CREATION AND THE TRINITY

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THE DOCTRINE of the Trinity will be elaborated and defended here in a way that demands philosophical theology. It will be maintained that the doctrine stems from *both* revelational *and* speculative roots, and that its defense must appeal to and acknowledge both. The argument will put forward a set of speculative notions that articulate an abstract metaphysical theory of creation. Then the traditional conception of the Trinity will be related to the speculative categories, first in general, and later with reference to certain dilemmas crucial to the orthodoxy of the Trinitarian formulations: for instance, economic versus immanent Trinitarianism, modalism and monarchianism, the distinction between creating and begetting, and so forth. At the end it will be apparent, in outline at least, that the particularities and unique claims of the Trinitarian doctrine that stem from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ can be given general and critical, though not particular and demonstrative, articulation in the notions of the creation theory. That is, the speculative theory says only general things about the Trinitarian persons and unity; but it says general things that are liable to particular specification by precisely the elements exhibited in the historical revelation.

A general defense of this connection between revelation and speculation is a topic for another essay.[1] But a word can be said here about the advantage of such a connection.

Speculation can make no claim to prove a revelational thesis. Yet it can exhibit the fact that the revelational claim is neither contradictory nor unintelligent by articulating the general features of the claim in an abstract and consistent set of categories. Most arguments *against* revelational doctrines (such as the Trinity) do in fact try to show the doctrines self-contradictory or unintelligent.[2] Furthermore, the speculative interpretation of a doctrine rooted in revelation relates

[1] Such an essay would have to treat principally the impact of Kant and transcendental philosophy on the theological tradition's use of reason and experience.

[2] Even Schleiermacher, concerned as he was to preserve the dogmatic truths in the doctrine of the Trinity, expressed his frustration at making internal sense of the doctrine. "The ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity demands that we think of each of the three Persons as equal to the Divine Essence, and *vice versa*, and each of the three Persons as equal to the others. Yet we cannot do either the one or the other, but can only represent the Persons in a gradation, and thus either represent the unity of the Essence as less real than the three Persons, or *vice versa*" (*The Christian Faith*, tr. Mackintosh and Stewart [tr. of 2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928] Prop. 171, p. 742).

the doctrine to the other elements of experience with which the speculation connects. This does not, of course, prove the revelation, or even make it more plausible than otherwise, as some have thought. For the revelation has to be *received* to be related to anything else, and the authority of its reception is the critical element. But speculative articulation does elaborate its meaning and show what connections stand or fall with the truth of the doctrine.

The chief contribution of speculation to revelation is precisely the abstract precision with which it can state the doctrine. The articulated doctrine of the Trinity is already several steps away from the revelatory events themselves. The reason theology is driven to systematic interpretation in the first place is that the relatively immediate responsive utterances, even for several removes from the event, are too concrete to be precise.[3] And precision is called for when the problem of error arises. The history of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity is an illustration of this. Definition of the doctrine came directly from the controversies over heretical interpretations of tradition and Scripture.[4] The heretics usually had good traditional and scriptural sources on their side; but the orthodox won because they were able to articulate the heart of Christian doctrine more consistently and comprehensively in terms of their partially speculative Trinitarian conceptions. The difficulty, in fact, that has always been felt with the Trinitarian terminology of the great councils is that it is not precise enough; even those who reject the speculative terms of the Trinitarian distinctions often do so not because they are speculative in the first instance, but because they are lacking in the speculative virtues of precision and consistency.[5]

THE METAPHYSICS OF CREATION

Since the argument is that speculation about creation furnishes a general model for interpreting the Trinity, we must begin with the theory of creation. The remarks of this section should be taken as a

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[3] See John E. Smith's excellent analysis of the ramifications of this point in *Reason and God* (New Haven, 1961) chap. 7, esp. pp. 153–56.

[4] As John H. Leith has argued, "Heresy is so important a factor in the origin of creeds that it tempts the commentator to exaggerate its role. As was said long ago, creeds are signposts to heresies" (*Creeds of the Churches*, ed. J. H. Leith [Garden City, N.Y., 1963] p. 9). Prof. Leith's introductory essay, "The Creeds and Their Role in the Church," is very instructive.

[5] See Schleiermacher, *op. cit.* If the doctrine were not speculatively inept, as he thought it, it is unlikely that he would have distinguished it so sharply from experience. He would have been more sympathetic to Calvin's treatment (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 13, 3–5), which holds speculation to an interpretation of scriptural experience.

philosophical hypothesis that might make sense on a very abstract level of what Christians want to say about God as Trinity.

Suppose that *God is the creator of everything that has determinate identity.*[6] What does this entail about the character of God in relation to the created order?

Obviously, the first feature of God to be recognized is that He is the creator or source of everything determinate. The determinations not only are *what* they are but *are* what they are because of their dependence on God as creator; they are totally conditioned by their relation to their creator. God, on the other hand, by virtue of the fact that the determinations derive their whole being from Him, cannot be conditioned by them *in His aseity*. The very fact that the determinations depend on God totally means that God must be independent of them. Creating them, God makes Himself creator, a relative feature; but the presupposition of creation is the independent reality of the creator. Our knowledge of God's abysmal aseity, strictly speaking, is knowledge of the implications of His created relations with the world as creator, not of His aseity taken as an object.[7]

The second feature creation entails for God is more complex. There is a sense in which the created determinations are themselves a feature of God, the same sense in which a person's deeds are part of his identity. People, of course, have effects they can walk away from; the dependence of the determinations on God, however, is so complete that they cannot be without His creative presence; therefore, so long as there is a determinate world, it constitutes God as the creator of a certain sort of world.

But what kind of identity is this? This is a metaphysical question. Determinations are always determinate relative to each other, and are therefore all complex, each being comprised both of features that relate to some other determinations and of features unique to itself.[8] As a unified complex, each determination is a harmony of a plurality of components. It is therefore a transcendental property of everything determinate to be a harmony of some sort. An analysis of harmony gives a clue as to what constitutes God's identity in the created product.

Specifically, there are two principles with metaphysical status involved in harmony. The first is that every harmony supposes plurality. Therefore we can say about the creator that He creates a world with plurality in it. This is not much, however, to know about God. Plural-

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[6] I have defended this supposition at great length in *God the Creator* (Chicago, 1968), especially chaps. 2–4. The detailed analysis of the relation between the creator and the created world is in chap. 4.

