi divini.

The second of the points mentioned at the outset was the problem of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity as such. As Rowan Williams has argued in this connection, Barth's Pneumatology raises certain specific problems for Trinitarian theology.³² In particular, while the idea of Revealedness is perfectly intelligible, if somewhat restrictive, when considered in relation to the economy, Barth is forced to move away from the Revealedness notion when he comes to discuss the immanent Trinity; here the emphasis shifts from Revealedness to the communion of the Spirit which is basically derived from the Augustinian view of the Spirit as vinculum.³³ That God is the Father and the Son is simply established for Barth in that, for revelation to be revelation, God must be what he shows himself to be, and must be capable of such self-showing. But problems begin to appear when the idea that God is in himself what he is ad extra is applied to the work and person of the Holy Spirit, since it would appear to imply that the Spirit's role in the immanent Trinity should in some sense be understood as the Revealedness of Revelation. In fact, however, the linear understanding of the Trinity which is based on God's revelation to men and women begins to break down at this point in Barth's theology, while in its place there appears a view of the Trinity in which plurality,

³²Williams, op. cit., pp. 169-172.

³³Ibid.

relationality, and fellowship features prominently.³⁴ Here the Spirit's role is one of love, and not a form of inner-divine self-clarification or self-completion.

Barth himself, of course, would not wish to admit this criticism. According to Barth, what brings him to affirm the filioque doctrine is nothing less than the fundamental thrust of his entire Trinitarian theology,³⁵ involving the principle basic to all his Pneumatological thought:

The event of revelation has clarity and reality on its subjective side because the Holy Spirit, the subjective element in this event, is of the essence of God Himself. What He is in revelation He is antecedently in Himself. And what He is antecedently in Himself He is in revelation.³⁶

Barth's argument is that in the economy of salvation, the Holy Spirit appears as the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of Christ, who mediates Christ to the Church. If this is so ad extra, however, then ad intra also the Spirit must be eternally the Spirit of the Son, who ex Patre Filioque procedit.³⁷ Against the East, therefore, Barth argues that the denial of the filioque is formally defective in that it reflects an unwillingness to acknowledge that God gives us himself in his revelation.

The Trinitarian paradigm of the Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness in Barth's thought means concretely that the God who speaks his Word, the Father, and the God who is his Word spoken, the Son, is also the God who makes the

³⁴Ibid., p. 171.

³⁵Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1, p. 479.

³⁶Ibid., p. 466.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 480-481.

Word heard in men and women.³⁸ According to Barth, however, it is precisely this paradigm which necessitates the filioque:

[The filioque] means that not merely for us, but in God Himself, there is no possibility of an opening and readiness and capacity for God in man - for this is the work of the Holy Ghost in revelation - unless it comes from Him, the Father, who has revealed Himself in His Word, in Jesus Christ, and also, and no less necessarily, from Him who is His Word, from His Son, from Jesus Christ, who reveals the Father.³⁹

It is, therefore, the question of revelation which is at stake in Barth's defence of the filioque, the fundamental significance of God's act in Jesus Christ in mediating the human knowledge of God. Barth's express fear is that abandoning the filioque would open the door to the idea of an immediate relation between the human spirit and the divine Spirit, by-passing Jesus Christ as the mediator of that relation, while he suspects that Eastern theology, at least in its less restrained moments, veers toward precisely such a position, thereby surrendering the primary content of the Christian gospel.⁴⁰

Barth's basic argument concerning the filioque, therefore, is that it alone provides an adequate foundation for the theology of grace, and that, if our reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ, by faith, is not to degenerate into a variation of a human subjective state, it must be grounded in the being of God himself. At the same time, however, one can justifiably argue that the linear understanding of the Trinity which is enshrined in the

³⁸Rosato, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

³⁹Barth, op. cit., I/1, p. 480.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 481.

Trinitarian paradigm of Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness is not easily reconciled with the filioque doctrine Barth actually develops. What appears here is precisely the idea of the Holy Spirit as "the fellowship, the act of communion, of the Father and the Son" whereby he is "the act in which the Father is the Father of the Son or the Speaker of the Word and the Son is the Son of the Father or the Word of the Speaker."⁴¹ While Barth is critical of Augustine's attempt to provide an analogy of the relation between the Son and the Spirit in the relation of knowledge to will in the soul,⁴² therefore, he nevertheless preserves the Augustinian-Western theology of the Holy Spirit intact:

As God is in Himself Father from all eternity, He begets Himself as the Son from all eternity. As He is the Son from all eternity, He is begotten of Himself as the Father from all eternity. In this eternal begetting of Himself and being begotten of Himself, He posits Himself a third time as the Holy Spirit, i.e., as the love which unites Him in Himself.⁴³

The problem here is that the Holy Spirit's place in the Trinity is as a middle term between the Father and the Son, rather than as the third term in a divine self-communication, bringing the process of self-communication in some sense to fulfilment. The earlier Trinitarian paradigm of the Revealer, his Revelation, and its Revealedness, therefore, appears to conflict with the Pneumatological position which is given in the filioque.⁴⁴

⁴¹Ibid., p. 470.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 475-476.

⁴³Ibid., p. 483.

⁴⁴Williams, op. cit., p. 176.

The Revealedness idea, in short, arguably should issue in an innertrinitarian version of the pre-Nicene Trinitarian taxis "from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit," which from the beginning connoted more than the order of transmission in the saving approach of God to the world. Here too the Spirit appears truly as the Spirit of the Son, but as the final moment of the divine outreach in the economic sense, and as the third moment of the divine overflow from the Father in the innertrinitarian sense. Barth, however, explicitly rejects this view in his account of the filioque, arguing that it makes the Son merely a mediating principle, and falls short of the Pneumatological idea he wishes to defend: "the thought of the full consubstantial fellowship between Father and Son as the essence of the Spirit."⁴⁵ The limitation of the Revealedness idea, therefore, appears at the very point where Barth's fundamental theological principle comes into play: that we deal in revelation with God as he is in himself, that the economic and the immanent Trinities are one.

Williams thus argues that the filioque, in which the idea of fellowship or love is of paramount Pneumatological importance, is inconsistent with the idea of Revealedness as Barth develops it elsewhere in his Trinitarian theology. This problem is made all the worse, for Williams, in view of Barth's profound development of the doctrine of the humanity of Christ in Church Dogmatics IV/1, largely on the basis of his earlier doctrine of election. Williams takes up the argument of Wingren at this point concerning the importance of epistemology in Barth's Pneumatology, and concludes that Wingren was right to argue that Barth, despite his emerging Christological understanding, failed to carry through with any decisive reformulation of his Pneumatological position between Church Dogmatics I/1 and

⁴⁵Barth, op. cit., I/1, p. 482.

IV/1.⁴⁶ The paradigm of the Revealer, his Revelation, and its Revealedness remains fully in place, therefore, even while Barth's developing Christology appears to require a significant degree of plurality and relationality - qualities absent from the original model. Williams' argument is that if the dynamic of the relation of Jesus Christ to the Father is to be taken seriously, God must be understood to confront himself across an enormous divide as he risks himself in the incarnation. It is this, as Williams sees it, which needed to be taken up into Barth's Trinitarian Pneumatology, but which was not.⁴⁷

In defence of Barth's position, it needs to be said against both Wingren and Williams that the humanity of Christ in his forsakenness by the Father has a place from the beginning in Barth's Trinitarian theology, although perhaps in the wider sense its implications are not fully developed in the Church Dogmatics. Nevertheless, in Church Dogmatics I/1, the Father is understood as the one who wills the death of man the sinner in his Son, Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ Barth's original insight is also deepened over time, so that the history of Jesus as the eternally elect one in Church Dogmatics II/2 assumes considerable theological importance in Barth's later Christology. An example of this has already been noted, that Jesus' human obedience is taken to reveal an ad intra relation of subordination of the Son to the Father.⁴⁹

This deepening of Barth's Christology is also reflected, significantly, in his later doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Having developed his Christology of the obedient Son in Church Dogmatics IV/1, Barth turns to consider the

⁴⁶Williams, op. cit., pp. 172-176.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 177.

⁴⁸Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. 384-390.

⁴⁹Barth, op. cit., IV/1, pp. 208-209.

Pneumatological problem of "the subjective realization of the atonement" once again.⁵⁰ Barth characteristically writes that the Holy Spirit in his work does not attest to us anything other than Christ, no higher wisdom or other righteousness than was found in the history of this one obedient man.⁵¹ "He attests to him the Son, who in obedience to the will of the Father took up and trod to the very end the way into the far country - his Judge who gave Himself to be judged in his place."⁵² Barth speaks here of an "actualizing" of the history of Jesus in our history as the Church, a work of the Holy Spirit which attests Jesus Christ to sinful men and women and which creates in them a genuine response and obedience to the God of the gospel.⁵³

Thus Barth can consistently relate the work of the Holy Spirit to the history of Jesus, and can understand this work as bringing it about that we can and must find that our history is enclosed in the history of Jesus, and his in ours.⁵⁴ The earlier purely noetic understanding of the Holy Spirit, whereby the work of the Spirit was to

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 643.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 643-650.

⁵²Ibid., p. 647.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 646-649.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 648. It is ultimately the logic of Barth's position which requires that one go beyond the noetic restriction. The sheer fact that the Revelation of which the Holy Spirit in the economy is the Revealedness is, in Barth, virtually synonymous with the Christ-event, which, clearly, is more than noetic in character. In this sense, the work of the Spirit, as the Revealedness of this Revelation, must comprise more than the subjective realization by faith in the Church of the saving significance of Christology proper, to include both the noetic recognition of Christ as Lord and Saviour, and the existential realization of his calling in the concrete life of the Church. As the Revealedness of Revelation, the Holy Spirit is to be understood as God the Redeemer, "the Lord who sets us free."

awaken faith as a species of knowledge, appears to have been significantly deepened through developments in Barth's Christology. An attempt has been made to treat Jesus' human history, in which he was obedient unto death, as theologically significant, and to relate the work of the Holy Spirit to the subjective realization of this history in our own human histories, so that our history too becomes theologically significant. But how exactly there is, by the Spirit's power, such an "actualizing of this history in other human histories,"⁵⁵ Barth is not prepared to say: it is and must remain a mystery.

In the absence of such an account, however, and given the obvious ecclesial context of the discussion, the conclusion has to be again that Barth has not significantly altered the old Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness paradigm on which his earlier Pneumatology was based. Rather, it has survived intact and, despite its inherent problems, still dominates Barth's later Pneumatological reflection. The tendency is thus still for Barth to slip into specifically noetic language, even when speaking of the "actualizing" of Jesus' history in our histories, as for example in the following representative passage:

How can it really be - the question of the Virgin in Lk. 1³⁴ - that there is an actualizing of this history in other human histories? By what ways does God bring it about that in the perverted hearts, in the darkened knowledge and understanding, in the rebellious desires and strivings of sinful men ... there takes place this awakening, in which they can know Jesus Christ as theirs and themselves as his?⁵⁶

The credo in Spiritum sanctum does not tell us how, Barth

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 649.

⁵⁶Ibid.

answers, but unquestionably, we are left with the old, noetic Revealedness paradigm again, the mechanics of which remain hidden, but the predominance of which is finally unchallenged.

It is difficult to see, therefore, how the Revealedness idea and the filiogue in Barth's Pneumatology can be reconciled, since the understanding of the Spirit posited in the two cases differs. In this sense, it appears that there is a profound inconsistency lying at the heart of Barth's Pneumatology; although the Revealedness doctrine and the filiogue are both clearly supported, the idea of the Spirit as the mediating vinculum in the one case and as the third term in a linear self-unfolding in the other is problematic. As we shall see in the next section, the idea of the Spirit as vinculum and of the filiogue would appear to be more sustainable from the point of view of a different Trinitarian theology, a theology which begins, not with the threefold event of revelation, but with the interpersonal relation between the Father and the crucified Christ.

Barth's revealedness model represents an important development in contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology, reflecting a number of biblical and patristic themes which would have to be taken up in any adequate doctrine of the Trinity. The Pneumatological restriction which is introduced through the paradigm of the Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness, however, can be questioned, while the specific difficulty involved in reconciling this conception with the filiogue doctrine renders Barth's version of it problematic. The revealedness idea could, therefore, be sustained, but only in the context of a more comprehensive Trinitarian Pneumatology, based on the total work of the Spirit in the economy and developed in a theology of the immanent Trinity in a more self-critical way. It may be, indeed, that this is what Barth's call for a new theology of the third article actually requires.

Broadly speaking, however, subsequent Trinitarian theologies of the Holy Spirit which take up the problem of Pneumatology where Barth leaves off have simply concentrated less on the present moment of the realization of historical revelation and more on the primary event of the economy as such, the Christ-event. In this way, the role of the Spirit in the latter becomes the measure of the Spirit's present role in the economy, and, in a development of the formal Trinitarian principles of Barth and Rahner, the primary analogy from which a doctrine of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity can be developed.⁵⁷ A strong criticism of the revealedness model is implicit in this, to the effect that, instead of having in view the problem of the knowledge of revelation in the Church, we need to have in view the problem of the relation between Jesus and the Holy Spirit which is a more basic Pneumatological datum, and which must, as such, serve as the presupposition of the noetic problem of faith (which is therefore secondary). The problem in Barth's Pneumatology, from this point of view, is, in fact, not that it is Christomonistic, but rather that it is insufficiently Christological in conception.

Whether or not subsequent Trinitarian theologies of the Spirit can be characterized in any sense as more adequately grounded in the economy remains to be seen; by way of anticipation, however, the general development of Trinitarian theology following Barth is unfortunately characterized by an even greater narrowing of vision with respect to the economy. Equally, because, as for Barth, the freedom of the immanent Trinity is its freedom to be the economic Trinity, and, as for Rahner, the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, there has been a

⁵⁷Barth especially, by contrast, takes the opposite approach; rather than his understanding of the present role of the Spirit being determined by the role of the Spirit in the Christ-event as such, his understanding of the latter is determined by the former. Cf., e.g., his discussion of "the miracle of Christmas," op. cit., I/2, pp. 172-202.

corresponding shift of perspective in the understanding of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. The theologians whom we shall next discuss understand the Spirit more narrowly in terms of the particular events of the economy on which their theologies focus: the crucifixion and resurrection, the anointing of Jesus, and the overall eschatological unfolding of the economy of salvation.

2. The Atonement Model

After the revealedness model, the development of Trinitarian theology from the standpoint of the theology of the cross, or what I have called the "atonement model," can be considered. In a certain sense, the theology of the cross is the embodiment of the new perspective in Trinitarian theology par excellence, in that the cross decisively focuses the wider question of the relation between the Trinity in itself, and its economic Trinitarian presence through creation, the incarnation, and Pentecost in space and time. Along with this, in broad traditions of Christian doctrine - and in particular in the Protestant traditions in which the theology of the cross has been most prominent in recent theology - the cross is understood to be the focal point of the New Testament message and the central content of Christian faith, so that it stands paramount in the theological understanding of the economy of salvation. According to Jürgen Moltmann, for example, "The death of Jesus on the cross is the centre of all Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but it is in effect the entry to its problems and answers on earth."⁵⁸ Given the axiomatic character of the unity of the immanent and the economic Trinity in contemporary Trinitarian theology, it is hardly surprising that the cross has, in consequence, assumed tremendous significance

⁵⁸Moltmann, op. cit., p. 204.

for a number of recent theologies of the Trinity.⁵⁹ Moltmann, once again, writes, "The content of the doctrine of the Trinity is the real cross of Christ himself. The form of the crucified Christ is the Trinity."⁶⁰

The Christological methodology which leads to such an ontology of the Trinity is derived in particular from the theology of Barth.⁶¹ Barth's entire Church Dogmatics can be read as an extended essay in a thoroughly Christological theological ontology.⁶² Barth himself does not, of course, develop his position from the sole standpoint of the theology of the cross, for he is concerned in his Christology above all with the whole dynamic of the Christ-event and of the doctrine of the incarnation as such; the cross, for Barth, is therefore to be located within the whole history of Jesus Christ and the broader problems of Christology rather than vice versa.⁶³ However, Barth's position is that a theology must be constructed on the

⁵⁹Cf., e.g., the work of Moltmann, ibid.; Jüngel, op. cit.; and Fiddes, op. cit.

⁶⁰Moltmann, op. cit., p. 246.

⁶¹Cf. Moltmann, ibid., pp. 202-203; Jüngel, ibid., pp. 101-102; and Fiddes, ibid., pp. 112-143.

⁶²Jenson, "The Logic of the Doctrine of the Trinity," p. 249.

⁶³Barth, op. cit., IV/1, pp. 557-558, writes: "A theologia gloriae, the magnifying of what Jesus Christ has received for us in His resurrection, of what He is for us as the risen One, can have no meaning unless it includes within itself a theologia crucis, the magnifying of what He has done for us in His death, of what He is for us as the Crucified. But an abstract theologia crucis cannot have any meaning either. We cannot properly magnify the passion and death of Jesus Christ unless this magnifying includes within itself the theologia gloriae - the magnifying of the One who in His resurrection is the recipient of our right and life, the One who has risen again from the dead for us. ... It can be a true confession only in this totality, in its application to the transition of the strictly coherent history which has taken place in Him."

basis of what God has actually done in Jesus Christ. His central contribution to the tradition of Trinitarian theology which attempts to conceive of the Trinity on the basis of the cross, in other words, is his sustained thesis that because the second person (in Barth's terminology, "mode of being") of the Trinity has become flesh in Jesus Christ, and because in Jesus Christ he has humbled himself and submitted to death on the cross, it must be proper to God in his own intrinsic essence to do this. We must, therefore, think of the divinity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a manner which is precisely consistent with this fundamental datum of revelation if we are to think the God of revelation at all and not of an idol of our own making.⁶⁴

The attempt to develop the theology of the cross into a Trinitarian hermeneutic in, for example, the theologies of Moltmann and Jüngel also amounts to an attempt to formulate such a Christological ontology of the Trinity. The basic axioms of the position are the Barthian presupposition that God is truly to be known from his revelation, and the understanding of the cross as the central event in the revelation of God; on the basis of these presuppositions, the word of the cross becomes, in Jüngel's words, "the place of the conceivability of God."⁶⁵

In one decisive respect, however, Moltmann and Jüngel move beyond the Barthian thesis, in that they adopt a more radical approach to the question of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity than does Barth. The crucial difference arises in connection with the question of the mode of God's presence in the cross. Whereas, for Barth, God was "in" Christ under the conditions of the incarnation, submitting to death for the sake of our salvation, for Moltmann and Jüngel the crucified Christ is

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 186-188.

⁶⁵Jüngel, op. cit., p. 152.

the second person of the Trinity in a much more immediate sense. For both, the economic and the immanent Trinity are more clearly identical in the literal sense than for Barth. Thus Moltmann, for example, writes of Barth's theologia crucis that it is insufficiently Trinitarian, meaning by this that the crucified Christ is not, in Barth, presented rigorously enough as the Son of God with whom we have to do in Christian faith and Trinitarian theology:

God's being is found [for Barth] in the history of the humiliation of the Son of God and in the exaltation of the Son of Man. Consequently we find in Barth many "theopaschite" statements about God's suffering and involvement in the cross of Christ. ... In my view Barth's limitations lie, strangely enough, in the fact that at these points he does not argue expressly enough in trinitarian terms. Because he always stresses - and rightly so - that God was in Christ, God lowered himself, God wanted to be the loser on the cross so that man might be the gainer, he uses the simple concept of God..., not yet a concept developed in trinitarian terms. That is why Barth, rather like Rahner, has to distinguish the God who in his primal decision proceeds from himself, from the God who is previously in himself "untouched by evil and death". This certainly makes it possible for us to conceive the very being of God as being present in the death of Jesus; but the converse is difficult; how can we conceive of Jesus' death on the cross as belonging within the being of God?⁶⁶

In a similar vein, Jüngel argues that God's intrinsic essence must be conceived in unity with God's actual existence in the place where God, for the Christian faith, is - and that is in Jesus Christ, and specifically in the

⁶⁶Jürgen Moltmann, The Future of Creation, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1979), pp. 63-64.

cross of Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ Any other procedure, and in particular the procedure from classical metaphysics which understands God as the highest essence, incapable of suffering and death, is to be rejected as inconsistent with the Christian revelation of God in the cross, and so as fundamentally anti-evangelical.⁶⁸ Here the new "metaphysical enterprise" assumes the form of the construction of a theology of the suffering of God through the development of a doctrine of the Trinity, economic and immanent, explicitly on the basis of the cross itself.

In this way the theology of the cross has come to have a central place in the new theology of the Trinity. However, the theology of the cross appears for the most part to be primarily Christological rather than Pneumatological in orientation, being concerned, essentially, with two problems: first, with the dogmatic problem of the relation between the two natures of the incarnate Logos and, second, in its specifically Trinitarian development, with the question of the personal relation between the Father and the Son. It is the latter which concerns us in this section. Here the role of the Holy Spirit in traditional Western Pneumatology is important, since it is in the light of the Western filioque doctrine, which understands the Holy Spirit's personal character in terms of the relation of love bonding the Father and the Son, that the theology of the cross assumes a Pneumatological form. By way of a critical preface to what follows, however, it must be said that the appropriation to the Holy Spirit of the work of sanctification in the theological tradition, and the association of the Spirit with the Church and with the eschatological consummation in the creedal formulations of both East and West, means that it is doubtful that a

⁶⁷Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 314-376.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 154.

developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit can, in principle, be drawn solely from the theology of the cross.⁶⁹

In order to develop the atonement model, Jüngel's theology, as perhaps the most profound and consistent statement of the position available, can for our purposes be taken to be its main representative.⁷⁰ Jüngel attempts, quite simply, to conceive of the Holy Spirit in his Trinitarian reality as the unity in love of the Father with the crucified Jesus.⁷¹ Jüngel's consistency in conceiving the Holy Spirit in this way derives from his basic view that God has, in his words, "defined his deity" in the event of the cross, through his self-identification with the dead Jesus, so that the cross becomes the hermeneutical basis for the concept of God.⁷² The being of God must therefore be conceived as the event of his identification with the crucified man Jesus. God in his very Trinitarian being, Jüngel repeats again and again, is his unity with

⁶⁹This is seen already, of course, in the theology of Moltmann, who develops his doctrine of the Holy Spirit more from the standpoint of eschatology (ecclesiological and Trinitarian) than from the standpoint of the theology of the cross. In this way, Moltmann's theology reflects the characteristically Reformed emphasis on sanctification to a much greater extent than does that of the Lutheran Jüngel. See Jürgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977); and Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981). See also below, Chapter III, section 4.

⁷⁰Moltmann does not in the end develop his doctrine of the Trinity from the standpoint of the theology of the cross alone; although his contribution to the Trinitarian theology of the cross is significant, therefore, his is not the best example of the atonement model of the Trinity. See footnote number 69 above. Jüngel, on the other hand, focuses his Trinitarian theology more consistently on the cross, and for this reason will be treated as the primary spokesman for the approach in view here.

⁷¹Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 368-376.

⁷²Ibid., p. 219.

perishability in Jesus Christ; what God is in his essence is what God is in his existence in this event in such a way that the two, the divine essence and the divine existence in the event of the cross, can never be separated, or even abstracted conceptually.⁷³ Jüngel, therefore, understands the being of God explicitly in the context of the union of God with perishability in the cross. In Christian theology, therefore, we are not concerned with the infinite and eternal and absolute God over against the finite and the temporal; rather, according to Jüngel:

The God who is in heaven because he cannot be on earth is replaced by the Father who is in heaven in such a way that his heavenly kingdom has come into the world, that is, a God who is in heaven in such a way that he can identify himself with the poverty of the man Jesus, with the existence of a man brought from life to death on the cross.⁷⁴

Jüngel draws from this argument the radical conclusion that the old distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity must be brought to an end in a doctrine of the Trinity which is explicitly formulated as an attempt to think the passion history of God. God is, for Jüngel, his relatedness to himself in the crucified Jesus.⁷⁵ Within this understanding, Jüngel reformulates the doctrines of the

⁷³"In this unity of the divine essence with the existence of Jesus the man, God's existence must be thought in such a way that God's essence is understood as his existence. And this must be done in such a way that no 'distinction of reason' can be made between the 'essence of God' and the 'existence of God' Accordingly, talk about God's essence is to be replaced by a kind of talk which leaves that distinction behind itself: talk about the being of God." (*Ibid.*, p. 209.)

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 370-371.

immanent and the economic Trinity: the doctrine of the economic Trinity "speaks of God's history with man," whereas the doctrine of the immanent Trinity "must speak of God's historicity. God's history is his coming to man. God's historicity is God's being as it comes . . .," God's "being in coming."⁷⁶ By this, Jüngel does not mean that God's being "becomes" in the sense current in process theology.⁷⁷ Rather, his meaning is that, as the immanent Trinity, God is intrinsically a loving self-movement ad extra, towards his creation; since this self-movement requires a history in order to fulfil what it is, it can be spoken of abstractly as a historicity. It is, however, only made concrete in God's actual history with mankind, for which God makes space within himself.⁷⁸ The immanent Trinity, therefore, "is" the economic Trinity, and vice versa.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 346-347.

⁷⁷John J. O'Donnell, Trinity and Temporality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 87-88.

⁷⁸Jüngel, The Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 96.

⁷⁹Cf. Jüngel's article, "Das Verhältnis von »ökonomischer« und »immanenter« Trinität," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 72 (1975), 353-364, presented at a colloquy of the Académie Internationale des Sciences Religieuses in 1975. Cf. also the account of the consensus achieved at the meeting in Thomas F. Torrance, "Toward an Ecumenical Consensus on the Trinity," Theologische Zeitschrift, 31 (1975), 337-350. Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 359-362, commenting in detail on Rahner's Trinitarian axiom, argues in basic sympathy with Rahner (and Barth) that the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity implies an eternal orientation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to the economy of salvation. Jüngel clearly does not hold that this amounts to a reduction of the immanent to the economic Trinity; on the contrary, the distinction must be maintained both in order to retain the category of grace, and in order that the kind of identity of immanent and economic Trinity given in Rahner's theology can be sustained. He writes, ibid., p. 364: "Die Einheit von »immanenter« und »ökonomischer« Trinität zu behaupten ist theologisch nur dann legitim, wenn diese Einheit nicht in dem Sinne tautologisch verkannt wird, daß die Freiheit und

In many ways, Jüngel's theological programme as expressed here amounts to an intensification of the Barthian attempt to think of God exclusively on the basis of revelation. What is required, for Jüngel as for Barth, is a movement away from the God of Christian theism towards a consistently "evangelical" concept of God. In his theology, Jüngel carefully constructs a dual case for this shift, arguing specifically that what is required is an approach based on the evangelical theology of the cross.⁸⁰ In the first place, there is the theological necessity for this shift in theological thinking, deriving from the message of the gospel itself, which is at its heart, Jüngel argues, the message of the cross. Jüngel is rather uncritically dependent here upon the Pauline and Lutheran traditions, but he shares also the common and equally uncritical⁸¹ contemporary conviction that the metaphysical God of Christian theism, who is by definition absolute and impassible, is theologically inconsistent with the God of the Christian gospel, who is revealed in the cross and suffering of Jesus. Thus dereliction theology, for Jüngel, requires a fundamental alteration in the idea of God in Christian theology.

This necessity is complemented, however, by the possibility of a shift in thought provided by the collapse in modern philosophy of the traditional metaphysical position underlying Christian theism. For Jüngel, the

ungeschuldete Gnade der Selbstmitteilung Gottes und also deren Ereignishaftigkeit undenkbar wird. Es sollte deshalb, gerade um die reale Identität von »immanenter« und »ökonomischer« Trinität als Geheimnis aussagen zu können, die distinctio rationis von »ökonomischer« und »immanenter« Trinität theologisch beibehalten werden."

⁸⁰Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, pp. 185-199.

⁸¹Unfortunately, Jüngel does not differentiate sufficiently between the various forms of Christian theism, or take into account the long and profound debate between them.

central expression of this collapse, and the real event which makes it inescapable for the Christian theologian, is the philosophical death of God in the context of modern thought.⁸² Because theology cannot ignore the intellectual context in which it is set - this, Jüngel argues, was one of the chief weaknesses of dialectical theology⁸³ - both the necessity and the possibility of a shift in the doctrines of God and the Trinity belong together. Jüngel's doctrine of the Trinity is itself an attempt to reappropriate the doctrine of the Trinity in this light, based both on the perceived necessity for a truly "Christian" Trinitarian metaphysics, and on the opening within theology itself for such a metaphysics provided by the collapse of the older position.

Materially, this shift issues in Jüngel's theology in a theology of God in himself as event rather than as substance. Once again, Jüngel's indebtedness to Barth is apparent: like Barth, Jüngel attempts to understand God's being in his act of revelation in Jesus Christ,⁸⁴ and, like Barth, he understands the theistic conception to militate against the "evangelical" conception.⁸⁵ The metaphysics of divine substance, which posits a fundamental distinction between divine and creaturely substance,⁸⁶ and which attributes to the former such essential qualities as immutability and impassibility, requires the concept of a God who is removed in his intrinsic essence from the events of the economy of salvation. On the basis of these presuppositions, indeed, it is an intellectual offence that God should ever have become involved in the affairs of his

⁸²Ibid., pp. 201-202.

⁸³Ibid., p. 200.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 158.

⁸⁵Ibid., passim, and Barth, op. cit., II/1, p. 263.

⁸⁶Augustine, op. cit., I, 6.

creation. Jüngel, however, fundamentally rejects this disjunction of the divine and the creaturely; on the basis of revelation, he argues, it is necessary to think God in his unity with perishing existence.⁸⁷ Specifically, for Jüngel, this means that it is necessary to think of God in his unity with Jesus in the event of the cross; to conceive of God as event is to conceive of God as this event.

I shall develop this conception at greater length in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity shortly; first, however, it is necessary to introduce the notion of the divine love, which is central to Jüngel's theological position, as it must arguably be to any possible Trinitarian theology of the cross. He writes, "To think God as love is the task of theology,"⁸⁸ while he defines this task itself as derived from the centrality of the cross: 'We are to read the statement "God is love" as an exposition of the self-identification of God with the crucified man Jesus.'⁸⁹ From this, indeed, stems the characterization of his Trinitarian Pneumatology in terms of the atonement; without the divine love, on the other hand, this would be meaningless.

The concept of the divine love can be understood, however, in two ways: the first ontologically, in the context of the doctrine of the divine being, and the second relationally, in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity. One of the ambiguities in Jüngel's position is that he does not sufficiently clarify the relation between the two senses in which the divine love can be understood: God is love, for Jüngel, both ontologically and as the Holy Spirit. In the first case, that God is love is comprehended through a reappropriation of the old idea of the divinity

⁸⁷Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 188-189.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 315.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 326.

as overflowing being.⁹⁰ (For Jüngel, however, the divine emanation does not occur simply so that God may return to self-possession, as in the older theological tradition, but in order that he may overflow into nothingness, and only in his union with nothingness return to himself.⁹¹) Hence, for example, God redeems, and hence his redemptive act is his being: his being is redemptive being, his overflow into the finite. God's grace, therefore, is not something secondary to his intrinsic being; rather, his intrinsic being is his grace. "We draw these theological considerations together into their ontological concept", Jüngel writes, "when we grasp the being of God as a Going-Out-Of-Himself into nothingness."⁹² It is in this sense that the divine being is defined by Jüngel as love, in that God is in himself a turning towards what is outside of himself. "Because God is love, this is then God's being: to be related to nothingness."⁹³ Thus, the idea of the divine overflow as an ontological characterization of the divine being explains how God's union with the crucified Jesus is possible: it is because God is love in his immanent being that he thus goes out of himself into his other, and in doing so, remains one with himself. In this context we might say, therefore, that the immanent reality of God is the economic reality, and

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 222-225. According to L. J. O'Donovan, "The Mystery of God as a History of Love. Eberhard Jüngel's Doctrine of God," Theological Studies, 42 (1981), 265, Jüngel's discussion of God as overflowing being constitutes a shift in his thought in God as the Mystery of the World from soteriological to ontological categories. The ontological significance of this reappropriation of emanationism certainly cannot be overlooked, but it is rather to be understood as another expression of the soteriological content which Jüngel already gives to his theological ontology than as a movement of thought involving a shift to a different conceptual level.

⁹¹Jüngel, op. cit., p. 224.

⁹²Ibid., p. 223.

⁹³Ibid., p. 222.

vice versa.

In the case of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the concept of the divine love is again paramount, but in a more specific sense. Whereas in the case of the overflow of the divine being, the notion of love is an abstraction used to comprehend the being of the God who identifies himself with nothingness in the cross of Jesus, the concept of the Holy Spirit as love functions within the Trinitarian dynamic itself. In his recent study of Jüngel's theology, J. B. Webster argues that Jüngel lacks a developed Pneumatology, and that this lack constitutes one of the chief inadequacies of his theological position.⁹⁴ However,

⁹⁴John Bainbridge Webster, Eberhard Jüngel: An Introduction to his Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 73-77. Cf., however, Jüngel's modest contribution to Pneumatology as such in his essay, "Zur Lehre vom Heiligen Geist: Thesen," in Ulrich Luz and Hans Weder, eds., Die Mitte des Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), pp. 97-118. Jüngel's treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit here is concerned with the work of the Spirit rather than with the specifically Trinitarian aspect of Pneumatology; thus the Spirit is approached primarily from the standpoint of the doctrines of faith and of the Church. The Holy Spirit is understood to complete the work of Christ by bringing men and women to faith: "Der zur Welt kommende Gott bringt den Glauben mit sich" (ibid., § 13.22). As the Spirit who thus draws men and women into relationship with Christ through faith, however, the Spirit also creates new relationships among men and women themselves; the work of the Spirit in the present thus appears as an eschatological anticipation of the final reconciliation of all things in the kingdom of God (ibid., §§ 8.5-8.53). In only two brief passages does Jüngel develop the Trinitarian implications of this. In the first (ibid., § 4.1), the Spirit is the inner-Trinitarian vinculum pacis, the communal bond within the Trinity through whom the Trinity is in itself a community of original peace, and the spring of the peace promised to the whole creation. In the second (ibid., §§ 12.851-12.862), the Holy Spirit takes his own being from the Father and the Son, and is, as such, to be understood in the present as the power of the representation of the history of Jesus, since he (the Spirit) is already in himself, as the vinculum pacis or caritatis, the relation between God the Father and Jesus in history. The Spirit thus brings about what Jüngel calls an eternally new beginning of God with himself and a temporally new

as Webster himself notes, Jüngel does not claim to have produced anything more than a sketch of how God is defined in the cross in his Trinitarian reality.⁹⁵ Nor, indeed, has Jüngel produced to date a single work developing a Christology at any length. The apparent lack of a specific Pneumatology is therefore rather deceptive; indeed, from this point of view the absence of a developed Pneumatology is due as much to the terms in which Jüngel's doctrine of the Spirit is cast as it is to any neglect of the subject on his part. In his Trinitarian theology, Jüngel understands the doctrine of the Holy Spirit explicitly in terms of the question of the relation between the Father and the Son, and employs the language of the Spirit as vinculum caritatis (or vinculum pacis⁹⁶) in this context.⁹⁷ However, consistent with his Barthian understanding of the Son as the eternal man, and with his staurocentric understanding of the Christ-event, Jüngel's treatment of the Trinitarian relation between the Father and the Son is developed in terms of the relation between the Father and the crucified Jesus. From this point of view, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit can be seen both to be hidden within the discussion of this relation, and also, as such, to be vital to Jüngel's theological programme. Given that the Holy Spirit is seen as the vinculum caritatis, and given the centrality of the cross in Jüngel's theology, it is precisely Pneumatology which allows Jüngel to maintain the unity between the Father and the crucified Jesus, and thus to develop his theology of the cross in a Trinitarian way.

beginning of God with humanity in Christ (*ibid.*, § 12.862). This, however, adds nothing to what has already been said of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, except to work out certain of its ecclesiological implications.

⁹⁵Webster, op. cit., p. 73.

⁹⁶See above, footnote number 94.

⁹⁷Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, p. 388.

The role of the Holy Spirit in this conception is to overcome the threat of the dissolution of the unity of the Father with the crucified Jesus, i.e., as the bond of love between the Father and the Son who is delivered over to death.⁹⁸ In this sense, it is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit which must be taken to underlie and to emerge from the whole discussion of the self-identification of the Father with Jesus on the cross. The Spirit in Jüngel maintains the unity of the Father and the Son in the event of the cross; in that God survives, as it were, the ordeal of the cross, he is to be defined precisely as Spirit:

In that God differentiates himself, and thus, in unity with the crucified Jesus, suffers as God the Son being forsaken by God the Father, he is God the Reconciler. God reconciles the world with himself in that in the death of Jesus he encounters himself as God the Father and God the Son without becoming disunited in himself. On the contrary, in the encounter of God and God, of Father and Son, God reveals himself as the one who he is. He is God the Spirit, who lets the Father and Son be one in the death of Jesus, in true distinction, in this encounter. The 'chain of love' (vinculum caritatis) emphasizes God's eternal being in the death of Jesus. Thus God is differentiated in a threefold way in his unity: in the encounter of Father and Son, related to each other as Spirit. But in the fatal encounter, God remains one God. For he remains as Father and Son in the Spirit the one "event God."⁹⁹

It is therefore the doctrine of the Trinity, and specifically the doctrine of the Holy Spirit within this doctrine of the Trinity, which enables Jüngel to articulate

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 346.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 368.

the truth that "God is love" in the context of the Christian gospel of the cross. It allows Jüngel, in his development of the doctrine of the Trinity, to understand the relation between the Father and the Son to be given in the cross by preventing this relation from issuing in a contradiction within God.¹⁰⁰ The unity of God thus survives, and God himself survives with it, but precisely as Spirit. In Jüngel's terminology, God is love, "the event of the unity of life and death for the sake of life,"¹⁰¹ but he is this as the Holy Spirit who unites in love the Father and the crucified Jesus.

At the beginning of this study, I argued that the general approach to the immanent Trinity which emerges from the contemporary development in Trinitarian theology can be characterized as the attempt to construct a doctrine of the immanent Trinity sub specie temporis. Jüngel's doctrine of the immanent Trinity, being constructed from the standpoint of the crucified Jesus, is clearly orientated along these lines. With reference to the traditional position and to his own reformulation of Trinitarian theology, Jüngel writes:

The immanent trinitarian doctrine understands God himself with no regard for his relationship to man; the economic trinitarian doctrine, by contrast, understands God's being in its relationship to man and his world. ... But [this distinction] is legitimate only when the economic doctrine of the Trinity deals with God's history with man, and the immanent doctrine of the Trinity is its summarizing concept. Here careful corrections to the traditional form of trinitarian doctrine are absolutely

¹⁰⁰Webster, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁰¹Jüngel, op. cit., p. 317.

called for.¹⁰²

Jüngel's basic argument concerning the immanent Trinity, therefore, is not that the concept itself is to be abandoned, but rather that the doctrine of the immanent Trinity must not be allowed to be structured by the dictates of classical theism. Fundamentally, the point he makes is a radical version of the Barthian thesis that God is in himself "for" humanity, that God has eternally chosen men and women for fellowship with himself, and therefore that the economy of salvation is properly to be conceived as interior to God himself.¹⁰³ In this context, however, the doctrine of the immanent Trinity does not survive as traditionally understood; it is rather conceived in the closest possible connection with the economic, so that the two appear no longer as separable, but rather as aspects of a single immanent-economic reality. In the key passage already cited, Jüngel writes:

Where the economic doctrine of the Trinity speaks of God's history with man, the immanent doctrine of the Trinity must speak of God's historicity. God's history is his coming to man. God's historicity is God's being as it comes (being in coming).¹⁰⁴

The language of God's being in "coming" (Kommen) used here in the context of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity expresses the idea that God is in himself a movement of

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 346.

