RETRIEVING ETERNAL PROCESSION: A DOGMATIC WESTERN ACCOUNT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S RELATION TO THE FATHER AND THE SON IN THE TRIUNE GOD'S DIVINE LIFE

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APPROVAL SHEET

RETRIEVING ETERNAL PROCESSION:
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To Simon and Winnie Cheng

“Always remember God’s grace in your heart”

(神的恩典銘記於心)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*. 9 vols. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, and Allan Menzies. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885–1897
Axiom	Polanus, Amandus. "Eighteen Axioms on the Trinity." In *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*, book 3, translated by Ryan M. Hurd. Available online at https://scriptoriumdaily.com/axioms-on-the-trinity/
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
De Potentia	Aquinas, Thomas. *Disputed Questions on the Power of God*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2023
DLGTT	Muller, Richard A. *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017
Hill	Augustine of Hippo. *The Trinity*. Translated by Edmund Hill. Edited by John E. Rotelle. Vol. 5 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, pt. 1, *Books*. 2nd ed. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2010
In Ioan.	Aquinas, Thomas. *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura*. Edited by R. Cai. Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1952
In Matt.	Aquinas, Thomas. *Super Evangelium S. Matthaei Lectura*. Edited by R. Cai. Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1951
LXX	The Septuagint
N.B.	Nota bene, note carefully
NPNF^2	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2. 14 vols. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1890–1900
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857–1866
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
S.a.	See also
SBJT	*Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*

SCG	Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Translated by Anton C. Pegis, James F. Anders, Vernon J. Bourke, and Charles J. O'Neil. 5 vols. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975
Sent.	Aquinas, Thomas. *Commentary on the Sentences*. 4 vols. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute, 2017
SSST	Short Studies in Systematic Theology
ST	Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by Laurence Shapcote. 8 vols. Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2018.
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

PREFACE

The privilege of reading, contemplating, and writing about my triune God, and all things in relation to God, should never escape me. When it does, God quickly reminds me of his benevolence in allowing me to formally study theology in this season of my life. I praise God for this opportunity to know him a little bit better and thus love him more accurately.

My theology professors at Southern—Gregg Allison, Stephen Wellum, Michael Haykin, Kyle Claunch, Oren Martin, and Bruce Ware—stir my heart's affection for God. Thank you all for challenging me to think more clearly about Scripture and doctrine and creating opportunities for me to participate in the world of academia. I love learning about our triune God from you all. To Drs. Wellum and Haykin, thank you for serving on my dissertation committee. A particular thanks goes to my Dok, Gregg Allison, the Dok of Doks, master of the pedagogical formula for encouragement. For the past decade, you balanced extending genuine interest and firm guidance in your mentorship. I would not have stayed as long as I have if not for your candor and optimism. With eternal gratitude, I praise God for providing you as my theology teacher. I know and love God more accurately and deeply because of you.

To my external reader, Fred Sanders, thank you for teaching the deep things of God to me. Your astute reflection in your work consistently points me to the triune God.

In God's kind provision, my studies aligned with Scott Gregory, Ryan Modisette, Nathan Justice, and John Davis, all of whom possess magnanimous hearts that model intellectual humility—a disposition that holds to convictions yet remains more interested in determining what is true than being "right" (i.e., winning an argument). In other words, I know and love God more because of you. Each academic friend (a pal with

whom you create a space to test ideas, get questions answered, share woes, and celebrate milestones) carried me through the program as a means of grace. I could never have finished this project without your generous help.

To the army of family and (normal) friends across the globe God rallied together to pray me through the program: thank you for your labors. Your intercessory prayers and "we're rooting for you!" DMs mean the world to me. To the friends who are my family in America, thanks for being in my corner. I am grateful to God.

A special note of appreciation to my parents: Mom and Dad, thanks for teaching me the ways of God—that is, to know and love God—from my youth. Your constant support, particularly through prayer and financial giving, made attending school a possibility and reality. Your sacrificial love most tangible teaches me what it means to receive a gift, on a human level, that I did not deserve or merit and yet ought not to attempt to pay back. And thank God for that because I will not be able to repay you financially. I dedicate this dissertation to you.

Sam Cheng

Louisville, Kentucky
May 2025

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Scripture reveals that God is one in being, and the Trinitarian persons subsist in the singular essence. Within the bounds of creaturely finitude, the Christian tradition has sought to precisely communicate the nature of God *in se*.[1] Christians respectfully approach God's Word, expecting that the God who has spoken (Heb 1:1–2; cf. 2 Tim 3:16–17)[2] desires his people to understand his intelligible self-revelation. As God helped Christians conceptualize truth regarding himself, the early church began summarizing these truths in creeds and confessions. Thus, the third article of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381), with the addition of the *Filioque* from the Third Synod of Toledo (AD 589), accurately attests that God the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son" (*ex Patre Filioque*).[3] In this dissertation, I aim to retrieve the biblical, historical doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from his single principle of origin.

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[1] By "classical," "classic," and "traditional" Trinitarian theology, I follow Stephen Holmes's broad definition, which he provided in response to the revival of the doctrine of the Trinity in modernism: "[I]n large part," accounts of "concepts and ideas" on the doctrine of the Trinity can be consistently "found in patristic, medieval, and Reformation" theology. Stephen Holmes, *The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012), 2. S.a. Craig Carter broadly defines "classical theism" as the work for which "the early church fathers, medieval scholastics, Protestant Reformers, and post-Reformation scholastics and Puritans" argue. Craig A. Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition: Recovering Trinitarian Classical Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 26. In other words, classical Trinitarianism describes the biblical belief of the doctrine of the triune God, developed by Christian theologians, and held with a general consensus throughout the life of the church. I use the word "traditional" and the terms "traditional theism" and "traditional Christianity" synonymously.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

[3] Philip Schaff, trans., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., 6th ed., rev. David S. Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 2:59.

The heart of *ressourcement*—a return to the sources—reclaims faithful and sound teaching found in the history of interpretation, such as in the writing of patristic doctors, medieval scholastics authors, and Reformed orthodox scholars. Not all areas of doctrine enjoy ecumenical consensus, and it would be dishonest to portray the tradition as theologically monolithic. Nevertheless, historical Christianity has attained strong agreement that the one God is three distinct persons. More specific to this project's interest, I affirm the tradition's teaching that the Holy Spirit subsists in God's one divine essence, and his relation of origin distinguishes him as the Third Person in the Holy Trinity. This is the dogma I seek to retrieve in this project.

The Holy Spirit cannot be fully known because he is God and enjoys the divine perfections, such as immensity and infinity, which are incompatible with creatures' finiteness. Yet, to our benefit, God invites Christians to consider the immeasurable depths of who the Holy Spirit is as God and as eternally in relation to Father and Son in the triune God's blessed divine life. The work of retrieval does not seek to simply elevate history as an end; rather, the church recognizes that God condescended through special revelation and graciously continues working in the Christian intellect and will, enabling the church to construct theological formulation of the Trinitarian persons. Moreover, God tasks the church with protecting orthodox teaching delivered to the saints and offering appropriate worship to the eternal Third Person: "All adoration ever be, Eternal Paraclete to thee."[4]

Thesis

In this dissertation, I seek (1) to retrieve the doctrine of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, a doctrine developed in the early church and faithfully confessed in the Western Christian tradition to uphold Scripture's

[4] Rabanus Maurus, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, trans. John Dryden, in *Breaking Bread*, vol. 39 (Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 2019), no. 195.

presentation of the Holy Spirit's (a) unity of essence with the triune God and (b) distinct personal property of being spirated by the Father and Son in the plenitude of God's divine life; and (2) to provide a constructive argument for the Holy Spirit's procession based on classical Trinitarianism. This traditional model of the Trinity is superior to contemporary ones that deny a classical view of Spirit's eternal procession because it more consistently coheres with God's revelation of himself in Scripture's redemptive-historical storyline.

Methodology

I defend this thesis in four movements. In part 1, I present historical arguments concerning the Holy Spirit's procession from patristic writers, medieval scholastic authors, and Reformed orthodox scholars, with particular attention given to the church fathers' writings from the Latin West and Greek East.

In part 2, I give an account of classical theism's explanation of the Bible's attestation of the Holy Spirit's procession in God and creation. I focus on New Testament passages that teach about the Holy Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son. The Farewell Discourse in John 14–17 serves as a central text as I contend for the Western notion that the Father and the Son are the Holy Spirit's single eternal principle. Based on John 17, I argue that a proper name for the Third Person is Love. I offer a biblical and theological account of Thomas Aquinas's idea of the Holy Spirit's four visible divine missions in the New Testament.[5]

In part 3, I construct a theological reading of Amandus Polanus's (1561–1610) eighteen axioms on the Trinity.[6] A classical account of the Holy Spirit's eternal

[5] It is outside the scope of this dissertation to provide a critique of the Thomistic tradition's teaching of justification and sanctification from a Reformed perspective.

[6] See my introduction to chapter 5 for Polanus's historical significance. Polanus's axioms exemplify a way in which theologians have synthesized and reduced traditional, orthodox doctrine into briefly stated rules or guiding principles of truth. These axioms summarize guiding principles for Trinitarian theology from a classical perspective.

procession affirms the Holy Spirit's divinity and his unique principle of individuation in God. Additionally, I consider the theological implications of Holy Spirit's order as third in God. Relying on Augustine and Aquinas, I utilize their procession-mission schema to explain how God's work *ad extra* reveals the triune inner life of God.

In part 4, I interact with revisionist proposals by Katherine Sonderegger, Elizabeth A. Johnson, and Sarah Coakley against the traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit. I depend on Polanus's axioms as a representation of the classical view. Each contemporary theologian serves as an interlocutor and provides building blocks, so to speak, for a more robust definition of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. In the end, I argue for a classical understanding of the Trinitarian persons' eternal relations in God's blessed life. The manner in which the Holy Spirit subsists in the divine essence—as the one whom the Father and Son eternally spirate—explains how the Holy Spirit brings God's covenant people back to their creaturely origin and appointed *telos*.

Survey of Contemporary Research

My interest in this dissertation and the theological retrieval movement drives my desire to interpret the Bible with the illuminating help of the Holy Spirit,[7] first and foremost, and with tradition's guidance. I believe that classical Christian theism developed the doctrine of God with faithfulness to Scripture's teaching, and the church benefits from academic research devoted to understanding who God is and all things in relation to God.[8]

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[7] John Owen relates the Holy Spirit to illumination in two ways, "namely, that we truly believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and that we understand the saving mind of God therein." John Owen, *The Holy Spirit—The Helper*, ed. Andrew S. Ballitch, vol. 7 of *The Complete Works of John Owen* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), 89. The Holy Spirit illuminates minds to receive Scripture as God's Word and understand God's teaching in his Word with joy.

[8] John Webster, *God without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *God and the Works of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016), 4.

My survey of contemporary research on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession assesses the following theological points: God's unity of essence, a Trinity of divine persons, the Holy Spirit's eternal relation of origin, the Father and the Son as the Holy Spirit's single principle, "Love" as a proper name, the procession-mission schema, mixed relations, and the eternal *taxis* of the Trinitarian persons as the *ratio* for appropriating inseparable acts to a divine person. Contemporary, traditional-leaning theologians in the West debate over the accurate interpretation of the listed points, the doctrine's entailment, and the biblical warrant for the doctrine.

For an example of a debate over what the doctrine entails, Graham A. Cole's position on the *Filioque* "is more Eastern than Western. The Holy Spirit," Cole avers, "eternally proceeds from the Father through the Son."[9] While Cole maintains distance from theologians who "separate pneumatology from Christology" and thus argue for inclusivism, I find it concerning that the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father and Son as a single principle is not confessed axiomatically.[10]

As an example of the questioned biblical warrant, John S. Feinberg suggests abandoning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession, "a doctrine [that] seems to fare even worse than the eternal generation of the Son" because of the biblical support limited to John 15:26, which Feinberg believes is wrongly interpreted by those who affirm the doctrine.[11] Feinberg argues that the apostle John did not intend "to make this subtle metaphysical point about the internal relations of the members of the Godhead. . . . This seems to be a case of forcing metaphysical distinctions and doctrines into the text of

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[9] Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 199.

[10] See his discussion in Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 199–202.

[11] John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 491. See his discussion on pp. 487–92.

Scripture where they don't belong."[12] Feinberg contends that the doctrine of eternal procession's meaning is "shrouded in obscurity," and "since Scripture reveals so little about" the Trinitarian relations *in se*, "there isn't a lot we can say about them [eternal generation and eternal procession]."[13]

On the venerable tradition of naming the Third Person "Love," contemporary exegetes such as Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger's find Augustine's interpretation of 1 John 4 and Romans 5 unconvincing as biblical support.[14] Allison suggests the church should embrace this name with caution.[15] Additionally, Allison and Köstenberger's "pneumatology has strong reservations about this distinction between procession by way of intellect and procession by way of will, finding inadequate biblical support for such a distinction."[16] I will offer my counter-proposal to their disagreement with Augustine on these two points. I believe my biblical and theological explanation of John 14–17 may placate contemporary exegetes who require further biblical evidence for the proper name "Love" and identifying Love's procession as that by way of the will.

Dominic Legge's *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*[17] and Adonis Vidu's *The Divine Missions*[18] provide the theological scaffolding for interpreting the Holy Spirit's divine mission. Their respective accounts can be strengthened with more biblical support, which I give in my exegetical sections on the Holy Spirit's four

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[12] Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 491.

[13] Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 492.

[14] Cf. Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 54.

[15] For example, Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 264n21.

[16] Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 267n30.

[17] Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[18] Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021).

visible missions in the New Testament. Additionally, Vidu hesitates to identify the Holy Spirit's divine missions prior to Pentecost because he wants to preserve the order of the Son and the Holy Spirit's missions.[19] However, I believe that the procession-mission schema is upheld so long as Christ's visible mission (the incarnation) temporally precedes the Holy Spirit's missions, both visible and invisible. I will distinguish between the implications of Legge's presentation of the Holy Spirit's visible missions and a Protestant interpretation. I believe the third and fourth visible missions (Christ's breath and the tongues of fire) do not necessarily support the theological development of the Catholic Church's papacy, as Aquinas postulates.

Transitioning to revisionist proposals, I provide a constructive response to recently proposed models of God's life in conjunction with a classical interpretation of the doctrine of divine processions. I will argue that revisionist proposals err in interpreting the biblical data about the Holy Spirit's relation to both (1) the Son and Father in the divine life and (2) creatures. In their ways, the alternative models of God redefine classical terms that seem to contradict Scripture's teaching about the divine nature and the Trinitarian persons. The early church accurately forged these terms and their definitions at Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), and Chalcedon (451). In the medieval era, Aquinas further clarified the concepts regarding the Trinity by offering a robust and modified Aristotelian metaphysic that undergirds the dogmatic statements of

[19] In *The Same God Who Works All Things*, Adonis Vidu states, "Strictly speaking a theology of the divine missions such as that of Aquinas will restrict the mission of the Holy Spirit to his visible manifestation at Jesus's baptism and Pentecost, following by his invisible mission that commences thereafter." Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 263; cf. Vidu, "The Spirit's Procession Revealed in the Spirit's Mission: An Augustinian Account," in *On Classical Trinitarianism: Retrieving the Nicene Doctrine of the Triune God*, ed. Matthew M. Barrett (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2024), 491. However, in *The Divine Missions*, Vidu only names the tongues at Pentecost as a visible mission; the dove is a pre-Pentecost manifestation. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 7. It is unclear to me whether or not Vidu considers the dove at Christ's baptism a visible mission of the Holy Spirit or a "symbolic mission." More to the point, we do not need to call the dove a symbolic mission but a divine mission because the Son's visible mission occurs before this visible sighting of the Spirit.

the creeds.[20] I turn to some of these definitions of the Trinity, which the dissertation's chapters develop more fully.

Each divine person is fully God—consubstantial, coeternal, and coexistent—and is distinct from the other persons according to their respective eternal intra-Trinitarian relations. Per Aquinas, a divine person is a subsistent relation,[21] a relation is a relation of origin, and the opposed relations constitute the divine persons.[22] These classical definitions gather the Bible's presentation of the triune God and provide metaphysical precision for creaturely speech about three really distinct persons who have and are identical to the one divine substance. This dissertation participates in theological retrieval by following the traditional confession of the relational distinctions in God, specifically attending to the Third Person.

The Holy Spirit subsists in God's one divine essence as the Third Person whose relation of origin is the Father and Son, for the First and Second Persons are the single principle of the Third Person.[23] This real opposed relation consists of two relations:

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[20] Steven J. Duby offers an example of Aquinas's modification of Aristotelian metaphysics in explaining how God as the first mover also energizes human movement. The author describes movement using act and potency. God, who is pure act and *a se* moves "creatures, who are subject to passivity and are not *a se*, [and who] ultimately depend upon the active movement of the eternal God who creates them and moves them to act" by producing "a resultant energy or activity, an *actus secundus*, that is proper to a human subject." Steven J. Duby, "Inseparable Operation and the Human Operation of Christ," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 77 (2024): 115–25.

[21] Aquinas further develops his definition from the Boethian definition. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.29 art. 3 co. The Holy Spirit is a subsisting relation, and his procession is not a procession of the divine essence (from the Father nor received from the Son) but a procession of a distinct person. Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 104–6. S.a. Vidu's definition of "subsistent relation" in a glossary: "A Thomistic way of expressing the nature of the divine persons as relations that subsist. Typically, relations are accidents of substances. In this account of the Trinity, however, relations are not secondary to the substances, but they are at the basis of the substance." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 117.

[22] Aquinas, *ST* I.30 art. 2.

[23] Within Emery's discussion on Aquinas's two clarifying aspects of the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son (Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3–4), the first of his points—"the 'condition' of the Father and Son as two distinct persons"—covers the distinction between *per Filium* and *a Filio*. See Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 289–94.

First, *per Filium* emphasizes the two distinct and ordered persons in active spiration. The Holy Spirit principally proceeds from the Father (Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 2), who by eternally generating the Son "gives it to the Son to be the principle of the Holy Spirit along with himself." Emery, 291. So Aquinas: "Therefore, because the Son receives from the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him, it can be said

(1) the Father and Son actively spirate the Holy Spirit, and (2) the Holy Spirit is passively spirated by the Father and Son. As a result, the second eternal procession in God results in two mutually opposed relations.[24] These distinctions lead to the precise definition of the Holy Spirit's incommunicable personal property, passive spiration.

The overall task at hand—of retrieval and responding to contemporary proposals—considers the church's historical development of the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal relation as being spirated from the Father and the Son. I follow the church's tradition to preserve the triune God's aseity and maintain what constitutes the Holy Spirit as God without reference to the economy.[25] The Holy Spirit uniquely proceeds from the Father and the Son, and his eternal relation of origin distinguishes him from the Father and the Son.

The theologians I chose as interlocutors offer important critiques of the classical position. I consider these theologians and their unique contributions for the following reasons. First, Sonderegger distinguishes between the divine persons and God's processional life; I rely on this distinction to develop definitions for person and

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that the Father spirates the Holy Spirit through the Son, or that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, which has the same meaning." Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 co. Second, *a Filio* underscores the Father and the Son's unified notional act of spiration and "avoids conceiving the *per Filium* like a different or secondary principle." Emery, 291.

Given Emery's clarification, Aquinas brings *a Filio* and *per Filium* together: *per Filium* implies *a Filio*. The two "expressions are not interchangeable" but complementary. Emery, 291. Together, the ideas inform the Holy Spirit's one single principle (*unum principium*).

[24] The same logic is used to discuss the Son's procession, whereby the principle and term are distinct from that of the Holy Spirit's procession but similarly results in two relations and thus two mutually opposed relations. This first eternal procession in God is also called generation or begetting. Two mutually opposed relations constitute the Son's eternal generation from his single principle: (1) the Father is the principle of the Son and actively generates the Son (*generatio activa*), and (2) the Son is passively generated by the Father as a term (*generatio passiva*). These two opposed relations constitute the divine persons, Father and Son. The Father is innascible (*innascibilitas*)—he is the principle (*principium*) without a principle. In total, there are four real relations in God.

[25] God's self-existence "is the eternal lively plenitude of the Father who begets, the Son who is begotten, and the Spirit who proceeds from both." God's perfect circular movement of paternity, filiation, and spiration—"God's being-in-relation as Father, Son, and Spirit"—"is God's being . . . without cause or condition, and depending on nothing other than itself." Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:20. God's *a se* life is the processions.

procession.[26] Second, Johnson considers God and his divine perfections in relation to creation, thereby helping me articulate how the tradition uses real and rational distinctions *in se*.[27] Third, Coakley looks at the divine persons' eternal *taxis* in God's life;[28] this eternal order, or mode of subsistence, gives me the *ratio* for interpreting God's work *ad extra*.[29] I chose and organized each conversation partner in this project to construct a dogmatic account of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. At the same time, the theologians I chose as interlocutors offer important critiques of the classical position. A goal of the project is to proactively address their concerns with charity and fairness while showing that the tradition presents a superior view of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. A classical view of the Holy Spirit's procession more coherently upholds God's unity of essence and the Holy Spirit's real distinction from his single principle, the Father and the Son.

Significance

I believe there are at least three reasons why my project is significant. To begin, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession ought to be retrieved.[30] The idea for this project began with the publication of Fred Sanders and Scott Swain's *Retrieving Eternal Generation* and a desire to give appropriate attention to the Holy Spirit's

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[26] The primary text is Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, *The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020).

[27] The primary text is Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (1992; repr., New York: Herder & Herder, 2013).

[28] The primary text is Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[29] Richard A. Muller defines mode of subsistence: "used in trinitarian language as a synonym for *subsistentia* (q.v.) and as a Latin equivalent for *hypostasis*; *modus subsistendi* is more technical and precise than *persona* (q.v.). The Reformed in particular prefer to say that the person of the Trinity are distinguished . . . according to their distinct modes of subsistence." Richard A. Muller, *DLGTT*, s.v. "modus subsistendi" (p. 222).

[30] As I explained in the previous section, Cole's Eastern-leaning position and Feinberg's rejection of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession give me reason to believe that evangelical theology must necessarily retrieve this classical dogma.

procession or spiration.[31] The specific arguments in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, such as the particular biblical passages used to argue for the Son's eternal generation, do not directly apply to the Holy Spirit's procession. However, the disposition to return to historical sources to recover this biblical doctrine upheld by the church motivates my research. As with *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, my goal "is to make three cases in adequate detail: that this classic piece of theological confession is in fact biblically, traditionally, and systematically satisfying." I echo Sanders and Swain's hope for my project, "that these three [cases] are one persuasive argument for retrieving the doctrine of eternal [procession] and recognizing its central importance for the doctrine of the Trinity."[32]

If evangelical theology has "attenuated or marginalized" this doctrine that explains the repleteness of God's life, which I believe it has, then the church ought to rectify this problem for the sake of our proper worship of God. Many theological resources that develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit comprehensively attend to his person and work.[33] This project focuses on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession as biblically, historically, and theologically conceived. To my knowledge, no one has written a constructive monograph on the eternal procession *per se*.[34] My project

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[31] Fred Sanders and Scott Swain, eds., *Retrieving Eternal Generation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017). Torey J. S. Teer originally came up with the idea for a Spirit-parallel. Thank you to Teer for handing off his idea. Thank you to Gregg R. Allison for sharing Teer's idea with me, alerting me to this area of need in academic research, and directing the shape and trajectory of this project.

[32] To follow Sanders and Swain's sensibility, their volume indeed "contribute[s] to a vigorous retrieval of classic Christian doctrine for contemporary theology and the church in a deeper and broader way" (Sanders and Swain, introduction to *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, 26), for it has motivated the pursuit of my current project. Hence, the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, "wherever it is confessed, ought to be celebrated; wherever it is not confessed, ought to be established; and wherever it is attenuated or marginalized, ought to be retrieved."

[33] For example, Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*; Cole, *He Who Gives Life*; Christopher R. J. Holmes, *The Holy Spirit*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015); Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*; Michael Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017); Robert Letham, *The Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2023).

[34] I specifically refer to a contemporary constructive work. Historical surveys that focus on the doctrine during the patristic period include these works: Henry B. Swete, *On the History of the Doctrine of*

contributes to this area of research by concentrating on the Trinitarian relations and highlighting the Holy Spirit's mode of subsistence in the divine essence.

The Holy Spirit's procession deserves appropriate attention because this eternal act is intrinsic to God's perfection: "Paternity, filiation and spiration are the life-filled abundance of God's being, his pure act in which he is who he is."[35] God's self-revelation of the processions, the "wholly achieved life of God,"[36] benefits the church, who receives the privilege of knowing and loving God as he is. Retrieving this doctrine will help foster Christians' celebration of the triune God. Furthermore, the tradition sought to preserve the inseparability of spiration and consubstantiality through the doctrine of God's processions.[37] The concept of procession enables the church to explain how the Holy Spirit is *homoousios* with Father and Son, yet he is a divine person who is really distinct from the Father and Son as the person who is eternally from the Father and Son. Retrieving this doctrine gives the church Trinitarian grammar to accurately confess the nature of God's simple and relational divine life.

That said, there will be discussions on the ways in which the Holy Spirit's procession in the divine life affects our understanding of God's work *ad extra*. This is my

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the Procession of the Holy Spirit: From the Apostolic Age to the Death of Charlemagne (1912; repr., Wipf & Stock, 2004); Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Complete Three-Volume Work in One Volume*, trans. David Smith, Milestones in Catholic Theology (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Edward A. Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Thomas Crean, *Vindicating the Filioque: The Church Fathers at the Council of Florence* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2023). Crean's project intends to narrowly focus on looking "at the witness of those saints of the patristic period who were revered in both Rome and Constantinople before the schisms of the ninth and eleventh centuries, and especially those who wrote at greater length about the Holy Spirit." Crean, 29.

[35] Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:152.

[36] Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:153.

[37] Webster makes this point regarding the Son's generation by and *homoousios* with the Father. Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:35. *Mutatis mutandis*, I apply this idea to the Father-Son and Holy Spirit relation: the relation between Spirator and Spirated is not a relation "between two realities who thereby come to be opposed to each other in an external relation." Webster, 1:35. According to Aquinas, there is one single Spirator (*unus Spirator*), Father and Son. Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 7. I use the term "Father-Son" to mean that the Father and the Son (together) are the Holy Spirit's single principle and eternal relation of origin.

project's second significance. My Protestant perspective affects my understanding of the Holy Spirit's work within God's covenant people,[38] commonly known as the divine missions. As I follow a classical notion of God's work *ad extra* reflecting God as he is in himself, this guides my interpretation of the divine missions. Although this project focuses on the person of the Holy Spirit in God's triune life, I will include analyses on the outworking of Christ's acquisition of salvation, which results in the Holy Spirit's divine mission of indwelling Christians. The dynamic between the eternal processions and divine missions presents itself as I consider Love as the Third Person in the eternal *taxis*, the order of his divine mission, and his appropriated operations.

My final reason for this project's significance is my reliance on Polanus's axioms as I maneuver through contemporary concerns about classical Trinitarianism. As a prominent theological figure in the tradition, Polanus's consolatory writing represents the doctrine of Reformed Orthodoxy and thus is valuable in the retrieval movement's interest. Since Polanus's axioms in *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* focus on the Father and the Son, a further theological development of the Holy Spirit's eternal relation with the Father and Son will round out Polanus's work.

Argument

In chapter 1, I introduce the theological milieu of my project, includes my thesis and methodology statements, and provides an overview of my project's historical, biblical, and systematic pieces.

In chapter 2, I outline the historical development of the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit. It brings together relevant historical material from the patristic writers, medieval scholastic authors, and Reformed tradition. I will include the

[38] The biblical interpretative framework for the economy of salvation relies upon Stephen Wellum and Peter Gentry's progressive covenantalism. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

Filioque discussion and argue that, at a minimum, the theological development of the patristic era from both the Antiochian and Alexandrian schools leading up to Nicaea affirm the Father and Son eternally breathe forth the Holy Spirit.[39] With that agreement in mind, I further pursue the so-called double-procession view of the Holy Spirit (*a Patre* and *a Filio*), which in time does, in fact, differ from the single-procession view (*a Patre per Filium*). In the end, I argue that the double-procession view, as confessed by the Western church, is biblically accurate.

In chapter 3, I argue for the biblical validity of the church's traditional practice of naming the Third Person "Love" based on the Farewell Discourse (John 13–17). This proper name describes Love's eternal relation to the Father and the Son, consequently explaining why Love brings people into God's regenerate assembly and creates Christian unity. I follow Augustine's hermeneutical rules for interpreting the Son's eternal relation to the Father and applying them, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Holy Spirit to the Father and

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[39] I rely on Siecienski's discussion in *The Filioque: A History of a Doctrinal Controversy*. Following Siecienski, I hesitate to interpret the Greek patristic doctors' writings on the Holy Spirit as affirming or denying the *Filioque per se* "as later theology would understand it." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 33. "The pneumatological concerns of the Greek fathers (e.g., establishing the full divinity of the Holy Spirit)," according to Siecienski, "did not include a detailed exploration of exactly how the Son was (or was not) involved in the hypostatic coming-into being of the Third Person of the Trinity. For that reason[,] the claim, made by both Greeks and Latins throughout the centuries, that the Eastern fathers explicitly advocated or condemned the filioque, cannot be sustained given the evidence we possess."

Stephen Holmes makes a similar point: "[I]t is clear that neither position on the filioque does violence to the received orthodox and catholic tradition. Historically, there was full communion between those who believed in the dual procession of the Spirit and those who believed in the sole causality of the Father for many centuries." Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 164. By Holmes's estimation, the church remained self-aware that it "did not have a common mind on the question, and felt no need to seek one" well into "the second half of the first millennium." The question eventually required solving, and the East and West "defined their own position as a necessary component of Trinitarian dogma."

While the East and West presently confess distinct accounts of the Trinitarian relations, I believe that the early Greek fathers did not deny the concept of the *Filioque* as such.

Son.[40] Augustine and Aquinas develop a theology for the names, Holy Spirit and Love.[41] These two proper names are not only creative titles incorporated into a venerable tradition but, more importantly, are grounded in Scripture and thus ought to be affirmed as proper to the Third Person. The name Love underscores the Holy Spirit's unique mode of subsistence as the one whom the Father and Son eternally spirate.

In chapter 4, I contend that the New Testament presents four visible, temporal missions of the Holy Spirit: two with respect to Christ, and two with respect to the church. I focus on the Synoptic Gospels and the book of Acts to show a traditional interpretation of the Holy Spirit's relation to the divine Son who assumes a human nature in the incarnation. The emphasis here will be on the Holy Spirit's eternal procession in relation to the Son's visible mission.

According to Dominic Legge, Aquinas identifies four visible missions of the Spirit: the baptism of Christ, the transfiguration, Christ's breath in the upper room on the evening of Easter Sunday, and Pentecost.[42] By focusing on these four divine missions surrounding the Son, I will highlight the manner in which each Trinitarian person works inseparably *ad extra*, giving particular attention to the Holy Spirit.[43]

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[40] Certainly, the Son's eternal generation from the Father will not map onto the Holy Spirit's eternal procession with perfect similitude, not least because the Son assumes a human nature in the incarnation, which adds a layer of complexity in discerning Christ's relation to the Father and Spirit as the God-man. Nevertheless, Augustine's hermeneutical rule guides my interpretation of why one sends and one is sent.

I will substantiate my claims with contemporary secondary resources to argue that a divine person is sent in time because the person proceeds from a principle in God. In the dissertation, I will interact with secondary sources, such as Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, chap. 15; Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), chap. 3; Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, chaps. 1, 3; R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), chap. 9.

[41] The only real distinctions in God are posited relationally between the persons.

[42] A divine mission is synonymous with personal actions, which have two necessary conditions: (1) a change in the world, and (2) an intentional agent to whom is ascribed responsibility. From a Trinitarian perspective, the whole Trinity acts together in these four visible missions of the Spirit, although the Spirit alone is the term of the visible signs discussed in this chapter because the result is a state that only characterizes the Spirit. Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, 160–62.

[43] A classical, confessional Trinitarian Christology ought to balance a Logos and Spirit Christology. The discussion on the first and second visible missions of the Holy Spirit considers how the Son in his divine and human natures, along with the Father, continually sends the Holy Spirit during the

In chapter 5, I transpose Polanus's eighteen axioms on the Trinity. These Trinitarian axioms generally focus on the eternal relation between the Father and the Son. This chapter moves through Polanus's axioms, exegetes each systematically, and fittingly applies his theological claims to focus on developing the classical doctrine of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 6, I construct a theological understanding of the Third Person's procession within a framework of God's inner life as a circular movement. A traditional conception of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession helps explain how the *a se*, omnipotent God relates to creatures through a mixed relation. The divine processions and trinitarian *taxis*—from the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit—presents the *ratio* behind the Holy Spirit's multifaceted work outlined in Romans 8. The biblically grounded processions-missions schema provides the logic for the Son and Holy Spirit's divine missions.

In chapter 7, I present contemporary proposals of the divine persons' eternal relations by Sonderegger, Johnson, and Coakley against a traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit. In each theologian's project, their model of God proposes an alternative understanding of eternal procession from a classical definition. I arrange the theologians' respective work such that I can follow a traditional sensibility to consider *Deus unus* before *Deus trinus* and identify the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession in the midst of that discussion.[44] I rely on Polanus's axioms in chapter 5 to respond to the revisionist proposals. I posit that a classical doctrine of God's processions

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Spirit's involvement in Christ's life. The third and fourth missions provide clearer implications for the church's mission and participation in the Holy Spirit's circular movement and return to God.

[44] Webster commends Franciscus Junius's arrangement of theology proper material in Riemer A. Faber, trans., *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae/Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, vol. 1, *Disputations 1–23*, ed. Dolf te Velde, Willem J. van Asselt, and William den Boer, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 187 (Leiden: Brill, 2014). My goal is to follow Junius's "most natural course of Christian teaching . . . from immanent to transitive: the nature of God determined by his names and attributes; the divine persons and their relations; the outer works of God," while working in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:5.

helps preserve God's singular, undivided divine nature and the Trinity of divine persons.[45]

In chapter 8, I have three goals: (1) a restatement of the thesis and methodology statements; (2) a summary of the value of upholding a view of God that does not compromise the Bible's presentation of God's oneness in nature and the Holy Spirit's eternal relation of origin as being spirated by Father and Son, as rightly confessed in the Christian tradition; and (3) a hypothesis of further areas of relevant research.

[45] Put differently, "as a *modus essentis* each procession *includes* the divine nature." Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:94.

CHAPTER 2

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ETERNAL PROCESSION IN CHURCH HISTORY

In this chapter, I outline the historical development of the doctrine of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit. In seeking a way to communicate the Holy Spirit is God, the divine Third Person, the tradition developed the notion of the eternal processions. The doctrine's strength and necessary value lies in its ability to uphold two fundamental biblical affirmations about God: God is one being, and the three persons are equally God.[1] My outline of the so-called double-procession view of the Holy Spirit (*a Patre* and *a Filio*) includes the *Filioque* discussion.[2]

Through a historical survey of the doctrine's theological development, I contend that the Western tradition's third article of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381), with the addition of the *Filioque* from the Third Synod of Toledo (AD 589), accurately describes the biblical teaching that God the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from his single principle, the Father and the Son (*ex Patre Filioque*), in God's divine life. I will trace the church's growth in understanding and theological precision in four

[1] The theological concept of procession carries the weight of redoublement; we clarify our understanding of a concept—in this case, God—through reiteration. Lewis Ayres references "the French Benedictine theologian Ghislain Lafont [who] has written very suggestively about the importance of 'redoublement'—reduplication or repetition—in Trinitarian theology." Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 260. I will speak more on this theological practice in chapter 7 when I address Katherine Sonderegger's use of redoublement.

[2] While the Eastern and Western traditions presently affirm distinct accounts of the Trinitarian relations, generally speaking, the Greek patristics did not deny the concept of the *Filioque* as such. In time, the Latin tradition will differ from others that do not affirm that the Son, as a single principle with the Father, eternally spirates the Holy Spirit. It would be difficult to discuss the Holy Spirit's procession without touching on the *Filioque* debate. Yet the purpose of my chapter is not to insist for a double procession over the single procession view as such.

sections—Greek East patristic writers, Latin West patristic authors,[3] medieval thinkers, and Reformed scholars—and each section will include an inventory of respective theologians' relevant primary works and a summary of their contributions to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit's Eternal Procession in Greek East Ancient Church Theology

The church fathers defended the Holy Spirit's divinity and order as third through developing the doctrine of the eternal procession. Key figures in the ancient Greek East period are Irenaeus of Lyons, Origen of Alexandria, Athanasius the Great, Didymus the Blind, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus.[4] This section will also cover the Creed of Nicaea (AD 325) and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381).

Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 130–200)

In Irenaeus and "for the first time," Henry B. Swete details, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit "takes its place in an orderly scheme of Christian teaching."[5] The theology of the Son and Holy Spirit's eternal processions from the Father is not developed, except for Irenaeus's treatment of the Holy Spirit's mission, which may indicate the concept of the processions "in the background of his thought."[6] Nevertheless, Irenaeus's "strong

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[3] The terms "patristic," "church father," and "father" should not imply that the period excludes the theological contribution of women. Rather, the majority of theologians who carry significant authority during this time are men.

[4] Mark DelCogliano notes that "the pneumatological developments of the fourth century constitute what can be considered a *third* stage in the history of the theology of the Spirit." Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres, trans., introduction to *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius the Great and Didymus the Blind*, Popular Patristics 43 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 11. "The third stage covers the mid to late fourth century and is characterized by the continuation, retrieval, and clash of older pneumatologies and their reconfiguration within the new context of Pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology" (13).

[5] Irenaeus's chief interest lies in the Son's incarnation, "but the doctrine of the Spirit is not overlooked." Henry B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers* (1912; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 86.

[6] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 88, citing Anthony Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 130. Kyle R. Hughes comments, "Irenaeus never offers an explanation for how the Spirit

antagonism to the Gnostic doctrine of emanations leads him to think of the Son and the Spirit as inherent in the life of God rather than as proceeding from Him."[7] The triad's inherent existence as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are anterior and external to the creation.[8] As such, Irenaeus identifies the Son and Holy Spirit as the "Hands of God."[9]

Irenaeus pictures God's work of creation as the Father creating by his two hands. The Father did not use intermediaries in creating "as if he did not possess his own hands. For with him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, he made all things, to whom also he speaks, saying, 'Let us make man after our image and likeness.'"[10] There is one God, and "the Spirit was present with Him [the Father], anterior to all creation."[11] This metaphor underscores the Holy Spirit's divinity, coequality, personhood, and eternal existence as not external to God.[12]

Irenaeus's concerns focus on Gnosticism and the Son and Holy Spirit's work in creation and human beings—that is, "their modes of working"—rather than "carefully

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coexists with God, which certainly leaves him open to a challenge on this basis." Kyle R. Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God: The Mosaic of Early Christian Pneumatology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2020), 65.

[7] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 93. Swete references the gnostic concept of προβολή. Here, "processions" is used to describe gnostic emanation, an external putting forward; this does not refer to an orthodox meaning of procession.

[8] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 92–93.

[9] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 93.

[10] Robert Letham cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.20.1; *PG*, 7:1032; see Robert Letham, *The Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R), 4.

[11] Letham cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.20.2–4; *PG*, 7:1032–1034; see Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 5. The Father's Offspring and Image—the Son and Holy Spirit, respectively—"belong to the essential life of God, and, though used as ministers, are not external instruments." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 88. Gregg R. Allison cites the same passage in *Against Heresies*, and Allison notices a pattern in the church's theological development: "The church's first attempts in understanding and explaining the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit focused on what would later be called the 'economic Trinity' (the different roles or activities of the three in relationship to the world)." Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 233; cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.38.3 (*ANF*, 1:521–22); 4.20.6 (*ANF*, 1:489).

[12] Letham cites Swete, who "remarks that as the hands of God, they are divine and coequal." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 88; Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 5.

distinguishing the persons."[13] Yet, Irenaeus does not confuse the Second and Third Persons: "[T]he two Hands of God are distinguished in their cosmical operations."[14] Specifically relating to human beings, Irenaeus traces God's pattern of creation of human beings in God's image: "God's whole work of creation, providence, and grace was carried out by his two hands, the Son and the Holy Spirit."[15] In grace, the Holy Spirit "work[s] in the hearts and lives of" human beings because "[t]he Paraclete was sent to fit [Christians] . . . for God, to bring them into union and fellowship with him."[16] "Through the Spirit," Christians ascend laddered steps and "mount up to the Son and through the Son to the Father."[17]

Robert Letham comments on Irenaeus's perception of a "reversal movement" in Christian redemption—"a form of ascent by steps like a ladder, through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father."[18] As the Third Person, the Holy Spirit is not a lesser divine person: "[I]f the Spirit holds in one respect the lowest place in the work of human salvation, it is not the least important or necessary."[19] Christ receives the gift of the Holy Spirit in dove form from the Father—the Father anoints the Son with the Holy

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[13] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 93.

[14] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 89. According to Hughes, Irenaeus's use of prosopological exegesis with respect to the person of the Spirit" is Irenaeus's "greatest contribution to the emerging identity of the Spirit as a distinct divine person." Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 65. Irenaeus accomplishes to clarify the Holy Spirit's distinct personhood "within the divine theodrama" by carving "out a unique identity and role for the Spirit apart from the Son" (68).

[15] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 5. In creation, the Holy Spirit, one with the Father and Son, shares in God's exclusive work of creating *ex nihilo* through nourishment and increase. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.38.3; *PG*, 7:1107–8; cf. Letham, 4.

[16] Swete cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.17.2; see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 90.

[17] Swete cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.36.2; 3.24.1; cf. 3.24.1; see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 91.

[18] Letham cites Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 90–91; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.36.2; 3.24.1; see Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 6. The Holy Spirit, one of the Father's hands, works in creation for Christian salvation. Letham cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.36.2; see Letham, 6.

[19] The Holy Spirit "prepares [human beings] . . . for the Son, who leads [human beings] . . . to the Father." Swete cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.20.5; see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 91.

Spirit, "who is the anointing."[20] Christ then uniquely imparts and sends the "Spirit upon all the earth" to his disciples.[21] Swete judges that Irenaeus's position on the Holy Spirit's mission is clear: "The Spirit was received from the Father by the Son, and the Son sent into the world; the Word bestows the Spirit on all, as the Father wills. The Paraclete was given to the Church, and dwells in her members."[22] The Holy Spirit transforms Christians into God's likeness, perfecting human beings "according to the Father's will."[23]

Origen of Alexandria (AD 185–254)

Kyle Hughes believes that Origen picks up and extends the view of the divine economy that Irenaeus sets forth.[24] George Butterworth dates Origen's *On First Principles* between 219 and no later than AD 225.[25] In response to Origen's alleged subordinationist tendencies, a more charitable interpretation of the times would acknowledge the ongoing development of "the linguistic tools . . . [that] did not exist to explain how the three could be distinct, yet one and indivisible."[26]

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[20] Letham cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.18.2–3; *PG*, 7:932–34; see Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 6. Irenaeus particularly focuses on Christ's baptism when considering God's work *ad extra*.

[21] Letham cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.17.1–3; *PG*, 7:929–31; see Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 6.

[22] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 93.

[23] Swete cites Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.8.1; see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 94.

[24] By divine economy, Hughes means the Holy Spirit's role in revealing "God's plan of salvation for the human race and the Spirit's role." Hughes, *How the Holy Spirit Became God*, 11. For Hughes, the divine economy also refers to God's inner life or self-disposition. Origen explores both topics but only calls God's salvation plan as the divine economy (95).

[25] George W. Butterworth, trans., introduction to *On First Principles* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2013), xli.

[26] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 7. Butterworth posits that Origen's chapters on the doctrines of the three divine persons "are wholly orthodox; for . . . Origen counted it his business to defend the Church tradition and to explain its meaning to intelligent [human beings]." Butterworth, introduction to *On First Principles*, xlviii. Letham litigates Origen's alleged connection with developing a theological idea that the Logos brings the Spirit into existence. Letham, 7. Edward Siecienski summarizes traditional allegations about Origen's subordinationist claims: "a result of his appropriation of Platonic philosophy[.] . . . According to Sergius Bulgakov, 'he did this . . . simply by putting the hypostasis of the Father in place of the Neoplatonic One, the hypostasis of the Son in place of the Neoplatonic mind, and the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit in place of the World Soul.'" Edward A. Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal*

On the second and third hypostases' relation, Origen "speaks in terms of the Spirit's origin through the Son—that is, receiving divinity and life from the Father through the Son."[27] Origen denies the Holy Spirit is a creature but explains that scriptural passages like Romans 8:9 support the idea that the Holy Spirit depends on the Son for existence.[28] Origen balances his "subordinationist tendencies with affirmations of the full equality of the three persons, since "nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less."[29] Quoting Colossians 1:15, Origen "emphasizes . . . the secondary position of the Son. The Holy Spirit is still less in degree, but all three are consubstantial, partaking of the fullness of the divine essence. Both Son and Spirit are genuine Beings, not simply divine

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Controversy, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 35, quoting Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jackim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 18.

Origen's "language concerning the Spirit" and his eternal relation with the Father and status as a creature "is less precise, at times questioning whether he was begotten like the Son, created, or brought forth in some other manner." Siecienski, 34. "Origen," Letham concludes, "held that both [the Son and the Holy Spirit] were to be regarded as God, not as creatures"; thus, Origen did not subordinate the Holy Spirit. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 127–34; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, rev. and exp. ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2019), 100–107, quoted in Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 7.

Additionally, Lewis Ayres adjudicates that Arius's theology does not directly result from Origen's alleged subordination of the Son. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20. Ayres offers three reasons for why he believes this view of Origen's influence is implausible: (1) "Origen exercised influence on *all* sides in Alexandria" and beyond; (2) "*no* theologian adopted Origen's system wholesale"; (3) "Origen's account of the Son as in some ways subordinate to the Father is in part simply that of his contemporaries: the aspects that seem most his own push on different directions from those pursued by Arius" (21). Ayres glosses "subordination" strictly and reserves the label for "theologians whose clear intention is to subordinate the Son to the Father in opposition to the gradual emergence of Nicene and pro-Nicene theologies." Put positively, Origen "offer[s] to future generations new terminological choices and theological formations: his work as exegete helped to shape the character of theology and exegesis in the fourth century."

Ayres defines "pro-Nicene" with three central principles: (1) "A clear version of the person and nature distinction, entailing the principle that whatever is predicated of the divine nature is predicated of the three persons equally and understood to be one"; (2) "[a] clear expression that the eternal generation of the Son occurs within the unitary and incomprehensible divine being"; and (3) "[a] clear expression of the doctrine that the persons work inseparably." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236.

[27] Siecienski references Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1–10*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 114; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 34. By my estimation, a charitable reading of this statement refers to the Father and the Son as the Holy Spirit's eternal relation of origin.

[28] Siecienski cites Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. George W. Butterworth (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 31; Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6–10*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, Fathers of the Church 104 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 54; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 35.