[7] See *ibid.*, pp. 74–88. [8] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–50 and the Appendix.

ity in itself is completely indefinite; what the pluralities are depends
on how they are harmonized, not on the fact that they are pluralities.
Since many have claimed that the absurdity in the world stems from
plurality, it is comforting to know that God is its creator; but this
still says little about God.

The second principle is that there are certain canons or norms of
harmonizing things. Not all kinds of features can be harmonized. The
formal norms that determine what can be harmonized, and in what
ways, are presupposed by all structural harmonies and given in-
stantiation in them; but the norms are not reducible to the harmonies,
since they are normative for any possible determinate structure. We
may, then, speak about norms in several ordered senses. The primary
sense refers to the norms that make all structures formally harmoni-
ous; in themselves they are indeterminate because prior to and pre-
supposed by all determination. In a secondary sense we can speak of
a particular determination's harmonic structure as a normative way of
measuring or combining its components. In this sense, every determina-
tion is "a good," because it is a normative way of unifying its plurality.
The reason it is normative is that its structure, just because it is har-
monious, embodies norms in the primary sense. A normative ideal is a
third sense of norm, usually mistaken as the primary sense; we can
speak of determinate ideals as imagined ways of getting more harmony
in the arrangement of given things than there is in the things just as
given.

What can we conclude about God from the norms of harmony? The
norms in the primary sense, *taken by themselves*, say nothing, since,
transcending structure, they are indeterminate. But norms in the
secondary sense, as the normative measures of the components of the
created harmonies, are the expressions of God (Jn 1:1-3). The reason
those secondary norms are expressions of God, however, is that they
are instantiations or specifications of norms in the primary sense. Norms
in the primary sense are uncreated, since they are indeterminate; but
they are what gives harmonious structure to all that is created. There-
fore, interpreting tradition and anticipating the argument below, we can
call norms in the primary sense the Word of God; norms in the second
sense constitute that Word "spoken," as it were, in creation. As a per-
son's identity is constituted by the determinate character of what he
does and says, so God's identity is constituted by the determinate char-
acter of His spoken Word, the created order that expresses Him in its
harmonies.

The third feature of God is the very act whereby He creates. This
act relates the abysmal creator to the created determinations. Fur-
thermore, the act accomplishes the creation both of the plurality in

determinations and of the determinate normative elements in harmony. The former gives no *special* character to the creative act, but the latter makes the act that which constitutes the determinations normative expressions of the creator. The act, therefore, has a mediative function promising to relate not only the created order with God but also the Son or normative expression with the Father.

If we ask what the nature of the act is, however, there is a problem. A person's act consists in its accomplishment of an end through a series of steps or stages, the order for which can be formulated as a rule or blueprint for action. There are no stages or steps in divine creation, however, since there can be no determinate medium through which the creation of all determinations takes place; creation *ex nihilo* is immediate. A person's act has the character of producing its product, and if the product were all that is determinately involved, then the nature of the act would be nothing but the nature of the product considered as being produced (*natura naturans*). So with God's act, its only nature is the nature of its product considered as being divinely produced—that is, the product as the normatively measured expression of the creator.

These three features of God, His being the source of the creative act, His being the normative terminus of it, and His being the act itself, are implications of the speculative hypothesis that God creates everything determinate. They are features God has because of His relation to the created order. There are many other things to say about the created order that stem from its relation to God, but these are not to the present point. The general speculative hypothesis itself might be made plausible in several ways. It would help, for instance, to prove that everything determinate is in fact created.[9] It would help also to show that the hypothesis is fruitful for interpreting pervasive phenomena of religion.[10] The hypothesis could also be tested in a wide variety of domains that suppose justifiable norms. But for the moment let it be considered merely as a hypothesis to help make sense of the doctrine of the Trinity.

THE TRINITARIAN PERSONS

The suggestions which the creation theory provides for interpreting the persons of the Trinity are the following: God the Father is the creator, God the Son is the determinate product of the creative act *in its character as the normative expression of the creator*, and God the Holy Spirit is the creative act itself mediating normatively between the creator and the product.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 64–74.   [10] *Ibid.*, chaps. 9–13.

Father

In early Christian writings the Father was nearly always identified with the creator.[11] The identification of Father and creator as interpreted in the present theory, however, differs in one crucial respect from the view of certain early writers, who supposed that the creator-Father is the real whole God of whom the Son and Spirit are elements or extensions.[12] Rather, as will become apparent, the creator in the present theory is distinct from and on a par with the normative product and the created act. In later Christian thought the Father, Son, and Spirit were identified as each a person of the Godhead, and it is this more orthodox position that the creation theory supports.

The motive behind the Church Fathers' interpretation was an acute sense of monotheism, of the need to recognize the unity of God behind all distinctions.[13] This problem may be posed in terms of the speculative creation theory by asking whether the creator is closer than the other persons to the sense of divinity that is independent of a connection with the creation. The nature of the creator by definition means that the creator must be independent in reality of what He creates, since what He creates is dependent solely upon Him; and since the character of being creator depends on the actual creating of something (without creating something, God is not creator), there would seem to be a transcendent ground beyond the feature of being creator to which that feature is the closest step.

To be sure, the reality of God must transcend the character He has as creator. But this transcendent reality is utterly and necessarily indeterminate, known only by the implications of the determinate nature of creatorship. The transcendent ground is a mystery in terms of its transcendence of God's determinate character, but only in these terms. Beyond or apart from transcending the determinate character of God as Father, Son, and Spirit there is nothing, not even mystery, for us. What it means speculatively is that God is *not* apart from His determinate character, but in it because He has created. Since God is not creator except that He creates something through His creative act, the act and the created things are just as close to the transcendent ground as the ground's character of being creator. It is God's immediate connection with His act and product that makes Him also creator. If

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[11] Cf., e.g., Justin's *First Apology* 8 and Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* 1, 10, 1; also Eph 1–3. J. N. D. Kelly says that "at this period the title 'almighty' connoted God's all pervading control and sovereignty over reality, just as 'Father' referred primarily to His role as creator and author of all things" (*Early Christian Doctrines* [2nd. ed.; New York, 1960] p. 83).

[12] That is, the Apologists. See Kelly, pp. 100–104.   [13] Cf. Kelly, pp. 83–87.

the act and product can be successfully identified with Spirit and Son, it will be plain that God is just as much Spirit and Son as creator-Father; any one entails the other. (Of course, it should be recognized that to call the transcendence of God beyond His determinate creatorship a "ground" is to cheat; "ground" means the same thing as creator, and we are only pointing out the trans-self-referential character of the notion of creator.)