¹⁰³See Jüngel's treatment of Barth's doctrine of election in The Doctrine of the Trinity, pp. 68-83, and footnote number 79 above.

¹⁰⁴Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, pp. 346-347. Cited above, p. 159.

himself to himself in his Trinitarian being,¹⁰⁵ a divine self-relation of the Father to himself, through the crucified Son and in the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁶ The divine being is not something which exists apart from this self-relation; rather, it is this self-relation in the sense that, as we have seen, God is love, a passing beyond himself to the other, so as not to be himself without the other. The divine self-relation, for this reason, cannot be taken to be self-absorbed, but is inclusive of the finite and sinful creation.

It is thus that the immanent and the economic Trinity are taken by Jüngel to constitute a unity. While Jüngel, therefore, together with the theological tradition, characterizes the Father as origin,¹⁰⁷ he also argues that the very "originality" of God as Father precludes the idea of isolation; not only does the idea of the Father involve the idea of the Son as its correlate, but to think of God as Father is to think of God as a "social essence," open to otherness in the form of the creation. In the case of the immanent Son, we are concerned not with the Father as primordial originality, but as the divine goal: God not only "comes from God" as Father, but God "comes to God" the Son.¹⁰⁸ But the Son of God is not the "goal" of a divinity which exists solely in and for itself; rather, the eternal Son is, as such, the one in whom God has as his goal not only himself, but also the creation drawn into fellowship with himself. Finally, according to Jüngel, God "comes as God" in this self-relation, as the Holy Spirit who unites

¹⁰⁵"The statement God's being is in coming implies ... that God's being is the event of his coming to himself." Ibid., p. 380.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 380-389.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 381-382.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 382-387.

the Father and the Son in love.¹⁰⁹ However, just as the Son is begotten eternally with the creation already in view - there is, for Jüngel as for Barth, no Logos asarkos - so the Holy Spirit is eternally the unity in love of more than the Father and the Son in and for themselves; the Spirit is the unity in love of the eternal Father and the Son who is eternally given over to death, and so also the basis of the inclusion of the perishing creation into the unity of God with himself. As such, the Holy Spirit is eternally in himself the power of the resurrection and of the eschatological transformation of the whole creation.

The atonement model of the Trinity, in which the Holy Spirit is held to be the "at-one-ment" of the Father and the crucified Jesus, and so also of the Father and the perishing creation, presupposes the view that the cross is the single point at which the being of God is defined. This presupposition is both the strength and the weakness of the position: the strength, because it enables a systematic understanding of the Trinity as the event of the self-identification of the Father with Jesus, in the Holy Spirit; the weakness, because, like many other systematic principles, it prematurely restricts the subsequent content of the theological position. To the extent that the whole of the systematic conception is concentrated in this one article, the result is a relative loss of, for example, the idea of God as Creator, or again, of God as Sanctifier. Indeed, the typical Christological restriction of filioquist Pneumatology appears here as more than a simple Christological restriction; the theological position as a whole is staurocentric rather than Christocentric, so that even the wider content of Christology is telescoped into the cross, and so that Christology suffers as well. It can, of course, be said in defence of the position that the phrase, "the word of the cross" is meant to encompass more

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 387-389.

than simply the bare event of the crucifixion, but this at the same time does nothing to move the theology towards a more nuanced approach. It rather reaffirms the fact that the more comprehensive content of the gospel is forced into focus at this one, albeit decisive, point.

This criticism could be illustrated in a number of ways, but it would be best in this context to refer specifically to Jüngel's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It is surely a telling sign of the limitations of Jüngel's position that, despite all the emphasis that is placed on the unity of the immanent with the economic Trinity, so little is made of Pentecost or of the Church in his Trinitarian Pneumatology. Jüngel does argue, certainly, that God's unity with himself in the Holy Spirit is an inclusive unity, and so a redemptive unity; this is clear from the fact that the point of the divine unity which is appropriated to the Holy Spirit as vinculum caritatis is the self-identification of God with the creature, in such a way as to draw the creature into the life of God. Jüngel is able also, as we have seen, to develop certain of the ecclesiological implications of this thesis.¹¹⁰ The divine love is therefore quite clearly not a function of divine egoism; in a way clearly reminiscent of Barth, Jüngel does not allow that God should will to be God without man.¹¹¹ But to draw such Pneumatological conclusions from the event of the cross as such is not the same as to draw them from the actual Pneumatological events which, in the New Testament witness, reveal it to be the case. This is a crucial problem not only in Jüngel's treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but also, potentially, in any treatment of the doctrine which is to be based explicitly on the theology of the cross.

¹¹⁰See footnote 94 above.

¹¹¹Eberhard Jüngel, "...keine Menschenlosigkeit Gottes...", Evangelische Theologie, 31 (1971), 376-390.

Closely related to this problem is the general difficulty involved in making the personal character of the Holy Spirit dependent on the relation between the Father and the Son. The difficulty here is one shared by most, if not all, theologians in the Western, filioquist tradition: it is the problem of the personal character of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is conceived as the bond of love between the Father and the Son, the role of the Spirit in the doctrine of the Trinity appears to be effectively confused with that of the one divine essence, which is likewise to preserve the divine unity by reconciling the plurality of Trinitarian relations with the unity of God. Indeed, it must be asked if Jüngel's common characterization of both the divine essence and the Holy Spirit as love is not in some sense a function of this confusion. The vinculum caritatis idea tends to lead, furthermore, to a deficient view of the personal agency of the Holy Spirit. In Jüngel's theology, as in the Western Trinitarian tradition, there is no doubt that both the Father and the Son are personal agents of some sort, having a genuinely interpersonal relationship; in the case of the Spirit, by contrast, it is difficult to resist the conclusion of R. D. Williams that the vinculum caritatis tradition reduces the role of the Spirit in the Trinity to that of a quality linking two agents.¹¹²

This problem is exacerbated, in the end, by the attempt to think of the immanent Holy Spirit sub specie temporis, and by a restricted, staurocentric understanding of the scope of the latter. In concentrating the temporal economy into the single datum of the cross, in other words, the atonement model in effect excludes from the theological system the possibility of an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in, for example, creation and in the

¹¹²Williams, op. cit., p. 182; so also Webster, op. cit., p. 77.

eternal generation of the Son from the Father; instead, the Spirit is necessarily cast in the singular role of the bond of unity overcoming the disjunction of Father and Son in the cross. There is unquestionably something extremely profound about the role the Spirit is given in such a dereliction theology, but it is at the same time a role that is very much pared down, and even simplistic, over against the wider possibilities for Pneumatological development given in the biblical witness and the theological tradition.

3. The Anointing Model

We consider thirdly the theme of the anointing of Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit as the basis of a possible Trinitarian theology of the Spirit. The potential of such a development seems in some ways rather obvious, and, in keeping with this, a number of theologians have recently attempted to construct such a theology.¹¹³ The other models considered in this Chapter are generally somewhat more familiar than the anointing model, however, while the possibilities for Trinitarian theological development are here also slightly greater; for this reason, a more expansive treatment of the anointing theme, covering a range of theological positions, will be provided. In order to deal with the various positions which have emerged in this context, we shall be concerned in what follows with two problems: first of all, the question of the

¹¹³Other theologians, however, have argued that the Christology of anointing with the Spirit is inconsistent with the doctrine of the Trinity. Geoffrey Lampe, for example, in his God as Spirit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), attempts to develop a Spirit Christology to replace Logos Christology, and argues in this connection that the doctrine of the Trinity must be abandoned. Cf. also the similar, more elaborate position of Paul W. Newman, A Spirit Christology (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987).

Christological basis of the contemporary discussion, and secondly, the question of the specific claims made on this basis in contemporary Trinitarian theology.

(a) The Christological Basis

In The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Hendrikus Berkhof noted the fact that on the strength of the Old and New Testament witness it would be possible and even obvious to design Christology from a Pneumatic standpoint, and that such a development would undoubtedly have wider Trinitarian implications.¹¹⁴ In such a theology, he argued, Jesus might be seen as the centre of God's life-giving presence as Spirit in and with the creation, and as the focus and starting-point of a new and redemptive work of the Spirit in the world. Berkhof, however, was convinced that any attempt to develop such a theology would have to proceed without any real theological precedent. He noted, for example, the fact that some of the earliest Christologies down to the middle of the second century were broadly Pneumatic (citing, for example, Ignatius, Ep. Eph., 7, 2; 2 Clem., 9, 5; and Hermas, Sim., V, 6, 5), but viewed the understanding of Christ's Sonship and of the Holy Spirit involved in these early theologies as problematic.¹¹⁵ These conceptions were, in any case, abandoned in the later theological tradition. The result, Berkhof argued, is that we lack a developed understanding of the manner in which the Spirit might be conceived to be uniquely united with Christ, and thus a clear starting-point and basis for discussion.¹¹⁶

Unfortunately, Berkhof did not provide the kind of detailed treatment of these problems which was needed, but

¹¹⁴Berkhof, op. cit., pp. 13-29.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

his Pneumatology anticipated the development which was to follow.¹¹⁷ This was to occur, significantly, not in Berkhof's own (Protestant) theological tradition, but rather in the Roman Catholic tradition, through a critical reappraisal of the scholastic doctrine of the habitual, or accidental sanctification of Jesus, a doctrine which Protestant theology has largely neglected.¹¹⁸ The scholastic tradition

¹¹⁷Berkhof's position also prefigures that of more recent theologians in other respects - e.g., in its insistence that the eschatological character of New Testament Pneumatology is of Trinitarian significance, in the sense that the role of the Spirit in the final consummation involves a Pneumatologically orientated history of the Trinity itself. See *ibid.*, pp. 94-121. This theme will be treated in some detail below in Chapter III, section 4.

¹¹⁸This distinction was developed above all in Western scholastic theology, but it has its real root in the development of Christology in the patristic era, by which it was established that the humanity Jesus has no independent existence, but exists hypostatically only in the Logos. In keeping with this, the accidental sanctification of Jesus, his anointing with the Spirit, is virtually made a function of his substantial sanctification in the hypostatic union. According to A. Michel, "Jésus-Christ," *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, VIII, col. 1277, the scholastic tradition went so far as to assert that the "unction" of Christ, or the anointing which makes Jesus "Christ," is the anointing of human nature with the divine in the incarnation. Over against this, the accidental or habitual graces of Christ appear as logically distinct from the grace of union in the sense that they do not involve a hypostatic union, and logically posterior in the sense that they flow from the grace of union. These include Jesus' habitual grace and infused virtues, together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit by which he healed the sick, etc., all of which are appropriated to the Holy Spirit's work in his human nature (*ibid.*, cols. 1279-1281). According to Thomas Aquinas, *op. cit.*, 3a. 7, 1; 1a. 43, 3, for example, one must acknowledge the fact that Christ possessed habitual grace for the simple reason that scripture teaches that the Spirit of God rested upon him; since the distinctive mission of the Holy Spirit is to bestow habitual grace, he argues, Christ must have possessed it. Thomas also, however, attempts to comprehend the dogmatic necessity of habitual grace in Jesus through the doctrine of Christ's true human nature (*ibid.*, 3a. 7, 1, ad 1). As man, therefore, because the human nature is

differentiates between the relation of the Spirit and the Logos to the human nature of Christ by means of the doctrine of the "accidental," or "habitual" sanctification of Jesus, as distinct from his "essential," or "substantial" sanctification. (The distinction can also be expressed in terms of "created grace" on the one hand over against the "grace of union" on the other.) Of particular importance in this respect has been the seminal work of the Roman Catholic theologian Heribert Mühlen.¹¹⁹ Not only does Mühlen provide an answer to Berkhof's query concerning the unique manner of the union of the Spirit with Christ through his re-examination of the doctrine of accidental sanctification,¹²⁰ but, more importantly for our purposes, his work has set the theological agenda for subsequent Trinitarian theologies of the anointing of Jesus.

In his theology, Mühlen adopts the scholastic doctrine that the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ was

not confused with the divine even after the union, Jesus had to participate in the divine nature in the way characteristic of all creaturely reality under grace. Thus the human nature of Jesus must have received, by the work of the Spirit, habitual graces like all other human beings - graces which enabled him to live a life of godliness by the characteristically human acts of knowledge and will. Thomas represents the whole of the scholastic tradition in this respect, the only important exception being Duns Scotus, who apparently identified substantial sanctity with the uncreated sanctity of God, and therefore refused to attribute substantial holiness to Christ on the grounds that such an attribution would imply a monophysite denial of Christ's human nature (Michel, op. cit., cols. 1275-1276).

¹¹⁹Mühlen has pursued this theme through a variety of works; Congar, op. cit., I, pp. 22-25, provides a summary of his position from this point of view. In what follows, reference has been made to Heribert Mühlen, Der Heilige Geist als Person (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963; references are to the 5th ed., 1988); and his "Das Christuseignis als Tat des Heiligen Geistes," in Johannes Feiner and Magnus Löhrer, eds., Mysterium Salutis (Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1969), III/2, pp. 519-524.

¹²⁰Mühlen, Der Heilige Geist als Person, pp. 206-214.

a secondary implication of the hypostatic union. Because the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and because the Son assumes human nature in the incarnation, the Spirit, according to Mühlen, rests upon him also.¹²¹ Thus Mühlen's Pneumatic Christology appropriates the anointing of Jesus ultimately to the Logos rather than to the Spirit - not, however, in the sense that the humanity is anointed by the Logos in the hypostatic union, as in some scholastic theologies,¹²² but in the sense that the anointing of the humanity with the Spirit to make Jesus the "Christ" derives from the assumption of flesh by the Logos.

At the same time, however, Mühlen attempts to overcome the limitations of the scholastic conception, which derive from its inability to conceive of the humanity of Christ in a fully historical way, and thus also of the relation of the Spirit to Christ in terms adequate to the historicity of human nature. According to Thomas Aquinas, for example, there was no increase in the habitual grace of Christ throughout his life; rather, since he had already reached the goal of creaturely union with God from his conception, through his substantial sanctification in the grace of union, the accidental graces of the Holy Spirit must also have been present in their fullness from the moment of his conception.¹²³ This view is required, for Thomas, by the very concept of the hypostatic union; the humanity of Christ must have received perfect and complete habitual grace from the very beginning of its existence, inasmuch as the union of divine and human natures in the hypostasis of the Son means that the Holy Spirit who comes forth eternally from the Son can never be separated from the humanity of the Son, but is of necessity communicated to the humanity

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 206-207.

¹²²See above, footnote number 118.

¹²³Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 3a. 7, 12.

continually.¹²⁴

Within this theological conception, accidental sanctity or habitual grace is still necessary for Jesus as man, precisely on the basis of the Chalcedonian doctrine that the hypostatic union does not obliterate the distinction of natures. However, over against the incarnation of the Logos, this work of the Spirit in the humanity of Christ appears to be of incidental significance; above all, it is in no sense the ground of the divine Sonship of Christ, but is rather the result or "crown" of the Sonship which is already presupposed, and which is conceived as the result of the hypostatic union within the established tradition of Logos Christology. The Sonship being thus established by the Logos, the work of the Spirit was to endow the humanity assumed by the Logos with the created sanctifying graces and charisms by means of which Jesus lived in a holy manner.¹²⁵ There is no doubt that the intention of the medieval tradition in this respect was to acknowledge the true humanity of Christ and to provide a distinctive role in Christology for the Holy Spirit in its relation to that humanity. However, just as the conception of human nature involved appears defective, since there is no growth or movement in its relation to God, so the Pneumatological determination of the humanity of Christ which results is minimized. The problem is that, in the end, the doctrine of the hypostatic union (and its interpretation through the idea of enhypostasia) does not permit the humanity of Christ to be considered apart from the Logos; in the medieval conception, therefore, even the accidental sanctification of the humanity of Jesus by the Holy Spirit becomes a species of Logos Christology, inasmuch as those graces which are thus given to the human nature by the Spirit flow ultimately from the hypostatic

¹²⁴Ibid., 3a. 7, 5 ad 2; 7, 13.

¹²⁵Congar, The Word and the Spirit, p. 86.

union.

This is a weakness which shows up most critically, perhaps, in less subtle versions of the scholastic position, in which the hypostatic union is of such importance that the Holy Spirit in effect has no place in Christology at all. In the later medieval period, for example, the tendency was to ascribe everything of positive importance to the hypostatic union as a result of an anti-Scotist concern to reassert the importance of Christ's substantial sanctification.¹²⁶ The result, however, was that Jesus' habitual grace, deriving from the work of the Spirit, appeared to be superfluous.¹²⁷ This is a tendency which is not limited to the medieval period; it can be seen also, for example, in the nineteenth century in the theology of M. Scheeben, who argues that biblical and patristic references to the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit are to be understood in the sense that Jesus is anointed by the Word, who is the principle of the Spirit.¹²⁸ Here literally everything in Christology must be appropriated ultimately to the Word, while the Christological importance of the Holy Spirit is effectively eliminated.

Mühlen attempts to overcome the deficiencies of this idea by developing at some length the salvation-historical importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. In his essay, "Das Christusergeignis als Tat des Heiligen Geistes," for example, Mühlen distinguishes between the salvation-historical framework of the Christology of anointing and the ontological Christology of

¹²⁶See above, footnote number 118.

¹²⁷Liam G. Walsh, in St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, trans., with introduction and notes by Liam G. Walsh (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, and New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), XLIX, pp. 46-47, note a.

¹²⁸So David Coffey, Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit (Sydney: Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1979), pp. 93-95.

the theological tradition, arguing that the particular significance of the Christology of anointing lies in its salvation-historical dimension. It is thus salvation history which provides Mühlen with a theological horizon in which to discuss the place of the Holy Spirit in Christology. He is aware, for example, that the biblical Christology of anointing, in particular as it was later developed in the early theological tradition by the Ebionites,¹²⁹ was inadequate and that the doctrine of Christ required an ontological elaboration through the development of Logos Christology.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the salvation-

¹²⁹On Ebionitism, see Hans-Joachim Schoeps, Jewish Christianity, trans. Douglas R. A. Hare (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 59-73, who argues that the Ebionites held at least initially to what can be characterized as a prophet Christology in which Jesus appears as the prophet like Moses who was promised in Deut. 18: 15. Their Christological view appears to have been that Jesus, as man rather than as the divine Son, perfectly fulfilled the Law of Moses in his earthly existence, and as a result of his obedience was consecrated Messiah and endowed with the power of God through the gift of the Spirit at his baptism. The Messianic office for which he was thus equipped chiefly comprised his dual role as the new lawgiver and as the eschatological Son of Man (ibid., p. 61). The position of the Ebionites is, however, notoriously difficult to reconstruct. The Fathers' characterization of the Ebionite sect, for example, goes beyond Schoeps' reconstruction; Tertullian, De carne Christi, 14, and Epiphanius, Haer. 30, 16, 3-4, speak of a group which held that at the baptism of Jesus, an archangel named Christ descended upon him, as he had also upon the earlier prophets (Schoeps, op. cit., p. 64; Pelikan, op. cit., p. 24). Jean Daniélou, following the Fathers, argues in The Theology of Jewish Christianity, trans. and ed. J. A. Baker (London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1964), pp. 55-64, that the angelic theme is primitive. Schoeps, however, regards this as a later Ebionite doctrine, current at the time of the early Fathers. As Daniélou's analysis is less extensive than that of Schoeps, who enters into the historical and theological problems in some detail, Schoeps' characterization of the Ebionites in terms of a relatively straightforward Christology of anointing is probably to be preferred.

¹³⁰Mühlen, "Das Christusergebnis," pp. 519-524.

historical aspect of Christology, grounded as it is in biblical revelation and related as it is to the historical humanity of Jesus as the God-man, needs to be reaffirmed and systematically reappropriated.

While maintaining the basic distinction between Logos Christology as ontological and Pneumatic Christology as salvation-historical, Mühlen argues that it is possible to draw an analogy between the sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit, so that just as the former is designated the Menschwerdung of the Son of God, so the latter can be spoken of as the "Zeitwerdung" of the Holy Spirit.¹³¹ The point of this is not, of course, to claim that the Spirit "became time" in a sense parallel to Jn. 1: 14, and much less to claim that this "becoming time" was analogous to the Word's assumption of flesh in the developed Christological doctrine of the hypostatic union. It is rather that in anointing Jesus, first of all, and also in the Spirit's continuing role as the mediator of the risen Christ to the Church, the Spirit is bound up inexorably with the temporal existence and mission of Jesus Christ, and thus assumes a role in the economy of salvation which he did not have before.¹³²

Mühlen unfortunately fails to limit his term to the Holy Spirit, as, according to Mühlen, the Menschwerdung of the Logos too can also be called a Zeitwerdung.¹³³ In the incarnation, the Logos indeed "became" something which he had not been from "the beginning." The crucial point, however, for our purposes is that the Holy Spirit, in his activity in the life of Jesus, also becomes what he was not before. Mühlen develops this thesis in two ways. In the first place, he presupposes the doctrine of the accidental

¹³¹Ibid., p. 530.

¹³²Ibid., pp. 531-532.

¹³³Ibid., p. 531.

sanctification of Jesus, arguing from it, however, that the Spirit created in him those graces which were required for his Messianic office, and that, through time, these graces increased and developed in his personal history. This grace, for Mühlen as for the scholastics, was derived ultimately from the hypostatic union, but immediately from the "unction" of the Holy Spirit – according to the infancy narratives, from the beginning of his existence. The total history of grace in Jesus' life, according to Mühlen, from his conception to his death, resurrection and exaltation, must be understood as a history also of the Spirit who bestowed the grace.

Secondly, however, Mühlen takes up the Johannine theology of the Spirit as expressed in particular in Jn. 7: 39; 16: 7; and 20: 22f., and as developed, again, in the scholastic doctrine of the gratia capitis of Christ, whereby the accidental sanctification of Christ is orientated a priori to the plurality of persons he represents as the incarnate Word.¹³⁴ In his development of the doctrine of the gratia capitis, however, Mühlen again emphasizes the stages of the work of the Spirit in the historical humanity of Christ; in particular, he argues that it was only through the earthly obedience of Jesus unto death that the Spirit became in time the gift given also to the Church, and not only to Jesus, for ever.¹³⁵ The Zeitwerdung of the Spirit continues, therefore, beyond the Christ-event itself into the time of the Church. Mühlen's wider Pneumatological thesis is thus orientated as much to ecclesiology as it is to Christology, and can be seen, in fact, in general terms as an attempt to relate the two together in a single systematic, Pneumatological

¹³⁴Mühlen, Der Heilige Geist als Person, pp. 229-230.

¹³⁵Mühlen, "Das Christusergebnis," p. 532.

conception.¹³⁶

In this conception, however, Mühlen gives both temporal and logical priority to the Christological over the ecclesiological aspect of Pneumatology.¹³⁷ His central point is that the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, from the first moment of his existence through to his

¹³⁶Consistent with this, the basis of the whole development lies in the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christ-event as such on the one hand, while, on the other, Mühlen refers to the characteristic work of the Holy Spirit in the economy as the Spirit's "corporeality" (Leibhaftigkeit) in the Church (ibid., p. 518). The connection between the two is that the continuing work of the Spirit in the Church is the continuation of the salvation-historical anointing of Jesus with the Spirit (ibid., p. 533). This reflects Mühlen's primary formula for the Spirit's economic function: "One Person in many persons," i.e., in Christ and in the Church (ibid., p. 518; Mühlen, Der Heilige Geist als Person, p. 168). The point, however, is that the Spirit must be understood in his presence and activity in the Church as the same Spirit who anointed Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, and as the Spirit through whom this same Jesus now makes himself present to us (Mühlen, "Das Christuserignis," p. 533). Two points follow from this. First of all, for Mühlen, the key difference as far as the Church is concerned between the Christ-event, and the Spirit-event which has its origin in the Christ-event, is the "then" of temporal completion which attaches to Jesus' earthly saving work, and the "now" of his present activity through his Spirit, though in the concrete economy of salvation these are aspects of a single divine work. Secondly, the Spirit does not mediate to us a heavenly Christ, abstracted from his history and ours, but rather makes possible a contemporary salvific participation in the historical Christ-event - or rather, to be more precise, Christ himself allows such participation in himself through his Spirit (ibid., pp. 540-543).

¹³⁷Like many theologians, Mühlen treats the Holy Spirit in terms of his present role as the mediator between Christ and the Church; according to Mühlen, we do not stand over against the Holy Spirit or in relation to the Spirit, but rather we stand over against Christ, or in relation to Christ, in the Spirit. In this sense, the Spirit is to be understood literally to be that relation by which we encounter Christ, so that in fact the Spirit's role in the economy subsequent to the Christ-event itself is as the condition and the material of the experience of Christ by the Church (ibid., pp. 514, 525-526).

baptism by John and finally in his death and resurrection, is to be understood as a profoundly soteriological event. It is, in other words, the Spirit's activity in the life of Jesus that is the presupposition of the Spirit's further role in the economy of salvation in giving life to the Church.¹³⁸ Much of Mühlen's theological work, indeed, is concerned to establish this, and to determine in what sense the latter would not have been possible without the former.

In Mühlen's development of the doctrine of the Trinity – where the emphasis falls on the personal character of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in contrast, clearly, to a more ontological conception of the Trinity¹³⁹ – the understanding achieved of the Holy Spirit is built on the older Western model of the Trinity, in which the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one principle; Mühlen thus defines the Spirit as the subsistent We-act between the Father and the Son, i.e., as their We-relation or mutual love.¹⁴⁰ In the immanent Trinitarian life, the Father appears

¹³⁸Sabbas J. Kilian, "The Holy Spirit in Christ and Christians," American Benedictine Review, 20 (1969), 99-121.

¹³⁹Mühlen holds that the older ontologically-conceived doctrine of the Trinity is inadequate, in that it needs to be supplemented by a Trinitarian language and conceptuality which can express more fully the mysterious life of God, and show how the divine life is the ground of the saving acts of God in history.

¹⁴⁰Mühlen's theology here is a radicalized version of the Augustinian trinitarian theory of relational predication, and thus of the traditional Western relational understanding of the Persons, by means of what he understands to be a synthesis of the Trinitarian theologies of Augustine and Richard of St. Victor (Mühlen, Der Heilige Geist als Person, pp. 81-82, 167). The new "personological" vocabulary, however, enables Mühlen to make one advance in particular upon the older tradition. He characterizes the relation between the Father and the Son on the one hand and the Holy Spirit on the other as a "We-You" relation, from the point of view, as it were, of the Father and the Son, and as an "I-You (plural)" relation, from the point of view of the Spirit (ibid., p. 168).

in Mühlen as the "I relation," the Son as the "Thou relation," and the Spirit as the "We in person."¹⁴¹ According to Mühlen, the Holy Spirit is thus eternally orientated to a plurality of persons, and can be seen in his salvation-historical function both as related to the person of the incarnate Son (rather than to the human nature assumed) and to the whole of the mass of humanity whom the Son came to redeem: as the "We in person," the Spirit is thus in his salvation-historical function the personal bond between

¹⁴¹Coffey, op. cit., pp. 35-37, provides an incisive critique of Mühlen, in which he notes certain basic problems inherent in this conception, not the least of which is the designation of the Holy Spirit as the "We in person," whereas the "We" is the Father and the Son, from whom the Spirit proceeds. (Coffey's critique of Mühlen's Christology, ibid., pp. 91-119, is more elaborate and sustained. I have chosen to omit it in this context, since in the treatment of Coffey which follows, Coffey's positive Christological position is developed in some detail.) Similar difficulties occur in the Augustinian model, of course, where the Father and the Son appear as the persons in relation, whereas the Spirit appears as their relation, i.e., more as an operation of the Father and the Son rather than as an personal agent in his own right. Furthermore, in Mühlen's adaptation of this model, the personal pronouns which attach to the Father, Son, and Spirit are necessarily ambiguous, according to the particular relation with which we are concerned. Both the Son and the Spirit can be designated "Thou," for example, while the Spirit can appear even in relation to the Father as "I." It is, however, difficult to agree with Coffey's basic criticism of Mühlen's doctrine of the Trinity, ibid., p. 37, where he asserts that Mühlen's understanding of the person in terms of the concept of a relational subject is foreign to the Trinitarian tradition. It is certainly true that Mühlen, op. cit., pp. 26ff., is critical of the definition of the "person" in the Western Trinitarian tradition as a spiritual subsistent relation, over against the idea of the self-consciousness of the Trinity as belonging to the divine essence, in which the three persons share. However, Mühlen's doctrine of the Trinity also appeals explicitly to the theologies of Augustine and Richard of St. Victor at this point (see above, footnote number 140), and appears, in addition, as a version of the social doctrine of the Trinity which, in outline at least, carries authority from the Eastern Trinitarian tradition.

Christ and all of those baptized into Christ.¹⁴²

While Mühlen's theology has set the agenda for contemporary discussion of the anointing of Jesus, however, his Trinitarian theology cannot be considered to be itself of direct relevance to the problem with which we are concerned here. The reason is that Mühlen's doctrine of the Trinity does not begin with the economy of salvation, or involve the contemporary Trinitarian thesis we have in view, that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa. Rather, Mühlen, above all in Der Heilige Geist als Person, moves in his treatment of the Trinity and of the Holy Spirit from the immanent Trinity, and indeed from the immanent Trinity of scholastic theology (which, however, he reinterprets in "personological" terms¹⁴³) to the economic problems of incarnation, anointing, and ecclesiology. While he argues that the salvation-historical modes of appearance of the Son and the Spirit can be taken to be confirmations of his theology of the immanent Trinity,¹⁴⁴ and indeed tacitly assumes that the reverse procedure would be possible,¹⁴⁵ his Trinitarian theology as such cannot be considered in the present context. Thus his understanding of the Holy Spirit as the innertrinitarian "We in person" derives, not from the economy of salvation as such, but rather from his basic treatment of the innertrinitarian processions.

(b) Trinitarian Theology

The claim was made above that Mühlen's theology sets much of the agenda for the subsequent development of the anointing theme in Trinitarian theology. To say this is

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 195-197.

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 44ff.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 196.

not, however, to imply that subsequent theology has followed Mühlen in detail. On the contrary, while Mühlen's treatment of the salvation-historical significance of the anointing of Jesus is generally assumed, a much more critical stance is adopted towards his broader position. Above all, over against Mühlen's movement from the theology of the immanent Trinity to the economy of salvation and the question of the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, subsequent anointing theologies are characterized by a reverse movement, from the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit to the problem of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Perhaps for this reason also, the theologians concerned – and here I shall restrict discussion to Kasper, Coffey, von Balthasar, and Congar – also adopt a more critical attitude towards the Christological doctrine of accidental sanctification. Mühlen was effectively prevented from this by his original acceptance of the Western Trinitarian paradigm, according to which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, so that in the economy, he saw the Holy Spirit as poured out upon Christ by virtue of the hypostatic union. It appears, however, that the economic datum with which we begin in the question of the anointing of Christ with the Holy Spirit is fundamentally the passivity of Christ in relation to the Holy Spirit, which, on the basis of the contemporary Trinitarian thesis, makes possible a very different view of the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Son than Mühlen's.

The theology of Walter Kasper is representative in this respect. Kasper's theology of the Spirit begins with Mühlen's understanding of the salvation-historical significance of the anointing of Jesus, but attempts to develop its Trinitarian implications more consistently from

the economic starting-point.¹⁴⁶ Kasper, therefore, develops a more radical Spirit Christology than Mühlen, in particular in that, unlike Mühlen, he challenges the older Trinitarian taxis upon which Mühlen's position is ultimately based, arguing that the hypostatic union is not the presupposition of Jesus' anointing with the Spirit, but rather its consequence.¹⁴⁷

As our sonship by adoption is the work of the Spirit, therefore, so Jesus' Sonship can also be regarded from a Pneumatic point of view - without, however, thereby excluding the idea of the assumption of flesh by the Logos. The question here concerns the sense in which Jesus receives grace by the work of the Spirit as the Son of God in his historical humanity. For Mühlen, the anointing of Jesus is an implication of the hypostatic union; for Kasper, on the other hand, Jesus can only be the Son of God in his concrete history of obedience by virtue of the unction of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit both created and sanctified his human nature at his conception, and provided the temporal, creaturely humanity assumed with continuing and increasing graces of love for and obedience to the Father, thus enabling Jesus to be the Son of God in his concrete human history. Here the "accidental sanctification" of the humanity appears as the presupposition of the hypostatic union in the sense that the temporal work of the Holy Spirit in the humanity of Christ mediates in a dynamic and temporal manner the union of the human with the divine nature of the Logos. The Holy Spirit, in other words, constantly mediates the incarnation.

¹⁴⁶Kilian McDonnell, "The Determinative Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," Theology Today, 39 (1982), 156.

¹⁴⁷Walter Kasper, Jesus the Christ, trans. V. Green (London: Burns & Oates, 1977), pp. 230-274.

Kasper's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in Christology is a response to what he takes to be the central problem of Christology: how Jesus Christ can be the Word made flesh, or, in Kasper's terms, the self-communication of God in history. To account for this, the Nicene-Chalcedonian axis in Christology posits the homoousion of the Father and the Son on the one hand, and, on the other, the doctrine of the hypostatic union. Kasper's basic argument is not that the tradition was wrong to develop these ideas, but rather that the resulting doctrine of the hypostatic union in particular was overly static and metaphysical and too little concerned with Jesus' historical, human relation, not to the Son, but to the Father.¹⁴⁸ The traditional account of Jesus as the incarnate Son separates the status of Jesus as the divine self-communication of the Father from his history of obedience and love to the Father. But this, Kasper argues, threatens the total witness of biblical revelation that the God of history is revealed in Jesus Christ in such a way that this historical human being, Jesus of Nazareth, is the Word made flesh.

Kasper thus accepts the homoousion in his Christology, but at the same time argues that under the conditions of the incarnation, and in view of the true human nature of Christ, it is necessary to understand it in "relational" or "personal" terms, thus taking up into Christology the existential dynamic of human historical existence.¹⁴⁹ For Kasper, the whole character of God's revelation and of the

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 236-238. Cf. also David Coffey, 'The "Incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ,' Theological Studies, 45 (1984), 473. This thesis mirrors Pannenberg's reappropriation of the historical Jesus, by which the consciousness of the human Jesus is understood to have been orientated to the Father (Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus - God and Man, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1968), pp. 334-337).

¹⁴⁹Kasper, op. cit., p. 238.

incarnation in itself above all demands that Jesus' history of obedience to the Father be of fundamental Christological importance.¹⁵⁰ His thesis is that, as man, Jesus Christ, like all men and women, is his history, and therefore that it is precisely in his history that Jesus is the Logos or self-communication of God.

The starting-point of Kasper's whole conception is thus the humanity of Jesus, since it is in his humanity, according to Kasper, that he is the Son of God.¹⁵¹ For Kasper, Jesus as man is to be understood as a historical human being like other human beings, and to be defined like other human beings in terms of a subjective ego which itself is to be conceived as an openness to others and ultimately to God. From the New Testament, we know that Jesus' openness to God takes the form of obedience to and love of the Father. Kasper builds his Christology on these anthropological presuppositions. On the one hand, Jesus' obedience to the Father, which in his case is absolute, presupposes that he relates to the Father as one from whom he is distinct, and yet his being as a human ego is defined relationally, being wholly determined by his relation to the Father and to others. On the other hand, his very obedience in love can only be the direct result of God's turning to him in love, for it is only God who can bridge the chasm between himself and humanity to fulfil the transcendent potentiality of his creatures. The obedience of Jesus is thus, for Kasper, to be understood as the result of the Father's perfect self-communication to him, the complete human response to the complete divine turning of the Father to him in love. It is therefore precisely because Jesus is nothing other than the Father's self-communication that he is also nothing other than his historical obedience to the Father in love: the two do not

¹⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 1-39, 240-252.

¹⁵¹Ibid., pp. 245-248.

merely imply one another, they are intensified proportionate to one another, so that in him they are completely one: Jesus Christ is true God, the Father's Word, and true man, the perfect human response to God.

Kasper's position here presupposes the transcendental Christology of Karl Rahner. In Rahner's reconstruction of the Christological tradition, the basic strategy is to ask what are the conditions for the possibility of the incarnation of the Word in Jesus of Nazareth. Rahner himself does not develop Christology from the point of view of Pneumatology; indeed, on the contrary, for Rahner the humanity of Jesus is related primarily to the Word who assumed it rather than to the Spirit or, indeed, to the Father.¹⁵² However, as we shall see, his position lends itself quite obviously to a Pneumatic development, and in a certain sense can be seen to require such a development.¹⁵³

Rahner's position is indebted to modern existential and phenomenological thought as well as to the wider philosophical and theological tradition, and is, as Rahner himself says, an attempt to re-state in relational or "ontological" terms the truth expressed in the "ontic"

¹⁵²Karl Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology," in Rahner, Theological Investigations, trans. Cornelius Ernst (2nd ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965), I, pp. 149-200.

¹⁵³This is a possibility which is also suggested by Wilhelm Thüsing in conjunction with Rahner himself in Karl Rahner and Wilhelm Thüsing, A New Christology, trans. David Smith and Verdant Green (London: Burns & Oates, 1980), pp. 60 and 108ff. Thüsing argues that Rahner's transcendental Christology must be interpreted in the light of the biblical understanding of Pneuma as that power by which the human openness to God is possible, and appeals in particular to the Pauline Pneuma Christology of 2 Cor. 3: 17 and 1 Cor. 15: 45 (cf. also Gal. 4: 6 and Rom. 8: 15) (ibid., p. 60). Unfortunately, however, Thüsing does not develop his suggestion in detail.

categories of classical Christology.¹⁵⁴ In particular, however, Rahner's Christology is a Christological reinterpretation, in these relational terms, of the older idea of the capax dei.¹⁵⁵ Rahner thus understands the hypostatic union in terms of the anthropological potentiality for obedience to God which Jesus, as man, shares with the rest of humanity.¹⁵⁶ Christology thus, in a certain sense, becomes a function of anthropology; insofar as the potentiality for obedience to God which is given in human nature can only be actualized by a divine self-communication, and insofar as the divine self-communication with which we are here concerned is fundamentally to be understood as the Word of God, Rahner understands human being as such as a potentiality for the hypostatic union.¹⁵⁷

Following Rahner, the basic Christological problem posed by Kasper is thus how it is that the divine Son can be man in such a way that the Father's self-communication can literally be the history of Jesus Christ. The problem is one of mediation, of how it is possible for the divinity

¹⁵⁴Karl Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation," in Rahner, Theological Investigations, IV, pp. 105-120.

¹⁵⁵On what follows, see Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology."