[29] Siecienski cites Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, 54; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 35.

attributes."[30] As the Third Person, the Holy Spirit is divine and coequal to the First and Second Persons. "Yet," as Edward Siecienski deciphers, "Origen still [maintains] . . . that 'the original goodness must . . . reside in God the Father, and from him both the Son and the Holy Spirit undoubtedly draw into themselves the nature of that goodness existing in the fount from which the one is born and the other proceeds."[31] Origen may not clearly state that the Holy Spirit proceeds "through the Son," but he wants "to affirm a relationship of origin to the Father."[32]

A parallel exists between the Son's knowledge and revelation of the Father and the Holy Spirit's revelation of God to whom the Holy Spirit wills.[33] Origen affirms the

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[30] Butterworth, introduction to *On First Principles* lxxii. On the one hand, Butterworth concludes that Origen affirms what might be termed consubstantiality. On the other hand, Origen rarely indicates the Holy Spirit as *homoousios* with the other persons. Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 101. "For Origen," Peter Widdicombe explains, "what is said of God must be eternally true," which leads Hughes to conclude that Origen believes "God has always existed as Father, Son, and Spirit." Peter Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God from Origin to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 69, quoted in Hughes, 96; cf. Origen, *On First Principles* 4.4.1.

[31] Siecienski cites Origen, *On First Principles* 28; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 35; cf. Origen, *On First Principles* 1.2.13 (Butterworth, 36). Origen's assertion that the Father is the "one fount of divinity" from whom the Holy Spirit eternally receives his existence is paired with Origen's clear affirmation of the Holy Spirit's eternality as a distinct *hypostasis* who has the divine nature. Origen, *On First Principles* 1.3.7, quoted in Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 97. However, Hughes underscores an absent point in Origen's writing: "While Tertullian indicate[s] . . . that Father, Son, and Spirit share . . . one 'substance' (*substantia*), Origen never clearly indicates that the Son, much less the Spirit, is of one 'essence' (*ousia*) with the Father; the term *homoousios*, so important in later trinitarian reflection, is almost entirely absent in Origen." John Behr, *The Formation of Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 184–91; Kilian McDonnell, "Does Origen Have a Trinitarian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit?," *Gregorianum* 75, no. 1 (1994), 15n69, quoted in Hughes, 101.

[32] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 35. Siecienski points to Origen's commentaries on John and Romans, and Siecienski suggests that Origen may nod in the direction of the Holy Spirit's procession "through the Son."

[33] Origen, *On First Principles* 1.3.4 (Butterworth, 43). In *On First Principles* 4.4, Origen spends considerable time outlining an orthodox understanding of the Father's eternal generation of the Son. While the doctrine of Holy Spirit's eternal procession is considerably less developed in this section, and while the logic behind the Son's generation is unique to the Son (for example, Origen utilizes the notions of offspring, wisdom, and light in his explanation), there are applicable principles for our understanding of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. I draw out some of these conclusions.

The Father is not separable from the Holy Spirit, and he spirated the Holy Spirit "by an act of separation from himself. . . . For we do not say . . . that a part of God's substance . . . change[s] into the [Holy Spirit] . . . or that the [Holy Spirit is spirated] . . . from something external to God's own substance, so that there [is] . . . a time when the [Holy Spirit does] . . . not exist." Origen, *On First Principles* 4.4.1 (Butterworth, 417–18). Rather, the Holy Spirit's procession from his origin, "the invisible and incorporeal God," is "like an act of will proceeding from the mind." Origen, 4.4.1 (Butterworth, 418). A divine person's procession from an origin does not insinuate a separation of a person from God's unified nature, whether in one's existence or substance.

Holy Spirit always knew the Father and is "included in the unity of the Trinity" because he has always been the Holy Spirit.[34] Referencing 1 Corinthians 12, Origen believes the text clearly shows "that there is no separation in the Trinity, but that this which is called 'the gift of the spirit' is ministered through the Son and worked by God the Father. And yet 'all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to each man as he will' (1 Cor. 12:11)."

The Holy Spirit's unity with the Father and Son coincides with the three persons' peculiar activity.[35] He highlights a pattern from Scripture: Creatures "obtain first of all their existence from God the Father, and secondly their rational nature from the Word, and thirdly their holiness from the Holy Spirit, they become capable of receiving Christ afresh in his character of the righteousness of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30)."[36] Christians participate in the Holy Spirit, who transforms the human being in purity and holiness such that Christians become "more worthy to receive the grace of wisdom and

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Ayres argues that Origen concerns himself with distinguishing the Father from the Son and Holy Spirit *qua* divine persons while elucidating how the Son and Holy Spirit share "the Father's nature to the extent that we may speak of there being one will, and that in the activity of the hypostases there is one 'movement.' Once again, Origen's concern is . . . maintaining the idea that the latter two [persons] reveal and bring to completion the one divine will and action." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 28.

[34] The Holy Spirit did not become the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not receive knowledge "through the relation of the Son" as though he lacked knowledge. Origen, *On First Principles* 3.4 (Butterworth, 43). Allison elucidates Origen's influence in paving the way for the affirmation of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. When Origen explains that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, Origen simultaneously affirms the Holy Spirit's eternality and the Trinity's unity. Origen, *On First Principles* 1.3.4 (*ANF*, 4:253); 3.5.8 (*ANF*, 4:344); 4.28 (*ANF*, 4:377), cited in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 238.

[35] This does not necessarily err against the doctrine of inseparable operations. Adonis Vidu defines "inseparable operations": "The ancient and universal Christian doctrine that, as the Trinity is one God, so the triune persons always act inseparably as one God, and not simply cooperatively, or collectively, in the world." Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 115. More specifically, "[h]ard inseparability in classical Trinitarianism . . . [means] that every act token of any Trinitarian person is also an act token of the other persons." Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), xiii, xv. Origen only seems to categorize the way Scripture describes the "activities" of the Holy Spirit, and none of these exclude the Father and Son's involvement. Origen, *On First Principles* 3.5 (Butterworth, 44). Yet, Hughes critiques Origen's work on the Holy Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son, which leaves "the exact nature of the Spirit's place in that Trinity [to remain] . . . somewhat unclear." Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 101. Specifically, Hughes refers to Origen's (1) elevation of the Father over the Son, and (2) circumscription of Holy Spirit's work in creation to emphasize the Son's expansive work.

[36] Origen, *On First Principles* 1.3.8 (Butterworth, 49).

knowledge," a blessed existence worthy of God.[37] Christians "receive a share of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, since the nature of the Trinity is one and incorporeal."[38]

The Creed of Nicaea (AD 325)

Faced with theological challenges concerning the nature of the Son's generation from the Father, the church required clarity on the language of generation that distinguishes the Son from "the language used about the 'creation' of the cosmos."[39] The council's decision "against Arius found expression in a short statement of faith, the creed of Nicaea."[40] Concerning the Third Person, the creed reads, "And in the Holy Spirit."[41] "For the moment," Swete summarizes that Arius does not reference the Holy Spirit: "[A]s in the early days of the Monarchian heresy, so in the beginnings of Arianism the Third Person [does] . . . not at first come into view."[42]

The Nicene Council's conceptually thin axiom on the Holy Spirit would require attention. Swete offers three reasons for discerning why the council agreed upon a singular sentence for the Third Person: (1) "the Church did not realize that the Person of

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[37] Origen, *On First Principles* 1.3.8 (Butterworth, 49–50).

[38] Origen, *On First Principles* 4.4.5 (Butterworth, 423).

[39] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 18. Constantine summons a council of bishops, "around 250–300" attend, "Ossius probably" presides, and they meet "from late May to July 325 at Nicaea in Asia Minor" (18–19).

[40] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 18.

[41] Ayres cites Richard Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318–381* (1988; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 19.

[42] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 164. Swete paints a picture of the theological milieu of the time: "It appears that in or about the year 318 [Bishop] Alexander[,] . . . at a gathering of clergy, discourse[s] . . . on the Holy Trinity, insisting especially on the unity of the three Persons in God," and Arius fiercely challenges Alexander's teaching, focusing on the nature of the Son's begottenness—that is, the eternality of the Son's begottenness from the Father. Arius's apparent silence on the Third *Hypostasis*'s deity in focusing on questioning the Second *Hypostasis*'s deity is Arius's logical move to question an affirmation of the Third *Hypostasis*'s deity. Swete suggests evidence pointing to Arius's full consciousness "of the consequences of his position" on the Father's creation of the Son.

the Holy Spirit was virtually included in the Arian attack upon the Person of the Son," (2) "she was not prepared to pronounce a decisive judgement upon the Godhead of the Spirit," or (3) "she was not concerned to anticipate heresy, or to defined the terms of Catholic communion more precisely than the occasion demanded."[43] While it is true that "the Council of 325 was content to assert the consubstantiality of the Son . . . [y]et the sudden arrest of the Nicene creed after the words, 'And in the Holy Spirit,' gave warning that at some future time it might be found necessary to guard the Deity of the Spirit as the Deity of the Son had been guarded."[44] Subsequent theologians such as Athanasius the Great steps up to the task.

Athanasius the Great (AD 295–373)

In his three letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit, Athanasius affirms the Holy Spirit's divinity while illuminating the doctrine of the Trinity.[45] On the Holy Spirit's eternal relations, Athanasius includes the Father and the Son: (1) the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father,[46] and (2) the Holy Spirit receives and shines forth from the Word.[47] As the person sent, given by, and who belongs to the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son and comes in the Son's name.[48] Athanasius adamantly states that a divine person who

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[43] Swete determines the third option "is more probable." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 165.

[44] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 165–66.

[45] Athanasius writes *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit* "between 355 and 360 against the *tropicii* (trope-mongers), a small group in Egypt who, while accepting the deity of the Son, balk[s] . . . at ascribing the same status to the Spirit." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 8. Swete explains the trajectory of Athanasius's writing: "The Nicene fathers [do not apply] . . . the Homoousion to the Holy Spirit," and early in Athanasius's writing, he sparsely references the Third Person. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 211. However, at "the end of the sixth decade of the century," the *Orations Against the Arians* and the *Letters to Serapion* provide "detailed theology of the Spirit." Swete, 212. Athanasius gives Bishop Serapion "advice in dealing with this group." Letham, 8.

[46] The Holy Spirit proceeds as the Holy Spirit, not as the Father's second son or grandson. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.15.2 (DelCogliano et al., 76).

[47] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.20.5 (DelCogliano et al., 85).

[48] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.20.6–7 (DelCogliano et al., 85); 2.10.2 (DelCogliano et al., 118); 3.2.3 (DelCogliano et al., 129–30). The Son is sent by the Father; thus, the Son glorifies the Father.

belongs to another divine person is proper to God's substance; thus, the Holy Spirit is not a creature but God.[49] As God, the Holy Spirit has the indivisible divine nature, and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated or divided from the Son or the Father.[50] Athanasius preserves the unity of the divine substance by contesting that "[t]he Father does all things through the Word and in the Holy Spirit."[51]

Based on Christ's self-identification as Truth, Athanasius interprets John 14:6 as revealing the divine persons, Spirit and Truth.[52] God's Spirit and Truth are "in the Father," and the Holy Spirit "is from the Father in the Son."[53] A Christian "who has the Holy Spirit has the Son . . . [for] the Son is in him and he is in the Son."[54] Athanasius

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Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.20.6–7 (DelCogliano et al., 85). Later, Athanasius cites John 16:15 and explains that the Holy Spirit's reception of all things from the Son parallels the Son's possession of all things from the Father. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 2.10.2 (DelCogliano et al., 118).

[49] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 2.10.3 (DelCogliano et al., 118–19). Amy B. Hughes and Shawn J. Wilhite note Athanasius's insistence on the Holy Spirit as Creator to enable creatures to participate in God: "[T]he Holy Spirit regenerates and renews (*Serap*. 1.22.1; 1.24.5–6)[,] . . . sanctifies (*Serap*. 1.23.1–2)[,] . . . and link[s creatures] to the divine life . . . (*Serap*. 1.24.2)." Amy B. Hughes and Shawn J. Wilhite, "The Beginnings of a Pro-Nicene Trinitarian Vision: The Beginnings of a Pro-Nicene Trinitarian Vision: Athanasius of Alexandria on the Activity of the Son and the Spirit," in *On Classical Trinitarianism: Retrieving the Nicene Doctrine of the Triune God*, ed. Matthew M. Barrett (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2024), 54.

[50] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.17.5 (DelCogliano et al., 80). Letham underscores Athanasius's theological contribution in underscoring the Trinity's indivisibility, which is "central to Athanasius' argument." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 8; cf. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.17.5 (DelCogliano et al., 80). Allison asserts that Athanasius refers to "the Spirit as homoousios and consubstantial . . . with the Father." Athanasius, *Defense of the Nicene Definition* 5.19–20 (*NPNF*^{2}, 4:162–64), quoted in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 239.

[51] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.28.3 (DelCogliano et al., 97). Hughes points out Athanasius's "emphasis on the unity of the three *hypostases* . . . begs the question of how Athanasius conceives of their distinction." Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 108. Hughes believes "Athanasius effectively punts the question by appealing to divine mystery (*Ep. Serap*. 1.20.3). . . . Athanasius does not aim to distinguish the generation of the Son from that of the Spirit or otherwise explain how the Spirit is distinguished within the divine being itself." Hughes, 109. Nevertheless, Khaled Anatolios sees "all the component features" in Athanasius that "would come to be orthodox trinitarian theology, asserting 'that both the real unity and real distinction are integral to the Christian identification of God.'" Hughes cites Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 145; see Hughes, 109. Indeed, "[i]t is not a Trinity in name alone and . . . linguistic expression, but in truth and actual existence." Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.28.3 (DelCogliano et al., 97).

[52] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.33.4 (DelCogliano et al., 104).

[53] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.33.4 (DelCogliano et al., 104).

[54] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 2.12.4–5 (DelCogliano et al., 121). For creatures, "When we participate in the Spirit, we possess the Son." Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 3.4.1 (DelCogliano et al.,

logically insists "that the Spirit is 'proper to the one Word and proper to the same as the one God in substance (*homoousion*)' (Ep. Serap. 1.27.3)."[55] Athanasius emphasizes the Holy Spirit's dependence on the Son: "[B]y linking the Spirit firmly to the Son Athanasius sees himself necessarily linking the Spirit also to the Father."[56] For example, he avers, "the Spirit is not external to the Word, but is in the Word and through the Word is in God."[57] This attestation of a tight-knit relationship, so to speak, between the Holy Spirit and the Son helps Athanasius simultaneously affirm two truths about God's divine life: (1) the Holy Spirit is divine, and (2) the divine substance is irreducible.

Theological implications for God's work *ad extra* also ensue: Lewis Ayres deduces that by linking the Holy Spirit to the Son, Athanasius "develops themes long fundamental to his account of creation and redemption."[58] Khaled Anatolios interprets

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132). Letham lists the Holy Spirit's relation to the Son as "the most distinctive aspect of Athanasius' discussion in these letters" because the *tropicii* affirms the Son's deity. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 10. Athanasius argues for the Holy Spirit's deity based on the Holy Spirit's inseparable relation with the Son—one's possession of the Son is to possess the Holy Spirit. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 3.4.1 (DelCogliano et al., 132). Stated negatively, the "anti-'Arian'" arguments of Athanasius's time that disparage and blaspheme against the Holy Spirit disparage the Son. Ayres cites Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.1.3 (DelCogliano et al., 53–54); see DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 23. Ayres identifies these blasphemous pneumatologies as anti-"Arian." Athanasius devotes the second half of Letter Two to proving that the Holy Spirit is not a creature. Ayres cites Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 2.10.2 (DelCogliano et al., 118); see DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24.

[55] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 108; cf. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 3.4.1 (DelCogliano et al., 132). "Unlike Origen," Hughes avers, "Athanasius explicitly asserts that the Spirit is *homoousios* with the Father and the Son." Hughes, 110. Later, Athanasius writes, "For the Trinity is indivisible, and there is one divinity of the Trinity." Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 2.15.4 (DelCogliano et al., 125).

[56] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 23; cf. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.21.1–3 (DelCogliano et al., 85–86).

[57] Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 2.14.4 (DelCogliano et al., 124–25). As Swete summarizes, "Athanasius did far more than refute heresy" that denied the Holy Spirit's divinity; "[h]e placed the whole subject of the interior relations in the life of the Holy Trinity on a scientific basis, so that the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can form a coherent whole, no part of which can be abandoned without a general collapse of faith." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 220.

[58] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24. Michael A. G. Haykin interprets Athanasius's argument for the Trinity's unity, the Holy Spirit's divinity, and the Holy Spirit's participation in God's work *ad extra*: "Denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit thus entails an attitude which is tantamount to rejection of the work of the Father and the Son." John McIntyre, "The Holy Spirit in Greek Patristic Thought," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7, no. 4 (December 1954): 360–61, quoted in Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Spirit of God: The Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 27 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 97.

Athanasius's argument this way as well: "[T]he Spirit is integral to the organic unity of divine agency, while the inseparability of the activity of Son and Spirit indicates that the Spirit has the same ontological unity with the Son and as the Son with the Father."[59] Athanasius notes how Scripture names the three persons with parallel titles, thereby securing the affirmation of the Holy Spirit's divine nature in an ordered and progressive way, "which begins with the Father, leads us to the Son, and then to the Spirit."[60] Ayres provides examples of the Holy Spirit's work in redemption and creation, and both examples uphold the Holy Spirit's divinity and order as third.[61]

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[59] Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius*, Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2004), 82.

[60] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24.

[61] First, as an example of the Holy Spirit's work in redemption, Ayres points to *Letters to Serapion* 1.23.4–7 (DelCogliano et al., 89–90); see DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24. Although not a fully refined schema, Athanasius's discussion on the divine persons' eternal order "hints towards an account of the relative roles of Son and Spirit in the work of redemption (and in the Godhead)." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24. The order of the three persons ought not to detract from a fundamental unity among them. Hughes cites Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.10.5 (DelCogliano et al., 69–70); see Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 113.

Ayres assesses Athanasius's lack of further development on the relationship between the divine persons' order and the relative work of the Holy Spirit in redemption. A difficulty in identifying the divine persons' relative roles "must stem from the difficulty of separating them [the relative roles] in a context where Father, Son, and Spirit mutually indwell and are all present whenever one is present (. . . see *Serap*. 1.19–20)." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24.

Siecienski offers a different interpretation. He suggests, "Athanasius never explicitly attributes the procession (ἐκπόρευσις) of the Spirit to the Son, nor does he ever question the monarchical principle. What Athanasius appears to advocate is the procession of the Spirit from the Father, while at the same time affirming that the Spirit is nevertheless the image of the Son who comes forth as his gift upon humanity." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 38.

The Son anoints Christ's followers "with his own Spirit. . . . This interrelationship of Son and Spirit [extends] . . . also to the Incarnate Christ, with Athanasius emphasizing the importance of the Spirit in forming the Incarnate Christ and shaping his ministry." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 24–25; cf. *Letters to Serapion* 1.14.7 (DelCogliano et al., 75). Letham points out this theme, "the Spirit and our salvation," as a third theological argument emphasized by Athanasius. "[A]ll creation partakes of the Word," or in the divine nature, "in the Spirit" because the Holy Spirit is divine. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 13.

Second, Athanasius includes biblical evidence for the Holy Spirit's ordered involvement in the work of creation. On the Holy Spirit creating, Ayres points to Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.31.3, which cites Psalms 32:6 and 147:18. DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 25. On the Holy Spirit's order in relation to the Father and the Son in creation—that is, "the Father . . . work[s] through the Son and in the Spirit"—Ayres cites Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.24.6 (DelCogliano et al., 91) and 1.28.3 (DelCogliano et al., 97). DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 25. Through considering the act of creation trinitarianly, "Athanasius insists . . . that the Spirit, who is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Son, must be proper to the substance of the Son and hence ranked with the creating triad[,] not the creation (see *Serap*. 1.25)." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 25; cf. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.25 (DelCogliano et al., 92–93).

This reasoning becomes a normative argument in the tradition: the Creator-creature divide is strictly binary, and Athanasius offers scriptural proof for the Holy Spirit's intimate involvement "with

Didymus the Blind (AD 313–398)

After Athanasius's death, "the role of [the] protagonist on the Catholic side at Alexandria [falls] . . . to Didymus, the blind head of the Alexandrian school."[62] Didymus's work, *On the Holy Spirit* (circa 360–365), opposes errored teachings: "[T]he association of the Spirit with the angelic order; the notion that Amos 4:13 proves that the Spirit is created; the same inference from John 1:3; the objection that ascribing divinity to the Spirit would make the Father a Grandfather."[63] Additionally, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz identifies an error that Didymus uniquely corrects in *On the Holy Spirit*: "[T]he doctrine that the Spirit is an activity of God and not a substantial reality (*Spir*. 97)."[64] Ayres comments on "one fundamental argument" in Didymus's logic that functions as "a theological foundation" to his work: "Didymus argues that the Spirit is the boundless source of all sanctification in which Christians (and all angels) participate, and thus *a priori* cannot be a created reality participating in goodness."[65] As such, "the Spirit must be one with the Father and Son."[66]

God's creating activity." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 25. Since the Holy Spirit is Creator, the Holy Spirit is God and not a creature. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is proper to the Son, and the Son gives the Holy Spirit to all Christ's followers. Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* 1.2.5 (DelCogliano et al., 55).

[62] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 221.

[63] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 31. According to Radde-Gallwitz, Louis Doutreleau summarizes five areas of overlap between Athanasius and Didymus's "pneumatological polemics." Radde-Gallwitz cites Didyme L'Aveugle, *Traité du Saint-Esprit*, ed. and trans. Louis Doutreleau, Sources Chrétiennes 386 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992), 33–36; see DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 38. They are as follows: (1) "Both draw a distinction between the Spirit and angels"; (2) "Both argue from the presence of the definite article: when it appears, scripture is referring to the *Holy* Spirit and not merely a created spirit"; (3) "Both worry over interpreting Amos 4.13 . . . rightly"; (4) "Both distinguish various uses of the word 'spirit' in scripture"; (5) "Both respond to the *reductio* that, if the Father has a Son who in turn has a Son called 'Spirit,' then the Father is in fact a Grandfather." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 38.

Letham's treatment of Didymus's theological contributions names three points. Didymus emphasizes (1) the Trinity's indivisibility and inseparability, (2) the Holy Spirit's ontological distinction from the created order, and (3) the order of the Trinitarian persons. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 14–15.

[64] This doctrine "does not appear in Athanasius or . . . Cyril of Jerusalem." DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 31.

[65] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 45.

[66] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 45.

Didymus also uses the notion of "the undiminished giver" to describe the Holy Spirit.[67] "This doctrine," Ayres argues, is "used in order to assert the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit."[68] The Holy Spirit gives gifts; he is never separated from the Father and the Son.[69] For example, Didymus describes a Trinitarian way God gives the gift of grace: "For whenever anyone receives the grace of the Holy Spirit, [the person] . . . has it as a gift from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."[70] The human being receives God's single grace in an ordered way such that the Holy Spirit as third in the divine *taxis* perfects God's activity. This singular, gracious act "demonstrates that the Trinity is of one substance."[71] By placing the three divine persons within God's singular substance and underscoring the singularity of God's activity in creation, Didymus successfully delineates how God is one in substance and three in person.[72]

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[67] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 46.

[68] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 46. Ayres compares Didymus's work to Athanasius's work. Overall, the former reflects "in far more detail than Athanasius on ways imagining Father, Son, and Spirit as irreducible and yet in a unique unity of substance" (47).

In *De Trinitate*, Didymus explains that the Third *Hypostasis* "is the Spirit of God and from God, although not posterior to Him. The procession of the Second and Third hypostases from the First is not the effect of a creative energy, but belongs to the nature of God; . . . it must be understood that the Persons co-exist and proceed simultaneously . . . not by way of creation, but after the manner of a spiritual nature." Didymus, *De Trinitate* 2.2, quoted in Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 222.

[69] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 46.

[70] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 76 (DelCogliano et al., 167).

[71] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 76 (DelCogliano et al., 167). Didymus alerts us to an axiom that the tradition will continue to protect: "[T]hose who have a single activity also have a single substance." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 81 (DelCogliano et al., 168). More specifically, Didymus states that God has one will, which is located in the nature and is indivisible. Didymus links the Father and Son's will based on John 10:30 and continues to connect the Son and the Holy Spirit. This two-step link shows that "the Trinity is undivided and inseparable according to nature." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 85 (DelCogliano et al., 170). In part 3 of *On the Holy Spirit*, Didymus continues to work through a list of divine attributes and divine works *ad extra* to show how Scripture teaches a two-fold truth about God: (1) the Holy Spirit does what only God can do because he is divine, and (2) the Holy Spirit is distinct and inseparable from the Father and Son within the one divine substance. See Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 74–110a (DelCogliano et al., 166–78).

[72] Occasionally, Didymus distinguishes how Scripture attributes God's perfections and actions to the Holy Spirit within a Trinitarian-shaped work. Matthew 28 and 2 Corinthians 2:17 describe Christian baptism, and "we conclude . . . that the Holy Spirit is truly the Spirit of the Father and God, and especially the Spirit of Wisdom and Truth, that is of the Son of God." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 99b; 103 (DelCogliano et al., 175, 175–76).

Didymus accounts for the Holy Spirit's relation with the Father: the Holy Spirit "has gone out from the Father,"[73] "comes forth from the Father,"[74] and "is sent from the Father."[75] The Holy Spirit is not another Son, for "the manner of His derivation from the Father differs from the Son's: He is not begotten but proceeding."[76] Didymus also accounts for the Holy Spirit's relation with the Son: the Holy Spirit "is sent from the Son[,] . . . the Wisdom and Truth."[77] The Holy Spirit's "substance . . . is nothing other than that which is given to him from the Son."[78] This reception preserves the Trinity's unity of substance.[79] Since upon first blush of passages such as John 14:16–17, 14:26,

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[73] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 110b; 113 (DelCogliano et al., 178, 179).

[74] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 112; 114; 116. (DelCogliano et al., 179, 179–80, 180).

[75] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 117 (DelCogliano et al., 180–81). Part 4 focuses on "The Spirit's Procession, Sending, and Proper Names." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 110b–31 (DelCogliano et al., 178–84).

[76] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 223.

[77] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 111 (DelCogliano et al., 179). On the Son's relation with the Father, the Son "is sent from the Father." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 111; 116 (DelCogliano et al., 179, 180). The Son also "goes out from God." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 113–15. Siecienski cautions readers in overemphasizing Didymus's work to support a Western view of the Holy Spirit's procession. Based on "a few passages of dubious authenticity," Siecienski believes it is unwarranted to interpret Didymus's writing on the Son's role in the Spirit's eternal procession." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 37. See Siecienski's discussion on Jerome's faithfulness to Didymus's *On the Holy Spirit*'s original Greek text in his Latin translation in Siecienski, 36.

Siecienski also comments on the authentic attribution of *De Trinitate* to Didymus (cf. *PG* 39.269–922), which modern scholars increasingly question; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 37. Siecienski cites Alasdair I. C. Heron, "Studies in the Trinitarian Writings of Didymus the Blind: His Authorship of the Adversus Eunomium IV–V and the De Trinitate, Volume 1" (PhD diss., University of Tübingen, 1972). By Zachary T. Hedges's estimation, "recent arguments [trend] . . . in the direction of support for this traditional identification" that Didymus authored *De Trinitate*. Zachary T. Hedges, "Filled with the Gifts of God: The Holy Spirit as Agent of Virtue Formation in the Participatory Pneumatology of Didymus the Blind" (ThM thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017). Hedges cites Heron, "Studies in the Trinitarian Writings of Didymus the Blind"; Heron, "Some Sources Used in the De Trinitate Ascribed to Didymus the Blind," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173–81; DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, trans., *Works on the Spirit*; Lewis Ayres, "The Holy Spirit as the 'Undiminished Giver': Didymus the Blind's De Spiritu Sancto and the Development of Nicene Pneumatology," in *The Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Seventh International Patristic Conference*, ed. D. Vincent Twomey and Janet E. Rutherford (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 57–72.

[78] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 165 (DelCogliano et al., 194). Swete draws a parallel between the Father and the Son's relation (the Son as the Father's perfect image) with the Son and the Holy Spirit's (the Holy Spirit images the Son). Swete cites Didymus, *De Trinitate* 2.5; see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 223.

[79] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 166 (DelCogliano et al., 194). The Son's sending of the Spirit of Truth is always in conjunction with the Father's sending of the Holy Spirit because "he [the Holy Spirit]

and 15:26 most evidently identify the Son sending and giving the Holy Spirit, Didymus emphasizes the Father's involvement in the unified act of sending and giving the Holy Spirit too.[80] According to Hughes, Didymus utilizes John 15:26 to make an argument "about the nature of the Spirit's procession from the Father and to note that the Spirit is sent by both the Father and the Son."[81] The Third Person's procession maintains the theological affirmations of the Holy Spirit's divinity and indivisibility from his source of sending: "[T]he Holy Spirit goes out from the Father"[82] and "[he] is sent from the Son . . . as is appropriate for the Spirit of God to be sent from Wisdom and Truth. For the Spirit . . . is not separated and sundered from" the Father and Son; all three persons have the undivided nature.[83]

Basil of Caesarea (AD 330–379)

The Cappadocian fathers, starting with Basil, inherit the legacy of Athanasius.[84] Stephen Hildebrand traces Basil's arguments in *On the Holy Spirit*.[85]

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comes through the identical will of the Father and Son." Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 117 (DelCogliano et al., 180–81).

[80] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 120 (DelCogliano et al., 181). The Holy Spirit's work is not third in rank and temporally after the Father and Son's work. Cf. Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 162 (DelCogliano et al., 193).

[81] Hughes cites Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 114; 117; 120 (DelCogliano et al., 179–80, 180–81, 81; see Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 116–17.

[82] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 113 (DelCogliano et al., 179).

[83] Didymus, *On the Holy Spirit* 111 (DelCogliano et al., 179).

[84] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 15. DelCogliano cautions against overemphasizing the Cappadocians' reliance on Athanasius's influential pneumatology (17n19). DelCogliano cites Marina S. Troiano, "Il *Contra Eunomium* III di Basilio di Cesarea e le *Epistolae ad Serapionem* I–IV di Atanasio di Alessandria: nota comparativa," *Augustinianum* 41, no. 1 (2001), 51–91; DelCogliano, "Basil of Caesarea on Proverbs 8:22 and the Sources of Pro-Nicene Theology," *Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (April 2008): 183–90; DelCogliano, "Basil of Caesarea, Didymus the Blind, and the Anti-Pneumatomachian Exegesis of Amos 4:13 and John 1:13," *Journal of Theological Studies* 61, no. 2 (September 2010): 644–58; see DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 16–17n18.

[85] Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. Stephen Hildebrand, Popular Patristics 42 (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011). Letham remarks that Basil's treatise *On the Holy Spirit* includes "his mature thoughts on the Holy Spirit and the Trinity." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 15. He wrote his magnum opus around 376.

Positively, Basil "offers analogies for understanding his [the Holy Spirit's] communion with the Father. In his refutation of his opponents[,] Basil takes on those who refuse to rank the Spirit with the Father and the Son."[86]

Basil's response secures theological affirmations of the Holy Spirit's participation in enjoying communion in God and his distinct personhood as the Third *Hypostasis*: "[T]he Spirit is third in order and dignity[,] . . . not third in an order of essences."[87] As the Third Person, "Basil presents the peculiar action of the Spirit, completing and sanctifying, as a constant part or aspect of God's activity."[88] Further developing pro-Nicene pneumatology, Basil notes "[t]he Spirit's function as the perfecter of divine action and the *telos* of all that is virtuous."[89] Basil moves the theological

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Commenting on Basil's *Against Eunomius* (364), Siecienski notes that it is widely accepted that Book Five is spurious. In Book Five, "Basil allegedly maintained that the Spirit was related to the source of the divinity through the Son, who as the Word of the Father Brough forth the utterance of the Spirit." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 39, citing Basil, *Contra Eunomium* 5.

[86] Stephen Hildebrand discerns how Basil's treatise alternates between positive statements of his understanding of the Holy Spirit and refutations of the ideas of his opponents." Stehpen Hildebrand, trans., introduction to *On the Holy Spirit*, 22; cf. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 6.13 (Hildebrand, 39).

[87] Ayres cites Basil, *Against Eunomius* 3.1; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 216. The Spirit's order as third after the Father and Son cannot be interpreted to mean the Holy Spirit occupies an "impious position, namely, the unlikeness of his substance, the lowering of his dignity, his generation at a later time." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 17.43 (Hildebrand, 78). Rather, Scripture lists the Holy Spirit as third, such as in the baptismal formula (Matt 28:19), to reveal the Holy Spirit's equality in rank with the Father and the Son.

Here, rank refers to the Holy Spirit's divinity. So Basil, "As the Son relates to the Father, so the Spirit relates to the Son, according to the order of the expression that has been given at baptism. But if the Spirit is ranked with the Son, and the Son with the Father, then, clearly, the Spirit ranks with the Father." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 17.43 (Hildebrand, 78). The Holy Spirit is God. Letham also highlights Basil's ranking the Spirit with the Father and the Son by referencing the baptismal formula. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 18.

Siecienski explains the historical context: "Basil's polemics against the *Pneumatomachoi* . . . led him to stress the unity and equality of the divine persons, both in the economy of salvation and in our doxological confession of the Trinity." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 39. Siecienski cites the baptismal formula to explain Basil's point: the Holy Spirit is third on the list, but he is equal in his divinity because the Holy Spirit is sanctification. Siecienski cites Basil, *Contra Eunomium* 3.2.

[88] Ayres continues, "The actions of the Father and Son in creating and saving intrinsically involve an action of perfecting and (where appropriate) sustaining in existence or perfection that is the work of the Spirit." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 216. For example, in 16.38, Basil identifies the three persons' communion in the one divine being and the Holy Spirit's perfecting presence: "'The Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father' (John 15:26)" is the breath of God's mouth who made all the stars (Ps 33:6). As the Third Person, the Holy Spirit confirms or perfects creatures' holiness "through the communion of the Spirit." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38 (Hildebrand, 72).

[89] In practice, "Basil insists that the Spirit is to be accorded equal worship and honour with the Father and the Son, even if he [Basil] is not willing to say directly that the Spirit is God in the same terms as Father and Son." Ayres cites Basil, *Against Eunomius* 3.1; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 216. Ayres

discussion by placing the traditional understanding of the Spirit, the agent of sanctification, within "the Nicene account of the loving God's immediate work in his creation."[90] Ironically, Basil believes that the Holy Spirit's order as third affirms his divinity.[91] The Third Person "is joined through the one Son to the one Father, and through himself, he completes the famed and blessed Trinity."[92]

The Holy Spirit's "particularizing property . . . within the monarchy"[93] distinguishes him from the Father and Son as third in the eternal order. Ayres explains that Basil's pneumatology is concerned with insisting "that the Spirit is a coequal member of the triune Godhead."[94] While the Holy Spirit's origin is the Father, "the most important pressure is to find a place for the Spirit in the Trinity as distinct and not simply as another Son."[95] His eternal relation within God's communal life "is said to be from God . . . insofar as he comes forth from God . . . as the breath of his mouth."[96]

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comments that Basil shows greater reserve in *On the Holy Spirit* in his employment of terms for the Holy Spirit; however, there exists "a wide variety of expressions indicating the Spirit's divine activity." Ayres, 216–17.

[90] Ayres cites Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 9.22–23; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217.

[91] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.44 (Hildebrand, 79–80). A "subnumeration" in counting the divine persons "import[s] Greek polytheism into Christian theology," and practically speaking, this would "recognize a first, a second, and a third Deity." Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 235.

[92] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.45 (Hildebrand, 81). Letham references this passage and summarizes Basil's theological point: the three persons are distinct. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 19.

[93] Basil refers to the Son, and I apply the principle of his interpretation of "God from God" to the Holy Spirit. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.45 (Hildebrand, 80). "[L]et holy things be counted piously," instructs Basil. The one God is incomposite; thus "when we must count them together[,] we are not carried away to the concept of polytheism by uneducated counting." Basil, 18.44 (Hildebrand, 80).

[94] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217.

[95] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217. Based on John 15:26, some writers will distinguish the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father from the Son's eternal generation, although "the Spirit's mode of procession remains even more mysterious than the Son." Nevertheless, the distinction maintains the Holy Spirit's unique place as third in God.

[96] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.46 (Hildebrand, 81). Allison assesses Basil's understanding of the Holy Spirit's procession, which is a distinct "mode of origin" from the Son: the Holy Spirit is "of God," not by way of the Father's generation of the Son, but by procession "as the breath of his [God's] mouth." Allison cites Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.46 (Hildebrand, 81–82); see Allison, *Historical Theology*, 436. "Merely enumerating the persons is insufficient," assesses Letham, "for we must confess each person to have a natural existence in real *hypostasis*. Thus, Basil insist[s] . . . on the oneness in being of the Spirit

Additionally, the Holy Spirit's particularizing property also has implications for God's work in creation. Basil solidifies a rule: "[T]he Spirit is third in the order of every divine action, completing and bringing to fruition what the Father accomplishes through the Son."[97] Since Truth Incarnate sends the Spirit of truth, or "the Spirit of Wisdom," or Christ's Spirit, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Truth.[98] The Father will glorify the Son (John 12:28); "thus also the Spirit is glorified through the communion that he has with the Father and the Son."[99] The mutual giving and receiving of glory between the divine persons testifies to their equality.[100]

Hildebrand also remarks on Basil's employment of the scriptural metaphor of archetype-image. By including the Holy Spirit in this illustration, which he develops in *Against Eunomius*, Basil biblically grounds "the communion of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son" while affirming "the divine plurality" of the persons.[101] In the metaphor, creatures join "the Spirit of knowledge," who enables "our gaze upon the

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with the Father and the Son, together with the distinction of hypostases." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 20, citing Basil, *Letter* 210.5 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:250–51).

[97] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217.

[98] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.46 (Hildebrand, 81–82). Although I believe a divine person is only sent in time based on their eternal relation of origin and find historical support in notions such as "the Spirit is called Christ's," Siecienski offers a different interpretation. By Siecienski's estimation, if one relies on "Basil's authentic works . . . it is difficult (if not impossible) to find support for the position that he taught that the Son had any role in the Spirit's hypostatic origin." Based on John 15:26, Basil establishes the "Spirit's uniqueness by his procession from the Father (as distinguished from the Son's generation)." The Holy Spirit "is not a 'second son'" because he proceeds from his origin, the Father, whereas the Son is generated. Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 40. Siecienski summarizes Basil in this way: "[Basil] never ascribe[s] . . . any role to the Son in the Spirit's ἐκπόρευσις."

[99] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.46 (Hildebrand, 82). Basil cites John 12:28 and 16:14, making a parallel argument for why the Son glorifies the Father. The Father tasks the Son to finish a work; therefore, the Son's accomplishment of the work on earth glorifies the Father.

[100] The three persons exist in a "proper, naturally united, and inseparable communion." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 26.63. Basil argues that he prefers the preposition "with" over "in" to describe the manner in which the persons exist together. Letham interprets Basil's expression "to the Father *with* the Son together *with* the Holy Spirit" against the "approved form '*through* the Son and *in* the Holy Spirit'" to correct a reduction of "the Spirit to a creature." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 16–17, citing Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 1.3–4.

[101] Hildebrand, introduction to *On the Holy Spirit*, 24.

image."[102] "Just as the Father is seen in the Son," Basil posits, "so the Son is seen in the Spirit."[103]

According to Letham, Basil clarifies the terms *ousia* and *hypostasis*; thus, subsequent theologians dialogue with more clarity when speaking of the one substance, three persons, and internal processions.[104] Two factors characterize the Holy Spirit *qua* person: (1) he derives his subsistence from the other, and (2) he is the Third Person eternally with the Son.[105] Consequently, the Third Person's relation in God's interior life—his distinct personal subsistence—is the pattern in which we interpret the Holy Spirit's work in human beings' spiritual lives.[106]

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[102] Hildebrand cites Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 18.46–47; see Hildebrand, introduction to *On the Holy Spirit*, 24.

[103] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 26.64 (Hildebrand, 103).

[104] This clarification of *ousia* and *hypostasis* is a development from Nicaea, where theologians used the two terms interchangeably. Letham cites Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 5.7; see Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 17. As Letham explains, "Basil wrote to Count Terentius that '*ousia* has the same relation to hypostasis as the common has to the particular.'" Letham, 21, citing Basil, *Letter* 214.4 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:254). From development, one problem may ensue: "By his comparison of general to particular, however, Basil may [leave] . . . the door open for a generic view of God, and a comparison to three men sharing a common human nature." Letham, 21.

Likewise, Swete notes this significant contribution from Basil's Letters: Basil lays emphasis "on the necessity for distinguishing between Essence (οὐσία) and Person (ὑπόστασις), especially in view of the renewed Sabellianism . . . abroad." Swete cites Basil, *Letter* 38 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:137–141); 214 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:254); 125 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:194–96); see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 238. In his letters, "Basil's view of the Procession comes more clearly into view. [So Basil:] 'The Holy Spirit is attached to the Son, with whom He is apprehended inseparably; while His being depends upon the Father as Cause, from whom also He proceeds." Swete cites Basil, *Letter* 38.4 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:138–39); see Swete, 239.

[105] Swete cites Basil, *Letter* 38.4 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:138–39); see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 239.

[106] Ayres suggests that a "major contribution of pro-Nicene pneumatology is the insistence that the work of the Spirit is inseparable from Father and Son," which profoundly affects how we see the work of sanctification. Ayres summarizes: "Thus pro-Nicene pneumatology makes a vital contribution to the history of pneumatology in its variety that the work of sanctification is the unmediated work of God." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217. The Holy Spirit unceasingly abides "with the Father and the Son" in an "eternal union." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 26.63 (Hildebrand, 102). The Third Person is equally divine with the Father and the Son. In his life of communion, he makes Christians holy: "As [a person] . . . who lays hold of one end of a chain pulls the other to . . . [oneself], so [the person] . . . who draws the Spirit draws to [oneself] . . . through the Spirit the Son and the Father." Swete cites Basil, *Letter* 38.4 (*NPNF*^{2}, 8:138–39); see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 239.

Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 330–390)

Standing in the line of theologians of the church, Gregory of Nazianzus preserves orthodox teaching from Nicaea.[107] The "[a]ncient fourth- and early-fifth century church" polemicist and historian continues to offer clarity on accurately interpreting the creed. The main text I discuss in this section is Nazianzus's *Five Theological Orations*.[108] I will systematically consider the *Orations* 3–5 from the *Five Theological Orations*.

In *Oration* 3, Gregory delineates a two-part orthodox definition of monotheism: numerical distinction and no division in the divine substance.[109] Following this definition, the Holy Spirit is "what [who] Proceeds from the Father" in a "non-temporal, incorporeal way."[110] He does not compose a part of God's being; the divine substance is not a plurality of "beings" with separate substances.[111] Procession does not reference the type of nature the Holy Spirit possesses.[112] Instead, the name "Holy Spirit"

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[107] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 16. Siecienski describes "the Theologian" as one who "occupies a special place in the development on Eastern trinitarian thinking." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 40. "Along with Basil and Gregory of Nyssa," Siecienski summarizes, "Gregory shaped the language and limits of the Church's trinitarian theology," particularly on the concepts of "divinity, equality, or unity of the three hypostases within the godhead."

[108] Lionel Wickham provides an overview of the *Five Theological Orations*; see Lionel Wickham, introduction to *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, by Gregory of Nazianzus, trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel Wickham, Popular Patristics 23 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 19–20.

[109] In the third and fourth orations, Gregory seeks to convince his opponents "to call the Holy Spirit 'God' directly or 'consubstantial' with the Father." Wickham, introduction to *On God and Christ*, 20.

[110] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 29.2 (Wickham, 70). Gregory asks a rhetorical question in the next section: "Since when has the Spirit been proceeding?" He responds, "Since as long as the Son has *not* been proceeding but being begotten in a non-temporal way that transcends explanation." Gregory, *Oration* 29.3 (Wickham, 71). His point is this: the Father is eternally ingenerate, the Son is eternally begotten, and the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father. The three "are not subject to time." Gregory, *Oration* 29.3 (Wickham, 71). Siecienski explains Gregory's point: "According to Gregory, the 'one Holy Spirit . . . proceeds (προελθόν) or goes forth (προϊόν) from the Father" and thus is "'God' (Θεόν) to those who understanding things properly." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 40, quoting Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 25.15–18, in *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*, trans. Christopher A. Beeley, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 202.

[111] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 29.10 (Wickham, 78). Separate substances necessarily mean separate or a plurality of beings, but God is a single being.

[112] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 29.11 (Wickham, 78–79). I apply Gregory's logic to the Holy Spirit's procession from the text on the ingenerate Father. As Gregory argues, the Father is neither "*a*

designates "the relationship, the manner of being, which holds good between the Father and the [Holy Spirit]."[113]

In *Oration* 4, Gregory contends that "Holy Spirit" is the personal name "of what has issued, or proceeds [from the Father], without generation"[114] The term "procession," taken from John 15:26, describes the Holy Spirit's eternal relation to the Father, and Gregory coins the term "procession" for the Third Person's distinctive property.[115] While coeternal and coequal with the Father, the Holy Spirit comes forth from him in the Holy Spirit's "unique manner."[116]

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designation either of the substance [*n*]*or the activity*." Gregory, *Oration* 29.16 (Wickham, 83–84). As such, the Holy Spirit is not of a different substance nor a creation.

[113] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 29.16 (Wickham, 83–84). The original subject in Gregory's text is the Father; I apply his logic to the Holy Spirit and only include the Father as the Holy Spirit's origin at this point.

[114] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 30.19 (Wickham, 108–9). There are shared and personal names of deity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are personal names that describe the divine persons' eternal relations. I apply Gregory's logic of the Father's relation with the Son to the Father with the Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit "is not simply identical in substance with the Father, but stems from him." Gregory, *Oration* 30.20 (Wickham, 109–11).

"The Father's unique role as the . . . 'principle/origin of divinity'" does not deny the equality of the persons. Siecienski notes that Athanasius and Basil emphasize this point. Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 41. Quite the opposite: the Father's unbegottenness grounds the Trinity's unity and distinguishes "the Father's hypostasis from that of the Son and the Spirit." Siecienski uses "source" and "cause" to describe the Father's relationship with the Son and the Holy Spirit. None of these terms ought to be interpreted with any temporal element; the three persons are eternal. On the Father's causality, an important concept in the Eastern tradition, Siecienski cites John A. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 295; cf. 307. Without succumbing to a view that excludes the Son as the Holy Spirit's relation of origin along with the Father, Letham offers a balanced word. The Father, as the origin of the Son and Holy Spirit, is not the first in "a causal chain of dependence" within divinity. Letham discerns this was an idea that "Basil and his brother impl[y]." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 30.

[115] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 28. Hildebrand comments on how "we see the priority of thought over language . . . with the word 'procession' [as] Gregory makes an innovation in vocabulary for the sake of clarity, signifying that the Holy Spirit does not have a relationship of sonship with the Father." Hildebrand cites Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 39.12, in *Gregory of Nazianzus*, trans. Brian Daley, Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 2006), 133; Stephen Hildebrand, "The Cappadocians and the Maturity of Nicene Vocabulary," in Barrett, *On Classical Trinitarianism*, 70. By Siecienski's estimation, Gregory's most significant contribution to the doctrine of the procession stems from his attempt to distinguish the Holy Spirit's relation to the Father, which is not through generation. The Second Person is the Father's only-begotten Son. The Holy Spirit's procession is unique and distinguished from a general coming forth. Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 42.