Son

The doctrine of Jesus as the Son of God is a central claim, especially when the New Testament sources are read in the light of later Trinitarian controversies. In its general form, the Christological thesis is that Jesus is Son of God because He is the incarnation of the creative Word (Col 1:13–20).

The creative Word must be spoken of in two senses, corresponding to the first two senses in which we may speak of norms. In the primary sense the Word "unspoken" is the form of pure normativeness, indeterminate in itself, that is embodied in anything that has a harmonious structure. In the secondary sense the Word "spoken" is the determinate expression of the creator, the harmonies created. What expresses the creator in determinate things is their formally normative way of combining their components. The Word is not determinate except as spoken, as embodied in things and expressing the Father. It does not make sense to think of the Word of God as being anything characteristic of the Father or determinate itself if it is not actually expressing the Father in the creations that are His products.

That there is a Word of God is not a uniquely Christian claim; the Jewish Wisdom literature is filled with it.[14] The Christian claim is that the Word is incarnate in Jesus, and its logical force is unheralded in either Greek or Jewish thought, Old Testament prophecies notwithstanding.[15] The force of the claim can be underscored by a contrast with an interpretation of Jesus characteristic of popular piety.

In the minds of many Christians, Jesus is the incarnation of the Word *because* He is perfect. What perfection in this context means can easily

[14] See Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., *Christ in Christian Tradition* (New York, 1965) pp. 27–35.

[15] See Prv 8:30–31; even Sir 24:8–29, which says that wisdom is to dwell with Jacob and Israel, and likens wisdom to a vine with abundant fruit (Jn 15:1–11), does not go so far as to assert an incarnation of wisdom. Wisdom, in fact, it says is the law of Moses (24:23). Interestingly, for Ben Sira (24:21) those who eat wisdom hunger for more and those who drink it thirst for more, whereas for John's Gospel those eating and drinking of Christ shall neither hunger nor thirst (6:35)—an unexpected pragmatic benefit of incarnate spiritual sustenance.

be interpreted by the creation theory: determinate harmonies have varying degrees of richness, and the richer ones can be called more harmonious than the poorer ones; consequently, whereas every harmony expresses the Father just because it is harmonious, some harmonies are more expressive than others, Jesus being somehow the best. What perfection means concretely can be interpreted in terms of the moral and aesthetic traditions of Greece and Israel, and is part of the common sense of our own culture. But to be perfect in a moral or aesthetic sense is not *ipso facto* to be an incarnation. A crucial distinction must be drawn between being a maximal instance of an ideal form or norm (perfection) and being God in the flesh (incarnation); the fact that "embodiment" is a synonym for both "instantiation" and "incarnation" only compounds the confusion. To say that Jesus is the incarnate Word is to say the He personally is the normative condition for the created order in the same sense that the formal norms or harmony are on a more general level. In other words, Jesus personally must be that "through which all things that are created, are created" as the formal normative condition for their possibility. Jesus must be the Word according to which the creator structures His creation (Jn 1:3); and He must be the transcendental condition according to which the created order expresses the creator.[16]

Therefore we must look at the specifics of the historical life of Jesus to see what it means to be the incarnation of the Word. The Christian claim is that by participation in Jesus' life the whole world attains or is restored to the acme of its created status, so that it expresses the Father according to its proper glory (Eph 1–2; 1 Pt 4:11, 5:10; cf. 2 Pt 1:3; Rom 8:19–22; Heb 2:10). The biography of Jesus is a cosmological account. Jesus is the divine incarnate Word precisely because His biography and the world's history relative to that biography accomplish the creation and redemption. The Christological question now becomes: Is Jesus of Nazareth one through whom the whole creation glorifies God properly? To answer it we examine Jesus' historical identity as a candidate Jewish Messiah, since this is apparently the historical figure who would redeem the world. The *specific* form of the

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[16] The theme of the lordship of Jesus means not only that Jesus rules the world but also that the world is a glorifying expression of God because it is in fact ruled by Jesus Christ. This lies behind Jesus' remark (to the Father): "all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them" (Jn 17:10 RSV); the work Jesus has accomplished (Jn 17:4), with the further work of the Spirit (Jn 16:14–15), makes those whom the Father has given Him (Jn 17:9) the proper possessions of the Father ("all mine are thine"). Cf. Paul's doctrine in Colossians: speaking of Jesus he says: "For in Him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to himself all things" (1:19–20 RSV); again: "For in Him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you

central Christological thesis is that Jesus is the incarnate Word be-
cause He is the Christ, the Messiah.[17]

Of course, this development is opposite from the history of Christian
understanding. Jesus was first called Messiah and only later was this
recognized to entail being the incarnate Word.[18] But if the historical
Jesus is the Messiah, then the Messiah is not what the Jews historically
had expected. The Jews balk at Christianity today, not so much be-
cause of Jesus' humiliation, but because of the cosmological implica-
tions concerning incarnation drawn from historical Messiahship.[19] The
cosmological claim is not just that Jesus is the best instance of the for-
mal norms of harmony, but that He is the norms themselves, doing for
the created order what they do.

To speak of the normativeness in the harmonies of things is to speak
very abstractly and vaguely. We understand it on the vague level per-
haps by analogies with mathematics and art. To see what normativeness
is more exactly, to see what the determinate expression of the creator
is in detail, we must look at the whole domain of determinate things
bit by bit.[20] In human affairs we must look to history, especially to the
history of the Jews and Christians. Specifically, Christians say God is
humanly and divinely present perfectly in Jesus Christ; and Jesus not
only *shows* but *is* the Word Himself.

Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is the creative act mediating between the creator
and created product, i.e., between the Father and Son.[21] The Spirit
mediates through the actual creation. But what is mediated is the nor-
mativeness.[22] Through creating something the creator gives determinate

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have come to fulness of life in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority" (2:9-10
RSV).

[17] Hence the supreme importance of the very early credal statements in Mt 16:16,
Acts 17:3, and Jn 11:27. Cf. also Lk 2:11, Acts 2:36, 9:22, and Jn 20:31.

[18] The incarnation of the Word came first to clear expression in John's Gospel, gen-
erally recognized as a late New Testament writing.