¹⁵⁶"Human being is ... a reality absolutely open upwards; a reality which reaches its highest ... perfection, the realization of the highest possibility of man's being, when in it the Logos himself becomes existent in the world." Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁵⁷The claim is not that there have been many hypostatic unions, of course, for there has only ever been one complete self-communication of God to humanity, Jesus Christ. However, at the same time the doctrine of the incarnation of the Word cannot be understood in abstraction from its anthropological presuppositions. Human nature as such is oriented to the divine self-communication, so that at the very summit of its potentiality it is entirely appropriate to find that it has its hypostasis in the hypostasis of the Word, as the older Christological tradition maintains.

and the humanity, though distinct, to be one in him.¹⁵⁸ It is here that Kasper goes beyond Rahner, and here that his theology is of particular Pneumatological significance, for his argument is that it is the Holy Spirit, and a Pneumatologically orientated Christology, which alone can provide the answer.¹⁵⁹ Kasper formulates his Christological position as follows:

By wholly filling Jesus' humanity, the Spirit endows it with the openness by which it can freely and wholly constitute a mould for God's self-communication. ... The Spirit is thus in person God's love as freedom, and the creative principle which sanctifies the man Jesus in such a way as to enable him, by free obedience and dedication, to be the incarnate response to God's self-communication.¹⁶⁰

It is fundamental to Kasper's argument, furthermore, that if sacred history is not to be emptied of its content, and theological metaphysics made meaningless, then the doctrine of the Trinity must be understood as the "transcendental condition" for the possibility of the self-communication of God the Father to Jesus.¹⁶¹ The question is basically what kind of Trinity must be postulated in order to make this historical self-communication possible. Kasper argues that only a model of the Trinity in which the Spirit has a central role to play in God's reaching out to the world can be adequate to this requirement. He therefore adopts a view of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity in which the Spirit is not to be

¹⁵⁸Kasper, op. cit., p. 240.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 249.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

conceived only as the love between the Father and the Son, according to the Augustinian paradigm, but in which also the Spirit is the "surplus and effusion of freedom in the love between the Father and the Son."¹⁶² As this surplus of love, the Spirit is to be understood as the personal agent within the Trinity itself in whom the Father, through the Son, reaches outward in love. As such, it is the Spirit who is the transcendental possibility of the divine self-communication to the creation: "The Spirit as mediator between Father and Son is at the same time the mediation of God into history."¹⁶³

To this extent, the basis of the Christ-event is Pneumatological, in the sense that the love by which God in himself loves the world, so much so that he gave his only-begotten Son, is ultimately the Holy Spirit. The Spirit thus serves a mediating role between God the Father and his self-communication in history in Jesus Christ. More than this, however, in Kasper's Pneumatic Christology it is in the Spirit that Jesus is the self-communication of the Father; for Kasper, Jesus is the Logos in his history of obedience and love precisely because the Spirit dwells fully within him. It is the activity of the Spirit, therefore, in the humanity of Jesus which makes him that perfect response of obedience and love to God and love of neighbour which constitutes him the Father's self-communication and thus the Son of God. This is so, however, because in the Spirit God eternally in himself "has the possibility of producing something outside, that is, a creature, and while maintaining its creaturely

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 250. Cf. also John Milbank, "The Second Difference: For a Trinitarianism Without Reserve," Modern Theology, 2, No. 3 (1986), 216-222. Like Mühlen, Kasper's theology draws heavily on the Trinitarian Pneumatology of Richard of St. Victor at this point. See above, footnote number 140.

¹⁶³Kasper, loc. cit.

independence, to draw it into his love."¹⁶⁴

In Kasper's doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, the Spirit is the love in which the Trinity is in itself impelled outward, and not simply, as in the Augustinian model, the bond of love between the Father and the Son. Thus, for Kasper, the immanent Trinity is eternally orientated ad extra through the Holy Spirit. As it is in the Holy Spirit, therefore, that the self-communication in love of the Father through the Son to the world takes place, so in the immanent Trinity the Holy Spirit is to be understood as the overflowing love of God in person, in whom God is eternally the gift of himself. Kasper argues that this is the irreducible minimum which both Eastern and Western Pneumatology, divided as they are by the filioque, must be able to affirm.¹⁶⁵ This leads him to a critique of both East and West, who are equally unable to affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit in the economy as the gift of God himself as uncreated grace: the East because of its doctrine of the divine energeia, and the West because of its doctrine of created grace. For Kasper, by contrast, the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation is the economic realization, as it were, of the eternal "Giftness" of the Triune God.¹⁶⁶

Various questions might be raised about Kasper's Trinitarian theology, for example, concerning his presupposed idea of the divine self-communication. In Chapter II, however, I have already provided a critique of this idea in connection with the theology of Rahner. The primary question which must be addressed in Kasper's theology concerns the way in which the idea of the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit is to be taken up

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Kasper, The God of Jesus Christ, pp. 214-229.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 226.

into the doctrine of the Trinity. For Kasper himself, the economic and the immanent Trinity are clearly not literally identical. The "transcendental theological deduction" involved in his theology in Jesus the Christ leads at best to the idea of an immanent Trinity which contains in itself the economic relations in question only in an eminent sense, a fact confirmed by Kasper's argument in The God of Jesus Christ that the idea of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity must be carefully circumscribed in terms of the kenotic character of the economic Trinity and the apophatic character of the immanent Trinity.¹⁶⁷

The implications of this question extend well beyond Kasper's theology and the theologies associated with the anointing model as a whole, into the area of the overall philosophical and theological context within which contemporary Trinitarian theology is located. As always in contemporary Trinitarian theology, two central questions arise: "What economic starting-point?" and "What relation between the economy and the Trinity in itself?" In the latter case, Kasper's theology shows that the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity is capable of being sustained while a clear ontological distinction between the two is still in view; as we have already seen in connection with Barth's theology, however, sometimes more than one understanding of the unity involved can be implicit in a single theology. The confusions which result can obscure the serious points being made, and even make the entire position problematic. It is therefore important to note the fact that different views of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity are often presupposed.

Even in the anointing model, therefore, while there is relative agreement concerning the question, "Which economic Trinity?" the question of the nature of the unity asserted between the economic and immanent Trinity remains

¹⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 273-277.

a disputed point. On the whole, however, the fact that this model has been developed for the most part in Roman Catholic circles has meant, as in Kasper's theology, that traditional metaphysical distinctions have survived to a much greater extent than they have in much Protestant Trinitarian theology.

This can be seen again in the Trinitarian Pneumatology of David Coffey, whose position again takes its rise from a critical reappraisal of Mühlen's theology and of the doctrine of accidental sanctification, carried out through a reinterpretation of the capax dei as employed in Rahner's Christology.¹⁶⁸ Like Kasper, Coffey attempts, on the basis of his broadly Rahnerian view of the incarnation, to understand the anointing of Christ as the presupposition of the hypostatic union. This understanding was traditionally impeded, he argues, by the belief that the divinity of Christ must be sharply distinguished from his humanity.¹⁶⁹ In Coffey's Christology, however, the way is opened to what he terms a Christology of ascent, in which the Holy Spirit plays the decisive economic role:

In the one act of nature and grace the humanity of Christ was created by the triune God and so radically sanctified by the Holy Spirit ... that it became one in person with the eternal Son, and

¹⁶⁸Coffey, Grace: the Gift of the Holy Spirit; Coffey, 'The "Incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ'; Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," Theological Studies, 47 (1986), 227-250; and Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," Theological Studies, 51 (1990), 193-229.

¹⁶⁹Coffey, 'The "Incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ,' p. 469; see also ibid., p. 467, where Coffey argues that the divinity of Christ is not something other than his humanity, but rather that, "...it is the humanity, i.e., human nature at the peak of its possibility, which is the achievement of God's grace..."

so Son of God in humanity.¹⁷⁰

In keeping with this, Coffey places a great deal of emphasis on the doctrine of enhypostasia, interpreting it with Rahner, though in a more radical sense, as an extension of the capax dei idea. At the same time, however, he both attacks dualistic interpretations of Chalcedon in order to maintain his basic position, and upholds the distinction between the two natures of Christ in order to avoid monophysitism and retain the possibility of a Christological development of the capax dei idea.

Coffey's Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit is developed from this Christology, again by taking the implications of the economic role of the Spirit in the Christ-event back into the doctrine of the Trinity. Here Coffey's position is based on the familiar thesis that the only way to give proper content to the doctrine is to begin with the economy and to move from there to the immanent Trinity.¹⁷¹ The reverse order, which begins with the immanent Trinity and moves to the economic, for example, in the proposition that the missions of the Son and Spirit are prolongations of the processions, is legitimate, he argues, only as a secondary deduction from the Trinitarian theology which has already been developed from the economy. We are justified, in other words, in moving from what has already been established of the Trinity in itself back to the economy, insofar as such a procedure renders the two levels of Trinitarian discourse more intelligible, and helps to order the relation between them.¹⁷² This reflects the fact also that God is who he is in himself before he is what he is in the economy; the movement from the immanent to the

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 469.

¹⁷¹Coffey, Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit, p. 2.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 2.

economic Trinity in theology is thus finally justified by the lordship and freedom of God. The unquestioned presupposition of the whole, however, is the conviction that God has revealed himself in the Christ-event, and therefore that he can be known in himself from his revelation.

In his Trinitarian theology, Coffey draws a basic distinction between what he calls the "bestowal model," or, later, the "model of return," and the "procession model" of the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁷³ Both are, according to Coffey, essentially attempts to read back into the Trinity in itself certain truths from the economy of salvation, and each is legitimate, but the content of the two differs. Coffey is primarily concerned in his theology with the bestowal model, since in his view it is derived more immediately than the procession model from the basic phenomenon from which the Christian religion as such is derived, namely, from the human history of Jesus in his relation of love for and obedience to the Father.¹⁷⁴ In the case of the procession model, by contrast, the point is more strictly the essential unity of the Son and the Spirit with the Father, which has to do with the subsistence or personhood of the Son and Spirit with the Father rather than with their mutual relations, and which therefore rests on a more abstract and ontological approach to the economy of salvation.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³Ibid., pp. 1-32, 43-144. In "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," p. 228, Coffey abandons the terminology of "bestowal" in favour of "return," on the grounds that this brings out the contrast with the procession model better. I have retained his original terminology here, however, as more accurately expressing the character of that model in itself. See below, p. 202.

¹⁷⁴Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," p. 233.

¹⁷⁵Coffey, Grace: the Gift of the Holy Spirit, p. 30.

Although there are difficulties involved in this position, it would be useful to pursue Coffey's distinction further; we begin, therefore, with the procession model. In Coffey's understanding, the procession model establishes that the Son and the Spirit, who are the agents of the economy of salvation, have an eternal origin in the Father and are one with him in divinity. By means of the procession model, therefore, we arrive at the idea of three consubstantial persons in one God, although beyond that basic conclusion there are various differences of approach between, for example, Eastern and Western theology.¹⁷⁶ Epistemologically, the procession model takes its rise from the missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, these being, in turn, ontologically expressed in their original, foundational form as Jesus' own consciousness of being sent, on the one hand, and the Church's past and present experience of the Holy Spirit, on the other.¹⁷⁷ The procession model is therefore the result of an inference made from the economy to the Trinity. Coffey does not himself discuss the nature of this inference, but he assumes that it is valid and that, at least in its fundamental features, the result can be sustained.

The real question, however, which Coffey has in view is not the methodological origin of the two Trinitarian models, but rather their final form. The decisive point here is that it is from the procession model that the understanding of the missions of the Son and Spirit as prolongations of the generation and procession of the Son and Spirit derives. This understanding arises, clearly, from the fact that the model has its origins in the missions; having posited a unity of substance between the Son and Spirit on the one hand, and the Father on the

¹⁷⁶Coffey, *ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁷⁷Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," pp. 232-233.

other, the procession model, as it were, returns to its foundations in the economy with new insight. Coffey thus repeatedly refers to the procession model as the "descending" model of the Trinity, in the sense that, though taking its rise from the missions, it is ultimately concerned with the eternal derivation of the Son and Spirit from the Father, and with the continuation of that movement, by grace, into creation in the redemptive work of Christ and his Spirit.¹⁷⁸

In the case of the bestowal model, according to Coffey, the content of Trinitarian doctrine corresponds to the question of the manner of these processions rather than to the fact of the processions themselves.¹⁷⁹ The difference between it and the procession model has its root in the economic basis from which the two develop. In the case of the bestowal model, we begin, according to Coffey, not with Jesus' consciousness of being sent, but rather with Jesus' consciousness of being united with the Father.¹⁸⁰ In fact, for Coffey, Jesus' consciousness of union with the Father must take precedence over his consciousness of mission; it is because of his Sonship that he is obedient, in short, rather than vice versa, so that the latter is a corollary of the former.¹⁸¹ Referring to the basis of the bestowal model, Coffey writes:

The phenomenon is Jesus' experience of being uniquely close to God, which he expressed in the prayer formula "my Father," and which he knew placed on him a responsibility for others, which

¹⁷⁸Coffey, Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit, pp. 54-71.

¹⁷⁹Coffey, 'The "Incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in Christ,' p. 470.

¹⁸⁰Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," pp. 233-234.

¹⁸¹The reverse would involve adoptionism.

came to expression chiefly in his preaching of the kingdom of God, to be entered by faith. The experience of Jesus was one of being uniquely loved by God, and this love evoked from him a love of the Father which was a love faithful unto death, and the sole and consuming, motivating force of his life....¹⁸²

Coffey's bestowal model of the Trinity is an attempt to read back into the immanent Trinity this feature of the economic basis of the Christian faith. The result corresponds to the older "mutual love theory";¹⁸³ what is new, however, is the distinction between it and the Trinitarian ideas of generation and procession, and the peculiar Christological position to which it is attached. In the Trinitarian model constructed from this economic basis, the Holy Spirit is conceived as the love which the Father bestows on the Son and the "answering love" which the Son, in turn, bestows on the Father; we are concerned here, therefore, not with the hypostatic qualities of the persons as consubstantial, but rather purely with their relatedness.¹⁸⁴ Here, therefore, just as Jesus' Sonship in humanity is expressed in this love, i.e., in the Holy Spirit, so in the immanent Trinity the Son is relationally, or personally (as opposed to essentially, which is the concern of the procession model) one with the Father in love, i.e., by virtue of the love bestowed on him by the Father, and by virtue of the love which he then returns to the Father. The Holy Spirit, therefore, appears here to be the relatedness of the Father and the Son in love. The

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 232, and Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," pp. 201-219.

¹⁸⁴As such, Coffey's bestowal model, again, builds upon the theology of Augustine and his theory of relational predication.

personal character of the Holy Spirit is established in the procession model, according to Coffey, so that there is no danger of a renewed relegation of the Spirit to a personal status effectively less than that of the Father and the Son, while in the bestowal model, the Spirit can appear as the love bestowed by the Father upon the Son and by the Son, then, upon the Father in return, without danger to the personal character of the Holy Spirit. The entire scheme, however, has its origin in the basic event of the incarnation of the Son of God, which Coffey understands as a Pneumatological event.

The primary problem with Coffey's Trinitarian theology, however, is that the distinction drawn between the procession and bestowal models threatens the unity of the doctrine of the Trinity as such. Coffey argues, of course, that the concerns of the two models are distinct, and thus that there is no conflict between them. However, his distinction is grounded in such fundamental aspects of Trinitarian doctrine that by that very fact it threatens to produce two Trinities rather than one. Precisely because the two models deal with differing problems which are not to be confused - the one with the fact of the processions and the other with the relations of the persons, one must ask whether or not the two Trinitarian models themselves can be reconciled. If they are not to be confused, in short, as Coffey maintains, can they be unified?

This problem can be illustrated by reference to Coffey's discussion of the mutual love theory, which he distinguishes sharply from the Augustinian psychological analogy. According to Coffey, the former pertains to the bestowal model, and the latter to the procession model.¹⁸⁵ The latter, he argues, understands the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit analogically from the

¹⁸⁵Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," p. 232.

two characteristic acts of a spiritual nature, knowing and loving: thus, the Son proceeds by knowledge and the Holy Spirit by love.¹⁸⁶ In keeping with his general understanding of the procession model, Coffey maintains that the psychological analogy as such posits only the fact of the processions, and does not address the question of the relations of the persons; the question of the relations of the persons is answered in the bestowal model, through the idea that the Father and the Son relate to one another in the Spirit, who is their loving relation in person.

The distinction which Coffey thus draws between the psychological analogy and the mutual love theory, however, conflicts sharply with the Augustinian position, in which the two clearly constitute a unified conception. Indeed, the whole point of the Augustinian analogy is to show that the three persons are related to one another as the knower to the known, who are not distinct, but are united in love: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Within the terms of the psychological model, the Holy Spirit appears as the unity between the Father, as knower, and the Son, as the one known: already, in other words, the Spirit appears as the relation of mutuality between the first two persons, a relation which in the Augustinian conception is one of ekstasis towards the other, or of love. The Father is other than the Son, and yet he knows himself in the Son, his image, and in knowing himself thus in his other, he loves the other, his Son; the Son, likewise, cannot be other than the one of whom he is the image, and is thus bonded to the Father in that same love, the love which is, for Augustine, the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁷ Even in its scholastic expression in the theology of Thomas Aquinas, from which Coffey's formula concerning the two characteristic acts of a spiritual substance seems to be derived, the point is not simply that

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁸⁷Augustine, op. cit., X, 11.

there are two spiritual acts which correspond to the two processions, but rather that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the love uniting them.¹⁸⁸

Coffey's position, of course, is that the older theology wrongfully confuses the proper content of the psychological analogy and the idea of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son. I do not propose to examine the traditional standpoint here in any detail; for our purposes, it will suffice, in order to refute this claim, to examine briefly Coffey's own alternative to the traditional position. The basic point which has to be raised here is the problem of how it is possible to speak of the generation of the Son or of the procession of the Spirit from the Father without speaking at the same time of the relation of the Son and Spirit to the Father. Would it be possible to conceive of the processions as non-relational, i.e., to think of the Son as begotten of the Father before all worlds and yet as unrelated in that very conception to the Father, or of the Holy Spirit similarly? Whatever the idea of begetting, or of spiration, might mean, it certainly involves the relation of the two persons involved. This, in fact, can be seen even in Coffey's position, despite his best efforts, where, for example, he speaks of the procession model as concerned with the outward movement of the Son and Spirit from the Father, and of the bestowal model as concerned with the return of the Son to the Father in love.¹⁸⁹ The language used itself reveals the ultimate inseparability of the two models, since, clearly, there can be no "return" without an "outward movement."

Instead of distinct Trinitarian models, it would be better to argue more simply that we have in Coffey's distinction merely two aspects of a single Trinitarian

¹⁸⁸Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a, 36, 4; 37, 2.

¹⁸⁹Coffey, op. cit., p. 232.

position. In this way, we avoid the danger of the loss of the unity of the Trinity by explicitly holding both aspects of Trinitarian theology together in a unified conception.

This is the view taken by Hans Urs von Balthasar in his Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit, which, on the whole, deals with this problem with greater sensitivity and insight. In his theology, Balthasar draws attention to what he calls the "Trinitarian inversions" of the economy of salvation, and specifically to the fact that, in his relation to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit appears in the New Testament both as the Spirit who is "over" and "in" Jesus.¹⁹⁰ According to Balthasar, the economic distinctions here are to be explained in terms of the Trinitarian relations of the Spirit, which Balthasar understands in basic continuity with the Western theological tradition.

Thus, according to Balthasar, as the Spirit of the Father in the economy, the Holy Spirit is "over" Jesus, anointing and empowering him for his mission, as well as leading him in his path of obedience according to the Father's will. Here the economic activity of the Spirit corresponds to the innertrinitarian understanding of the Spirit in terms of the relation between the Father and the Son, only here on its "Fatherly" side: the Spirit is the objective fruit of the subjective love which the Father is in his self-giving in the generation of the Son.¹⁹¹ As the Spirit of the Son, by contrast, the Holy Spirit is "in" Jesus, moving him constantly to obedience, and determining his whole personal character in terms of obedience.¹⁹² In an

¹⁹⁰Hans Urs von Balthasar, Theodramatik (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1978), II/2, pp. 167ff.; and Balthasar, Theologik (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1987), III, pp. 158, 167-168, 176.

¹⁹¹Balthasar, Theologik, III, pp. 144-150; 166.

¹⁹²Balthasar, ibid., p. 166, and Theodramatik, II/2, pp. 167-168, draws a distinction between the Selbstverfügung and Gehorsam of the Son, the first referring to the free self-humbling of the Son in the

analogous way, the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity is understood in terms of the loving relation of the Son to the Father in his reciprocal response of devotion.¹⁹³ Here the Son's love for the Father in the Holy Spirit corresponds to and reflects the fact that, in the innertrinitarian taxis, the Son is in his very hypostatic reality the result of the Father's own eternal self-giving in the generation of the Only-Begotten.

Balthasar's focus throughout this discussion is on the event of the incarnation, understood in terms both of its inception and in terms of the whole incarnate history of Jesus.¹⁹⁴ His specific approach is to raise the question of the incarnation as the work of the whole Trinity.¹⁹⁵ Thus, for example, the incarnation involves the Father through his sending of the Son, and the Holy Spirit also in that the Father, according to Balthasar, entrusts his own "sperma theou" to the Spirit in the divine condescension to the womb of Mary.¹⁹⁶ Throughout the entire incarnate life of the Son, furthermore, there obtains a reciprocal relation between the Son and the Spirit which varies with the

incarnation, and the second to the incarnate Son's concrete obedience to the Father unto death. The role of the Holy Spirit in Christology is developed by Balthasar in connection with this obedience unto death; it is, for Balthasar, in the power of the Spirit that Christ abandons himself to the will of the Father, and thus in the power of the Spirit that he goes ultimately to the cross. Thus also, for Balthasar, the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son can be said to mediate the event of the incarnation insofar as it consists, in the concrete life of Christ, in perfect obedience to the Father. See also Hans Urs von Balthasar, Pneuma und Institution (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1974), pp. 222-229.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Balthasar, Theologik, III, pp. 161-162.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

necessities of the economy.¹⁹⁷ It is thus necessary, Balthasar argues, to come to terms theologically with the fact that the Father is always "with his two hands" in his saving work.

Balthasar, like Kasper and Coffey, is critical in this context of the older view which distinguishes sharply between the action of the Logos, who becomes flesh in the gratia unionis, and that of the Holy Spirit, who is understood to provide the human nature with the accidental grace required for the incarnate work of the Logos.¹⁹⁸ Balthasar, rather, refers to the hypostatic union and to the anointing of the incarnate Logos as two simultaneous acts, in the sense that the two are complementary aspects of a single Trinitarian event. But, significantly, he also understands both in Pneumatological terms: it is the Spirit, as the Spirit of the Father, who carries the sperma theou into Mary's womb, and the Spirit, as the Spirit of the Son, who enables the incarnate Son to obey to the end the command of the Father.¹⁹⁹

The idea of Trinitarian inversion as employed here is intended to explain how it is that, for example, the Spirit is on the one hand given to Jesus, and on the other is given by Jesus, while at the same time precluding the possibility of internal contradictions in the immanent Trinity. It is significant that while Balthasar holds that the Holy Spirit can thus be both in and over the Son in the innertrinitarian sense, he does not hold that the economic Trinitarian inversions as such imply corresponding inversions within the immanent Trinity. Rather, his position is that the innertrinitarian reality is such that

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., and John J. O'Donnell, "In Him and Over Him: the Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus," Gregorianum, 70 (1989), 28.

¹⁹⁹Balthasar, op. cit., p. 168.

it provides the inexhaustible, eternal basis of the diverse economic taxis. It is not, therefore, that the economic inversions in the relation between the Spirit and the Son given in the dynamic of Jesus' history in any sense reflect or even less bring about immanent inversions, but that the eternal Trinitarian relations must be such as to explain how the economic inversions are themselves possible. The point is, therefore, that the Holy Spirit can be conceived both as the Spirit of the Father, directing Jesus on his way of obedience, and as the Spirit of the Son, moving Jesus as Son to his total love for and dedication to the Father, just as the Spirit is also eternally the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

At the same time, the idea of Trinitarian inversions enables Balthasar to understand the events of the economy of salvation in a unified and fully Trinitarian sense. Not only, therefore, does his conception not force the doctrine of the Trinity into contradiction, but it allows the economy of salvation to be appropriated as a fully Trinitarian event. The anointing of Jesus by the Spirit is understood with Mühlen as the anointing of the person of the Son, and not simply as the anointing of the humanity of the incarnate Son. The formal cost of this approach, however, as Balthasar repeatedly emphasizes, is that it is impossible to argue that each economic taxis corresponds, in and of itself, to an eternal taxis in the immanent Trinitarian being; rather, insofar as it is a reflection of the Trinitarian relation, it represents only one aspect of that presupposed, but more complex, eternal reality.

Balthasar himself clearly holds that there can be no theological access to the immanent Trinity apart from that provided by the economy of salvation.²⁰⁰ At the same time, however, his approach suggests that the solution to the question, "Which economic Trinity?" cannot be found in the

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 192.

economy itself. Balthasar rejects the idea that each economic Trinitarian relation has a corresponding immanent Trinitarian basis on that grounds that, once granted, this principle would imply that the contradictions in the economy should be taken to require contradictions in the immanent Trinity itself - something which Balthasar, for undisclosed reasons, does not admit. But the basis for that judgement would not appear to be the economy of salvation itself; given the evident inversions of relation within the economy, a strict reading of the principle that the only access to the immanent Trinity is from the economy would appear to require precisely the innertrinitarian inversions which Balthasar is anxious to exclude.

We turn finally to Yves Congar, who makes the intriguing suggestion in his study, The Word and the Spirit, that Barth's doctrine of election might provide the link between the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. The suggestion arises in the context of a discussion of the question whether or not the biblical Christology of anointing requires a Trinitarian doctrine of the Son proceeding "a Patre Spirituque" in the immanent Trinity.²⁰¹

Congar's argument is based on the observation that Jesus appears in a number of New Testament documents as the bearer of the Spirit, and that the Christological importance of the Spirit in his life in these traditions is indicated by the fact that the Spirit is related by the writers to his Sonship (Lk. 1: 35 and Mk. 1: 9-11 par.). To explain this, Congar argues on the one hand that Adoptionism must be avoided, and on the other that the humanity of Jesus as Son of God must be taken with full seriousness.²⁰² Jesus, in short, is the Son of God in two ways. He is the Son of God by eternal begetting, but he is

²⁰¹Congar, op. cit., p. 93.

²⁰²Ibid., pp. 91-92.

also Son of God in his humanity according to the historical stages by which his Sonship is realized: in the annunciation, in the baptism, and in the resurrection. Congar conceives Jesus here not only as the Only Begotten, but also as the Prototokos, the Firstborn among all those predestined to be conformed to him. Congar writes: "I would say that the Word was conceived incarnandum and even crucifigendum glorificandum, caput multorum Dei filiorum - that, at his conception, he had to be made flesh, crucified and glorified as the head of many sons of God."²⁰³ These historical stages, he argues, for Jesus and for us, are the work of the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁴ It is in this sense, according to that aspect of historical Christology by which Jesus becomes, for us, the Son of God, the Saviour, and the Messiah, that it can be said that the Son or the Word proceeds "a Patre Spirituque." The Spirit is to be seen as intervening in "all the acts or moments in the history of the Word incarnate."²⁰⁵

Congar, like Balthasar, argues in the end that we are not obliged to refer every event in the life of Christ to the immanent Trinity, and thus that the case for a spirituque doctrine is weak on that particular basis. While, for Congar, there is indeed a clear and close relationship between the economic and the immanent Trinity, this is not a relation of identity. Citing Rahner's axiom, and Lafont's critique of Rahner, he argues that the economic Trinity "is" indeed the immanent Trinity, but that, at the same time, the immanent Trinity cannot be reduced to the economic.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, he argues, the

²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴Ibid., and Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, III, pp. 165-173.

²⁰⁵Congar, The Word and the Spirit, loc. cit.

²⁰⁶Ibid. p. 93, and Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, III, pp. 11-18.

theme of the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit must be susceptible to a Trinitarian development, precisely because it is a Trinitarian event. It is here that the significance of Barth's doctrine of election for Congar appears, as Congar goes on to suggest specifically that Barth's doctrine of Jesus Christ as the eternally elected man might provide the key to such a Trinitarian development of the anointing theme,²⁰⁷ and thus make possible a more thoroughgoing Trinitarian interpretation of the anointing than Barth himself, and the mainstream Christian tradition, hold to be possible.

Congar's argument, following Mühlen's, is that the particular strength of such a Pneumatic Christology is precisely its potential for a salvation-historical approach to Christology and so to the mystery of salvation. His point is that the nature of God's saving work, which takes place in history through events situated in time bringing about something temporally new, is fundamentally at odds with the traditional view that the whole of the grace of Christ was given in the hypostatic union from the moment of his conception.²⁰⁸ This is particularly clear, he argues, in the light of the witness of the New Testament to historical stages in the life of Christ, governed by successive comings of the Spirit to him in his role as Messiah, from which there seemed to result a genuine growth of grace in him in his human obedience to the Father and in his Messianic work.²⁰⁹ Congar argues that the fully historical character of the economy of salvation commits us, in the end, to the view that there were historical stages, or kairoi, in the life of Christ which are to be seen as

²⁰⁷Congar, The Word and the Spirit, pp. 93-95.

²⁰⁸Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, III, pp. 165-167.

²⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 167-169, and Congar, The Word and the Spirit, pp. 88-91.

"authentic qualitative moments in which God's communication of himself in Jesus Christ and in a very real sense also to Jesus Christ was accomplished. There were successive comings of the Holy Spirit over Jesus in his quality as 'Christ the Saviour'." ²¹⁰

Here, then, the reason for Congar's reference to Barth's Christological doctrine of the eternal man becomes clear. According to Barth:

...we do not have to reckon with any Son of God in Himself, with any [Logos asarkos], with any other Word of God than that which was made flesh. According to the free and gracious will of God the eternal Son of God is Jesus Christ as He lived and died and rose again in time and none other. ²¹¹

If, in accordance with Barth's Christology, there really is no Word other than Jesus Christ, and thus if Jesus Christ in this sense belongs to the doctrine of the Trinity, then the history of Jesus Christ belongs to the doctrine of the Trinity and therefore also his anointing and a form of spirituque doctrine. Since there is no Son but Jesus Christ the eternal man, in this sense, the immanent Trinitarian relation between the Spirit and the Son must also eternally contain within itself this historical event of anointing.

Congar's thesis here illustrates one of the many ways in which Barth's doctrine of election might be developed, although quite contrary, there can be little doubt, to Barth's own Christological and Trinitarian use of the doctrine. The whole scheme, however, clearly rests upon the presupposition that the Barthian view of Jesus Christ as the eternally elect man, belonging to the doctrine of the

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 87.

²¹¹Barth, op. cit., IV/1, p. 52.

Trinity, can indeed be sustained. In Barth's own theology, the doctrine of election is derived from his basic Trinitarian thesis that there is no "other" God lurking "behind" his revelation, in the sense that that God should be unrevealed and unknown. God has indeed spoken, Barth argues, and that sheer fact, which operates in his theology as a constant (and largely unquestioned) presupposition, determines the resulting course of his theology.

As we have seen, however, the idea of election as Barth employs it in the context of Trinitarian theology involves problematic assumptions and implications, not the least being the extent to which it can lend itself to a view of God as capricious both in himself and towards us. It would be better to say that the very thing which God could not have done, if he is indeed in himself the love from which the economy of salvation flows, was to "choose" in a literal sense either for us or against us. If indeed the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, and if it is true that God cannot be other than who he is in the economy, then it would appear that God was determined by himself as love to be God in Jesus Christ, and that there is a divine necessity to the incarnation and the entire economy of salvation.

Despite the fact that Congar appeals to Barth's problematic doctrine of election, his account directly raises the underlying question of the Trinitarian theology of anointing: "What does the human experience of Jesus Christ in relation to the Holy Spirit have to do with the doctrine of the Trinity, and what does the doctrine of the Trinity have to do with Jesus' experience of the Spirit?" If Rahner's axiom as it stands were to be translated into these terms, we could simply say that the one "is" the other and vice versa, although, on the whole, advocates of the anointing model tend to maintain also that the identity thus posited is qualified by the kenotic character of the economy and the apophatic character of discourse concerning

the immanent Trinity.

In the "anointing model," therefore, the problem of the Holy Spirit's place in the Trinity is discussed in the context of Christology. It is significant not only that here the work of the Holy Spirit comes to be of importance for the divine Sonship of Jesus, but also that here the divine Sonship of Jesus is understood in terms of the historical obedience of Jesus to the Father. It is the humanity of Christ, in this sense, which has particular theological significance for this Trinitarian theology. For it is not enough here that human nature be taken on by the Logos, so that by the sheer fact of its once-for-all assumption it is redeemed; what is affirmed instead is that the Logos in his divinity is none other than the Logos who was made flesh, who, in Barth's words, "lived and died and rose again in time and none other," and who, it is added here, was anointed with the Holy Spirit and thus lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. It is not, in short, merely the humanity of Jesus, but also his human history under the power of the Spirit, which is taken up into the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus the Trinitarian relation which obtains between the Holy Spirit and the Son of God, on this understanding, is in principle and eternally inseparable from the question of the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, while the anointing, likewise, cannot be considered in its full significance apart from the immanent Trinitarian relation between the Spirit and the Son.

4. The Eschatological Model

The fourth and last of the approaches to the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity in contemporary theology with which we shall be concerned is what I have called the "eschatological model," in order to reflect its basic thesis that the Trinity is in itself orientated, like the

economy of salvation, to the future consummation of the kingdom of God. As we have seen, the temporal character of the economy is also taken up into Trinitarian theology in the revealedness, atonement, and anointing models through the idea of the unity of the economic and immanent Trinity. Temporal aspects of the economy thus assume Trinitarian significance - the epistemological aspect of the work of the Spirit, the crucifixion, and the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit. In the eschatological model, the temporal aspect which comes to the fore is the anticipation of the coming kingdom of God, and thus the essential element of futurity in the Christian hope. To the extent that the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity has been presupposed in recent theologies of the Trinity, this has been an obvious development, since, on this basis, the question of the immanent Trinitarian significance of the fact that the economy of salvation is not yet complete was bound to arise.

The origins of this position extend back also, however, to the "rediscovery" by biblical scholars such as Weiss and Schweitzer at the end of the nineteenth century of the central significance of eschatology in the message of Jesus and in the thinking of the primitive Church.²¹² As a result, eschatology became one of the crucial issues of twentieth century theology, and can, indeed, be traced back to the foundations of the tradition of Trinitarian theology which we have in view to the theology of Barth. T. F. Torrance notes that the attempt to recognize the importance of eschatology is one of the factors marking the shift from the early Barth of the commentaries on Romans to the theology of the Church Dogmatics.²¹³ The earlier

²¹²Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), pp. 37-94.

²¹³T. F. Torrance, Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology, 1910-1931 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1962), p. 79.

characteristically dialectical opposition of eternity and time, transcendence and immanence, thus gives way to the idea of the God whose very eternal transcendence is his freedom to be temporal and immanent, and in whom, through the concrete realization of this freedom in the incarnation, there exists for us the eschatological "new time" of reconciliation through Christ, over against the "old time" of sin.²¹⁴ For Barth, therefore, the significance of eschatology is related to the freedom of God in his divine decision to be God in Jesus Christ, which determines what God eternally is. As the one who does not choose to be God except in Jesus Christ, therefore, he is in himself, in effect, the new time of redemption, and thus the ground of the eschatological tension between it and the old time of sin. As such, the significance of eschatology for Barth is related to the very concept of the freedom of God which leads to the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity.

In his Theology of Hope, Moltmann rejected Barth's assumption of eschatology into the being of God, essentially on the grounds that simply to deny the polarity of divine eternity and creaturely temporality does not yet yield a true theological eschatology; for Moltmann, this can only be achieved if Jesus Christ himself is understood to have a genuine future, and if, indeed, God himself has "future as his essential nature."²¹⁵ In Moltmann's view, since for Barth the Christ-event is ontically complete and cannot be transcended, the supposedly "eschatological" aspect of his theology still refers only to the eternal presence of God in time, rather than to the true presence of time, and so of the eschatological future, through

²¹⁴Ibid. See also John E. Colwell, Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1989), pp. 13-31, 51-53.

²¹⁵Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 16, 50-58.

Christ in God.²¹⁶ This key criticism of Barth has wide repercussions in Moltmann's theology, and relates, in the end, to differing views of the relation of the economic and the immanent Trinity in Moltmann and in Barth.

Although Moltmann's Trinitarian theology has been cited briefly in connection with the atonement model of the Trinity in the previous section by reason of his position as expressed in The Crucified God, Moltmann's Trinitarian theology, I have suggested, is best understood in connection with the problem of eschatology. Here the wider result is quite different from that achieved in the approach based on the theology of the cross alone. In the latter, as we have seen, the inner-divine relation is understood to be given in the event of the cross, and specifically in the relation between the Father and the crucified Son, in the Holy Spirit. The Pneumatological result of the procedure is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit akin to that in the Western filioquist tradition, in which the Spirit is understood as the vinculum caritatis. Moltmann develops this view in The Crucified God:

In the cross, Father and Son are most deeply separated in forsakenness and at the same time are most inwardly one in their surrender. What proceeds from this event between Father and Son is the Spirit which justifies the godless, fills the forsaken with love and brings the dead alive...²¹⁷

However, in the context of Moltmann's wider theology, the Trinitarian event of the cross is to be understood as opening up an entire eschatological, Trinitarian process, and not as a self-contained event.²¹⁸ The cross is thus seen

²¹⁶Ibid., p. 57.

²¹⁷Moltmann, The Crucified God, p. 244.

²¹⁸Ibid., p. 249.

as an event within the whole eschatological history of the Trinity, which is yet to be completed.

Along with Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg has also developed a theology of the Trinity from the standpoint of eschatology. In several works, Pannenberg sketches the Trinitarian implications of his more developed doctrine of God, according to which God's being is historical and orientated towards his future kingdom.²¹⁹ Building on an analysis of the biblical idea of God's lordship, he begins with the argument that "God's being and existence cannot be conceived apart from his rule," that to have power over the creation is "intrinsic to God's nature," and that, in view of the fact that the kingdom of God belongs to the future, "God's being is still in the process of coming to be."²²⁰ In his development of this theme, Pannenberg somewhat idiosyncratically gives ontological priority to the future over the past, so that what God will be is nevertheless in a retroactive sense what God is now.²²¹ William Hill summarizes Pannenberg's position well: "God will reveal Himself at the end as always having been what He has become

²¹⁹Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Der Gott der Geschichte," Kerygma und Dogma, 23 (1977), 76-92; also in his Grundfragen Systematischen Theologie. Gesammelte Aufsätze 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1980), pp. 112-128, from which references here are taken; Pannenberg, "Die Subjektivität Gottes und die Trinitätslehre," in ibid., pp. 96-111; Pannenberg, "Problems of a Trinitarian Doctrine of God," and Pannenberg, Systematische Theologie, Band I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988). For a comparative treatment of Moltmann and Pannenberg, see Roger Olson, "Trinity and Eschatology: The Historical Being of God in Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg," Scottish Journal of Theology, 36 (1983), 213-227, and for a critical assessment of Pannenberg's theology of the Trinity, Roger Olson, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity," Scottish Journal of Theology, 43 (1990), 175-206.