[116] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 42.15 (Daley, 147). Siecienski concludes that "Gregory's trinitarian schema" with the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father, "the cause within the Godhead," sets the stage for subsequent theologians in the Eastern Tradition "to refute the Latin teaching on the procession." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 43.

Gregory speaks of the Holy Spirit as *homoousios* with the Father and the Son. On Basil not using *homoousios* to describe the Holy Spirit, Letham cites Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of*

In *Oration* 5, when Gregory names the Second Person "Life," he includes the Holy Spirit in his explanation. The Holy Spirit is the Son's breath, whom Christians uniquely receive.[117] To speak of the Trinitarian persons, Gregory identifies three subjects or predicates, "light and light and light," even though the three exist in a single reality.[118] The Holy Spirit's existence cannot be separated from the Father or Son's.[119] By virtue of the Holy Spirit's rank as divine, he "can make me God" and "link me with deity."[120]

Gregory asks if the Holy Spirit is an accident or substance, eventually ruling that the Holy Spirit is a substance in the second sense—as God.[121] Next, Gregory considers the Holy Spirit's eternal relations between the Trinitarian persons.[122] Gregory's definition of the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father defends the Holy Spirit's

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God: One Being, Three Persons (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 126. Conversely, Letham cites Mark J. Larson, "A Re-Examination of *De Spiritu Sancto*: Saint Basil's Bold Defence of the Spirit's Deity," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 67–69, for Larson's reasoning for why Basil does not use "*homoousios*." Larson marshals evidence that "Basil says the same thing in other words." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 16.

[117] Referencing Acts 17:28, "For in him we live, move, and exist," Gregory explains "there is a two-fold sense in which he breathes into us; we are filled, all of us, with his breath, and those who are capable of it, all those who open their mind's mouth wide enough, with his Holy Spirit." Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 30.20 (Wickham, 109–11). Gregory does not make the case that the Son is the Holy Spirit's origin as such. But the Son possesses the Holy Spirit in some way such that the Son is capable, so to speak, of breathing the Holy Spirit.

[118] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.3 (Wickham, 118–19). The Holy Spirit is "true light," as is the Father and the Son; therefore, "[w]e shall extol the Spirit; we shall not be afraid."

[119] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.4 (Wickham, 119). In the fifth oration, Gregory "moves on to proclaim the full Godhead and consubstantiality of the Spirit as a revelation belonging to the era of the Church." Wickham, introduction to *On God and Christ*, 20. Wickham deems the fifth oration as "the finest." In it, "Gregory has to persuade his listeners to join him in recognizing the Holy Spirit as God and as consubstantial with the Father and Son" (20). In his theological context, Gregory faces two challenges: "[T]he Holy Spirit is not called 'God' in the Bible nor was he called 'consubstantial' by Basil (or, of course, in the revised Nicene Creed of the council of 381)" (22).

[120] Gregory contrasts the Holy Spirit's rank with that of creatures' rank. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.4 (Wickham, 119). On the notion of making a human being "God," Wickham references 1 Peter 1:4 and Matthew 28:19.

[121] Gregory rules out accident and substance in the first sense, which would categorize the Holy Spirit as a creature. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.6 (Wickham, 120–21). The Holy Spirit is not an accident or else that would make him "an activity of God."

[122] He clarifies that the Holy Spirit is neither ingenerate nor begotten; rather, he proceeds. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.7 (Wickham, 121–22). Gregory asserts, "[T]he Son is 'Son' in a more elevated sense of the word[.] . . . [The] term express[es] his consubstantial derivation from God." I apply Gregory's logic on the Third Person's name in an elevated sense that also upholds his consubstantial derivation from God.

divinity.[123] The language "Holy Spirit" does not warrant an argument "for any deficiency, for any subordination in being"; rather, procession gives the Third Person the name applied to him—Holy Spirit.[124] Stated positively, this language "safeguard[s] the distinctness of the three hypostases within the single nature and quality of the Godhead. . . . The Spirit is not the Son . . . yet whatever the Son is, he [the Holy Spirit] is."[125]

Gregory boldly states that since the Holy Spirit is God—he is consubstantial.[126] To locate God's nature is to locate the Trinity.[127] "One of the most distinctive characteristics of Nazianzen's Trinitarian theology," Ayres avers, "is the manner of his emphasis on the harmony of unity and diversity in the Godhead. For Gregory, the generative nature of God eternally produces the triunity as the perfection of divine existence."[128] God's nature is indivisible, and the Holy Spirit is really distinct from the Father and the Son.[129] As the Third Person, the Holy Spirit is not subordinate to the Father or Son because there are no degrees of being in God.[130] The oration concludes

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[123] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.8 (Wickham, 122). Gregory calls procession the "midway term between ingeneracy and generacy" to push against arguments that consider the Third Person the second son or grandson of the Father. As "a mean term between alternatives," the Holy Spirit exists in a way unique to him.

[124] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.9 (Wickham, 123).

[125] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.9 (Wickham, 123).

[126] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.10 (Wickham, 123–24); cf. 31.17–19 (Wickham, 129–32). This consubstantiality is defined as "things with a different individual being [having] . . . the same substance" like Adam, Eve, and Seth. Gregory, *On God and Christ*, 31.11 (Wickham, 124–25). The Holy Spirit is not an offspring. Gregory, *Oration* 31.11. Citing Gregory, *On God and Christ* 31.10, Siecienski notes Gregory's contribution in contrast with Basil. Unlike Basil, Gregory boldly "proclaimed the Holy Spirit both 'God' and *homoousios* with the Father and the Son." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 40. Siecienski uses "*homoousios*" instead of "consubstantial."

[127] Later theologians offer precision on this: Gregory accurately discerns the notion that the three persons who individually have the one divine essence do not add up to more than what the divine essence is. Later, Gregory explicitly states the word "God" is used three times in referencing the three divine persons, yet three gods do not exist—orthodox Christianity is not a tritheistic religion. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.13 (Wickham, 126–27).

[128] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 244–45.

[129] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.14 (Wickham, 127–28). The Godhead timelessly exists in the three.

[130] The Father or Son do not have ontological priority over the Holy Spirit even though the Bible numbers them as First Person and Second Person, respectively. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.14.

with Gregory's adamant explanation of his biblical position, even though the opposing position surmises the Bible does not state the Holy Spirit's divinity.[131]

Creed of Constantinople (AD 381)

In comparison to the Creed of Nicaea (AD 325), the Creed of Constantinople "offers additional clauses on the Holy Spirit."[132] It reads, "[We believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceeds from the Father who is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, who spoke by the prophets."[133] Richard Hanson lists twelve differences between the Creed of Nicaea (AD 325) and the Nicene Creed (AD 381), and Ayres deduces only three substantial differences: "(1) [T]he addition of the extended statement about the Spirit; (2) the omission of 'from the *ousia* of the Father'; (3) the omission of Nicaea's anathemas."[134] The first and second differences concern this project's discussion.[135]

The "uses of *sun-* as a qualifier in quick succession in the Spirit clauses of Constantinople," teaching "equal worship to the Spirit," leads to an affirmation of the

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Allison recognizes the Cappadocian Fathers' major contribution to Trinitarian theology as they underscore the concept of perichoretic unity while emphasizing the Trinitarian persons' order. Allison, *Historical Theology*, 239; cf. Gregory, *Oration* 31.16 (Wickham, 128–29).

As God, the Holy Spirit deifies Christians and thus is worthy of worship. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.28 (Wickham, 138–39). Christians' ability to recognize the Holy Spirit's worthiness to receive adoration is a supernatural work he performs.

[131] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 31.21 (Wickham, 133). Letham faults this as biblical fundamentalism. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 27.

[132] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 32. The creed "sums up the considered biblical exegesis and doctrinal commitments of the church at the time. It has been recognized as authoritative through the centuries in both East and West" (85).

[133] Ayres follows Hanson's translation in Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 816; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 255.

[134] Ayres cites Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 816; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 256. Ayres also comments on J. N. D. Kelly's slight exaggeration on the differences between the two creeds, which Kelly surmises are "so extensive that, in the context of the fourth-century creeds, Constantinople is better regarded as a new creed rather than an adaptation of Nicaea." Ayres cites J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1972), chap. 10; see Ayres, 255.

[135] According to Ayres, the third point "is most early dealt with: the creed [is] . . . not designed to exclude a party present the council who might [take] . . . hold those views and thus no such anathemas [are] . . . needed." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 256.

Spirit's involvement "in the same activities as Father and Son and hence sharing the same nature."[136] The Holy Spirit shares the Father and Son's indivisibility "in creation, providence, and grace."[137] The creed affirms the Holy Spirit's deity.

Conclusion

The pro-Nicene trinitarian theologians of the Greek East "viewed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three irreducible agents who share or constitute one indivisible divine nature or power and operate inseparably. Most significantly," Mark DelCogliano opines, "this new context led to a recovery of pneumatology which emphasized the Spirit's status as Creator within the inseparable and unmediated creative activity of God."[138] At this point in history, "the question of the *Filioque* is not an issue.[139]

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit's Eternal Procession in Latin West Ancient Church Theology

Ayres pictures the early fifth century in the West as beginning a new phase in Trinitarian controversies.[140] This section focuses on three church fathers and their theological contribution to pro-Nicene pneumatology. Key figures in the ancient Latin West are Tertullian of Carthage, Hilary of Poitiers, and Augustine of Hippo.

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[136] Ayres cites Anthony Meredith, "The Pneumatology of the Cappadocian Fathers and the Creed of Constantinople," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 48, nos. 3–4 (September 1981): 196–212. Ayres moves beyond Meredith's argument. See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 257.

[137] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 32.

[138] DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, introduction to *Works on the Spirit*, 14.

[139] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 217–18. Ayres believes it is vitally important for scholars studying fourth-century pneumatology to "stop summarizing the period by making the question of attitudes towards the filioque an important point of departure." He avers, "The question of the respective roles of Father and Son is used as an occasion by virtually all pro-Nicenes to argue that the unity of the Godhead means that we should not separate the Son's activity from the Father's."

[140] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 269.

Tertullian of Carthage (AD 160–215)

"Tertullian's significance for the development of early Christian pneumatology," Hughes assesses, "is well-established in the literature."[141] Hughes identifies Tertullian's use of prosopological exegesis in *Against Praxeas* (AD 210) to accomplish three theological goals.[142] (1) "Tertullian explicitly names the Spirit as a distinct divine person in the context of his functioning as a primary speaking agent."[143] (2) "Tertullian is simply concerned to demonstrate the distinctiveness of each divine person."[144] (3) "Tertullian redefines the very notion of personhood that is applied to the Spirit."[145] In sum, Tertullian endows "the Spirit with a more substantial degree of personhood than had either of his predecessors [Justin and Irenaeus]."[146] Under Tertullian's theological sensibilities, orthodox teaching on the Holy Spirit upholds the divine person's distinctiveness.[147]

According to Hughes, Tertullian's interest lies "in detailing . . . how unity and diversity can coexist in the Godhead."[148] Tertullian navigates orthodox dogma's path forward, careful to not fall into the errors modalism, on the one hand, and tritheism, on

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[141] "For summaries of Tertullian's pneumatology and its significance," Hughes cites Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit—In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 178–83; Michel René Barnes, "The Beginning and End of Early Christian Pneumatology," *Augustinian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2008): 184–86; David E. Wilhite, "The Spirit of Prophecy: Tertullian's Pauline Pneumatology," in *Tertullian and Paul*, ed. Todd D. Still and David E. Wilhite, Pauline and Patristic Scholars in Debate (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 45–71; see Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 69, 69n46.

[142] Hughes defines prosopological exegesis: "The language of identifying the speaking 'persons' (*personae* in Tertullian's Latin being the equivalent of the Greek *prosōpa*) clearly marks this section [*Against Praxeas* 11] as appealing to the person-centered reading strategy." Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 70. Hughes believes that Tertullian's doctrine of the Trinity and hermeneutical strategy mutually inform one another like "some kind of hermeneutical spiral." Hughes cites Michael Slusser, "The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 476; see Hughes, 71.

[143] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 72.

[144] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 72.

[145] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 72.

[146] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 73.

[147] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 73.

[148] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 85.

the other hand.[149] Circumstantial pressure forces him to elucidate a way "to understand God as 'Trinity' (*Trinitas*, with Tertullian being the one who coined this phrase), existing as 'one substance' and 'three persons' (*Prax*. 2.4)."[150] Evidently, Tertullian gives the church the language of one substance and three persons (*usus substantia*, *tres personae*) to describe Holy Mystery.[151]

Hughes summarizes Tertullian's image of the Trinity in three points. (1) "Tertullian . . . subtly redefine[s] . . . the divine economy . . . [that] intends to convey truth concerning the internal relations among Father, Son, and Spirit."[152] (2) Tertullian's "new vocabulary for conceiving of the nature of the Trinity . . . [ranks] the Spirit [as] third within the Godhead" through appealing "to the notion of 'order' (*gradus*; cf. *Prax*. 2.4, 4.1) within the triune God."[153] (3) Tertullian's formulation—"that the Spirit proceeds *from* the Father *through* the Son (*Prax*. 4.1)"—opens the door for later theologians to subordinate the divine persons.[154]

Yet in *Against Praxeas*, 30.5, Tertullian's attention to the Holy Spirit's proclamation that God is one and teaching that the "monarchy encompasses multiple divine persons" testifies to the Holy Spirit's existence as a distinct divine person.[155] Tertullian "combats the threat of moralistic monarchianism" by locating the Holy Spirit's proper role in the divine economy.[156] As "the leader into all truth" in "the divine

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[149] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 85.

[150] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 86; cf. Allison, *Historical Theology*, 327.

[151] Siecienski, cites Joseph Moingt, *Théologie Trinitaire de Tertullien*, 3 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1966); see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 52.

[152] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 86.

[153] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 86.

[154] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 87.

[155] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 88.

[156] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 84.

economy," Tertullian underscores the Holy Spirit's "distinct identity and function within the Trinity insofar as the Spirit testifies to the other divine persons."[157] This logic of the Third Person's role in God's work *ad extra* guarantees the existence and authority of the Holy Spirit as a divine person who shares in the same divine substance.[158]

Methodologically, Tertullian identifies the Son's involvement in the Holy Spirit's procession by "establishing a link" or pattern between God's work *ad extra* and *ad intra*.[159] In God, the Father communicates the divine substance to the Son and the Holy Spirit through the Son; in creation, (1) the Father sends the Son, and (2) the Father sends the Holy Spirit through the Son.[160] Crucially, Tertullian locates the Son's involvement in the Holy Spirit's eternal existence and manifestation in creation.[161] Swete discerns that in Tertullian we "find the first distinct approximation to the Western doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost."[162] Subsequent theologians find support for the Son's participation in the Holy Spirit's eternal procession through Tertullian's writings.[163]

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[157] Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 89.

[158] Hughes cites David Rankin, "Tertullian's Vocabulary of the Divine 'Individuals' in *adversus Praxean*," *Sacris Erudiri* 40 (2001): 8; see Hughes, *How the Spirit Became God*, 90.

[159] Siecienski uses "economic" and "immanent," respectively, and cites Bertrand de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, trans. Edmund J. Fortman, Studies in Historical Theology 1 (Still River, MA: St. Bede's, 1982), 80–81; Henry B. Swete, *On the History of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit: From the Apostolic Age to the Death of Charlemagne* (1912; repr., Wipf & Stock, 2004), 54; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 52. Siecienski believes Tertullian equates "the immanent and economic Trinities." Although I would hedge against "equating" God in himself and creation in a way that follows Rahner's axiom—the immanent Trinity is the economic and vice versa—I agree with the eventual classical notion that the divine missions are the divine processions turned outward. However, God's acts *ad extra* are not univocal to God's life in himself.

[160] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 52. Siecienski notes that Tertullian carefully "protect[s] the divine monarchy" when comparing God's work *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

[161] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 52.

[162] Swete, *On the History of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, 54.

[163] Siecienski assesses Tertullian's influence: "Although it would be inaccurate to describe Tertullian himself as a 'filioquist' or an advocate of a 'double procession,' his writings remain among the oldest witnesses to the idea of procession *from* or *through the Son*, providing the foundation upon why the *filioque* will be built." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 52. In sum, Tertullian functions as a crucial figure in the Western tradition.

Hilary of Poitiers (d. AD 367)

Hilary of Poitier's main text is *De Trinitate*.[164] This work best marks Hilary's "development in Latin pro-Nicene theology" as Hilary demonstrates what he learns "from contemporary eastern concerns while still turning constantly to his . . . Latin traditions."[165] At the time of *De Trinitate*, "the doctrine of the Holy Spirit [is] . . . still underdeveloped"; thus, "it is a surprise to find that the earlier part of his work contains so much upon it."[166] Swete believes Hilary's writing shows his deep reflection "upon the relations of the Spirit of God."[167]

He combats Arianism by focusing on the Son's consubstantiality with the Father while stressing the Holy Spirit's divinity.[168] Hilary highlights the persons' unity in the openings of books 2 and 3: "The Father is the one from whom all things come, and is treated as the source of the Son and the Spirit."[169] A priority of place belongs to the First Person; the Third eternally is from the First. Ayres notes a pattern of pro-Nicene theologians developing analogies for "the Word and Spirit as necessary to the Father

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[164] Hilary of Poitiers, *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, Fathers of the Church 25 (1954; repr., Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002).

[165] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 180.

[166] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 297–96.

[167] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 297–96. In general, Hilary addresses the problem of Arianism in his work. Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 53. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit does not receive the same treatment of the Father and Son

> in textbooks of dogmatic theology. . . . The person and nature of the Holy Spirit are not treated at length for the simple reason that St. Hilary [is] . . . concerned, as [are] . . . the Arians, with the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. [Consequently,] Hilary [will be] . . . accused of denying the true divinity of the Holy Spirit because he never states explicitly that the Holy Spirit is God. (Stephen McKenna, trans., introduction to *The Trinity*, by Hilary of Poitiers, x.)

However, Hilary affirms the Third Person's "true divinity" in diverse ways; thus, Hilary's "perfect orthodoxy on this subject cannot be reasonably denied" (x).

[168] Swete, *On the History of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, 114; Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 53.

[169] Ayres cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.1 (McKenna, 35); 7.22 (McKenna, 247–50); see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 180. Later, in 2.29, Hilary opines, "we are bound to confess Him [the Holy Spirit], deriving His origin, as He does, from the Father and the Son (patre et filio auctoribus)." Swete cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.29 (McKenna, 57–58); see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 298.

being the Father."[170] Since the Father must be with the Word and Spirit, the Word and Spirit express God's perfection.[171] A perfection (*consummatio*) exists in the Trinity.[172]

On the Holy Spirit's procession as such, Ayres adjudicates that Hilary virtually says nothing "about the relationship of the Spirit to the Son and Father in the Godhead. Just about the only thing that Hilary can say is that the Spirit comes from the Father and through the Son."[173] Based on John 16's statements of the Holy Spirit and a theological "assumption that the unity of nature means that whatever is the Son's is the Father's and vice versa,"[174] Hilary explains the Holy Spirit's eternal existence with the Father.[175] The Holy Spirit is neither generated nor created; book 2 describes the Holy Spirit as "part of the perfect 'whole' that is the Godhead."[176] Dennis Ngien boldly interprets Hilary's discussion on unity from John 14:6–11: the Holy Spirit's origin is "the Divinity commonly shared by the Father and the Son. Thus, the ontological priority of divine unity and the reciprocity of relations within that unity would have led him to conclude that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son."[177] Ngien postulates, "Hilary does not

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[170] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 180. Generally speaking, Hilary preoccupies his writing with a focus on the Father and the Son's relation, defending the mysterious logic of unity and distinction, and clearing the way for "increasingly clear pro-Nicene articulation of the common nature of the three" (183). Hilary develops this clarity, however, by focusing on the Father-Son dyad.

[171] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 180.

[172] Ayres cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.1 (McKenna, 35); 7.22 (McKenna, 247–50); see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 180.

[173] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[174] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[175] Ayres cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.19 (McKenna, 288–89); 12.55 (McKenna, 541–42); see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185. Dennis Ngien points out how Hilary "affirms a singularity of meaning between the *de meo accipiet* of John 16:14 and the *a Patre procedre* of John 15:26, thereby espousing a view similar to the Western doctrine of the *Filioque.*" Dennis Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005), 6.

[176] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[177] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 7. Ngien suggests that Hilary "locates the unity of the Godhead . . . in the One being of God" rather than "the differentiations of persons (as in the person of Father)." On Ngien's interpretation of John 14:6–11 and unity, Ngien cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 7.41 (McKenna, 270–71); Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine: Some Historical Prolegomena* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 140.

explicitly state that the Spirit receives the divine nature from the Father and the Son"; however, "this [notion] is already contained when he says that the Spirit 'did not receive anything from creatures' but 'from those things which are proper to God.'"[178] Ayres notes Hilary's concern in "books 2 and 8 to show how the Spirit's individual subsistence is compatible with Scripture's insistence that God is Spirit."[179]

Perhaps based on the limited writing on the Holy Spirit's subsistence in God, Siecienski questions Hilary's technical use of three verbs, *procedure*, *mittere*, and *accipere*.[180] He notices Hilary's reservation of the first term for the Father's activity and the second and third for the Son's sending and the Holy Spirit's receiving from the Son, respectively.[181] Siecienski suggests that it may be that Hilary, conscious of the Son as the one through whom the Spirit exists in eternity, uses "the *per filium* formula" to advocate for what will develop in time as the *Filioque*.[182] Ngien offers a slightly different interpretation of Hilary's use of "to receive" from "to proceed." For Hilary, the two verbs communicate both "the Father and the Son are sources of the Spirit's immanent being, not only of his economic mission as the Paraclete."[183] The Holy Spirit receives from the

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[178] Ngien cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 12.55–57 (McKenna, 541–43); cf. Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 115; see Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 6.

[179] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[180] Siecienski cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.20 (McKenna, 290); see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 54.

[181] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 54. Siecienski questions the validity of later theologians relying on Hilary as a source for the *Filioque* position since he reserves *procedere* for the Father. By my estimation, this could be a valid interpretation: the verbs distinguish the first and second persons and preserve the monarchy. According to Siecienski, Hilary passionately protects the monarchy. Cf. Hilary, *De Trinitate* 4.11 (McKenna, 99–100). S.a. Carl L. Beckwith's discussion on "Hilary's insights on John 5:19," which Augustine uses to interpret "other significant verses on the Holy Spirit to show the ordered relation and inseparable works of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Carl L. Beckwith, "Hilary of Poitiers, On the Unity and Distinction of Father and Son: A Pro-Nicene Reading and Use of John 5:19," in Barrett, *On Classical Trinitarianism*, 63.

[182] Siecienski remains unconvinced that theologians can decisively rely on Hilary as an advocate for viewing the Son as the Holy Spirit's eternal relation of origin. He cautions, "[I]t remains unclear whether Hilary himself would have accepted the teaching." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 54, citing Hilary, *De Trinitate* 12.57 (McKenna, 543).

[183] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 6.

Son in time because he receives from the Son in eternity.[184] The Father communicates all he has to the Son; thus, the Holy Spirit receives from the Son and proceeds from the Father. No difference exists between how he receives the Father and the Son.[185]

Although the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession *per se* receives less attention, Hilary's writing on the Holy Spirit revolves around his divine work in creation.[186] Hilary focuses on how the Holy Spirit orients Christian worship and enables Christians to contemplate, understand, and persevere in faith.[187] In relation to the Father, saints "adore the Father for eternity" through the Holy Spirit's enablement.[188] In relation to the Son, Hilary writes in book 8 that the Holy Spirit "enables us to live in Christ, [for] the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God."[189] Finally, in relation to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit enables creatures' adoration of the Holy Spirit.[190]

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[184] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 6.

[185] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 6.

[186] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[187] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[188] Ayres cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.31; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

[189] Ayres cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.19; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

It is unclear to me what Swete thinks about Hilary's understanding of the Holy Spirit's procession. On the one hand, Swete considers Hilary's discussion on the Holy Spirit's reception from the Son and the implications for interpreting "preceding from the Father and receiving from the Son." Swete cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.20–32; cf. 9.73; see Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 300. Swete seems to surmise that no difference exists between the two receivings: the Holy Spirit "receives from the Son, because all things that the Father hath are the Son's." Swete cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.20–32; cf. 9.73; see Swete, 300. In book 12, Hilary's concluding remarks on the Holy Spirit deny that he is a creature and affirm "that He proceeds from Thee [the Father] and is sent through Him [the Son]." Swete cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 12.55; cf. 12.55–57; see Swete, 301. Since the Second Person is the only eternally begotten Son from the Father, Hilary "refuses to say that the Holy Spirit was begotten" and will not "assert that He [the Holy Spirit] was ever created." Swete cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 12.55; see Swete, 301. Notably, Swete identifies "Hilary's general treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity is Eastern rather than Western," even though Hilary originates from a classical Western education. Swete, 303.

On the other hand, Swete believes Hilary's

> scheme of the Trinity is incomplete; the Third Person is not wholly co-ordinated with the First and the Second. Nor is he prepared to decide the question of whether generation can be predicated of the Spirit; whether "to receive" is the same thing as "to proceed"; whether the Father and the Son are Both sources of the Spirit's eternal being or only of His missions as the Paraclete. On the whole, he inclines to the Eastern view which regards the Spirit as from the Father through the Son.

Swete cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 8.20; 2.29; see Swete, 304.

[190] Ayres cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.31; see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 185.

In creation as in God, the Holy Spirit is called Gift. The term "Gift" is "a technical title for the Spirit, which he [Hilary] interprets both" in creation and in God.[191] The "concord between giver and given" is this: "The Spirit, who receives/proceeds from the Father and Son, is their mutual Gift."[192] The relationship between God's inner life and God *ad extra* leads Hilary "to the conclusion that the economic Gift of the Spirit proceeds immanently *ex Patre Filioque*."[193] Hilary's idea of the Holy Spirit as Gift will draw Augustine's attention.[194]

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430)

Ayres deems Augustine's Trinitarian grammar for persons and essence as "one of the clearest examples of a fundamental pro-Nicene Trinitarian."[195] Siecienski believes Tertullian and Hilary immensely influences Augustine's theology of the Trinity and "acceptance of the *filioque* in the West."[196] In comparing Augustine's trinitarianism to the Cappadocians, Augustine intends "to express his agreement with the settlement they had brokered at Constantinople, not diverge from it."[197] However, Augustine's clarity on the Father and the Son spirating, as a single principle, the Holy Spirit seems to mark a

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[191] Ngien cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 2.1; Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 7.

[192] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 7.

[193] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 7.

[194] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 7.

[195] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 365. "Augustine may thus be read as one of the greatest Latin pro-Nicenes" in the early 400s. Ayres, 267.

[196] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 52–53. He mentions that Hilary is the "only Church father quoted by name in Augustine's *De Trinitate*" (53). However, contra Siecienski, Augustine never quotes Tertullian positively.

[197] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 35.

decisive distinction.[198] Letham recognizes that "Augustine's writings on the internal relations of the Trinitarian persons" uniquely impact "the following centuries."[199]

On the Faith and the Creed

Ayres explores "Augustine's early understanding of the three persons . . . in the short *On the Faith and the Creed* (*De fide et symbolo*) of AD 383."[200] Augustine "asserts two basic principles" to interpret the nature of the Holy Spirit's origin: (1) "[T]he Spirit is not begotten like the Son," and (2) "the Father is the ultimate source of the Spirit (and thus the Spirit is not begotten by the Son at [*sic*] one remove from the Father)."[201] Augustine further develops an idea of speaking of the Holy Spirit as "the communion (*communio*) or deity so to speak of the Father and Son."[202] By suggesting the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, Augustine calls "the Holy Spirit the Love of God."[203] Augustine utilizes "his Platonic resources" to explain God's nature and "defend

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[198] This distinction follows "to logical (if very personal) conclusions positions still emergent in the previous generations." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 35, citing Lewis Ayres and Michel René Barnes, "Conclusions," *Augustinian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2008): 235–36.

[199] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 36. In his survey of Augustine's influence (pp. 36–43), Letham lists seven points of significance from *De Trinitate*, theological points that highlight the Holy Spirit. Siecienski believes Augustine's writing on the doctrine of the Trinity incalculably impacts the Western world, writing "that [becomes] . . . the foundation for subsequent Latin trinitarian theology and later [serves] . . . as the basis for the doctrine of the *filioque*." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 59. Describing his methodology, Siecienski suggests that Augustine borrows "language and categories . . . from the neo-Platonists (and perhaps Marius Victorinus himself . . . [to] make sense of the biblical affirmation that the Holy Spirit 'who proceeded from the Father' [is] . . . also 'Spirit of the Son'" (59). In Siecienski's estimation, "Augustine's writings in the West [takes] . . . on the role of a 'second canon,' with his *De Trinitate* viewed as the criterion *sine qua non* for orthodox trinitarian teaching" (63).

[200] Ayres cites Augustine, *De Fide et Symbolo* . . . , ed. Joseph Zycha, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 41 (Vindobonae: F. Tempsky, 1900); Augustine, "Faith and the Creed," in *Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, trans. Charles T. Wilcox et al., ed. Roy J. Deferrari, Fathers of the Church 27 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

[201] The original might have meant "as one removed from the Father." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 370. "As for all pro-Nicenes," Ayres discerns, "further progress in describing the nature of the Spirit's procession (beyond simply saying that it is different from that of the Son) is difficult."

[202] Ayres notes that Augustine describes his argument "as that of others." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 370.

[203] As God's love, the Holy Spirit enables Christians to follow Christ. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 371. Ayres suggests that Augustine's first attempt to describe the Holy Spirit as the Father and Son's communion "does not occupy much of the text and is rather clumsy."

the idea of Spirit as communion" in a way that "deal[s] with a problem he . . . read[s] about in and inherit[s] . . . from earlier Latin pro-Nicene tradition."[204] Augustine avers, "God is immaterial and simple"; all relationships in God are "eternal and essential to God, [and] there is nothing in God that is not eternally part of what it is to be God."[205] By considering the Father's generation of the Word, Augustine applies the logic of "God's immaterial and ineffable nature," *mutatis mutandis*, "to pneumatology."[206] The Father and the Son's love "is inseparable from the reality, being, or substance of both and thus the Spirit may be conceived as love and as a divine and substantial person."[207] In sum, he follows the "fundamental grammar of relations between the persons and essence" and "grammar of divine simplicity" to explain how the Holy Spirit is an irreducible divine person who is not subordinate to the Father and Son.[208]

On the Trinity

Augustine presents his mature theological writing in *De Trinitate*. I adapt Matthew Levering's overview of *The Trinity* by focusing on the Holy Spirit.[209] Books 1–4 argue for the Holy Spirit's coequality with the Father from both testaments.[210] Books 5–7 contemplate the technical terms, unity and distinction, in the New Testament, which

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[204] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 371–72.

[205] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 371.

[206] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 372.

[207] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 371.

[208] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legac*y, 372. "The doctrine of inseparable operations" closely relates to "a doctrine about the unity of three irreducible persons" (373).

[209] Matthew Levering, *The Theology of Augustine: An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 152. The remainder of this section on Augustine follows Levering's division of *The Trinity*. See Levering's explanation in Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152.

[210] Augustine argues for the Son and Holy Spirit's coequality with the Father—I focus on the Holy Spirit. Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152.

illuminates how the Holy Spirit leads Christians to participate in God.[211] Books 8–11 describe the Holy Spirit's eternal existence with the Father and the Son in God through the image of mental acts.[212] Books 12–15 combine the created image with the Holy Spirit's divine mission, culminating in the vision in glory.[213]

On the Trinity, Books 1–4

Levering explains, "The biblical witness to the missions in history of . . . the Holy Spirit provides an antidote to . . . errors about God."[214] Augustine relies on biblical proof and offers his interpretation of the creeds to contend for an accurate teaching of the one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[215] Augustine brilliantly patterns the temporal missions after the eternal processions. Since the Father does not eternally proceed from anyone, "the Father is the source of all sending."[216] The Holy Spirit's mission is strictly tied to the Son's visible mission.[217]

Augustine considers the Holy Spirit's specific visible missions. He physically manifests himself as a dove at Christ's baptism.[218] Christ enlightens the disciples' minds as Christ breathes the Holy Spirit onto his disciples in John 20.[219] Manifesting as tongues

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[211] Understanding how "the New Testament names divine unity and distinction . . . [will help us] gain insight into God." Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152. Later, Levering gives another overview of this section of *The Trinity*: "He [Augustine] seeks to understand what distinguishes the names for God that describe his oneness from the names for Good that describe his threeness" (161).

[212] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152.

[213] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152.

[214] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 153. Levering summarizes the errors to which Augustine responds: a conception of God in material terms, an attribution of unbiblical capacities to God, and a denial of the truthfulness of God's triunity.

[215] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152.

[216] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 160.

[217] More specifically, the Holy Spirit's invisible mission depends on the Father's temporal sending of the Son in the incarnation. Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 160.

[218] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 154.

[219] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 160.

of fire, "the Holy Spirit comes down upon the gathered community at Pentecost."[220] In these visible missions, Augustine insists that the Holy Spirit, who "does not speak on his own, but instead speaks what he receives," is not a derivation that includes inequality with the Father and Son.[221]

Ultimately, Augustine's processions-missions theology grounds his explanation for creatures' "ascent to God['s]" glorious divine life of the processions—the Father begets and Son, and the Father and the Son spirate the Spirit—through the Spirit.[222] The Holy Spirit "is sent to us when we know him as proceeding from the Father and the Son" for Christians' sanctification.[223] The Holy Spirit's mission, his "perceptible manifestation, . . . draws humans into communion with [his] . . . invisible divine reality."[224]

On the Trinity, Books 5–7

Augustine reconciles, as it were, names describing God's perfect unity and other names for the three distinct persons.[225] The Holy Spirit, a distinct person based on

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[220] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 152; cf. 154.

[221] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 154.

[222] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 160.

[223] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 160.

[224] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 154. The Holy Spirit's visible mission does not alter the invisible and immutable divine nature. See Ayres's discussion on Augustine's preservation of God's nature in Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 189–91.

Strictly speaking, these temporary symbols at the Holy Spirit's sendings depend on the incarnation. Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 154–55. More appropriately, one should not identify a single divine person in an Old Testament manifestation of God. For example, the pillar of cloud may indicate the presence of the Trinity or one of the persons (155). Levering adds that the Holy Spirit's mission of descent in the New Testament does not reveal God's invisible and unchanging proper substance to the creature's senses (157). "Old Testament manifestations," Augustine distinguishes, "prefigure these missions in a way that enables the people of the Old Testament to share by anticipation (faith) in the accomplishment of the missions" (157).

[225] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 161. Stated differently, some names pertain to the divine substance with "substance-wise" terms (cf. Augustine, *The Trinity* 5.2.9 [Hill, 196]), while others to the divine persons with "relationship-wise" terms (cf. Augustine, *The Trinity* 5.3.12 [Hill, 198–99]). Augustine helpfully distinguishes speech regarding the divine substance from the divine persons: any attribution made to the divine substance equally pertains to the three persons. Levering, 163.

his eternal relation, is spirated "not with reference to his divine substance but with reference to the Father [and Son] who [spirates]."[226] The Holy Spirit does "not participate in the divine substance" and does not change the divine substance in being spirated from the Father and the Son.[227]

In his inquiry into the name of the Holy Spirit, "Augustine describes the Holy Spirit as the 'gift' of the Father and the Son."[228] Augustine markedly asserts the Holy Spirit's eternal single origin, Father and Son, and describes this eternal procession in terms of communion. As "the Gift of the Father (John 15:26) and of the Son (Rom 8:9)," the Holy Spirit is given in "some sort of ineffable communion."[229] The name Spirit reveals "something common to both" Father and Son so "that we might know that it is their communion that we receive."[230] This grounds Augustine's creative description of the Holy Spirit as the Father and Son's love. In time and based on his eternal relations, the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to God's people "so that we can participate in this communion" in the divine life.[231] Including creation in Augustine's explanation,

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[226] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 163. Levering cites Augustine's discussion on the Father begetting the Son; I apply this logic to the Father and Son's relation to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's divine substance is not spirated; rather, the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person is spirated.

[227] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 163.

[228] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 163. Augustine cites a variety of New Testament passages in making this theological claim. In anticipating charges of "postulating two principles within the godhead," Augustine states that the Father and Son are "not two origins . . . with reference to the Holy Spirit" but one. Augustine, *The Trinity* 5.14.15, cited in Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 62; cf. Allison, *Historical Theology*, 438. According to Ayres, Augustine understands "that the Spirit is spoken of relatively (*relative dicitur*) when he is said to be of the Father and of the Son; but the relation that is spoken of is only revealed by the title Gift." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 251.

Levering comments on Augustine's gentle correction of "Hilary's distinction of the [Holy Spirit] . . . according to . . . use/gift." Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 165, citing John E. Sullivan, *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and its Influence* (Dubuque, IA: Priory, 1963), 90. Augustine preserves divine simplicity by hedging against introducing multiplicity in God (Levering, 164). This explanation is valid "if he means solely that the Father is the source" of the coeternal Holy Spirit (165).

[229] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 251.

[230] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 251.

[231] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 163. Ayres identifies "Augustine's second rule of scriptural predication: Scripture appropriates to the Spirit terms common to each divine three," such as

Levering summarizes that the Holy Spirit must be the love of the Father and the Son "to pour out divine love upon us."[232] In sum, the Third Person's names "help us to understand that all of the Spirit's actions are founded in and reveal the Spirit's status as the (co-equal) Spirit of Father and Son."[233]

Augustine looks to distinguish and not separate the persons from the essence.[234] He arrives at a demarcation that identifies the Holy Spirit as distinguished from the Father and the Son "by the relation of origin in the communication of the divine substance . . . . The divine substance must not be conflated with the relation [of spiration or being spirated] . . . . The singular divine substance does not subsist outside the distinct relations."[235] Augustine's notion of divine simplicity and "twofold language . . . enables us to talk of God's unity and of the distinctions between the persons without implying that the distinctions are somehow secondary to the shared substance."[236] Augustine's

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Holy, Spirit, and Love, "in order to show the character of the Spirit's derivation from and consubstantiality with the Father." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 255.

[232] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 164. Letham suggests a plausible criticism for presenting the Holy Spirit as love, an attribute that "is not peculiar to the Spirit. Indeed, the Bible attributes love far more often to the Father (John 3:16; Rom 5:8) and the Son (2 Cor. 5:14; Gal 2:20). How, therefore, can it be used of the Spirit as a property distinctive to him?" Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 37. Letham wonders if this practice of appropriating the attribute of love to the Holy Spirit, an attribute common to all the divine persons by virtue of their possession of the same essence, impinges on God's divine simplicity and teaches, perhaps implicitly, that love belongs to the Holy Spirit to the exclusion of the Father and Son. I contend that love describes the nature of the Father and Son's relationship and their single act of breathing forth the Holy Spirit.

[233] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 255. The Father and Son do not add to the Holy Spirit's divinity. Levering cites Lewis Ayres, "*Sempiterne Spiritus Donum*: Augustine's Pneumatology and the Metaphysics of the Spirit," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 132–36; see Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 164. Elsewhere, Ayres argues that Augustine's "doctrinal development of a grammar of divine simplicity secures" what becomes orthodox teaching on "God's Trinitarian nature" for the Latin tradition. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 383. See Ayres's three-step division of Augustine's "account of how the Son may be the Wisdom of God while the Father is still wise 'in himself'" utilizes the doctrine of divine simplicity. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 378–379.

[234] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 165.

[235] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 165. Scripture teaches us to speak of God "according to essence and according to relation." Levering delineates the Father and Son's eternal relation of origin as the Father—I apply Augustine's logic to the Holy Spirit.

[236] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 377. In Ayres's example, he uses the Father and the Son whereby Augustine deciphers the meaning of calling the Second Person "the Father's Wisdom" or "Power." I apply Ayres's understanding of Augustine's argument to the Holy Spirit, whom Augustine calls

"coherent language" on the types of distinctions in God allows for real distinctions according to relation between the Trinitarian persons that do not contradict affirmations of God's unity.[237]

On the Trinity, Books 8–11

Augustine searches for illustrations of God's unity of substance and trinity of persons.[238] The first image (mind, knowledge, and love) draws together "two dyads: mind

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Love (cf. Augustine, *The Trinity* 7.6 [Hill, 226]): "[W]e may say that Father is eternally Father and" Holy Spirit is eternally Holy Spirit "without meaning that they are distinct substances or that the [Holy Spirit] . . . is only accidental, separable from what it is to be God. In such a case we are saying that Father and [Holy Spirit] . . . are terms which indicate relationships, but that those relationships are essential to being God." Ayres, 377.

[237] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 377. Ayres divides Augustine's account of how the Holy Spirit is "of God" while his origin, Father and Son, are each God "in himself" in three steps (378). In Augustine's original argument that Ayres breaks down, the two main subjects are the Father and the Son, the Wisdom of God. I apply the logic of the argument to focus on the Holy Spirit because, as Ayres states, "the principles of his Trinitarian faith tell him that the Spirit is also God and is a distinct person"; thus, "the same arguments apply to all three persons" (379). However, I will not refer to the Holy Spirit as "the Wisdom of God" since the second person is traditionally named Word.

(1) Augustine affirms the Father's individual reality by "insisting that the persons are not just relations. The Father is something in himself and only *because* the Father is such an essence can the Father be spoken of in relation." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 378. Additionally, "the Father is God and God is simple, therefore the Father must be" all that he is "in Himself, in his essence" (378). The Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit "who is essence from essence" (379).

(2) The Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit. More precisely, the Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit's essence: what the Holy Spirit is has been spirated by the Father and Son. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 378. According to divine simplicity, Augustine contends, "calling the [Holy Spirit] . . . God means that *all* the arguments Augustine has applied to the Father must now be applied to the [Holy Spirit]" (378). Relying on his grammatical tool of simplicity, Augustine explores "the unity and multiplicity . . . principles of Nicene Trinitarian belief" (379). From this, Augustine successfully explains how the Father and Son, who are simple beings, spirate "another who is also coequal and simple" (379). The Holy Spirit "is an essence in Himself, not just a relationship: to talk of the person of the [Holy Spirit] . . . is to talk of the [Holy Spirit's] . . . essence" (379).

(3) "Divine simplicity enables and demands a further step" in Augustine's argument. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 379. If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are individually love itself, "then we can go a step further and say that the [Holy Spirit's] . . . essence must be identical with the [Son] and Father's essence" (379). Ayres deduces, "The grammar of simplicity . . . provides . . . resources for us to speak of the unity of the three. . . . This language draws us to the individual reality of the persons and then immediately to their unity without the need to image a substance or thing which provides that linkage" (379).

[238] Levering sheds light on Augustine's methodology. Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 167. Since God fashioned human beings in his image and since God is a Trinity of divine persons, Augustine hunts for an illustration in the human being that illustrates the Holy Trinity (167). Augustine identifies a *vistigium Trinitatis* in "the relationship between memory (and imagination), sight, and the will" (171). S.a. Ayres's assessment of Augustine's famous analogical site "for exploring the distinction and unity of memory, intelligence, and will," which "builds on common pro-Nicene themes"; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 291.

and its love, and mind and its knowledge."[239] Levering breaks down Augustine's logic of love and its relationship with the mind: "When one loves oneself, the lover and the beloved differ from the love. . . . When the mind loves itself, furthermore, the lover and the beloved are the same."[240] Bringing this reduplication together, "lover/beloved and love are the same in the mind that loves itself fully, and they are also distinct with reference to each other,"[241] thus satisfying the requirement for speaking of God's substance and trinity, respectively. Levering discerns, "These two dyads resolve into a triad: mind, its knowledge of itself, and its love of itself. When the mind knows and loves itself fully, these three are equal."[242] The distinguishing factor for the three (mind, knowledge, and love) is their "relation of origin: mind generates knowledge, and mind and knowledge breathe forth love. [Yet] in the mind that knows and loves itself, each of them is in the other."[243] This triad, for Augustine, "images the divine Trinity."[244]

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[239] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 169. Augustine's definition of love includes a triad: lover, beloved, and love. This definition is at play in this first image, though Augustine is clear that "the Holy Spirit is not the Father's love"; rather, "the Father is love in himself" (181).

[240] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 169. Siecienski highlights this model of the triad as Augustine's most influential: "In this model[,] the Spirit becomes, as it was for Victorinus, the bond of love joining lover (Father) and beloved (Son)." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 60. Moreover, the Father and Son pour out their mutual gift of their mutual love (the Holy Spirit) upon humanity. For Augustine, since the Holy Spirit "is the Spirit of both, it logically follow[s] . . . that the Holy Spirit must proceed from both." Siecienski, 60; cf. Augustine, *The Trinity* 4.5.29 (Hill, 182). Following Joseph Lienhard's line of thinking, Siecienski charges Augustine for "not distinguishing between eternal procession and mission in time," enabling Augustine to interpret biblical passages on the Son sending his Spirit "into the hearts of believers." Siecienski cites Joseph T. Lienhard, "Augustine and the Filioque," in *Tolle Lege: Essays on Augustine and on Medieval Philosophy in Honor of Roland J. Teske*, ed. Richard C. Taylor, David Twetten, and Michael Wreen (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011), 146; cf. Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John 41–124*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, vol. 13 in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, pt. 3, *Homilies* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2020), 99.7 (Hill, 381–82); *The Trinity*, 4.5.29 (Hill, 182). Augustine concludes that the Holy Spirit proceeds (1) from the Father principally and (2) also from the Son. Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.5.29 (Hill, 422–23).

[241] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 169.

[242] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 169.

[243] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 169. Siecienski explains how the Holy Spirit's name and procession fit into Augustine's category of "relationship-wise" terms for Trinitarian persons: "[T]he Spirit, who is the mutual love of Father and Son, has his origin, that is, he proceeds, from both and is the gift of both. In this way is the person of the Spirit defined and differentiated in terms of his relational opposition to both Father and Son." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 62.

[244] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 169.

"Augustine further develops his triad as an image of the Trinity," Levering continues, "by establishing how the mind's knowledge of itself is word and image, united to the mind by love."[245] Augustine analogously applies this formulation to God: "Love unites the word to the mind by approving the concept that the mind has articulated. . . . This word is the image of the mind."[246] Then, Augustine applies this idea of coming forth from an origin to love: "The appetite or will to know then becomes love for what the mind has come to know."[247] Love's movement within the mind embraces "what is known and approvingly unites it to the mind."[248] By exploring "memory, understanding, and will[,] . . . he shows that each is fully in the other, so that each and all are equal to each and all, and the three are one."[249]

After the mental triad, Augustine finds two bodily images of God.[250] In the first, Augustine likens the idea of "our intention to see the object" to the Holy Spirit.[251] The second, "the intention to remember," has similitude to the Holy Spirit.[252] Augustine's search for apt illustrations for the Holy Spirit's eternal procession (1) upholds God's

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[245] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 170. When creatures "conceive something in the mind, we formulate an inner word rooted in love."