[19] See Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein's brilliant essay "Thomas Altizer's Apocalypse,"
in *America and the Future of Theology*, ed. Wm. A. Beardslee (Philadelphia, 1967) pp.
32–40.

[20] For the technical use of the term "normative," see my "Intuition," *International
Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1967) 556–90, esp. pp. 581–89.

[21] Cf. Gn 1:2–3; this passage can mean that the Spirit of God moving over the face
of the waters was the condition for His Word ("Let there be . . . ") being spoken. This,
of course, gives a functional interpretation to the concept of Word; the writer of the pas-
sage was not a Logos-Christologist.

[22] This claim has a cosmological generality not directly expressed in Scripture. But
see Rom 14:17: "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteous-

structure to the normativeness or harmony of which He, apart from creation, is the utterly indeterminate form. Conversely, it is through the creative act that the created determinations are normative expressions of the creator. Only in virtue of the fact that it is created can the created world contain the divine Word. Thus it is from the Holy Spirit that the world's sanctity is derived.

The speculative thesis that the creative act mediates between the creator and His normative expression can be made concrete in the doctrine of the Spirit only by reference to the historical Christ, since the Holy Spirit is Christ's historical Spirit (1 Pt 1:11). This reference can be made economically through a discussion of certain standard Christological problems.[23]

First is the heretical Ebionite claim that Jesus could at most be a perfect human being.[24] That He is a perfect human being is not to be denied. But His perfection constitutes the true divinity of the second person of the Trinity. Jesus is the human incarnation of the normativeness in God's creative act. Because of this, the whole world glorifies God and expresses the creator by participating in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is not the structural fact that Jesus is the incarnation that is in itself important, but rather the implication that the whole created domain can fulfil itself as the terminus of the divine creative act through participation in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:17-19). The surprise of the Incarnation is that it shows that all the rest of the world cannot be fulfilled in its created status without participating in Christ (Rom 8:20-39). This is not deductive from the theory of creation, but it is consistent with it and is what is apparent from Christian examination of what creation in historical detail reveals itself to be. If Jesus' actual identity as a perfect being has this eschatological significance, then being that kind of perfect man is no small thing and is not to be taken as an exclusion of divinity.

Second is the opposite heretical claim of Docetism that Jesus Christ could not have been an actual human being but only the appearance of one.[25] This claim is rebutted easily within the creation theory be-

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ness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (RSV). See also the many passages where the Spirit is the power by which God does something: e.g., Mt 1:18, Acts 20:28, Rom 5:5, 15:13-16.

[23] In this and following discussions of Christological and Trinitarian controversies the historical problems are subordinated to dialectical ones. The following books give adequate historical accounts of the positions discussed: J. N. D. Kelly, op. cit.; C. C. Richardson, The Doctrine of the Trinity (Nashville, 1958), a careful criticism of the doctrine; Claude Welch, In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology (New York, 1952).

[24] Cf. Kelly, pp. 139-40.

[25] Ibid., pp. 140-42. See Ignatius' argument (Epistle to the Trallians 10-11): "But

cause of its identification of the second person of the Trinity with the normativeness in actual created things. It would be no indignity to the second person of the Trinity to be a real live human being. Obviously the tender spot of the present interpretation is to show sufficient distinction between the second person and the world.

Third is the adoptionist claim that Jesus was a mere man who was sanctified by the Spirit to become Lord and Saviour.[26] True, it is because of the Spirit's mediation through creation that Jesus is divine, but this is not something overlaid on an ordinary human nature. It is by the Spirit's creative activity that every created thing embodies to some degree the normativeness of the second person of the Trinity; likewise, it is through the Spirit's creative activity that Jesus is the perfect incarnation in whom the world is fulfilled. The adoptionists are right that if Jesus had done something wrong, if He had been disobedient, unfaithful, or arrogant, He would not have been the Christ. Further, they are right in saying that the reason He did *not* do something wrong was the presence of the Spirit to Him. But they are wrong in not seeing that the perfect presence of the Spirit was constitutive of the very being of Jesus because He was by nature the Christ. It was because of the Spirit that Jesus was the divine Christ, and it was because He was the divine Christ that the Spirit was present to Him.

Fourth is the Patripassianist claim that Jesus' suffering (and whole life) was a combination of merely human pain and the suffering of the Father present in Christ by the Spirit.[27] This claim attributes divinity to Jesus only in the sense that the Father is present to Him, and hence the only *divine* suffering is that of the Father in Christ. But it is Jesus Christ Himself who is the second person of the Trinity, and His human suffering is itself the suffering of the second person. The Father in the Spirit makes Jesus the suffering Christ. The eschatological significance

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there are men who do not believe in God, that is, they have no faith. If, as they declare, His suffering was only an illusion (it is they themselves who are mere illusion), why then am I a prisoner, and why do I pray to fight with the beasts? I would then be dying in vain.... For it is through the cross that Christ in His passion calls all of you to be His members. Hence the head cannot be born without limbs, for God promises us union, that is, Himself" (*The Fathers of the Primitive Church*, ed. and tr. Herbert A. Musurillo, S.J. [New York, 1966] p. 75).

[26] Cf. Kelly, *op. cit.* See especially the references to Paul of Samosata in Grillmeier, *op. cit.*

[27] Historically, Patripassianism was the result of monarchianism—for instance, in Noetus of Smyrna and Praxeas (see Kelly, p. 120; Grillmeier, p. 144; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, ed. and tr. Ernest Evans [London, 1949]). Consequently, the mediating function of Spirit I have attributed to the position is a historical distortion, as is the entailed distinction between the Father and the nondivine elements in the Son. What is of interest here, however, is the structure of the problem.

of this is that we participate through the Spirit in the suffering of the Son (1 Pt 4:13-14).

ECONOMY AND IMMANENCE

Let us now take up several traditional problems of the Trinity as a whole. Classically, the contrast has been made between the economic view of the Trinity and the immanent view. According to the immanent view, the distinctions between the persons are in God as He is Himself;[28] according to the economic view, they are rather in God's revelation to the world, or at least in God's connection with the world.[29] The orthodox position has been to hold to both views. If one holds to the immanent view, the economic view usually follows; but many people have held the economic without the immanent.