²²⁰Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 55-56.

²²¹Ibid., p. 63.

historically."²²²

I do not propose at this point to enter into a discussion of the coherence of Pannenberg's position, but only to survey briefly its Trinitarian implications, in order to pass on then to a more detailed treatment of Moltmann's theology. The latter has produced a more sustained eschatological model of the Trinity through a series of books, while his treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit outweighs in scale and importance Pannenberg's work on the subject. Nevertheless, Pannenberg's outline treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity from the point of view of eschatology precedes much of Moltmann's recent work, and broadly anticipates many of its results.²²³

In his essay, "Der Gott der Geschichte," Pannenberg argues that the older doctrine of the immanent Trinity, which developed for various understandable historical and theological reasons, nevertheless threatens to make the realm of creation and of historical redemption theologically redundant.²²⁴ The presupposed dualism of the older conception, by which the Trinity in itself is sharply differentiated from the Trinity of the economy of salvation, the former being complete in and of itself and the latter being the outworking of sheer grace, is obviously inconsistent with Pannenberg's own presupposed view that God's intrinsic being is in some sense temporally incomplete, awaiting final realization in the coming kingdom. Pannenberg argues, therefore, that the traditional view is called into question by the biblical thematization of the Godhood of the Trinitarian persons in salvation

²²²William J. Hill, "The Historicity of God," Theological Studies, 45 (1984), p. 323.

²²³Pannenberg, "Problems of a Trinitarian Doctrine of God," p. 252.

²²⁴Pannenberg, "Der Gott der Geschichte," pp. 86-87.

history, and in particular in the cross of Jesus.²²⁵ In Jesus - God and Man, Pannenberg had argued that the divinity of Jesus Christ is decided retroactively from the resurrection;²²⁶ now he argues in a more fully Trinitarian sense that the Godhood also of the Father is likewise placed in question by the crucifixion, and only affirmed with the resurrection.²²⁷ The Godhood of the Father, as well as that of the Son, therefore, is mediated through the history of Jesus Christ (although at the same time it must also be said that the present is here determined by the future²²⁸). All of this, however, is the work of the Holy Spirit: he raises Jesus from death, and thus certifies the Godhood of the Father and the Son as well as their unity in the self-differentiation of the two in the cross.²²⁹ For Pannenberg, therefore, the eternal Godhood of the Father is dependent on the reality of his kingdom as realized economically through the work of the Son and Holy Spirit.²³⁰

The main representative of this position in contemporary theology is, however, Moltmann, whose work on Pneumatology and the doctrine of the Trinity in The Church in the Power of the Spirit and The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, which have already been cited, will serve as the basis for what follows. In the earlier book, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, Moltmann takes up the thesis of the Theology of Hope that eschatology is the decisive element in Christianity and that futurity is the very mode

²²⁵Ibid., p. 87.

²²⁶Pannenberg, Jesus - God and Man, pp. 53-114, 133-137.

²²⁷Pannenberg, "Der Gott der Geschichte," p. 88.

²²⁸Olson, "Trinity and Eschatology," pp. 222-224, and Olson, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity," pp. 199-202.

²²⁹Pannenberg, loc. cit.

²³⁰Ibid., p. 89.

of the being of God. Moltmann had by this time already argued in The Crucified God that this eschatology is focused in and springs from the cross, and is not simply a function of a universal world-historical process; The Church in the Power of the Spirit developed the latter aspect further, by seeing the Church as set in the context of this continuing "Trinitarian history," contributing actively and passively to its fulfilment in the future kingdom of God.²³¹

Early in this work, Moltmann makes the observation that it is through the work of the Holy Spirit that the Church is determined by the divine future:

... the whole eschatology of the history of Christ ... can also be described as the history of the Spirit, a result of the workings and indwellings of the Spirit through which the future that is hoped for enters into history.²³²

From this, it would be reasonable to assume that without the doctrine of the Holy Spirit Moltmann's future-orientated theology would be inconceivable. Consistent with this, Pneumatology assumes enormous importance in his theology as a whole and in his Trinitarian theology in particular. Of key importance in this respect is what might be called Moltmann's Pneumatological deepening of the Barthian doctrine of election. For Barth, the fact that God sent his Son into the world in the incarnation led to the idea of Jesus Christ as the eternally elect man; for Moltmann, the fact that God sent his Son and Spirit into the world, thus opening himself to it, means that God is in

²³¹William J. Hill, The Three-Personed God (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), pp. 166-175.

²³²Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, p. 34.

himself open to his creation, and allows himself to be determined by its history.²³³ In both conceptions, the freedom of God is held to be of central importance: for Barth, the divine decision to be God in Jesus Christ, and not to be God without mankind, leads to a free self-determination of God to be eternally who he is in himself in Jesus Christ; for Moltmann, God eternally and freely threw himself open to be determined by the Pneumatological, eschatological history which springs from the cross.²³⁴ The openness to the creation which this involves is not one born of deficiency, therefore; as for Barth, it is an openness which derives from the fulness of divine being, from the "self-communicating livingness of God which overcomes death."²³⁵

In this context, Moltmann argues that the work of the Holy Spirit must be understood in terms of the lordship of God: his indwelling in everything and his glorification in the renewing of creation:

The eschatological meaning of the messianic mission of Christ and the Spirit lies in the glorifying of God and the liberation of the world, in the sense that God is glorified through the liberation and healing of creation, and that he does not desire to be glorified without his liberated creation.²³⁶

What is appropriated to the Spirit economically, however, is also true of the Spirit immanently: the unification of the creation with the Father and the Father's glorification through that saving work is at the same time, therefore,

²³³Ibid., p. 55.

²³⁴Ibid., pp. 53-56.

²³⁵Ibid., p. 56.

²³⁶Ibid., p. 60.

the role of the Spirit in the unification of God and the glorification of the Father within the immanent Trinity.²³⁷ Since God is in himself open to the creation, he can only be unified and glorified together with the creation. Hence the unity and final glory of God will only come about with the eschatological goal of salvation history – indeed, it is the eschatological goal of salvation history – and hence too the history of the kingdom of God is itself the history of the unification and glorification of the Trinity.²³⁸ God is thus, for Moltmann, not simply God in Jesus Christ; rather, he is God in history, and not without history, in the precise sense that he has chosen not to be God apart from the ongoing historical process which has yet to be completed "in the power of the Holy Spirit."

The Church in the Power of the Spirit thus appears as an extension and outworking of Moltmann's earlier ideas in his Theology of Hope and The Crucified God. In one respect in particular, however, The Church in the Power of the Spirit made a decisive advance over his earlier theology, in that here Moltmann clarified his view of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity. Whereas, in The Crucified God, Moltmann's treatment of this question is ambiguous at best,²³⁹ he spells out his position in The Church in the Power of the Spirit in some detail in terms which are by now familiar:

Is the mission of Jesus a chance historical event or does it find its foundation in God himself? If its foundation is in God himself, does it then correspond to God, or does God only appear in this manner, a manner which perhaps does not correspond to him at all? If we push our question

²³⁷Ibid., pp. 57-62.

²³⁸Ibid., pp. 60-62.

²³⁹Moltmann, The Crucified God, pp. 237-241.

further back like this, then we cannot find anything in God which is antecedent to the sending of Jesus and in which this sending was not included.... The relation of the one who sends to the one sent as it appears in the history of Jesus thus includes in itself an order of origin within the Trinity, and must be understood as that order's historical correspondence.²⁴⁰

Moltmann, however, as we might expect from the above, puts a radical interpretation on this traditional, indeed, ultimately patristic, line of reasoning. Departing from the older language of the Trinitarian processions as the ground of the economic missions, he signals his desire to take up the historical, eschatological economy into the doctrine of the immanent Trinity by speaking of immanent and economic missions: "The missio ad extra reveals the missio ad intra. The missio ad intra is the foundation of the missio ad extra."²⁴¹ Because God has quite literally opened himself to history in the economy of salvation, the eternal processions are eternally in themselves also the missions; the Son is eternally the Son who was sent and who died on the cross, and the Spirit likewise eternally the Spirit who raised him from death and continues his work in the glorification and unification of the creation in him.

Moltmann's The Trinity and the Kingdom of God in general mirrors his earlier position, but is again a more mature expression of his theology as well as a comprehensive synthesis of his earlier Trinitarian thought. For this reason, it will serve as the main focus for our discussion. The starting-point of Moltmann's doctrine of the Trinity here is his argument that Christian theology has never, in fact, thought the Trinitarian content of the

²⁴⁰Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, p. 54.

²⁴¹Ibid.

gospel with sufficient rigour. According to Moltmann, the tendency throughout Christian history has always been for theologians to reduce the Trinity to either an explicit or implicit monadic monotheism.²⁴² He examines, for example, the two classical Trinitarian heresies of Arianism and Sabellianism, and argues that both are dominated by the notion of the one God and of the universal monarchy of this one God as a single subject.²⁴³ Equally, according to Moltmann, the "orthodox" positions of both West and East – the Western emphasis on the una substantia of the Godhead and the Eastern view that the Father's monarchy is the principle of unity of the Trinity – effectively evade a thoroughgoing doctrine of the Trinity in favour of differing versions of monadic monotheism.²⁴⁴

In The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, Moltmann is also highly critical of the Idealist thesis that the Trinity is to be understood in terms of God as Absolute Subject, relating himself to himself by passing over into his opposite so as to be all reality.²⁴⁵ In Chapter IV, I shall argue that Moltmann's Trinitarian theology is itself, in fact, of broadly Hegelian and so Idealist provenance, inasmuch as Moltmann understands God to freely define himself in relation to the creation. For the moment, however, Moltmann's claims can be taken seriously, since they have to do with a different question, that of the need for a genuine Trinitarianism as opposed to a latent modalism. According to Moltmann, the Idealist thesis is simply another monadic reduction of the three divine persons to a logically prior and overridingly important

²⁴²Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, pp. 18-19.

²⁴³Ibid., pp. 132-137.

²⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 10-12, 177-178.

²⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 139-150.

basic unity. Both Barth and Rahner, Moltmann argues, fall prey to the Idealist view of God,²⁴⁶ and, in adopting its view that God is Absolute Subject, effectively degenerate in their Trinitarian theologies into a form of Sabellianism.²⁴⁷ The problem here, Moltmann argues, is that the Son and the Spirit do not appear as full-fledged persons in the Trinity: in the reflection logic of the Absolute Subject, the Son is simply the other in whom the Father contemplates himself, while the Spirit is a correlation of the Father as thinker and the Son as image of thought, and not a distinct third person. The Absolute Subject, which serves in the Idealist tradition as the principle of the unity of the one God, logically precedes the self-differentiation of the Absolute Subject into the three persons, and therefore, for Moltmann, obliterates the persons, reducing the doctrine of the Trinity to Sabellianism.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 139-148.

²⁴⁷Thus, for example, according to Moltmann, ibid., pp. 139-144, Barth uses the doctrine of the Trinity to secure the one Lordship and subjectivity of God in his rule and revelation. Because he speaks of the one God as the Lord who reveals himself through the Word and in the Holy Spirit, Barth rejects the language of three persons and adopts, rather, the language of the divine "modes of being." Moltmann argues, ibid., pp. 144-148, that Rahner similarly makes God the supreme individual, whose one essence becomes the sameness of the self-related, Absolute Subject. Moltmann notes that Rahner does not allow the problem of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity to be elucidated in terms of the mutual love of the Father and the Son, since that would presuppose two centres of consciousness. All we have is a differentiated self-communication of the Absolute, which does not admit any real threefoldness in God himself as Trinity. For Moltmann, Rahner's theology is effectively a denial of biblical revelation, an obscuring of the history of the Father, Son, and Spirit to which the Bible testifies.

²⁴⁸This explains why Moltmann is, on the whole, sympathetic to the idea of the good diffusing itself, via the idea of the love of God, but not to its Idealist equivalent; in Moltmann's view, we begin with the

In his positive treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, Moltmann deals first of all with the threefoldness of the God of revelation and secondly with the question of the divine unity. Thus he begins his doctrine of the Trinity with the three divine persons as given in the biblical history, and moves from this "Trinitarian history" to the unity of the three. In this way, the unity of the persons is again from the beginning made formally dependent upon their history, as Moltmann understands it, in the biblical witness, and comes to be seen explicitly in terms of "the eschatological question about the consummation of the Trinitarian history of God."²⁴⁹

It is the New Testament itself, according to Moltmann, which witnesses to the history of the Father, Son, and Spirit, so that this fundamental datum of revelation cannot be by-passed in dogmatic theology. Moltmann is critical of nineteenth century liberal theology for holding that the Trinity has no place in the proclamation of Jesus or in the original Church's gospel, just as he is also critical of the implicit monotheism of the theological tradition.²⁵⁰ For Moltmann, the history of Jesus is already understood in the New Testament in terms of the history of the relations between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus Moltmann apparently assumes that the "Jesus" of the synoptic gospels is already understood as the eternal Son of God, and that the Holy Spirit likewise can be understood in a fully Trinitarian sense throughout the New Testament; accordingly, he treats the baptism narratives of the synoptics, for example, and the declaration of Sonship

Trinitarian relations already as the source of the divine outreach in love, rather than with the Father or with the divine essence as its source.

²⁴⁹Ibid., p. 149.

²⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 61-64.

embedded in these narratives, as having a fully Trinitarian structure, in that here the Father empowers the Son for his Messianic office through the Spirit.²⁵¹ In the sending motif of New Testament Christology, similarly, Jesus is presented as the Son of the Father who sent him, and the Father as the Father who sent Jesus.²⁵² As in the baptism narratives, this happens "in the Spirit", in a Trinitarian structure in which (1) the Father sends the Son through the Spirit; (2) the Son is sent by the Father in the power of the Spirit; and (3) the Spirit brings people into the fellowship of the Son with the Father.²⁵³

Moltmann extends this understanding of the Trinitarian history of Jesus to Jesus' death and resurrection, and finally to his future as the risen and ascended Son of God. In the passion, the Father is the Father who forsakes the Son and thus loses his Fatherhood, while the Son is the Son forsaken by the Father who thus loses his Sonship.²⁵⁴ In the New Testament, the cross is thus an event within the history of the Trinity, as the Trinity here takes the form of (1) the Father who gives up the Son; (2) the Son who gives himself up for us; and (3) the Spirit who unites the Father with the Son even in his forsakenness.²⁵⁵ Again, the Son who appears to Saul of Tarsus is none other than the crucified and risen Son, the Son who has precisely this history of being raised by the Spirit into the glory of the

²⁵¹Ibid., pp. 65-71, and Jürgen Moltmann, The Way of Jesus Christ, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 73-94.

²⁵²Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, pp. 71-74.

²⁵³Ibid., pp. 74-75.

²⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 75-80.

²⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 80-83.

Father.²⁵⁶

According to Moltmann, furthermore, in being raised from the dead into the glory of the Father, Jesus was also made the Lord of the kingdom and of the Spirit.²⁵⁷ He now appears as the divine sender of the Spirit, whereas the New Testament had earlier presented him as the sent Son who was acted upon by the Spirit. The Trinitarian relations here undergo another change. Here (1) the Father raises the dead Son through the Spirit; (2) the Father enthrones the Son as Lord of the kingdom and of the Spirit; and (3) the risen Son sends the Spirit from the Father to renew creation. The Trinity itself appears here again as open to the world, as something which integrates people into its own history, and as something which has this history precisely so that people can be integrated into it.²⁵⁸

The New Testament, finally, presents Jesus as the Son who is to come again at the parousia, and Paul in particular, according to Moltmann, presents the consummation of salvation history at the parousia as an event within the history of the Trinity (1 Cor. 15: 22ff).²⁵⁹ Death is not yet destroyed, so that the history of the Son is not yet complete. When finally death has been destroyed, says Paul, the Son himself will be made subject to the Father. Moltmann argues that the divine rule given to Christ at the resurrection is here to be turned over to the Father once more, that the Son's obedience to the Father will only be complete once this has been achieved. The kingdom of Christ is therefore, according to Moltmann, provisional. When the final consummation occurs, then, and the Son is made subject to the Father in this way, the form

²⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 84-88.

²⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 88-89.

²⁵⁸Ibid., p. 90.

²⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 90-93.

of the Trinity will again be changed. Eschatology, we can see once again, is something which "takes place in God's essential nature."²⁶⁰ The form of the Trinity seen here is (1) the Father subjects everything to the Son; (2) the Son transfers the consummated kingdom to the Father; (3) the Son subjects himself to the Father.²⁶¹ But the Son himself receives this kingdom, which he transfers finally to the Father, from the Spirit, who draws the whole of creation into the fellowship of the Son with the Father.²⁶²

A distinction can therefore be drawn between three main stages in the saving work of Jesus Christ, while three Trinitarian forms or structures can be discerned in these three stages. These stages are the sending, delivering up, and resurrection of the Son; the Lordship of the Son at the right hand of the Father; and the future of the Son in the parousia. These give rise to three central Trinitarian structures which can be differentiated as stages in the eschatological history of the Trinity: (1) in the sending, the delivering up, and the resurrection of the Son: Father → Spirit → Son; (2) in the Lordship of Christ and his sending of the Spirit: Father → Son → Spirit; and (3) in the eschatological consummation: Spirit → Son → Father.²⁶³ Moltmann's point is that the Father, Son, and Spirit act in various concrete ways within each stage according to these basic paradigms, while their mutual relations actually change as salvation history passes from one stage to another.

Moltmann enumerates the following conclusions concerning the threefoldness of the God of revelation, which amount to a summary of his overall Trinitarian

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 92.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 93.

²⁶² Ibid., p. 94.

²⁶³ Ibid.

position as it reflects on the question of the threefoldness of God.²⁶⁴ (1) The rule of Christ has a Trinitarian structure. (2) The Father, Son, and Spirit do not work by only one pattern. (3) The doctrine of the Trinity must be drawn from Scripture and reflect it. Scripture reveals that there is more than one Trinitarian structure in the relations between the Father, Son, and Spirit. Up to now, however, dogmatic theology has predominantly worked with only one such pattern, Father → Son → Spirit. (4) The common denominator of the changing patterns is the rule of God; what we are seeing in salvation history is the history of the kingdom which is not only an earthly one but which is itself the history of the Trinity. (5) This history of God is open to creation, and inclusive of it. (6) The unity of the Trinity presupposes the three divine subjects which are active here, so that a monadic unity of one substance or subject is excluded; the unity must therefore be a fellowship rather than an identity, or a union as opposed to a numerical unity.

The divine fellowship which is the unity of the Trinity, to which we now turn, is the second central theme in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God.²⁶⁵ Western theology has attempted to secure the unity of the Trinity in a separate, special doctrine of the divine substance or in the idea of the divine subjectivity. Moltmann's argument is that no such separate, special doctrine is needed; rather, for Moltmann the divine unity "is already given with the fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit."²⁶⁶ His thesis is that the divine unity is social, and therefore grounded precisely in the threefoldness of God. Personal

²⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 94-96.

²⁶⁵Ibid., p. 149.

²⁶⁶Ibid., p. 150.

and social character are aspects of the same reality, so that just as the three divine persons are distinguished by their character as persons, so their unity or at-oneness is secured by their character as persons.²⁶⁷

Moltmann appeals at this point to the Trinitarian doctrine of perichoresis (John of Damascus) by which it is understood that each of the divine persons interpenetrates and dwells in the other two.²⁶⁸ What is distinctive about Moltmann's doctrine of the divine unity through perichoresis, however, is the fact that this unity is not static, but that because it is relational, a function of the mutuality of the three persons, it is also eschatological, or still to be realized in all its fulness. Again, Moltmann wants to proceed from the biblical testimony to his doctrine of God, but the biblical testimony, in his view, speaks about a consummation of the Trinitarian history of God.²⁶⁹ Moltmann writes:

The unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is then the eschatological question about the consummation of the Trinitarian history of God. The unity of the three Persons of this history must consequently be understood as a communicable unity and as an open, inviting unity, capable of integration.²⁷⁰

The biblical testimony to the triune God speaks of a God who unites others with himself, who even sunders himself from himself in the cross in order to reconcile all things to himself. God is thus in himself open to creation in such a way that his own unity will only be complete when all

²⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 148-150.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 150, 174-176.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 149.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

things are united with him in the consummated Trinitarian relations of Father, Son, and Spirit. The divine unity is therefore not only eschatological, but also soteriological: eschatological because it is integral with salvation history and the parousia; soteriological, because God has opened himself to his creation in the incarnation and the sending of the Spirit, precisely in order to draw creation itself into the fellowship of his own divine life.

Moltmann's Pneumatology has several particular strengths. In the first place, through his understanding of the development of the Trinitarian relations themselves through salvation history, Moltmann is able to provide a Trinitarian explanation for the fact that the Holy Spirit is not sent to the Church until after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; until then, the Spirit was not in the strict sense the Spirit of the Son. Through the Trinitarian history of the Christ-event, the Spirit has become, for Moltmann, the Spirit of the risen Christ.²⁷¹ Moltmann is thus able to find room within the doctrine of the Trinity itself for the fact that Pentecost succeeds Easter, and the fact that the Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit, not just of the Son, but of the risen Jesus Christ.²⁷²

Secondly Moltmann is able to represent the Holy Spirit successfully as a personal agent within the Trinity.²⁷³ Moltmann thus effectively overcomes the standard problem of traditional Trinitarian Pneumatology; he condemns, for example, its understanding of the Spirit's personal character as a function of the relation between the Father and the Son, or else as an "energy" by which the divine

²⁷¹Ibid., pp. 122-124.

²⁷²Ibid., pp. 126-128.

²⁷³Hill, op. cit., pp. 174-175, notes that this is seen in particular in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, which in this respect makes a significant move beyond the less personal understanding of the Spirit as the power of futurity in The Church in the Power of the Spirit.

outreach to the world is effected, as preventing the recognition of the Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son.²⁷⁴ In Moltmann's social Trinity, by contrast, the Spirit is not only something which the Father and the Son share in common, or a power of God by which the creation is liberated (although the Spirit is both), but is actually the agent of acts which affect the Father and the Son.²⁷⁵ The Spirit glorifies the Father and the Son by bringing the creation back to the Father through the Son and by unifying it with the Father and the Son. The Spirit therefore has a distinct role of his own to play in the divine life, at once economic and immanent, and appears as the glorifying and unifying God.²⁷⁶

Thirdly, Moltmann's social Trinity is Pneumatologically significant also for the dogmatic problem of the relation between the Son and the Spirit. I have already pointed out that Moltmann's doctrine of the Trinity comprehends New Testament material which on the one hand places the Son within the overarching sphere of the power and presence of the Spirit, and the Spirit within the overarching sphere of the saving work of the Son on the other. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have a history of mutual relations which are variable rather than eternally static. But Moltmann is able to take us beyond this again in his treatment of the dogmatic and ecumenical problem of the Western filioque doctrine.²⁷⁷ Because we know the Father concretely as the Father of Jesus Christ rather than as the Father in a general sense, and that same Father

²⁷⁴Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, pp. 125-126, 142-143.

²⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²⁷⁶Ibid.

²⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 178-187. See also Moltmann, "Theological Proposals Towards the Resolution of the Filioque Controversy," in Vischer, op. cit., pp. 164-173.

as the one from whom the Spirit proceeds, we need to speak of the Spirit's procession from the Father as in fact from the Father of the Son. This helps to clarify the relation of the Son to the Spirit: the Spirit proceeds from the Father in the eternal presence of the Son. For Moltmann, this theological conclusion is bound up with the divine unity. The Father is not the cause of the other two Persons and hence the principle of the divine unity, for the divine unity is a concrete, inner-Trinitarian matter of the relationships of the Persons.²⁷⁸ It is as the Father of the Son and not as the Father who is the patriarchal monarch of the Godhead that the Father breathes forth the Holy Spirit, while the Holy Spirit for his part is no longer conceived along Western lines as the modalistic bond of unity between the Father and the Son in the one divine substance. Rather, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, receives his "form" from the Father and the Son,²⁷⁹ presumably through the economy of salvation, and also glorifies the Father and the Son by drawing the redeemed creation into the life of God.

There are, however, a number of inherent weaknesses in Moltmann's position, the first and most obvious, perhaps, being the notion of eschatology underlying his "eschatological model" of the Trinity. Moltmann presupposes that the development of thought in the modern era must be taken up into theological thinking as well, so that there can be no return to earlier modes of thought.²⁸⁰ However, the question arises whether or not eschatological thinking also should be abandoned; for Albert Schweitzer, for example, the thoroughly eschatological message of Jesus which historical criticism recovered at the end of the

²⁷⁸Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, pp. 188-190.

²⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 185-187.

²⁸⁰Moltmann, The Crucified God, p. 238, and Hill, op. cit., p. 168.

nineteenth century means that Jesus is "a stranger to our time."²⁸¹ Leaving aside the question whether Schweitzer correctly understood the nature of Jesus' own eschatological thinking, or that of the primitive Christian communities which produced the New Testament,²⁸² there is still room to ask whether Moltmann's apparently quite literal understanding of the coming kingdom of God²⁸³ can be sustained, or whether it is not also, in Schweitzer's words, "a stranger to our time."

In practice, Moltmann employs two languages and two conceptualities concerning eschatology in his theology, the first, that of a literal divinization of the creation in the Trinity itself at the eschaton, and the second, the conceptuality of the freedom of men and women which "corresponds to it," and into which it can be "translated."²⁸⁴ Perhaps this is unavoidable, to the extent that the final consummation, our divinization and God's glorification and unification, is by definition beyond our present experience. Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost may well provide the vital clue to what will be in the end, but Moltmann is naturally unable to articulate the nature of

²⁸¹Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, trans. W. Montgomery (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981), p. 399.

²⁸²James P. Mackey, Jesus the Man and the Myth (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1979), pp. 39-40.

²⁸³Moltmann's reference in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, p. 213, to the kingdom as "the eschatological kingdom of glory in which people will finally, wholly and completely be gathered into the eternal life of the triune God and - as the early church put it - be 'deified'" leaves us in little doubt as to his intentions; indeed, a literal rather than metaphorical understanding of the coming of the kingdom of God and the final consummation is required by Moltmann's theology of the Trinity, since, without it, God in himself will be left incomplete.

²⁸⁴Ibid. Cf. also, more generally, ibid., pp. 191-222; The Church in the Power of the Spirit, pp. 133-361; and The Future of Creation, pp. 97-148.

the divinization to which he points in concrete terms. On the other hand, the present implications of his idea of the future glorification of the children of God are spelled out in considerable detail; here the constant impulse is to offer a utopian vision of human existence, indebted, perhaps, more to the various philosophical traditions on which he draws than to the biblical idea of the coming kingdom of God.²⁸⁵ This distinction is important, inasmuch as it indicates that the concrete economic basis of his eschatological model of the Trinity may be less well defined than Moltmann himself realizes.

Were the whole idea of eschatology in the original Christian proclamation to be understood as mythological, and accordingly "de-ontologized," it might be possible to argue that Moltmann would be left with a cipher for the utopianism he espouses, but it would also follow that he would be without a detailed economic basis for his elaborate Trinitarian theology. This reflects perhaps the central problem in Moltmann's position, for it is arguable that biblical eschatological categories belong to an age and religious culture that is long past and which cannot be recovered, and, moreover, that they were never intended to function in Moltmann's rather literal, ontological sense. If Moltmann's understanding of the nature and significance of Christian eschatology cannot be sustained, however, then the Trinitarian superstructure erected on it must also be abandoned.

According to Rudolf Bultmann, for example, "The real point of myth is not to give an objective world picture; what is expressed in it, rather, is how we human beings

²⁸⁵On these sources, see M. Douglas Meeks, Origins of the Theology of Hope (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 15-19, 108-117.

understand ourselves in our world."²⁸⁶ Thus I have used the word "de-ontologized" above as opposed to Bultmann's own "demythologized" in order to criticize Moltmann's overly ontological reading of biblical eschatology. Whereas, therefore, Moltmann condemns patristic theology for developing the idea of the epiphany of the eternal in time, as opposed to the biblical, eschatological mode of thought, and therefore for corrupting the biblical message,²⁸⁷ it is equally arguable, on precisely the same grounds, that in developing biblical eschatology into a theology of the divine being, Moltmann himself goes well beyond biblical categories and the original function of eschatological language.

The limitations of Moltmann's argument also appear when his underlying understanding of the relation between the immanent and the economic Trinity is considered. This is nowhere more true than in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. Moltmann's thesis here, as in his earlier work, is that in the economy of salvation, the Trinity is revealed both to be open to the world and to have, in consequence, a genuine history.²⁸⁸ In itself, therefore, the economy of salvation is taken to reveal that the Trinity spans the gap between the finite and the infinite falsely posited in the theological tradition; God cannot be, for Moltmann, who he is in himself without the fellowship of his creation. At one point, Moltmann alleges that the older doctrine of the immanent Trinity is purely the product of metaphysical

²⁸⁶Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in Rudolf Bultmann, New Testament Mythology and Other Basic Writings, ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1984), p. 9.

²⁸⁷Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 40-41.

²⁸⁸Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, pp. 126-127.

dualism,²⁸⁹ but as he examines neither the basis for this dualism in the philosophical and theological traditions, nor the metaphysical presuppositions on which his own positive position rests, his argument at this point must be taken to be overly simplistic.²⁹⁰

If the philosophical basis of Moltmann's rejection of the traditional idea of the immanent Trinity is questionable, there remains the ostensibly non-metaphysical basis for the distinction, developed in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, based on the theological idea of divine grace.²⁹¹ The idea of divine grace, it is often argued, requires a distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity in order to preserve the freedom of God in his saving activity in the economy. The underlying assumption here is that the notion of grace presupposes divine freedom. If God were in some sense bound by external necessity to save humanity, then the category of grace would be inappropriate; as the gospel is the gospel of grace, however, the divine freedom must be maintained, and thus a distinction must be posited between God in his intrinsic freedom, and God in his economic condescension. Moltmann, however, rejects this argument as ill-founded. We do not, he argues, face the alternatives of the freedom of God on the one hand and necessity in God on the other; rather, the correct understanding is bound up with the

²⁸⁹Ibid., p. 158.

²⁹⁰This judgement echoes those of Catherine M. LaCugna, "Philosophers and Theologians on the Trinity," Modern Theology 2, no. 3 (1986), 169-181; David Brown, The Divine Trinity (London: Duckworth, 1985), pp. 307-308; and Richard E. Creel, Divine Impassibility (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), passim, who argue, albeit concerning the doctrine of the Trinity as such on the one hand and the contemporary theological debate concerning divine impassibility on the other, that the philosophical groundwork for much contemporary theological discussion, including Moltmann's, has not been adequately carried out.

²⁹¹Moltmann, op. cit., p. 151.

evangelical truth that God is love.²⁹² Moltmann's point is that because the economy of salvation proceeds from the love which God is, the notion of an external necessity in some sense determining the action of God is inappropriate. It is out of himself, i.e., out of the love which he himself is, that God loves the world, so that in loving the world God is being true precisely to himself. Rather than this introducing an element of determinism into the activity of God, Moltmann argues, God is here free: he is true to himself, self-determined, so that as such, his love is his freedom and his freedom is his love.²⁹³

The material content of the argument here is of particular significance for the doctrine of the immanent Trinity insofar as it posits an identity between the love which God is in himself and the love by which he saves the world. The point is that the immanent Trinity cannot be conceived apart from the love which communicates salvation. In a reversal of considerable importance, Moltmann thus argues that the older doctrine of the immanent Trinity, in differentiating God in himself too sharply from God as he is for us, in fact endangers the very concept of grace which, it would appear, it is intended to protect.²⁹⁴ The distinction, he argues, effectively makes God in himself unknown and his hidden nature potentially arbitrary, whereas in the Christian revelation, God is love, and is known in himself to be such.

Moltmann therefore rejects the classical metaphysical basis for the older distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity on the one hand, and its chief

²⁹²Ibid.

²⁹³Ibid. See also ibid., pp. 114-118, where Moltmann argues that the incarnation is neither free nor necessary, but both free and necessary because it stems from the divine love.

²⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 151-152.

theological justification on the other. What he proposes instead is that we understand the immanent and the economic Trinity in terms of a continuity in which the two "merge into one another."²⁹⁵ This does not mean, however, that Moltmann rejects all differentiation between the two. With his rejection of the classical distinction in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, Moltmann proposes a new understanding: the immanent Trinity is to be understood in the context of doxology, in which the Church praises God for what he is in himself, whereas the economic doctrine of the Trinity speaks of God soteriologically.²⁹⁶ The idea of the doxological Trinity, however, has serious shortcomings, not the least of which is that it fails to address the ontological question of divine transcendence. What is proposed is not in the first place an ontological distinction, but a nominal or linguistic one: it is based not on the difference between the essential nature and the activity of God ad extra, but rather is grounded in the consciousness of the intending subject and in the nature of his or her linguistic acts. No direct attempt is made to investigate the possible ontological basis of this linguistic differentiation. In this way the distinction is minimalized, to say the least, but it survives in its minimalist form – and even beyond it, as we shall see – and continues to shape in certain respects the content of Moltmann's treatment.

Here Moltmann's formal statement of his own mature position on the relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity is important. What he proposes is a variation on Rahner's axiom as his own Trinitarian principle:

Statements about the immanent Trinity

²⁹⁵Ibid., p. 152.

²⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 151-154.

must not contradict statements about the economic Trinity. Statements about the economic Trinity must correspond to doxological statements about the immanent Trinity.²⁹⁷

The content of Moltmann's doctrine of the Trinity surveyed above helps us to understand what he means here. The ontological notion of God in himself is to be replaced by the praise of God for what he is in himself - for example, for his goodness rather than for his particular opera ad extra which are deemed good - while the content of the "doxological" doctrine of the Trinity, what God is praised for, is to be determined by the content of the economic doctrine.

It is questionable, however, whether the idea of praising God for what he is in himself without a prior idea of God in himself is in fact coherent: does not the entire scheme in fact depend upon a presupposed, and perhaps hidden, ontological distinction underlying the linguistic? Were Moltmann consistently to adopt the view that no metaphysical distinction can be posited, there would be no basis on which it could be judged that God is anything else or other than, literally, his opera ad extra: the Trinity, in consequence, would be (to adopt a term from recent Christology) entirely functional rather than ontological. Were this the case, there could be no possible basis for a real linguistic distinction, since the question of what lies behind the activity of God could not arise in the linguistic sense, or in any other for that matter, given that the possibility of that ontologically-grounded linguistic step has been eliminated.

One therefore has to conclude that Moltmann's reformulation of Rahner's axiom, at least as stated, cannot be sustained, and that, insofar as he continues (as he

²⁹⁷Ibid., p. 154, italics deleted.

does) to speak of an immanent or ontological Trinity, certain hidden metaphysical presuppositions are presupposed. Nor does this militate, necessarily, against Moltmann's wider theological enterprise; as Donald MacKinnon says in one place, there is something intellectually frivolous about any aversion to the concern with "what is" in the metaphysical sense, and so too in theology: "theology is ontological, or it is nothing."²⁹⁸ It does, however, raise questions about the allegedly non-metaphysical character of Moltmann's Trinitarian theology, for it clearly indicates that a metaphysics of the immanent Trinity is implicitly in view.

The character of this metaphysics can best be seen through Moltmann's discussion of the idea that the economic and the immanent Trinity form a continuity in which the two merge into one another. As we have seen, Moltmann is highly critical in this context of the traditional distinction, according to which it can be said that the economic Trinity in some sense reflects or reveals the immanent. His main point, however, is not so much to do away with the idea of the revelation of the immanent Trinity in the economic as it is to introduce the more important idea, foreign to the tradition, that the economic Trinity also has a "retroactive effect" on the immanent Trinity.²⁹⁹ Moltmann, in rejecting the metaphysics of Western dualism, and in arguing that the economy of salvation affects the immanent Trinity, thus introduces the metaphysical possibility that the immanent Trinity can be conceived as at least a partial product of the historical events of salvation-history. Moltmann's position, as such, approaches the kind of

²⁹⁸Donald MacKinnon, "Some Reflections on Hans Urs von Balthasar's Christology with Special Reference to Theodramatik II/2, III and IV," in John Riches, ed., The Analogy of Beauty (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1986), p. 169.

²⁹⁹Moltmann, op. cit., p. 160.

explicit metaphysical view given in process philosophy, although it cannot, admittedly, be likened to it in philosophical subtlety.³⁰⁰

The basis of this retroactive effect of the economy on God in himself lies, of course, for Moltmann in God himself, who opens himself to the creation and who does not will to be himself without the creation. It is, in other words, grounded in the twin ideas that God is free and that God is love. Thus, for example, in discussing the immanent Trinity, Moltmann argues that the immanent Trinitarian love of the Father for the Son - i.e., the Holy Spirit - reaches out beyond the Son himself and is only fulfilled with the return of the love of the Son and of those who are united with the Son.³⁰¹ God thus freely makes himself dependent on the creation for his own fulfilment; he is not who he is without us.

This means, however, that historical events become determinative of the immanent, eternal being of God. This thesis, of course, is not peculiar to Moltmann, but appears more clearly in his theology than others, perhaps, because of his distinctive idea of the Trinitarian history of God. It is therefore difficult, as we have already seen, to resist the conclusion that the doctrine of the Trinity in Moltmann reduces God in himself to his particular acts ad extra. As one commentator writes:

Although Moltmann does not wish it, one seems forced to picture the scheme outlined in his book as a linear one with a temporal process culminating teleologically in a future state which is entirely determined by the process's cumulative history.³⁰²

³⁰⁰Fiddes, op. cit., pp. 123-143.

³⁰¹Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 161-170.

³⁰²Olson, "Trinity and Eschatology," p. 221.

If the Trinity in the economy of salvation is in process, in other words, then by Moltmann's own Trinitarian logic the immanent Trinity must also be in process, and, as such, will only come to completion at the eschaton. One thus has to ask whether or not Moltmann's theology threatens to reduce the immanent Trinity to the economic, and to make God in himself a product of the historical process. Moltmann's claim is that the concept of the immanent Trinity must be retained as the concept distinguishing the God who reveals himself from the economy as such. If, however, it is really the case that the immanent Trinity is in process, and that it is a product of its successive historical determinations, then it is doubtful that the concept of such a revealer underlying the revelation can be sustained. The case is, rather, more likely the reverse, where the "revelation," as it were, underlies the "revealer," and the "interaction" between the immanent and the economic Trinity is in fact less an interaction than a one-way determination of the immanent by the economic Trinity.³⁰³

William J. Hill criticizes Moltmann's theology at this point more sharply. According to Hill, the idea of eschatology, in which the eschaton will one day be reached and God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15: 28), is itself irreconcilable with Moltmann's view of God; referring primarily to Moltmann's Trinitarian theologia crucis, he writes:

The pronounced emphasis upon historicity as even the mode of divine being leaves unexplained why suddenly it all comes to an end. ... Again, if the content of divine history, as trinitarian, is death as a phenomenon within God (so that suffering is not in contradiction to love but its

³⁰³Ibid.

condition; and thus God is to be found in his opposite), then how does God any longer remain a God of love once suffering and death are overcome?³⁰⁴

The question Hill thus poses is whether or not Moltmann, within his understanding of the Trinitarian history of God and his conception of the being of God as found in his opposite, is able to allow that the eschaton will ever come, since once it does, the historical process in relation to which God is intrinsically defined will be brought to an end. Moltmann's Trinitarianism may well be consistent with the idea of an eternally and infinitely unfolding process, but not, it would seem, with biblical eschatological ideas, in which the consummation will finally come.