[246] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 170.

[247] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 170. For Augustine, partial knowledge (rather than love for the unknown) simulates love.

[248] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 170.

[249] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 170, citing Lewis Ayres, "The Discipline of Self-Knowledge in Augustine's *De Trinitate* Book X," in *The Passionate Intellect: Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions Presented to Professor I. G. Kidd*, ed. Lewis Ayres, Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities 7 (New York: Routledge, 1995), 272–96 (261–96); Aryes, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 303–5.

[250] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 171.

[251] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 171. See Levering's explanation of the first bodily triad, the act of seeing (with the three as "the visible object, our vision of the object, and our intention to see the object").

[252] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 171. See Levering's explanation of the second bodily triad, the art of recollection (with the three as "the mind's eye, the remembered image, and the intention to remember").

unity of substance and (2) highlights the unique way the Holy Spirit relates to the other two divine persons, his eternal relation of origin.

On the Trinity, Books 12–15[253]

Augustine investigates "a number of biblical texts that associate the Holy Spirit with 'love' and 'gift.'"[254] Augustine finds, "The Holy Spirit proceeds as gift of love from the Father and Son, and so the Holy Spirit is named by what they possess in common. . . . The mission of the Holy Spirit bestows upon us this gift" of eternal life.[255] He contends that Love is a proper name for the Holy Spirit because love "proceeds from and unites memory and understanding."[256]

Augustine's conception of the Holy Spirit as the love between the Father and the Son receives greater coherency. He rationalizes that, while God's love is identical to

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[253] Written almost a decade later after completing books 5 and 6, book 15 extensively discusses the language of the Spirit who is "of the Father," "of the Son," and "of Christ." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 251. Augustine's reflections on "the Spirit's 'role' in the Trinity" increase in maturity (251). Ayres discerns the importance of the doctrine of divine simplicity within Augustine's "grammar for asserting the [processions] . . . of the persons from the Father, [which] provides a grammar for ensuring the irreducibility of the [Holy Spirit] in Trinitarian language" (381).

[254] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 183.

[255] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 183. Augustine also develops a theological argument for the name "Holy Spirit" for the Third Person. The divine persons' proper names always identify something unique about the person, and what is unique always boils down to a person's relation to the other persons in God. Although the Father and Son are each holy and spirit, the Holy Spirit's name reveals that he is what is common between the Father and Son. See the diagrammed explanation of the name "Holy Spirit" in Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 250.

Augustine explains that the New Testament names the Spirit "of Christ" and "of the Father" because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. On this point, Letham cites Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 99.7 (Hill, 381–82); see Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 42.

[256] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 183, citing Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 251–54, 258–59; Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 135–39; Basil Studer, "Zur Pneumatologie des Augustinus von Hippo (*De Trinitate* 15,17,27–27,50)," *Augustinianum* 35 (1995): 567–83; Joseph Ratzinger, "The Holy Spirit as *Communio*: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine," trans. Peter Casarella, *Communio* 25 (Summer 1998): 327–31.

Letham questions whether or not Augustine's notion of the Holy Spirit as the Father and Son's mutual, communal love subordinates the Holy Spirit. He adjudicates that this does not because Augustine "stresses the Holy Spirit's consubstantiality at length." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 41. See chapter 3 for my discussion on Love as the Third Person's proper name; I follow Aquinas's biblical and theological interpretation, and Aquinas follows Augustine's.

the single substance, "the Holy Spirit is properly called love."[257] His language practices redoublement.[258] Applying these two inseparable ideas—the one essence and the three persons—to the Holy Spirit, Augustine determines that Love possesses the divine essence in his mode as the love between the Father and the Son; the divine essence exists through and as love, the third subsisting relation.

Ayres tackles the question of Augustine's pneumatology and, in particular, his account of "double procession" in *De Trinitate* 15.17.29.[259] Augustine develops the concept of love, applying it to the Father and Son's communion—the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit *of* Father and Son."[260]

Augustine's argument speaks more "of the Father's relationship to the Spirit, and in so doing he emphasizes the importance of viewing the Father as the cause and source of the Trinitarian communion."[261] As *principium*, "the Father works eternally through the Son and Spirit he generates and spirates."[262] The Holy Spirit is "not another

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[257] Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.17.28–9 (Hill, 422–23). That is, "Father and Son are in their essence love *and* . . . the Spirit is the love of Father and Son and fully another beside and in them." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 259.

[258] Ayres explains how Augustine methodologically navigates "speaking about the divine three as 'persons' [which] involves showing that those 'persons' each possess the divine essence in a particular mode, and how speaking about the divine essence involves showing that essence to exist through and as subsisting relations." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 260.

[259] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 263.

[260] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 263. First, the Spirit is "of the Father" because the first person is "*principium* within the Trinity" (263). Second, the Spirit is "of the Father and Son" because "the Father's begetting of the Son is identical with the establishment of the communion of Father, Son[,] and Spirit" (263–64). "[*I*]*n* the begetting of the Son," Augustine avers, "the Father gives his love (or substance), thus eternally establishing the Son as lover of the Father and the Spirit as the personal giving love of Father and Son" (264).

Ayres points out that Augustine only speaks of the Son (and the Father) as the Holy Spirit's *principium* in book 5; elsewhere, Augustine develops the formulae, "stating that the Father gives it to the Son and to the Spirit that the Spirit proceeds also from the Son." Ayres cites Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.27.48; see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 265. Ayres believes that Augustine carefully navigates the Holy Spirit's procession by guarding the Father as *principium*: "For the Father to act eternally as *principium* is for the Father eternally to give rise to two who share the divine fullness and through whom the Father eternally works." Ayres, 265.

[261] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 264. Ayres underscores Augustine's continual refinement of his argument even within book 15.

[262] Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 265.

Son from the Father"; rather, Augustine observes "that he proceeds from the Father and the Son."[263] The Father gives to the Son the eternal spiration of the Holy Spirit, who is *principaliter* from the Father.[264]

The Father and Son's eternal spiration of the Holy Spirit consequently affects our interpretation of God's acts in creation. Augustine considers the meaning of Christ's breath in John 20 and Pentecost; he "suggests that Christ's twice giving the Spirit expresses this twofold orientation of love."[265] That is, "The Spirit inspires in us love for God and . . . neighbor."[266] Moreover, his mission "restore[s] the mind's ability to remember, know, and love itself as a participation in the eternal divine mind."[267] The

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[263] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 184. Letham highlights Augustine's argument for the Holy Spirit's divinity—he is "equal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Son"—based on his eternal procession from them. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 39.

[264] Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.6.47 (Hill, 437–39); cf. 15.6.45 (Hill, 435–36), 15.6.48 (Hill, 439–40). On this point, Levering cites Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.47; Ayres, "*Sempiterne Spiritus Donum*," 146–49; Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*, 139–46; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 263–66. See Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 184.

Generation, the eternal procession by which "the Father gives the Son all that he is except his Fatherhood," is distinct from spiration. Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 184. In his eternal generation, the Son "receives from the Father the power to spirate the Spirit with the Father, who is the source." Letham explains that the Son spirates the Holy Spirit with the Father even though the Son does not include himself in his statement in John 15:27—"the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father"—because, at this point in the biblical discourse, the Son already stated that all that the Father has belongs to the Son. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 31. Augustine's theological reading of the text leads him to conclude that Christ includes himself in the Spirit's procession: "[T]he Son has it from the Father that he is God [God of God], so he has it from him [the Father] that the Holy Spirit proceeds." Letham cites Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 99.8 (Hill, 382); cf. Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols., trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 1:78–79; see Letham, 42.

[265] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 184. Augustine compares Christ's breathing to Christ's comment from "Luke 8:46, where Jesus remarks after healing the woman with the hemorrhage that 'power is gone out from me.'" Letham cites Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 99.7 (Hill, 381–82). Since the Holy Spirit is called power in other parts of Scripture ("Luke 1:34–35; 6:19; 24:49; Acts 1:8"), Augustine concludes the Holy Spirit is the power that went out from Christ; he likens this movement of going out to the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Son. See Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 42.

[266] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 184.

[267] Levering references the Son and the Holy Spirit in the original and cites Rowan Williams, "*Sapientia* and the Trinity: Reflections on *De Trinitate*," in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Melanges T. J. van Bavel*, ed. Bernard Bruning, Mathijs Lamberigts, and Jozef van Houston (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 321; see Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 180. Ayres discerns "an important argument" at which Augustine hints in book 7 "find[s] full form in book 15"; an analogy for God's trinitarian communion is "the conjoint action of *memoria*, *intelligentia*, and *voluntas*." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 381.

divine missions perfect the image of God, and human beings require the gift of the Holy Spirit to "be drawn into the divine life."[268]

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit's Eternal Procession in Medieval Theology

Augustine's work significantly influenced medieval theology on the Trinity.[269] The representative figures for the medieval period are Photius of Constantinople, Anselm of Canterbury, Richard of St. Victor, and Thomas Aquinas. I devote the greatest attention to Aquinas's writings.

Photius of Constantinople (AD 810–891)

Photius of Constantinople's "attacks on the filioque" do not attempt to refute the Latin patristic thinkers' "evidence . . . but rather to attack the logical consequences of a 'double procession' from both Father and Son."[270] Subsequently, "the Orthodox case

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[268] Levering, *The Theology of Augustine*, 181. Ayres identifies book 15 as parallel with 4.6 and 5.7, with book 15 containing Augustine's mature thinking on "what it is to be a divine 'person'" and "the Spirit's possession of the fullness of the Godhead as divine 'person'/individual." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 232. Book 15 shows "greater clarity in Augustine's discussion of the Spirit's agency."

[269] According to Ngien, Augustine

> opens two avenues of development, each with individual differences. The first picks up his essentialist strands—his analysis of the activities of the spirit, understanding, and love, and is followed primarily by Anselm (d. 1109) and Aquinas (d. 1274); the second adopts his personality strands—his theme of God-charity, and the Spirit as the mutual love, and is followed primarily by Richard of St. Victor (d. 1172). (Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, x, citing Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:96)

Cf. Thomas J. White, who refers to the medieval strands as the relationalist and emanationist approaches, respectively, and adds a third, "the nominal approach pioneered by Ockham." Thomas J. White, *The Trinity: On the Nature and Mystery of the One God*, Thomistic Ressourcement 19 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 375. See White's full discussion in chap. 21 (pp. 373–408).

[270] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101. On Photius's historical context, Siecienski cites Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 1–69. Photius sends Byzantine missionaries from Constantinople to convert King Boris I of the Bulgars's subjects. The missionaries return to report to Photius "about the strange practices . . . among which [is] . . . their use of an interpolated creed" that contains the *Filioque* clause. Siecienski, 101. "For centuries," the third council of Toledo (589) is "used to date the first use of the filioque in the Western version of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed." Siecienski, 68. See Siecienski's telling of the historical moment in Siecienski, 68–69. Marc A. Pugliese offers a different reading of the times: "Depending upon its date of origin, the *Quicumque* or 'Athanasian Creed' may be the earliest confessional witness to the Double Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son" in Article 13. Marc A. Pugliese, "How Important Is the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy?," *Westminster Theological Journal* 66, no. 1 (2004): 161n8.

against the *filioque*" will build on Photius's chief arguments.[271] Siecienski eloquently overviews *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*'s arguments in six points.[272] Centuries after Photius's death, "his arguments against the Latin teaching on the procession [are] . . . revived, forming the basis for subsequent Eastern reflection on the issue of the *filioque*."[273] Aware of Photius's historical context, whereby Photius reacts "to the perceived heresies of the Latin missionaries,"[274] Siecienski suggests the absence of

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More specific to Photius's immediate context, Siecienski cites Robert Haddad, who claims "that the filioque [is] . . . already well known in Byzantium . . . Constantinople, imperial and patriarchal, [chose] . . . to ignore the filioque as long as it [is] . . . confined to the Latin west[.] . . . [However] the perceived Latin threat in Bulgaria [ensures] . . . that the filioque would never again be ignored." Robert M. Haddad, "The Stations of the *Filioque*," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2002): 228, cited in Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101n96.

[271] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101.

[272] Siecienski cites Photius of Constantinople, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Astoria, NY: Studion, 1983), 50–51; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101. Siecienski notes that "recent scholarship has put Photius' authorship of the *Mystagogia* into question." Siecienski, 102, citing Tia Kolbaba, *Inventing Latin Heretics: Byzantines and the Filioque in the Ninth Century* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2008).

I reproduce Siecienski's summarizing points here: (1) "If 'the Father is one source of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the Son another source of the Holy Spirit, then the monarchy of the Holy Trinity is transformed into a dual divinity.'" Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101, citing Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 50–51.

(2) "If his [i.e., the Spirit's] procession from the Father is perfect and complete—and it is perfect, because he is perfect God from perfect God—then why is there also procession from the Son?" Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101, citing Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 50–51.

(3) "If the Son participates in the quality or property of the Father's own person, then the Son and the Spirit lose their own personal distinctions. Here one falls into semi-Sabellianism." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101, citing Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 50–51.

(4) "Because the Father is the principle and source, not because of the nature of the divinity but because of the property of his own hypostasis[,] . . . the Son cannot be a principle or source." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101, citing Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 51. "For Photius," Ngien explains, "being a source of the Holy Spirit is strictly personal, an activity belonging to the Father only. . . . He retreats from the accepted Greek conception of the Spirit *per filium*, insisting that the Spirit proceeds from the Father 'alone', [likening] . . . the Son and the Spirit . . . unto two branches from a single stem." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 29n20.

(5) "By the teaching of the procession from the Son also, the Father and the Son end up being closer to each other than the Father and the Spirit, since the Son possesses not only the Father's nature but also the property of his person [i.e., of being a principle or source of the Spirit]." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101, citing Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 51.

(6) "The procession of the Spirit from the Son makes the Son a father of the Spirit's being; thus 'it is impossible to see why the Holy Spirit could not be called a grandson!'" Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 101, citing Photius, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 52.

[273] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 104. "However," Siecienski adds, "it should be noted that Photius's work . . . never [intends] . . . to be a complete explication of Eastern trinitarian thought."

[274] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 104.

thought from patristic authors in Photius's presentation of his theological position.[275] Nevertheless, Photius's "emphasis on the Spirit's procession from the Father alone . . . [helps] create a dialectical tension between procession ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πατρός and procession *filioque.*"[276] Subsequent theologians claim the *Filioque* formula as "the faith of the universal Church."[277]

An additional historical factor may explain the adoption of the *Filioque*.[278] According to Letham, Arian teaching that subordinates the Son continually threatens the church in Spain.[279] In response, localized liturgies adopt the addition, *a Patre Filioque*, to maintain the affirmation of the Son's deity with the Father.[280] The Council of Toledo (589) allegedly adopts the addition of the *Filioque* clause, the French church accepts it in the late eighth century, and Rome formally enshrines it in the creed in 1014 under Pope Benedict VIII.[281] Even after his death, we find Photius's work in the mix of the *Filioque*

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[275] For example, "Photius never [explores] . . . the patristic tradition behind the διὰ τοῦ Υιοῦ formula or the necessary eternal relationship between the Son and the Spirit, 'even though it [is] . . . a traditional teaching of the previous Greek fathers." Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 104, citing Markos A. Orphanos, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit According to Certain Later Greek Fathers," in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy*, ed. Lukas Vischer, Faith and Order Paper 103 (London: SPCK, 1981), 25.

[276] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 104.

[277] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 104.

[278] The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

[279] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 51.

[280] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 51.

[281] Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 51. Letham references Shawn C. Smith's work, which dates the insertion to a later date, the eighth Council of Toledo (653); see Shawn C. Smith, "The Insertion of the *Filioque* into the Nicene Creed and a Letter of Isidore of Seville," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 261–86.

controversy.[282] The church's theological development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession will deepen, albeit strenuously.[283]

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) solemnly proclaims dogma on the Holy Spirit's procession *ab utroque*.[284] Several decades later, "a first attempt at reconciliation with the East at the general council of re-union at Lyons in 1274" further defines the doctrine.[285] Consequently, the council rejects "the Photian interpretation of the Filioque" as they place an emphasis "on the eternity of the procession of the Spirit in order to stress that it is not 'temporally' posterior to the generation of the Son, with whom the Spirit is coeternal as with the Father."[286] The ecumenical council's reunion at Florence (1439) further clarifies the dogma espoused at Lyon.[287]

Guillon presents the Council of Florence's "threefold advance in the process of defining anew the doctrine already proclaimed at Lyons."[288] (1) The ecumenical council defines the addition as an interpretation that licitly and reasonably "declare[s] the truth

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[282] As such, I include my brief discussion on the *Filioque* controversy in my section on Photius, who died in 891. His work significantly influences the debate that will stretch into the medieval era and beyond.

[283] I only briefly overview the events surrounding the Schism. See a brief summary in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 243–45, 439–41; Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 229–51.

Letham summarizes the Eastern and Western perspectives. The East objects to the *Filioque* clause based on ecclesiastical and theological arguments. To the former's point, the *Filioque* is added without an ecumenical council's consent. To the latter, the clause compromises the Father's monarchy and confuses the First and Second persons. Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 54. The West claims the validity of the insertion based on the truthfulness of the doctrine. Based on verses in John's Gospel—the *locus classicus* as John 15:26—Letham explains how the Son breathes the Holy Spirit with the Father: "Jesus refers to the Father's sending the Spirit at Pentecost, in response to his request, or in his name (John 14:16, 26). But Jesus also says that he himself will send the Spirit at Pentecost (16:7), and later he breathes on the disciples and says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (20:22). So he shares with the Father in the sending of the Spirit." Letham, 53. For the Western tradition, the Son sends the Holy Spirit in time (Pentecost) because the Son eternally breathes forth the Holy Spirit in the divine life. Christ reveals "that he and the Father are one (10:30). So it may be asked whether the Son does not also share with the Father in spirating the Spirit in that eternal manner to which John 15:26 refers." Letham, 53. The Latins respond affirmatively.

[284] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 166.

[285] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 166.

[286] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

[287] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

[288] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

. . . because of an imminent necessity (probably an allusion to the heretical error of Photius: *a Patre solo*)."[289] (2) The ecumenical council "'defines' with greater precision the procession of the Spirit, who receives his essence (the divine nature) and his existence simultaneously from the Father and from the Son and proceeds eternally from both by a single spiration as from a single principle."[290] (3) The ecumenical council clarifies that the expression "'the Holy Spirit proceeds *from* the Father *through* the Son' tends to signify . . . that the Son is also the cause (according to the Greeks) or the principle (according to the Latins) of the subsistence of the Holy Spirit, as is the Father."[291] Referencing Tertullian, the Greek formula *per Filium* "suggests and prepares, in its orientation, the meaning that" the Latin formula *Filioque* explicates.[292] They opine that "the Greek fathers [hold] . . . the essential of the Filioque when they [say] . . . the Son is cause of the Spirit"; conversely, "the Latins . . . satisfy the profound design of the Greeks when they [affirm] . . . with Augustine that the Holy Spirit proceeds principally from the Father, who is the principle of the whole divinity."[293]

Pivoting to an offensive position, Bertrand de Margerie critiques Photius's position and presents three necessary logical affirmations that Photius's presuppositions deny "about each of the three persons."[294] Photius's position denies: (1) "the immediate

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[289] Heinrich J. D. Denzinger and Adolf Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei et Morum* (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1963), 1302; Heinrich J. D. Denzinger and Clemens Bannwarth, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* (Friburgi: Herder, 1928), 691, quoted in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

[290] Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 1300–1301; Denzinger and Bannwarth, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 691, quoted in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

[291] Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 1301; Denzinger and Bannwarth, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 691, quoted in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

[292] Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 1301; Denzinger and Bannwarth, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 691, quoted in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167.

[293] Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 1301; Denzinger and Bannwarth, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 691, quoted in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 167–68.

[294] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 172. For another perspective, I include Yves Congar's response to Photius's arguments: "He [does] . . . not understand the homogeneity of the Latin idea of the mystery of the Trinity, according to which the distinction between the Persons in their perfect

and direct unity of the Holy Spirit with the Son, which can only be a relation of origin"; (2) "the perfect unity of the Father and of the Son who possesses all in common, except paternity and filiation, but have in common the power to spirate"; and (3) "the indivisible unity of the person of the Father, since in the Photian view the property of Spirator would logically have to constitute another Person distinct from the Father (since it is independent of paternity)."[295]

As a result, de Margerie discerns two existing currents that reject the *Filioque*.[296] On the one hand, some recognize "that the *Filioque* was the formation of ideas that are in fact found among the Fathers. Nevertheless[,] it is not a dogma but only a 'theologoumenon,' that is a theological opinion."[297] On the other hand, others seek "to maintain at all cost and to justify the position of Photius, which [they believe] . . . to be traditional."[298]

In the aftermath "of the so-called Photian Schism, the Eastern and Western Churches [remain] . . . in communion for over a century despite the unresolved

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consubstantiality is derived from their relationship and the opposition of their relationship—the Father and the Son are relative to one another—and that relationship is one of origin and procession." Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:58–59. In contrast, Photius distinguishes the divine persons "by personal properties that could not be communicated."

[295] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 172.

[296] De Margerie follows Marie-Joseph Le Guillou's delineation of the two currents in contemporary orthodoxy. Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, *The Spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy*, Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism 4 (Paris, 1956), s.v. "filioque," quoted in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 174n59.

[297] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 174. De Margerie references Sergius Bulgakov, who "recognizes that the Greek formula 'through the Son' has been interpreted as a participation of the Son in the procession of the Holy Spirit." Pugliese dissents from Photius's claim—the idea of the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son, "in the sense intended by the *filioque*," develops later in history. Pugliese, "How Important Is the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy?," 163. Pugliese suggests otherwise: "As any of church history will show, the concept of the 'unanimous consent of the fathers' is a chimerical idea that does not exist in reality. In fact, there are plenty of witnesses, in the Greek as well as Latin Church Fathers, who say what the *filioque* affirms."

[298] De Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 174. De Margerie notes that "[t]his current in fact is bound up with the Palamite doctrine of uncreated energies."

theological differences."[299] Although an uneasy peace exists between Rome and Constantinople, "very little [is] . . . said by either side . . . for most of the tenth century."[300] The Schism between the East and the West occurs in 1054.[301]

Anselm of Canterbury (AD 1033–1109)

Although the discussion was highly politicized, Christians search for an answer to this main question: From whom does the Holy Spirit eternally proceed as his principle?[302] "Anselm seeks to win round the Greeks to the Western view. . . . [H]is treatise [on this doctrine] . . . appeared four years later, in 1102."[303] Anselm's main argument in *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*[304] is this: To maintain symmetry in the Trinitarian persons' relations, the Holy Spirit must proceed from both the Father and the Son.[305]

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[299] Siecienski cites Karl Leyser, "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationships," in *Relationships between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. Derek Baker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 109.

[300] Siecienski cites Leyser, "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationships"; see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 109.

[301] Brian Davies and G. R. Evans, introduction to *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, by Anselm of Canterbury, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ix.

[302] The nature of the debates is more political than theological at the time. Davies and Evans, introduction to *Anselm of Canterbury*, ix. The Eastern Church believes the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, while the Western Church includes the Son as the Holy Spirit's origin.

[303] Davis and Evans, introduction to *Anselm of Canterbury*, ix; cf. William E. Mann, *God, Belief, and Perplexity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 232. Given the contention, "the Pope ask[s] . . . Anselm to speak at the Council" of Bari in 1098. Davis and Evans, ix. His treatise could provide permanence to the views he shares at the Council of Bari. Davis and Evans, xix.

Ngien reports, "Anselm is the first Western theologian since Charlemagne to develop a rigorous apologetic for the Latin, Augustinian tradition." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, x. Commenting on Anselm's methodology, the essentialist approach, Ngien compares Anselm to Augustine: "Like his predecessor, Anselm's starting point is the divine essence, rather than the persons. In repudiating the doctrine of *per Filium* and monopatrism, Anselm furnishes two major arguments to substantiate *Filioque*: first by way of necessary reasons, second by way of exegetical foundation" (x–xi).

[304] Anselm of Canterbury, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Richard Regan, in Davies and Evans, *Anselm of Canterbury*. In this section, I sequentially move through *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*.

[305] Davis and Evans, introduction to *Anselm of Canterbury*, xix. Methodologically, Anselm argues "that the doctrine of God's triunity, an article of faith, is at least rationally grounded and logically consistent." Ngien cites Franciscus S. Schmitt, *Opera Omnia Ad Fidem Codicum* (Edinburgh: T. Nelson, 1946), 1:104; Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:96; cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, in *Anselm*

Anselm describes the Greek position on the doctrine as a denial "that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son," which is not a denial "that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son."[306] Anselm responds: the Holy Spirit is God from God by procession.[307] His name, Holy Spirit, reveals that he is distinct—"as the one who proceeds from someone" or "as the Spirit of God"—rather than "spirit in an absolute sense."[308] The Holy Spirit has "from the Father what constitutes" him as the Third Person.[309] The Holy Spirit's "relational opposition" is not interchangeable with the Father and Son's respective relations; as such, the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.[310]

After clarifying the nature of the Holy Spirit's personhood, Anselm inquires into interrelated concepts about God: "[I]ndivisible unity and the dissociable plurality."[311] The irreducible and non-transferrable set of relations distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son. Moreover, the doctrine of "inviolable simplicity of the divine nature" prevents any multiplicity in God's substance, even though there exists a plurality of

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of Canterbury, vol. 1, *Monologion, Proslogion, Debate with Gaunilo, and A Meditation on Human Redemption*, ed. and trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert W. Richardson (London: S. C. M. Press, 1974), 95; see Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 23. Specifically concerning the Third Person, "[t]he Holy Spirit is not the principle of another. To avoid collapsing the personal distinctions in the Trinity with the essence common to all three, Anselm turns to the definitions of the persons by relationships—an understanding which is already in Augustine and the Greeks." Ngien, 24.

[306] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 391). Anselm comments on the Latin Church's addition of the *Filioque* clause without the Greek Church's consent. He explains the Latin Church's motives: "[N]ecessity compel[s] . . . this, and no argument prevent[s] . . . it, and the true faith admit[s] . . . it, [therefore] the Latin church faithfully assert[s] . . . it knew that we should believe and profess it." Anselm, 13 (Regan, 426). By Anselm's estimation, the addition "establish[es] things regarding the orthodox faith that assemblies of the people should profitably read and sing."

[307] The Son is God from God by generation. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 391).

[308] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 391).

[309] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 391).

[310] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 392–93). The "relational opposition . . . prevents us from predicating Father and Son and Holy Spirit of one another, and from attributing the properties of each to the others. Anselm, 1 (Regan, 393).

[311] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 393). Anselm picks up on Augustine's categorical delineation of terms for God's substance or essence and the divine persons. The latter category does not apply absolutely to God; relative terms denote personal relationships between the Trinitarian persons. Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 60.

divine persons.[312] The relations of generation and procession "restrict consequences of God's unity."[313]

Anselm makes sense of the notion that God from God exists within God, even though this being from another does not multiply the divine nature. He develops this notion of relational opposition to distinguish the divine persons, which does not duplicate the essence.[314] He questions the nature of the Holy Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son, respectively: "The Holy Spirit is indeed necessarily from the Father, since no opposition stands in the way."[315] Next, in his inquiry on the Son's relation to the Holy Spirit, either the Son is from the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit is from the Son.[316] Acknowledging a universally known part of the faith "that the Son is not from the Holy Spirit," Anselm continues to argue for a coherent interpretation of Scripture's "God from

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[312] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 393–94). "The Son and Holy Spirit, of course, have existence from the Father but in different ways," as the Son is generated and the Holy Spirit proceeds. Anselm, 1 (Regan, 397). By this account, the Son and Holy Spirit are distinct.

[313] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 394). The Holy Spirit (the one who originates from another *via* procession) and the Father (the one is the origin of another) are not identical persons. I leave out the Son in this example since Anselm does not argue for the Son's participation in the Holy Spirit's procession at this point of the treatise. The Holy Spirit is not the Son, for the Son is the one from whom is from the Father through generation.

[314] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 415). Ngien avers, Anselm's "axiom, '*in Deo omnia sunt unum, uni non obviat relationis oppositio*,' enables him to establish the ontological distinction of the persons within the unity of God." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, x. The Father and the Son are the single principle from which the Holy Spirit proceeds, and the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Son as he does from the Father." Ngien continues to explain a critical theological point for Anselm: "[T]he origin of the Holy Spirit is not rooted in the mutual love between the Father and the Son as in Augustine, but in love as the eternal essence shared by both—viz., their one [united] Godness of love."

[315] Since the Holy Spirit is from the Father, the Father cannot be from the Holy Spirit: "The Father cannot be from two or all three of the Trinity because of the same aspect of opposition." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 395).

[316] Anselm declares that either both propositions cannot be true or both are false. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 1 (Regan, 396). N.B.: Aquinas will pick up on this option in his presentation of double procession. Anselm sets out to prove that the Son cannot be from the Holy Spirit. Based on Anselm's explanation of the dichotomous choice, he asserts that the Greeks ought to logically choose one of the two options. See Anselm's "universal and irrefutable logic" in Anselm, 1 (Regan, 396–98). Later, Anselm poses his dichotomy again: either the Holy Spirit is from the Son or the Son is from the Holy Spirit. Cf. Anselm, 15 (Regan, 430).

The Second and Third Persons are God from God, not God from whom God is. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 15 (Regan, 430). His definitions preserve the definition of the one God. The Son and Spirit's procession really distinguish them *qua* persons from their relation of origin. Cf. Ngien cites Fortman, *The Triune God*, 174; see Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 34.

God" pattern: "[T]here is God from God only either by generation, as the Son is generated, or by procession, as the Holy Spirit proceeds."[317] It is impossible to understand the Son as being from the Holy Spirit by virtue of generation and procession.[318] He believes he lays out "irrefutable logic" that the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son.[319]

Anselm explores the idea of the Holy Spirit's distinction from the Father *qua* person and the way the Holy Spirit has his existence: "[T]he Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father only by reason of the fact that the Holy Spirit has his substance from the Father."[320] Fundamentally, his discussion hinges on interpreting the "God from God" formula. The Holy Spirit's distinction from the Father stems from his eternal origin.[321] In the divine life, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son; thus, in creation, the Holy Spirit "is given or sent and proceeds to sanctify creatures."[322] The Holy Spirit is God from God: he exists, proceeds, originates, and is sent or given from the Father and

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[317] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 398).

[318] He argues this in two steps. First, he assesses a possible from-ness by generation, "For if the Son is generated from the Holy Spirit, the Son is the Son of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the Son's Father. But neither one is the Father or the Son of the other." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 398). In other words, only a father and a son exist in the relation of generation; "Therefore, the Son is not generated from the Holy Spirit."

Second, Anselm considers a hypothetical from-ness by procession. If the Son proceeds from the Holy Spirit, "the Son would be the Spirit of the same Holy Spirit" because only the Spirit proceeds in this type of relation. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 398). Anselm reminds us that "we clearly deny this when we say and profess that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son. . . . Therefore the Son is in no way from the Holy Spirit."

Ngien interprets Anselm's logic. In arguing for the defensibility of the *Filioque*, Anselm shows "that the procession of the Spirit from the Father is inseparable from the relations between the Father and the Son"—he argues that *Filioque* is necessary. Anselm places "Augustine's notion of *de Patre principaliter* within his framework, in which the Son's begetting and the Spirit's procession are understood against an identity of essence and an equality of divinity, both of which are intrinsic to divinity." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 29, citing Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:98–99.

[319] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 398).

[320] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 401).

[321] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 401). Anselm considers other alternatives. The Holy Spirit is not from no one or else that would logically result in two gods. The Holy Spirit is not from himself because that would be an illogical assertion. He concludes, "no one who denies that the Holy Spirit is from the Son can deny that the Holy Spirit is from the Father."

[322] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 403). This procession is not based on the Father sending or giving the Holy Spirit in time. Anselm, 2 (Regan, 402).

the Son.[323] Anselm argues if one accepts the idea that the Son sends and gives the Holy Spirit in time, as Christ indicates, then it should follow that the Holy Spirit is eternally from the Son (and the Father).[324]

Anselm places the Father-Son dyad in a primary position because of their names.[325] Building on this dyad of opposed relations, Anselm considers how the Holy Spirit fits. "[I]f one relation is nothing apart from the other relation," namely, the Father generating the Son and the Son's generation from the Father, "there can be nothing from the relation of Father apart from the relation of Son. And so it will follow that the Holy Spirit is from both relations if he is from one of them."[326] Logically, the Holy Spirit must proceed from the Father and the Son. Additionally, Anselm looks to John's Gospel for biblical support.

Anselm offers his interpretation of John 14:26 and 15:26. He ponders, what does Christ mean "when he speaks of the Paraclete 'whom the Father will send in my name' . . . [and] says, the Paraclete 'whom I shall send to you from the Father'"?[327] In the

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[323] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 403). Anselm glosses the words "proceed," "exist," "originates," "sent," and "given." He rationalizes that the words ought to be understood synonymously to communicate the notion that the Holy Spirit is God from God. However, this does not collapse our understanding of the Holy Spirit in creation to the Holy Spirit as God in himself.

[324] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 403). Anselm discerns the nature of God's inner life of the divine procession for interpreting the Trinitarian persons relations in creation, the divine missions. Since "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as he does from the Father, it of course follows that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, and that the Spirit is given and sent by the Son as well as by the Father." Anselm, 14 (Regan, 429).

[325] The Father is Father because he has a Son, and the Son is Son because he has a Father. I do not mean primary in a hierarchical way. Fundamentally, this argument is based on a view of the doctrine of revelation that recognizes the Bible's authority—it is inspired by God. The names "Father" and "Son" communicate a true reality: the First Person is named Father and the Second Person is named Son. This does not diminish the Holy Spirit's divinity; rather, the revealed names "Father" and "Son" push us to recognize this dyad first. S.a. David S. Hogg's discussion on the Holy Spirit as "the love that exists between [and binds] the Father and the Son," which "leads Anselm to affirm that the three persons of the Trinity . . . in terms of their names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . [and] their relations: unbegotten, begotten, and neither begotten or unbegotten, but proceeding from." Hogg cites Anselm, *Monologion* 53–61, in David S. Hogg, "Anselm of Canterbury: Faith Seeking Trinitarian Understanding," in Barrett, *On Classical Trinitarianism*, 130–31.

[326] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 2 (Regan, 404).

[327] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 4 (Regan, 405).

former verse, Anselm suggests that the Paraclete's sending by the Son is in the sending by the Father.[328] In the latter, it can only mean, "I shall send as if the Father should send, so that my sending of the Spirit and the Father's sending of the Spirit are one and the same."[329] By virtue of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and Son, Christ can affirm that the Holy Spirit belongs to him and Christ can give the Holy

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[328] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 4 (Regan, 406).[328] In John 15:26, Christ does not include himself in the statement, "When the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father has come." Anselm, 11 (Regan, 420). Anselm suggests a hermeneutical rule: "[H]e wishes what he says in the case of one to be understood in the case of the others." Anselm, 11 (Regan, 421). Pointing to another text that requires this hermeneutic, Anselm cites Matthew 11:27: "No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son wishe[s] . . . to reveal them." Anselm explains that "revealing and knowing is common to the three persons." The Holy Spirit knows and reveals by virtue of the fact that "the very same substance that constitutes the Father constitutes the Holy Spirit." Moreover, the Father and Son reveal the Holy Spirit because the three persons are one.

This reminds me of the doctrine of inseparable operations. Scripture may not name the three persons in every of God's *opera ad extra*; yet, based on the knowledge of God's unity of essence, we recognize that the persons always act inseparably in creation. Anselm concludes that "things attributed to one person as if only to the one person cannot be excluded from the other two persons." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 11 (Regan, 421).

I concede Anselm's point insofar as it follows the axiom of the Trinitarian persons' inseparable actions in creation. However, since this passage pertains to the Trinitarian persons' relations, I do not think we can apply this axiom in the same way. Readers cannot univocally assert the involvement of the three persons in all scriptural passages because some passages reveal the nature of a divine person's eternal relation in God, which is the only appropriate place to recognize what is not common to the three. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 11 (Regan, 421–22).

Later, Anselm quotes John 5:26, "As the Father has life in his very self, so he also gave the Son to have life in his very self." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 11 (Regan, 422). I understand the thrust of Anselm's argument: while the Holy Spirit is not named, it cannot necessarily mean that the Father does not also give the Holy Spirit to have life in himself. But the questions are thus: What is the nature of the Son's involvement in the Holy Spirit's procession? Or, in his words, "things attributed to one person as if only to the one person cannot be excluded from the other two persons." Anselm, 11 (Regan, 421). This question is precisely the only acceptable conceptual place, so to speak, to identify the Trinitarian persons' distinctions. A follow-up question remains: How has Anselm helped readers interpret the appropriate place to include the three persons even if they are not all named from the appropriate place to note how "the three persons differ from another." Anselm, 11 (Regan, 422)?

In sum, I do not disagree with Anselm's argument at this point; I merely wish to suggest that the biblical passages may be revealing a uniqueness about a divine person, a unique fact that distinguishes them as the person that they are.

[329] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 4 (Regan, 406).

Spirit.[330] The Father and the Son constitute the co-principle and co-sending of the Holy Spirit.[331] As such, the Scripture also calls the Third Person the Spirit of the Son.[332]

Next, Anselm tackles John 16 and interprets the acts of hearing, knowing, learning, receiving, speaking, declaring, and glorifying to the Holy Spirit. Christ prepares his followers for the coming Holy Spirit. "[T]he Son shows openly that the Son is the one from whom, as from the Father, the Spirit receives his knowledge or substance," for the Holy Spirit's "knowledge is simply his substance."[333] The so-called acts listed allude to the dynamic of the eternal procession: the Holy Spirit receives his substance and exists and proceeds from the Son (and Father).[334] Also from John's Gospel, Christ breathed on his disciples "so that we understand that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him"[335]—"the

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[330] Conversely, the Son does not belong to the Holy Spirit, nor can the Holy Spirit give the Son, because the Son is not from the Holy Spirit. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 4 (Regan, 406). John 14:26 and 15:26 "must be taken together." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 37. The Father gives the Holy Spirit to the Son; "read together," the two verses reveal that the Father and the Son each "send the Spirit on behalf of the other."

[331] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 37.

[332] Conversely, the Son is not called the Son of the Spirit because the Holy Spirit does not receive the Son from the Father. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 4 (Regan, 407). Anselm suggests "that the Son has from the Father the substance from which the Holy Spirit proceeds." The Son is fully God in himself, and the Holy Spirit does not ontologically complete, as it were, or "supply a lack" in the Son's divinity.

Anselm considers the meaning of the phrases "Spirit of God," "Spirit of the Father," and "Spirit of the Son." Negatively, the Holy Spirit's "ofness"—as Fred Sanders calls this genitive construction (Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021], 113; cf. "fromness" in Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, New Studies in Dogmatics [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016], 124)—does not entail possession by something greater or a part of a larger whole. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 12 (Regan, 424). Positively, the Holy Spirit is the substance of God who exists and proceeds from God, or from the Father, or from the Son. Anselm, 12 (Regan, 424). Anselm does not find a distinction between the Holy Spirit as from and given from the Father and the Holy Spirit given by the Son. According to Anselm, this is a distinction that the Greeks make. Anselm, 12 (Regan, 424–25).

[333] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 6 (Regan, 411). These terms must be understood analogically since any of these acts understood temporally would mean that God is mutable. Anselm rightly asserts that anything the Holy Spirit receives from the Son, such as knowledge, is identical with the single divine essence. As such, in the Father and Son's spiration of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit "hears," "receives knowledge," and "learns."

[334] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 6 (Regan, 410).

[335] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 5 (Regan, 408). Anselm references Psalm 33:6, Isaiah 11:4, Ezekiel 36:26–27, and 2 Thessalonians 2:8 to substantiate his claim (that the Father and Son breathe forth the Holy Spirit). He understands the Father as the mouth of the Lord and the breath of the mouth and lips as the Holy Spirit. Additionally, Christ's breathing reveals that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son's mouth and lips. Anselm, 5 (Regan, 409–10).

Holy Spirit comes out of the depths of Christ's body," the recess of the Son's divinity, and from his person.[336] Anselm concludes that the Holy Spirit equally exists and proceeds from the mouth and lips of the Father (the Father's substance) and the mouth and lips of the Son (the Son's substance).[337]

The order of the Son's generation and the Holy Spirit's procession in God does not "constitute certain grades and intervals."[338] Although the Son does not exist from two persons, the Holy Spirit is not subordinate or "subsequent to the Son."[339] Furthermore, Anselm questions the formula "from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 11:36) and its application to the Trinitarian persons.[340] He believes this formula describes God's work in creation and does not apply to the divine persons.[341] The Son's term "through" should not be conceived as a different way of relating to the Holy Spirit.[342] Anselm maintains that the Holy Spirit may be through the Son, but that is to say, the Holy Spirit is from the Son.

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[336] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 5 (Regan, 408).

[337] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 5 (Regan, 409–10).

[338] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 8 (Regan, 413). God is one, and it is incorrect to "posit grades of dignity" to the divine persons. Also, God is outside of time, and it is incorrect to "constitute intervals in eternity," which is outside of time.

[339] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 8 (Regan, 413).

[340] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 415).

[341] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 415). The Trinitarian persons are not "from the Father and through the Son and in the Holy Spirit" because "we cannot include any one of the three persons among those things and exclude the other two." He rationalizes that "from" and "through" should not be distinguished in the procession. Since the one, indivisible, divine nature belongs to the Son, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father's divine nature and the Son's divine nature.

[342] The argument remains the same for substituting the name, Word, for the Second Person. What the Father does through the Word, such as spirate the Holy Spirit, means that the Word is doing the act of spirating. Citing John 5:19, Anselm states, "things done by Father through the Word . . . are done by the very Word." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 416).

Anselm recognizes the distinction between the Father, the "initial source," and the Son and Holy Spirit's respective relations from the Father. Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 417). The Son's generation from the Father "is neither spatially nor temporally nor substantially distinct from the Father"; the Son remains in the Father. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit's procession does not exclude the Son as his origin.

Using his spring, stream, and lake analogy, Anselm contends that the Holy Spirit (the lake) has one source, not two.[343] Although his procession is from the spring (Father) and stream (Son), the procession is unique to the Holy Spirit and does not take away from the Son's generation, who also exists from the spring.[344] Together, the Father and the Son are equally considered the origin of the Holy Spirit. Anselm focuses on the type of relation between (1) the Father, the spring and original source, and (2) the Son, the stream whose existence is from the Father *via* generation. Both the spring (the original source) and stream function as the condition, reason, or one source for the lake's existence.[345] Anselm likens the Holy Spirit's single source to the Trinity as the single source of creatures.[346]

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[343] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 418). Anselm compares the Son's generation from the Father with the Holy Spirit's procession from the Son. The latter may suggest that the Holy Spirit exists from but does not proceed from the Son.

See Mann's explanation of Anselm's Nile analogy in Mann, *God, Belief, and Perplexity*, 245–49. Anselm "uses it to argue for the appropriateness of the *filioque* doctrine (De Proc. 9)." Mann, 248. Conversely, "[t]he Greeks reason that although the lake comes from the river, it does not proceed from the river; rather it accumulates from the river. So even if the Holy Spirit exists from the Son, he cannot be properly said to proceed from the Son." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 31.

[344] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 9 (Regan, 418).

[345] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 10 (Regan, 419). The Holy Spirit is not "more from the Father than from the Son." Anselm, 9 (Regan, 419). He argues that the Greeks wrongly emphasize the distinction between the Father and Son because "the very water . . . is one and the same in the spring and the stream." Anselm, 9 (Regan, 419). Ngien deciphers, "The Father communicates his spirative power to the Son so that the Son is also the ontological cause of the Spirit. Governed by *una substantia* as his prolegomena . . . Anselm affirms that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one principle." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 29.

[346] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 10 (Regan, 420). Although the Father is the source or cause of the Son and the Father and Son are the source or cause of the Holy Spirit, there is only one origin and cause in God.

Anselm summarizes his arguments—his "irrefutable logic":[347] the name Holy Spirit "necessarily admits plurality . . . signify[ing] that God is from God."[348] The Trinitarian relations are in God, and their plurality cannot "be absorbed in the unity, nor can the unity let its uniqueness be absorbed in the relations."[349] The Holy Spirit's eternal relation of being from Father and Son (the Holy Spirit's God from God-ness) is within God.[350] The concept of the eternal procession conceptually preserves "the unity of the divine nature and the Trinity of the persons."[351]

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[347] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 14 (Regan, 426). He opens with succinctness: "The Holy Spirit is from the Son, just as he is from the Father, and yet he is not from them as if from two different sources but as from one." Anselm, 14 (Regan, 427). The Holy Spirit is from God, "the Father and Son," two distinct persons yet the single origin of the Holy Spirit's procession.

Since the Father and Son are equal, the Holy Spirit does not originate from the Father and Son in two different ways. Instead, "the one and the same Holy Spirit, the whole of whom is once for all from the whole God, cannot be more or less from the one and supremely simple God." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 14 (Regan, 428). Anselm "argues for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son on the grounds of divine simplicity." Hogg, "Anselm of Canterbury," 132, citing Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 148–52.

This single origin considers the Son's eternal generation: "[T]he Son has from the Father that the Holy Spirit is from the Son." Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 14 (Regan, 428). We may make this distinction for the Father by saying "that the Holy Spirit is chiefly from the Father." Anselm is clear that "chiefly" should not insinuate that the Father is more worthy and the Son is less worthy and secondary.

[348] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 14 (Regan, 428). The Holy Spirit's procession from his origin means that he is coeternal and consubstantial with the Father and Son. Anselm, 14 (Regan, 429). In Mann's exegesis of Anselm's notion of memory, understanding, and love in *Monologion* 50, he explains how "divine self-love must be co-eternal with God." Mann, *God, Belief, and Perplexity*, 243. Divine love is "consubstantial with the Father and the Son," following (without temporality) God's self-memory and self-understanding (243). From the logic on consubstantiality, Anselm establishes "that this divine love proceeds equally from both, who love each other and themselves to the same extent . . . with one love that proceeds as a whole from each other (*Mon*. 50–54)" (243). Moreover, divine love is not begotten as the Son because divine love does not resemble its parent(s) (243–44).

Anselm also converges with Augustine on employing the "analogy of Trinity to memory, understanding, and will. . . . The Father is the primordial memory, as it were, that is perfectly imaged by the Son's locution. If, however, the Third [Person] . . . is analogously identified with will, then we shift from the realm of cognition and contemplation to the arena of *desire* and *action.*" Mann, *God, Belief, and Perplexity*, 244. The type of relationship between memory and understanding is distant from the will's desire to do something; "divine love, then, is not the offspring of the Father or the Son but nevertheless proceeds from both of them" (244). The Father and Son's spiration of the Holy Spirit means that he "is uncreated, coeternal, and consubstantial with them" (244).

[349] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 15 (Regan, 431).

[350] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 16 (Regan, 433).