Our own suggestion attributes the distinction of the persons to God immanently in the following way. God's determinate character comprises the threefold totality of His being (1) creator, (2) creative act, and (3) normative terminus of the creative act. And this determinate character is Trinitarian. To show indeed that this is an immanent or "essential" doctrine of the Trinity, two steps must be taken. First, it must be indicated that all three elements in this Trinitarian distinction are properly and equally divine. Second, it must be made clear that the locus of the Trinitarian distinctions is the real and true God, and not just an economic appearance of some God who lies behind all three characters of creator, act, and product.

The task of showing all persons of the Trinity to be equally divine seems to be different in the case of each person. For it would seem that everyone would accept the claim that the creator is divine, and probably His act as well. Most thinkers at first, however, would reject the claim that the product as the expression of the creator is divine, precisely on the ground that being the created product is the very contrast to being divine; it would seem that what is meant by saying something is not divine is that it is created instead. But it will be argued here that the case for all three persons is the same: if the creator is properly divine, then so are the other persons. This is a denial of subordinationism. Below we shall consider the thesis that none of these persons is divine, but for now we shall assume that the creator is.

In traditional Trinitarian theology the divine unity of the persons has always been attributed to the mediating function of the Holy Spirit, interpreted in our categories as the creative act. So it is with

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[28] Welch, *op. cit.*, Appendix A, pp. 293 f. For a discussion of the general issues, see Kelly, chap. 10.   [29] Kelly, pp. 107-15; Welch, *op. cit.*

our model. The creator is what He is in virtue and only in virtue of exercising His creative act. His character as creator is constituted by His creative acting. Therefore the Spirit-act is divine in precisely the same sense that the creator is, since they are mutually constituting features.

Now is there any sense in which the product can be detached from the creator and creative act? If there is no such sense, then we are allowed to say that the product is divine, since it is what makes the act be a doing of something and the creator be an actual creator. An act which produced nothing would not be an act, nor a creator who created nothing a creator.

I submit that there is no sense in which the product can be detached from or disunited with the other persons, since it would need some independent being in order to be detached. Yet by definition its whole being depends utterly on its connection with the creator and act. On the human analogy, we distinguish a person's deeds from his person by a kind of detachment or disunity. But this is because his actions take place in a medium of space, time, and other things that give his deeds and the results of his actions a locus other than the person himself. A person can walk away from his deeds. Furthermore, human actions always share partly the character of the medium or environment in which they take place, so that we can attribute responsibility for a deed to a person although we cannot attribute to him the power to create it *ex nihilo*. But in the case of God there is no medium for His actions; the product is produced immediately. A medium, to make a difference, would have to be determinate, hence created, and therefore could not be a condition of creation as such. Further, there can be no features of the creator's deeds that He did not Himself create, since every feature is determinate and every determination created. Consequently, the created product is of a piece with the creative act and the creator. Its nature is immanent in the natures of creator and act in the sense that they could not be what they are *at all* (not even a little bit of a creator or a feeble effort of act) without the created product. The product is constitutive of the natures of the other persons. To deny this would require acknowledgment of an independent status for it that would deny the creatorship of creator and act. In other words, the creation theory of God is essentially Trinitarian: God cannot be conceived simply as a creator over against a world He creates. (To be sure, this point is one-sided. Christian theology must be able to articulate a distinction between the world and the Word. Otherwise it falls into the difficulties of Hegelianism. We shall return to this problem below.)

In the light of the attempt above to show that the created product qua created is within the divine Trinity, it is likely that the strongest charge to be brought against the general suggestion is that it is no immanent doctrine of the Trinity at all, rather a solely economic view in disguise. For if the created product is divine, the kind of divinity involved must be of some inferior sort. Furthermore, since we have acknowledged that the creator must have some reality independent of His character of being creator, the implicit assumption of this view is that the creator's transcendent independence is the true Divinity, and that the whole of the determinate Trinity is derivative because it is dependent on the creative act that makes all determinate things. Finally, the charge goes, the chief trait of the merely economic view is that the distinction between the persons of the Trinity depends strictly upon the connection with the world and that this is all that underlies *our* Trinitarian distinctions.

First, let it be answered that God's divinity lies in His Trinitarian nature, not in His independent reality beyond the Trinitarian distinctions. In fact, given the reality of the creation, with the Trinitarian distinctions, there is no *further* reality to God at all. He does not have some primordial nature *beyond* the Trinitarian one. His reality as independent source of the being of the created realm is transformed into and contained within His nature as creator, act, and product. All that the trans-self-referential character of His creatorship means is that there can be no determinate necessity that God be creator. There is no necessity that God have any nature whatsoever, since any determinate necessity depends on God having the peculiar character of creator; this is the truth of the claim for transcendence. After the fact, so to speak, we can say that He does have His Trinitarian nature nonetheless. Given God's self-determination as creator, act, and product, there is no need to search beyond for anything else divine. If anything is divine at all, it is the Trinity.

If God were not to have created anything, including even the determinate structure of intelligibility, then there would be no ground for saying that He has any nature whatsoever. More particularly, there would be no ground for saying that He has a divine nature. Divinity is a meaningful character only in relation to determinate things, and if there are no determinate things, and hence no relation to them, then God could not be divine or anything else. God makes Himself divine when He creates, in the only meaningful sense of divinity. Of course, this claim would not be correct if we did not also claim that everything determinate, including the structure of intelligibility and possibility, is created. If, prior to creating, there were a

possibility in God of creating the world, then He would have to have
some nature to have the possibility; and that nature would have to be
divine. But the belief that He did or could have such a possibility
stems from a misleading analogy with human creativity. Persons'
creative acts are not only conditioned by the media and natures of
the things acted upon, but also by the prior character of the persons.
Persons are discursive individuals such that every act is conditioned
by the feedback on their natures of their previous acts. This, how-
ever, is an element of the finitude of human acts that God's per-
fectly free and infinitely self-constituting creative act does not share.
Rejecting the analogy with human acts at this point, it is not strange
to say that God has no nature prior to His self-naturing, and that
once His reality has its Trinitarian nature, that is the whole of its
nature.

It might be thought that the distinction between the unspoken and
spoken Word holds a clue for distinguishing an immanent Trinity
from an economic one. It would seem that the Word unspoken is in-
ternal to the Godhead and unconnected with the world, whereas the
spoken Word is God present in the world. But the Word unspoken is
indeterminate, and consequently indistinguishable from any other
person within the Godhead. The only reason we can talk about the un-
spoken Word is by inference from the determinate and normative
spoken Word expressing the Father; this is exactly parallel to the
distinction between the transcendent, indeterminate one who makes
himself creator, and the determinate creator He makes Himself. Just
as God is not transcendently indeterminate, having determined Him-
self, so the Word is not unspoken but spoken. The Word is not some
"what" before it is spoken; it is precisely "what" *is* spoken.