The final difficulty which can be mentioned is the problematic character of Moltmann's attempt to construct the doctrine of the immanent Trinity from the economic, in view of the sheer diversity of the New Testament material he attempts to appropriate. Moltmann attempts to unify this material through a history of the Trinitarian structures given in the economy of salvation according to the New Testament witness. His attempt, however, is arguably bound to failure from the beginning, since his confidence that the various Trinitarian structures can be unified into one whole appears to presuppose an almost fundamentalist conviction that the various New Testament theologies can be unified - that they are all speaking about the same thing in a non-contradictory sense. Moltmann's attempt to construct a single history of the Trinitarian relations has been shown to be problematic on grounds of philosophical superficiality and because of its implications for the doctrine of the immanent Trinity as such; it could, however, be criticized at the outset as an impossible

³⁰⁴Hill, op. cit., p. 175.

attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable by imposing a single historical schema upon what are clearly disparate materials. This problem will be taken up again below, in the context, however, of a more general assessment of the standpoint adopted in contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology, and thus in the light of all four Trinitarian models outlined.

IV
PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

1. Dialectical Trinitarianism

In Chapter II, we saw that the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity in contemporary theology must be understood in relation to the wider development of modern thought, and not simply as a pure return to revelation. This applies both to the theologies of Barth and Rahner, in which a partial critique of the metaphysical presuppositions of traditional Trinitarian theology appears, and to post-Barthian and post-Rahnerian Trinitarian theology, where increasingly the doctrine of the Trinity has been developed in the light of the philosophical problem of the "death" of the God of classical theism. Having provided a survey of the dogmatic content of recent Trinitarian Pneumatology in Chapter III, we can now return to this question, in order to assess the Trinitarian theologies examined in a more general way. Since the central principle of this theology is that of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, this will involve pressing the question of the nature of the unity thus asserted, and of the extent to which, in principle, this idea of unity can be sustained.

In this section, I shall argue that the contemporary Trinitarian thesis presupposes a doctrine of the "subjectivity" of God, and that the unity affirmed here of the economic and the immanent Trinity is a form of "dialectical" unity-in-difference. The theologies surveyed in Chapter III will thus be characterized as versions of "dialectical Trinitarianism." I have hesitated over this

expression, since the terminology derives from the philosophy of Hegel, in which, however, the stage of dialectic is understood to be transcended with the affirmation of unity-in-difference. Hegel's logic, contrary to what is often asserted, is not dialectical, but rather "speculative," the speculative stage of reason being that in which the unity-in-difference of terms is apprehended, their original opposition being a function of dialectic.¹ However, in contemporary Trinitarian theology, where the unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity is affirmed, Hegel's speculative logic is expressly renounced. Contemporary Trinitarian theology is perhaps speculative in the sense that it affirms a unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity, but it is so entirely without involving speculative logic. I have thus adopted the more conventional term "dialectical."

Part of the problem involved in characterizing contemporary Trinitarian theology in this way is that theology in our age has been influenced so profoundly by "anti-metaphysical" philosophical systems on the one hand, and has become so much a matter of sentiment or activism on the other, that the attempt to face up to the ontological questions implicit in theological claims is often regarded with suspicion. In The Nature of Doctrine, for example, George Lindbeck argues that doctrine in general is best understood simply as a set of rules or regulative statements for the life, worship, and confession of the Christian community.² Following Bernard Lonergan's more differentiated account,³ he contrasts this with a

¹G. W. F. Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, trans. William Wallace (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), § 82.

²George A. Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine (London: SPCK, 1984), pp. 73-90, 104-108.

³Cf., e.g., Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), pp. 308-309.

"propositional" view of doctrine, in which theological statements are taken to refer ontologically to, for example, the immortality of the soul or to the triune being of God. Lindbeck's thesis is that Christian doctrine, in common with other shared truths and values in particular societies, operates within an essentially social context which informs it and within which it has a practical function of some sort (meaning as use). Thus different theologies of the Trinity are best understood as functioning within different communities and serving various liturgical and practical uses, rather than as theological positions having genuinely ontological implications.⁴ A particular theory becomes normative, according to Lindbeck, and so, strictly speaking, a doctrine, when it becomes useful as a common basis for the life and worship of the specific community in which it has a function.

The problem with Lindbeck's position, of course, is that the said propositional theory itself only "functions" as it does when the conditions of Lindbeck's regulative theory are not met, i.e., when the believing community which makes ontological claims of various sorts, however hesitantly, understands itself not merely to be organizing the data of scripture and tradition with a view to life and worship, but to be stating what is ontologically the case. To the extent that a particular propositional doctrine functions precisely as a propositional doctrine, therefore,

⁴Thus, according to Lindbeck, op. cit., p. 106: "... theological theories that tend to identify the economic and immanent trinities ... may or may not correspond better to the triune reality of God than do the Augustinian and Thomistic theories ... which stress the immanent trinity of psychological analogies and substantial relations. That question is unanswerable this side of the Eschaton. It is also irrelevant to theological assessment. Which theory is theologically best depends on how well it organizes the data of Scripture and tradition with a view to their use in Christian worship and life."

it does so on the basis of the conviction that a propositional or ontological statement can be made. In this way, the whole enterprise is intelligible only if the doctrinal statement in question is regarded as something more than merely functional in Lindbeck's sense, and if, contrary to his claim, it can indeed be evaluated on the basis of the claim it makes. If a propositional view of doctrine is to be criticized on the basis of the presupposition that meaning is use, therefore, then the genuine "use" of various propositional claims about God or creation in Christian theology must be taken seriously. If it is not, then one has to assume that, in fact, it is not meaning as use which underlies the "regulative" critique of such propositional statements, but rather a reductionist metaphysics implicit in the position - which is, in the end, something quite different.

Against Lindbeck, and against the anti-metaphysical theological impulse his position represents, I shall argue that just as classical Trinitarian theology makes ontological claims in the light of which it must be assessed, so contemporary Trinitarian theology must be judged in relation to the theological ontology it involves. The fact that such an assessment of the classical position is required is explicitly recognized in contemporary Trinitarian theology, where the criticism repeatedly appears of older forms of Trinitarian theology as presupposing dualistic conceptions of God as impassible, infinite, and eternal over against the creation as passible, finite, and temporal. What is, perhaps, not so clear in contemporary theology is that the alternative Trinitarian theology advanced must also itself be susceptible to ontological analysis and criticism. In Chapters II and III, we have seen that the central principle in relation to which this theology is developed is that of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity. In this section, this unity will be further

defined, as has been stated, as a unity-in-difference, and contemporary Trinitarian theology, in consequence, as dialectical.

The idea of "dialectical Trinitarianism" is analogous to John Macquarrie's conception of "dialectical theism," developed in his 1983-84 Gifford Lectures, In Search of Deity. According to Macquarrie, dialectical theism appears repeatedly in the theological tradition as an alternative to "classical" Western theism, and has come to new prominence since the nineteenth century.⁵ He thus locates the development of recent theological thought within a wider history which includes thinkers from Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius to John Scotus Eriugena and Nicholas Cusanus, and in more recent times, to Hegel, Whitehead, and Heidegger.⁶ To this extent, Macquarrie's study constitutes an advance on the positions encountered earlier, in which such historical connections are not drawn in any detail. His main argument, however, is already familiar. According to Macquarrie, a dialectical theism has distinct advantages over traditional ways of conceiving God; in particular, according to Macquarrie, it avoids the one-sidedness of classical theism, in which God's transcendence, for example, is emphasized at the expense of his immanence.⁷ This comes to be of particular importance, for Macquarrie, in the light of the problem of the atheisms of freedom and protest. The argument is that a dialectical concept of God overcomes the metaphysical isolation of God from the world, so that the world does not need to be emptied of significance in acknowledging the absolute significance of God alone (the problem of the atheism of freedom), nor the

⁵John Macquarrie, In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1984), pp. 59ff., 125ff.

⁶Ibid., pp. 59ff.

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

old impassible God denied in face of human suffering (the problem of protest atheism).⁸ In dialectical theism, rather, God cannot be conceived to be who he is without the world, so that the world itself is given an intrinsically divine significance and so that suffering is no longer seen to be something alien to God.

Macquarrie thus outlines his concept of God under a series of dialectical oppositions: God is being and God is nothing, God is infinite simplicity and yet embraces the plenitude of the many, God is incomprehensible and knowable, transcendent and immanent, impassible and passible, and so on.⁹ In this conception, the categories of Western dualism, by which the infinite and the divine were opposed to the finite and the creaturely, are self-consciously transcended. Unfortunately, however, it is not always clear from Macquarrie's treatment that a dialectical theism goes beyond a simultaneous affirmation of opposites, as in the following definition:

When I speak of 'dialectical theism', I am not thinking of some weak compromise. 'Dialectic' is to be understood in the strong sense of the clash of opposites; for instance, God is not half transcendent and half immanent, but wholly transcendent and wholly immanent.¹⁰

Although in the detail of Macquarrie's argument, where he deals with the concrete content of a number of dialectical systems of theology, this weakness is largely overcome, the

⁸Ibid., pp. 30-42, 171ff.

⁹Ibid., pp. 171-184. Macquarrie, however, ibid., pp. 27-28, 54, notes that one does not have to give equal emphasis to each side of the opposition in such a conception, a qualification which is, as we shall see, quite important to remember.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 14-15.

precise sense in which, in principle, dialectical opposites can be asserted to be one remains to be specified. Merely to state, as Macquarrie does, that for a classical divine attribute x , a dialectical theism asserts both x and $-x$, is clearly insufficient. Indeed, the whole point of the dialectical conception (or, in Hegelian language, of a "speculative" conception which goes beyond dialectical opposition) is that the opposition of the two is relativized in a higher unity.

The fact that such a unity is asserted in contemporary Trinitarian theology vis-à-vis the economic and the immanent Trinity, while speculative reason has been rejected, is of central importance to our discussion. The key question in all of this concerns the principle of the unity of the two terms, by which dialectical opposition becomes dialectical unity-in-difference. Despite the fact that Hegel's specific doctrine of speculative reason has been rejected in contemporary Trinitarian theology, and especially in the German tradition with which we have for the most part been concerned, Hegel's philosophy has nevertheless been of particular importance in this respect - or rather, one particular aspect of his philosophy, taken up and isolated from the Hegelian position as a whole. This is due not so much to the strictly philosophical content of the Hegelian position, as it is to the thesis in contemporary theology that the older Christian metaphysical conception of God as "statically" immutable and impassible is inadequate to the God of Old and New Testament revelation, since, in revelation, God appears as the God of history, intensely involved in the history of his people.¹¹

¹¹On the question of Hegel's significance for contemporary theology, see, e.g., Hans Küng, The Incarnation of God, trans. J. R. Stephenson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), pp. 382ff. Alister McGrath, The Making of Modern German Christology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 213, makes the point, with reference to the question of the importance of history in modern theology, that Hegel was one of the few philosophers to construct a

What is of particular importance here is the shift from the idea of God as substance to that of God as subject; whereas one is able to conceive of God as substance in abstract isolation from created or non-divine substance, the concept of God as subject involves the idea of relationality, and thus a dialectical conception of the self and its other, in relation to which it is the self. This involves not so much the idea of a gradation in various separate levels of existence, along the lines of a chain of being, as it does the idea of God as the divine subject and the world as his other, over against which the divine subjectivity is in part, at least, defined.¹² The argument is that only an understanding of God as subject, or as free in his relations to himself and to the created order, is adequate to the God of history, who is who he is and who is true to himself precisely in his historical relation to the world. It is at this point that Hegel's philosophy has been of decisive importance for contemporary theology. According to Hegel:

... everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as Substance, but equally as Subject. ... Further, the living Substance is being which is in truth Subject, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This Substance is, as Subject, pure, simple negativity, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this

philosophy of history, and that, "It may well be that the years ahead will witness the re-emergence of Hegel as the philosophers to whom theologians appeal, for precisely this reason." There is no doubt that McGrath's judgment is well-founded, but Hegel's importance already has to be assumed in contemporary theology. See the discussion below.

¹²Hill, op. cit., pp. 149-155.

indifferent diversity and its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. ... Thus the life of God and divine cognition may well be spoken of as a disporting of Love with itself; but this idea sinks into mere edification, and even insipidity, if it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative.¹³

This passage shows that Hegel's philosophy not only lays the foundation for a metaphysics of God as subject or person, but also for a specifically Trinitarian metaphysics in which the logic of the divine subjectivity itself leads over into a real incarnation of God, a philosophy of the suffering and death of God, and of the reconciliation of the "negative" to God. As such, the fundamental shape of subsequent Trinitarian theology is already given in Hegel's philosophy, although, as we shall see, there are also basic differences.

Taking up this Hegelian theme, for example, Walter Kasper argues that the older theological tradition attempted, within the limits of its philosophical tools, to be faithful to the biblical concept of God.¹⁴ The great problem, then as now, was to understand how it was possible for the eternal Son of God to become flesh and to die a human death. In some ways, classical theology attempted to acknowledge this mystery, but, according to Kasper, it also tended towards the view that such involvement with the creation is something foreign to God.¹⁵ Kasper cites various historical attempts to understand God in this Christological sense as the God of history. The primitive

¹³G. W. F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), Preface, §§ 17-19.

¹⁴Kasper, Jesus the Christ, pp. 176-181.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 179.

Christologies of Ignatius of Antioch and Tertullian, for example, attempted to state in something of its paradoxical force the fact that the eternal God for our sake subjected himself to suffering and death in Jesus Christ.¹⁶ Kasper also has particular praise for Luther's theologia crucis, which was an attempt to break through the medieval system of metaphysical theology in which, as Luther thought, God was not found in the cross.¹⁷ But for Kasper, the key attempt to understand God in this Christological sense is the philosophy of Hegel. In Hegel, it belongs to the concept of the Absolute that it empty itself into its opposite; for Hegel, only in this way is the Absolute in fact the Absolute - i.e., only thus is it wholly free or self-determined. The important point here for Kasper is that in Hegel God's very being is thus conceived in terms of the idea of a freedom which is mediated through self-surrender and self-emptying.¹⁸ This leads to the concept of God as "subject," or, as Kasper prefers, "person," as opposed to a more self-enclosed, abstract concept of the divine essence, and provides the conceptual tools by which theology can relate God to history and specifically to the suffering of Jesus.¹⁹ Like others, however, Kasper argues that Hegel's insistence that the logic of the Absolute is accessible to speculative reason is entirely misplaced; according to Kasper, it is love rather than logic which leads to the movement from the immanent to the economic Trinity, a love which is known exclusively from the concrete events of revelation.²⁰

While the Hegelian philosophy as a whole is not

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 179-180.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 181-185.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 183.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 182-183.

embraced, therefore, in its general outline it provides a basic conceptuality according to which the immanent and the economic Trinity can be understood to be both distinct and yet one. Since God is subject, or "person" as in Kasper's theology, and since the subjectivity of God involves God's relation to his other, otherness is not something added externally to the life of God but is to be regarded as a moment within it. What God is in the economy, therefore, in relation to the creation, cannot ultimately be isolated from what he is in himself. It is this Hegelian idea which provides the starting-point for the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity in contemporary theology,²¹ and which renders the relation of unity between the two, in Pannenberg's words, something which "belongs to the concept of the divine essence itself."²²

It would be worthwhile briefly to pose the question whether there is in fact any clear alternative to this characterization of the contemporary Trinitarian position. As we have seen, the idea which is central to the development of contemporary Trinitarian theology is that of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity. However, despite the fact that this principle is universally affirmed, the logic of the assertion is seldom discussed. If, for the sake of argument, we restrict ourselves to Rahner's axiom that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, it is already clear that the logical complexity of the copula "is" in general is such that its meaning is bound to be ambiguous. The fact that the unity of the economic and immanent Trinity is generally affirmed in contemporary Trinitarian theology, therefore, does not mean that the idea of unity involved

²¹Robert P. Scharlemann, "Hegel and Theology Today," Dialog, 23 (1984), 257-262.

²²Pannenberg, "Problems of a Trinitarian Doctrine of God," p. 254.

here can be taken to be transparently obvious, not only between theologies but even within a single theology.

There are, in short, a number of ways in which two things can be said to constitute a unity, so that the nature of this unity remains to be specified even when the contemporary Trinitarian thesis is explicitly affirmed. The most literal reading possible would take the economic and the immanent Trinity to be identical, in the sense of referring to precisely the same reality, as in the tautologous statement that $1+3$ "is" $2+2$, and vice versa, where the copula is to be taken in the sense of "is equivalent to." One could not, by contrast, reverse the order of subject and predicate in the proposition "Socrates is a man" in this way, since by the "is" here a universal, "man," is asserted to pertain to a particular, "Socrates." To attempt to apply the vice versa in this case would simply be to confuse the proper sense of the particular and the universal terms involved; the meaning of the two terms themselves prevents such a reversal, while the sense of the "is" in the two propositions is quite different.

The reading, "is equivalent to" would appear to be precluded by the historical distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity, since none of the theologies considered explicitly attempts to invalidate it.²³ However, several obvious alternatives remain. Rahner's axiom might, for example, be read as a reductionist thesis of a sort, although in this case, again, the vice versa would have to be dropped. The statement that the economic "is" the immanent Trinity here would mean that the one reduces to

²³This argument relates to that of Ghislain Lafont concerning Rahner's axiom, already encountered in Chapter II. To begin with, since Rahner's idea of the identity of the economic and the immanent Trinity does appear to presuppose a prior distinction taken from the theological tradition, the reading "is equivalent to" has to be excluded. It follows, therefore, as Lafont argues, that the axiom as stated is not fully justified, and, in particular, that the vice versa of the formulation is problematic.

the other. In the context of contemporary thought, a theological reductionism is bound to be a temptation because of the prevalence of philosophical and theological movements which are "anti-metaphysical" in character, in the sense of asserting the finality of the world of finite experience, and which thus implicitly or explicitly oppose the idea of a God who is metaphysically transcendent to the created order.²⁴ In Trinitarian theology, the tendency which would follow from this would be to reduce what is called the immanent Trinity to the economic reality with which Christian theology is concerned, and to make the latter the one absolute reality. As in all reductionism, however, the effective result of this would be to do away with what has been "reduced," so that, in this case, what used to be called the immanent Trinity would now effectively be treated as an illusory, illegitimate theological category.

This standpoint is adopted by none of the Trinitarian theologies surveyed above. It is, in fact, an extremely radical position, argued most consistently, perhaps, in the nineteenth century by Ludwig Feuerbach.²⁵ As Marx argued of

²⁴Any broadly reductionist position, of course, paradoxically depends upon a philosophical standpoint which is as "metaphysical," in the strict sense, as any other: the attempt to assert the "absoluteness" of the empirical world of finite human experience, for example, at the level of individual subjectivity, as in certain forms of existentialism, or at the level of human societal existence, as in certain forms of socialist thought, both rely on an implicitly metaphysical claim about what is ultimately real, even if the resulting positions are not "metaphysical" in the usual sense of the word. The same applies to other forms of reductionism, such as the cruder forms of scientific materialism.

²⁵Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957). Cf also, Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," IV, in David McLellan, ed., Karl Marx (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 157: "Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, of the duplication of the world into a religious world and a secular one. His work consists in resolving the religious world into its secular basis." In addition to Feuerbach, reference might also be made to the

Feuerbach, however, a consistent reductionism would abandon the realm of theological discourse altogether;²⁶ this, clearly, is not the route taken in contemporary Trinitarian theology, where theological discourse concerning the economic and the immanent Trinity has rather been revitalized. As the implicit tendency towards which a particular theology may tend, however, reductionism is an important factor in contemporary theology – the assertion that there is no God "up there" at all, and that the concrete "economic" reality with which we have to do in our finite lives is the only meaningful field of human discourse, including theological discourse.²⁷

more recent "death of God" theology of the 1960's, in which a similar reductionism was sometimes advanced, e.g., by Thomas J. J. Altizer, The Gospel of Christian Atheism (London: Collins, 1967).

²⁶It was fundamental to Marx's polemic against Feuerbach that the human essence is not an abstract entity (for Feuerbach, the historical idea of God, particularly as manifested in the Christian religion) residing outside the world, but a totally this-worldly reality; the human species being is, for Marx, the nexus of social relations (Marx, op. cit., VI).

²⁷This, e.g., is the criticism of liberation theology provided by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation, trans. Vatican Polyglot Press (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1984), which insists that liberation theology is to be understood as "a real system, even if some hesitate to follow the logic to its conclusion," (IX, 1) and which characterizes this system explicitly as a "reductionism" (IX, 8; cf. also VIII, 1-9; IX, 1-7). The document argues, for example, that the theology of liberation tends to develop an extreme historical immanentism, with the result that God is effectively identified with history, and faith with fidelity to history (IX, 3-5). Christology here, it asserts, tends toward a rejection of the teaching of tradition in the name of class, while '...one claims to meet again the "Jesus of history" coming from the revolutionary experience of the struggle of the poor for their liberation...' (X, 9, 11). The result, it argues, is that faith in the incarnate Word, dead and risen for all men, and whom "God has made Lord and Christ" is denied, while in its place is substituted "a Christology in which Jesus appears as a symbol who sums up

Another superficially obvious possibility would be to read Rahner's axiom as an affirmation of an analogical relation, or a relation of proportional similarity, between the economic and the immanent Trinity. As we shall see, this view has much to commend it, since, in the end, the identity asserted in Rahner's axiom must be qualified analogically. The idea of analogy, however, cannot ultimately account either for the specific form of Rahner's axiom, or for the fact that it has been taken up almost universally in contemporary Trinitarian theology. A straightforwardly analogical statement such as "God is good," first of all, cannot be reversed by the addition of a vice versa, while secondly, the idea of analogy as such contains not the slightest suggestion of the idea of the divine subjectivity which pervades the Trinitarian theologies we have examined.

Once, however, we concede that contemporary Trinitarian theology is of a broadly Hegelian provenance, Rahner's axiom can be taken to mean, not that there is no immanent Trinity, or that the distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity in the theological tradition was illegitimate, or that there is a proportional

in Himself the requirements of the struggle of the oppressed" (ibid.). The Church is then understood in this light as 'a Church of the oppressed people whom it is necessary to "conscientize" in the light of the organized struggle for freedom', (IX, 12) while the central ecclesial event of the Eucharist tends to be "transformed into a celebration of the people in struggle, even though the persons who participate in these practices may not be fully conscious of it." (IX, 1.) Many of the criticisms of the document appear to be exaggerated, and in particular it clearly fails to condemn the ecclesiology and theology which implicitly and explicitly sanctions political abuses. What is important for our purposes, however, is the claim made that there is an underlying reductionism in the philosophical sources of liberation theology which, when thought consistently, leads inevitably to a reductionist theology. Whether or not liberation theology itself can show that it is not reductionist and that it can refute this challenge remains, of course, an open question.

similarity between them, but rather that the distinction between them is at once valid and sublated in a higher unity in a revised, more "concrete" concept of the Trinity.²⁸ Here the economic and the immanent Trinity are understood as separate aspects of or abstractions from one concrete whole, God as subject, who is, as the immanent Trinity, self-determining precisely in relation to the

²⁸Clearly, however, we cannot restrict the line of influence solely to Hegel's philosophy, even if his thought has been of crucial significance in the respects indicated. Macquarrie, e.g., op. cit., pp. 153ff., suggests that the philosophy of Heidegger must also be included here, in particular in view of Heidegger's polemic against the "onto-theology" of the theological tradition. Also of importance is the process theology which stems from Whitehead, to which Macquarrie, pp. 139ff., also draws attention. Here the old dualist categories of God and the world, of the infinite and the finite, etc., are thought together in a manner analogous to the economic and the immanent Trinity in contemporary Trinitarian theology. Hartshorne's development of a dipolar concept of God in particular might be cited; the two poles correspond to the old dualist categories, but in Hartshorne's conception, neither God nor creation can be divorced as in the older conception, nor absolutely identified as in pantheism, but must be thought together in their distinction in what Hartshorne calls "panentheism": everything is "in" God. In theologies of the Trinity which draw on process philosophy, this attempt to think the Trinity as the unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity is likewise associated with a new effort to conceive the being of God in a way which transcends older metaphysical categories, by resolving the older dualistic separation of the immanent and the economic Trinity. See, e.g., David A. Pailin, "Process Theology," in Richardson & Bowden, op. cit., pp. 467-470, and his, God and the Processes of Reality: Foundations of a Credible Theism (London and New York, 1989). For a treatment of the relation between process thought and the Trinitarian theologies surveyed above, see also Colin E. Gunton, Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), passim, and Fiddes, op. cit., pp. 110ff. For a "process" theology of the Trinity, see Schubert M. Ogden, "On the Trinity," Theology, 83 (1980), 97-102; Joseph A. Bracken, "Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology," Process Studies, 8 (1978), 217-230; and Bracken, "Process Philosophy and Trinitarian Theology - II," Process Studies, 11 (1981), 83-96.

other, i.e., as the economic Trinity, involved with and in the creation. The distinction and the validity of the distinction are thus maintained, but are at the same time relativized by the holding of the two together in a higher unity. Such a "dialectical Trinitarianism," therefore, does not simply posit contradictory assertions simultaneously, as if the Trinity were to be understood without further ado as both economic and immanent, but a genuine unity of the two, in which, however, the relative distinction of the economic and immanent Trinity is at the same time preserved, a unity-in-difference founded in the intrinsic relationality of the Trinity itself.

The idea of a dialectical unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity offers a clear advance over other ways of understanding the contemporary Trinitarian thesis. In the Trinitarian models considered above, the economic Trinity is identified in some sense with the immanent Trinity, but in a way which maintains the distinction. The expression "dialectical Trinitarianism" denotes the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity is here understood to comprise both the economic and the immanent Trinity, the two being at once identical and yet distinct within the logic appropriate to Trinitarian theology. At the same time, dialectical Trinitarianism can also be seen as a more precise expression of the general phenomenon of dialectical theism noted by Macquarrie, since it involves the claim, not simply that God and the world must be thought together in some sense, but that the dialectical unity-in-difference in God explicitly involves the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so that the moment of "otherness" involved is given a Christological definition, and so that the triune God is quite specifically defined in his immanent Trinitarian being in the economy of salvation. The introduction of the idea of the Trinity into the dialectical concept of God, in other words, makes for a more differentiated conception than does the more general

idea of God, while the economy of salvation, as we have seen, gives this conception its concrete content.

The importance of the Hegelian position in this respect extends even to the theology of Moltmann, who otherwise attempts to distance himself from the Idealist tradition.²⁹ In his discussion of the modern doctrine of the Trinity in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, Moltmann notes that the general concept of God as Absolute Subject in three modes of being, which he condemns as unable to secure an adequate doctrine of the Trinity, and which he associates particularly with the theologies of Barth and Rahner, derives particularly from Hegel.³⁰ Later in the same book, however, we clearly see Moltmann's own indebtedness to Hegel's philosophy, and indeed, the idea of the subjectivity of God taken up explicitly and acknowledged as fundamental to Moltmann's entire Trinitarian conception.³¹ Moltmann here relates Hegel's understanding of the subject to Richard of St. Victor's understanding of the persons, according to which being a person means not only subsisting, or subsisting in relation, but existing in the light of another by virtue of love. According to Moltmann, however:

Hegel ... picked up this idea and deepened it. It is the nature of the person to give himself entirely to a counterpart, and to find himself in the other most of all. The person only comes to himself by expressing and expending himself in others. ... This adds a third term into the doctrine of the Trinity, in addition to the concept of person and the concept of relation; and this makes it possible to perceive

²⁹In contrast to Moltmann, Jüngel's debt to Hegel, like Kasper's, is more openly-acknowledged. See Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, pp. 63-100.

³⁰Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 16-20.

³¹Ibid., pp. 173-174.

the living changes in the trinitarian relations and the Persons which come about through the revelation, the self-emptying and the glorification of the triune God. We have termed it the history of God, which takes place in the Trinity itself, and we have in this sense talked about God's self-limitation, about God's pain, and also about God's joy and his eternal bliss in the final glorification.³²

Hegel's understanding of the subjectivity of God, in other words, which in Hegel's words "sinks into ... insipidity ... if it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative,"³³ is here understood by Moltmann to provide the foundation for his own characteristic doctrine of the Trinitarian history of God.

As was stated earlier, the fact that the idea of the unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity is maintained without reference to Hegel's speculative logic is of key importance. It is significant in this respect that the emergence of dialectical Trinitarianism in contemporary theology is closely related to the development of the idea of God as event. Barth's theology has been particularly influential at this point.³⁴ We have already seen that, for Barth, the living God of the Bible must be understood in dynamic terms, as having movement, life, and even decision in himself: "To its very deepest depths God's Godhood consists in the fact that it

³²Ibid., p. 174.

³³Hegel, loc. cit.

³⁴On the relation between Barth and Hegel, cf., e.g., Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 139-150; Pannenberg, "Die Subjectivität Gottes und die Trinitätslehre," pp. 98ff.; and Timothy Bradshaw, "Karl Barth on the Trinity: A Family Resemblance," Scottish Journal of Theology, 39 (1986), 145-164.

is an event...."³⁵ Barth's doctrine of God, however, rests upon the further qualification of this event as the event of revelation in Jesus Christ: God is in himself eternally open to fellowship with men and women, since, in himself, he has eternally decided to be "for us" in Christ. In this conception, therefore, God is not who he is without mankind. Barth's developed doctrine of God reflects this systematically in the doctrine of election.

In his essay on Hegel in Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, Barth also, significantly, characterizes Hegel's philosophy as centred in the idea of God as event.³⁶ According to Barth, in Hegel's philosophy:

... the key to everything ... [is] that reason, truth, concept, mind, God himself are understood as an event, and, moreover, only as an event. They cease to be what they are as soon as the event, in which they are what they are, is thought of as interrupted, as soon as a state is thought of in its place. Essentially reason and all its synonyms are life, movement, process. God is God only in his divine action, revelation, creation, reconciliation, redemption; as an absolute act, as actus purus.³⁷

Barth argues here that theology should let itself be reminded by Hegel that God can only be known in truth as

³⁵Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, p. 263.

³⁶Karl Barth, "Hegel," in his Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1972), pp. 398-402, 413, 415-416, 419-420.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 398-399. Bradshaw, op. cit., pp. 159-160, on the other hand, claims that the theme of God as actus purus in Barth represents the existential, non-Hegelian element in Barth's theology. Bradshaw's point, however, rests upon a misunderstanding both of Hegel himself and of Barth's understanding of Hegel, as the above quotation shows.

the living God who presents himself to us, and that, on this basis, a Hegel renaissance would not necessarily be a bad thing for theology.³⁸ However, a pivotal criticism of Hegel also appears in the essay, that although Hegel understood truly that God is event, he also made that event a function of the logical dialectic rather than of free grace: for Barth, the "weightiest" problem in Hegel's philosophy is his "failure to recognize that God is free."³⁹

In fact, Hegel's intention in his philosophy is precisely to conceive of God as free, so that, from this point of view, Barth's criticism is rather strained. The point is, rather, that instead of failing to recognize the freedom of God, Hegel understands this freedom differently than Barth, arguing that freedom is both negatively the absence of dependence on an other, and positively a relating of self to self, or a self-determination. According to Hegel, the very substance of spirit is freedom, understood in this precise sense.⁴⁰ Freedom, therefore, is a living process which proceeds necessarily from the very logic of spirit or Geist. Hegel's entire position depends on the confidence that this logic not only determines the divine life, but that it is also accessible to us insofar as the human and the divine Geist are not qualitatively different in this sense. Barth, on the other hand, understands the freedom of God as his lordship in revelation; this, as we have seen, is developed in his theology as God's existential freedom, which, in the end, ultimately has priority over God's essence.⁴¹

In Church Dogmatics II/1, Barth discusses the idea of

³⁸Hegel, op. cit., pp. 416-417.

³⁹Ibid., p. 420.

⁴⁰Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, § 382.

⁴¹See above, Chapter II, section 2.

God as actus purus in similar terms to those above, a discussion which is important in this context as an elaboration of his own positive theology, rather than of Hegel's.⁴² Barth argues here that the idea of event which he has in view in his doctrine of God must be understood specifically as the event of his revelation, and so not as an event like any other, but as an utterly unexpected act which derives from the lordship of God. He writes:

...the action of God that takes place in revelation is a particular action, different from any other happening, even in contradiction to it. Actus purus is not sufficient as a description of God. To it there must be added at least "et singularis."⁴³

Thus for Barth, the livingness of God, or what Hegel calls the divine subjectivity, is apprehended solely in revelation. God is event, not in a general sense, but in the sense that he is who he is precisely in his act of revelation.

Barth's understanding of God as event, together with his associated criticism of Hegel, which is summed up in his idea of God as actus purus et singularis, can be said to be fundamental to subsequent Trinitarian theology. It is, in effect, what allows the conception of the unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity to be developed without a speculative logic. It is significant in this context that this conception amounts to a complete redefinition of the concept of God as actus purus over against its original Aristotelian and scholastic definition. The latter depends upon the Aristotelian distinction between form as actuality, and matter as

⁴²Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, p. 264.

⁴³Ibid.

potentiality.⁴⁴ To say that God is pure act here, therefore, is not simply to say that God is immaterial, which was axiomatic to Aristotle and the scholastics, but that he is fully actual in himself, in the precise sense that he is eternally what he is, without intrinsic capacity for change or limitation because he is already, by definition, the infinite plenitude of all possible perfection.⁴⁵

The clearest opponent of this older position among the contemporary Trinitarian theologians we have encountered is Jürgen Moltmann, whose theology is a development of the idea of salvation history itself as the Trinitarian history of God. Just as salvation history is not yet complete, so the Trinity, which out of love is eternally open to creation, is likewise in via. As we have seen, however, the ultimate implication of such a position is not only that the Trinity would have to be conceived as a potentiality developing through particular actions to ever new forms of actuality, but that without the problem of the unredeemed creation upon which the Trinity acts ad extra, the very process by which the Trinitarian life is defined would cease. If, in short, the historical process whereby God acts ad extra in the world for the overcoming of suffering and death were actually to come to an end in a final consummation, then the problem would arise how God could still be self-constituting in his actions ad extra.

In the end, however, Barth's position is no less problematic. We have already seen the difficulties involved in maintaining in a literal sense that God "chose" to be who he is in Jesus Christ; now we can take up the other side of the same problem, the particularity of the event, not only in which the revelation of God takes place, but in

⁴⁴Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1959), II, pp. 192, 197, 329-332.

⁴⁵Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a, 3-4, 7; Summa Contra Gentiles, 1.16-18, 28, 43.

which the being of God himself consists. This is the ultimate implication of Barth's idea of God as actus purus et singularis, that God in a quite literal sense determines himself to be God in the particular history of this man, Jesus of Nazareth. This means, however, that God has determined himself only to be who he is in unity with the realm of potentiality, the creation. The thesis involved here is that God expresses his divinity precisely in the event by which he unites himself with the finite, and that he is, therefore, only fully actual or free in his self-limitation - in short, that he is who he is sub specie temporis.

Barth's position at this point not only involves a strong affirmation of the identity of the economic and the immanent Trinity, through the idea of the event of revelation by which God is defined as actus purus. It also has other radical implications for theology, above all concerning the manner in which revelation becomes a systematic necessity for the knowledge of God. In the theological tradition, revelation is necessary for the simple reason that the human mind is finite and the Trinity infinite; the apophatic qualification which attaches to all knowledge of God in Christian Platonism, for example, is simply a function of this more general dualism. Revelation is a systematic necessity here only from our point of view, in the sense that without it, the truth of God would be inaccessible, since the human mind cannot reach up to comprehend what is to it by definition incomprehensible. Even in revelation, therefore, God is made known to us in a way which befits our limitations, in sensible form and in images which are self-consciously understood by way of analogy.

In a Trinitarian theology such as Barth's, by contrast, in which the Trinity can be said to define itself in the economy, the systematic requirement for revelation runs much deeper. Because the Trinity is here conceived as

event, or as actus purus in the sense outlined above, revelation is not simply necessary because our minds are limited, but rather because the Trinity itself is determined in its own being by the concrete reality of the economy of salvation. This determination is understood fundamentally as a free existential self-determination, a result, as Barth understands it, of divine choice. This, however, means that even if the human intellect were such that it could comprehend the divine infinity, it could not do so without looking to see who God has determined himself to be in the concrete economy. In this sense, the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa. Revelation here becomes a systematic necessity, not in the sense that God must, as God, pass over into otherness according to the logic of his own being, as in the philosophy of Hegel, but in the sense that, as it happens, God has chosen to be who he is in Jesus Christ, so that the divine being is itself contingent upon revelation. Without reference to it, even God, as it were, could not know who he is in himself, since at the level of the ontology underlying the epistemology, he is not who he is without it. In principle, therefore, according to this view, God can only be known a posteriori, since he is who he is in revelation: God has determined himself eternally to be God only in Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

⁴⁶The argument here can be illuminated by reference to M. B. Foster, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science," Mind, 43 (1934), 446-468; 44 (1935), 439-466; 45 (1936), 1-27, a series of articles concerning the development of the empirical method in early modern science. Foster's argument is that key elements of the philosophy of nature underlying the development of the modern science of nature stem from the Christian doctrine of creation. In ancient Greek science, the intelligibility of a natural object, its essence, is formal rather than material, or sensible; what is comprehended in the form is known a priori as the logos of the object. The intelligibility of the object is therefore not derived from empirical experience as in modern science; rather, the Greek scientist uses the objects of sense experience much as a geometrician uses drawn figures as examples. Essences, therefore, are comprehended apart from sense experience,

The problem with this conception can best be seen by a more detailed comparison with the Trinitarian theology of Hegel, to which it is closely related. Hegel too adopts the idea of God as actus purus, but again reinterprets it completely, moving beyond the Aristotelian metaphysics of potentiality and actuality in which it was originally located, and understanding it instead in terms of his wider

even though sense experience may be required initially. Foster's argument is that such a science of nature is incompatible with a doctrine of creation, on the grounds that in the former, essences are intelligible in themselves, apart from God, since both form and matter are eternal principles, whereas in the latter, form and matter are created by divine will. In Greek science, therefore, the intelligibility of the world is in principle independent of God. Even in the Greek doctrine of the Demiurge, which bears the closest superficial resemblance of any Greek theological teaching to the doctrine of the Creator, the work of the divinity is restricted to the uniting of form and matter, and cannot extend to the bringing into being of either element. Since the world is eternal, its total intelligibility, or its set of all possible formal essences, must also be given eternally. In the doctrine of creation, on the other hand, both creaturely form and matter are temporal and contingent, being the product of divine will rather than eternal principles in their own right. For this reason, Foster argues, the doctrine of creation requires a science of nature in which natural objects can only be known by empirical observation, since it is only by actually looking to see what God has done in creation that what is created can be known. The doctrine of creation, therefore, makes an empirical science of nature necessary, since a posteriori knowledge is the condition of the possibility of understanding the contingent, created essences of the natural world.