[351] Anselm, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* 16 (Regan, 434). Ngien comments that though "Anselm does not use the term *circumincession* (or *perichoresis*), the substances of the concept are found in him. The patristic idea of *circumincession* grounds the persons' unity of essence so that each exists fully in the others, yet without exceeding the others." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 43, citing Anselm, *Monologion* 1.68. More fundamentally, consubstantiality may ground the

Richard of St. Victor (AD 1110–1173)

"A Scottish monk who joined the monastery some time between 1120 and 1135,"[352] Richard wrote *On the Trinity* between 1162 and 1173.[353] Ruben Angelici succinctly states the twelfth-century author's goal for writing: the Victorine "demonstrate[s] the necessity of God's unity and triunity on the logical level, motivated by faith."[354] Jean Ribaillier suggests an apt subtitle for Richard's work *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino* because methodologically Richard divides his masterpiece into two main sections.[355]

A divine person who proceeds in God, or "receive[s] their being *ab alio*[,] . . . can receive it only in one of three ways," unmediatedly, mediately and unmediatedly, or mediately.[356] The Second Person proceeds in an unmediated way from the First Person,

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Holy Spirit's unity of essence with the Father and the Son over *perichoresis* (see Amandus Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5 in chapter 5).

[352] Ruben Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor, On the Trinity: English Translation and Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 5.

[353] Boyd T. Coolman and Dale M. Coulter, *Trinity and Creation: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Richard and Adam of St. Victor* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 200. Angelici calls Richard's dogmatics "the link between eleventh- and thirteenth-century Scholasticism. . . . [I]t is impossible to interpret thirteenth-century theologians without keeping in mind Richard's worldview." Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 60.

[354] Angelici believes that Richard of St. Victor "is the author of one of the most significant mediaeval works on the dogma of the Trinity," which "awakened profound adoration in Richard's contemporaries." Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 5. Methodologically, Richard of St. Victor uses "the typical categories of Scholasticism . . . [and] responds to the question of knowledge and the method of trinitarian investigation describing a search pattern that is profoundly Augustinian in its core" (23).

According to Ngien, "Richard of St. Victor picks up the personalist strands in Augustine"; based on the notion of love in Augustine, the Victorine considers God's life in himself: "[P]erfected love demands a Trinity of persons. . . . 'The perfection of the divine love is revealed by . . . a love intrinsically oriented to community.'" Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, xi, quoting Colin E. Gunton, *Theology Through the Theologians: Selected Essays 1972–1995* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 127. In comparison, "Richard's . . . personalist approach to the divine mystery of the Trinity . . . is the very opposite of Anselm's." Ngien, xi.

However, Ngien distinguishes Richard's account from "Augustine's mutual love theory": "The love expressed by the Spirit is not of two turned towards each other . . . but rather of two turned to a third. . . . Contrary to Augustine, Richard's Trinitarian language is love (Father), beloved (Son) and co-beloved (Spirit). This Trinitarian configuration allows the distinctiveness of the third person to come through far more clearly and strongly." Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, xi.

[355] Angelici cites Jean Ribaillier, *Richard de Saint-Victror, De Trinitate: Texte Critique avec Introduction, Notes et Tables*, Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Âge 6 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1958); see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 24.

[356] The third option is impossible. Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 54. Ngien notes Richard's definition of a person, which modifies Boethius's definition: Richard conceives of a "person as 'an

and the Third Person proceeds in a mediated and unmediated way from the First Person and in a mediated way from the Second Person.[357] A personal procession in the chain of processions always constitutes an incommunicable property for each divine person.[358] Richard distinguishes the Second and Third Persons through the *Filioque* doctrine, an essential logical component.[359] In his understanding of the Trinitarian persons, "divine personal properties can be reduced to two possible considerations: giving or receiving."[360] The Holy Spirit relates to the Father distinctly from how the Son relates to the Father because each person has a different mode of origin; the paternal will toward the Second and Third Persons is different.[361]

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father's will.[362] As the Third Person, he is the object of the Father and Son's common love.[363] The Father wanted, so to speak, a person to be loved by the Father and Son "in order to give him [the Holy Spirit] the

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incommunicable existence of an intelligent nature.'" Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 64, citing Richard, *De Trinitate* 4.22.24; Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 143; Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall, *The Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 59; Claude Welch, *In His Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 296. Angelici offers a slightly different gloss for Richard's definition: a "person is 'an individual, singular, incommunicable property." Angelici, 51. "The divine persons," Ngien continues, "are three incommunicable existents," and each person "exists in himself alone, according to a certain mode of reasonable existence." Ngien, 64, citing Richard, *De Trinitate* 4.24. The Holy Spirit "possesses a unique property by which he may be distinguished." Ngien, 64.

[357] Richard's "chain of procession" ends at three persons, "otherwise God—the most perfect being—would never be complete. The person who terminates this series" is the Third Person, "who is given origin but does not give origin to anyone." Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victo*r, 54–55.

[358] Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 5.10; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 55.

[359] Christopher P. Evans, introduction to *On the Trinity*, by Richard of St. Victor, in Coolman and Coulter, *Trinity and Creation*, 206.

[360] Evans, introduction to *On the Trinity*, 206.

[361] Evans, introduction to *On the Trinity*, 207.

[362] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.6 (Angelici, 210).

[363] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.6 (Angelici, 210). On Richard's deduction "nothing is better than charity" and this application to God's being, see Ngien's outline of Richard's three propositions in Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 55–58. This line of thinking leads Richard to develop his concept of "self-transcending love of one divine person for another divine person" in the divine life. Ngien, 55.

delights of charity. . . . The communication of love appears to be somehow the original cause of the second [procession]."[364] Since the Holy Spirit is God and possesses equal dignity as the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit "demands and deserves this love."[365] Angelici elucidates Richard's "notion of caritas" to describe the Trinity's existence. He relates each divine person to the idea of love in three distinct ways.[366] Describing the Third Person, Richard explains, "the last person, who does not donate [his] . . . being, as it interrupts the chain of processions, shows *due* love."[367] Richard's method of identifying the three divine persons' personal relational properties distinguishes "the first by [his] . . . *gratuitous* love, the second by *gratuitous* and *due* love, the third by *due* love."[368] The First and Second Persons, the two lovers in Richard's schema, unite by "the flame of love" and "constitute the single cause of an equal co-beloved," the Third Person.[369] The Third establishes the First and Second Persons' union in their shared love for the Third (*condilectus*).[370] Since the Third Person "has the property to possess without giving to

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[364] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.6 (Angelici, 210).

[365] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.7 (Angelici, 210).

[366] He describes the Father: "[*T*]*he first person* does not originate from any other while [he] . . . gives origin to all others, giving being to them, [his] . . . love is *gratuitous*, as [he] . . . denotes itself with being." Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 5.17; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 56. Next, Richard describes the Son: "The second person, who donates being to another one and receives its being from the first, demonstrates both *gratuitous* and *due* love." Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, 5.19; see Angelici, 56.

[367] Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 5.18; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 56.

[368] Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 5.20; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 56–57. The existence of "other, intermediate, possible ones [persons] by *gratuitous* and *due* love," Angelici states, "is utterly absurd." Angelici, 57. The hypothetical different persons would have the identical personal property as the Second Person; however, distinct persons logically require distinct personal properties. Angelici, 57.

[369] Ngien cites Richard of St. Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs, the Mystical Ark, Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. Grover A. Zinn, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 384; see Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 52.

[370] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 62. Richard contends, "[J]ust as the Father wanted his Son to co-exist with him so to have someone to whom he could transmit the riches of his greatness, he also desired the Holy Spirit to be united with him so that there would be someone to whom he could communicate the delights of his charity. Both of them, then, express the Father's glory." Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.13 (Angelici, 219). Logically, Richard believes the Third Person completes the

anybody,"[371] "no [other] person receives in any way fullness of divinity from the [Third]."[372]

Richard will name the Third Person through analyzing the nature of the Trinitarian persons' relations.[373] Referencing Mario Spinelli, Angelici describes the relational dynamic between the first and second procession: "A priority of nature (and not of chronology) is found in the first procession with respect to the second one, as the one equal in dignity . . . is required 'before' the object of co-love."[374] The Holy Spirit is not another Son who proceeds from the Father,[375] nor can the Holy Spirit be called the divine Son's son. The Holy Spirit's procession from the Son is immediate, and he also proceeds from the Father.[376]

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processional series. Ngien cites Richard, *De Trinitate* 5.23; Fortman, *The Triune God*, 192–93; see Ngien, 62.

[371] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.11 (Angelici, 215).

[372] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.11 (Angelici, 215). Matthew Levering comments on Richard's argumentation, which "goes beyond the Augustinian analogy when he proposes that only a communion of persons can enjoy truly perfect charity, in which they each direct love toward each other. . . . [T]he attempt to make triunity necessary for the perfection of divine love is mistaken." Levering cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 3.2 (Angelici, 126); Niko den Bok, *Communicating the Most High: A Systematic Study of Person and Trinity in the Theology of Richard of St. Victor (†1173)*, Bibliotheca Victorina 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996); Justin Stratis, "A Person's a Person, No Matter How Divine? The Question of Univocity and Personhood in Richard of St. Victor's *De Trinitate*," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70, no. 4 (November 2017): 377–89. See Matthew Levering, "Trinity and Love," in Barrett, *On Classical Trinitarianism*, 380–81.

[373] In considering the personal names, Richard "employs a criterion of analogy with human nature to find the reason behind divine names." The Victorine finds "a name for the third person" after identifying a name for the Second Person (Son), whose "prime" or "immediate procession" of filiation from the Father "shows a direct and particular bond between these two." Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.17 (Angelici, 225); see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 58. A name for the Third Person is "harder to produce" because "the designation 'Holy Spirit,' in fact, could suit any of the three." Angelici cites Albert M. Ethier, *Le* "*De Trinitate*" *de Richard de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1939), 100; 114; see Angelici, 58.

[374] Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 58, citing Mario Spinelli, *Riccardo di San Vittore: La Trinità*, Fonti Cristiane per il Terzo Millennio 4 (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1990), 50.

[375] So Richard: "[O]nly the Son is called reflection of his [the Father's] substance," and Angelici references Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:15. Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.18 (Angelici, 227). Scripture does not refer to the Third Person in relation to the Father this way: "[T]he Father has not impressed, so to speak, the reproduction of his image in the Holy Spirit, when he produced him."

[376] Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 58.

The Holy Spirit is the breath proceeding from the Father, the one with whom he is consubstantial.[377] In God, "only the Father speaks [the Word] and only the Holy Spirit listens. Conversely, the exterior word is produced also by the activity of the divine Breath, i.e., the Holy Spirit."[378] This unique characteristic as breath is exclusively proper to the Third Person.[379] Furthermore, both the Father and Son are individually holy and spirit; "holy" and "spirit" may define the divine substance, which commonly belongs to each divine person.[380] Yet, the Third Person's proper name is Holy Spirit.[381] The "spirit" part of the name comes from his emanation from the Father and Son—who share the same sentiments, desires, and goals—and cause pious hearts a share in piety.[382] The name appropriately indicates "the same relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Father and Son, in the same way that the word 'spirit' (*spiritus*) can indicate the like-mindedness . . . of plural persons (cf. Acts 4:32)."[383] The "holy" part of the name reveals the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work of inspiring saints' hearts.[384]

The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and Son, receiving "the fullness of divinity from the Father and the Son at the same time."[385] In his procession, "[t]he Holy Spirit does not receive anything less or in a different fashion from either" the Father

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[377] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.9 (Angelici, 212).

[378] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.12 (Angelici, 218).

[379] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.9 (Angelici, 213).

[380] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.10; 6.11 (Angelici, 213–14).

[381] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.10; 6.11 (Angelici, 213–14).

[382] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.10 (Angelici, 214).

[383] Evans, introduction to *On the Trinity*, 207.

[384] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.10 (Angelici, 214).

[385] Evans, introduction to *On the Trinity*, 206.

or Son[386] because he proceeds "absolutely in the same way from"[387] both, "the unbegotten one and from the only-begotten."[388] The Victorine makes sense of the Holy Spirit's procession with his "unique conception of God's nature as love," whereby the three divine persons possess love—the divine essence—in their distinct mode of being.[389] Yet the second procession is distinct from the first. Ngien believes "we detect Richard's two distant ways of producing (*modus procedendi*): the first one, generating, is willing a beloved (*dilectus*) responding love, while the second one (proceeding), is willing a companion in love (*condilectus*)."[390]

In his procession, the Holy Spirit obtains everything that he possesses, such as existence, power, and will, from the Father and Son; thus, the Holy Spirit is the sent or given Gift to dwell in human beings.[391] "Like Augustine," Angelici notes, "Richard names this third person *Gift of God*."[392] As Gift, the Third Person sanctifies. His gift or mission induces due love, and God gives the Holy Spirit to human beings "when due love residing in the divinity is inspired into the human soul."[393] When God's "Spirit enters the rational soul [he] . . . turns its sentiments on with divine ardor and transforms it by communicating to it a character similar to [his] . . . own," which he eternally receives

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[386] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.11 (Angelici, 215).

[387] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.13 (Angelici, 219). The Father and Son communicate the fullness of divinity to the Holy Spirit, and this reception through their respective procession is common to the Son and Holy Spirit. Richard of St. Victor, 6.19 (Angelici, 228).

[388] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.19 (Angelici, 228).

[389] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 69.

[390] Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, 69.

[391] Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.14 (Angelici, 220). This is a classical interpretation of the eternal procession and the temporal divine missions: the Holy Spirit who eternally proceeds from the Father and Son is sent in time through his divine missions.

[392] Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.14; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 58.

[393] Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.14; Spinelli, *Riccardo di San Vittore*, 51; Ethier, *Le* "*De Trinitate*" *de Richard de Saint-Victor*, 115–17; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 58.

from the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit enables Christians to express love back to the triune God, the Creator, "the love it owes him."[394]

Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225–1274)

Thomas Aquinas expounds the Latin tradition's dogma on the Holy Spirit's eternal procession with meticulous metaphysical clarity.[395] I offer an exposition of Aquinas's explanation of God's processions in the West to demonstrate a way that classical theism interprets the doubling claims "God is one" and "God is three." I intend to underscore the biblical and logical coherency of this Thomistic theological redoublement by dividing my analysis into four sections: (1) procession exists in God, who eternally exists as one in being, as explored in *prima pars*, *quaestio* 27, article one of his *Summa Theologiae*; and (2) the Holy Spirit is fully God who, along with the Father and Son, subsists in the one divine nature in his mode of being and eternally proceeds, of which *Summa Theologiae*, *prima pars*, *quaestio* 27, articles three to five demonstrate;[396] (3) the Son's eternal relation to the Holy Spirit as Aquinas discusses in *prima pars*, *quaestio* 36, articles two to four of his *Summa Theologiae*; (4) and the circular movement of the Holy Spirit's procession.

Processions in the One God
(ST I, Q. 27, A. 1)

In *quaestio* 27, Aquinas begins by reminding the reader he previously considered God's unity of being; he has treated God's oneness, which "pertains to the

[394] Angelici cites Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity* 6.14; Spinelli, *Riccardo di San Vittore*, 51; Ethier, *Le* "*De Trinitate*" *de Richard de Saint-Victor*, 115–17; see Angelici, *Richard of Saint Victor*, 58.

[395] Formally, Aquinas tackles "The Procession of the Divine Persons" in *prima pars*, *quaestio* 27 of his *Summa Theologiae*.

[396] In total, I move through four arguments under two headings. I exclude article 2 ("Whether any procession in God can be called generation?") to give attention to the Holy Spirit's procession.

unity of divine essence."[397] Following God's oneness, article one addresses the question "Whether there is procession in God?" followed by three objections.[398]

Aquinas cites Christ's words to respond to the objections:[399] "I came from God and I am here. For I didn't come on my own, but he sent me" (John 8:42). Scripture forces Aquinas to confess procession in God because there must be a way to communicate the distinction between the persons: the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son.[400] In his answer, he seeks to demonstrate that procession is internal to God's life and procession does not necessarily posit extrinsic and outward acts. Gilles Emery posits, in God, "procession must be grasped as 'the drawing out of a reality that has issued from a principle,' that is, as a pure 'relation of emanation.'"[401]

The divine processions metaphysically establish the Holy Spirit's "genuine alterity" from the Father and the Son.[402] Emery delineates how Aquinas performs a "philosophical analysis"[403] "of the Aristotelian theory of the categories"[404] and analogically integrates "it into theology" to account for real relations in God.[405] The

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[397] I limit the scope of the discussion on the question of procession without elaborating on God's oneness *per se*. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.26 art. 4 ad. 2 co. 2. I note the general ordering of Aquinas's logical consideration of the relations of origin in God. He inquires into a divine person's origin, a divine person's relation of origin, and the divine persons as such.

[398] Objections to God's procession follow: (1) procession signifies outward movement, but there is nothing mobile in God or extraneous to God; (2) procession includes diversity; and (3) to proceed from a first principle seems to be against the nature of that which one proceeds.

[399] Aquinas uses the word "proceeded" (*est quod dicit Dominus, Ioan. VIII, ego ex Deo processi*), which is technically not "from" as the CSB states. However, I concur with the theological pattern of reading "from" in reference to God *ad extra* to correspond to an eternal procession in God.

[400] Cf. 1 John 5:20; 1 Cor 6:19; John 5:19.

[401] Gilles Emery cites Thomas Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 13 q. 1 art. 1; cf. ad. 1; *De Potentia*, q. 10 art. 1 ad. 2. Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 53.

[402] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 53.

[403] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 55.

[404] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 54.

[405] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 55. Aquinas deduces that the "two possible foundations for the existence of a real relation" are "action/passion, and quantity." Emery,

concept of "action implies both an acting subject and some reality which issues from this agent, . . . which *proceeds* from it . . . . [S]uch action entails a double relation: the relation of the agent to the terminus of his action, and the relation of the terminus to the agent from which it issues."[406]

Contrary to Arius and Sabellius who, in their respective ways, supposed procession to be an external act,[407] Aquinas underscores the concept of the intellect and the agent of the intellect. His concept allows him to say *via* similitude that this act of understanding the object is the procession of knowledge within the agent.[408] The divine procession is a kind of internal conception in God; procession is not necessarily an external, outward, and distinct act from the first principle of which the act proceeds.[409]

Two Eternal Processions in God
(ST I, Q. 27, Aa. 3–5)

After proving "the procession of the Word in God is called generation" in article two,[410] Aquinas defends another "procession [that] exists in God besides that of the Word" in article three.[411] Aquinas responds to the objections with two biblical

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54. Aquinas rules out the latter option because "God is great without quantity." Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.28 art. 4; see Emery, 55.

[406] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 55.

[407] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 1 co.

[408] On the contrary, "Arius and Sabellius [understand] . . . the procession as something brought about within an external reality." Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 1; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 57. To avoid their error, Aquinas builds "his Trinitarian treatise on the immanent processions of the word and of love" to contemplate the truth.

[409] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 1 ad. 1–3. Aquinas appropriates "Aristotle's distinction between two kinds of actions:" immanent and transitive, which give rise to an interior or exterior reality, respectively. Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 1; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 55–56. God's processions are immanent.

[410] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 2. I offer this brief note for context.

[411] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 3. The objections include the following: another procession in addition to the generation of the Word would lead to an infinite number of processions; one nature possesses only one mode of communication; and a possible procession of love is identified with the procession of the intellect.

citations from John (14:16; 15:26).[412] He concludes, contrary to proposals that affirm the existence of only one procession, God has another procession in himself because Christ speaks of the Spirit of truth, the Counselor, who proceeds and is given. In sum, "there are two processions in God: the procession of the Word, and another."[413]

The divine processions remain in God. For Aquinas, "the word *procession* exposes two meanings: in its common usage it refers as much to the origin of the Son as the Holy Spirit, and it also has a restricted sense which exclusively relates to the Holy Spirit."[414] The intellect and the will are two distinct actions that (1) remain within the agent and (2) are used to describe the procession of the Word and another procession—"that of love."[415] The procession of love acknowledges the object loved is within the lover.[416]

Article four further considers "the procession of love in God" by comparing the distinct second procession to the first, which is generation.[417] Aquinas cites

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[412] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 3 s.c. The two passages read: "When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me" (15:26), and "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" (14:16).

[413] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 3 co.

[414] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 52.

[415] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 3 co. 2. Ngien opines that Aquinas successfully "holds the two"—Anselm's essential approach and Richard's personalist approach—"in synthetical balance, affirming not only the Spirit as proceeding from the love of the Infinite Being for itself, but also as the mutual love of the Father and the Son for each other." Ngien cites Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Crossroads, 1984), 298; see Ngien, *Apologetic for* Filioque *in Medieval Theology*, xii.

[416] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 3 co. 2. Aquinas replies to the objections with three points: (1) the processions terminate in the procession of the will, (2) a procession communicates the entire divine essence, and (3) the distinct processions of the will and the intellect are ordered. Emery lists three elements at stake in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession *a patre* and *a filio*. "(1) The defence of the faith against heresies"; (2) "Christ's dignity and prerogatives"; and "(3) The concrete Son-shapedness of salvation." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 269–72.

[417] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 4. Orthodox Trinitarian theology disagrees with the three objections that suggest the procession of love is identical to the procession of generation: processions in God are like in nature (generated); generation and love possess a similitude to that which it is from; and generation is the common name for all processions in God.

Athanasius, contending that the Holy Spirit proceeds as love and not as begotten.[418] In God, the second procession—that of love—is not univocal to the procession of generation because of the distinct *ratio* behind the generation of the Word and Love. [419]

Again relying on psychological analogies, the procession of the will is made actual by a similitude to an impulse and a movement toward an object.[420] The inclination of the will toward the object of the will (to perform an action) is like the procession in God by way of love that impels and moves;[421] thus, the Holy Spirit proceeds in God by way of love. Emery elaborates on Aquinas's analogous illustration of the love-procession: "The beloved being is present in the loving will . . . in a dynamic mode, like a vital movement, a weight of love entraining the will toward the beloved being."[422] The beloved's presence in the lover "displays the modality of an interior weight of love ('what impels and moves') which arises in the will when it loves something (when it is activated)."[423] Utilizing the example of fire, Aquinas "indicate[s] a dynamic mode of presence, under the form of an 'impression' (impression) of the beloved, which moves or

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[418] Aquinas cites "the statement of Athanasius" in Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 4 s.c., which does not have a citation and may refer to the Athanasian Creed: "The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor begotten, but proceeding" (*Spiritus Sanctus a patre et filio non factus nec creatus nec genitus, sed procedens*).

[419] Richard A. Muller defines "*ratio*":

> *reason*, indicating (1) the human rational faculty: (2) the mental capacity for reasoning; (3) a motive, premise, or ground of argument; (4) principles and axioms that are either self-evident or gathered by good and necessary conclusions from self-evident principles; or (5) a theory or structure of knowledge. *Ratio*, accordingly, can be variously translated as reason, motive, account, basis, ground, plan, schema, or theory. (Richard A. Muller, *DLGTT*, s.v. "ratio" [p. 305])

The *ratio* that distinguishes the Holy Spirit's actions and operations from the Son's is based on each persons' respective relation of origin.

[420] Aquinas distinguishes the procession of generation from the procession of love through the intellect and will within the agent, respectively: "In evidence whereof we must consider that the intellect and the will differ in this respect, that the intellect is made actual by the object understood residing according to its own likeness in the intellect; whereas the will is made actual, not by any similitude of the object willed within it, but by its having a certain inclination to the thing willed." Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 4 co. 1.

[421] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 4 co. 2.

[422] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 66.

[423] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 66.

inclines the will towards the beloved being (affection, attraction, impulsion)."[424] Succinctly, "the one whom I love is present to my will as inclining me towards [them]."[425] This is Aquinas's original conception of love.[426]

Aquinas provides three responses to the objections: (1) all that exists within God is God (cf. q. 3, aa. 3, 4), including God's processions, despite the processions' different proper names; (2) the principle of loving is the word's likeness of the object understood; and (3) the procession of the Holy Spirit can be called spiration, even though this second procession does not have a special name.[427] Elsewhere, Aquinas opines, "We do not find, in the created world, a subsistent reality which proceeds by way of love, as the Holy Spirit proceeds"; thus, the second procession cannot be given "a proper name, but only a common name."[428] Emery summarizes three beneficial points from Aquinas's investigation of what love is: (1) "[T]he emanation of a reality which proceeds from the will and remains immanent within it (. . . an analogue for understanding the Holy Spirit's relation of origin); (2) the existence of a procession distinct from that of the word . . . ; (3) the procession of a term which is consubstantial to its principle."[429] Aquinas successfully offers a coherent metaphysical explanation for the Holy Spirit's procession of the will as the mode of love, which remains within God's essence and really distinguishes him from the Father and the Son.[430]

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[424] Emery cites Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* IV.19 (no. 3560); cf. *ST* I.37 art. 1; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 67.

[425] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 67.

[426] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 67.

[427] In *quaestio* 28, Aquinas clarifies the existence of two pairs of opposed relations in God: paternity-filiation and spiration-procession. Technically speaking, "procession," also called passive spiration, is the Holy Spirit's relation with respect to the Father and the Son. Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.28 art. 4; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 100.

[428] Emery cites Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 13 q. 1 art. 3 ad. 2; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 52.

[429] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 68–69.

[430] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 69.

The fifth and final article in question 27 circles back to focus on the first objection in article four: "Whether there are more than two processions in God?"[431] It may seem as though power and goodness are processions, and God's fecundity grounds more processions in addition to word and love.[432] However, Aquinas argues that only two processions exist, and he explains this by considering the Son and the Holy Spirit's unique modes of subsistence. In his psychological model whereby the nature is intellectual (albeit, divine), the intellect and the will are the only distinct acts that remain within the agent. Aquinas cannot logically deduce more than two distinctions;[433] thus, the only possible processions in God are the procession of the Word and of Love. He ends with responses to the objections: power is the principle that externally acts on another; goodness belongs to the essence, which the two processions of Word and Love conceptually include; and the one perfect Word and one perfect Love is in God, not "a procession of Word from Word, nor of Love from Love."[434] In sum, two distinct processions exist in God—no more, no less.

The Son's Eternal Relation to the Holy Spirit (ST I, Q. 36, Aa. 2–4)

Turning to *quaestio* 36, Aquinas considers the nature of the person of the Holy Spirit.[435] In article two, Aquinas inquires, "Whether that divine person who is called the

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[431] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 5.

[432] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 5 s.c.

[433] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 5 co.

[434] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 5 ad. 3.

[435] Aquinas addresses my interest in the nature of the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son in articles two to four. I will walk through the three articles to underscore the Father and Son's respective roles.

In article one, Emery distills two arguments for the name "Spirit" from congruity introduced by the *Summa Theologiae*. First, Aquinas follows Augustine: as a "community" name, the Holy Spirit draws two terms together. The Third Person is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; considered absolutely, both Father and Son are holy and spirit. As such, "the Holy Spirit is given a title common to the two persons whose communion he is." Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.5.37 (Hill, 429). Second, Aquinas defines the "proper meaning of Spirit. 'In the physical world, the name *spirit* suggests a sort of impulse or motion: one actually gives the name *spirit* to breath and to wind. And it belongs to love to move and push the

Holy Spirit, proceeds from the Father and the Son?"[436] In response to objections, Aquinas invokes Athanasius's statement, "The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son; not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding."[437]

Aquinas continues in response, avering, "It must be said that the Holy Spirit is from the Son."[438] The divine persons are distinguished relationally, not absolutely.[439] Aquinas uses the idea of opposed relations in relation to the Father in which two exists, one with respect to the Son and another to the Holy Spirit.[440] To distinguish the Son and Holy Spirit from each other, the Father and the Son must be in an opposed relation to the Holy Spirit. The two opposed relations prevent, so to speak, collapsing the Second and Third Persons into one person, "But this is heretical since it destroys the Faith in the

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lover's will towards that which he loves." Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 1; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 224.

Emery proceeds by considering two arguments for the name "Holy." First, the name Holy refers "to purity or detachment from things which are unworthy of a spiritual love." Emery cites Thomas Aquinas, I *Sent*. d. 10 q. 1 art. 4 ad. 4. Second, Holy carries "the contiguous idea of consecration to God, and affinity with God." Emery cites Aquinas, *SCG* IV.19 (no. 3568); *ST* I.36 art. 1; *In Ioan.* 14.26 (no. 1955). Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 224. In the end, after considering the relations between the three persons who subsist in God's singular essence, the Third Person is properly named "Holy Spirit."

[436] Objections to the Holy Spirit's procession from the Son follow: (1) John 15:26 does not name the Son; (2) the council of Constantinople's creed does not include the Son in the article about the Holy Spirit's procession; (3) the Holy Spirit may be from the Son but distinct from an affirmation of a procession from the Son; (4) the Holy Spirit rests in or abides in the Son rather than proceeding from him; (5) in human beings, breath does not proceed from a word; (6) "the Holy Spirit perfectly proceeds from the Father"; (7) the Holy Spirit does not need to proceed *a Filio* to be really distinct from the Son.

[437] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 s.c.

[438] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 1.

[439] All absolute distinctions are common to the three persons. Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 1.

[440] This logic seems to uphold the Father's monarchy, a dogma that the historical church concerns herself with upholding. White calls the Father the "fontal principle." White, *The Trinity*, 483. Aquinas's two opposed relations are ordered. In the second, "the Father spirates the Holy Spirit . . . as one who is always already constituted by his paternity. . . . Moreover, the Son himself s always already receiving from the Father all that the Father is[,] . . . and so he has from the Father the power of being one principle of the Holy Spirit together with the Father." White, 484; cf. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 293.

Trinity."[441] "In Thomas' Latin Theology," the Trinitarian persons exist in unity, though not in conflation, through the doctrine of "the Holy Spirit's procession *a Filio*."[442]

In Aquinas's model of the Trinity, if a divine person has a relation of origin (cf. q. 28, art. 4), then a principle exists—between the two persons, the Father and the Son, there is an opposed relation where the Father is the principle of the Son, and the Son's relation of origin is the Father. Aquinas believes these two opposed relations eternally distinguish the persons and thus the two ordered processions, "the Son by way of the intellect as Word, and the Holy Spirit by way of the will as Love."[443] The divine processions form the basis for the only way to distinguish the three persons' "personal property," which expresses "the opposed relations of origin that constitute the persons."[444] A mental conception precedes love (cf. q. 27, art. 2; art. 4; q. 28 art. 4); thus, "the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son."[445] If the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son, "a material distinction [exists]; which is impossible."[446] Since the Son is included in the Holy Spirit's relation of origin, Aquinas "concludes that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son."[447]

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[441] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 2. Emery asks about the Eastern distinction between the Second and Third Persons: "[A]re not the two modes of generation and procession enough to distinguish them from one another?" Emery gives Aquinas's answer: the Son and Holy Spirit's respective relation of origin "are not distinct within the divine nature which they communicate, but within the purview of the relations they involve, that is, within relationship to a principle." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 286. Aquinas views the Holy Spirit's procession *a Patre* and *a Filio* as a necessity to "safeguarding the Spirit's distinctness from the Son, that is, the Spirit's own personality."

[442] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 289.

[443] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 4. Aquinas reasons that anything that proceeds from a source must be ordered, as we note in the created, natural world. Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 5.

[444] Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 124, citing the Council of Florence, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, *Nicaea I to Lateran V*, ed. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 570–71.

[445] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 4.

[446] *Per imposible*, if the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, the Son would necessarily need to proceed from the Holy Spirit; the relation of origin and opposition relations distinguish the Son and the Holy Spirit.

[447] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 6.

In article three, Aquinas inquires, "Whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son?" He considers four objections to the concept of "through" the Son. (1) The notion of "through" introduces non-immediacy or temporality between the persons.[448] (2) The Holy Spirit "proceeds more from the Father than from the Son."[449] (3) Logically, "through" makes the procession not eternal.[450] (4) "Through" is a two-way street, so to speak; but the Son does not "spirate the Holy Spirit through the Father."[451]

Yet, contrary to his objectors, Aquinas cites Hilary: "[T]he Holy Spirit . . . is through Thy Only Begotten."[452] Aquinas discerns that the "preposition through points out . . . some cause or principle of" an act in which one acts through another.[453] Regarding the cause in "through," Aquinas likens the Holy Spirit's procession to "the cause of the action regarded as terminated in the thing done."[454] As an example, Aquinas pictures an artisan who acts by using a mallet and a bailiff working on behalf of the king's authority—the mallet and the bailiff illustrate the nature of through-ness in which "the Son receives from the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him (the Son)."[455]

Aquinas offers four replies to the objections. (1) The Father's power to spirate the Holy Spirit "is one and the same power" in which the Son spirates the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father immediately and from the Son mediately.[456] (2) Although the "Holy Spirit proceeds principally or properly from the Father," "the same

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[448] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 1.

[449] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 2.

[450] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 3.

[451] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 4.

[452] Aquinas cites Hilary, *De Trinitate* 12. Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 s.c.

[453] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 co.

[454] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 co.

[455] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 co. 1–2.

[456] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 1.

spirative power belongs to the Father and to the Son; and therefore the Holy Spirit proceeds equally from both."[457] (3) A person who proceeds from their principle is co-eternal with their principle: "[T]he procession of the Holy Spirit is co-eternal with His principle," the Son and the Father.[458] (4) Returning to his illustrations of the mallet and bailiff, Aquinas proves it is not necessarily the case that a person who works through someone means the converse proposition is true.[459]

Aquinas utilizes the *per Filium* formula to underscore the Son *qua hypostasis* and his relation of origin as from the Father.[460] Furthermore, on the Holy Spirit's procession *through* the Son in article three, Emery points to the ancient feature of *per Filium*, as opposed to *a Filio*, in Latin Trinitarian theology, going back to Tertullian: "The Spirit comes in no other way than from the Father through the Son (*a Patre per Filium*)."[461] The two expressions of the Holy Spirit's procession are not interchangeable but are informative for the nature of the Holy Spirit's single originating principle. The former emphasizes the two distinct persons in active spiration: "Since the operation comes from one single principle alone," there necessarily exists something singular in the Father and the Son "which will be the principle of that action which is spiration," a numerically singular and simple act "by which the . . . person of the Holy Spirit

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[457] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 2. Emery deduces that Aquinas follows Augustine and Albert in utilizing the formula "the Holy Spirit proceeds *principally* from the Father." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 291. Here, principally "accentuates the Son's origin-relation in respect of the Father, an origin in virtue of which the Son receives his breathing of the Holy Spirit from the Father."

[458] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 3.

[459] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3 ad. 4.

[460] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 290. Emery adds, "The shared Love of Father and Son also sheds light on this plurality" of the persons—two distinct *hypostases*, together as the supposita—who each spirate the Holy Spirit.

[461] Emery cites Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 4.1; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 291.

proceeds."[462] The latter emphasizes Father and Son's unified notional act of spiration: "Since therefore the Son has it from the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him, one can say that 'the Father breathes the Holy Spirit through the Son', or, what accounts to the same thing, 'The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.'"[463] Given Emery's clarification, Aquinas brings *a Filio* and *per Filium* together, for the expressions are not interchangeable—the former is not strictly Western while the latter is strictly Eastern—but complementary; together, the formulas explain the Holy Spirit's procession.[464]

In the fourth and final article,[465] Aquinas asks, "Whether the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Spirit?"[466] Contrary to the objections, Aquinas cites Augustine: "The Father and the Son are not two principles, but one principle of the Holy Spirit."[467] Again, Aquinas underscores the nature of the Father's relation with the Son.

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[462] Emery cites Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 11 q. 1 art. 2; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 290.

[463] Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 3; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 291. Thomas G. Weinandy observes weaknesses of the Eastern and Western traditions: "[T]he Greek focus on the Spirit's proceeding from the Father 'through the Son' (Lat. *per filium*) and the Latin emphasis on the Spirit's proceeding from the Father 'and the Son' (Lat. *filioque*)." In his estimation, the problem is that both "tend to portray the third person in passive terms and thus are inadequate to ascribe the Spirit a more active personhood." Thomas G. Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 6–9.

[464] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 291. Aquinas surmises, "[I]f we take careful note of the statements of the Greeks . . . we shall find that they differ from us more in word than in meaning." Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 10 art. 5. See Emery's interpretation of Aquinas's position of Byzantine theologians' rejection of the procession of the Holy Spirit *a Filio* in Emery, 294–97.

[465] Emery delineates Aquinas's two-aspect argument in explaining the nature of the Holy Spirit's procession. The first aspect is "the 'condition' of the agent[:] . . . the Father and the Son are taken in relation to their plurality as persons." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 290. The second aspect is the principle of the agent's action: "Under this second aspect, the Father and the Son are one single principle (*unum principium*) of the Holy Spirit" (292). Aquinas explores the "second aspect," per Emery, in article 4.

[466] He lists the objections: (1) The Father and the Son's oneness in nature does not necessarily entail one principle, and the Father and the Son cannot have one property that belongs to each of the two subjects. (2) The Father and the Son are not identical persons. Also, the Father cannot have two properties or be two principles because he is one subject. (3) The Holy Spirit is not the principle of the Son. (4) The Father loses his personal distinction from the other persons. (5) The Holy Spirit's principle is not identical to the Father or the Son *qua* divine persons. (6) The Father and the Son are not the same principle of the Holy Spirit. (7) The Father and the Son are each Spirators of the Holy Spirit.

[467] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 s.c.

The Son has everything the Father has except the Father's notional act.[468] Moreover, in relation to the Holy Spirit, an opposed relation does not exist between the Father and the Son;[469] as such, "the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Spirit."[470] A singular principle necessarily "signifies a property . . . after the manner of a substantive";[471] a principle "takes its number from the form it signifies, like other substantives."[472] With respect to the Trinitarian persons, "by reason of the unity of the form," the unified property, "that is signified by" the word principle, the Father and the Son are "one principle of the Holy Spirit."[473]

Aquinas replies to the objections. (1) The Father and the Son are two distinct "supposita that possess one common nature" with the common property, spirative power.[474] (2) The Father possesses several properties, but this does not necessarily entail that the Father is "several principles, for this would imply in Him a plurality of subjects."[475] (3) The appropriate place, so to speak, to "speak of similitude or dissimilitude in God" is "by reason of the essence" rather than persons' "relative properties."[476] (4) A principle does not have a "determinate supposition but rather it

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[468] The Holy Spirit's procession constitutes the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person, but this eternal relation "does not [formally] constitute the Father and the Son." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 293. "Nonetheless," Emery writes, "the spiration of the Spirit is present in paternity and filiation."

[469] See axiom eight in chapter 5 on Polanus's clarification that "only opposed relations" sufficiently ground one's ability "to make the distinction" and "relations that are not opposed do not distinguish." Polanus, *Axiom* 8. The Father-Son dyad and FatherSon-Holy Spirit dyad are two pairs of opposed relations that logically prevent us from collapsing the Son and Holy Spirit into one person.

[470] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 co. 2.

[471] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 co. 2.

[472] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 co. 2.

[473] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 co. 2.

[474] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 1. Emery suggests that Aquinas's understanding of the Father and the Son's shared Love "also sheds light on this plurality." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 290.

[475] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 2.

[476] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 3.

stands indeterminately for two persons together."[477] (5) Technically, principle is not synonymous with person.[478] (6) Metaphysically, nothing prevents the Father and the Son from being two divine persons, which they are, and yet the "same principle."[479] (7) The substantive word "Spirator" derives its number from itself. Since the Father and the Son are distinct supposita, there are two spirating, but they are "not two spirators by reason of the one spiration."[480]

Emery explains the Holy Spirit's single principle from the perspective of the principle and term. The Holy Spirit's procession *a Filio* does not conflate the Father and the Son—the First and Second Persons remain distinct persons as they spirate the Holy Spirit together.[481] In addition, their single, common act or notion of active spiration "does not divide the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit does not have a dual origin."[482] The Father and the Son's "principle of action," their notional power, "is numerically one and identical in the Father and . . . the Son."[483] As such, the First and Second Persons are "one single 'Spirator' (*unus Spirator*)."[484]

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[477] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 4.

[478] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 5.

[479] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 6.

[480] Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 4 ad. 7.

[481] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 289.

[482] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 289.

[483] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 292.

[484] Emery comments that Aquinas "fine-tunes" ideas that Augustine passes down the tradition, which "excludes [1] any kind of duality of principles . . . and [2] every 'division' within the Holy Spirit." Emery cites Augustine, *De Trinitate* 5.15.15; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 292.

The Circular Movement of the Holy Spirit's Procession

Aquinas uniquely solidifies an idea of God's circular movement in the divine inner life.[485] Within a Thomistic framework of the Trinity, a necessary and eternal *taxis* of the divine persons is built into the definition of the divine processions. Considering all three persons, God's eternal processions are the dynamic of God's ordered inner life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[486]

More specifically, he considers the Holy Spirit's existence within God's dynamic, circular life. Aquinas posits: "In the coming forth [*exitus*] from the first principle there is a certain circulation [*circulatio*] or circling back [*regiratio*], such that everything returns to that from which it proceeded as a principle, as if returning to its end."[487] In light of God's divine processions, "the procession of the persons is the *ratio* of the production of creatures from the first principle, so also the same procession is the *ratio* of returning unto the end, because just as we were created through the Son and the Holy Spirit, likewise we also are joined [through them] to our ultimate end."[488] The *reditus* is patterned after the *exitus*.

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[485] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 13. Through his theological contribution, the doctrine of Holy Spirit's eternal procession receives fuller development.

[486] The three divine persons' "distinct, incommunicable personal properties . . . *are* God's self-existence. . . . In this perfect circle of paternity, filiation[,] and spiration, God is who he is." John Webster, *God without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *God and the Works of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016), 20.

[487] Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 14 q. 2 art. 2, cited in Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 12. See Legge's discussion of *exitus* and *reditus* in Aquinas, which is developed from a Neoplatonic conception and is a part of the common Dionysian heritage that Thomas received from his master, Albert the Great (and that he shares with St. Bonaventure). Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 12–14. Legge cites Gilles Emery, *La Trinité créatrice: Trinité et création dans les commentaries aux Sentences de Thomas d'Aquin et de ses précurseurs Albert le Grand et Bonaventure* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1995), 487–88.

[488] Legge cites Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 14 q. 2 art. 2. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 12.

The Holy Spirit's *exitus* and *reditus* do not diminish his divinity.[489] The Holy Spirit is the Third Person in God's circular life. Several notable advantages exist for advocating a strict definition of God's *taxis*. The *taxis* provides a language for understanding how each divine person subsists—according to their mode of being—without transgressing the doctrine of inseparable operations. The Holy Spirit always acts from the Father and the Son because he is the divine person eternally from his origin, the Father and Son. As the Third Person, the Holy Spirit is the term of the movement of *exitus*: all of God's acts are principled from the Father, move through the Son, and terminate in the Holy Spirit.[490] Yet all of God's *opera ad extra* are one and undivided. Consequently, the circular movement of *reditus* follows a reversal of the *exitus*, starting in the Holy Spirit, moving through the Son, and terminating in the Father, the initial source. Moreover, the *taxis* offers a blueprint for the divine missions (proper to divine persons) and appropriating the triune God's acts of salvation (common operations) to specific persons.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit's Eternal Procession in Reformed Theology

My representatives of Reformed theology are two theologians and a collection of dogmatic statements, the *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*. This section bridges the gap from the medieval period as it offers Protestant sensitivities to the doctrine.[491] I will focus on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession in John Calvin's *Institutes of the*

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[489] The divine persons are not distinguished by absolute properties. Like his orthodox predecessors, Aquinas understands God's singular *ousia* does not leave room for ontological rank when considering the divine persons, even when we speak of their eternal *taxis*. For this reason, the only real distinctions in God are posited relationally between the divine persons, who are each subsisting relations.

[490] Vidu coins this movement as "terminus2." See Vidu's categorization of terminus in two senses; Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, 167–71.

[491] This is not to imply that Protestants have a different position on the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Roman Catholic tradition. However, the Protestant tradition, generally speaking, will develop the doctrine in a different direction. To offer two examples, Protestants hesitate to embrace the theological notion of (1) naming the Third Person "Love" and (2) identifying the Holy Spirit's procession as by way of the will.

Christian Religion, the *Leiden Synopsis*, and Petrus van Mastricht's *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, respectively.[492]

John Calvin (AD 1509–1564)

The Protestant Reformers such as John Calvin examines "afresh the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."[493] According to Paul Helm, Calvin's discussion on God distinguishes between God in himself and as he reveals himself to creatures.[494] Calvin upholds orthodox monotheism and the doctrines of divine simplicity and Trinitarian persons by defining distinction and division. The term "distinction" allows Calvin to affirm that the Holy Spirit is the tongues of fire at Pentecost, while the Father and Son are not; yet, as the tongues of fire, the Holy Spirit is necessarily related to the First and Second Persons.[495] On the contrary, "division" would not apply to the persons' intra-Trinitarian relations: the Holy Spirit is not divided from the Father or the Son "since each is wholly and necessarily God."[496] Calvin defends the divinity of the Trinitarian persons; the Holy Spirit "is *autotheos*, God himself."[497]

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[492] I include the *Leiden Synosis* and Mastricht to represent the Reformed tradition because these works have been recently translated into English and deserve interaction. In addition, Polanus is an important figure in this period; thus, I devote chapter 5 to interpreting Polanus's eighteen axioms on the Trinity, focusing on the Holy Spirit's procession.

[493] Joel R. Beeke, "The Holy Spirit," in *John Calvin: For a New Reformation*, ed. Derek W. H. Thomas and John W. Tweeddale (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 369.

[494] Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 35. Helm quotes from John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics 20–21 (London: S. C. M. Press, 1960).

[495] Helm's example highlights the Son's incarnation; I apply the logic to focus on the Holy Spirit. See Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 35.

[496] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 35.

[497] Helm cites Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13.20; 1.13.23; see Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 43.

As for the importance of the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy, Calvin affirms the doctrine.[498] Technically, Calvin uses *et Filio*, which corresponds to *Filioque*.[499] In his understanding of the Trinity, the doctrine of the *Filioque* preserves the Son's full deity.[500] In eternally spirating the Holy Spirit, Calvin recognizes "the Son has the entire, full divine essence or substance."[501] If the Son spirates the Holy Spirit with the Father, then the Son is not subordinate to the Father.

Averse to any teaching that subordinates the divine persons, Calvin critiques language that "casts a shadow over the true, full deity of the [third] . . . person and so compromises his aseity."[502] The Trinitarian persons' order cannot mean that any "person has a derived or subordinate divine nature."[503] Calvin's theology retains God's unity of essence, keeps a reasoned order of the Trinitarian persons, and affirms the Holy Spirit's deity.[504] Moreover, he connects God's inner life to God as he reveals himself to creatures. Consider the Third Person: eternally as the third in order, "a natural economic order of equality, then, flows from the Trinity. This order coincides with revelatory and redeeming activity,"[505]—specifically, the human mind's contemplation of God's "power

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[498] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 45; cf. Pugliese, "How Important Is the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy?," 166.

[499] Pugliese cites Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13.18 (Battles, 1:143); see Pugliese, "How Important Is the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy?," 166n45.

[500] Pugliese, "How Important Is the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy?," 173.

[501] Pugliese cites Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13.23 (Battles, 1:150–51); see Pugliese, "How Important Is the *Filioque* for Reformed Orthodoxy?," 173.

[502] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 45.

[503] In the original, the subject is the Second Person. Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 43.