The second part of the criticism of our view is that God, in the
transcendence of His nature as creator, is more divine than the deriva-
tive divinity of His derivative Trinitarian nature. The answer to this
is implicit in what was said above: divinity cannot apply to anything
beyond the Trinitarian nature. The question whether the Trinitarian
nature itself is derivative is an important one, however. True, it is
made or constituted by God in His transcendent reality. But it is not
derivative from or made out of any transcendent primordial God-stuff,
for there is no such thing. God is no thing except as Trinitarian crea-
tor. Were He not creator, He would be indeterminate and indistinguish-
able from nothing. His transcendence of His creatorship and Trinity
means only that what He is He did not have to be, that He is Himself
freely.

The last part of the criticism is that the distinction of the persons of

the Trinity depends on the connection of God with the world, and that this is a merely economic view of Trinity. True, we claim that the distinction between the persons depends on the creation of the world. But the claim is also that the world, *in the respect that is crucial to the distinctions between the persons*, is not merely mundane but also divine, a part of the divinity of the other persons of the Trinity. What is rejected is the view that God is on one side, the world on the other, and that revelation or creative activity is a bridge between the two; if the distinction between the persons depended solely on the bridge so conceived, the persons would not be immanent to God's own nature. Since we reject the Aristotelian-substantialist model of God and world as separate and conjoined, the fact that the connection between God and world constitutes the distinction of Trinitarian persons does not mean that our view is merely economic. The connection between God and world is internal to God.

Ironically, the hardest problem for our Trinitarian suggestion is the defense of the economic side, not the immanent side. The real test for our case comes in making out the distinction between the begotten Son and the world. If this test is failed, then no meaning can be attached to the revelation of God to what is other than Him, and this is the problem to which economic Trinitarianism is addressed. The truth in the economic view is that God is indeed present in three persons to the world; but if the world cannot be distinguished from God, then this is not possible.

However, the focus of the problem of Christian theology is the claim that Jesus is the Christ. The problem is that Jesus, a creature like all men, is also the divine Lord, "begotten, not made." Therefore, just as the life of faith is focused on the problem of grasping Christ as both man and God, so more abstract theology ought to have its focus centered on the problem of distinguishing and grasping together the created world and begotten divinity. Speculative theories that begin with an antecedent begotten Son and try to meld Him onto a separately created world do not reflect the proper locating of the problem as it is found in the concrete life of faith. The advantage of our own view is that its problematic points are in the right place from the standpoint of revelational theology. Many difficulties with traditional speculative categories for Trinitarianism stem from an improper locating of the focal problems.

In summary of this section, let it be understood that the persons of the Trinity are taken to be eternal, relative, and connected with creation. They are eternal in the sense that they are ontologically prior to things that happen in time, since time is one of the things created.

Furthermore, they are related in such a way that their natures are determinate only in terms of each other: the Father is determinately the Father only with respect to the Son in the Spirit, etc. This is the perichoresis of the ancient Fathers and the subsistent relation theory of Augustine rendered in terms of the speculative theory of creation. Since the persons are interdeterminate, their distinction is eternal from yet another point of view, and it is false to say of the Son that "there was when He was not."[30] The connection of the persons of the Trinity with the world is the crucial problem to be pursued further.

BEGETTING AND CREATING

In the ancient Trinitarian controversies it was seen from many quarters that an ordering of the persons is essential.[31] But it was also seen that, if the ordering of the persons is of a piece with the order between God and world, then subordinationism, with its degenerate forms of divinity, is inescapable.[32] Therefore two orders were acknowledged. The order of God and world was said to be that of creator-created. The order between the persons was said to be that of begettor-begotten for Father and Son, and that of procession, "spiration," or generation for the Spirit from both other persons. Theologians have always been hard pressed to make out these distinctions.

Creation is said to be the making of something out of nothing. Begetting is making something out of the begettor.[33] The trouble with the usual interpretation of this distinction, however, is that the theory of begetting leads right back into subordinationism. If the Son is made out of the substance of the Father, then either He is everything the Father is and is indistinguishable from Him, or He has only some of the Father's substance and is less than the Father. The first alternative denies the distinction between the persons, and the second is subordinationist. To provide for the distinction between the persons, the Father, although perhaps using His own substance, would have to give some determinate features to the Son that the Father did not already have. These features would then seem to be

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[30] The battle cry of the Arians *ēn pote hote ouk ēn*.

[31] Without some form of order, Sabellianism in one guise or another is the result.

[32] For instance, Arius' argument on its dialectical side was that the Father alone is unoriginate or self-existent and that everything else is dependent, including Christ. The opposing argument was that the Father is both unoriginated (*agenētos*) and unbegotten (*agennētos*), that the world is originated or created, and that Christ is merely begotten, not originated. This opposition, however, depends on making out the created-begotten distinction we are dealing with. See Kelly, pp. 227–31.

[33] So Arius, denying that to beget (*gennān*) differs from to create (*poiein*), said the Son is created *ex nihilo*.

de novo, or *ex nihilo,* and the distinction between creating and begetting crinkles up. To provide for the equal divinity of Father and Son, the process of begetting the Son must not involve an alteration in Fatherly substance that makes the Son's part of it less than the Father's. Yet, as Aristotle pointed out, any change in the perfect is for the worse.[34] These are the chief difficulties with the notion of begetting.

The difficulties stem from the Aristotelian notion of substance as that which has primary identity, and we have rejected that speculative scheme implicitly already. Furthermore, it is apparent from what has been said in previous sections how our own theory of creation would resolve the problems of the relations between the persons. The created domain, *as the normative terminus and expression of the creator's act,* can be said to be "begotten."

The difficulty to be faced on the view defended here is to make a distinction between begetting and creating. The speculative theory is called a theory of creation because of the philosophical use of the notion of creation. What must be done now is to determine what the *theological* tradition meant by the created order and see if that can be rendered within our speculative theory as something subordinate in the proper sense to the begotten Son.

As a matter of fact, what the ancient Fathers often meant by creation was something quite philosophical, dependent on the various speculative schemes prevalent at the time. With reference to this, we can only argue that our own speculative scheme is better on speculative grounds and allude to the straightforward philosophical defense of it.[35] The more strictly theological roots of the ancient creation doctrine were basically twofold.