Foster's contention that a Christian doctrine of creation requires the contingency of the form of the created world, in the sense that it might have been created otherwise by sheer fiat, may perhaps be questioned. However, once a voluntarist view of creation such as Foster's is granted, in which the intelligibility of the creation might just as well have been otherwise, the force of his position is difficult to resist. The world can no longer be said to be intelligible a priori, and empirical science becomes necessary. By extension, a similar argument can be formulated for the systematic necessity of revelation in contemporary Trinitarian theology.

philosophy of subjectivity.⁴⁷ Barth, clearly, follows Hegel in understanding God as actus purus in terms of the concrete actuality of his economic outreach. Where Barth differs from Hegel most decisively, as we have seen, is in his view that this outreach is not the outworking of speculative logic, or, as Hegel puts it, of the "inward force" of Geist,⁴⁸ but rather of the existential freedom of God in the act of election. This view, however, leads to fundamental problems in the Barthian and post-Barthian position, inasmuch as the assertion that God chooses to redeem his creation involves also the idea that God chooses who he himself will be; the denial of any sort of identifiable rational imperative lying behind this choice, however, means that not only this choice, but also the being of God himself is seemingly rendered arbitrary, and threatens to reduce to the finitude of its economic manifestation.

Hegel's treatment of the Trinity, by contrast, can be said to preserve the "absoluteness" of God precisely by means of its characteristic claim to rational necessity.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, § 34, and Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, III, pp. 275ff.

⁴⁸Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, § 34.

⁴⁹Hegel's understanding of human rationality plays a key role in the logic of his treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is first of all fundamental to the Hegelian philosophy that reason can know the Triune God, precisely because God has given himself in history to be known: God, in Hegel's famous phrase, is not envious (Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, § 564); in the supreme sense, God is the truth, which it is the business of thought to grasp (Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, III, p. 246). Secondly, the fact that, for Hegel, there are not two kinds or reason or spirit, but only one - the divine, in which the human shares - is of crucial significance, in that it reveals why it is that the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity can be known in speculative philosophy. According to Hegel, ibid., I, p. 130., reason is the divine in humanity: "Human reason, human spiritual consciousness or consciousness of its own essence, is reason generally, is the divine within humanity. Spirit, in so far as it is

One of Hegel's fundamental presuppositions is that philosophical thought presupposes religious consciousness, but raises it to philosophical comprehension.⁵⁰ With respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, which is for Hegel the fundamental truth posited by the Christian religion, Hegel's express thesis is that philosophy (i.e., speculative philosophy, his philosophy) grasps the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity in its necessity. The doctrine of the Trinity is, indeed, for Hegel what is true as such; it is the truth of speculative reason, the truth of

called divine spirit, is not a spirit beyond the stars or beyond the world; for God is present, is omnipresent, and strictly as spirit is God present in spirit. God is a living God who is effective, active and present in spirit. Religion is ... not an invention of human beings but an effect of the divine at work, of the divine productive process within humanity." Thirdly, Hegel understands spirit as self-consciousness, as an innermost relation of the self to the self. Thus, in all knowing, I am ultimately conscious of myself. Hegel does not mean this, however, in any solipsistic sense; rather Hegel's position is that the structure of all consciousness of truth is one in which spirit knows itself. As such, spirit is a self-determination in which the self distinguishes itself from the self (the objective) but then overcomes this distinction to arrive at a new unity, in which the two poles are held together. Self-determination, for Hegel, is freedom, being at home with oneself in this sense, and freedom, Hegel teaches, is the principle of spirit. The "absolute philosophy," therefore, is that philosophy in which this principle of freedom has risen to philosophical comprehension, the philosophy, in short, in which spirit knows itself to be all reality (Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, §§ 572-577).

⁵⁰Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, I, pp. 151-153. In religion, therefore, the truth is already at least partially present, and in the "absolute" or "consummate" religion, Christianity, the truth is already completely present, although in an inadequate form. Philosophy comprehends the truth of religion in its necessity, and the absolute philosophy, the truth of Christianity in its necessity. Cf. also Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, § 573.

spirit.⁵¹ Hegel writes:

God is thus grasped as what he is for himself within himself; God [the Father] makes himself an object for himself (the Son); then, in this object, God remains the undivided essence within this differentiation of himself within himself, and in this differentiation of himself loves himself, i.e., remains identical with himself - this is God as Spirit. Hence is we are to speak of God as spirit, we must grasp God with this very definition which exists in the church in this childlike mode of representation as the relationship between father and son - a representation that is not yet a matter of the concept. Thus it is just this definition of God by the church as a Trinity that is the concrete determination and nature of God as spirit; and spirit is an empty word if it is not grasped in this

⁵¹Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, III, pp. 276, 279, 289. Hegel's position, as such, involves a polemic against the theology of the Enlightenment, the categories of which are limited to the finite understanding (as opposed to speculative reason - the proper domain of philosophy - even, implicitly, of the philosophy of the Enlightenment), and which consequently holds that while it may be possible to know that God is, it is not possible to know what God is. According to Hegel, op. cit., I, p. 126, the rational theology of the Enlightenment thus issued in a "negative tendency toward any content at all in regard to the nature of God." But Hegel's position is also, by implication, a polemic against the received theological standpoint of the medieval world, in which the truth is given by revelation and received on the basis of authority. Whereas medieval thought surrenders its freedom (the freedom it had in pagan philosophy) in order to attain this truth, Hegel's philosophy is an attempt to reconcile this truth of the doctrine of the Trinity with the reassertion of the freedom of thought in modern philosophy. As such, Hegel seeks to take us beyond the confines of ecclesiastical dogma in order to present the truth in all its purity and necessity as self-grounded and self-authenticating (Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, §§ 782-788).

determination.⁵²

As such, the Trinity is the universal truth of reason – and, as such, is both the truth in the absolute sense and the truth of finite spirit in its own sense as well. Or, as Hegel puts it, the fundamental idea of the Trinity is also the universal idea.⁵³ Whereas the one-sided representation of reason in Enlightenment thought lead to a denial of this universal idea, and whereas the orthodox Christian tradition has resisted it as a universal idea even while maintaining its truth vis-à-vis God, Hegel, by contrast, stands with, for example, Jacob Boehme in holding that the Trinity is in everything and everywhere.

In this context, the question of Hegel's concrete view of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity is important. What needs to be repeated here first of all is that for Hegel as much as for the theological tradition, there could be no question of a rise in thought to the immanent were it not for the givenness of the economic Trinity in revelation.⁵⁴ For Hegel is quite clear that there is nothing in thought which has not first become objective to us (at the same time, there is nothing objective that is not also a product of thought in the absolute sense).⁵⁵ But this does not answer the question put, which concerns the relation of the immanent to the economic Trinity on the divine side, sub specie aeternitatis. This is a controversial point in Hegelian

⁵²Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, I, pp. 126-127.

⁵³Ibid., III, p. 289.

⁵⁴Ibid., I, pp. 411-412; III, pp. 251-253.

⁵⁵Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, §§ 6-12.

scholarship,⁵⁶ since Hegel is often misrepresented as a pantheist (a charge which he himself refutes),⁵⁷ but, as I shall attempt to argue, Hegel's position requires that the older distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity be clearly maintained.

Characterizing the immanent Trinity in one place, Hegel writes that here the act of differentiation issues in a relation of God merely to himself, so that the otherness posited here by spirit is only "a play of love with itself, which does not arrive at the seriousness of other-being, of separation and rupture."⁵⁸ While this is an isolated statement, it is nevertheless to be taken seriously (though certainly not too seriously, since, as Hegel argues elsewhere, the doctrine of the Trinity is concerned with the self-unfolding of spirit in itself, while the demonstration of its truth is the task of logical exposition,⁵⁹ and certainly logic is not undervalued in the Hegelian system). However, the nature of spirit itself is such that it must distinguish itself from itself in otherness, in order thereby truly to come to unity with itself. As the eternal play of love grasped by speculative reason, therefore, the immanent Trinity rests within itself, but contains already the principle of unity-in-difference. The basis of the economic Trinity is thus

⁵⁶Küng, op. cit., pp. 413ff. Cf. also Anselm K. Min, "Hegel's Absolute: Transcendent or Immanent?" The Journal of Religion, 56, no. 1 (1976), 61-87; and Min, "The Trinity and the Incarnation: Hegel and Classical Approaches," The Journal of Religion, 66, no. 2 (1986), 173-193.

⁵⁷Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, I, pp. 374ff.; and Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, § 573. For a detailed treatment of this question, see Quentin Lauer, Hegel's Concept of God (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), pp. 243-282.

⁵⁸Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, III, p. 292.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 290.

already here, for it is an expression of the inner movement of spirit itself which leads first of all to the creation of finite reality and then to the reconciliation of that finite reality to God in Christ and in the Church. In the incarnation in particular, God suffers the pain of death in order thereby to negate the finitude of the finite, and thereby to overcome its otherness and reconcile it to himself.⁶⁰ But since it is a moment within the divine life itself to pass over into otherness and then to attain unity with itself in that otherness, and so to be self-determining, this reconciliation of finitude to the divine appears as much a divine self-reconciliation as a reconciliation of the finite realm to God.

Emil Fackenheim discusses the problem of the immanent and the economic Trinity in his study, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought, and poses the question whether the Trinitarian life "achieves its bliss" by indifference to the finite world or by coming to itself through the finite. Fackenheim argues that it is only as the immanent Trinity and the reconciliation of the finite in the Christian revelation are distinguished yet held together by the notion of divine love that Hegel's position becomes meaningful.⁶¹ If the divine were indifferent to the finite, and the Trinity rested complete in itself, then the story of the divine activity in the world in the Christian religion would be merely mythical; on the other hand, according to Fackenheim, Hegel holds that a divinity which came only to itself through its incursion into the finite would not warrant serious consideration from the human standpoint.⁶² Fackenheim argues that it is only by affirming

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 124-133.

⁶¹Emil Fackenheim, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 153.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 152-153, 218-219.

the love of God for finite humanity, and thus by preserving the distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity through the concept of love, that the dilemma can be overcome. The divine love is not merely a self-love; it is a genuine love for the other, an inclusion of the other into itself, and is thus, in this concrete sense, a gratuitous ultimate affirmation of the finite in the infinite love of God.

As Fackenheim argues, the point hinges on the extent to which the concept of a genuine "otherness" of creation is possible within the Hegelian system. God does, for Hegel, create an other to himself. Arguably, this other, the finite creation, must be granted actual independence if the inner logic of spirit is to find fulfilment; already in himself, God has an other, which means that here God is already in relation to himself and in unity with himself in the spirit which is the divine play of love with itself. The logic of the position would then be that because genuine otherness is posited in creation, any divine Trinitarian incursion into this finite realm of genuine otherness will be distinct from the immanent level of divine being, even though having its basis there.

At the same time, however, it remains the case that in Hegel's thought, the moment of economic outreach to that other is itself part of the concrete whole apprehended in the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus the higher truth is the truth of the unity-in-difference of the immanent and the economic Trinity, a unity, however, in which the doctrine of the immanent Trinity takes definite precedence. It is the inner logic of spirit, which is freedom, which leads to the creation of the other, and then to the divine reconciliation of itself to itself in the other; for Hegel, it is this truth precisely which is the ultimate content of

speculative philosophy.⁶³

To this extent, the Hegelian lineage of much contemporary Trinitarian theology is unquestionable. In both cases, the Trinity in itself is not what it is without the other; being intrinsically open to the creation is held to be of the divine essence. Thus the man Jesus Christ becomes the crucial locus of Trinitarian theology, as the mediator not only between mankind and God, but also, and perhaps more significantly, between God and mankind. It is in Jesus Christ first of all, and then also, as we have seen, in the continuing economic activity of the Spirit of Christ, that the openness of God to the creation is concretely realized. The Trinity itself, therefore, in both cases in a certain precise sense comes to fulfilment, in that because the Trinity is in itself orientated to the economy, it can not, in the end, be what it is in itself without the world.

The implication of this is that in both Hegel and in the contemporary Trinitarian theologies surveyed above, the Trinity is regarded as essentially knowable.⁶⁴ According to Hegel, the Trinity is the truth of speculative reason, the truth in the ultimate sense, which is intrinsically capable of being understood. The Trinity has, furthermore, given itself to be known in the finite, and, indeed, comes to self-consciousness itself through the knowledge thus gained in the finite world. In the contemporary Trinitarian tradition, similarly, we have encountered the assertion that there is no God hiding behind his revelation who is unknown and unknowable. What the Trinity is in itself is what it is ad extra, and what it is ad extra is also what it is in itself.

⁶³Bernard M. G. Reardon, Hegel's Philosophy of Religion (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1977), pp. 58-76.

⁶⁴See, e.g., Lisabeth During, "Hegel, Barth, and the Rationality of the Trinity," King's Theological Review, 2 (1979), 69-81.

Although the two positions thus both maintain that the Trinity can be truly known, it is nevertheless in this question of the knowledge of the Trinity that the differences between the two emerge most clearly. Most obviously, perhaps, in recent theology the "Vorstellungen" or images of religious representation are still employed, to the extent that finite economic events are taken to be adequate to the problem of the doctrine of the Trinity. Unlike Hegel, contemporary Trinitarian theology makes no attempt to apprehend the truth of revelation, i.e., of the Trinity, in its logical necessity. For Hegel, on the other hand, such a step is necessary in speculative philosophy, and therefore constitutes an essential element in the overall systematic philosophical perspective from which alone the detailed treatment of the Trinity provided can be understood.⁶⁵ In the transition from religious consciousness to speculative philosophy, Hegel argues, the religious form of consciousness with its concrete, objective apprehension of the truth of spirit as alien to the self must be left behind so that, in particular, consciousness can know its content as none other than itself, i.e., so that consciousness becomes self-consciousness and so that the form and content of consciousness can be identical and be known to be such.⁶⁶ Thus, for Hegel, in knowing the Trinity in its necessity in speculative philosophy we know also that we participate in the Trinity and that the Trinity knows itself through us: spirit, in the absolute philosophy, knows itself to be all reality in this precise sense. In this form of consciousness, the time-bound Vorstellungen of religious representation are taken up and transcended in the speculative necessity of the self-

⁶⁵Hegel, op. cit., I, pp. 404ff.; and Phenomenology of Spirit, §§ 788-808. See also Fackenheim, op. cit., pp. 184-192.

⁶⁶Hegel, loc. cit.

unfolding of God.

Contemporary Trinitarian theologies which affirm the identity of the economic and the immanent Trinity, on the other hand, apprehend the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity as a sheer datum, as something given in the facticity of revelation itself. It is for this reason above all that the language of religious representation is sustained; here, in contemporary theology, the form is already adequate to the content, since the Trinity in itself is none other than the Trinity ad extra. While this approach has the possible advantage of taking with utter seriousness the actual revelatory content of the economy of salvation, it also leads directly to many of the characteristic weaknesses of the contemporary approach to Trinitarian theology which we have already seen. These relate, not simply to theological epistemology, but also to what is actually affirmed of the Trinity in the ontological sense in particular theological propositions.

First of all, the givenness of the content of Trinitarian theology means that confusions about what is in fact given or revealed can easily arise. Once the economy becomes the source and content of the doctrine of the Trinity, the de facto unsystematic character of the economic basis poses enormous problems for an attempt at a systematic treatment. This can be seen from the four models discussed in the previous Chapter, all of which appeal directly to the content of the economy of salvation, but none of which is strictly consistent with the rest. I shall return to this question shortly in the next section. Secondly, the tendency of contemporary theologians from Barth onwards to adopt the Hegelian idea that God opens himself to the world, without, however, adopting the underlying Hegelian logic of freedom, leads to the idea of the sheer original free choice of God to be self-determining only in relation to the world. Such an idea of the divine choice, however, necessarily raises the question

whether God might not, in principle, have chosen something else and so have determined himself, in his own intrinsic essence, to be something else.

This is a weakness that has already been developed in some detail in connection with Barth's doctrine of election, but it applies, by implication, to later adaptations of that doctrine. The problem is that in this way, the finitude of the economic aspect of the unity-in-difference of the economic and immanent Trinity comes to prominence. In Hegel's own philosophy, there is no danger of this, for the simple reason that the whole is apprehended from the ultimate standpoint of speculative reason, in intention at least, in its rational necessity. In Hegel, in fact, the danger is that the contingent world is conceived too closely as an outworking of the logic of divinity (or spirit), to the extent that the finite world can effectively appear to be divinized.⁶⁷ The problem involved in contemporary Trinitarian theology, on the other hand, is precisely the converse: here the divine appears to be in danger of being "finitized," rather than the finite divinized, as, without the logical necessity of a divine outreach, and in view of the total givenness of God in revelation, the very finitude of the mode of God's givenness in revelation intrudes upon the being of God in himself. The result is a doctrine of immanent Trinitarian suffering and temporality, in which, admittedly, the immanent Trinity is the ground of the economic, but in which also, in the end, the proper distinction between the two, whereby the infinite freedom proper to the immanent Trinity is preserved, and whereby the finite freedom proper to the sphere of the economy of salvation is understood as secondary and derivative, is not maintained with sufficient clarity.

⁶⁷Hence the risk in Hegel's philosophy, as least on this reading of it, is not of pantheism, as is often alleged, but of acosmism.

The basic problem associated with the contemporary tradition of Trinitarian theology would appear to lie, therefore, in the immediate appeal to the economy of salvation, the presupposition of which, as we have seen repeatedly, is that the triune God is who he is in his revelation. A theology building on this foundation, however, is in principle unable adequately to distinguish the immanent Trinity from the economic. Whereas in the Hegelian position, for example, the economic Trinity can be regarded from the standpoint of an immanent Trinitarianism to be distinct and derivative, and yet to be one with the immanent in a speculative unity, contemporary dialectical Trinitarianism apprehends the unity-in-difference of immanent and economic Trinity to be given in the pure particularity of the mode of revelation. The result, however, is that the freedom of the immanent Trinity and the whole immanent life of the Trinity, which is thus asserted to be truly known, is rendered finite, like the economic starting-point.

The ontological problem involved here could, in principle, be pursued at great length. The question arises, however, whether or not such a position can be sustained, not simply from the point of view of theological ontology, but from the point of view of the very economy of salvation itself. To what extent, in other words, does the latter lend itself to the contemporary Trinitarian thesis? Already above, it has been noted that the unsystematic character of the economic basis of contemporary Trinitarian theology poses specific problems for the attempt to develop a systematic Trinitarian conception. This is the question to be taken up in the next section, where again the idea of the unity-in-difference of the economic and the immanent Trinity will be in view. Such an approach from the economy of salvation is also in keeping with the character of contemporary Trinitarian theology as, in intention at least, representing a turn to the economy of salvation. To

this extent, indeed, by questioning the approach of contemporary Trinitarian theology to the economy, we not only question its more problematic ontological implications, but the very reorientation of Trinitarian theology to revelation on which the position as a whole claims to rest.

2. The Problem of Economic Diversity

If the first and basic problem in contemporary Trinitarian theology concerns the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, then the second concerns the economic starting-point from which particular systematic Trinitarian conceptions are developed. In Chapter III, four distinct models of Trinitarian Pneumatology were discussed, all of which presuppose the general idea of economic-immanent Trinitarian identity, and all of which are ostensibly developed from the economy of salvation. The four models, however, themselves show how varied the economic Trinitarian taxis is, and how many paradigms in the economy are available, in principle, for development. This reflects a fundamental problem in Trinitarian thought, the sheer diversity, not only of the possible Trinitarian interpretations to which the economy of salvation is susceptible, but of the actual economic basis of Trinitarian theology itself.

Although this diversity can be enriching from the standpoint of Christian spirituality, the range of economic themes in question presents a considerable challenge to the attempt to formulate a systematic Trinitarian conception. In the theological tradition, for example, conflicting views of the Trinitarian taxis can thus emerge, despite the relatively stable Trinitarian conception developed in the classical Creeds, all of which can appeal for support to

different aspects of the economy of salvation.⁶⁸ As we have seen, much of the controversy surrounding the procession of the Holy Spirit in the history of theology derives from ambiguities inherent in the biblical witness, ambiguities reflected also in the wider spiritual and theological tradition.⁶⁹

To the extent that the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity is explicitly affirmed in contemporary Trinitarian theology, however, the difficulties which arise

⁶⁸Three examples can be cited briefly. First, there is the Trinitarian taxis of Father → Spirit → Son, which is indebted to the biblical, messianic tradition of the synoptic gospels. Excluding the adoptionists, the chief theological representatives of this position include the Syrian Fathers Aphraates and Ephrem (W. Cranmer, Der Geist Gottes und des Menschen in frühsyrischer Theologie (Münster: Aschendorff, 1979), and, as recent ecumenical research has shown, the medieval Byzantine writers Gregory of Cyprus and Gregory Palamas (Staniloae, op. cit., and Markos A. Orphanos, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit According to Certain of the Later Greek Fathers," in Commission on Faith and Order, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, pp. 21-45). Secondly, there is the more familiar Trinitarian taxis of Father → Son → Spirit, which on the whole predominates in Eastern Christian theology and which also has important Western advocates. The paradigm here is clearly derived in part from the Middle and Neo-Platonic traditions, but also gains support from those biblical texts which speak of the Son as mediator and giver of the Holy Spirit. The third paradigm is that of the Western filioquist tradition, which is more difficult to represent schematically, but in which the Father and the Son together breathe forth the Spirit as their common bond of love. Here the Augustinian psychological analogy is undoubtedly of fundamental importance, but the paradigm depends also on various New Testament texts which associate love and unity with the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁹The various spiritual, liturgical, and theological traditions which appear in the wider history of the Christian Church once again represent different economic conceptions, and potentially different starting-points for theologies of the Trinity. Recently Yves Congar, op. cit., I, pp. 65-173, and Louis Bouyer, Le Consolateur (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1980), pp. 61-336, have provided extensive surveys of the Pneumatological tradition from this point of view.

from the diversity of this economic material are clearly intensified. Since the doctrine of the Trinity here becomes a quite literal development of the idea that the Trinity in itself is none other than what it is economically, the question of its economic basis obviously becomes of fundamental importance. As we have seen, the diversity here has yielded a number of mutually inconsistent Trinitarian positions in contemporary theology. Moreover, since the relations between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as given in the economy do clearly differ and even conflict, it is difficult to see how, in principle, such a result can be avoided on the basis of the contemporary Trinitarian thesis.

The question which we have to address, therefore, is how the diversity of the economy can be reconciled with a systematic conception of the Trinity. Such a systematic conception must by definition be self-consistent over against the apparently self-contradictory character of its economic basis. The problem is thus a matter of reconciling diversity with unity. Three possible responses to this problem emerge from the theologies encountered in earlier Chapters. The first is to attempt to deny the inconsistency of the original body of economic data by treating the various economic paradigms in question as stages in an overall development. The second is to attempt to argue that the contradictory nature of the economic data must be presupposed, but that the differing data must be understood in a way which does not grant equal importance to its separate elements. In either case, the attempt is to qualify the diversity of the economy, although the first approach does so more radically than the second. The third is to attempt to qualify the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity itself in such a way that the diversity of the economic basis can no longer pose a threat to the development of a systematic conception. It is this third approach, I shall argue, which offers the

most persuasive alternative.

The first approach, of course, is that taken by Moltmann, while the second is typified by Jüngel in his "atonement" model of the Trinity, and, to a lesser extent, in the "revealedness" and "anointing" models of Barth and theologians such as Kasper respectively. Of the first two approaches, the second is the only one worth taking very seriously, since the attempt to unify the economic data in themselves in a single development, as in Moltmann's theology, rests on questionable exegetical and theological foundations. In Chapter III, I have already provided a critique of Moltmann's position, so that there is no need here to repeat criticisms already made. Briefly, however, there is no doubt that such a procedure in this case might be possible, if the economic data in question were susceptible to such a synthesis. One decisive consideration, however, counts against this view. Historical-critical study has shown that while some New Testament documents did directly influence the development of others (for example, the compilers of Matthew and Luke knew Mark), the broad traditions of thought in the New Testament were developed for the most part in isolation. Thus, for example, Paul, with one or two possible exceptions, apparently did not know the material represented in the synoptic narratives. For this reason, it is necessary to understand the different streams of tradition as representing different theologies, within certain limits, of course, since for the most part they were not written with the others in view.⁷⁰ The question of

⁷⁰Ernst Käsemann, "The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church," in his Essays on New Testament Themes, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1964), pp. 95-107. Käsemann writes, ibid., p. 103: "We now have three results: (a) the variability of the New Testament kerygma; (b) the extraordinary wealth of theological positions in primitive Christianity (a phenomenon going beyond the horizon of the New Testament); (c) the incompatibility between some of these

the mutual compatibility of these traditions belongs to a later stage of the formation of the New Testament, that of the establishment of the canon. The variety of the theologies represented in the canonical documents is a problem of this second formative stage, but not of the stage of writing. We must therefore assume that the different theologies of, for example, Paul and the synoptists, is a basic feature of the original documents and therefore irreducible.

Not only, therefore, must we judge that the different New Testament traditions cannot be unified artificially in a single "Trinitarian history of God," but also that the attempt to do so does violence to their own proper significance. One has to ask, in fact, if it is not an uncritical a priori presupposition concerning the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity, rather than the economic data themselves, which has resulted in this economic synthesis. In practice, therefore, the thesis that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa appears in this case to militate against its original intention, which was to relate Trinitarian theology directly to the economy, and to allow the internal dynamic of the latter to shape the form and content of the former. Instead, in this approach to the diverse economic basis, quite the opposite occurs.

A stronger case can be made for the second approach, which can be said in general to arise from a theological assessment of the relative theological significance of different aspects of the broader economy of salvation, and an appropriation into Trinitarian Pneumatology of those deemed to be of central importance. Here, however, one must still pose the question on what grounds the choice of the central economic paradigm is made, and whether or not the

positions...." Käsemann concludes that the New Testament canon does not constitute a basis for theological unity, but rather for theological pluralism.

resulting restriction of economic Trinitarian taxis can be justified. The problem, as we have seen, is that the biblical economy represents the relations between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in differing ways. If, therefore, we attempt in some sense to relativize this diversity, we appear to contradict the initial purpose of the turn to the economy, which was precisely to ground the doctrine of the Trinity more fully in it.

In the theological tradition, the difficulties which arise from the diversity of the economy are not so severe; since the idea of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity in the contemporary sense is not asserted, the problem of the diversity of the economic basis can be said from the beginning to pose no immediate threat to the unity of the Trinity. Moreover, because the immanent Trinity is by definition hedged about with apophatic qualifications, the various concrete Trinitarian theologies which appear in the tradition are arguably to be seen less as contradictory representations of the Trinity than as competing images of an ultimately hidden mystery.

More importantly, perhaps, the traditional understanding of the fundamental economic event of revelation in Jesus Christ, mediated through the Chalcedonian two natures doctrine, makes it possible to deny that every aspect of the economy needs to be taken up into Trinitarian theology in the first place. On the basis of the two natures doctrine, for example, one can logically argue that Christ received the Spirit in his human nature, but gives the Spirit in his divine nature, just as he suffered on the cross as the incarnate Son of God, and therefore in his human nature, but was and is strictly impassible in his divine nature. The idea that one can thus begin with an economic distinction between what refers to the relation between the divine nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit and between his human nature and the Spirit can serve as a useful tool in resolving the theological problem

of the diversity of the economy. The problem here is a relative loss of the unity of Jesus Christ rather than of the doctrine of the Trinity, as the varied aspects of the economy are to be referred to the two natures of Christ rather than to the Trinity itself.

The latter strategy is employed at times by, for example, Karl Barth among recent Trinitarian theologians. Thus, in his treatment of the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit in Church Dogmatics I/2, Barth argues that just as it is only through the activity of the Spirit that men and women believe, so the work of the Spirit in the conception of Jesus is to be understood as miraculously enabling human nature to be assumed by the Word.⁷¹ The role of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Jesus is to make it possible for the humanity to be there for the Word when the Word becomes flesh: the Word works in the work of the Spirit to unite the humanity with himself. In this sense, Barth writes, "The very possibility of human nature's being adopted into unity with the Son of God is the Holy Ghost. ... Through the Spirit it becomes really possible for the creature, for man, to be there and to be free for God."⁷² The role of the Holy Spirit as active in relation to Christ is thus restricted by Barth to the human nature assumed by the Word in the incarnation.

In Church Dogmatics I/1, the same point is made even more clearly; Barth asks here, in connection with his defence of the filioque, if the fact that Jesus can be said in some sense to have received the Spirit at his conception, baptism, and resurrection indicates that an innertrinitarian relation between the Holy Spirit and the Son, which is neither begetting nor procession, should be

⁷¹Barth, op. cit., I/2, pp. 196-202.

⁷²Ibid., p. 199.

postulated.⁷³ Barth's response is again that because the Spirit's work here is related to the human nature of Christ and to its assumption by the Word, it is relevant only to our adoption as children of God, rather than being directly revelatory of an eternal work of the Spirit on the Son of God himself.

It is questionable, however, how far Barth's doctrine of election, consistently thought through, can be reconciled with this earlier conception; as we have seen, the idea that there is no Logos asarkos makes the attempt to distinguish in this way between the human and divine natures of Christ problematic. Barth, of course, did not formally abandon the two natures doctrine after developing his doctrine of election. On the contrary, as late as Church Dogmatics IV/2, Barth maintains that the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures of Christ must be affirmed: the divine and human natures are on the one hand without confusion or change, and on the other without division or separation.⁷⁴ At the same time, however, though only with reference to the latter, he writes:

We do not have here a divine and eternal and heavenly Christ who is not wholly of human essence, nor a human and temporal and earthly Jesus who is not wholly of divine. We do not have here a dual, but the one Jesus Christ, who is as such of both divine and human essence, and therefore the one Reconciler, Saviour and Lord. He pre-existed as such in the divine counsel. He was born and lived and died as such.⁷⁵

⁷³Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. 485-486.

⁷⁴Barth, op. cit., IV/2, pp. 62-64.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 64, emphasis mine.

Barth's reference to the doctrine of election here raises the question how the divine and human natures can indeed be ultimately separated; if Jesus Christ is the eternal man in Barth's sense, then the human nature properly belongs to his divinity, according to the eternal divine choice, and is not simply an "extra" assumed externally. If this is the case, however, then it is difficult to see how the whole range of human experience, including his experience of the Spirit and finally his suffering and death, does not belong to his intrinsic being as the eternal Son of God, and so to the doctrine of the Trinity.

The issue in fact turns upon the sense in which one understands the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, which is, in a sense, what is at stake in the doctrine of election. In Barth's own theology, as we have seen, this is a somewhat controversial point, but in subsequent Trinitarian theology, the issue becomes very clear indeed. The problem is that the older form of Christological dualism represented by the two natures doctrine is held in check by the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity; indeed, the more the latter unity is emphasized, the less the former duality can be maintained.

In Rahner's theology, for example, the immediate Christological extension of his Trinitarian Grundaxiom is the affirmation of a "more essential and more intimate" relation between the divine and human natures of Christ than was previously posited in the tradition.⁷⁶ In

⁷⁶Rahner, The Trinity, pp. 32-33: 'Human nature in general is a possible object of the creative power and knowledge of God, because and insofar as the Logos is by nature the one who is "utterable" (even into that which is not God); because he is the Father's Word, in which the Father can express himself, and, freely, empty himself into the non-divine; because, when this happens, that precisely is born which we call human nature. In other words, human nature is not a mask ... assumed from without, from behind which the Logos hides to act things out in the world. From the start it is the constitutive, real symbol of the Logos

subsequent theology, this thesis is developed further; according to Moltmann in The Crucified God, for example, a Trinitarian theology of the cross must abandon the doctrine of the two natures altogether in order to avoid evacuating the cross of deity.⁷⁷ Moltmann, probably correctly, understands the doctrine of the two natures as interpreted in the context of the problem of the suffering of Jesus to be a function of the doctrine of divine apatheia. According to Moltmann, however, if we take our concept of God from the event of the cross, the suffering of God on the cross becomes essential to a Trinitarian doctrine of God:

...if one begins by leaving on one side any concept of God which is already presupposed and taken from metaphysics, one must speak of the one whom Jesus called 'Father' and in respect of whom he understood himself as 'the Son'. ... What is in question in the relationship between Christ and his Father is not his divinity and humanity and their relationship to one another but the total, personal aspect of the Sonship of Jesus. This starting point is not the same as that to be found in the tradition. It overcomes the dichotomy between immanent and economic Trinity, and that between the nature of God and his inner tri-unity.⁷⁸

Although Hill argues that Moltmann here sets aside the doctrine of the hypostatic union,⁷⁹ Moltmann's position is perhaps better understood as a Trinitarian intensification of the doctrine of the hypostatic union: because the

himself. So that we may and should say, when we think our ontology through to the end: man is possible because the exteriorization of the Logos is possible.'

⁷⁷Moltmann, The Crucified God, p. 245.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Hill, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

economic Trinity "is" the immanent Trinity, and vice versa, the human nature of Christ "is" his divine nature, and vice versa. Moltmann's point is not to deny the divinity, but to affirm its unity with the humanity, on the basis of his understanding of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity. We have, likewise, seen the same broad argument put explicitly by David Coffey, for example, in Chapter III in connection with the anointing model, while Jüngel's position could be similarly understood on the basis of his more explicit adaptation of Barth's doctrine of election.

The problematic nature of the two natures doctrine in face of the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity means that another way must be found to reconcile the diversity of the economic basis with the unity of the Trinity. One could, for example, attempt to reconcile the two by effectively restricting consideration to a single consistent economic Trinitarian axis. The one-sidedness of Barth's revealedness model might even be mentioned in this context, despite his adoption of the two natures doctrine, since in Barth's theology the idea of the outpouring of the Spirit who bears witness to Christ after the resurrection and ascension does appear in the end, as Rosato maintains, to be isolated from the total work of the Spirit in the economy. More clearly, perhaps, Jüngel's Trinitarian Pneumatology is based on a procedure in which everything is made to rest on the event of the cross.

In either case, the approach is to exclude certain aspects of the wider potential economic basis of a Trinitarian Pneumatology, in favour of a single aspect, which is then taken to constitute the economic foundation required for subsequent development. There can be little doubt, of course, that given the original economic restriction, a coherent view of the Trinity can thus be generated. This, however, is precisely the problem, for the fact that the various Trinitarian positions which can thus be developed are equally dependent on the economy and at

once in themselves complete and mutually exclusive means that the question of the basis of the original economic restriction must be raised.

Excluding the two natures doctrine, it is clear that there are both theological and, to a lesser extent, historical grounds for some such restriction of the relevant economic data. It is possible, first of all, to speak of an internal canon in the scriptures themselves which raises certain theological themes to prominence.⁸⁰ The idea of the covenant has been developed in this way as the central theme of the Old Testament by Walther Eichrodt,⁸¹ while the death of Christ can arguably be said to be the centre of the New Testament, as, for example, Jüngel maintains. This could be argued on grounds internal to scripture, for example on the basis of such Pauline texts as 1 Cor. 1: 18ff., which speaks of the centrality of the cross, or in keeping with a more general theological thesis concerning the atonement. Alternatively, either on the basis of the Fourth Gospel or on various theological and philosophical grounds, the incarnation might be posited as the central economic event, the total economy of salvation being sustainable only if it is accepted as of primary significance. A number of other alternatives, such as the idea of the kingdom of God, as in Moltmann's overall theology and in some forms of liberation theology, are also possible, on similar grounds.

The limitation of this approach is that the judgment as to what the centre of the economy of salvation is can always be disputed; indeed, as we have seen, there is an internal debate about this in scripture itself. Clearly, certain definite conclusions can be reached, such as that the fact that Jesus might have slept or ate at such and

⁸⁰James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977), pp. 374-376.

⁸¹Eichrodt, op. cit.

such a time, or that he lived for so many years, is of no particular significance over against the fact that he was crucified under Pontius Pilate and the claim that he was raised from the dead.⁸² In the wider sense as well, some of the more searching passages from Paul or the parables of Jesus must be taken more seriously than, let us say, the apocalyptic expectations peculiar to Jude. However, more weighty questions of biblical interpretation and Christian theology such as how one reconciles the teaching of Jesus and of Paul, or the Christologies of the synoptics and of John, are destined to be matters of permanent dispute. In this sense, the supposed simplicity of the turn to the economy which characterizes contemporary approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity appears merely superficial, particularly in view of the fact that, in its inception, the doctrine of the Trinity developed over a long period of time out of complex biblical, theological, and philosophical considerations.

A second possible justification for this approach would be the search for what is historically most primitive, on the grounds that what is closest to the original revelatory Christ-event should serve as the foundation for subsequent theology. Thus, for example, the search for the ipsissima verba of Jesus, or again for the "Christology" of Jesus himself or of the earliest Christian community, could be conceived as a way out of the dilemma of economic diversity. It might be argued, therefore, that the Jesus of the synoptics, who is more the Jesus of living memory, rather than the Pauline or Johannine Jesus of theological interpretation, should serve as the foundation for Christology, and thus, for example, that the original preaching of the kingdom is of primary theological importance. The weakness of this approach, however, is

⁸²David F. Wright, "'Incidentalism' in theology - or a theology for thirty-year-olds," Themelios, 11 (1986), pp. 88-90.

again obvious: what is later historically cannot be taken a priori, as it were, to be less adequate theologically or even, necessarily, less accurate historically.

By way of summary, let us take the case of the crucifixion of Jesus, where there is no doubt that we are concerned with something more theologically central and more historically certain than, for example, his conception by the Holy Spirit. On both grounds, it would be plausible to argue that as an economic basis for Trinitarian theology, the former must take precedence over the latter. The problem, however, arises in connection with the idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity, on the basis of which one would apparently have to insist not only that the economic basis be prioritized in this way, but that those economic paradigms which conflict with the one chosen be effectively excluded from consideration. This appears to be necessary for the simple reason that all the relevant economic paradigms, taken in themselves, are susceptible to Trinitarian development, and as we have seen, with mutually inconsistent results. From the economic starting-point, therefore, not simply one doctrine of the Trinity can, in principle, result, but a number of distinct doctrines of the Trinity.

Such a restriction of the relevant economic material is certainly possible, as we have seen, but in practice, the result of this procedure again appears to thwart the original purpose of the turn to the economy in contemporary Trinitarian theology. Whereas the intention here was to relate the content of the doctrine of the Trinity more explicitly and immediately to the economy of salvation, the cost of the methodology involved appears to be a selective focus on one aspect of the economy and an effective exclusion of the rest. This results in what must appear as a rather arbitrary restriction of the economic material in relation to which the Trinitarian theology in view was originally intended to be developed.