[504] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 43; cf. Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13.20.

[505] Beeke, "The Holy Spirit," 372.

whereby he executes the decrees of his plan,"[506]—enabling us to contemplate . . . the Spirit as the third person."[507] Calvin upholds the Holy Spirit's full deity as God.

Helm judges that, in identifying and excluding heretical teaching, such as subordinationism, Calvin permits and occasionally requires extra-biblical language.[508] However, Calvin hesitates to endorse the ideas of analogical models for the Trinity.[509] The Third *Hypostasis*'s name "Holy Spirit" does not clearly reveal his relation to the first and second *hypostases*; "Calvin has less to say about the procession of the Spirit."[510] Joel Beeke offers a similar reading of Calvin's writings on "the ontological Trinity."[511] So Calvin: "In the one essence of God there is a trinity of persons; you will say in one word what Scripture states, and cut short empty talkativeness."[512]

Synopsis of a Purer Theology (AD 1620–1625)

Between 1620 and 1625, four professors at Leiden University create the *Leiden Synopsis*.[513] This compilation of disputations documents Reformed teaching in the

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[506] Beeke cites Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13.18 (Battles 1:143); see Beeke, "The Holy Spirit," 373.

[507] Beeke, "The Holy Spirit," 372–73.

[508] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 40.

[509] Helm cites a passage from Calvin (*Institutes* 1.13.18), who alludes to "Augustine's analogies in *On the Trinity*." Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 40.

[510] Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 45.

[511] Beeke, "The Holy Spirit," 373.

[512] Beeke cites Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13.5; see Beeke, "The Holy Spirit," 373.

[513] "Popularly known as 'the Leiden Synopsis,'" this work collects Reformed scholastic teaching from The University of Leiden's department of theology. William den Boer and Riemer A. Faber, eds., introduction to *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, vol. 1, *Disputations 1–31*, trans. Riemer A. Faber (Landrum, SC: Davenant Press, 2023), vii–viii.

On the *Synopsis*'s background, Boer and Faber explain, "[I]t gives a full compact summary of theology as it was understood in the years after the Synod of Dort, which was held in 1618 and 1619." Den Boer and Faber, introduction to *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, vii. The four professors—Antonius Thysius (1565–1640), Johannes Polyander (1568–1646), Andreas Rivetus (1572–1651), and Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639)—use the Leiden Synopsis "as an educational textbook in the decades following the Synod" (viii–ix).

seventeenth century.[514] Disputation 9 focuses "On the Person of the Holy Spirit," outlining "the orthodox doctrine."[515]

From our creaturely understanding of "spirit," we analogically transfer a relative meaning to signify the divine Third Person's "relation to the God who breathes."[516] Scripture describes how he "proceeds by means of inexpressible spiration from God the Father and the Son effortlessly and from eternity."[517] As a really distinct person from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is *homoousios* with the Father and the Son,[518] "joined to them through a unity and sharing of essence."[519] The Holy Spirit's eternal procession is within God's essence.[520]

The Holy Spirit's order as third (Matt 28:19) cannot refer to "a difference in nature or a disparity in majesty."[521] Instead, he is third "by the order of subsistence."[522] As the divine person eternally from the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit receives, participates, and shares in the entire, singular divine essence.[523] The Holy Spirit's unique

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[514] Den Boer and Faber, introduction to *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, vii. Methodologically, the theological faculty "define . . . their Christian doctrine" in this "compendium of Reformed theology" by engaging with "the church fathers, various medieval doctores, and especially the Reformers and post-Reformation theologians" and by contrasting "alternative or opposite views." Willem J. van Asselt, William den Boer, and Riemer A. Faber, introduction to *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae/Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 1, *Disputations 1–23*, trans. Riemer A. Faber, ed. Dolf te Velde, Willem J. van Asselt, and William den Boer, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 187 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 3.

[515] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.28 (den Boer and Faber, 94).

[516] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.2–3 (den Boer and Faber, 88).

[517] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.4 (den Boer and Faber, 88). The *Leiden Synopsis* offers biblical references: the Old Testament calls the Third Person "the Spirit of God (Gen 1:2; 1 Cor 2:11)," "the Spirit of the Lord (Isa 61:1)," "the breath of the Almighty (Job 33:4)," and "Holy Spirit (Isa 63:10)."

[518] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.22 (den Boer and Faber, 93).

[519] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.4; cf. 9.6 (den Boer and Faber, 88).

[520] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.10 (den Boer and Faber, 90). The notional act "should be taken according to God's act directed toward the inside."

[521] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.7 (den Boer and Faber, 89).

[522] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.7 (den Boer and Faber, 89).

[523] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.8 (den Boer and Faber, 89).

mode of subsistence distinguishes him from his origin.[524] Spiration and procession describe the way in which the Holy Spirit emanates and "go[es] forth in a proper sense, namely, from someone who" breathes.[525] "Going forth" (cf. John 15:26), or procession, is the Third Person's personal property.[526]

Procession is distinct from generation. The former "refers to a mouth by which the interior strength of a soul presents itself. Accordingly, he is also called 'the Spirit of the mouth and lips of God' (Ps 33:6; Isa 11:4)."[527] The two different words, generation and procession, conceptualize and sufficiently indicate the distinct production of the Holy Spirit from the Son.[528] Following the Western tradition, the *Leiden Synopsis* emphasizes that, while "the Son is only from the Father, . . . the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son jointly."[529] The document offers theological and biblical support for why the Western view necessarily requires doctrinal confession.

The three theological reasons for the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son follow. (1) A procession from the Father and the Son preserves God's unity.[530] (2) A double procession logically upholds the Trinitarian persons' order. With a

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[524] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.9 (den Boer and Faber, 89).

[525] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.9 (den Boer and Faber, 89). No temporal element exists in the Father's breathing the Holy Spirit, even if we linguistically use the past tense to describe this procession, "breathed" and "spirated." Disputation 9.8 (den Boer and Faber, 89).

[526] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.11 (den Boer and Faber, 90).

[527] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.13 (den Boer and Faber, 90). That is, "the breath of his mouth" (Ps 33:6) and "breath of his lips" (Isa 11:4 ESV).

[528] Disputation 9 states this in response to the notion that the Holy Spirit proceeds by means of the will, of love, . . . of power." *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.14 (den Boer and Faber, 90–91).

[529] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.15 (den Boer and Faber, 91). The authors suggest settling the Greek and Latin controversy by recognizing the Son's role as the one "through" whom the Holy Spirit proceeds. When the Greeks affirm "that the Father spirates the Holy Spirit through the Son, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son . . . it is shown that He comes from both; and the mode of subsistence is shown, too." Disputation 9.19 (den Boer and Faber, 92).

[530] Stated negatively, "[I]f the spiration of the Father is considered without the spiration of the Son, it will be necessary to place the Son's essence apart from the Father's." *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.16 (den Boer and Faber, 91).

single procession, "the Holy Spirit would no longer be the third person"; instead, he would have the same position "in an order" and rank "equal to the Son, and, as it were, placed over against Him."[531] (3) The Son's spiration of the Holy Spirit maintains "the relation and relatedness . . . between the Son and the Holy Spirit."[532]

The disputation includes at least three biblical reasons for confessing this doctrine. (1) The Holy Spirit is "of the Father (Matt 10:20)," "of the Son (in Galatians 4:6)," "of the Son of God and of Christ (Rom 8:9)," "and of Jesus Christ and of the Lord (Phil 1:19; 1 Pet 1:11)."[533] Scripture identifies the Third Person as "of" the Father and the Son because he eternally is from both. (2) Christ relays to his disciples that the Paraclete will teach them what the Paraclete receives from the Father and the Son (John 16:14–15).[534] The Son eternally communicates to the Holy Spirit what the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples; the eternal procession will manifest temporally.[535] (3) The Father and Son both "send," "give," and "pour out" the Holy Spirit.[536] Scripture testifies that the Holy Spirit is "in God, from God, and of God, that He is God."[537]

As the Third Person eternally from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit's origin and order ground his temporal, divine missions.[538] The Holy Spirit's eternal origin, eternal relational mode, and eternal order as third informs the *ratio* for his acts and

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[531] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.16 (den Boer and Faber, 91).

[532] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.16 (den Boer and Faber, 91). The authors of the disputation demand to see this relatedness.

[533] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.17 (den Boer and Faber, 91). Our latest English versions render the verses differently, i.e., "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:19) and "the Spirit of Christ" (1 Pet 1:11).

[534] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.17 (den Boer and Faber, 91).

[535] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.17 (den Boer and Faber, 91).

[536] For example, in John 20:22, "Christ bestowed the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles by the act of breathing." *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.18 (den Boer and Faber, 91).

[537] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.28 (den Boer and Faber, 94).

[538] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.18 (den Boer and Faber, 92).

operations in creation.[539] As the Third *Hypostasis* who "has everything from the Father and the Son . . . so too does He render everything to the Father through the Son."[540]

Petrus van Mastricht
(AD 1630–1706)

Petrus van Mastricht covers the doctrine of God the Holy Spirit in *Theoretical-Practical Theology*.[541] Question one asks, "Is the Holy Spirit a person?" After addressing heretical views with Scripture and reason,[542] Mastricht ends question one by moving

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[539] The Holy Spirit's procession "in time" may be considered secondary acts, which are not separate operations. *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.12 (den Boer and Faber, 90).

[540] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, Disputation 9.20 (den Boer and Faber, 92).

[541] I focus narrowly on the Holy Spirit's procession. See chapter 27 in Mastricht (pp. 567–92) for the larger discussion on the doctrine of the person of the Holy Spirit. Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, vol. 2, *Faith in the Triune God*, trans. Todd M. Rester, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Michael T. Spangler (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 576–85 (hereafter cited "*TPT*").

Mastricht opens this chapter with brief introductory and transitory remarks, suggesting that he aims to contemplate the divine person who is third in reference to the order, mode of subsisting (from Father and Son) and mode of operating (from Father and Son). Subsequently, he separates the remainder of the chapter into four main parts, and the four parts are the exegetical, dogmatic, elenctic, and practical. I will focus on the elenctic part.

His methodology is to discuss these four parts to prove his initial, opening statements and give reason for the Holy Spirit's "economic office the consummation of things." Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:567. In the parts that I will not cover in my project, Mastricht underscores the Holy Spirit's order as third, which has implications on his order of action. The manner in which the Holy Spirit relates to Father and Son in the divine life of God gives reason for the Holy Spirit's operation *ad extra*. Mastricht grounds this logic in John 14:26; he spends this chapter with an acute concentration on these words of "our Savior." Under this part, Mastricht addresses five questions pertaining to this doctrine. He raises the questions by providing the background discussion of which readers may or may not be aware. Then, he lays out a sequence of allegations and responses, allowing him to attend to disputes with precision.

[542] The proponents of a heretical view are the Pneumatomachi (the Macedonians) and the Englishman John Biddle; they surmised the Holy Spirit is a created person. Proponents of another heretical view, the Socinians, did not believe that the Holy Spirit is a person but a created medium between the Creator and creature. Valentinus Smalcius was a proponent of this view. Mastricht cites Smalcius's *Refutatio disputationis de Spirit Sancto, quae hoc anno in academia Jenensi habita est, praeside Alberto Gravero*. Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:577.

Against these two views, the Reformed believe the Holy Spirit "is a true person," and Mastricht offers his response from Scripture and reason. He also favorably points to "the celebrated" work of Johannes Hoornbeeck in *Socinianism Confounded*. Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:577. Hoornbeeck is a Dutch Reformed theologian whose polemical writings critique Socinianism. For scriptural support, he cites §V, "That the Holy Spirit is a person." In reference to reason, he provides four factors. In sum, Mastricht appeals to the logical necessity to affirm that the Holy Spirit is a person, and he bases his arguments on his biblical exegesis.

through "objections against the personality of the Holy Spirit." His back-and-forth style names and refutes the objections as he repeatedly states, "I respond."[543]

Question two asks, "Is the Holy Spirit a divine person, from eternity consubstantial with the Father?" The proponents of this heretical view are Tritheists and Peratae.[544] Specifically, Mastricht identifies four relevant opposing positions. (1) Valentine Gentile acknowledges the Holy Spirit is God but does not affirm consubstantiality with the Father. (2) Jewish people in general think the Holy Spirit is God's force. (3) Macedonius believes the Holy Spirit is "the prince of the created angels." (4) John Biddle, the father of English Socinianism, a heretic, and contemporary to Mastricht,[545] "alleges that the Holy Spirit differs from God as his spirit."[546] Mastricht spends the remainder of question two's introduction responding to Biddle's arguments in four points.[547] Mastricht contends that the Holy Spirit is a distinct divine person, but his essence is not distinct from the Father's essence.[548]

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[543] There are seven in total. First, the Holy Spirit's personal characteristics are personification. He responds: the Holy Spirit "has all personal characteristics" and it would be proper to speak of a person in this manner. Second, Scripture attributes that which is not normally proper to persons. He responds: this figural attribution is not unique to the Holy Spirit. Third, the Holy Spirit is not always numbered along with Father and Son in the Bible. He responds: the Holy Spirit is conjoined to the other two persons and at times, the Bible names two persons and not the third. Fourth, the act of willing is attributed to the wind. He responds: the Holy Spirit wills by the intellect. Fifth, operations can be attributed to accidents, and not necessarily to persons. He responds: even if it were the case that operations are attributed to accidents, not all personal characteristics are attributed to an operation. But Mastricht believes that all personal characteristics are attributed to the Holy Spirit. Sixth, the Holy Spirit is called the power through which God works. He responds: the Holy Spirit is not an accidental power; "rather, he is God's personal or economic power, because the Father consummates the ad extra works through the Son and the Holy Spirit" (he cites §X of his chapter for support). Seventh, the Bible calls the Holy Spirit "breath," and compares him to wind and fire. He responds: this biblical comparison teaches God's people about the Holy Spirit's personal procession and his economic operation. Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:577–78.

[544] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:579.

[545] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:579.

[546] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:580.

[547] Biddle's twelve arguments were originally presented in John Biddle, *Vindiciae pro deitate Spiritus Santi adversus pneumatomachum Johannem Bidellum Anglum*, in *Opera omnia*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Gerardus Borstius, 1684), 2:451–97, and Mastricht apparently relies on Johannes Cloppenburg's *Vindication of the Deity* of the Holy Spirit against Biddle, to respond directly to Biddle's errors. Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:579n16.

[548] Second, Jehovah alone gave the Holy Spirit (Neh 9:6; 9:20). He responds: Jehovah is none other than the tri-personed God who is one (Deut 6:6). Objections three to twelve do not name heretical

Question three asks, "Does the worship of the Holy Spirit have any basis in Scripture?"[549] Mastricht lists two proponents on the opposing side: (1) the Socinians "deny the eternal deity of the Holy Spirit," and (2) the Remonstrant Apologists do not find scriptural warrant for worshipping the Holy Spirit.[550] From his Reformed perspective, Mastricht disagrees and acknowledges others who prove that the Holy Spirit ought to be worshipped based on Scripture.[551]

Question four asks, "Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father and the Son?"[552] Mastricht immediately mentions a difference of opinions on the debate, that is, whether the Holy Spirit has a single or double procession. He first acknowledges Weigel's idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father in the Old Testament and then proceeds from both the Father and the Son in the New Testament. Next, and more pertinent to historical discussions within theological orthodoxy, Mastricht provides

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proponents. Third, God speaks from himself, but John 16:13 says otherwise. He responds: speaking from oneself in reference to John 16:13 means that the Holy Spirit "does not subsist from himself, but from the Father and the Son." Fourth, John 16:13 also says that the Holy Spirit hears and therefore is taught from another. Mastricht responds: hearing is another indication of a divine person's order of subsistence and operation *in se*. Fifth, John 16:14 states that the Holy Spirit receives from another because he is dependent. Mastricht responds: this verse teaches about the Holy Spirit's manner of subsisting in God's one divine essence, and the Holy Spirit. Sixth, the Holy Spirit is sent because he serves God. Mastricht responds: sending a divine person is not equivocal to a sent creature. Seventh, the Holy Spirit is the gift that God gives but is not himself the giver. He responds: the covenant of grace helps us appropriately understand that persons can be given. Eighth, the Holy Spirit changes location. Mastricht responds: the Holy Spirit is immutable and accommodated creaturely language is analogical. Ninth, the Holy Spirit "prays for Christ to come in judgment." Mastricht responds: this language is accommodated because the Holy Spirit does not formally pray in himself. Tenth, Acts 19:2 seems to say that those who were baptized were unaware of the Holy Spirit's existence. He responds: the distinction is between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and his existence. Eleventh, the Holy Spirit's intellect is distinct from God's intellect. Mastricht responds by pointing to the answers in objections three and four. Twelfth, the Holy Spirit's will is distinct from God's will. He responds by referencing objection nine and adds, "the Holy Spirit causes believers to pray" in a manner that is fitting to God's one will. Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:580.

[549] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:581.

[550] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:581.

[551] He cites Hoornbeeck, *Socinianismus confutatus*, 1:447–51; Alting, *Theologia elenctica nova*, 187–91; see Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:582n18. Mastricht acknowledges that, numerically speaking, the passages of Scripture which instruct human beings to worship the Holy Spirit is less than in comparison to the Father and Son. However, the office of the Holy Spirit helps account for this difference: "[B]y office [the Holy Spirit] is rather the cause of worship in us than its terminus (Rom 8:15, 26; Gal 4:6)." Mastricht, 2:581.

[552] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:582.

background information concerning the Greek and Latin churches. He judges that both sides sinned in the historic debate.[553] Nevertheless, he argues that Scripture ("a dogma consistent with the Scriptures") and tradition ("the more ancient Fathers of the church") teach the Latin formula of the Holy Spirit's procession "from the Father and the Son eternally, as from one principle and by a single spiration."[554]

He offers six biblically supported reasons why the Reformed agrees with the Latins. (1) Scripture calls the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20) and the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19). Accordingly, just as he is the Spirit of the Father by procession (1 Cor. 2:11), so he is the Spirit of the Son by the same procession."[555] (2) Mastricht parallels the Spirit as "of the mouth of the Lord Jesus (2 Thess. 2:8)" with "the Spirit of the mouth of the Father [Ps 33:6]."[556] (3) The Holy Spirit, the water of life (Isa 44:3; John 7:38; Ezek 36:25–26), "proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 22:1)."[557] (4) The Son and the Father send the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; John 15:26; 16:27), the Father sends Holy Spirit in the Son's name (John 14:26), and the Son sends the Holy Spirit from the Father (John 15:26).[558] Taken together, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son "in a similar way."[559] (5) In John 16:14–15, the language of reception conveys the meaning of "from eternity" through a

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[553] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:582–83. In the objections section of question 4, Mastricht mentions Basil, Theophylact, John of Damascus, and Cardinal Basilios Bessarion in the Council of Florence, who may be referenced by the Greeks to say "that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son." Mastricht is content with this language insofar as the Trinitarian persons are all accounted. However, to Mastricht, the "from" and "through" language ought to affirm the Holy Spirit's one procession is from both Father and Son, that is, active spiration. Mastricht, 2:584.

[554] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:582–283.

[555] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583. Mastricht does not offer an exegetical explanation for choosing this verse in support of the Holy Spirit's procession. By my estimation, he identifies the Spirit of God existing within God, and God's Spirit and God's thoughts are distinct yet remains in God.

[556] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

[557] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

[558] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

[559] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

procession.[560] The Holy Spirit eternally receives what the Son has through an eternal procession from the Son (and Father). (6) The Holy Spirit's mediate procession from the Father distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the Son, who proceeds immediately from the Father *via* generation.[561] The doctrine of the Father and the Son's singular act of spiration of the Holy Spirit preserves the Trinitarian order of subsisting and operation.[562]

Conclusion

The church fathers labored to develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. The doctrine preserves two notions: the divine essence is unified, singular, and indivisible, and each of the eternal three persons is identical to the divine substance. The Holy Spirit's eternal procession from his origin, Father and Son, uniquely distinguishes him as the Third Person who is equal in divinity to his principle.

I focused on tracing the Latin West's theological development of the doctrine in the medieval era and into the Reformed orthodox. With devotion to accurate biblical interpretation, the church doctors through the centuries took turns affirming the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son and equally God with the Father and Son. The doctrine's precision reaches a uniquely clear metaphysical apex under the genius and care of Aquinas, who further develops Augustine's ideas of the Trinity. In his magisterial corpus, *The Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas coherently elucidates the intricate ways to describe the Holy Spirit's divinity and eternal relation of origin. The Holy Spirit's principle of individualization describes how the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son and equally God with the Father and Son.

Through a historical survey of the doctrine's theological development, I contended that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from and is equal in divinity to his

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[560] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

[561] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

[562] Mastricht, *TPT*, 2:583.

single principle (the Father and the Son), as stated in the third article of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381) with the addition of the *Filioque* from the Third Synod of Toledo (AD 589). I traced this thesis in four parts: first, I surveyed theologians' writings from the ancient East; second, I considered theologians' writings from the ancient West, focusing on Augustine's understanding of the doctrine; third, the writing from the medieval period offered significant clarity on the doctrine, and I gave substantial attention to Aquinas's teaching; fourth, I highlighted work in the Reformed tradition.

For the Latin church, the idea of the Holy Spirit proceeding "through" the Son necessarily means the Son, with the Father, is the Holy Spirit's single principle. The Father and Son exist in an opposed relation with the Holy Spirit—spiration and procession—and this distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the Son, who is from the Father only. Together, the Father and Son actively spirate the Holy Spirit in God, whereby the Son receives from the Father in his eternal generation his spiration of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

THE THIRD DIVINE PERSON'S ETERNAL PROCESSION AND PROPER NAME "LOVE" IN JOHN 14–17

The Farewell Discourse (John 13:1–17:26)[1] contains the Paraclete passages.[2] Traditionally, these texts identify the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from his principle, the Father and the Son. In preparing Christ's apostles for his departure, Christ speaks of the Paraclete's subsequent presence.[3] The Holy Spirit is this Paraclete.[4] The apostles anticipate the Holy Spirit's divine mission following Christ's ascension whereby the Holy Spirit will be a terminus in God and be present in a new mode to God's people.[5]

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[1] In his outline of the Farewell Discourse, Edward Klink labels John 13:1–30 as the introduction, John 13:31–38 as the prologue, John 14:1–16:24 as the discourse proper, John 16:25–33 as the epilogue, and John 17:1–26 as the conclusion. Edward W. Klink III, *John*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2016), 574.

[2] Cf. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PTNC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 480; Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 73.

[3] On "paraclete," Allison and Köstenberger note that the Greek term "does not occur in the LXX and is found elsewhere in the NT only at 1 John 2:1, which describes Jesus as believers' 'advocate' with God the Father." Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 72–73.

[4] The word Paraclete "is the verbal adjective of [παρακαλέω], lit. 'to call alongside,' and hence 'to encourage,' 'to exhort'. . . . In secular Greek, [παράκλητος] primarily means 'legal assistant, advocate' *i.e.* someone who helps another in court, whether as an advocate, a witness, or a representative." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 499.

The CSB translates παράκλητος as Counselor, while the ESV uses Helper. I will follow Klink's method of transliterating the word as Paraclete because "the term has a general meaning that overlaps with several potential meanings," such as Comforter, Helper, and Advocate, "and almost certainly encapsulates many of those meanings simultaneously, even if certain contexts tend to emphasize one meaning over another." Klink, *John*, 632. By employing the transliterated word, Klink avoids "limiting or muting aspects of the identity and multifaceted function of the Paraclete that are core to . . . (his) identity."

[5] A personal divine mission, both visible and invisible, requires several components: a procession and a created effect from the perspective of creatures (and does not constitute a real change in God). Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 1–2. The three divine persons subsist in the one substance, and each person is distinct from the other persons by virtue of a relation of origin or a personal mode of subsistence, which is the first missional ingredient. Consequently, the Holy Spirit's mission is not independent of the Father or Son because the procession in God is an element of a person's mission. The second component is a created effect, a divine person's new mode of existing in creation. The created effect must be in creation only; for God, his new mode of existence is not real since real changes cannot exist in God. This dynamic

Based on the Holy Spirit's eternal procession and temporal mission, a tradition arose of naming the Holy Spirit "Love."[6] The Holy Spirit is the Love of God for he is the communion of Love between Father and Son.[7] Love is personally and uniquely given by

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between the Creator and the creature is called a mixed relation, and I will focus on developing the idea of mixed relations in chapter 6. For creatures, the personal mission of a divine person is truly made present in a new way, according to a created effect. Dominic Legge summarizes Aquinas's teaching concerning the created effect of a divine mission in general with four elements:

> (1) Something "new" in the creature, (2) through which the divine person sent "begins to be in a creature," in person, in a new mode, (3) "according to a new relation" between the person sent and the creature, which is "really in" the creature and by which the creature uniquely "is referred to" that one divine person "as a terminus," and (4) this is efficiently caused by all three persons as a single principle of the created effect. (Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017], 23)

For points two to four, Legge cites Thomas Aquinas, *Contra errores Graecorum* I, c. 14; I *Sent*. d. 15 q. 3 art. 1 ad. 3; and I *Sent*. d. 30 q. 1 art. 2, respectively. N.B.: According to Aristotle's metaphysical theory, the soul is the form of human beings' body. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, trans. J. A. Smith, ed. Richard McKeon, Modern Library Classics (1941, repr., New York: Random House, 2001), 2.1.412b5–6 (McKeon, 555); 2.1.412a20–21 (McKeon, 555); 2.1.412a27–28 (McKeon, 555); cf. *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, vol. 1, *Disputations 1–31*, ed. William den Boer and Riemer A. Faber, trans. Riemer A. Faber (Landrum, SC: Davenant Press, 2023), Disputation 15.22 (den Boer and Faber, 149). I assume this metaphysic and, due to my project's limitation of space, I am unable to argue for this philosophical view. In sum, a mission is proper to a divine person and terminates on that divine person, and God manifests an effect in creation. I will focus on the Holy Spirit's visible missions surrounding the incarnation in chapter 4.

[6] Cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.5.28 (Hill, 422); Aquinas, *ST* I.37 art. 1. As "Holy Spirit" is a proper name of the Third Person, "Love" is a proper name as well. By Aquinas's estimation, "Gift" is the third proper name for the Third Person. This chapter focuses on the name "Love" since this theological argument is contested within my evangelical circle, whereas "Gift" receives wider acceptance.

[7] Gilles Emery notes Peter Lombard's work (cf. Peter Lombard, *Sentences* I, d. 10–18, 31–32) in drawing together "the numerous themes and diverse names" for the Holy Spirit, and the medieval Augustinian tradition focuses "on three particular aspects: Holy Spirit, Love, and Gift." These three names reveal the Spirit's personal property and economic action. Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 219–20.

However, despite the venerable tradition of "Love" and "Gift" as personal names for the Third Person, some Protestant theologians show reluctance to affirm these proper names. Francis Turretin, for example, states that it is wiser to speak of difficult matters (such as the eternal processions) in other ways: "I know that the Scholastics wish to derive this difference from the operation of the intellect (*modum intellectus*)—hence he is called the Wisdom of God; but procession by way of the will (*modum voluntatis*)—hence he is called Love and Charity. But as this is unsupported by Scripture, so it entangles rather than explains the thing." Turretin poses the lack of scriptural support for this naming. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George M. Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 309.

Similarly, Herman Bavinck hesitates to affirm the processions by way of intellect and will, which grounds the naming of divine persons in scholasticism. He discovers that

> [t]his distinction had its background in the tradition of comparing "generation" with thought and utterance and speaking of the Holy Spirit as the love that unites the Father and the Son. In medieval and Catholic theology this distinction became virtually universal. Though Protestant theologians did assume a distinction between "generation" and "spiration"—like the distinction between "Son" and "Spirit"—and also in part acknowledged the correctness of the above distinctions, they were less inclined to speak with this degree of certainty and boldness and considered this distinction insufficiently scriptural and modest. (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 314)

Without an explicit biblical warrant, Turretin and Bavinck are reluctant to call the Third *Hypostasis* "Love."

the Father and Son to the church, and Love shapes the church according to his personal property: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

While Scripture does not explicitly state that Love is a proper name for the Holy Spirit, I believe John's Gospel supplies textual warrant for making a theological argument. The divine mission testifies to how the Holy Spirit subsists in God's divine life. The Love that Father and Son mutually share is the Love that God spirates and shares with all Christians whom God brings into the covenant community.[8] The church militant and triumphant share in God's personal Love whom they receive for the purpose of uniting them to God and other believers.

In this chapter, I will argue for the validity of the church's traditional practice of naming the Third Person "Love" because the Farewell Discourse describes the Holy Spirit's eternal relation to the Father and Son (as the passively spirated, mutual bond between Father and Son) and consequently explains why the Holy Spirit brings people into God's regenerate assembly and creates Christian unity. I will defend my thesis in three parts: (1) a survey of the Paraclete passages in John's Gospel for exegetical and theological support; (2) an overview of Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas's logic

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Richard A. Muller summarizes that orthodoxy following the Protestant Reformation in general seems to be reserved in the theological development of processions, posing the medieval's theological treatment as highly speculative:

> The usual unwillingness of the Protestant scholastics to enter into a lengthy discussion of the way in which the emanations of the second and third persons of the Trinity differ represents *a rather significant example of the difference between medieval and Protestant scholasticism*: the Protestants revert to the caveat of Gregory of Nazianzen against excessive inquiry into the mystery and emulate the Reformers in their somewhat reserved acceptance of the tradition without further explanation. The extensive and frequently cogent speculation of the medieval doctors concerning the relation of the emanations to the divine nature, intellect, and will (itself an extension of the Augustinian metaphors) is simply ignored by most of the Reformed orthodox. (Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, vol. 4, *The Triunity of God* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003], 376 [emphasis added])

It could be the case that the evangelical tradition, which finds its roots in the Reformed tradition, inherited a reluctancy to distinguish the processions in God using psychological analogies (Son *per modum intellectus* and Holy Spirit *per modum voluntatis*), thereby withholding theological support for "Love" as a proper name for the Holy Spirit.

[8] To speak more precisely, I do not mean to imply that the third Divine Person is a divine attribute (i.e., love) as such. I leave aside the types of distinctions (i.e., real and rational) for the time being.

for Love as a proper name; and (3) a theological argument for naming the Holy Spirit "Love" based on John 17, underscoring how Love disposes Christians and elevates their nature so that they participate in God's life.

An Exegetical Survey and Theological Assessment of the Five Paraclete Passages in John's Gospel

John's Gospel has five Paraclete passages: 14:16–17; 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:7–11; and 16:12–15.[9] Christ promises to send the Paraclete to his disciples—those whom he loves. The temporally sent Holy Spirit will help and encourage Christ's followers.[10] This first part of the chapter aims to accomplish two goals: (1) I summarize Edward Klink's excursus of the Paraclete figure from *John*;[11] (2) I survey the five texts that underscore the Paraclete's operations, dividing each text's discussion into two sections: an exegetical explanation and a theological interpretation.

"Another Paraclete"

Christ will send another Paraclete, who is the Holy Spirit. Klink provides three general functions of the Paraclete and two reasons for believing that a close relation exists between Christ and the Paraclete. Methodologically, I work out a definition for the title Paraclete as my first goal so that I can argue that the Paraclete (14:16) is the Holy Spirit and focus on the nature of his activity in the remainder of the chapter.

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[9] Carson asserts that there are five because he separates 16:7–11 and 16:12–15. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 480. In Klink's outline, he seems to combine vv. 7–11 and vv. 12–15 into one Paraclete passage since they fall under the same pericope in Klink's outline. Klink, *John*, 671. I will follow Carson's numeration.

[10] According to Adonis Vidu, the Son and Holy Spirit are individually sent to Christians in their respective invisible missions. See Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), chap. 3 ("The Invisible Missions"). The Son's invisible mission is by way of the intellect, and the Holy Spirit's divine mission is by way of charity. This chapter focuses only on the latter, though it should not be perceived that the Son's mission is non-existent or unimportant.

[11] See Klink's excursus in Klink, *John*, 571–75.

In the Farewell Discourse, the Paraclete has three general functions. (1) "[T]he Paraclete is still to come."[12] (2) "[T]he Paraclete has a special relationship to the disciples."[13] (3) "[T]he Paraclete has a unique role in the world to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment."[14] I will expand on the three functions throughout this chapter.

Pertinent to this discussion is the identity of the Paraclete and the relational dynamic between Christ and the Paraclete. After noting three functions of the Paraclete, Klink suggests two reasons for believing that Christ and the Paraclete closely relate to each other: (1) there are "the functional parallels," and (2) Christ verbally qualifies "the Paraclete is 'another Paraclete.'"[15] Klink opines, "The adjective 'another' . . . signifies 'another of the same kind' . . . . The implication is that Jesus was also a Paraclete, just a different Paraclete than the Spirit."[16] Klink seems point out distinctions: (1) a distinction exists between the divine persons (Son and Holy Spirit), and (2) another distinction exists between a divine person and the divine essence. The Trinitarian persons are really distinct from each other and "another of the same kind"—the Holy Spirit is another divine person in the divine essence (he is not the Father nor Son).[17] We can interpret the "adjectival qualification"[18] through a Trinitarian lens.

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[12] Klink, *John*, 633.

[13] Klink, *John*, 633.

[14] Klink, *John*, 633.

[15] Klink, *John*, 634.

[16] Klink, *John*, 634.

[17] See Amandus Polanus's definitions of *aliud* and *alius* in chapter 5 for a fuller explanation of this theological point. Amandus Polanus, "Eighteen Axioms on the Trinity," in *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*, bk. 3, trans. Ryan M. Hurd, https://scriptoriumdaily.com/axioms-on-the-trinity/. Weighing in on the debate on whether the "John's Spirit" is a power or person, Craig Keener interprets the evidence to support the latter. Keener clarifies, "given the possible Christian antecedents to a personalized Spirit and particularly the parallels with the personal work of Jesus, the case should weigh in favor of a personal Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel despite the weakness of earlier Jewish evidence supporting this view." Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 963.

[18] Klink, *John*, 634.

The title Paraclete applies to Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paraclete "expresses the intimate presence of God with his people."[19] Stated differently, "the title 'Paraclete' refers to the ministerial office of the Trinitarian God in the world, occupied by both the Son of God and the Spirit of God."[20] In the following section, we will see that Christ names the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete.

The First Paraclete Passage:
John 14:16–17

In John 14, Christ prepares his apostles for his imminent departure. He tells them to have courage and to believe that, as surely as the Son will return to the Father to prepare a place for his followers, so will the Son return to bring his disciples to the Father's house.[21] When Philip asks to see the Father (v. 8), Christ informs Philip that Philip has already seen the Father. Minimally, the apostles ought to consider the Son's work on earth and deduce that God causes these works (v. 11). Moreover, Christ connects belief in God and the result of belief (vv. 12–17). Following the Son's return to the Father, the apostles' belief in the Son will result in even greater works (v. 12). After the Son leaves, the apostles benefit in two new ways: the Son's followers will be able to pray in the Son's name and to the Father directly through the Son (vv. 13–14). This is the context leading up to our text.

Klink translates the first Paraclete passage: "And I will ask the Father and he will give to you another Paraclete in order that he will be with you forever. The Spirit of truth, which the world is not able to receive, because it does not see or know him. You know him, because he remains beside you and is in you" (vv. 16–17).

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[19] Klink, *John*, 634.

[20] Klink, *John*, 635.

[21] The only way for the apostles to go to the Father is through the Son's way (14:1–6). The Son is the path to the Father (v. 6), and knowing the incarnate Son is knowing the Father (v. 7) who sends him. The visible mission of the Son—Christ's incarnation—is God's revelation of the Son's eternal procession, that is, of generation.

D. A. Carson explains the two links between verse 15 to what follows and precedes, respectively. The first link is this: "(1) The prospect of doing greater things anticipates the need for enabling power, the manifestation of God himself by his Spirit. This verse is moving the discussion toward vv. 16–17."[22] The second link is this: "The obedience theme is of a piece with asking for things in Jesus's name (vv. 13–14)."[23] A theme of perpetual disobedience exists in the old covenant. Despite God's faithful pursuit of his people by upholding his end of the covenant, Israel never perfectly reciprocates love to God. In verse 15, Christ reveals God's continued expectation of the disciples' moral love for God.[24] After he departs, the disciples will have supernatural help to accomplish greater works (v. 12) and keep God's commands (v. 15). Christ promises to ask the Father to give the disciples "another Paraclete" such that his departure will not remove the Father's presence in the disciples' lives. The Father will send the Paraclete upon Christ's request because the disciples require "divine assistance."[25] The Paraclete will bring God's presence to the disciples.

The disciples will receive the Spirit of truth (v. 17; cf. 15:26; 16:13). Two possible interpretations follow: an objective genitive ("the Spirit who communicates truth")[26] or an attributive genitive ("the Spirit characterized by truth").[27] However one interprets this genitive construction, what matters to this present discussion is the

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[22] Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 498.

[23] Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 498.

[24] Klink, *John*, 631.

[25] Klink, *John*, 631.

[26] Klink, *John*, 635.

[27] Klink believes this likely is an objective genitive. Klink, *John*, 635n21, citing C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 463; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII–XXI*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 639. Klink adds, "Since objective genitives usually require a verbal head noun, it could also be an attributive genitive." Klink, 635n21, citing Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 86–88, 116–19.

meaning of "truth," a noun in the genitive case. Christ reveals himself as the truth (14:6), and Christ's disciples have seen the "glory as the unique Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14; cf. 1:17).[28] In John 4, Christ closely associates the Spirit and truth. Both nouns characterize true worshippers of the Father (v. 23) and "must be taken together to make sense of the phrase."[29] Thus, truth in 14:16 "speaks of the reality of God now accessed *through* Christ and *in* the Spirit."[30] In John's Gospel, the Spirit of truth "is involved in each" aspect of "the concept of truth."[31] Upon the Son's request to the Father, the Paraclete who communicates truth concerning the Father's only Son will be sent to the disciples. This other Paraclete who possesses truth remains present in the disciples' lives.[32] While the world will "not see or know" the Spirit who is connected to God's truth, the disciples "know him" (v. 17).[33] The Paraclete brings God's truth and presence to Christ's followers through indwelling them.[34]

A Theological Interpretation

I note three theological points based on the textual explanation of the first Paraclete passage. The points concern the doctrines of the Trinity and eternal procession of the Holy Spirit because these loci are relevant to my project.

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[28] Klink's translation in Klink, *John*, 83.

[29] Klink, *John*, 245.

[30] Klink, *John*, 635.

[31] See Allison and Köstenberger's list for "several aspects" of truth in John and the Holy Spirit's involvement with each aspect. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 75.

[32] Klink notes that "the prepositional phrase 'beside you' . . . is equivalent to 'with you' . . . in v. 16. The propositions are not to be played off each other but to be understood to be speaking with their own overlapping perspectives regarding the real presence of the Paraclete . . . [in relation to] the believer." Klink, *John*, 636.

[33] "The terms 'see' and 'know,'" Klink explains, "are not to be distinguished; they are referring to the experience of knowing and relating to God, the Spirit." Klink, *John*, 636, citing Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 373–75.

[34] Klink offers, "The last prepositional phrase, 'in you[,]' . . . emphasizes the agency of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Using language and agency, Jesus highlights the indwelling nature of the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete." Klink, *John*, 636.

First, the unity of the divine essence explains the relational dynamic between the Father, the incarnate Son, and the Paraclete. Philip has seen the Father in Christ because of God's unity of the divine essence (v. 9).[35] The incarnate Son has and is identical to the divine essence, and this divine nature is identical to the Father's essence. Also, Christ comforts the disciples by promising a persistent mutuality between God and the disciples.[36] The Paraclete whom the Father gives "[befits] the perfect union between the Son's desire and the Father's will."[37] God has one divine will: the Father will affirmatively answer the Son's request to send the Paraclete because the Son's will and the Father's will—to send the Paraclete—are identical. In addition, the triune God outwardly demonstrates the nature of the unified essence and the divine persons' perichoretic relationship as the Son's work is understood as the Father's work (cf. vv. 10–11). When the Son is speaking, his words are the Father's (cf. v. 10).

Second, Israel fails to obey and love God because of human beings' fallen nature. However, through Christ's incarnation, God ushers in a new eschatological age. Under the new covenant inaugurated in Christ's blood, God pours the Paraclete or Spirit of truth onto the church so that God's people will faithfully love him. When the church faithfully keeps God's commands, she proves her love for God (v. 15).[38] The promised Spirit of truth is eternally spirated from the Father and Son and temporally marks Christians (v. 16). God's people will finally receive the capacity to love God with

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[35] Although the Trinitarian persons are really distinct, each person is identical to the divine essence. I will discuss the notion of God's numerically singular essence in chapter 5's discussion of Polanus's axiom 4. Furthermore, the Son and Father mutually indwell each other (John 14:10). I will discuss the notion of *perichoresis* in my discussion of Polanus's axiom 14.5 in chapter 5.

[36] Klink, *John*, 631.

[37] Klink, *John*, 631.

[38] Technically, Christians are still unable to perfectly love God because while their fallen human nature is redeemed, it requires a future perfecting. But under the new covenant, those in Christ are considered righteous because Christ functions as their federal head. God credits Christ's righteousness to the Christian's account.

circumcised hearts, a mark or a created effect of the second Paraclete's divine mission that characterizes genuine faith (v. 17).

Third, the Trinitarian persons' unified and ordered operations *ad extra* ought not to be missed: the Son is the truth (v. 6), and the Father sends the Son on a visible mission. The Father sends the Son, "Not because one is greater and the other is less, but because . . . the first is the one from whom the sent one is; the other is the one who is from the sender."[39] Following the Second Person's visible mission, the Father and Son will send the Third Person on his mission: "[The Son] will ask the Father, and [the Father] will give [the apostles] another [Paraclete] to be with [them] forever" (v. 16). Following Augustine's logic, the First and Second Persons send the Third because the Third proceeds as "one who is from the sender[s]" in God's triune life. This Paraclete "is the Spirit of truth," and his work is to make known the Son, who is the true revelation of God. Only Christians will receive, know, and be indwelled by the Spirit of truth (v. 17).

The Second Paraclete Passage:
John 14:26

The context of the second passage is Christ's continued preparation of his apostles for his imminent death. The world will no longer see him (v. 19); nevertheless, he will not leave them as orphans (v. 18) because Christ will conquer the grave and rise again to life in order for his followers to also have everlasting life (v. 19). Looking forward to the inauguration of the church and the new covenant, which have yet to be established at this point in the narrative, Christ's followers will have God's commands and be able to keep them (v. 21) in a way that was not previously possible. Then, the second Paraclete passage reads, "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and remind you of all the things that I said

[39] Augustine, *The Trinity* 4.5.27 (Hill, 179).

to you."[40] Following Klink's observation, I highlight three aspects concerning the person and work of the Paraclete in verse 26.[41]

First, the Father sends the Holy Spirit. John regularly describes the Father sending the Son;[42] here, we learn the Father will send the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's ministry to Christ's disciples upon his departure will be novel.[43] The Paraclete's new way of working will befit "the start of the newly inaugurated state of existence for the children of God."[44]

Second, the Father sends the Holy Spirit in Christ's name. The second Paraclete does not replace the first Paraclete; rather, he ministers to the disciples with continuity to Christ's work: "'In my name' locates the work of the Spirit within the largee work of Christ, just as the work of Christ is located within the larger mission of the Father."[45] One cannot isolate the Holy Spirit's work from the Son's incarnation since the Holy Spirit comes in Christ's name.

Third, the Holy Spirit teaches and reminds Christ's disciples of truth. Although the first Paraclete will no longer dwell among the disciples in his physical body, the second will come alongside them to assist them in their ministry. The Holy Spirit will enable the disciples to understand the truth about Christ. When the disciples need to recall the truth Christ taught them, the Holy Spirit will help them remember these lessons. Klink opines that "'teach' and 'remind' are best understood as synonyms. For the word (message) of the Word was not lacking but fully sufficient, so that the Spirit is not adding

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[40] Klink's translation; see Klink, *John*, 640.

[41] Klink, *John*, 640.

[42] Klink, *John*, 640.

[43] Klink, *John*, 640.

[44] Klink, *John*, 640.

[45] Klink, *John*, 640.

to the Word but emboldening it."[46] The Holy Spirit never teaches contrary to or to replace Christ's teaching.

A Theological Interpretation

I note two overarching theological points based on the textual explanation of the second Paraclete passage. The divine missions of the Son and Holy Spirit are relevant doctrinal loci in my project.

First, the Paraclete is a divine person. The second Paraclete passage builds on the information shared about the Holy Spirit in the first. In the first Paraclete passage, the neuter pronoun "it" follows the neuter antecedent "Spirit" in reference to the "other Paraclete" (masculine) that Christ will send (vv. 16–17).[47] The second Paraclete passage illuminates that "the 'other advocate' [(v. 16)]] takes on a definite identity, and with it a title, along with a job description."[48] Describing the Holy Spirit's personhood in verse 26, J. Ramsey Michaels contends, "The 'he' and the 'I' are both emphatic, framing the last clause. . . . The effect of the 'he' is to highlight the personality of 'the Advocate [or Paraclete],' corresponding to the personal 'I' who speaks."[49] Taken with John 14:15–16, the Paraclete behaves, so to speak, like a person—a divine person. His responsibility toward the disciples will emulate Christ's influence, such as teaching and reminding them of Christ's sayings.

Second, Christ's departure beckons the way for the Father and Son to send the Holy Spirit in his mission to the apostles (John 20:19–23) and, subsequently, to every believer (Acts 2:1–4). The Holy Spirit will teach and remind the apostles of all the truth

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[46] Klink, *John*, 640.

[47] J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 784.

[48] Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 791.

[49] Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 791.

the Son revealed (Heb 1:1–2). The apostles uniquely receive the Paraclete's help because God tasked the apostles to author Scripture (1 Pet 1:20) and set a foundation for the church (Eph 2:20). The triune God efficiently causes God's work *ad extra*, and this indivisible work can terminate on a divine person.[50] The Holy Spirit's appropriated work in the apostles is to "remind [them] of everything [the Son has] told [them]" (John 14:26).

In addition to the Holy Spirit's work in the apostles, subsequent disciples of Christ are the terminus of the Holy Spirit's invisible mission.[51] All Christians will receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, who "reveals to [the Christian] inwardly the mystery and hidden presence of the Holy Trinity."[52] The Holy Spirit is "[t]he principle of [the church's] love for God." The Holy Spirit teaches and reveals truth to Christians (v. 26), and he disposes Christians to love God. God's Spirit transforms the human will to reflect and image God in order for the church to love and obey the Father as the Son does (v. 31).

This is precisely how Aquinas interprets who the Holy Spirit is and what he does from John 14: "[T]he Holy Spirit is called consoler because he is formally love."[53] Notice the emphasis on love in Christians: God, by his love, convicts the world of sin and those whom he converts will receive the Holy Spirit, for the Paraclete or "consoler" formally causes Christians to love. Within the Christian dwells Love, who is the principle

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[50] Adonis Vidu coins this "terminus1." Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 167–68.