First was the testimony of Scripture. The exegesis of Scripture, however, was usually dependent on philosophical views, and Scripture itself is not clear-cut regarding a distinction between creating and begetting.

The second root of the creation doctrine had more to do with theological implications of Scripture. In particular, if the work of redemption, especially the Incarnation, is to be significant, then the world that needs redeeming must have some independent status for God to work on. If redemption is to be significant for men, then this "independent status" cannot be some opposing evil divine principle, as the Manichees claimed, but had to be of the household of men. Furthermore, if the created order is simply identical with the divine Son, then the Incarnation would be nonsense. But the Incarnation is a great move of grace, not necessitated by the determinate character

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[34] *Metaphysics* 1074b27.   [35] In *God the Creator.*

of creation. Therefore, to protect the integrity of the Christian revelation in Christ, the Church Fathers had to emphasize the distinction between the begotten Son and the created, fallen world.

What is theologically necessary, therefore, is to have a world that at once can be fallen and redeemed.[36] Since the revelation is that redemption is actually accomplished in and by Jesus Christ, the world must be distant enough from the Son to be changed by His incarnation and close enough that His incarnation can be its proper redemption and fulfilment. The crucial theological notions that must be reflected in the distinction between the merely created status of the mundane world and the begotten status of the Son are fallenness and redemption.

But those are basically eschatological notions, including in the Incarnation the last judgment on things. Eschatology requires the doctrine of the Spirit, for it is only through the Spirit that the whole creation can participate in Christ and thus be the proper expression of the Father's creative act. We must suspect, therefore, that the notion of begetting is intrinsically connected with the notion of Spirit, and cannot be contrasted with creating except in conjunction with Spirit. The task of contrasting the order of the persons with the order in creation then boils down to this: (1) to show how, in the light of the creation theory, the world may be fallen and redeemed, and (2) to show how the redemption is accomplished by Father, Son, and Spirit. If some of the factors in the two orders coincide or appear to be the same things viewed from different contexts, this is no confusion as long as the proper theological motives of accounting for fallenness and redemption are kept uppermost. This again is to locate the speculative problem in the right place from the standpoint of theological faith.

1) The theory of creation notes that every created determinate thing is a harmony of one sort or other. Further, in its normativeness the harmony in the determinations is the expression of the Father. Not every mode of harmony in determinations like men is always the richest possible under the circumstances, and hence men have moral responsibilities; i.e., their actions are judgeable according to the normative character of their results. The created world being the particular thing it is, determinations like men have the capacity to live

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[36] It is interesting that this is exactly where Athanasius saw the issue. As Kelly says (p. 243), "In Athanasius's approach philosophical and cosmological considerations played a very minor part, and his guiding thought was the conviction of redemption." The most important meta-thesis of this paper is that only very abstract philosophical theology, such as is implied in the theory of creation, can preserve the concrete history and experience of religion. The fallacy of misplaced concreteness is always committed where concrete problems are treated as abstract, and vice versa.

so as to alienate their actions and themselves from their created function of expressing the Father in normative structures. This is not mere moral error; it is rejection of one's created status and the divine purpose of created existence, from which moral error may follow.[37] That men *are* fallen from their created status is the testimony of Christianity. The whole created world perhaps is distorted into participation in man's fall by man's perversion.

No created thing can cease to be an expression of the Father and still exist, since it must have a harmony in some mode or other in order to exist at all. But it can exist in a mode of harmony that does not express the Father in the way proper to it.

What about redemption? From what has been said already it is apparent that redemption is the restoration of the created domain to being the proper normative expression of the Father, the re-establishment of the created realm as the glorification of the Father. "Glorification" is the theological word for how the determinate harmonies reflect the Father as their normative ground. How can the world be made to glorify the Father? The Christian answer is through participation in the Son, Jesus Christ. The upshot of participation in the Son is that the world enjoys its proper, as opposed to fallen, created status. Through participation the created world can be said to be identical with the Son (the thesis to which the creation theory is committed): the normative fulfilment of the world in Christ is the normative expression of the Father, that is, the Son (1 Cor 12:4-6; 15:28; Eph 1:16-23).

The matter must not remain on the general level, however. Men's fallen state is something historical and particular, regardless of the fact that it is universally widespread. Something historical and particular must come about to accomplish the redemption and make the world's glorification of the Father a historical reality. Each determinate thing must glorify the Father particularly. Therefore, in the case of men, something particular for each man must be done to accomplish the redemptive glorification. For this we turn to Christ and the Spirit.

2) Jesus Christ is the redemptive incarnation of God the Son. This means, first, that He is a man; otherwise He would not be incarnate. Since men are particular men, Jesus Christ is a particular man.[38] Second, this means that He is the perfect expression of the Father. But He would not be a perfect expression of the Father, nor would He

[37] See *God the Creator*, pp. 220-35.

[38] Cf. the quotation from Ignatius, n. 25 above. If bodily men are united to God, it must be through a bodily Christ.

be the incarnation of the full reality of the Son, were He not to accomplish the redemption of the whole world. Since Jesus Christ is fully God, He must be the full glorification of the Father that the Son of the Father is. Therefore, it is necessary for the divine identity of Jesus Christ that the whole world participate in the glory He gives the Father. Since Jesus Christ is also a man, the world must participate in His human life too.

The identity of a person consists in what he does with his historical material, his own self, and his situation. So the identity of Jesus is to be determined in part by noting His historical situation; it is to be determined in larger part by noting the personal things He did in that situation (His righteousness, compassion, obedience, and so forth); but most importantly for us, perhaps, it is to be determined by noting what He has done, is doing, and promises for the world's redemption. Jesus—and this is an historical claim—was raised from the dead (Acts 2:32), commissioned His followers as apostles (Mt 28:18–20), ascended into heaven, and is present in history for the moment in the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9–11). That Spirit has worked in the Church, tempering it to be the body of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12), continuing His work; Spirit and Church together, therefore, continue the growing identity of Jesus, and in large part that identity still consists in promise. But the metaphysics of redemption is that the world properly glorifies God only in that it participates in Christ. It is the function of the Holy Spirit both to constitute Christ the one in whom we participate and to move us so that we participate in Christ.