The only way which appears to offer an escape from this dilemma is the third possible approach mentioned at the outset, which represents a more minor tendency in contemporary Trinitarian theology to loosen the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity by emphasizing the distinction of the two even in their unity. This tendency is particularly associated with the positions of Roman Catholic theologians such as Kasper, Lafont, and Congar, although it also appears, as we shall see, in Barth (though undifferentiated from his doctrine of election), and cannot be taken to be foreign, in itself, to Protestant theology. With reference to Rahner's axiom as the rallying cry of contemporary Trinitarian theologians, for example, one commentator has recently written:

Interpreters of [Rahner's axiom] have tended to divide into two camps: those who believe in a strong identity of immanent and economic Trinity and those who would qualify that identity by positing a prior actuality of the immanent Trinity. Moltmann [and] Jüngel ... seem to hold to the strong sense of the identity. That is, each in his own way represents the innertrinitarian life of God as a salvation-historical process. ... Kasper holds to a weaker sense of the identity in The God of Jesus Christ. While agreeing that the economy of salvation must not be seen as merely a temporal manifestation of an eternal and immutable immanent Trinity, he wishes to avoid the opposite misinterpretation which would dissolve the immanent Trinity in the economic Trinity....⁸³

This passage recognizes a distinction between two basic senses in which the idea of the unity of the economic with

⁸³Olson, "Wolfhart Pannenberg's Doctrine of the Trinity," pp. 197-198, referring to Kasper, The God of Jesus Christ, p. 276.

the immanent Trinity has been affirmed, although perhaps the language of a "strong" versus a "weak" identity of the economic and the immanent Trinity is too imprecise.

Balthasar's development of the idea of "Trinitarian inversion" is particularly important in this context. Balthasar's thesis is that the "inversions" of Trinitarian taxis seen in the economy of salvation are only economic, and to that extent apparent, in that the conflicting economic paradigms in question are explicable in terms of the deeper and eternal innertrinitarian taxis. An attempt is thus made to refer particular events in or aspects of the economy of salvation to different aspects of Trinitarian doctrine. Thus, for Balthasar, the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both Son and Father explains how Jesus Christ can be both active and passive in relation to the Spirit. His argument, however, depends upon the presupposition that the unity between the economic and the immanent Trinity does not obliterate their clear distinction, and that the immanent Trinity in particular is not to be too closely identified with the content of revelation. As we have seen, Balthasar himself makes the point that in his theology, not every aspect of the economy can be taken in and of itself to have an immanent Trinitarian referent; rather, we catch merely a glimpse of the hidden depths of the immanent Trinity in the economy, so that the economy of salvation must not only be taken as a whole, in its various differentiated moments, but so that the economic Trinity must also be taken as the Trinity by way of kenosis, accommodating itself out of love to creaturely need.

Balthasar's approach assumes that the economic data are varied, that they can neither be artificially unified or reduced in number, and yet that the Trinity is truly revealed. The various aspects of the economic activity of the Spirit must all be susceptible to Trinitarian development, therefore, if the economic Trinity is the

immanent Trinity, and must at the same time be susceptible to development into a single theology of the Trinity, without thereby relativizing their own proper differences. Balthasar's approach in his theology of the Trinitarian inversions thus begins with the whole body of economic data and constructs a Trinitarian theology to interpret those data. In this sense, it reflects a more genuine concern for the whole of the diverse content of the economy than do the approaches discussed above.

What this approach also implies, however, is a certain loosening of the relation between the economic and the immanent Trinity. It could be said that there is indeed here a clear and close relation of identity between the economic and immanent Trinity, but a relation which is best understood as analogical, according to the traditional theological conception, and which thus lays emphasis upon their unity-in-difference, rather than as a radical sublation of distinction through the idea that the Trinity in itself is what it is in the economy as such. Analogy, in short, can be defined as a method of predication in which concepts relating to something known are referred to something relatively unknown, on the basis of some presupposed similarity between the two objects.⁸⁴ In Balthasar's theology, the attempt is to unite the two in their distinction without, at the same time, relativizing that distinction, by positing as the principle of their unity the analogical principle of proportionality, or of proportional similarity.⁸⁵

⁸⁴On the history of the idea of analogy and its theological use, see Hampus Lyttkens, The Analogy Between God and the World (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln and Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1953), passim.

⁸⁵Hans Urs von Balthasar, Elucidations, trans. John Riches (London: SPCK, 1975), pp. 18-25; also in Balthasar, The Von Balthasar Reader, ed. Medard Kehl and Werner Löser; trans. Robert J. Daly and Fred Lawrence (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982), pp. 181-187.

From this point of view, Rahner's axiom can be understood to assert that "the economic Trinity contains, in a mode appropriate to its representation in the created order, the reality of the heavenly, or immanent Trinity," and, in a corresponding sense, that "the immanent Trinity is the reality contained in the economic." The idea of the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity can thus be understood as an attempt to formulate the thesis that the divine mystery is indeed disclosed to us in Jesus, without at the same time minimizing the importance or the reality of the kenotic mode under which that mystery is given in Jesus. The mystery, in this case, would be disclosed, but not completely disclosed. It is for this reason, and only for this reason, that any particular aspect of the economy does not in and of itself have to contain the whole of the Trinitarian mystery; not only do the separate moments of the economy not contain the whole of that mystery, but neither even does the economy as a whole.

I have already indicated that this is the position assumed by a number of other contemporary Roman Catholic theologians vis-à-vis Rahner's axiom. It is, clearly, a fairly traditional view, which rests on the idea that the immanent Trinity is at once to be differentiated from the economic, and yet that it is a mystery which is disclosed to us - though only by way of kenosis - in the economic. It is also significant that although the implications of Barth's doctrine of election are ultimately inconsistent with such an analogical view, it is nevertheless the position he adopts in Church Dogmatics II/1 in his discussion of the "primary" and "secondary objectivity" of God, which in fact prefaces his discussion of election in Church Dogmatics II/2.⁸⁶ This distinction arises in the course of a discussion of the reality of the Church's knowledge of God in faith, which is the presupposition of

⁸⁶Barth, op. cit., II/1, pp. 16ff.

theological discourse according to Barth's understanding of Anselm's central theological principle of faith seeking understanding. In the revelatory act of God on which faith and, out of faith, Christian dogmatics, is based, God objectifies himself to us in such a way as to reveal himself as the loving God who demands the obedience of faith as our response to his self-revelation.

It is this presupposed reality of the knowledge of God in faith which raises the further theological question of the nature of the knowledge of God thus given. The problem Barth addresses is how the mediate knowledge of God, given through those finite events and objects in history by which God has chosen to reveal himself, represents a true knowledge of God.⁸⁷ It is here that the distinction between the "primary" and "secondary" divine objectivity is introduced. Barth maintains that God's givenness to us in revelation, his secondary objectivity, cannot be understood to be identical with God in himself because of the introduction of creaturely reality into his secondary objectivity in revelation:

We call this the primary objectivity of God, and distinguish it from the secondary, i.e., the objectivity which He has for us too in His revelation, in which He gives Himself to be known by us as He knows Himself. It is distinguished from the primary objectivity, not by a lesser degree of truth, but by its particular form suitable for us, the creature. God is objectively immediate to Himself, but to us He is objectively mediate. That is to say, He is not objective directly but indirectly, not in the naked sense but clothed under the sign and veil of other objects different from Himself.⁸⁸

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 16.

⁸⁸Ibid.

Nevertheless, as Barth says, "His secondary objectivity is fully true, for it has its correspondence and basis in His primary objectivity."⁸⁹ Barth proceeds to argue that the principle of the "correspondence" in question here is a sacramental one: God gives Himself to be known by men and women "in, with, and under" the finite objects which serve as the vehicles of his self revelation.⁹⁰

This sacramental correspondence is itself, for Barth, rooted in and based on the act of God in revealing

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 52. Reference might also be made at this point to the idea of Christ as the "primordial sacrament" of God in recent theology: he is the "exegesis" (Jn. 1: 18) of the Father, in flesh, both as a visible sign of grace and as the reality of that grace itself (to which our own sacraments in the narrower sense point back). The word "sacramental," as we have seen, is used in this sense by Barth, but it is Eduard Schillebeeckx, Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God (London and Melbourne: Sheed and Ward, 1963), pp. 15-16, who has perhaps stated the position most clearly: "...the saving activity of Jesus is sacramental. For a sacrament is a divine bestowal of salvation in an outwardly perceptible form which makes the bestowal manifest; a bestowal of salvation in historical visibility. The Son of God really did become true man... The man Jesus, as the personal visible realization of the divine grace of redemption, is the sacrament, the primordial sacrament, because this man, the Son of God himself, is intended by the Father to be in his humanity the only way to the actuality of redemption. ... Human encounter with Jesus is therefore the sacrament of the encounter with God." Since limiting this conception of sacramentality to Jesus would appear to be a "Christomonistic" restriction, however, a more comprehensive alternative might be justified, involving the idea that the whole of the saving work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the "sacrament" of the immanent Trinity, which is given in it in a manner appropriate to its accommodation to the creation in the economy. This term has the advantage that it connotes the specific events of Christian revelation with which we are necessarily concerned in Trinitarian theology, whereas historically "analogy" has a long history as a technical term in the doctrine of God. "Analogy," however, as a technical term cannot finally be abandoned, even in the context of the theology of the economic and the immanent Trinity, in particular because of its recognized logical status.

himself.⁹¹ It is thus to God's gracious act of condescension in revelation that appeal must finally be made to find the real basis of our knowledge of God. God has graciously made himself accessible to sinful men and women, so that the knowledge of God given in faith has a divine and not an anthropological basis. Fundamentally, God is not in himself something other than what he is in revelation, precisely because it is God who has acted. It is God himself who is present in the creaturely signs, which for that reason serve as sacramental objects taken up and used by God for his own purpose:

Revelation means the giving of signs. We can say quite simply that revelation means sacrament, i.e., the self-witness of God, the representation of His truth, and therefore of the truth in which He knows Himself, in the form of creaturely objectivity....⁹²

It is this sacramental correspondence between God's objectivity ad extra and ad intra which, according to Barth, provides the possibility of a real knowledge of God. The fundamental sacramental reality in question is, of course, the man Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh.⁹³ From this primary sacramental reality there stretches forward and backward in time a sacramental continuity in the existence of the Church and of Israel.⁹⁴ This Christological basis introduces, finally, the knowledge of the Trinity as such:

...the heart of it all is that it is He Himself, the one, supreme and true

⁹¹Barth, op. cit., pp. 51ff.

⁹²Ibid., p. 52.

⁹³Ibid., p. 53.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 54.

Lord, who thus unveils Himself to us; that in revelation we have to do with His action as the triune God, and therefore with Himself in every creaturely work and sign that He uses. On this basis and only on this basis can there be real knowledge of God.⁹⁵

Within this conception, a sacramental correspondence obtains between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity, founded not on the ontological identification of the two, but solely on the grace of revelation.

Barth also speaks here, significantly, of the "analogy of faith," finding such language unavoidable.⁹⁶ Barth's argument is that as long as we allow God's revelation itself to dictate the terms of the proportionality involved in analogy, rather than the idea of an essential proportionality of being which can then be developed in a natural theology, analogy is a necessary and valuable tool for theological discourse. The position here is that the principle of the similarity between God's revelation and God in himself is not a general similarity of being, but purely God's truthfulness in his self-revelation.⁹⁷

It is this aspect of Barth's theology which needs to be drawn out more clearly in contemporary Trinitarian theology. The resulting approach could, in principle, constitute a via media, on the one hand between the

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 51.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 225-228.

⁹⁷Evidently, if such a position were consistently maintained, then despite the Christological doctrine of election, and the idea of Christ as the eternal man, a basic distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity would have to be maintained as well. Here, Barth's theology differs sharply from that of certain of his followers - and among those surveyed above, from Jüngel's and Moltmann's in particular. Curiously, Roman Catholic theologians such as Balthasar appear closer to his thought at this point than do many Protestants.

theology which seeks to exclude all but one consistent economic Trinitarian taxis from consideration, and the theology which seeks to unify the diverse elements artificially, and on the other between the contemporary affirmation of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity and the older distinction between them. Such an approach would preclude the necessity of an arbitrary restriction of the economic data to a single aspect of the diverse economy as the basis of a Trinitarian theology, so that the diversity of the economy could be maintained without the imposition of an artificial unity, and a doctrine of the Trinity developed from all the relevant economic data. This would allow a certain flexibility in the treatment of the economic data; because the unity of the economic and the immanent Trinity would be qualified analogically, not every aspect of the economy would need to be taken in itself to be of Trinitarian significance. An adaptation of the two natures doctrine, for example, would still be possible on this view, while, on the other hand, even a Christology in which the emphasis lay on the unity of Christ's person, like Balthasar's, could still be developed, consistent with an integral Trinitarian theology affirming the passivity and activity of Christ in relation to the Spirit.⁹⁸

In both sections of this Chapter, therefore, fundamental problems have appeared in connection with the turn to the economy in contemporary Trinitarian theology. We have seen first of all that the theological ontology

⁹⁸It is noteworthy that, unlike Barth, Balthasar, on the basis of his analogical view of the relation between "economy" and "theology," does not appropriate passivity to the human nature and activity to the divine nature of Christ. This would have been a possibility, given the idea of the unity involved in Balthasar's theology. Balthasar, however, does not take this route - a point concerning which no real criticism can be made, but which, it is clear, has important implications for his theology of the Trinity.

involved in contemporary versions of "dialectical Trinitarianism" is problematic, precisely because an adequate distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity is not always drawn, and because the contemporary approach from the economy threatens to reduce the latter to the finite form of the former. Secondly, we have seen that in view of the diversity of the economic basis of Trinitarian theology, it is necessary to qualify the idea of the unity between the economic and the immanent Trinity analogically, in order to make it possible both to build on the whole of the economy and to preserve the integrity of the Trinity. The problems which emerge from the diversity of the economy, therefore, again suggest that the contemporary Trinitarian thesis that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa requires careful qualification.

TOWARDS A TRINITARIAN PNEUMATOLOGY

It is clear from the argument of previous Chapters that the potential for growth in Trinitarian theology in general and Pneumatology in particular which was mentioned at the beginning of this study has still to be realized, and that the claim of contemporary Trinitarian theology to a more adequate Pneumatological position than the tradition can be exaggerated. The doctrine of the Trinity today remains a crucial area of theological controversy, and Pneumatology in many ways its weakest link.

What remains to be done is to bring the discussion to a close by outlining the more positive results which emerge from this study for Trinitarian Pneumatology. In this Chapter, I shall take up this question in two brief sections, the first concerned with the economic basis for a future development of Trinitarian theology, and the second with possible directions for the theology of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity, and an associated social doctrine of the Trinity. Although the results in each case are somewhat tentative, and can only be presented here in outline, they nevertheless indicate the course which a further development of Trinitarian Pneumatology might follow.

1. The Economic Basis: Reciprocity

Throughout this study, we have met with reasons for conceiving the economic basis for a Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit in a Pneumatology conceived in close connection with Christology. The very attempt to develop a

Trinitarian Pneumatology, of course, implies that such connections must at some point be drawn, even if this means that the relation between the Spirit and the Father must also feature prominently in such a theology, as indeed it has in the theological tradition.¹ A number of factors arising in recent theology, however, suggest that a specific relation of reciprocity might obtain between the Spirit and Christ. In what follows, the case for developing a Trinitarian Pneumatology around this idea will be stated briefly, drawing on arguments adduced in previous Chapters. If Trinitarian Pneumatology is to be sensitive to the results of modern scholarship and relevant to the needs of the Church, it will be argued, it will need to be developed with this question in view.

In Chapter I, three factors raising the question of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in recent theology were outlined. Modern biblical scholarship concerning the Spirit was considered first of all, and in particular the recognition among exegetes of the importance of both Spirit and Logos Christology (to use the later terms) in New Testament thought. These not only appear to reflect the differing concerns of distinct New Testament theologies, but are to be found as parallel emphases within single New Testament traditions. The connection between Pneumatology

¹The relation between the Father and the Spirit has traditionally been given ontological priority over the Spirit-Son relation, in view of the doctrine of the Father as the "first" person of the Trinity and as "source" of the other two persons which prevails in Eastern theology and also in Western theology in its own way as well. At the same time, however, the connection between the Spirit and Christ in the economy is of primary importance in the epistemological sense, since it is only in the light of the latter that the former is truly known. Not only is the Son revealed in the Christ-event, but also the Father and Spirit as well. The idea of the Spiritus Redemptor, in this sense, precedes the Trinitarian doctrines of homoousion and procession as understood of the Spirit. The relation of the Spirit to the Son, therefore, can never be neglected in Trinitarian Pneumatology.

and Christology which thus appears in New Testament thought itself is already two-sided, involving apparent reversals of the line of dependence between the Spirit and Christ, sometimes between different New Testament traditions, and sometimes within the same traditions.²

²The work of Schweitzer, Hermann, Dunn, and others on the Pauline view of the Spirit has been of particular importance in this respect, showing the extent to which even Paul, who was formerly understood to advocate an "incarnational" Christology in the usual sense of the term, is able to adopt a version of Spirit Christology as well. Cf. Rom. 1: 3-4; 1 Cor. 15: 45; 2 Cor 3: 17; and Chapter I, section 1 above. Elsewhere, the two-sidedness of the relation also appears: cf., e.g., Luke 3: 22 versus Acts 2: 33; and John 1: 32-34 versus 20: 22, etc. The Johannine material in particular deserves comment. The Fourth Gospel, as is well known, attains a level of Pneumatological sophistication which takes it well beyond the thought of the synoptics, and has as a result been used as much as a quarry for Pneumatological as Christological proof texts. The first mention of the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel, however, found in the Johannine baptism narrative, appears to be problematic from this point of view: "And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descend as a dove out of heaven and remain upon him. And I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water, this one said to me, "The one upon whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this one is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I bear witness that this one is the Son of God.'" (Jn. 1: 32-34.) What is unexpected about this is its setting in the chapter which contains the most impressive list of "high" Christological titles in the New Testament. It is of the Logos (1: 1), God (1: 1, 18), the True Light (1: 9), the Messiah (1: 41), the Lamb of God (1: 29, 36), the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit (1: 33), and the Son (the "Chosen One" in several MSS) of God (1: 34) that the Baptist speaks. The tension between the Jesus who appears in the later sections of the gospel as the Lord of the Spirit and this Jesus who receives the Spirit from the Father is evident. Rudolf Bultmann's comment in The Gospel of John, ed. R. W. N. Hoare and J. K. Riches, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 92, footnote 4, is representative of the problem as it is usually understood: "The Evangelist has clearly not thought out the relation between the Spirit which Jesus receives in his baptism and his character as the Logos; in the rest of the Gospel Jesus appears not as the bearer but as the giver of the Spirit. The imparting of the Spirit to Jesus is taken from the tradition and has, in the Evangelist's interpretation, no longer any importance for Jesus; it is

In the contemporary theological context, secondly, we have seen how ecclesiological problems and ecumenism have brought the question of the relation between the Spirit and Christ to prominence. The pentecostalist and charismatic movements, first of all, challenge the domestication of the Spirit to institutional structures and the practical subordination of the Spirit to the Word. Ecumenical discussions of ecclesiology, secondly, have also focused attention on the crucial importance of Pneumatology for the

significant for the Baptist only as a sign of recognition." Bultmann's position is that there is an inconsistency between Jesus' character as the Logos and his reception of the Spirit in the vision of the Baptist, since in the rest of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus appears not as the bearer but as the giver of the Spirit. He therefore argues that the descent of the Spirit is of no Christological significance. Against Bultmann, however, the Johannine baptism narrative can be shown not only to be consistent with Johannine Christology and Pneumatology, but to be required by it. The argument against the position represented by Bultmann is simply that it involves a misreading of Johannine Christology. In fact, the Father bestows an impressive array of "gifts" upon the Son in the Fourth Gospel. Bultmann himself, *ibid.*, p. 165, footnote 1, cites the following: "...everything 3. 35; 13. 3; (17. 7); his name 17. 11; [glory] 17. 22, 24; [authority over all flesh] 17. 2; [to have life in himself] 5. 26; works, or the work 5. 36; 17. 4; words 17. 8; the [judgment], or the [authority] for the [judgment] 5. 22, 27; everything that he asks for 11. 22; the believers 6. 37, 39; 10. 29; 17. 2, 6, 9, 12, 24; 18. 9." Since, however, the divine qualities thus possessed and exercised by Christ are precisely those he receives from the Father, Johannine Christology cannot be conceived to preclude the idea that he should also be both the recipient and giver of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is akin to all the others given by the Father to the Son in the Christology of the Fourth Gospel, and indeed, it would be highly inconsistent with the Christology of the Fourth Gospel if the Spirit the Son gives were not the Spirit he first receives, in the same way that he receives everything else. We are dealing, therefore, in Jn. 1: 32-34 with a Johannine theme, although the qualification must be, in view of the parallel (though more difficult) text found in the context of another Baptist discourse (Jn. 3: 34-35; cf. 3: 27), that it appears only in the context of Baptist discourses (so also C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 300).

theology of the Church. A number of theologians have concluded that a recovery of the two-sidedness of the relation between the Spirit and Christ which appears in the New Testament would be an attractive theological option from the ecumenical point of view, since it provides a theological ground for the diversity also of the different theological traditions. According to Congar, for example, the central differences between the West and the East can be seen to be focused in eucharistic theology, where, in the West, the decisive role is accorded to the words of institution, the verbum, whereas in the East the epiclesis is of central significance.³ Congar maintains both that the two approaches are complementary, and that for the good of the Church they require integration.⁴

Thirdly, we saw in Chapter I how the filioque doctrine has emerged in recent years as one of the key dogmatic problems of the ecumenical movement. The most constructive suggestion which has been made in recent theology concerning the filioque has again been that a recovery of the reciprocity between the Spirit and Christ is needed. Thus, for example, it has become clear that exaggerated attacks of West against East and East against West, to the effect that the one detaches Pneumatology entirely from Christological control, and that the other completely subordinates Pneumatology to Christology, must be rejected, on the simple grounds that both traditions have clear theological mechanisms for avoiding such extreme conclusions. Despite the rather different conceptualities employed in the two traditions, therefore, it is already

³Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, III, pp. 228-274.

⁴In the same way, but from the standpoint of Eastern Orthodoxy, John D. Zizioulas, Being as Communion (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), pp. 123-142, maintains that an adequate "synthesis" of Christology and Pneumatology is the prerequisite to a resolution of the ecumenical problems of ecclesiology.

arguable that the two are not as far apart as is often alleged.⁵ It is in keeping with this view that the formal recommendation of the Faith and Order memorandum, "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective," is that the reciprocal relationship between the Spirit and Christ which obtains at the level of the economy of salvation in the New Testament witness be seen to be of central importance to the ecumenical enterprise, and be formally taken up into the doctrine of the immanent Trinity.⁶

The question of the relation between the Spirit and Christ, finally, is also clearly of central importance in contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology, in the sense that the material differences between the four models encountered above derive from their different economic starting-points, each of which involves a different view of that relation. The diversity of the four Trinitarian models surveyed, therefore, can largely be taken to be rooted here. The Trinitarian Pneumatology orientated to the problem of revelation and faith, and which understands the Spirit as the Spirit who reveals Christ, for example, differs fundamentally from that drawn from the synoptic Christology of anointing, and indeed, contradicts it. The same could be said of the other Trinitarian models examined.

In Chapter IV, it was argued that these material tensions in the economic data upon which contemporary Trinitarian theology is ostensibly based ought to determine

⁵Congar, for example, argues that the Pneumatological positions of the East and West must be understood to be complementary expressions of the one Trinitarian faith, although admittedly in terms of their different, more basic overall Trinitarian presuppositions. See, e.g., Congar, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 174ff., esp. 213-214, which is a survey of recent developments, and the account above, Chapter I, section 3.

⁶Commission on Faith and Order, "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective," §§ III-V.

more precisely than has hitherto been specified what should be the formal limits of the argument that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa. The conclusion was that the diversity of the economic basis itself requires that the idea of unity involved be qualified by a kenoticism regarding the economic Trinity and a recognition of the analogical character of all knowledge of the immanent Trinity. Otherwise the diversity of the economic basis leads to a series of premature restrictions of the relevant economic data, and to a number of one-sided Trinitarian positions, none of which can easily be reconciled with the rest. Since it is one and the same Christ who is anointed with the Spirit, who suffers on the cross, who sends the Spirit to the Church after the resurrection, and who mediates the new creation and final glorification of the children of God, such contradictions cannot ultimately be sustained in a systematic theology. The unity of the Christ-event itself demands that the one-sidedness of the four models examined in Chapter III be modified in such a way that the diversity of the economy on the one hand is maintained while, on the other, the unity of the Trinity in itself is preserved.

Following the suggestions of Faith and Order and Congar noted above, therefore, and in keeping with the way in which the question of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been raised in contemporary theology, the possibility of bringing the idea of a reciprocity between the Spirit and Christ to formal expression in Trinitarian theology can be considered. The starting-point for such a conception must obviously be the diversity of the biblical material, in which the mission of Christ is presented as dependent upon the work of the Spirit on the one hand, and the mission of the Spirit as dependent upon the work of Christ on the other. More than this, however, what is arguably required is a developed and integrated Pneumatological Christology and Christological Pneumatology which can be

taken up in their reciprocity into Trinitarian theology. Historically, the doctrine of the Trinity did not develop simply out of reflection on scripture, or from a consideration of isolated economic events as such, but out of the Christological and Pneumatological controversies of the first four centuries of Christian theology. The economic basis for the doctrine, in consequence, was an already highly "theologized" understanding of the events of the economy of salvation, expressed in patristic Christology and Pneumatology. Recent Trinitarian theology, similarly, has relied upon a complex series of theological presuppositions concerning the economy of salvation. Barth's and Rahner's doctrine of divine self-communication, Jüngel's theology of the cross, the Pneumatological "Christology of ascent" developed by Kasper and Coffey, and Moltmann's understanding of eschatology as a Trinitarian history are all essentially economic doctrines which ground their respective Trinitarian theologies of the Spirit.

What has not been developed in contemporary Trinitarian theology so far, however, is a treatment of this problem in terms of the role of the Holy Spirit in Christology and of the role of Christ in Pneumatology as related problems in the wider theological sense. If the idea of Christological and Pneumatological reciprocity is to be developed formally in Trinitarian theology, however, then such a treatment will first be needed. Much of contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology can be of use in this respect, since it is characterized by an increased interest in the Trinitarian significance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. To date, however, no systematic, comprehensive account of the wider theological framework within which this question should be discussed, drawing on relevant patristic, medieval, and modern theology, has been written. The nearest one comes to such a treatment is Mühlen's work on accidental sanctification, which itself, however, represents only one side of the

entire question. The fact that Mühlen's work has generated such interest in the Trinitarian significance of the role of the Spirit in the life of Christ, however, itself suggests that a wider treatment of the problem might give rise to an even more fruitful discussion.

Theologically, therefore, a great deal of work remains to be done in this area. Very little historical study has been done on the role of the Holy Spirit in Christology in the theological tradition, for example, while likewise, and perhaps in consequence, no attempt has been made to discuss the wider Trinitarian implications of the question in the light of a comprehensive survey of the tradition. While, for example, the rise of Logos Christology in patristic theology has been treated in intimate detail, little historical or systematic work is available on the alternative tradition of Christology stemming from the synoptics to which it was originally opposed, and over which it was certainly victorious, but which still possesses canonical authority and which nevertheless persists as a minor theme within the wider Christological tradition.⁷ It may be that we can look forward to the

⁷The Christological theme of anointing survives in much altered form, as we have seen, in the Western scholastic doctrine of accidental sanctification. It also appears, clearly, in recent Spirit Christologies such as Lampe, op. cit. Very little, however, has been written of the Pneumatic Christology which appears in certain traditions of Eastern theology, in, for example, Irenaeus, who speaks of the work of the Spirit in the life of Christ in the context of his doctrine of recapitulation (Irenaeus, Haer., III, 93; III, 17, 1-2; III, 5, 6-11; V, 20, 2). Although in Irenaeus the Spirit's work is mainly to mediate and perfect in us the image and likeness of God which was obscured by sin and restored by the incarnation of the Logos (ibid., V, 8, 1), his argument is that this sanctifying work of the Spirit was itself made possible by the work of the Spirit in Jesus Christ himself. Recapitulation, therefore, is not simply the work of the Logos. The recapitulation of humanity which occurs in Christ involves also, for Irenaeus, the restoration of the fullness of the Spirit to human nature, through his presence in Christ, the "anointed one." Thus the Holy Spirit has a vital role in Irenaeus'

Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, February, 1991 to build on the recommendations of the Faith and Order document, "The Filioque Clause in Ecumenical Perspective," in this respect, at least by

Christology and soteriology. The Spirit restores the glory of the original creation in human nature, through Christ; because he has anointed Christ, who recapitulated all things in himself, we also can receive the Spirit as well (ibid., III, 9, 2; III, 17, 3). In the subsequent theological tradition, Irenaeus' view of the place of the Spirit in Christology was taken up in the Antiochene school of Christology, which emphasizes the importance of the humanity of Christ in his free response of obedience to the Father. (See, e.g., Swete, op. cit., pp. 255-273, who provides a brief account of the Antiochene position in this respect.) Thus Theodore of Mopsuestia speaks of Christ's need of the Spirit in order to fulfil his ministry; Theodore, in a way characteristic of the Antiochene tradition, emphasizes Irenaeus' idea of the obedience of Christ as the pioneer of our salvation, and for that, according to Theodore, the Spirit was required (Theodore of Mopsuestia, In Ev. Jo., I, 16). The Nestorian controversy, however, effectively brought this tradition, which made the role of the Spirit in the humanity of Christ central to Christology and soteriology, to an end. In its place, the doctrine of the hypostatic union appeared, which effectively precluded the possibility of such a treatment of Christ's human nature apart from the Logos. In Western theology, this leads to the doctrine of accidental sanctification.

The idea of anointing survives, however, in altered form in the Cappadocians Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, who speak of the Spirit as resting on the Son or as the "Unction" of the Son in a Trinitarian sense (Basil, De Spir. Sanct., 3, 1; 16, 39; 19, 49; Gregory of Nyssa, Adv. Maced., 92-94, 102, 103. See also Boris Bobrinskoy, 'The Indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: "Pneumatic Christology" in the Cappadocian Fathers,' St Vladimir Theological Quarterly, 28 (1984), 49-65.). The same view is found in John Damascene (De Fide orth., I, 8) and the medieval Byzantine tradition of Pneumatological Christology surveyed by Staniloae, op. cit. As Staniloae maintains, this Christology is still alive in the Eastern tradition, but it is a Christology which very much remains to be integrated into a contemporary Trinitarian theology. From the point of view of Western Pneumatology, and even Western ecumenical theology, Congar's work, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, e.g., is typical in this respect, in that he does not discuss this tradition in his otherwise comprehensive survey.

recommending such a study. Since this problem is not in view in the assembly theme, however, such a result is unlikely.⁸ In any case, detailed historical and theological work in the future will be required.

The implications of a theology of reciprocity between Pneumatology and Christology developed along these lines would be considerable, not just for Trinitarian theology as such, but also for wider questions of the economy of salvation, as expressed, for example, in ecclesiology and spiritual theology, to which Trinitarian theology is also implicitly or explicitly related. For example, the practical subordination of the work of the Spirit to the Word in a theology such as Barth's can be justified to some extent from scripture, and has a systematic basis in his Trinitarian theology of the Revealer, his Revelation, and its Revealedness, and thus in the priority he gives to Christology over Pneumatology. In Barth's theology, however, as in most Protestant theology, this has wider implications for ecclesiology and the spiritual life, which are thereby focused not only by, but also to a great extent in, the proclamation of the Word. The "ontic" role of the Spiritus Creator, together with the importance of religious experience of the Spirit, the role of the affective life in the approach to God through art and the senses, as well as the illuminative role of the mystic, can very easily be diminished in this way, while ecclesial life, the liturgy, and spirituality are thereby impoverished. On the other

⁸This can be seen, e.g., from recent editions of The Ecumenical Review devoted to Pneumatology: vols. 41 (1989), no.3; and 42 (1990), nos. 2-4. Among all the material represented here, including, significantly, the report of an Orthodox consultation held in 1989 in preparation for Canberra ("Orthodox Reflections on the Assembly Theme," The Ecumenical Review, 42 (1990), 301-312), no treatment of the relation between Christology and Pneumatology has been forthcoming, with the single exception of an unremarkable article by the Orthodox theologian John Breck, "'The Lord is the Spirit': An Essay in Christological Pneumatology," The Ecumenical Review, 42 (1990), 114-121.

side, the one-sidedness of ecclesial life which can arise from a priority of Pneumatology over Christology is well documented in the excesses of the Montanists, for example, or of the radical reformation and the charismatic and pentecostalist movements. Ecclesiology can be one-sided here as well, with even worse results.

If, however, a theology of the reciprocity of the Spirit and Christ in the economy and in the Trinity were to be developed, as the Commission on Faith and Order has suggested, it would follow that such one-sidedness in ecclesiology and spirituality could no longer be sustained systematically. In Pneumatology, progress towards such a position can arguably be taken to be of the utmost importance. At the same time, perhaps, an increasing encounter of the various traditions of ecclesiology and spirituality in the concrete life of the Church is also important as the soil from which such systematic reflection is likely to grow. Ecclesiology and spirituality are admittedly founded on a tradition of Trinitarian thought, so that the latter has logical priority over the former, but we should not for that reason neglect the importance of the ecclesial praxis and culture in which theology and theologians have their roots. An enrichment of the scope of Pneumatology in this sense can be seen to be one of the practical promises held forth by ecumenism, and the latter, in turn, to be a focus of promise for the former.

2. The Holy Spirit in the Immanent Trinity

We turn finally, therefore, to consider possible directions for the theology of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Even if our main theological emphasis were to fall upon the doctrine of the economic Trinity, we could not ultimately avoid this question, since an adequate understanding of the economic Trinity requires a satisfactory doctrine of the immanent Trinity. The function

of the doctrine of the Trinity since patristic times has been to ground the saving work of the triune God in the being of the triune God himself. In interpreting the economy in this way, however, Trinitarian theology has to concern itself precisely with the immanent Trinity, since otherwise it cannot, by definition, succeed in its desire to provide an absolute ground for salvation in the being of the triune God himself.⁹ Thus the point was made early in this study that Trinitarian theology historically has been overwhelmingly concerned with the doctrine of the immanent Trinity.

It is commonly observed that the difficulties involved in developing a Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit are in many ways greater than those we encounter in connection with the other two persons. The problem, in fact, is as basic as the very terms in which the doctrine of the Spirit is conceived. Even the name "Holy Spirit" itself, for example, unlike "Father" and "Son," is not a relative, but an absolute term, which could in itself be used as appropriately of the divine essence, or even of the Father and Son, as of the Spirit himself in the Trinitarian

⁹Historically, as we have seen, it was the Arian controversy above all which forced Christian thought beyond the question of the oikonomia to confront the question of what the God of Christian revelation is in himself. The Nicene Fathers who adopted the homoousion as an anti-Arian measure thereby ensured that the economy of salvation was not understood in terms of the deficient ontology of the divinity which was maintained by the Arians. By their adoption of the homoousion, however, they also effectively accepted that an ontology of the divinity could nevertheless not be avoided: thus, according to the Creed of Nicea (325), the "one Lord Jesus Christ," "begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father," is "of one substance with the Father." In this way, the eternal relation of the "pre-existent" Logos to the Father became the central theological theme of the Nicene era, and transformed the character of subsequent Trinitarian theology. The Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit which finally emerged in patristic theology was therefore, like that of the Son, a theology of the Spirit sub specie aeternitatis.

sense.¹⁰ Thus Thomas Aquinas notes that the third person, unlike the Father and the Son, has no proper name.¹¹ In the same way, the term "procession," or "spiration," cannot be said to have the relative precision of the corresponding terms "filiation" and "sonship." The Father, likewise, cannot be understood as the Father of the Holy Spirit, but rather only as his "Spirator," so that even the phrase "who proceeds from the Father" is misleading. Even our most basic terminology here is thus problematic in a way not so of the Father and the Son, and has to be deliberately accommodated to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.¹²

As Congar suggests, the limitations of our language here can be seen as something of an advantage as well as a disadvantage, in the sense that it keeps us from presuming that our knowledge can extend too far into the mystery of the Trinity.¹³ Terms such as "Spirit" and "spiration," like the terms "Father" and "Son," or "filiation" and "sonship," are all ultimately only analogies, so that an apophatic

¹⁰Lossky, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Triadology," pp. 34-35; and Congar, op. cit., III, p. 6.

¹¹Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1a. 36, 1.

¹²This problem appears to be less severe, however, in the East than it is in the West. Staniloae, e.g., op. cit., pp. 176-177, argues that one of the reasons the East is unable to admit that the Spirit proceeds from the Son is that "spiration" is proper to the Father, so that accepting the doctrine of double procession would imply that the Son was a Father as well. Staniloae refers to a number of patristic sources for this argument, and goes on to state: 'It would be preferable to use the word "procession" for the relation of the Spirit to the Father, and for his relation to the Son, the term "goes out from" doubled with other terms like "shines out from" or "is manifested by", terms which have been used by the eastern Fathers.' As was pointed out in Chapter I, Eastern Pneumatology generally employs a more specific and differentiated terminology in its Pneumatology than does the West. See also the account of the divine energeia below, pp. 328ff.

¹³Congar, op. cit., III, p. 5.

qualification is written into the very structure of our discourse. However, it remains the case that the analogies employed in Pneumatology are particularly problematic, for the reasons indicated. To this extent, one of the primary problems to be overcome in a Trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit is the limitation inherent in the terminology we begin with, because of the limitation which attaches to all theological analogy, indeed, but also because of the particular weakness inherent in the analogies which are used in Pneumatology.

It is precisely here, however, that the potential contribution of contemporary theology to the task of a future Trinitarian Pneumatology can be most significant. The economic categories employed in contemporary Trinitarian theology provide a number of specific analogies which take us well beyond the limitations of terms such as "procession," or even "Spirit" itself. At the same time, these categories carry us back to the ultimate basis of Trinitarian theology in the economy of salvation, and serve as a check against a doctrine of the Trinity which is unrelated to the economy of salvation. At the centre of Christian theology stands the conviction that the Trinitarian life has truly been shared with us in Jesus Christ. In the salvation-historical events with which we have to do, a genuinely salvific Trinitarian "history" took place. If Trinitarian theology, therefore, is not immediately orientated to salvation history in the interests of soteriology, it loses its proper theological function and becomes irrelevant to the primary concern of Christian theology, which is precisely the saving work of God in Jesus Christ. Once this happens, however, it also tends to fruitless speculation, since it is then no longer controlled by the economic events it is intended to interpret. As Rahner writes in the passage so often cited:

The basic thesis which ... presents the Trinity as a mystery of salvation (in

its reality and not merely as a doctrine) might be formulated as follows: The "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity.¹⁴

In the previous section, it was suggested that the basic reciprocity which obtains between the Spirit and Christ at the economic level might profitably be taken up into the theology of the immanent Trinity. In this section, therefore, the possibility of a theology of immanent Trinitarian reciprocity will be considered more fully. I shall argue that such a theology is able to claim a rich inheritance from both Eastern and Western theological traditions. The idea of reciprocity in this sense has already been taken up in a number of ways in recent theology, drawing on the older theological tradition. At least three possibilities for further exploration can thus be considered: firstly, the idea of Spirit-Son reciprocity as taken up in Balthasar's adaptation of the filioque doctrine; secondly, the attempt by a number of Eastern Orthodox theologians to deal with the question of the innertrinitarian relation between the Spirit and the Son in terms of reciprocity and the Orthodox doctrine of the divine energeia; and thirdly, the idea of perichoresis in Trinitarian theology. I shall argue, however, that none of these is entirely adequate to the notion of innertrinitarian reciprocity, that the idea of reciprocity involves a broadly "social" understanding of the Trinity, and that in this respect, recent Trinitarian theology on the whole offers the possibility of a genuine advance beyond the achievement of the older theological tradition.