[51] Still, the Father and the Son are also said to dwell in the Christian: "[W]e will come to [the Christian] and make our home with [the Christian]" (14:23). Collectively, these verses teach that the triune God's presence is in the Christian. See Vidu's explanation of the Son and Holy Spirit's invisible missions to Christians. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 50–54. The Son and Holy Spirit's distinct invisible missions mediate the Father's presence to the Christian. Vidu, 51.

[52] Thomas J. White, *The Trinity: On the Nature and Mystery of the One God*, Thomistic Ressourcement 19 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 664–65.

[53] Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Chapters 13–21*, trans. Fabian Larcher and James A. Weisheipl (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press), 71. On the four Aristotelian causes and Aquinas's use of the formal cause with respect to the Holy Spirit's procession, see Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 24. When Aquinas refers to the Holy Spirit's procession as a formal cause, he does not imply that matter composes God or that what God is depends on matter. Cf. Vidu, 58–60.

for transforming the human subject to reciprocate God's love back to the fundamental source of love. God loves his redeemed people, and Christians have received God's Love, who "acts in the soul."[54] The fruit of this formal Love is the ability to love God, hear the Son's words—that is, the Father's words—and keep God's commands. Dominic Legge expounds on the notion of Love as a formal cause: "It is the created formal cause by which a human being is elevated and given to participate in a new and higher nature, the divine nature itself."[55] The Christian's participation[56] in God's divine nature through Love elevates the human nature, which begins at one's conversion and will be perfectly realized in glory. While on earth, God's people's elevated nature and obedience prove the existence of a created effect: the Father and Son's spirated Love giving charisms to Christians whom he indwells.

The Third Paraclete Passage:
John 15:26–27

The vine and branch metaphor leading to the third passage instructs our understanding of Christians' union with God (vv. 1–17). In verse 9, Christ encourages his disciples to remain in his love based on the Father's love for the Son, which the Son then shares with the disciples. Subsequently, the disciples should keep Christ's commands to remain in the love Christ extends to them. Their example of receiving and reciprocating love is Christ, who says, "just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love" (v. 10). The incarnate Son parallels his relationship with the Father and his followers with himself. Out of the disciples' love for God, they ought to seek to obey the

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[54] Aquinas, *ST* I–II.110 art. 2 ad. 1.

[55] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 27. This participation does not make the Christians into God, for "[c]reatures are not of the same species as God. They do not partake of the nature of God." White, *The Trinity*, 266.

[56] See Lewis Ayres's discussion on Aquinas's devotion to preserving the true distinctions between God and creation. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 323–24.

Father's instructions. The instruction is thus: "[L]ove one another just as I [Christ] have loved you. No one has a greater love than this: that a person lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you" (vv. 12–13). Christ counts his disciples as his friends because of their obedience to his command—a command which he heard from his Father and made known to them (vv. 14–15).

The disciples are no longer "from the world" (v. 19) because they love God. In contrast, the world hates Christ and the Father (v. 22; v. 24; cf. v. 18; v. 20). Although the world witnesses Christ's unique works (v. 24), the world does not know Christ and the Father who sent him (v. 21). The world has seen Christ and hates him and his Father (v. 24). Consequently, the world will also hate Christ's disciples (vv. 18–19) and persecute them (v. 20). This is the context of the third Paraclete passage.

Klink translates the text: "When the Paraclete comes, whom I send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who comes from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also will testify, because from the beginning you have been with me" (vv. 26–27).[57] In verse 26, John describes the movement, so to speak, of the Paraclete in two ways: (1) the one whom Christ sends "from the Father" and (2) the "one who comes from the Father." The definite article with the noun Paraclete implies "that the disciples have heard . . . [the term Paraclete] before, as indeed they have (see 14:16, 26)."[58] The promised Paraclete comes alongside the disciples to bolster them in light of their anticipated persecution, which Christ warned them about moments earlier. Christ will personally send the Paraclete—"whom I send to you"—a claim he did not previously make. In John 14:16 and 14:26, Christ says the Father will give and send the Paraclete, respectively. The disciples will testify about truth, which always comes from God,

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[57] Klink, *John*, 663.

[58] Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 824–25.

through the help of the Spirit who communicates truth or is characterized by truth.[59] The disciples will receive the Paraclete; through indwelling the disciples, the Paraclete will share the truth with which he closely associates. As the Spirit shares God's truth with Christ's disciples, the Paraclete empowers the disciples to live as truthful witnesses to Christ's work. Fundamentally, the Spirit of truth (cf. 14:17) testifies to Christ because, as Klink avers, "God is the primary and first-order witness to himself."[60] Christ's disciples participate in God's work of testifying to truth.

A Theological Interpretation

I note four theological points based on the textual explanation of the third Paraclete passage. The points concern relevant loci in my project: the doctrines of the Trinity, the eternal generation of the Son, and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.

First, Christ offers a metaphor in the verses leading to our main text. Although John does not explicitly mention the Holy Spirit in John 15:1–17 as he depicts the Son's relationship to the Father, I uphold the maxim, *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt individa*. My task queries how the Holy Spirit implicitly works alongside the Father and Son in the

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[59] Taking the genitive construction as an objective genitive, this can be understood as "the Spirit who communicates truth." Klink, *John*, 635. Alternatively, if one believes this is an attributive genitive, this can be interpreted as "the Spirit who is characterized by truth." Similar to my reading of John 14:17, either reading supports my point that the Holy Spirit closely associates with truth and thus shares truth with Christ's disciples.

In *Biblical Reasoning*, R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman note how "Scripture frequently uses genitive constructions, with or without a proposition, to name the Spirit in relation to another divine person (Matt. 10:20; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 2:11–12; Gal. 4:6). Whether they emphasize possession or origin, these genitive constructions all point to relations of 'from-ness' or origin." R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 191. The Spirit of truth is the Third Person, and "the name 'Holy Spirit' is used relatively [as] it refers the Spirit's existence to the Father and the Son to whom he belongs and from whom he originates. Hence, the Holy Spirit, like the Son, is both God and *from God*." Jamieson and Wittman cite and summarize Matthias Scheeben's findings: "[T]he Greek theologians tend . . . to emphasize the genitive of origin, the Latins the genitive of possession." Jamieson and Wittman, 191n35, citing Matthias J. Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *Doctrine About God, Or Theology in the Narrower Sense* (St. Paul: Emmaus Academic, 2021), 601.

[60] Klink, *John*, 668.

gardening illustration.[61] I reason that the Holy Spirit ontologically connects Christians (branches that remain and produce fruit) to God through the Son (vine). From a Reformed perspective, the doctrine of a saint's perseverance entails that the Christian is by nature a branch that will remain connected to the vine. At the moment of Christian conversion, the Holy Spirit irreversibly connects the branch to the vine. Moreover, through indwelling Christians, the Holy Spirit formally causes Christians to produce fruit that reflects the mode of procession that is present to them: love (vv. 4–5).[62]

Christians are regenerated human beings and compose the church. This union between the vine and branch uniquely characterizes the new covenant community. The Son is the true vine, the Father is the gardener, and the Holy Spirit is the way by which Christians (the branches) remain in the vine (vv. 1–2). Under the new covenant, true branches (Christians) remain in the vine because branches receive God's Spirit. Since Christians (branches) remain in the true vine (Christ), it logically follows that Christ's genuine disciples will inevitably remain in the vine and produce fruit. This glorifies the Father and gives evidence for the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence (v. 8).

Second, Christ sets an example for Christian obedience to God. John parallels the Father and Son's relationship to the Son and disciples' relationship. In God, the Father loves the Son; according to an Augustinian tradition of interpretation, the communion of love between the two persons is the Holy Spirit.[63] The Son obeys the

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[61] Different answers satisfactorily meet this requirement. I offer an answer in the main body. Another answer would be an affirmation that the triune God efficient causes all of God's work *ad extra*.

[62] Vidu expounds on Christians' reception of the Son and the Holy Spirit's invisible missions: "[W]e [Christians] receive a created participation in the personal properties of the Son and Spirit: we are thus formed according to knowledge and love. . . . [O]ur intellect and our volition receive the supernatural gifts that dispose them to enjoy the persons." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 66; cf. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 244. Christians receive and are shaped according to the Holy Spirit's personal property of love through his invisible mission.

[63] Cf. Augustine, *The Trinity* 6.1.7 (Hill, 210–11).

Father because the First Person is the Second Person's principle of origin.[64] As for the parallel, the mutual Love between Father and Son is communicated to Christ's followers—those who will remain in Christ's Love as they keep his commands. The disciples' obedience and ability to remain prove Love's divine mission (15:12–16).

However, this parallel between Father and Son to Son and Christians is not univocal: "The idea, rather, is that the ongoing relationship between Jesus and his disciples is characterized by obedience on their part, and thus is logically conditioned by it."[65] The Son loves his disciples, and the disciples respond by loving the Son and obeying him. Yet the love and obedience exemplified in Christ's relationship to the Father are not identical to the love and obedience the church demonstrates to Christ. In the first case, the church obeys the Son's commands to love one another because he is God and their Creator.[66] In the second case, a divine person's obedience to another reflects the existence of an eternal principle of origin.

Third, the Father and Son are the Holy Spirit's single principle in the divine essence.[67] According to a procession-mission schema,[68] the Father and Son send the Holy

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[64] Classical explanations exist for Christ's obedience to the Father. I highlight two; they are not mutually exclusive. First, the divine Son assumes a complete human nature. By virtue of the Son's human nature's will, he obeys. From an exegetical perspective, Jamieson and Wittman outline the practice of partitive exegesis in *Biblical Reasoning*, chap. 8 (pp. 153–78). Second, the Son's principle is the Father. According to an Augustinian rule of interpretation (cf. Augustine, *The Trinity* 2.1.3 [Hill, 99]), the Son "obeys" the Father in God's work *ad extra* because the Father is the Son's eternal relation of origin. A divine person obeys another divine person because "one is from the other" *in se*. Each *hypostasis* subsists in the divine essence in a mode proper to that person, and this mode of subsistence does not include an authoritative or submissive characteristic or a functional subordination of persons to other persons. A reason why the Father sends the Son in the incarnation is because the Father eternally generates the Son.

[65] Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 503.

[66] Carson seems to push the comparison further than appropriate. He suggests that the disciples "love and obey Jesus, and he loves them, in exactly the same way that [the Son] loves and obeys his Father, and the Father loves [the Son] (cf. 3:35; 5:20; 8:29; 14:31)." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 503. The phrase "in exactly the same way" may overstate the similitude between the Trinitarian persons' eternal relations and God and creatures.

[67] It would be inaccurate, according to classic Trinitarianism, to develop a person's role, whether demonstrating authority or submission, within God. When the Son says he has made known to his disciples everything he has heard from his Father, he is not implying the Father is ontologically greater than the Son, nor he is revealing an authority-submission relation of origin in God's divine life.

[68] I will discuss the "procession-mission schema" in detail in chapters 6 and 7.

Spirit in a divine mission, such as indwelling the disciples, because they eternally spirate the Holy Spirit (15:26). The Paraclete or Spirit of truth enables the disciples—those who "have been with Christ from the beginning" (15:27)—to testify of the truthfulness of Christ's teaching. Verse 26 is a key text for affirming the Holy Spirit's procession from a single principle, the Father and Son.

The Holy Spirit's single principle may be identified in two steps. (1) I interpret "the Spirit of truth, who comes from the Father" as the Third Person. The Father eternally spirates the Holy Spirit. In time, the Paraclete "proceeds from the Father" (15:26) in his divine mission to Christians because he eternally proceeds from the Father in the divine life. (2) In the Son's eternal generation, the Father gives the Son his (the Son's) spiration of the Holy Spirit. John's Gospel identifies the Son as truth (cf. 14:6–7).[69] By stating that the Paraclete is "the Spirit *of truth*" (emphasis added), Christ reveals the Son as the principle of the Holy Spirit along with the Father. The Father and Son are in an opposed relation with the Holy Spirit, which constitutes the Holy Spirit as a divine person.[70] Together, the Father and Son eternally breathe forth the Holy Spirit.

Another argument can be made for the Spirit's single principle from Father and Son in verse 26. When Christ states that he will send the Paraclete in time, he reveals that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son in eternity. Christ includes himself in the act of sending the Paraclete with the Father.[71] Fundamentally, Christ states that he will send the Paraclete *via* the divine missions because the Son eternally spirates the Paraclete. Christ will send the Paraclete "from the Father" because the Father is also the Holy Spirit's

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[69] Cf. Klink, *John*, 635–36.

[70] I will discuss the concept of opposed relations in chapter 5; see Polanus, *Axioms* 9; 10. Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.36 art. 2 co. 1.

[71] I note this point from Michaels's exposition. However, Michaels suggests that Christ's inclusion of himself in sending the Paraclete along with the Father who gives to sends the Paraclete "should not be exaggerated." Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 825. Michaels does not explicitly warn against the specific types of exaggerations to which he alludes.

principle of origin. Immediately after explaining how the Paraclete comes ("whom I will send to you from the Father"), Christ adds that the Spirit of truth comes from the Father. This additional description concerning the Paraclete is not redundant.[72] Christ underscores how the Spirit comes forth: verse 26 first emphasizes the Son sends the Spirit; then it also emphasizes the Father sends the Spirit. Taken together, the Father and Son, as a single principle, eternally breathe forth the Spirit in the blessed divine life.

Fourth, the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit to Christ's followers. The disciples receive the indwelling Holy Spirit after Pentecost, and the Paraclete strengthens them to author sacred Scripture, establish the church, and endure persecution. Subsequent followers of Christ receive the Paraclete's counsel and help as well.[73] While in the natural fallen state, human beings sin (15:22; 15:24) by hating Christ (15:18) and the Father (15:23). However, by grace, the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to testify to the truth of Christ's life and work (15:27).

Aquinas explains God's supernatural enablement by referencing the Holy Spirit as creatures' exemplar-efficient cause: "Love in person . . . 'imprints' his gift of charity 'in our hearts.' This imprint, a created effect, is the 'sign' of his presence."[74] Christians are granted "dynamic participation in his very procession as Love, so that we become lovers of God. This is our assimilation to the Holy Spirit and our movement into the Triune God who is our final end."[75] God's love in the divine life is communicated to his church. Thus, the church loves God and one another (15:17) through contingent

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[72] I am responding to Michaels's comment on Christ's redundancy. He writes, "[I[n the present instance Jesus 'sends' the Advocate explicitly 'from the Father,' and not content with that adds, redundantly, that this 'Spirit of truth . . . goes forth from the Father' (v. 26)." Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 825.

[73] However, the apostles' responsibility to author Scripture and establish the church uniquely belongs to them and not Christians as such.

[74] In discussing the way in which Trinitarian persons love creatures, Legge cites Aquinas, III *Sent.* d. 2 q. 2 art. 2 qla. 2 ad. 3. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 46.

[75] Legge cites Aquinas, III *Sent.* d. 2 q. 2 art. 2 qla. 2 ad. 3. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 46.

participation in Love's procession.[76] Love is the exemplar-efficient causality of Christians' love. The Spirit creates the capacity for creatures to reciprocate love back to God. This love toward God is always communicated in a creaturely way, dependent on the object of the Christian's love, which is distinct from how the Son loves the Father.

The Fourth Paraclete Passage:
John 16:7–11

Christ takes the opportunity to further describe the nature of his departure and fortify his apostles. Klink translates John 16:7–11:

> But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes he will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment; concerning sin because they do not believe in me, and concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you will no longer see me, and concerning judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged.[77]

When the disciples inevitably face persecution on account of their knowledge of the Father and his Son (v. 3), they will be kept from stumbling (v. 1). Christ informs the apostles of his departure from the disciples, return to the Father (v. 5) and the coming of the second Paraclete to the disciples (v. 7). Initially, this return directly benefits the apostles; later, the church benefits as well. After Christ goes away, he will send the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to the disciples.

Klink suggests that this final occurrence "of the 'Paraclete' in the Gospel . . . [is] the fullest and climatic depiction of his ministerial office."[78] Similar to the context of the third Paraclete passage, this fourth text links the Paraclete's work in light of the apostles' persecution (v, 2). Klink offers two clarifying points regarding the coming Paraclete (cf. v. 7). First, Christ's departure "is not his absence but the magnification of

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[76] White explains that Aquinas occasionally distinguishes between two types of efficient causes: univocal and equivocal (i.e., Aquinas, *ST* I.4 art. 2). Aquinas opts for the equivocal cause: God equivocally causes the church to love. White, *The Trinity*, 264.

[77] Klink, *John*, 677.

[78] Klink, *John*, 677.

his presence, for the Christian life by the Spirit involves . . . a new state of existence between the Trinitarian God and the believer."[79] Second, Christ's departure "becomes the promise and guarantee of his presence" through another Paraclete.[80] The Paraclete's indwelling presence in Christians exceeds the benefit of Christ's incarnate life during his earthly ministry. However, the Paraclete's operations in "the world" (v. 8) differ from that of Christ's followers. The Holy Spirit's agenda of conviction of the world revolves around three aspects: sin, righteousness, and judgment (v. 8).[81]

A Theological Interpretation

I note three theological points based on the textual explanation of the fourth Paraclete passage. Instead of following the flow of the text, I arrange the points logically beginning with God's inner life before moving to consider his work *ad extra*. The points concern relevant loci in my project: the doctrines of the Trinity, the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, and the divine missions of the Second and Third Persons.

First, with the Father, the Son eternally spirates the Holy Spirit. In the divine life, the eternally begotten Son receives his personhood or mode of subsistence as Son from the Father, which includes the eternal act of spirating the Holy Spirit. Thomas J. White emphasizes the *taxis* in the divine life in the formula "'*from* the Father *through* the Son [*a patre per filium*],' which is to say, by the Father's power received fully by the

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[79] Klink, *John*, 678.

[80] Klink, *John*, 678.

[81] The first term, "convict," governs the following three. Klink, *John*, 678. Sin, righteousness, and judgment are "prefaced by a conjunction . . . [with] a causal function," i.e., "because." Klink, 679. "The Advocate," Michaels summarizes, "will redefine three familiar terms (familiar especially to the Jews), each one in relation to Jesus: 'sin' as rejecting Jesus, 'justice' as what God has done for Jesus, and 'judgment' as what Jesus carries out by his death." Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 835. Allison and Köstenberger interpret John 16:8–11 differently. Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 340–43. The Spirit convicts Christians and "stirs up hope as Christians communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through believers' words and life, the Spirit works in ways appropriate to his divine agency to effect a salutary dissatisfaction and expose guilt and shame, prompting confession, repentance, and faith in Christ." Allison and Köstenberger, 343, citing Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 536–39.

Son."[82] Together, Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit in eternity; therefore, Christ says he will send the Paraclete in time on the condition that Christ leaves (v. 7). Commenting on verse 7, White notes, "In sending the Spirit, the Son makes manifest in his visible mission in time what is true from all eternity, that he and the Father co-spirate the Spirit eternally as their shared mutual love."[83] The temporal missions reveal the eternal processions: the Son will send the Spirit of truth in a divine mission to spiritually strengthen Christ's followers.

Adonis Vidu adds to this explanation of verse 7 by considering (1) the order of the Son's mission before the Holy Spirit's, and (2) Christ's human nature's involvement in spirating the Holy Spirit. "[I]n the mission of the Son the human nature of Christ is united to the Word," Vidu contends, "it is engaged in such a way that it begins to externally spirate the Holy Spirit."[84] As a result, the Holy Spirit proceeds "externally through the incarnate Son's returning everything to the Father."[85] Christ's followers will benefit from Christ's ascension because they will receive "the very theandric love of Christ."[86]

Second, the *reditus* of the Son's visible mission (the incarnation) transitions to the *exitus* of the Holy Spirit's divine mission—indwelling Christ's followers. This is the precise benefit of Christ's *reditus* for the apostles (v. 7). The ascended Son will send the other Paraclete—the Holy Spirit whom the Father and Son eternally spirate—on his

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[82] White, *The Trinity*, 483. In chapter 6, I will focus on developing the notion of a Trinitarian *taxis* in Polanus, *Axioms* 4; 14.7.

[83] As the first gift, "[t]he Spirit is the eternal uncreated gift of the Father to the Son and of the Son to the Father, the mutual impression of spirated love." White, *The Trinity*, 662.

[84] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 44.

[85] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 45.

[86] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 62. On Christ's theandric action of giving the Holy Spirit as God and man, see Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 216–17.

divine mission.[87] Moreover, this advantage of the coming Paraclete extends to all of God's people after the church's inauguration. Following Christ's visible mission, his followers will all receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, whose invisible mission marks Christians who God welcomes into the covenant community. The Paraclete's visible mission will result in the inauguration of the new covenant people of God.

Third, the culminating work of the Son and Holy Spirit's respective divine missions to Christians ends with Christians returning to God. As the Son returns to the Father (v. 5), the Son brings those who are united to him back to God.[88] The Son's *reditus* terminates in the divine person from whom he is sent. By grace, Christians participate in this movement of return to the Father.

The Fifth Paraclete Passage:
John 16:12–15

Hearing of Christ's departure, the apostles' hearts fill with sorrow. Christ encourages them again by preparing them for the coming Spirit of truth:

> I have much more to say to you, but you are not able to bear it now. But when he comes the Spirit of truth, he will guide you in all truth. For he will not speak from himself, but what he hears he will speak, and he will announce to you what is coming. He will bring glory to me because he will receive from me and announce it to you. All that the Father has is mine; for this reason I said that he will receive from me and announce it to you.[89]

At this point in the narrative, the apostles' capacity limits their comprehension of receiving more truth (v. 12). They cannot bear more information than Christ has already

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[87] Carson argues that the Son's inability to send Love on his mission until the Son leaves is not a metaphysical inability for the Son and Love to simultaneously minister to the disciples. "Rather," Carson avers, "the thought is eschatological. The many biblical promises that the Spirit will characterize the kingdom of God . . . breed[s] anticipation. But this saving reign of God cannot be fully inaugurated until Jesus [returns] . . . to the glory he enjoyed with the Father before the world began." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 534. In the Son's return to the Father followed by sending the Holy Spirit, Carson believes the Son has God's unfolding plan of salvation in mind.

[88] The Son's *reditus* does not result in any separation of the eternal, divine persons during the Son's incarnation.

[89] Klink, *John*, 673. The fourth and fifth Paraclete passages fall under the same pericope in Klink's outline. Klink, *John*, 671.

disclosed. However, following Christ's resurrection, the promised Spirit of truth will come and guide Christ's followers into all the truth (v. 13). Verse 13 characterizes the Spirit of truth's role, which mirrors Christ's incarnation, "for he too does not speak 'on his own' (see 5:19; 7:17–18; 12:49; 14:10), and he too says only what he has 'heard' (that is, from the Father; see 5:30; 8:26, 40; 15:15)."[90]

As Christ previously referenced the Paraclete, he calls the Paraclete the "Spirit of truth" again (cf. 14:17; 15:26). Recall the Paraclete passage in chapter 14: the Father will send the Holy Spirit in Christ's name, and the Holy Spirit will teach and remind Christ's followers what the Son has told them. The Spirit of truth will not reveal a distinct message from the Son's teaching: "[H]e will not speak on his own" (v. 13). Rather, the Paraclete's reiterative announcement will provide a more robust account of "the implications of God's triumphant self-disclosure in the person and work of his Son."[91] Christ is the culmination of the law and the prophets, for "[a]ll antecedent revelation has pointed toward him, and reaches its climax in him."[92] The Paraclete "who communicates truth" guides Christ's followers to the truth about God's work in Christ's life and ministry.[93]

Chapter 16 concludes with Christ's desire for the apostles to have peace, and the Paraclete will aid the apostles to this end. In light of Christ's impending absence, he charges them to take heart and be courageous (vv. 16–19).[94] Then, when he returns, Christ "will tell [them] . . . plainly about the Father" (v. 25). Before Christ's exaltation,

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[90] Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 837.

[91] Carson cites Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII–XXI*, 708 on the type of announcement the Spirit brings; see Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 540–41.

[92] Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 539.

[93] Klink, *John*, 685.

[94] The Son leaves to face the cross (v. 28; v. 32), a work the apostles do not yet understand (v. 25). Also, the Son will return to the Father and prepares the apostles for his impending bodily absence (v. 17; v. 28). By leaving his apostles, the Son will complete his work of inaugurating the church.

confusion marks the disciples. However, after the Son's exaltation, the Spirit of truth is sent to Christ's followers and illuminates "figures of speech." The Paraclete enables Christians to know the Son and grasp the meaning of the incarnation.

A Theological Interpretation

I note three theological points based on the textual explanation of the fifth and final Paraclete passage. The points concern relevant loci in my project: the doctrines of the Trinity, the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, and the divine missions of the Second and Third Persons.

First, the Holy Spirit's operations reveal that he is God. It terminates on the Holy Spirit to receive from his principle, the Father and Son *via* passive spiration, and make the truth known to God's people. The taking and declaring language in John reveals the eternal relations of origin. The economic operation of declaration does not support any form of subordination or hierarchical rank of the Third Person; rather, this final Paraclete passage reveals the Third Person's eternal relation with the Father and Son. While the Holy Spirit takes and declares the Father's truth to the apostles (v. 15), which glorifies the Son (v. 14), the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and Son. The Paraclete's responsibility, so to speak, of receiving and declaring reveals his eternal principle in the divine life.

Second, along with the Father, the Son is the Holy Spirit's eternal principle of origin. I interpret the genitive construction in this passage (v. 13) as I did in the two previous occurrences (cf. 14:17; 15:26). Christ's I Am statement from John 14 reveals the way to the Father, namely, Christ: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). Once more, chapter 16 names the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of truth." The Spirit of truth, "or 'the Spirit who communicates truth,'" teaches God's people the truth about Christ, the fullness of God's self-revelation to the world, because the Holy Spirit is eternally from

the Son.[95] The Son receives everything from the Father in his eternal generation, which is why Christ does not speak from himself (cf. 5:19; 7:17–18; 12:49; 14:10) and only speaks what he has "heard" (cf. 5:30; 8:26; 8:40; 15:15).

A similitude exists between the Son's eternal generation from the Father and the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Son (and Father). The Son gives what he received to the one who proceeds from him, the Spirit of truth. Then, the Holy Spirit announces the truth to the disciples (16:15). Verse 15 reveals that "the Son truly spirates the Spirit with the Father, but he does so by the same power of spiration that the Father has. The Father, however, imparts this power to the Son precisely in generation. In this way, the Son is truly and completely the principle of the Holy Spirit with the Father."[96] Together, Father and Son actively spirate the Holy Spirit in eternity and therefore send the Spirit of truth in time. In the Holy Spirit's divine mission to the apostles, he will declare God's revelation—that is, who Christ is and what he accomplished in the incarnation—with greater clarity (vv. 12–13; cf. v. 25).

Third, the Holy Spirit communicates God's love to the elect in the new covenant, the term in his divine mission. Every Christian possesses God's love, "[f]or the Father himself loves" Christians (v. 17). The Holy Spirit's invisible mission elevates Christians' renewed nature through habitual grace to fully (with one's heart, soul, mind, and strength) and faithfully (as required in a covenantal relationship) love God.[97] John provides further evidence of the Holy Spirit's divine mission: the Son promises direct access to the Father in prayer (v. 26). In the new epoch of salvation history, the church

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[95] Klink, *John*, 685.

[96] The unbegotten First Person of the Trinity is the principle without principle: "The Father is always and ever the fontal principle of both the Son and Spirit, even if he gives the Son eternally to be with him the source of the Spirit." White, *The Trinity*, 483. The Son spirates the Spirit "only and always *from* the Father."

[97] Habitual grace is a quality of the soul that "acts in the soul as a formal cause." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 27. Legge makes a distinction between a formal and efficient cause. The Trinity is always understood to be the single efficient cause of a created effect *ad extra*.

receives the privilege to approach and ask the Father for their requests in Christ's name (16:23–24; cf. 14:13; 15:16), for Love unites Christians to Christ (16:26; cf. 16:32).

A Historical Overview of Augustine and Aquinas's Positions on "Love" as a Proper Name for the Holy Spirit

Part two of this chapter considers Augustine's seminal notion of naming the Third Person as Love. I will briefly survey Augustine's arguments from *The Trinity*. Next, I will discuss Aquinas's reasoning for affirming Augustine's practice and present his support.[98] I contend the Trinitarian persons' proper names reveal the way they subsist in the divine essence. The proper names also teach us how God acts in creation, although the epistemological order of knowing and discerning begins in creation. That is, we recognize the Holy Spirit's proper name is Love because of the nature of his temporal mission to impart gifts of grace to God's people. As a result, Christians love God and experience unity with other Christians.[99]

Augustine on "Love" as a Proper Name

As Matthew Levering comments, contemporary exegetes may find Augustine's exegesis unconvincing.[100] Based on Augustine's biblical arguments for Love as a proper name for the Third Person, some scholars believe this venerable practice lacks scriptural warrant. I will rehearse Augustine's textual proof, focusing on two main texts: 1 John 4 and Romans 5.[101] Despite his unconventional exegetical work according to contemporary

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[98] Vidu comments that Augustine and Aquinas are "the two most foundational theologians of the divine missions." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, xv.

[99] Part 3 of this chapter focuses on arguing for Christian unity as evidence for Love indwelling Christians. The word "charity" may be translated as "love." Cf. Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.5.29 (Hill, 423). I will primarily use the term "love."

[100] Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 54.

[101] See Levering's discussion on Augustine's interpretation of Love as a proper name in Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 55–59.

standards, Augustine demonstrates astute sensitivity to Scripture's attestation of the Holy Spirit's operations in creatures.[102] These operations reveal a pattern of one's will impelled and inclined toward another person, and this pattern grounds Augustine's assertion of naming the Holy Spirit as Love. In the next section, I will trace how Aquinas further develops Augustine's theological claims.

Levering notes that Augustine develops his view in book 15 of *The Trinity*.[103] Augustine cites 1 John 4. Verses 7 and 8 read, "Dear friends, let us love one another, because *love is from God*, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because *God is love*" (emphasis added). Gregg Allison and Andreas Köstenberger helpfully summarize Augustine's logic: the love of God (v. 7) is a divine person (v. 8) who is eternally from another, given in time to remain in Christians (v. 12), and enabling Christians to love one another (vv. 11–12).[104] Augustine then appeals to Romans 5:5 to substantiate his claim: "*God's love* has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (emphasis added). Augustine takes this to mean that Christians receive Love, the Third Person, and thus shares God's love back to God.[105] If one disagrees with Augustine's exegesis of Romans 5, the argument for the Holy Spirit's proper name still stands because a contemporary interpretation of 1 John 4 can support Augustine's inklings.

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[102] I will argue that Augustine's sensitivity, although based on unconventional hermeneutics from a contemporary standpoint, proves theologically accurate. Aquinas will develop Augustine's idea and offer reasonable theological support. In the end, based on biblically sound arguments with which even the contemporary exegete can agree, I believe Protestants should affirm Augustine's view in naming the Third Person "Love."

[103] Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 55.

[104] Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 265–66.

[105] Allison and Köstenberger delineate two interpretations of the phrase "God's love" in Romans 5:5. Either this explains "*God's love for us* or . . . *our love for God*. Most modern interpreters take the expression in the first way. . . . Augustine, by contrast, took it in the second way." Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 266–67 (emphasis original).

Taken together, Augustine posits that God gives the Holy Spirit to Christians, and the Holy Spirit pours out God's love into Christians (cf. Rom 5:5), empowering them to love one another in a manner that reflects God's love in himself (cf. 1 John 4:7–8). The theological question Augustine asks, then, is this: in what ways are the Holy Spirit's eternal procession revealed in his divine mission of bringing love to God's people? He answers: the Holy Spirit is the communion of love between the Father and Son; therefore, he fittingly brings God's love to the human beings he indwells and shapes Christians to love God.

Augustine asserts that a personal name discloses what is proper to oneself,[106] and the Trinitarian persons are named based on their modes of subsistence.[107] In God's triune life, the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father; the Spirit of them both is suitably called Charity to express the Father and Son's perfect communion and mutual love.[108] In creation, God's people commune with other Christians and God because they receive God's Love. Christians have God's Love; in turn, Love impels Christians toward God. Although Augustine's exegesis of these two passages may not satisfy the contemporary exegete, Augustine rightly interprets the pattern of the Holy Spirit's work: the Holy Spirit creates a communion of love.

Aquinas on "Love" as a Proper Name

I turn to Aquinas, who further develops Augustine's understanding of the Holy Spirit as the Father and Son's mutual love.[109] Augustine accurately perceives that the

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[106] Augustine, *The Trinity*, 5.3.12 (Hill, 198).

[107] The divine persons are not named according to their substance since God's essence is one. Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 64.

[108] Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.5.31 (Hill, 424).

[109] Gilles Emery summarizes Aquinas's methodology: "Aquinas's mature doctrine of the Word and Love allows him to account for all personal names in God (Father, Son, Image, Spirit, Gift), that is to say, for all personal relations and personal properties. His trinitarian theology rests on these two pillars: the doctrine of subsistent relations, and that of the Word and Love." Gilles Emery, "Thomas Aquinas's Appropriation of Pro-Nicene Theology of the Trinity," in *On Classical Trinitarianism: Retrieving the*

divine missions are patterned after the eternal processions. Aquinas gives a metaphysical flourish to Augustine's theology and "illuminate[s] the manner in which the processions are extended into creation by the missions."[110]

In creation, God determines to will the good to the creatures he loves.[111] By restoring the broken relationship between human beings and himself, God gives Christ's followers their highest good: himself. As such, Aquinas contends that the name Love reveals a personal eternal relation of origin and explains the pattern of the Holy Spirit's operations in the church. The Love of God works inseparably with the Father and the Son to apply Christ's salvific work to the church. Aquinas contends that Love is sent to indwell Christians because Love eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.

I present Aquinas's argument in five sections. The flow of the argument highlights that fact that God acts in creation according to his order of being; God reveals his inner life in salvation history. I begin with God's two divine processions before narrowing the discussion to the second procession. Two concepts ground the practice of naming the Third Person Love: the Father and Son's mutual love and the procession by way of the will. The latter sections end with a discussion of the Holy Spirit's temporal mission.

The Two Divine Processions

As Aquinas considers the processions in God, he describes the Son's procession from the Father by way of intellect and the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son by way of will.[112] The concepts of intellect and will are internal to and

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Nicene Doctrine of the Triune God, ed. Matthew M. Barrett (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2024), 145.

[110] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 15.

[111] Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I–II.26 art. 1.

[112] See a fuller discussion of Aquinas's theory of the two processions in chapter 2.

remain in the subject (God): "There are only two such actions in the intellectual and divine nature [of God], namely, to understand and to will."[113] At the same time, the procession of the intellect is really distinct from the procession of the will. As such, the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor Son. I will consider God's two processions in order.

The Father generates the Son from eternity in the divine essence. While this generation is similar in the creature's experience of parents generating their offspring who share a similar nature, it is dissimilar in that the principle (Father) generates the principled (Son) within the one undivided nature. To consider an analogy to describe this procession, Aquinas explains that the Son proceeds from the Father by way of knowledge or intellect because the Father generates one who is like himself and yet distinct from himself, similar to the knowledge of a thing in the knower's mind.[114] The Son subsists in the one substance of God as the Father's perfect intellect; the Father perfectly knows the Son as Son within the one essence.

As for the Holy Spirit, his procession by mode of love within God consists of "a certain vital movement and impulse, according to which anyone is described as moved or pulled by love to perform an action."[115] The lover's movement of impulse toward the beloved arises in the lover's will such that the beloved is present in the lover's will, inclining the lover toward the beloved. "With human beings," compares Emery, "it is a matter of the relation which a love has to that volition from whose act love dawns. This analogy gives us a grasp of the divine relation which Love enjoys with the Father and

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[113] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 5.

[114] Knowledge depends on an object by which the mind possesses in itself as the mind, and yet the mind is distinct from that which it perceives: "For it is clear that the more a thing is known, the greater the intimacy of its intellectual conception with the one who knows it; and the more it is one with him; because the intellect by the very act of knowing, becomes one with the known." Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 1 ad. 2. Aquinas uses the analogy of the intellect in relation to the knowing mind to conceptualize the Son's procession from the Father: the mind is really distinct from the intellectual conception, while the concept of the thing known reminds in the mind: "In God, the Father 'understands himself' by a single eternal act and so generates an eternal Word—as a conception proceeding from his act of understanding—that 'expresses the Father.'" Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 15.

[115] Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 4.

with his Word, from whom he eternally issues forth."[116] The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds by the mode of the will (that is, as love), and his procession is inextricably linked with the Son's procession.

White explains Aquinas's teaching on love in God, analogically speaking, with respect to the Son's generation:

> The Father . . . loves himself and his Word, and in loving himself and the Word, spirates the love that is the inner *inclinatio* or *affectio* of divine love. Just as the Word knows himself and the Father, and in doing so, loves the Father and himself, so too he also spirates the love as the *inclinatio* or *affectio* that is common to himself and the Father.[117]

The mutual affection and love between the Father and the Son is none other than the Holy Spirit.[118] This shared, identical nature between the principle and principled is identical to the love that each divine person wills to the other.[119] While their way of loving the other is proper to their mode of being, the Father and the Son's mutual love is the same and simple proceeding Love. The Holy Spirit is the "mutual *impressio*, or presence of the loved one in the will or heart of the lover."[120] Based on the one who loves and the beloved's mutual love, the Holy Spirit must proceed from both as "the eternally spirated

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[116] Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.28 art. 4; I.37 art. 1; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 226. This does not imply that God is composed of parts such that the Holy Spirit uniquely possesses a divine attribute to the other persons' loss. God is simple; his attributes are not distinct from his essence. It follows that God is love: God's attribute of love is identical to his essence. If love characterizes God's *esse*, the triune God perfectly loves within the divine life.

[117] White, *The Trinity*, 487. Aquinas bases his reflections on the Trinitarian persons' relations on the psychological model of the Trinity. Aquinas insists that the Father is "a personal subject who knows himself and loves himself. . . . [I]n loving himself he spirates his Spirit of Love, through his Word."

[118] According to Emery, Aquinas both follows and expounds on Augustine's traditional interpretation of "the theme of mutual love" to emphasize the Holy Spirit's single principle. Emery underscores Aquinas's solution to Augustine's notion of mutual love: the Father loves and eternally generates the Son; the Son loves and is eternally begotten from the Father. Love is a divine person who proceeds from the Father and Son's mutuality. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 237. S.a. White, *The Trinity*, 487.

[119] The Father loves the Son in a manner proper to the Father; the Son loves the Father in a manner proper to the Son.

[120] White, *The Trinity*, 487–88.

term and fruition of the mutual inclination."[121] Love "is not a 'medium' (*medius*)";[122] rather, Love proceeding (*Amor procedens*) is the Third Person who eternally relates to the one who loves and the beloved.

In sum, God loves in himself, and the Father and Son's reciprocal love constitutes the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person. God loves in the triune life and creation.[123] Creatures receive God's Love as he communicates Love with creation.[124]

Love: A Divine Procession from the Father and the Son

If the Holy Spirit is the mutual love who proceeds from the Father and the Son, does it necessarily follow that the Spirit can be properly named Love?[125] Here, in section 2, I rehearse Aquinas's argument: the Father and Son love one another through the Holy Spirit. If the Third Person is the First and Second's mutual love, this may provide a valid basis for identifying a proper name for the Holy Spirit's procession.

To begin unpacking the assertion that the Father and the Son love one another through the Holy Spirit, Anthony Keaty acknowledges three types of love in God in Aquinas's writing: essential, personal, and notional. First, essential love is the substance

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[121] White, *The Trinity*, 487.

[122] Aquinas, *ST* I.37 art. 1 ad. 3.

[123] God's love for creatures is analogous to the love in the divine life.

[124] Later, I will further my argument for the church's unique reception of Love *via* a covenant relationship between God and his people.

[125] Anthony Keaty observes that, according to Augustine, the central challenge is to demonstrate how love, which belongs to all three persons, can also be uniquely proper to one particular *hypostasis*: "I do not know why just as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are called wisdom and are all three not three but one wisdom, so also Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not called charity and similarly all three one charity." Keaty cites "Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.17," which is Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.5.27 (Hill, 421). Anthony Keaty, "The Holy Spirit Proceeding as Mutual Love: An Interpretation of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, I.37," *Angelicum* 77, nos. 3–4 (2000): 544n26. Keaty seeks to answer Augustine by packing Aquinas, *ST* I.37 art. 1 ad. 1: "To say that Love is a name proper to the Holy Spirit, one will have to explain how love is one in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and yet proper, or distinctive, to the Holy Spirit." Keaty, 533–57.

of God.[126] Second, personal love points out that the Father does indeed love the Son and vice versa. As the previous section argued, this bond of love is the Holy Spirit for the Third Person proceeds from the Father and Son.[127]

Third, notional love suggests that the Spirit proceeds from his single principle, the Father and the Son: "[T]o love is to breath Love."[128] The emphasis here is the Father and Son's unified act. The Father and Son love one another through the Spirit as they actively spirate the Spirit, who proceeds as the bond of Love. Notional love emphasizes the communal act of the Father and Son (*spirare amorem procedenter*).[129] Together, they are the Holy Spirit's originating principle.[130] As such, the name "Love" captures the Third Person's personal relational property of proceeding from the Father and Son's communion.

In sum, attuned to Aquinas's commitment to the Augustinian tradition, Keaty organizes the definition of love in three ways to conceptually demonstrate and justify the

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[126] Keaty explains, "When referring to the relationship between the lover and the object loved, love (*amor et diligere*) is said essentially." Keaty, "The Holy Spirit Proceeding as Mutual Love," 545–46. Love is the name used to describe the lover and beloved's relationship. As discussed in a previous section, the Christian tradition affirms the doctrine of simplicity, whereby the three persons and the attributes are identical to the one essence. Thus, love as an attribute is common to all three persons. As a result, when considering "through the Holy Spirit" under the lens of essential love, this does not imply an accident (love) exists in one *hypostasis* that the other two do not possess.

[127] "When referring to the affections proceeding within the lover (*amor procedens*)," Keaty avers, "*amor* is used personally." In fact, "Love can also be used personally in God as such indicates Love proceeding from a principle." Keaty, "The Holy Spirit Proceeding as Mutual Love," 546.

[128] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 240.

[129] Keaty makes distinctions: "When referring to the act called by Thomas (*spirare amorem procedenter*) comparable to *dicere*, then the verbs *amare* or *diligere* are used notionally." Keaty, "The Holy Spirit Proceeding as Mutual Love," 545.

[130] Kenneth M. Loyer remarks, "The imprint on God's will created by God's love for his own goodness (essential love) is a term of procession in the act of loving; as such, it leads to the immanent procession of love that is that common spiration of the Father and the Son (notional love), namely, the very person of the Holy Spirit whose *proprium* is love (personal love)." Kenneth M. Loyer, *God's Love through the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Thomas Aquinas and John Wesley* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 99. Here, Loyer shifts the attention from the Father and Son's affections proceeding within himself, respectively, to the Spirit's personal affections. This perspective was not brought out by Emery and could be further evidence for Love proceeding to be a proper name for the Spirit.

Third Person's personal name, Love-proceeding.[131] This query into Love's eternal procession in the divine life by way of the will paves the way for a discussion of divine missions.

Love: A Divine Mission from the Father and the Son to the Christian

The divine missions reveal the eternal processions. The Father and Son is the principle of Love's eternal procession and divine mission. Moreover, Love-proceeding is sent in his divine mission to indwell Christ's followers. It is proper and fitting for the Father and the Son's mutual bond of Love to proceed *ad extra* as he does in God's inner life, like an impulse or affection: "As the bond of unity which proceeds from Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is Love, eternally inclining toward being given."[132] In time, the eternal procession by way of the will is received by Christians. Upon the Christian's conversion, they receive the Love of God by sanctifying grace. Love-proceeding "[elevates] the creature . . . beyond its natural capacities . . . to a supernatural participation in the divine life."[133] As a result, creatures exist in a mixed relation with God.

Love-proceeding indwells the Christian by virtue of an invisible mission:[134] "the indwelling by grace is a spiritual reality in the soul that cannot be seen directly."[135] However, the human soul's senses possess a unique ability to perceive the existence of a

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[131] S.a. Emery's discussion on how "Thomas reinterprets the theme of mutual love in the light of his own idea of love" in Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 237–41, especially p. 237.

[132] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 257.

[133] See Vidu's interpretation of Aquinas's notion of "sanctifying grace" in Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 18–19, 55–56.

[134] There are two types of divine missions: invisible and visible. I will discuss the Holy Spirit's divine missions in the New Testament according to Aquinas in chapter 4.

[135] Legge cites Aquinas in two places: *ST* I.43 art. 5 ad. 3 and *ST* I–II.112 art. 5. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 25.

divine mission and the created effect, namely, love.[136] More specific to the church, Aquinas states that Love is the first gift from which every other gift proceeds.[137] The notion of God's initiation of bestowing a good gift to the recipient grounds a person's salvation. The Holy Spirit gives the first gift of redeeming love and new spiritual life to Christ's followers.[138] Following this reasoning, God's initial gift of his love is none other than the Third Person. This is why Aquinas, crediting Augustine and Hilary, states that "the Spirit is rightly called the divine person nearest to us."[139] God's gracious act of loving Christians is to give them himself: proceeding Love.

Love Perfecting the Church: Christians Receive and Enjoy God via Love Proceeding

In considering the triune God's processions and missions, I am now positioned to turn to the reality of the church, comprised of individual Christians.[140] Christians possess Love, and this divine Love (1) binds the people of God together and (2) unites the church to God himself. I will discuss point one in this fourth section, and I will give attention to Love proceeding uniting the church to God in the fifth section.

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[136] Following Aristotle, the soul is the body's form or organizing principle that constitutes the material alive or not. The created effect of the mission is that Love begins to be in the Christian person in a new way. Love works, inseparably with the Father and the Son, to bring new life to human beings.

[137] In addition to his discussion on "Love" as a proper name for the Holy Spirit, Aquinas argues that "Gift" is proper to the Third *Hypostasis* as well. The implication of gratuitous donation, a gift, is grounded in willing good to another, which precisely is characteristic of love. By virtue of his procession as the Love, the Spirit "proceeds with the character of the First Gift (*procedit in ratione doni primi*)." See Aquinas's interaction with the matter in *ST* I.38 art. 2. "Love" and "Gift" are closely tied together.

[138] Legge cites Aquinas, III *Sent*. d. 2 q. 2 art. 2 qla. 2 ad. 3. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 46.

[139] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 16.

[140] Simply put, I define a Christian as a person who has personally repented of their sin and, in faith, trusted in Christ's gracious work on the cross on their behalf so that they can be forgiven for their trespasses against God and experience spiritual regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, the Christian is a part of the universal church, the people of God under the new covenant. In this discussion, the emphasis is on love within the new covenant community. Christians are uniquely instructed by God to love Christ's body. However, while this is not the focus of this chapter, Christians are also to love other people who are not within the covenant community.