The reason Christianity demands a historical Jesus is now apparent. A picture of Jesus may be all that is necessary for the response people make to God's redemptive act. But salvation or redemption consists, over and above men's choices, in participation in the real person Jesus. Only in actually redeeming or completing the creation does Jesus have a divine identity; He is divine because He is the Word not only through which things were made but also through which they glorify the creator; He *is* the divine glory, the only proper normative expression of the Father. Without participating in His concrete reality there is no concrete glorification for the rest of us. If there were only a picture, there might be an adequately human response to God's declaration of love; but the most adequate human response is not adequate to the task of redemption; that task requires God's cosmic activity. To say otherwise is to step into Pelagianism, to be blind to the cosmic drama (Col 1:15–20).

The key to Christology is pneumatology. The divinity of Jesus Christ, in both His person and works, consists in His being both the

beginning and end of creation, as well as its middle. He is the general Word that is the normative expression of the Father in every harmonious determination of being. He is the consummation of the world in which every determination enjoys its perfect status as a normative expression of the Father in glory. And He is also one who, so far as His historical particularity goes, lived for about thirty years some two thousand years ago, now is in eternity, and for whom we wait in our final consummation. But the only way by which the whole world, from beginning to end, can have Jesus Christ as God-man Lord, seeing that His full reality is human as well as divine, is through spiritual participation. This participation is part of the very fiber of created being and the Spirit is the divine creator's.

The doctrine of the Spirit is a conundrum in modern theology. It is clear now that the Hegelian notion of Spirit does too much; it is also clear that the psychological interpretation of the Spirit as the cause of the "warm heart" does too little. But there is a truth to both sides. With the Hegelians we must acknowledge that Spirit has sufficient cosmological import to bring the whole created domain to perfection. With the evangelicals we know this must be done through the personal moving of each individual soul; without this individual quality the historical reality of Jesus Christ is lost, as it was in Hegelianism. What is needed is a speculative scheme that satisfies these categorial demands of the doctrine of Spirit.

My suggestion is that the theory of creation defended here offers such a scheme. A detailed elaboration of the suggestion is another task, but certain programmatic remarks can be made now. The Spirit-act expresses the Father, and what the expression is, is the Son; the Spirit proceeds from the Father as an act proceeds from an agent; it proceeds from the Son as an act's character proceeds from what it does. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, the "of's" being interpreted in their respected senses according to the relations of the persons in creation. The Spirit could not be the Father's Spirit without being the Son's Spirit, and vice versa, as is apparent from our previous discussion.

It is a contingent fact about the created natures of things that they have their consummation in Jesus Christ; this makes the participation of the world in Christ a particular work of God in the Spirit. But further, the only way by which any particular created thing can be what it is, is by the particular operation of the Spirit on it. Some elements of created being involve the possession of general features: e.g., it is part of the created nature of Socrates to possess humanity. But other features of individuals are themselves individual, individually created.

Some determinations are what they are mainly because of causal relations with other things; other determinations, such as men, have significant features that are not caused, at least in the ordinary sense. Scientific causality has to do with the being of things that are mutually determinate. The Holy Spirit is the divine ground of each determination, in both its caused and uncaused features.

It is in their created being that determinations participate in the Son from the most general to the most specific levels. Regarding redemptive participation in Jesus Christ, the relevant features of men are their minds, hearts, wills, and historical deeds. Although acknowledging that the activity of the Spirit is omnipresent, Christianity properly concentrates on its activity in enlightening the mind, quickening the heart, and directing the will. The revelation of God in Christ is complete only in the consummation of last things in glory. It is the task of a full pneumatology to trace how the activity of the Spirit dealing individually and collectively with men can accomplish such a participation in Christ that God comes into the full glory of His creation in us and in all men.[39]

We now come to our final problem: the unity of the persons of the Trinity acting economically, that is, acting toward and in the world. The essential or immanent unity of the persons as mutually in each other has already been discussed. The implication for divine action in the world is that the essential unity is indissoluble. Nothing the Spirit does, even in providential activity, can fail to be the expression of the Father; it is the Father who acts in the Spirit. Further, nothing the Spirit does can fail to have the character of the Son, the normative expression of the Father. Whether operating directly in Jesus Christ or in us to make us participate in Jesus Christ, the Spirit's activity is constituting the identity of Christ. For Christ is not Christ unless the whole world is in Him. Therefore the principle can be affirmed: *opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa.*

Trinitarian modalism must be rejected. The persons of the Trinity are not different modes of God's action in the world, nor modes of revelation. Every action and every revelatory thing must have the structure of Father sending Son through Spirit. Interpreting Scripture, we can admit what tradition calls the "appropriation" of certain things to certain of the persons. Dealing with Jesus Christ, we speak primarily of the Son. Dealing with participation in Christ, we speak primarily of the Spirit. Dealing with the grace in the gifts of both

[39] For a discussion of how the creator is present to men without abrogating their freedom, see "Can God Create Men and Address Them Too?" *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (Oct., 1968).

Son and Spirit, we speak mainly of the Father. But each appropriation should be qualified with a nod to the structural unity of each person with the others. Likewise, the strong claims of Trinitarian monarchianism must be rejected. Indeed, the persons of the Trinity are united in nature and action: the being of one entails the being of the others. But in the one unity there are three persons. It is a mistake to say simply that God is one. It must also be said that the one God is Trinitarian. This is not tri-theism, for three gods would have to be independent substances. The persons of the Trinity are not substances in the Aristotelian sense, but are mutually determined, though different, characters in the structure of divine creativity. Monarchianism commits the error of claiming that there is a unity in some God beyond the characters He expresses in creation; but God gives Himself a unified character precisely in the Trinitarian function of creating.

The unifying notion in the Godhead is glory, since it is God's glory that is the ground for His being called divine. The notion of glory is essentially Trinitarian. God cannot be glorious without being glorified. The Son, and the whole world in Him, glorifies the Father. But the Son would not be the glorification of the Father were He not the Father's normative expression; otherwise the glorification would be gratuitous. It is only through the Father's creative act making the Son His normative expression that the Son glorifies the Father; therefore we say the Son glorifies the Father through the Spirit-act. Each person of the Trinity is said to have His own glory. The glory of the Father is to be glorified by the Son. The glory of the Son is to glorify the Father (Jn 13:31–32). The glory of the Spirit is to glorify the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father (2 Cor 3:12–18). The glory of God is one complex and unified thing, and that one thing is indissolubly Trinitarian.