First of all, therefore, there is the option of a theology of reciprocity as developed in Balthasar's treatment of the filioque doctrine. As we have seen,

¹⁴Rahner, op. cit., pp. 21-22, italics deleted.

Balthasar's theology of Trinitarian inversion is an explicit attempt to deal with the problem of economic diversity in view of his presupposed idea of the unity of the economic with the immanent Trinity. Balthasar's position has proved to be particularly illuminating in this respect, in that his theology of Trinitarian inversion demands an analogical qualification of this unity. Where Balthasar's theology is deficient, however, is precisely in the thoroughly filioquist understanding of the two-sidedness of the relation between the Spirit and Christ which results; according to Balthasar, the Spirit is given economically to the Son as the Spirit who proceeds from the Father, and given by the Son to the Church as the Spirit who proceeds from the Son. The inversion of taxis is therefore economic only, inasmuch as the various moments with which we are concerned in the economy as a whole have their ultimate ground in different aspects of the innertrinitarian life.

In Balthasar's theology, therefore, the apparent reciprocity between the Spirit and Christ is understood in terms of the doctrine of double procession: on the one hand, the Spirit is the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and is bestowed on the Son; on the other, the Spirit is the Spirit who proceeds from the Son, the response of the Son in love to the Father, and the Spirit who is thus also by definition the Son's to give. Undoubtedly, this interpretation of the filioque has a great deal to be said for it as far as the problem of Spirit-Son reciprocity is concerned. It might be argued, for example, and with some justification, that the "Fatherly" side of the procession of the Spirit has been underemphasized in the West, and that many of the deficiencies of Western filioquist Pneumatology might be overcome if this side of the procession were to be given more sustained treatment. However, the fundamental problem remains that here the Holy Spirit does not truly appear as a Trinitarian agent in his

own right; it is not so much the reciprocity of Spirit and Son which is thus made thematic as it is the relation between the Son and the Father. The reciprocity involved in the theology of Balthasar, in consequence, is more a matter of the Father and Son relation than of that proper to the Spirit and the Son as such. In terms of the economic problem of reciprocity as outlined above, therefore, Balthasar's approach appears to confuse the activity of the Spirit in relation to Christ with the Father-Son relation. A true theology of reciprocity, on the other hand, would allow the Spirit to be an innertrinitarian agent in his own right, truly "of one substance" with the Father and the Son, whose agency in this sense has never been in doubt.

This criticism, of course, reflects the wider Eastern criticism of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Western theology which was outlined in Chapter I in connection with the filioque dispute.¹⁵ If, however, one were to accept the Western view that the Spirit can truly be understood in his hypostatic quality as the relation of love subsisting between the Father and the Son, and admit the implied limitation of the personal agency of the Spirit, Balthasar's position could be adopted. This wider implication of his position is, however, not one which I have been prepared to support, for the reasons specified.

Secondly, the Eastern doctrine of the Trinitarian energeia can be considered as a possible locus of Spirit-Son reciprocity. In Chapter I, it was pointed out that this concept is of crucial importance for the Eastern theology of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as at least one prominent Eastern view is that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone at the level of the divine essence, but "comes forth" from the Father and the Son at the level of the eternal divine energies. Staniloae points out that in the medieval Byzantine tradition, after the filioque had become the

¹⁵See also, e.g., Evdokimov, op. cit., p. 65.

official cause for schism with the West, the doctrine of divine energeia became the central focus of Eastern Pneumatological development, inasmuch as it enabled the East to relate the Son and Spirit at the eternal, innertrinitarian level without recourse to the filioque.¹⁶ From the Western point of view, it must be remembered, particularly because it so seldom is, that in Eastern theology the divine energeia are as eternal and truly "innertrinitarian" as the community of divine essence;¹⁷ the difference, according to Eastern thought, is that the energies make God "participable," or communicable, whereas in the divine essence God is radically inaccessible.¹⁸ Gregory Palamas, indeed, can even employ the Augustinian analogy of love (eros) in this sense.¹⁹ According to Palamas, the Spirit can be understood as the love of the Father for the Word and of the Word for the Father, both immanently and economically, but only with reference to the eternal divine energies; in his ousia, the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father alone.

On the basis of the Eastern theology of the energeia, a number of Eastern theologians have recently advocated a theology of reciprocity in Trinitarian Pneumatology. Staniloae, for example, attempts to take this theme up from the point of view of a social doctrine of the Trinity,

¹⁶Staniloae, op. cit., pp. 178-184.

¹⁷This is a point often missed in Western theology. Cf., however, Gregory Palamas, Triad., III, ii, 5ff. (ET The Triads, ed. John Meyendorff and trans. Nicholas Gendle (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), pp. 93ff.); Vladimir Lossky, The Vision of God, trans. Asheleigh Moorhouse (Clayton, Wisconsin: The Faith Press, 1963), pp. 124ff.; and Congar, op. cit., III, pp. 61ff., who also provides an extensive bibliography.

¹⁸Evdokimov, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

¹⁹Gregory Palamas, Cap. Phys. Theol. 36-37 (PG 150, 1144-1145), referred to by Evdokimov, op. cit., p. 59, and Orphanos, op. cit., p. 33.

arguing that while the Spirit receives his hypostatic existence from the Father alone, his personal character is constituted also by his network of relations with both the Father and the Son which exists eternally in the divine energeia.²⁰ Staniloae writes:

There is a reciprocity of infinite richness in its complexity between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, and it is this which gives them their fully personal character. But there is a special reciprocity between the Son and the Spirit which is reflected in their contact with the world.²¹

In L'Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe, similarly, Paul Evdokimov maintains that while the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit has dominated Pneumatology for a thousand years, the reality must be judged to be more complex than the inflexible filioquism on the one hand and monopatrism on the other which have predominated in traditional polemics.²² The alternative, he argues, is to recognize that the Trinitarian relations are indeed fully Trinitarian, i.e., that in the divine life, there is a relation of interdependence and mutuality among the three persons, including between the Spirit and the

²⁰Staniloae, op. cit., pp. 184-186. Staniloae here attempts to take up one side of Moltmann's suggestions in his essay, "Theological Proposals Towards the Resolution of the Filioque Controversy," to the effect that the Spirit receives his existence from the Father but his "image" or "relational form," i.e., his personal character from the Son (Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 164-173). Staniloae argues that Moltmann is right to posit a clearer distinction between the Father and the Son in their relations with the Spirit than is possible on the filioque paradigm, but wrong to distinguish between the existence and personal character of the Spirit in this way. The proper distinction, he argues, is between the Trinitarian ousia and energeia.

²¹Staniloae, op. cit., p. 186.

²²Evdokimov, op. cit., p. 69.

Son.²³ Building on the theology of the divine energeia, Evdokimov goes so far as to argue that the term filioque might be acceptable from the Eastern point of view if the technical term "procession" were abandoned when the filioque is affirmed, and also, significantly, if a reciprocity of the Spirit and Son were recognized by the simultaneous affirmation of a parallel spirituque formula.²⁴ The argument is that each person must be understood in his simultaneous relations to the other two. Evdokimov suggests that the Trinity can be represented pictorially as a triangle inscribed in a circle, with the Father at the top and the Son and Spirit at its base angles; while generation and procession are represented in the triangle, the reciprocal "energetic" relations of the persons are represented in the circle, in which movement occurs in both directions.²⁵

From the standpoint of contemporary theology, it is difficult to make a judgement about this Eastern view. It is clear, as has already been argued, that the standard criticism that the distinction between essence and energeia in this form threatens to reduce the Spirit-Son relationship to a second, inferior level of the Trinitarian being cannot really be sustained, since the energeia are as irreducibly eternal as the divine essence. It would appear in any case that if such an obvious criticism could be made, Eastern theology would have seen the point long ago. The question is rather a matter of the foreign conceptuality employed in the Eastern distinction, in the sense that this conceptuality, and indeed, much of the Trinitarian theology it presupposes, is alien to Western theology.

²³Ibid., p. 48.

²⁴Ibid., p. 71.

²⁵Ibid., p. 48.

The third doctrine from the tradition which relates to the problem of reciprocity is closely related to the previous discussion, and comes very near to what is meant by reciprocity: the doctrine of perichoresis. Etymologically, the term connotes mutual involvement or interchange; as such, it initially came into theological use in the Christologies of Gregory Nazianzen and Maximos Confessor in connection with the two natures doctrine.²⁶ It is, however, very rare before John Damascene, who took the term from Gregory and Maximos and reinterpreted it primarily in a Trinitarian sense.²⁷ In his theology, perichoresis refers to the mutual interpenetration or eternal circulation of divine life among the persons. Perichoresis in this sense is of central importance in John Damascene's Trinitarian thought, indeed, so much so that it is put on a level with the unity of the divine nature as the ground of divine unity.²⁸ As such, it is apparently

²⁶L. Prestige, "[Perichoreo] and [Perichoresis] in the Fathers," Journal of Theological Studies, 29 (1928), 242-244; and A. Chollet, "Circuminsession, -cession," Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, II, cols. 2527-32.

²⁷John Damascene, De fide orth., 1.8; 1.14; 4.18; cited by Prestige, loc. cit. The idea of mutual interchange between the persons, however, is found earlier. It appears, for example, to be supported by scriptural texts such as Jn. 10: 38, 14: 11, and 17: 21 (vis-à-vis the Son and the Father) and perhaps 1 Cor. 2: 10 (vis-à-vis the Spirit and the Father). The idea of mutual interchange is also particularly important in the Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians, with their strong pluralism, and in particular in Gregory of Nyssa (ibid., p. 244). It was in the theology of John Damascene, however, that perichoresis was first used as a technical term in Trinitarian theology.

²⁸John Damascene, Nat. comp. 4. Prestige, op. cit., p. 249, having surveyed the use of the term perichoresis in John Damascene's thought, draws the following conclusions: "[Perichoresis] is not a consequence but an equivalent of unity. . . . It has drawn to itself the adjectives denying confusion, which in earlier writers were associated with [henosis]. . . . It represents an attempt to define the nature of this unity. . . . It is illustrated negatively by being treated as incompatible with separation in substance,

intended as a measure against tritheism on the one hand and modalism on the other: the persons are indeed one in their hypostatic interpenetration, and yet three since this interpenetration presupposes a genuine plurality.

Through the influence of John Damascene, the doctrine of perichoresis came to be accepted de fidei in both Eastern and Western Trinitarian theology. However, like other Trinitarian doctrines, it is understood differently in the two traditions. In the East, where the primary datum of Trinitarian theology are the hypostaseis rather than the ousia, perichoresis remains, as in John Damascene, a doctrine of Trinitarian unity. Eastern theology is more dynamic than that of the West on this point; each hypostasis is drawn to the other two, while the three are one precisely because they are completely outward-looking in this sense. In Latin theology, on the other hand, the divine substantia is logically prior to the persons, and serves as the fundamental ground of Trinitarian unity. Perichoresis (circumincession) here is conceived as a function of substantial unity, since on this basis there is a perfect fusion of relational activity in the one divine life.²⁹

The idea of the reciprocity between the Spirit and Christ arising from our study of contemporary Trinitarian Pneumatology is clearly closely related to the traditional doctrine of perichoresis, particularly in its Eastern expression. The contemporary Trinitarian tradition in this sense arguably leads to a broadly Eastern view of the Trinity, which begins with the three persons and their work, and moves from there to the question of Trinitarian unity. It is only when the priority of the persons is thus

in place, or time, in power, operation, or will."

²⁹Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a. 42, 5. See also Chollet, op. cit.; and A. M. Bermejo, "Circumincession," New Catholic Encyclopedia, III, p. 880.

accepted, in other words, that the idea of reciprocity can be developed.

We have seen that in the social doctrine of the Trinity advocated by Eastern theologians such as Staniloae and Evdokimov, the idea of the perichoretic relations of the three persons at the level of the divine energeia is put forward as the way ahead for ecumenical reasons. We have also seen in Chapter III that Moltmann, who speaks of the mutual relations of the persons in a similar way, develops both a strong doctrine of the priority of the persons and a strong view of perichoresis in his Trinitarian theology, relying on it as the sole principle of Trinitarian unity. Moltmann thus attempts to avoid the obstructions which the priority of substance in Western theology, and the monarchianism of Eastern theology, present to his radical social doctrine of the Trinity. According to Moltmann:

The unity of the trinitarian Persons lies in the circulation of the divine life which they fulfil in their relations to one another. This means that the unity of the triune God cannot and must not be seen in a general concept of divine substance. That would abolish the personal differences. But if the contrary is true - if the very difference of the three Persons lies in their relational, perichoretically consummated life process - then the Persons cannot and must not be reduced to three modes of being of one and the same divine subject. The Persons themselves constitute both their differences and their unity. ...through the concept of perichoresis, all subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity is avoided. It is true that the Trinity is constituted with the Father as starting point, inasmuch as he is understood as being 'the origin of the Godhead'. But this 'monarchy of the Father' only applies to the constitution of the Trinity. It has no validity within the eternal circulation

of the divine life, and none in the perichoretic unity of the Trinity. Here the three Persons are equal; they live and are manifested in one another and through one another.³⁰

Undoubtedly, the doctrine of perichoresis will assume new importance if the idea of innertrinitarian reciprocity is to be developed, as in Moltmann's theology, into a broadly social doctrine of the Trinity. We can expect in this context both that the precedent of previous doctrines of perichoresis can and will be drawn upon, and that the idea of perichoresis will be developed further. It is questionable, however, whether the doctrine of perichoresis itself can bear all the weight necessary for the development of the idea of reciprocity in the innertrinitarian sense, since it was not originally developed with this problem in mind. Indeed, in general, perichoresis is a derivative and secondary doctrine which, in its classical expression, could be deduced from Trinitarian doctrines already developed, without any reference to the economy of salvation or even, strictly speaking, to the problem of Trinitarian taxis. The mutual indwelling of the persons is in this sense a corollary of the idea that the three are one and the one three. The problem of reciprocity as defined here, on the other hand, involves the idea of the interpersonal Trinitarian relations deriving from the economy, and, on this basis, genuine reversals of the economic Trinitarian taxis, whereas the doctrine of perichoresis, even when affirmed strongly in particular theologies in the older tradition,

³⁰Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, p. 175. This, however, is a thesis which neither the West nor the East can strictly accept. The former point is obvious; on the latter, see, e.g., Evdokimov, op. cit., pp. 48, 71-72, where he argues that the energetic perichoresis in the divine life involves a reciprocity between the Son and the Spirit which, however, has its ultimate source and goal in the Father.

was never taken to abrogate the (generally one-sided) doctrines of Trinitarian taxis held in the particular traditions. Thus the doctrine of perichoresis has not generally been taken by Eastern or Western theologians to overcome the differing view of the Trinitarian taxis with respect to Pneumatology which separates the two traditions.

The question which has to be faced in this context, therefore, has wider implications for the structure of Trinitarian theology than can be expressed in a simple reaffirmation of the doctrine of perichoresis, reflecting not only the assumptions of the Eastern and Western Trinitarian traditions, but also of contemporary Trinitarian theology.³¹ One problem here is how perichoresis is to be defined, of course, in the sense that it makes all the difference whether it is taken to occur, for example, as an expression of the unity of divine substance, or as a more genuine expression of interpersonality at the level of the energeia. We have seen from the doctrine of the divine energeia that Eastern theology is able to differentiate between the sense in which the Spirit is related to the Father alone as the "source" of the Trinity, and the sense in which he is eternally related both to Father and Son in a reciprocal relationship in the "energetic" life of the Trinity. This distinction makes a more nuanced approach to the problem possible in Eastern than in Western theology. This points, however, to the fundamental question which is at issue, concerning the idea of the person or hypostasis itself and in particular concerning the nature of its hypostatic relations, which the doctrine of perichoresis as such presupposes. The question is whether or not it is possible to conceive of the persons in such a way that an innertrinitarian relation which is not ultimately a procession is possible.

³¹This is, of course, recognized by Moltmann as well, whose position as a whole is similar in this respect to the one about to be developed.

A great deal depends upon the answer which is given to this question. In Eastern theology, the energetic hypostatic relations are distinguished from the processions, making possible a doctrine of energetic Trinitarian relationality; indeed, in Eastern theology, the processions themselves are not understood primarily in a relational sense, but rather as differing modes of origin (tropos hyparxeos).³² In Eastern theology, consequently, the relations are held only to express the prior absolute diversity of the persons.³³ This does not mean, however, that the innertrinitarian relations become merely accidental. Rather, in Eastern theology, as we have seen, the threefold relations of the persons is of enormous importance: the relations, not just, as in the Western-Augustinian tradition, between the Father and the Son on the one hand and, on the other, between the Father and the Son as one principle and the Spirit (deriving from eternal generation and double procession), but the relations between each person and the other two persons in distinction. According to Evdokimov, for example, "Le plus important pour comprendre la théologie trinitaire de l'Orient, c'est le caractère toujours ternaire ou triple des relations."³⁴ This is one of the reasons the East is unable to adopt the Western view of the relations of opposition: one can really only oppose two principles, whereas the relations of the persons are triple; with regard to the Spirit and the Son, therefore, Eastern thought has it that the Spirit proceeds from the Father conjointly and together with the begetting of the Son upon whom he rests, while the Son is begotten by the Father conjointly and together with the procession of the Spirit

³²Lossky, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Triadology," pp. 37-38.

³³Ibid., p. 38.

³⁴Evdokimov, op. cit., p. 42, italics deleted.

who manifests him.³⁵ Each has a relation of origin to the Father, a relation of procession, in other words, and a relation to the other person which is not of origin or procession. In the latter case, the relation is not causal, but one of interdependence within the perichoretic life of the three.³⁶

In the Western-Augustinian tradition, by contrast, all innertrinitarian relations are understood as qualities logically consequent upon the actions of generation and spiration, while it is these relations which distinguish the persons. The doctrine of relations is thus immediately implied by the doctrine of the processions. According to Thomas Aquinas, for example, there are only four real relations in the Trinity: fatherhood, sonship, spiration, and procession, corresponding to the two acts of generation and spiration on their active and passive sides.³⁷

The idea of a true innertrinitarian reciprocity between the Spirit and the Son such as we have in view can, however, only be said to be possible if there are relations which are not immediately derivative of the processions in this sense. From the standpoint of the Western tradition, one could not, for example, maintain the filioque together with a parallel spirituque doctrine, affirming that the Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit together. In the semi-causal conceptuality of Trinitarian procession, such a reversal of the natural order or taxis of the persons could never be sustained. Within the terms of Western theology, therefore, if the Spirit and the Son are to be related at all in the innertrinitarian life, it will have to be through either a filioque or spirituque doctrine, but not through both, since in Western theology the processions

³⁵Ibid., p. 43.

³⁶Ibid., p. 48.

³⁷Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a. 28, 4.

are the sole grounds of the personal relations. Equally, however, within the terms of the Western view that the only real innertrinitarian relations are rooted in the processions, the Eastern doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone would mean that the Spirit has no relation to the Son, or vice versa. A distinction between the processions and some other innertrinitarian relations is therefore an absolute prerequisite for a theology of innertrinitarian reciprocity.

It is here that the social doctrine of the Trinity begins, and not simply, as is sometimes alleged,³⁸ with a simple assertion of the priority of the plurality of the persons over the unity of the one God. (These are perhaps best seen as antinomies in all Trinitarian theologies.) The social doctrine of the Trinity undoubtedly presupposes the irreducible plurality of the persons, but it is more immediately concerned with a rather different problem: not with plurality for its own sake, as it were, but rather with innertrinitarian relationality. More specifically, the social doctrine of the Trinity begins with the idea of the Trinity as a community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose relations are conceived to be genuinely personal, in the nature of love rather than relational in the more abstract, ontological sense of the "relations of opposition." In this sense, its economic basis in the concrete relations of the persons in the economy is strong, far stronger, it must be said, than the economic basis of the idea of self-communication underlying the semi-modalistic Trinitarian theologies of Barth and Rahner. The development of a Trinitarianism grounded in the concrete relations of the persons in the Christ-event must in this sense be reckoned to be one of the major achievements of post-Barthian and post-Rahnerian Trinitarian theology, even

³⁸So, e.g., Hill, op. cit., p. 217.

if the theologies which have thus emerged have rested on questionable appropriations of the relevant economic data.

There is, significantly, a major Western Trinitarian tradition which can enrich our understanding at this point, that inaugurated in the twelfth century by Richard of St. Victor. William Hill, citing Michael Schmaus, notes that there are only two significant Trinitarian traditions within the medieval Western tradition: the Augustinian, which is mediated by Anselm and Peter Lombard and which culminates in Thomas Aquinas, and that begun by Richard of St. Victor, which continues in the Franciscan tradition in Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure.³⁹ In contrast to the mainstream tradition of the West, Richard's Trinitarian theology, like those of Jüngel, Mühlen, Kasper, and Moltmann more recently, begins with the Johannine idea that God is love.⁴⁰ His argument is that God, who is love, is necessarily⁴¹ a community of persons, and indeed a Trinity, since love cannot exist where there is only one, and is incomplete when it is not open to more than a selfish possession of a single other.⁴² He writes:

³⁹Hill, op. cit., p. 226, with reference to Michael Schmaus, Der liber propugnatorius des Thomas Angelicus und die Lehrunterschiede zwischen Thomas von Aquin und Duns Scotus, vol. 2, Die trinitarischen Lehrunterschiede (Münster: Aschendorff, 1930).

⁴⁰Richard of St. Victor, De Trinitate, III, 2, 6.

⁴¹Richard's theology is intended to provide "necessary reasons" for what faith believes (ibid., I, 5; III, 1); this does not mean, as Copleston, op. cit., II, p. 179 points out, that we can discern the necessity fully, but only that there must be necessary reasons for what necessarily exists, so that, as God is necessarily a Trinity, there must be a necessary reason for this fact. The "necessary reasons" adduced, therefore, are not fully comprehended, but approached by way of the analogy of human love. See, e.g., Richard of St. Victor, op. cit., III, 13.

⁴²Ibid., III, esp. 2, 11, 14, and 15.

...the most excellent level of charity, and therefore the fullness of goodness, cannot exist where a defect of will or a defect of a faculty excludes a sharer of love and a sharing of most excellent joy. Therefore it is necessary that each of those loved supremely and loving supremely [i.e., the Father and Son] should search with equal desire for someone who would be mutually loved and with equal concord possess him. Thus you see how the perfection of charity requires a Trinity of persons, without which it is wholly unable to subsist in the integrity of its fullness.⁴³

According to Richard, therefore, love is not to be appropriated in the technical sense to the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, as in the dominant tradition of the West, but is rather to be understood in terms of the divine being itself, in which the three persons subsist. Because God is love, God is a community of love, a Trinity.⁴⁴

⁴³Ibid., III, 11, as translated in Richard of St. Victor, Book Three of the Trinity, in Richard of St. Victor: The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, Book Three of the Trinity, trans. Grover A. Zinn (London: SPCK, 1979), p. 385. Cf. also ibid., III, 19

⁴⁴One question which might be raised concerning Richard's argument concerns the limitation of the innerdivine fellowship to three; on the analogy of human relationships, the mutual love of two is not full until it is open to the wider community, and not just to a third. In human terms, the third person introduces the possibility of a love which is fully shared, but if this is so, and in God it should be infinitely so, then the question arises why it is limited to a triplicity. Of course, the Trinity is open to the creation, out of love, so that the divine love does diffuse itself beyond even itself. But this, Richard argues at the beginning of Book III of the De Trinitate (III, 2), is not the kind of strictly innerdivine love with which we are concerned in Trinitarian theology as such. Richard does not fully address this question of the limitation of love to triplicity, but the point seems to be that the divine community, having gone on to a fourth, would require a further "infinite progress" to ever more divine

The spirit of the Anselmian dictum "credo, ut intelligam" is evident in Richard's Trinitarian theology, and his position can perhaps be said to offer a rational account of plurality and indeed of the triunity of God which is at least as persuasive as any other. Richard's theology also shows that a social doctrine of the Trinity is not based simply on a movement from the plurality of the persons to the unity of the three; indeed, his De Trinitate begins with a treatment of the unity of the divine substance,⁴⁵ and his attention only then turns to the idea that there is "true plurality in that true and simple Divinity," since its highest perfection is love.⁴⁶ Rather, we see again in the theology of Richard that the central presupposition of the social doctrine of the Trinity is simply the possibility of a discussion of the persons as related in love, without immediate reference to the doctrine of the processions. In the whole of Book III of the De Trinitate, where his argument for the plurality of the persons in God appears, Richard does not once develop the Augustinian relational doctrine of the persons, nor does he use the (Anselmian) phrase "relations of opposition." His argument rather follows a different course.

Thomas Aquinas himself notes this fact several times with reference to the theology of Richard (and his theological successors among Thomas' Franciscan contemporaries) in his discussion of the Trinitarian

hypostaseis. This, however, would lead to absurdity, in the sense that God would thus have to be conceived as an infinite process of self-replication, which could never, by definition, be called to a halt. On this view, the love which God is could never be sated. There is, therefore, a certain rationale for the triadic structure of the argument. What remains is only the possibility of a sharing of the divine love with the created universe.

⁴⁵Ibid., I, II.

⁴⁶Ibid., III, 1.

relations in the Summa Theologiae.⁴⁷ Thomas notes, with reference to his view that the persons are their relations, that a different view has been taken, to the effect that the relations are merely a sign of personal distinction, which is itself based in the mode of origin, i.e., begetting and spiration. His response essentially represents the Augustinian view that there are only three ways in which one might be able to distinguish the persons: according to either substance, accidents, or relations; since the substance is identical and there are no accidents in God, we are left with the relations as the sole basis of personal distinction. These, furthermore, are simply logical expressions of the acts of filiation and spiration: fatherhood and sonship, on the one hand, and active and passive procession on the other.

Thomas' criticism, however, points to the limitations of his own position as much as to those of Richard's. William Hill's critique of Richard, which follows in the Thomist tradition, raises the problem well:

[Richard's] emphasis seems to fall, not upon love as a dynamism giving rise to the Word and the Pneuma, but upon the very nature of love as presupposing an inner relationality that is personal in kind. This is his primal and dominating principle to which the doctrine of the processions is subordinate. The universal tradition on the invariant order among the Persons demanded that he give consideration to the processions. But there his system reaches an impasse, because while love may well require a plurality of persons as its condition, it does not explain the origin of such a plurality. If the processions also constitute a structure indigenous to love, then it is

⁴⁷Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., 1a. 40, 2; 40, 3. Thomas, ibid., 1a. 32, 1, ad 2, also disputes the Victorine view that the nature of love requires that God, being love, is a Trinity.

difficult to explain that the Father is without origin, that the Son arises from the Father alone, and that the Spirit's origin is from the Father and the Son (at least in the Western tradition that Richard represents). That is, it is difficult to maintain a distinct personal identity for each of the Three.⁴⁸

This criticism can only be justified, however, so long as the only real Trinitarian relations are the processions; Richard's position is not that there are no processions, to be sure, nor is it that there is no Trinitarian taxis flowing from the natural order of the processions. Rather, his position is analogous to that of the East on this point: the three persons are constituted as distinct by origin, and not by relation; the relations only express the distinction.⁴⁹

Richard's conception can be seen to offer a coherent alternative within Western theology to the Augustinian position represented by Thomas, once its presupposition that relations in the Trinity need not necessarily be relations of origin or processions is admitted. On this basis, the Son and Spirit can indeed be eternally related while not having their eternal origin in one another. There can be little doubt that outwith the Augustinian theory of relational predication, such a presupposition is perfectly intelligible. To use another social analogy, a natural brother and sister have the same origin, whereas the possibility of an interpersonal relationship between them is not based on this, but on their own individual personality. From the point of view of origin alone, an abstract relation could be established in an ontological or causal sense, while if the two had never met, their

⁴⁸Hill, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

⁴⁹Richard of St. Victor, op. cit., IV, 15, 20, 23-4.

relation would be non-existent from the standpoint of interpersonal reality. The Trinitarian relations Richard has in view similarly depend upon whether or not the Trinitarian persons as persons are capable, in themselves, of genuinely interpersonal relations of love. In the other main Trinitarian tradition of the West, the persons are not strictly conceived as such; for Richard, on the other hand, the persons are, and in this respect, his position is entirely representative of the social doctrine of the Trinity.⁵⁰

What Richard's theology does not do, however, is to develop this thesis from the point of view of the economy of salvation. His theology rather regards the persons as abstract divine beings capable of loving relationships within the one substance of the God who is love, but beyond this it is unable to take us. There is in this sense a good case for the traditional criticism of Richard's position cited above, that while he regards the immanent Trinity as an eternal life of relationality and love, the relations themselves are left empty of content. Thus the very relationality of the Trinitarian terms "Father" and "Son," if not "Holy Spirit" as well, is effectively lost. The psychological analogy, by contrast, which lies at the heart of the other main Western Trinitarian tradition, specifies the character of the two processions in terms of the characteristic acts of a spiritual nature, memory, knowledge, and will. In this, without question, lies its particular strength.⁵¹

⁵⁰According to Evdokimov, e.g., *op. cit.*, p. 48: "La relation entre le Fils et l'Esprit n'est pas causale, mais c'est une relation d'interdépendence et de condition car toute relation interdivine est toujours triple dans la circumincession éternelle de l'Amour divin."

⁵¹Equally, however, in understanding the Trinity on this analogy, adequate personal distinction is arguably denied to the three, and their relationality, which in the economy of salvation is quite concrete, becomes a matter of the highly metaphysical doctrines of eternal filiation and

We have seen nevertheless that the idea of reciprocity which emerges from the economy itself cannot be reconciled with the semi-causal view of the Trinitarian relations which prevails in the West, and in particular that it requires a theology of innertrinitarian relationality beyond what is possible on the basis of the Western relational understanding of the persons (the relations of opposition). The Eastern doctrine of the divine energeia is clearly relevant here, as is Moltmann's distinction between the "constitution" and "form" of the Trinitarian persons, according to which the processions refer to the constitution of the persons, or to their divine existence, and the mutual relations in love to their personal form or "eidōs."⁵²

In a social doctrine of the Trinity, in short, the homōousion is understood to preclude the idea that the persons should be incapable of genuine interpersonal relationships. If these relations merely follow the order of the processions, genuine mutuality and reciprocity is no longer possible, in particular from the point of view of the Holy Spirit. The Eastern doctrine of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone, indeed, would thus preclude the possibility of any relation between the Spirit and the Son, while in the West, no genuinely reciprocal relation between the two would be possible, because the relation following from the procession is one-sided. In a theology of innertrinitarian reciprocity, however, both the Spirit and the Son must be capable of being the subject of acts which relate each to the other. Thus, the idea of Spirit-Son reciprocity means that both the Spirit and Son can be active and passive in relation to the other in the

spiration.

⁵²Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 185-187, and Moltmann, "Theological Proposals Towards the Resolution of the Filioque Controversy," p. 169

immanent life of the Trinity, and not merely, as in the older Western paradigm, active and passive in one direction only, i.e., from Son to Spirit, in the immanent Trinity and the reverse only under the conditions of the incarnation, i.e., by virtue of the humanity assumed by the Son and the communicatio idiomatum.

If a theology of immanent Trinitarian reciprocity is to be developed, however, it will have to meet the criticism that, like Richard's social doctrine of the Trinity, it does not sufficiently differentiate the relations of the persons. If this criticism holds, then to the extent that the Spirit and the Son are asserted merely to be related reciprocally, the relations are simply indistinguishable. The four Trinitarian models of Chapter III, however, are important here. This is not, of course, because they always directly lend support to a theology of innertrinitarian reciprocity, but because the various aspects of the relationality of the persons which are to be taken up in this theology are precisely what is developed in the four models. A theology of immanent Trinitarian reciprocity can therefore draw on the differentiated economic data with which the Trinitarian theologies surveyed in Chapter III already begin.

The contribution of the contemporary Trinitarian tradition to the social doctrine of the Trinity can arguably be decisive at this point, for the images of revealedness, atonement, anointing, and eschatological fulfilment provide a wealth of specifically relational content for Trinitarian Pneumatology, and a content which has already been developed in these theologies in a systematic way. On the basis of the contemporary Trinitarian thesis that the economic is the immanent Trinity, indeed, this concrete relationality has become a major, perhaps the major, theme of Trinitarian theology, since the sending of the Son and Spirit and their salvation-historical relatedness as the "two hands of the

Father" are constitutive of the economic Trinity. No Trinitarian theology which presupposes the contemporary Trinitarian thesis, therefore, can ultimately avoid taking up these relations into the theology of the immanent Trinity. Thus the thematization in post-Barthian and post-Rahnerian Trinitarian theology in particular of the obedience of the incarnate Son to the Father, the loving unity of the Father and the Son in the Spirit even in the event of the cross, the anointing of the Son with the Spirit, and so on, flows from this systematic starting-point.⁵³ What we are concerned with here is not an abstract series of processions within the divine being, by which its unity is differentiated in a threefold way, but rather the living, historical reciprocity of the Trinitarian persons in the concrete events of the economy of salvation.

A future theology of Spirit-Son reciprocity in a social doctrine of the Trinity might thus begin with the concrete, economic relationality between the Spirit and Christ, based on an analysis of the role of the Holy Spirit in Christology and of Christ in Pneumatology as suggested in the previous section, and on the ideas of Trinitarian relationality as developed in the various models of Chapter III. In the economy, however, what the Spirit "gives" to

⁵³In Barth and Rahner, of course, this starting-point is combined with a particular thesis concerning the self-communication of God, so that the economic Trinitarian relations tend to be assimilated to the self-communication paradigm. It is for this reason above all that both Barth, op. cit., I/1, pp. 355ff., and Rahner, op. cit., pp. 103ff., criticize the terminology of Trinitarian "persons," and opt instead for the term "modes of being." However, the deeper implication of the view that the Trinity in itself is both known from what it is ad extra and that it "is" what it is ad extra in the sense of Rahner's axiom is that the relations of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which are more complex than that given in the self-communication paradigm, be taken up into discussion of the immanent Trinity. This is precisely what has happened in post-Barthian and post-Rahnerian theology. In this sense, the positions of Barth and Rahner, contrary to their expressed intentions, lead to a social doctrine of the Trinity.

Christ and what Christ "gives" to the Spirit in their reciprocal economic relationship is not interchangeable. It is possible, for example, to say on the basis of the anointing theme that Christ is filled with the Spirit, and thus that the Spirit is the "unction" of Christ, but one would have no economic basis for the converse statement that the Spirit is "filled" with Christ. What the Spirit receives from Christ is not an anointing, but rather, as in the Johannine tradition, "what is Christ's" (Jn. 16: 14), i.e., the particular Christocentric form of his mission after Jesus' death and resurrection. If one were to abstract from this in a theology of the immanent Trinity, it would be possible to say, for example, that the Spirit and the Son relate mutually to one another in the fellowship of the divine Trinitarian life, but this would hardly be adequate to the economic starting-point. We know that in the economy, the Spirit rests upon the Son, and that the Son gives the Spirit to those who believe. Each has relations of activity and passivity to the other, but this involves more than the simple reversal of an identical active and passive relation. Within the Trinitarian life, a relation of reciprocity obtains between the Spirit and the Son, not a relation which is identical on each side, but a relation of activity and passivity which is appropriate to each, and which cannot be identified with the procession of either without serious consequences for the entire social model which the economy of salvation appears to require.

If, however, the active and passive mutual relations of the Spirit and the Son can be differentiated on the basis of the economic content of the relations, they can also be differentiated in a social doctrine of the Trinity in terms of the relations each of the two has, not to the

other, but also to the Father in their respective relations to the other.⁵⁴ Thus, according to Staniloae, for example:

The Son sees the Father not only as he by whom he is begotten, but also as him from whom the other proceeds.... But in his link with his other other [i.e., the Spirit], or in the procession of this one from himself, the Father does not forget the Son as Son, but insofar as the Third Person also proceeds from him, all the complex richness of his relationship with the Son can be seen. ... In his turn the Son knows in the light of his other, by whom the Father lives in all the richness of his love for the Son - the Son knows his Father and his love towards him more fully. Not only does the Father by his link with the Spirit live his love towards the Son in its fullness, that is to say not only does the Son shine out brightly towards the Father in the light of the Spirit cast by the Father on the Son, but also the Spirit is fully realized from the Father by the Son.⁵⁵

It is possible, in fact, to make the following fourfold distinction in the interpersonal relations between the Spirit and the Son. In the active relation of the Spirit to the Son, the Spirit is related to the Son as the Son of the Father; in the passive relation of the Son to the Spirit which corresponds to this, the Son is related to the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father. Similarly, in the active relation of the Son to the Spirit, the Son is related to the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father; in the passive relation of the Spirit to the Son, finally, the

⁵⁴Richard's analogy of a community of love, involving three persons and not just two, also requires that a genuine reciprocity between the Spirit and the Son should involve the Father as well.

⁵⁵Staniloae, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

Spirit is related to the Son as the Son of the Father. The distinctions thus made in the reciprocal relations between the Spirit and the Son are important from the point of view of the social doctrine of the Trinity, since on the basis of the social analogy, none of the persons is what he is except in relation to the other two. The persons as well as the relations, therefore, can be seen to be genuinely distinct.

Clearly, any Trinitarian relation which is taken up from the economy into the theology of the immanent Trinity must be understood under a kenotic qualification, so that the apophatic character of the immanent Trinity is preserved. The task of developing a theology of the innertrinitarian relations from the economy has, therefore, to reckon seriously with the paradox which has emerged from our study, that an adequate doctrine of the immanent Trinity is only possible when an apophatic reticence about it is embraced. This does not mean, however, that nothing whatever can be said about the immanent Trinitarian relations. The kenotic character of the economic, and the ultimately apophatic character of the immanent Trinity, do not preclude all knowledge of the immanent Trinity; rather, these are simply the qualities that define the scope of our knowledge of the Trinity, and thus make it what it is. As we have seen, the terms "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" themselves are analogies, as are the terms "filiation" and "spiration." This does not, however, prevent us from abstracting from the usual finite sense of the terms in developing a Trinitarian theology, or even in the most simple affirmation of Trinitarian faith. The same can, in principle, be said of the concrete salvation-historical relations of the persons as the basis for a theology of innertrinitarian relationality. An abstraction from the finite, temporal relations which are thus described is clearly required, but this does not mean that nothing whatever will be left at the end.

In its emphasis on the economy, therefore, contemporary Trinitarian theology has pointed the way to a further development in understanding of the Trinitarian life of God as relational. It reveals again, if only through its limitations, that it is necessary to move beyond the kenotic form of the economy to a proper level of abstraction in the theology of the immanent Trinity, and yet correctly focuses attention on the fact that our knowledge of the immanent Trinity comes only by way of the economy. Given these qualifications, however, it would appear that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity can indeed be deepened by the new appraisal of the concrete relationality of the persons in the economy which has taken place in recent theology. Although a number of questions have been raised about this theology, chiefly concerning the kenotic character of the economic Trinity, the apophatic character of the immanent Trinity, and the notions of dialectical Trinitarianism and the subjectivity of God, its basic orientation to the economy undoubtedly provides a fruitful basis for future discussion.

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