At the moment of a human being's conversion—when God creates new spiritual life in a person who was previously spiritually dead (Titus 3:5)—the Christian experiences God's love in a new way that was absent prior to this moment. Now, the Christian experientially receives the love of God that pardons sin and brings them into fellowship with God. This new relationship is characterized by love. The Christian recognizes God's love because the triune God acts to create a new effect in every believer's soul, the term of the Holy Spirit's mission. The Holy Spirit revivifies human beings and perfects the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

The Father and Son send Proceeding Love to the creature and communicate God's Love to his church. Emery perceives a connection in Aquinas's theology between the triune God's life of love and creatures' reception of God's Love: "Thomas finds the pattern and the source of the goods which the creating and gracious God assigns to creatures in the love through which God loves himself and through which the Father and the Son love one another. The Father and the Son love one another and love us through *one single Love*, which is the Holy Spirit."[141] When God brings human beings into communion with himself, these creatures receive God's graciously gift of Love. This gift is none other than loving God himself because the Trinity is the greatest good.

As the triune God loves the Christian and as Love indwells the Christian, God creates and infuses goodness into every Christian, lifting the human being's nature.[142] For God, he simultaneously loves his goodness and loves creatures *via* Love's divine mission because God wills the creature's highest good in giving himself.[143] As the object of God's Love, new covenant community members learn to intellectually perceive the state of another Christian's good—love is the superior way (1 Cor 13:13). Supernaturally

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[141] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 243 (emphasis original).

[142] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 243.

[143] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 243.

loving one another in the church begins with knowledge of the object of love; it is followed by the subject's will turned toward willing good to the beloved. "The *inclinatio* or *affectio* of [God's redeemed people's wills] is this turning toward the other that occurs immanent to the person, as when we loved in the secret of our hearts, in the inner self of our wills, and we are 'turned' toward that which we love,"[144] and the object of Christian love is the family of God. The church inevitably demonstrates that she is truly God's people as the Holy Spirit indwells each Christian and disposes the Christians to love other Christians. As a true marker of the church, Christians love the other person by spiritual inclination, affection, and impression. Love's spiritual fruit in human beings patterns after the formal principle: love.

The Church Participates in God's Life

If the previous premise is true—that each Christian knows the Love of God because God has given himself to Christians as a gift—and if the church is made up of Christians, then it may follow that the Love of God ontologically unites the church. Love dwells in each beloved, regenerated human subject and connects Christians to God. The triune God will perfect this inaugurated reality of union with his people in glory.

God is his creation's end. He extends a special, covenantal love to his church by (1) elevating the Christian's nature to participate in his divine life and (2) uniting Christians to himself, as the church receives her highest good: the triune God. Legge points out "an original contribution" in Thomistic theology in a concerted description between eternal processions and the church's ultimate end:[145]

> *Exitus* and *reditus* accounts for how the Trinitarian processions themselves ground both creation and the Trinitarian dispensation of grace. . . . [Aquinas] uses it to offer a fundamental theological exclamation of the scriptural and Patristic teaching that we return to the Father through the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. As

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[144] White, *The Trinity*, 487.

[145] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 13.

> Thomas puts it, "just as we were created through the Son and the Holy Spirit, likewise we also are joined [through them] to our ultimate end."[146]

The Holy Spirit's procession becomes the creature's *exitus* from God, and the Father's spirated Love's *reditus* back to the Father is also the church's *reditus*. The movement of the Third Person's procession is "always relative to the Father, eternally 'pointing back to' and terminating in [his] principle, as, analogously, the created [gift of love points the church] back to the Spirit and terminate[s] in [him]."[147] This *reditus* is already the church's reality by virtue of Love's invisible mission. God's gift of grace assimilates and conforms creatures' natures to the Holy Spirit so that Christians "can reach up to God" through participating in Love's notional act.[148] The goal will be realized in the eschaton: God will bring the church back to himself so that Christians participate in his divine life and attain God.

A Theological Argument for "Love" as a Proper Name for the Holy Spirit from John 17:1–26

I alluded to the theological implications of the Paraclete's operations in part 1.[149] In part 2, I argued that this interpretative method of relating the divine missions to the eternal processions finds support in a "significant tradition . . . [which speaks] about Love as the precise formality of the Spirit's indwelling."[150] Augustine and Aquinas find biblical and theological support for naming the Third Person as Love because God reveals the relational dynamics of his loving inner life to creation. In this final part of the chapter, I offer a theological argument for naming the Holy Spirit "Love" based on John

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[146] Legge cites Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 29 q. 1 art. 2 qla. 2; see Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 13.

[147] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 32.

[148] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 387; cf. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 65.

[149] That is, based on the Paraclete's divine mission to Christ's disciples, we theologize to gain greater clarity on the nature of the Third Person's eternal relation to the First and Second Persons.

[150] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 52.

17.[151] As a test case for recognizing Love as the Father and Son's communion, Christ's prayer to the Father for his disciples discloses Love's divine mission to Christians and testifies to the nature of the triune God's divine life. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son by way of love. Furthermore, the internal processions are the *ratio* of creatures' *reditus* to the divine life.

I will explore two implications of Love's divine mission to the church in the four sections of John 17.[152] The two implications follow: (1) the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit to regenerate and bring God's Love to human beings;[153] (2) Love disposes Christians to love one another and elevates the Christian's nature so that the church will enjoy a perfect union with God in glory.

Section 1: Jesus Prays for His Glorification (vv. 1–5)

Christ's prayer reveals a circular motion of *exitus* and *reditus* in relation to the principle within the divine essence and in creation. The First Person, the *fons deitatis*, is the principle of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The two processions come forth (*exitus*) from the Father and thus will return (*reditus*) to their end, the Father.[154] Christ identifies this *exitus* movement by stating the Father gives the Son authority over all people (v. 1) and work to accomplish on earth (v. 4). Then, Christ speaks of the *reditus* movement:

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[151] While this final chapter of the Farewell Discourse does not contain a Paraclete passage, the chapter continues to reveal the dynamics of the divine persons' eternal relations. As Klink avers, the main idea of John 17 is Christ's consecration of "his disciples to God so that by their participation in the oneness of the Father and the Son, the church may give him glory . . . and facilitate his mission in the world." Klink, *John*, 706. I believe John 17's main idea supports my chapter's thesis; thus, this section offers more biblical support for the Third Person's proper name. This may assuage the minds of some contemporary scholars who are dissatisfied with Augustine's exegesis of 1 John 4 and Romans 5:5 as discussed in part 2.

[152] I follow Carson's division of the four sections and replicate his titles. Carson adapts his exposition from "Schnackenburg (3.167–169) and Beasley-Murray (pp. 295–296)." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 553.

[153] Regeneration is an inseparable, unified work of the triune God. The Holy Spirit never acts independently from the Father and the Son in God's work *ad extra*.

[154] Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 14 q. 2 art. 2.

when the Son is glorified, the incarnation brings glory to the Father (v. 1; vv. 4–5). Christ vindicates his teaching when he conquers sin and death. The Son's message is this: he is the only way to know and return to the Father, the only true God.

Section 2: Jesus Prays for His Disciples (vv. 6–19)

Christ focuses on the relationship between the triune God and creatures. He prays for his disciples in particular instead of the world in general (v. 9). The Son receives everything from his principle, the Father (v. 7). In relation to creatures, the Father gives the disciples to the Son (v. 6; v. 9). In turn, the disciples receive the words from the one they follow, the Son (v. 8; cf. v. 6).

The Son's *reditus* to the Father (v. 13) marks the beginning of the Holy Spirit's divine mission. The mission of Christ's followers mirrors the Son's visible mission in the incarnation (v. 18), which the Holy Spirit makes possible as he aids the disciples' mission to the world (v. 11). Additionally, as the Third Person, Love works to bring forth the unity for which the Son prays on behalf of his disciples "so that they may be one as . . . [the Father and Son] are one" (v. 11). The eternal procession of Love supernaturally shapes the apostles' mission and their *reditus* to God. Aquinas explicates, "The Love of the Father towards the Son is the *ratio* in which God bestows every effect of love on the creature,"[155] such as unity (v. 11). For this reason, "the Holy Spirit, who is the Love by which the Father loves the Son, is also the Love by which he loves [the disciples] . . . by

[155] Legge cites Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 14 q. 1 art. 1. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 16.

imparting its perfection to it."[156] Love is sent to indwell the disciples; through Love's habitual grace, the apostles receive help to carry out God's mission.[157]

Section 3: Jesus Prays for Those Who Will Believe (vv. 20–23)

The scope of benefits from Love's divine mission reaches beyond Christ's first disciples (v. 20). Similar to the Son's prayer for the disciples in section 2, this third section focuses on all believers as the object of prayer. Klink translates this portion of Son's prayer for the church:

> I ask not for these alone but also for those who believe in me through their word, so that they may be one, just as you Father, are in me and I am in you, that they may also be in us in order that the world may believe that you sent me. And the glory which you have given to me I have given to them, in order that they may be one just as we are one. I in them and you in me, so that they may be brought to completion as one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and you loved them just as you loved me (vv. 20–23).[158]

Under the new covenant, all of God's people will personally believe in Christ (v. 20) and possess God's Love (v. 23). Through the created effect of the Holy Spirit's mission (indwelling Christians), the church strives to embody the unity, analogically speaking, shared between Father and Son.

Legge illuminates Aquinas's theological position: "Every good bestowed on a creature (including existence itself) has its origin in the Holy Spirit, because a true gift . . . flows from the giver's love. This love is ultimately grounded in the procession of Love, and thus in the Holy Spirit."[159] Aquinas features the centrality of the Love of God

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[156] Legge cites Aquinas, I *Sent*. d. 14 q. 1 art. 1. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 16.

[157] Specific to the apostles, the Holy Spirit guides the apostles in their unique work of establishing the church. Some apostles co-author divine Scripture with the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21). Collectively, the apostles lay the foundation of Christ's church through frontier missional efforts.

[158] Klink, *John*, 710.

[159] Legge cites Aquinas, *ST* I.38 art. 2. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 16.

when he claims that "all gifts are given to us through him."[160] In God, the bond of love between the Father and Son is the *ratio* of (1) the church's love for one another and (2) the Christian's reciprocation of love back to God. "The Holy Spirit himself proceeds temporarily or is given, [rather than] only the gifts of the Spirit" to each Christian's soul.[161] God perfectly loves his church by seeking their good and bestowing gifts, which flow naturally from the divine person who is Love. By virtue of Love's mission to the church and indwelling Christ's followers, the Third Person ontologically unites Christians to one another and God.

From a baptistic perspective, regenerate church membership advances the notion that God shares his personal Love with each Christian, resulting in the church's love for one another.[162] Based on John 17:20–23, I notice two conditions resulting in a conclusion: (1) if Christians are regenerated human beings and indwelled by Love, and (2) if the church is ontologically composed of Christians, then (3) it ought to entail that the Love in God is also the Love in the church that gives the Christian habitual grace to "be one" (v. 21) with other Christians and God. The church's oneness is "like" the Father and Son's oneness in some ways (vv. 21–22) precisely because Love-proceeding is "the origin, *ratio*, cause, and exemplar of our [the Christian's] return to the Triune God in the dispensation of grace."[163] Christ reveals this unified, mutual indwelling in his prayer: the Son is in the Christian and the Father is in the Son "so that they [the church] may be made completely one" (v. 23); thus, the church is one at present. Additionally, the Love

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[160] Legge cites Aquinas, III *Sent.* d. 2 q. 2 art. 2 qla. 2 ad. 3. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 17.

[161] Legge cites Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 14 q. 2 art. 1 qla. 1. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 20.

[162] Instead of seeing the church as a mixed covenant community, much like Israel in the old covenant, Baptists believe the church is comprised of regenerate human beings who have personally confessed their sin, placed their faith in Christ, and received the ordinance of (credo)baptism (under normal circumstances). Love-proceeding indwells the Christian, and it is this person who is considered a part of the new covenant church.

[163] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 17.

of God works to perfect the church's inaugurated reality because Love's *exitus* and *reditus* also characterize the church. The church returns to the Father *via* participating in the movement of Love's divine mission.

Section 4: Jesus Prays That All Believers May Be Perfected so as to See Jesus's Glory (vv. 24–26)

The final section further supports the idea of a creature's *reditus* to God's life *via* participating in the Holy Spirit's procession, that is, by way of love. Although John does not explicitly name the Third Person in these verses, I will note two ways the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and Son provides insight into the Holy Spirit's operation to Christ's followers. The Holy Spirit (1) illuminates true knowledge and (2) reveals God's love.

First, similar to the Son's knowledge of the Father (v. 25) and the apostles' knowledge that the Father sent the Son (v. 25; cf. v. 3; v. 8), the Holy Spirit will help the church comprehend the truth: the Father loves the Son (v. 24) and sends the Son (v. 25). While Christ states that he will personally make the Father's name known to his followers,[164] his Spirit will continue the work in Christ's name after Christ departs (cf. 16:13–15). Second, the Holy Spirit—whose divine mission is ordered after the Son's mission—will make the Son and Father's name known so that the Father's love for the Son "may be in them [Christians]" and the Son may be in them (17:26).[165] Based on the church's knowledge of the Father through the Holy Spirit's illuminating work, the church receives the Father's love. This order reflects the two eternal processions in God: the

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[164] That is, Christ is the subject of the sentence, "I will continue to make it [the Father's name] known to them [Christ's followers]" (v. 26).

[165] A similitude exists between the Holy Spirit revealing his principle and the Son revealing his principle. The Son makes the Father's name known (v. 26) because the Father is the Son's principle. Legge coins the term "vector" in delineating that the processions and missions reveal one's principle. The Holy Spirit accomplishes his invisible mission as creatures participate in the vector of their return to the Holy Spirit's principle. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 52; cf. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 16, 48, 88.

procession of love is logically ordered to the procession of knowledge.[166] By recognizing the Holy Spirit brings God's love to creatures, Aquinas accurately argues that Love is a proper name for the Third Person.

The created effect united to a divine person's procession reflects the Trinitarian persons' relations in the divine life. The Son prays that the Father grants the church a reality whereby Love formally causes the church's elevated nature to a glorified similitude with God's divine nature as creaturely possible.[167] Christians will see Christ's glory (v. 24), a theme introduced previously.[168] I note John's logic: the Father gives the Son glory; the Son gives the disciples glory for the goal of oneness and unity.[169] Christ desires his followers to grasp the revelation of the Father's love through the sent Son for unity (v. 26; cf. v. 23). The Augustinian notion that the Third Person is the Father and Son's mutual love theologically substantiates my understanding of Love's operation within Christians as revealed in this section of Christ's prayer. Klink renders verse 26 this way: "[A]nd I will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."[170] Incorporating the concept of mutual loving in the divine life into the relationship between Christ's followers may explain the outworking of Christ's expectations for his followers. He prays that his followers "may be one just as we [Father and Son] are one" (v. 11; v. 22; cf. v. 21) and receive the love the Father

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[166] The Christian's faith is logically ordered: "Love, which is a created participation in the Holy Spirit . . . is ordered to knowledge." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 60.

[167] Cf. Aquinas, *ST* III.23 art. 3.

[168] In section 3, Christ discloses that he gave the disciples the glory the Father gave the Son so that the disciples may be one as the Father and Son are one (v. 22).

[169] As defined by Carson, "*Glory* commonly refers to the manifestation of God's character or person in a revelatory context; Jesus has mediated the glory of God, personally to his first followers and through them to those who believe on account of their message." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 569.

[170] Klink, *John*, 711. Klink interprets "make *it* known" (emphasis mine) as Christ's prayer "that God would be made known and God's people would know . . . God, his glory and his love, sharing in the very life of the Trinitarian God" (725).

extends to the Son. The Third Person makes this oneness and reception of love possible. In the divine essence, the Lover exists in union with the Beloved because the two subjects mutually love perfectly. In creation, God shares the divine persons' mutual love with Christ's followers, thus enabling the church to participate as creatures in God's loving. When Christians love one another, they experience unity. God will perfect the church's act of love in glory.

Section 4's description of glory elaborates on the church's ontological and eschatological *telos*. In the new heavens and earth, the church participates in God's glorious nature through Love's habitual grace "by which a [Christian] is elevated and given to participate in a new and higher nature, the divine nature itself."[171] According to Legge, "Aquinas calls this a 'certain regeneration or re-creation,' through which [a human being] . . . 'participates [in] the divine nature, through the nature of the soul, according to a certain likeness.'"[172] Presently, Love disposes Christians to a higher mode, thus creating a way for the church's participation in the divine nature in the most perfect, creaturely way at Christ's return. Love-proceeding formally causes "the beginning of the [church's] divinization that reaches its apex in glory insofar as habitual grace is 'in' the essence of the soul itself, elevating that essence to participate in the divine nature."[173] The Christian's future is union with God.

Considered horizontally, the Father and Son send Love to the church. In his divine mission, the Holy Spirit infuses the human soul with grace so that Christians love one another. During the present age, God divinizes the church by elevating the Christian's human nature through the created effect of Love's divine mission. Considered

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[171] For Legge's Thomistic account of divinization, see Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 27.

[172] Legge cites Aquinas, *ST* I–II.110 art. 4. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 27.

[173] Legge cites Aquinas, *ST* I–II.110 art. 4. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 27.

vertically, Love supernaturally infuses the church with theological virtues,[174] such as love, fitting the Christian's human nature to love and attain to God himself in glory.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to biblically and theologically defend the legitimacy of properly naming the Holy Spirit as "Love." I argued that the Third Person's name reveals his eternal relation of origin. The Father and the Son spirate the Holy Spirit from eternity, and Love proceeds from his single principle as the communion of love between Father and Son. In creation, his divine mission to creatures reflects his eternal procession. I found biblical support in chapters 14–17 in John's Gospel. Moreover, for theological evidence, I followed a traditional Thomistic practice of naming the divine persons. The Holy Spirit's operations in creation reflect his eternal relation with Father and Son in God. Specifically, I focused on how the triune God inaugurates the church in salvation history: the Father and Son send Love *via* his invisible mission to every disciple of Christ. As a result, Christians truly possess God through the created effect united to the divine mission by way of love. The indwelling Holy Spirit disposes Christians, elevating their human nature by grace to attain a higher mode (the divine nature). Also, since Love is present in every Christian soul, he ontologically unites new covenant members to each other and God himself. When Christ returns for his followers, the church will be perfected in love and participate in God's life as Love's *reditus* brings God's people back to the Father.

[174] Aquinas, *ST* I–II.110 art. 3 ad. 3.

CHAPTER 4

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S FOUR VISIBLE MISSIONS: A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SPIRIT'S PROCESSION IN CHRIST'S LIFE

A revived interest in Christology with a pneumatological emphasis exists among scholars.[1] Theologians desire to answer questions such as, "How is the Holy Spirit involved in Christ's incarnation? How do we understand the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and Son in light of the Son's divine mission?"[2] The

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[1] One result is a heightened interest in the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the incarnate Son, which some theologians term "Spirit Christology." In his dissertation, Kyle Claunch proposes a wide definition when considering the spectrum of viable Spirit Christologies: "Spirit Christology is an approach to Christology that affords paradigmatic prominence to the Holy Spirit for understanding traditional Christological categories." Kyle David Claunch, "The Son and the Spirit: The Promise of Spirit Christology in Traditional Trinitarian and Christological Perspective" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 2.

Leopoldo Sánchez's recent book on Spirit Christology seeks to introduce readers to the biblical, historical, systematic, and practical development of Spirit Christology. See Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., *T&T Clark Introduction to Spirit Christology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2022). "The main impetus for exploring Spirit Christology as a theological framework," assesses Sánchez, "began in the twentieth century with the revival of Trinitarian theology, the Second Vatican Council's call for a vigorous return to the study of biblical and patristic sources, and the rise of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements as a global phenomenon" (xi). In his book, Sánchez indicates his commitment to classical Trinitarianism and Christology. In retrieving the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, he desires to balance Logos Christology with Spirit Christology.

He supplies a succinct definition of Logos Christology: "Jesus is the God-man or the divine word made flesh. Against Arianism, it defends the unity of the Son and the Father, or the Son's consubstantiality (*homoousios*) with the Father. Against Nestorianism, it defends the unity of the person of Christ in two natures." Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 181. He also defines Spirit Christology:

> Jesus is the receiver, bearer, and giver of God's Spirit. A Nicene (or Chalcedonian) Spirit Christology understands Jesus' identity in the Spirit in a Trinitarian perspective and as a compliment to Logos Christology. Replacing a Nicene Spirit Christology, a post-Nicene Spirit Christology understands "Spirit" not as a person of the Trinity but more generally as God's general presence in the man Jesus. Finally, some church fathers work with a pre-Nicene Spirit Christology, which understands "Spirit" as the divine element in the Logos. (181)

Theologians from wide theological backgrounds, such as Claunch and Sánchez, desire to develop a Spirit Christology that adheres to historic church creeds.

[2] Theologians seek to understand the ways the Holy Spirit relates to Christ's incarnation and extrapolate to consider how the Holy Spirit works in Christians' lives. Sánchez, for example, has pulled together various models of Spirit Christology, which frames the numerous ways the Spirit can be understood to work in the life of Christians. Sánchez's interest gives the church several models of Spirit Christology because Christians experience different adversities; he believes a Spirit Christology can speak

theological and metaphysical questions require solutions that demonstrate attentiveness to theological commitments and credal confessions regarding the Trinity that accurately cohere with exegetical proof of the biblical data.[3] Thomas Aquinas's mature doctrine of the eternal procession and temporal missions secure the immutable dynamics of the Trinitarian relations in God while offering a robust understanding of the Holy Spirit's procession in the incarnation that accounts for Christ's natures.

According to Aquinas, a divine person's divine mission must include an eternal procession and a divine person's presence in creation in a new way.[4] Since the Son and Holy Spirit proceed in God, only the Son and Holy Spirit are sent on divine missions in time, both visibly and invisibly.[5] A mission includes a starting point (an

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into the multi-faceted, individualized needs of the Christian. See Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., *Sculptor Spirit: Models of Sanctification from Spirit Christology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).

[3] Examples of orthodox theological commitments pertinent to my project include a Christology affirmed in the historic Christian creeds, i.e., Niceno-Constantinopolitan (381) and Chalcedon (451). Additionally, the triune God's work in creation is inseparable (*opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*). Although the doctrine of inseparable operations is not codified in the two creeds named, Adonis Vidu makes a case for the classical nature of "hard inseparability." Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), xiii, xv. Each divine person's involvement in the one act *via* his mode of subsistence remains true in personal divine missions, both visible and invisible. Hard inseparability functions as a traditional parameter in the following discussion.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 1 s.c.; I.43 art. 1 ad. 2. Gilles Emery, citing Aquinas, I *Sent*. d. 16.1 art. 1, synthesizes a definition of a visible mission: it "contains three threads: (1) the divine person's eternal procession; (2) the divine person's new presence; and (3) the disclosure of the eternal origin and new presence through a visible sign." Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 406–7.

Substantively identical to Emery, Dominic Legge summarizes Aquinas's teaching on the created effect of a divine mission in four points. A created effect is

> (1) something "new" in the creature, (2) through which the divine person sent "begins to *be in* a creature," [Legge cites Thomas Aquinas, *Contra errores Graecorum* I, c. 14; emphasis added by Legge] in person, in a new mode, (3) "according to a new relation" [Legge cites Aquinas, I *Sent*. d. 15 q. 3 art. 1 ad. 3] between the person sent and the creature, which is "really in" the creature and by which the creature uniquely "is referred to" that one divine person "as a terminus," [Legge cites I *Sent*. d. 30 q. 1, art. 2] and (4) all three persons efficiently cause this as a single principle of the created effect. (Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017], 23)

Joseph Pohle explains the relation between the sender and the sent in a divine mission: "[E]very '*missus*' enters into a twofold relation: a relation to the sender (*mittens*) as his *terminus a quo*, and a relation to the goal of his mission, which constitutes his *terminus ad quem*. . . . In the Divinity any influence of the 'Sender' on the 'Sent,' other than the relation of origin, would be repugnant to the Essence of the Triune God." Joseph Pohle, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2, *The Divine Trinity*, trans. Arthur Preuss (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co, 1912), 175–76.

[5] Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 5 co.

eternal principle) and an endpoint (a divine person is the term of a triune work), and creatures perceive the eternal procession in an effect in creation.[6] The Father and the Son are the Holy Spirit's originating principle in God and creation. In the Holy Spirit's divine mission, the created effect "accounts for how the divine Person as proceeding . . . is received in a creature"[7] and for the Holy Spirit's new mode of existence.[8]

Aquinas identifies four visible missions of the Holy Spirit during the Son's visible mission recorded in the Gospels and Acts, "foundational for salvation, from Christmas to Pentecost."[9] Two divine missions terminate in Christ's human nature, and two terminate in Christ's apostles.[10] The former missions are Christ's baptism at the beginning of his earthly ministry (Matt 3:13–17) and Christ's transfiguration (Luke 9:28–36), which the crowd at the Jordan River and the three apostles on the mountain visibly witnessed, respectively.[11] Christ's breath in the upper room (John 20:19–23) and the tongues of fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–12) are the two divine missions to the apostles. The

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[6] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 17.

[7] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 17.

[8] Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 6 co. In a divine mission, God does not begin to exist where he previously did not. Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 3; *Contra Errores Graecorum* I, c. 14.

[9] Gilles Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 7 in Gilles Emery, "Thomas Aquinas's Appropriation of Pro-Nicene Theology of the Trinity," in *On Classical Trinitarianism: Retrieving the Nicene Doctrine of the Triune God*, ed. Matthew M. Barrett (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2024), 149.

[10] N.B.: Adonis Vidu's strict definition of a divine mission: "In our view, the union resulting from the indwelling are called *symbolic*, such as the baptismal dove, the tongues of fire, etc., although real missions, do not engage the divine person in a final union." Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 28. Even though the dove, cloud, and breath does not result in the same type of union as the hypostatic union, I still refer to this relationship as a union, which "takes place between the procession and the creature. The particular nature of such a union need not be identical for all missions, as different missions may be said to have different functions, just as the divine persons have different personal identities." Vidu, 28. S.a. Legge, who traces Aquinas's distinction of Christ's humanity as "an absolutely unique case, quite unlike the visible sign in the Holy Spirit's visible missions." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 49–51, citing Aquinas, I *Sent*. d. 16 q. 1 art. 1 ad. 1. Nevertheless, Aquinas calls the dove, cloud, and breath signs of the Holy Spirit's visible mission. I follow Aquinas's lead and explain my position in my section on the third visible mission.

[11] On the other hand, an example of an invisible mission—an eternal procession and a created effect that is not perceived by human sight—is the Spirit indwelling the incarnate Word. While the Holy Spirit is eternally consubstantial with the Father and the Son, the Spirit acts in the world in a new way, according to our creaturely senses, in the human nature of the Son. The human eye cannot see Christ's possession of the Holy Spirit without measure.

people who witnessed the Holy Spirit's divine procession at the four events physically experienced God's temporal mission through the manifested created effects.[12] Each created effect adapts to the Holy Spirit[13] and signals one of these two realities: (1) the divine mission's personal property as "from another," the Father and the Son, or (2) the divine mission's terminus as "in another according to some special mode."[14]

In this chapter, I will argue that during Christ's visible mission, the Son (with the Father) continues to actively spirate the Holy Spirit in the Trinity such that the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from his relation of origin remains unchanged as from eternity, even in the Holy Spirit's four visible missions during the incarnation. I will defend my thesis by considering the visible missions Aquinas identifies in two sections per divine mission: (1) In section 1, I interpret the biblical text describing the Holy Spirit's visible mission; (2) in section 2, I offer a theological reading of God's Trinitarian relations in the Holy Spirit's divine mission.

The Holy Spirit's First Visible Mission: Christ's Baptism (Matt 3:13–17; cf. Luke 3:21–22; Mark 1:9–11; John 1:29–36)

God sends John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17; cf. Mal 4:5–6). John baptizes and instructs people not to trust their ethnic ties to Abraham for salvation (vv. 7–10), repent, and live righteously. As the kingdom of heaven has come near (Matt 3:2), John prepares the hearts of his hearers (v. 5) for "the one who comes after . . . is more powerful" (v. 11). Christ is unique (cf. Luke 3:15–16). Not only will he bring the message of salvation (Matt 3:6); Christ ushers in the kingdom of heaven (v. 2)

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[12] Vidu remarks that personal actions have two necessary conditions: (1) a change in the world, and (2) an intentional agent ascribed responsibility. From a Trinitarian perspective, the whole Trinity acts together in these four visible missions of the Holy Spirit, although the Holy Spirit alone is the term of the visible signs. The result is a state that only characterizes the Holy Spirit. Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, 160, 162.

[13] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 53.

[14] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 49.

so that Jews and Gentiles can receive salvation from God's wrath and be gathered into the barn (v. 12). John also alerts listeners to Christ's more powerful baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Christ approaches John at the Jordan for baptism to fulfill his mediatorial duties (v. 13).[15] Initially reluctant, John attempts to prevent this (v. 14); however, Christ persuades John: "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness" (v. 15).[16] Christ's baptism inaugurates his ministry and discloses the necessity of obeying God in his perfectly righteous life.[17] By fulfilling all righteousness (v. 15) in his work on earth, Christ can baptize his followers with the Holy Spirit (v. 11). Immediately after John baptizes Jesus, he sees "the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him" (v. 16).

Osborn believes the "imagery of the dove" for the Holy Spirit combines four ideas from the Old Testament: (1) "the Spirit of God hovering over creation [Gen 1:2], thus signifying a new creation";[18] (2) "the Spirit as a symbol of Israel (Hos 7:11), with

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[15] Grant Osborne notes the main idea of this passage: "[I]n inaugurating his ministry via baptism, Jesus not only fulfills the OT . . . but also fulfills all of God's righteous requirements by identifying with us in our need to be reconciled to God." Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2010), 120. He suggests that "the two leading ideas are in v. 15 ('fulfill all righteousness') and v. 17 ('This is my Son whom I love')" (121). The Gospels contain sparse information regarding his life before the baptism, which may emphasize Christ's ministerial work post-baptism.

[16] Osborne suggests that John's hesitancy stems from the Evangelist's understanding that "baptism signifies repentance," and John's implied knowledge of Christ's sinlessness causes John to question Jesus's desire for baptism. Osborne, *Matthew*, 123. Christ "does not need to repent, but by submitting to baptism Jesus begins his messianic work by identifying with the human need and providing the means by which it can be accomplished" (124).

[17] "As connected with the will of God," Osborne opines, Christ's baptism fittingly fulfills all righteousness because he "means to complete all that God has set out for him to do." Osborne, *Matthew*, 123. Christ's righteousness is the means by which sinners can mercifully be spared from the fire that never goes out. Later, in his ministry on earth, Christ will be "thrown into the fire" (v. 9) and receive sinners' punishment in their place on the cross.

[18] Osborne, *Matthew*, 124, citing David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New Century Bible (Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1972) 96–97; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 95; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, International Critical Commentary (1988; repr., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 334; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33A (Dallas: Word, 1993), 58; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 62.

Jesus as the ideal, true Israelite";[19] (3) "the dove returning to Noah's ark (Gen 8:8–12) with the imagery of a new world being inaugurated";[20] and (4) "the dove as a messenger signifying to Jesus the divinely commissioned role set for him."[21] The four themes behind the Spirit's descent signify God's inauguration of a new age through "the coming of the Messiah, God's very Son."[22] Christ's ministry ties to John's message of repentance from sin and turning to God for salvation. As such, the voice from heaven identifies Christ as the "beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased" (v. 17).

Grant Osborne contends that verse 17 references two Old Testament passages. First, Jesus fulfills the role of the "Davidic king" as Matthew's Gospel describes Jesus with "echoes [of] Ps 2:7 . . . thereby showing that the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit was a messianic anointing of the King of kings."[23] Second, the "descent of the Spirit of God" signifies that God divinely identifies his chosen servant in fulfillment of "well-known messianic prophecies in Isaiah."[24] In sum, the Spirit anoints Jesus—the Davidic king and Yahweh's chosen Servant.[25]

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[19] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125, citing Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 67.

[20] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125, citing Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 132–33.

[21] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125, citing John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 156.

[22] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125.

[23] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125. Osborne notes that Christ was not adopted in his baptism; rather, "it is clearly a commissioning scene. Jesus was Son of God before this (cf. 1:23; 3:15)" (125n25).

[24] Cf. Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 121. In Osborne's exegesis, he recognizes a "second OT passage behind [verse 17, namely,] . . . Isa 42:1." Osborne, *Matthew*, 125. France notes the significance of Christ's baptism from the New and Old Testaments. France perceives the heaven opening with parallels with "a visionary experience" in the NT (cf. John 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 4:1; 19:11) and "a theophanic vision" in Ezekiel 1:1 (cf. Eek 2:2; Isa 63:19). France, 121. France believes God works to redeem his people through the man God sends to carry out God's prophetic work in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[25] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125. Stephen J. Wellum makes this point: "Even at his baptism and the beginning of his earthly ministry," Christ's mediates as "the promised David Son–King to fulfill God's covenantal promises . . . to save a people for himself." Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 151.

A Theological Interpretation of God's Trinitarian Relations at Christ's Baptism

As Christ "went up immediately from the water," the text presents the Holy Spirit's visible mission: Christ sees the Spirit of God in dove form (v. 16)—"in a physical appearance" (cf. Luke 3:22) —and rest on him (Christ). In John's Gospel, the writer further notes that the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descends from heaven and continues to rest on the Son (John 1:32–33). The Third Person's visible mission identifies "the Spirit-filled Davidic Messiah, Son of God, and Servant"[26] and discloses the Spirit's eternal principle.

The personal missions reveal personal processions: the descending dove manifests the Holy Spirit's notional act. The Trinitarian relations in God do not alter in the temporal sending. The witnesses of the Son's baptism experience the created effect of God's eternal procession *ad extra*: "Here, at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, the Holy Spirit is sent" by the Son according to both the Son's divine and human natures "to disclose in Christ the power (*auctoritas*) to regenerate people's spirit by giving them grace."[27] The Holy Spirit's invisible substance was not seen,[28] nor did the Third Person unite with a visible creature becoming a dove—"the Spirit is not 'in' the sign [the dove]."[29] Instead, the form that descended is a sign of the divine person's presence in creation in a new way, "'in' someone else. . . . The dove at Christ's baptism points to the Spirit's mission to, and presence in, Christ."[30] This temporary mode as a dove visibly

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[26] Osborne, *Matthew*, 125.

[27] Emery cites Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 7 ad. 6. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 411.

[28] Aquinas cites Augustine, and Legge cites Aquinas, *ST* III.39 art. 6 ad 2. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 50.

[29] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 51.

[30] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 51. My theological interpretation of the text—the dove physically manifests the Holy Spirit—disagrees with Davies and Allison's suggestion that only Christ experiences a vision. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1–7*, 320. Aquinas distinguishes between the Holy Spirit's visible mission, which "is always a sign of an invisible mission," from the Holy Spirit's unique presence in Christ's human nature. Legge cites Aquinas, *In Matt.* c. 3 lect. 2 (no. 301). Legge, 170. "In Christ," the Holy Spirit's visible mission "does not signify a new effect, because from the instant of his conception he was full of grace and truth." Legge cites Aquinas, *In Matt.* c. 3 lect. 2 (no. 301).

reveals an already existing, invisible reality: the Holy Spirit's invisible mission to Christ, which occurs at the moment of Mary's conception of Christ.[31] In other words, the dove manifests and glorifies the Holy Spirit's principle, the Son: "For each thing that is from another, manifests that from which it is[.] . . . Therefore, because the Holy Spirit is from

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[31] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 51; cf. Aquinas, *ST* III.34 art. 1. Vidu nuances the discussion on the conception. More precisely, Vidu interprets the Holy Spirit's activity to Christ's human nature at the virginal conception by referring to the doctrine of appropriation. Vidu distinguishes between inseparable Trinitarian actions and divine missions. In the case of the former, "the operation of the whole Trinity [is] . . . appropriated to the Spirit specifically, and [thus is] not a mission *strictu sensu*." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 35. In the case of the latter, Vidu refers to Augustine's query about Old Testament theophanies, which are not divine missions since "self-communicating of the [divine] persons" do not take place. By my estimation, I can offer distinctions to specify a Protestant reading of the divine missions that maintain the procession-mission model, theophanies, Pentecost's uniqueness, and the rejection of apostolic succession. The events that concern me are Mary's virginal conception and Christ's breath in the upper room (John 20:22).

First, Mary's conception is not a divine mission of the Spirit. I follow Vidu's explanation in Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 34–35. However, I follow Legge's explanation for the Holy Spirit's invisible mission to Christ's human nature at the moment of the conception. Tyler R. Wittman summarizes Legge's description of the Spirit's invisible mission to Christ: "Legge shows how the Spirit's invisible mission to the Son in grace accounts for the Son's gifts of grace, including his beatific vision and prophetic knowledge, as well as the entitative and operative *habitus* that enable the Son's human nature and agency to operate in perfect accord with his divine nature." Tyler R. Wittman, review of *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, by Dominic Legge, *Themelios* 42, no. 2 (August 2017): 393–94. The Holy Spirit's invisible mission to Christ in Mary's womb results in vast metaphysical implications for salvation. Christ *qua* human being receives the grace of union, which precedes Christ's reception of habitual grace *via* the Holy Spirit's invisible mission "by order of nature and understanding." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 147. On Legge's exegesis of Aquinas's priority of the grace of union without introducing temporal succession or priority between the divine processions in *ST* III.7 art. 13, see Legge, 146–57. I follow Aquinas's theological interpretation of Mary's conception. This does not commit the error of mixing up the order of the divine missions because Christ's visible mission precedes the Spirit's invisible mission to the human nature.

Second, per Aquinas, the Holy Spirit's third visible mission is his "outpouring on Mary and the Apostles on the night of the resurrection." Wittman, review of *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 393. Aquinas and the Roman Catholic tradition postulate the two visible missions to the apostles mirror the two visible missions to Christ, signifying the "gifts of grace he [the Holy Spirit] bestows on Christ to save and teach." Wittman, 393. A Protestant reading of this passage does not need to affirm apostolic succession; instead, I suggest we consider the unique office of apostleship God designed as a temporary position of authority in the early church. Gregg R. Allison, *The Church: An Introduction*, SSST (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 57.

I liken the Holy Spirit's visible mission to how the Holy Spirit regenerated but did not permanently indwell God's old covenant followers. The Holy Spirit's did not yet indwell the apostles in John 20:22, but Christ's breath manifests a spiritual reality in their soul (their regeneration). This visible mission is unique in two ways. (1) This sign of the apostles' regeneration is distinct from old covenant believers' regeneration because they lived during the transition of the old to the new covenant. Since this event happens after Christ's visible mission, the breath signifies the apostles' unseen reality: the impermanent indwelling Holy Spirit prepares them for the Spirit's permanent indwelling under the new covenant and their unique roles in bringing God's salvation and teaching to the world. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In Ioan.* c. 20 lect. 4 (no. 2539); Bruce D. Marshall, "What Does the Spirit Have to Do?," in *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Exegesis and Speculative Theology*, ed. Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 63. (2) This sign of the apostles' regeneration is distinct from new covenant believers' regeneration. Following Pentecost and the inauguration of the new covenant, the Holy Spirit regenerates and permanently indwells every Christian. This interpretation of the third visible mission guards the epic event of Pentecost in salvation history.

the Son, it is proper to [the Spirit] . . . to glorify the Son."[32] By virtue of his personal property, the Son sends the Holy Spirit on his first visible mission at the Jordan. The Holy Spirit's *reditus* to his principle[33] leads (1) those who witness the baptism and (2) Christ's followers, ultimately, to know the Father and the Son.

The Father reveals himself after the Holy Spirit's descent. In response to the Son's baptism, a voice from heaven states: "You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased" (cf. Luke 3:22; Mark 1:11). The Father makes himself known through his intimately phrased pronouncement, "my beloved Son."[34] The subject of John's baptism is none other than the eternal Son, whom the Father sends in a visible mission (the incarnation) because the Father is the Son's eternal principle. Christ's perfect love and obedience to the Father results in the Father announcing his pleasure with his beloved to the bystanders' benefit.[35] By grace, Christ gives his followers a share in his sonship through the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work of conforming Christians to his principle.[36] As a result, the Father loves and is pleased with his adopted children.

In summary, the Holy Spirit's descending presence in the dove and the Father's audible message confirm John's message of repentance: God fulfills the promise

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[32] Legge cites Thomas Aquinas, *In Ioan.* c. 16 lect. 14 (nos. 2106–2107). Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 225. The concept of glorifying one's principle of origin applies here. The same idea applies to the Son and Father: the Son manifests the Father because he is from the Father.

[33] Recall Legge's explanation of the Holy Spirit's dual fundamental aspects in his (and the Christians in virtue of participation in the Holy Spirit's) return to God.

[34] Aquinas interprets the manifestation of the dove: "The visible mission was directed to Christ at the time of His baptism by the figure of a dove, a fruitful animal, to show forth in Christ the authority of the giver of grace by spiritual regeneration; hence, the Father's voice spoke, *This is My beloved Son* (Matt 3:17), that other might be regenerated to the likeness of the only Begotten." Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 7 ad. 6 (emphasis original).

[35] When I say "results in," I mean the Father is the Son's principle rather than a causal dependency of the Son on the Father that may insinuate hierarchy and subordination. The Son makes his principle known. Moreover, by virtue of the Son's human nature, the Son obeys and pleases the Father.

[36] Although I rely on Aquinas's theological sensibilities on God's forgiveness of sins through Christ's substitutionary death, the Protestant doctrine of justification—a forensic declaration of Christ's righteousness imputed to a human being, by grace, through faith—differs from a Roman Catholic teaching or lack thereof. Nevertheless, Roman Catholics and Protestants can agree on the present concepts, God's gracious act of adoption and deification (or sanctification).

of sending his chosen kingly servant—the one on whom God's Spirit rests—to usher in God's rule and reign in a new way through Christ's impending work as the sacrificial Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1:36).[37] The Father sends his beloved Son, and Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit and wield his winnowing shovel to separate the repentant from unrepentant people (Matt 3:11–12).[38]

The Holy Spirit's Second Visible Mission: Christ's Transfiguration (Luke 9:28–36; cf. Matt 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13)

The Synoptic Gospels include an account of Christ's transfiguration. Christ privately brings Peter, James, and John up to the mountain to pray (Luke 9:28). During Christ's prayer, "the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white" (v. 29). Matthew illustrates the change of Christ's face resembling the sun (Matt 17:2). Mark notes the effect on Christ's clothes, which "became dazzling—extremely white as no launderer on earth could whiten them" (Mark 9:4).[39] As Christ radiated like the star in the solar system, "Suddenly, two men were talking with him—Moses and Elijah" (Luke 9:30). The three men converse about Christ's impending work carried out in obedience to the Father, by the Holy Spirit (v. 31). Initially, the sleeping apostles miss the events (v. 32); when they awake and see Christ's glory with Moses and Elijah (v. 32), terror grips the apostles (Mark 9:6). As the two deceased prophets—influential human beings in the old covenant and yet infinitely lesser in every way than the Christ[40]—take

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[37] Osborne believes the Holy Spirit manifests God's kingdom's presence in the world. Osborne, *Matthew*, 127.

[38] The Son baptizes his followers with the Holy Spirit, the invisible mission of the Spirit to Christians. Following the Spirit's visible mission at Pentecost in the church's birth, God dwells in every Christ follower, unique to the new covenant.

[39] Cf. David E. Garland, *Luke*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2011), 392; Barbara E. Reid, *The Transfiguration: A Source- and Redaction-Critical Study of Luke 9:28–36*, Cahiers de la Revue Biblique (Paris: Gabalda, 1993), 115.

[40] Darrell Bock interprets Moses and Elijah's appearance: "The best suggestion is that Moses typifies the prophetic office that Jesus will occupy (as the later allusion to Deut. 18:15 suggests), while Elijah pictures the hope of the eschaton." These two prophets illuminate the significance of who Jesus is

their leave, Peter interjects, "Master, it's good for us to be here. Let's set up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (v. 33). While Peter proposes a suggestion, the triune God reveals himself.

The appearance of a cloud overshadows the group (v. 34). David Garland explains, "The cloud is a veil and vehicle of divine glory that signifies God's presence (Exod 24:15–18; 13:21–22; 16:10; 40:34; 2 Sam 22:12)."[41] A voice from the cloud then reiterates the message from the Christ's baptism: this is the beloved Son (v. 35; cf. Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7). However, distinct from the baptism, the voice includes instructions to obey and listen to the "Son, the Chosen One" (Luke 9:35). In light of Christ's imminent departure to Jerusalem (v. 31), Christ's transfiguration reveals to the disciples "(and to the reader) that suffering and death are not incompatible with heavenly glory."[42]

A Theological Interpretation of God's Trinitarian Relations at Christ's Transfiguration

The sign in the Holy Spirit's second visible mission is the mass suspended in the atmosphere that appears amidst Peter's chaotic experience—"while he was saying this" (v. 34). As the cloud overshadows the men, an audible voice declares that Jesus is God's Chosen One; thus, they ought to listen to Christ's message. The voice belongs to

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and the work he will accomplish in different and complementary ways: "Jesus will function as a Moses-like formative figure for the people he draws round himself, much as Moses drew together the nation of Israel. With Jesus comes a new period, a new configuration of God's people, a fresh way of relating to God. Thus, Elijah is present as the hope of the eschaton (Mal. 4:5–6 [3:23–24 MT])." Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, vol. 1, *1:1–9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 868.

[41] Garland, *Luke*, 395.

[42] Garland, *Luke*, 392. Garland contends that the transfiguration—"a preview of Jesus' future glory"—primarily benefits the apostles rather than Jesus himself. Garland, 392, citing Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 380.

the Father; he refers to Christ as his Son. The Holy Spirit's relation to the three apostles "is made present in a new way, according to the created effect," the cloud.[43]

The Father and Son eternally spirate the Holy Spirit. Fittingly, the Holy Spirit is sent from his principle "upon Christ in the appearance of a cloud."[44] Darrell Bock asserts, "The cloud's presence seems to be God's answer to Peter's suggestion [in Luke 9:33]: no [shelters] are needed since God has wrapped the disciples in his glory and presence. . . . [T]hrough [Christ] . . . they have access to full communion and presence with God."[45] The cloud is a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence and mission: the Holy Spirit points the disciples to the transfigured Son because God's people find ultimate deliverance from sin through the Chosen One's suffering. As a sign of the Holy Spirit's mission, the cloud illuminates an unseen reality—"Christ always has the fullness of the Spirit dwelling in his humanity."[46] The cloud manifests an eternal procession.

The apostles perceive this created effect, a new reality on the side of creatures, and hear the voice and fall facedown out of terror (Matt 17:6). With compassion, "Jesus came up, touched them, and said, 'Get up; don't be afraid.' When they looked up they

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[43] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 15. On the cloud as a created effect, Legge cites Aquinas, *In Ioan.* c. 20 lect. 4 (no. 2539); see Legge, 57. Aquinas avers, "The Transfiguration showed it forth in the appearance of a bright cloud, to show the exuberance of doctrine." Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 7 ad. 6. Emery translates *ad ostendendam exuberantiam doctrinae* this way: "[T]o show the fecundity of [the Son's] teaching." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 411.

[44] Legge cites Aquinas, *In Ioan.* c. 20 lect. 4 (no. 2539); see Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 57. In virtue of his divine and human natures, the Son sends the Holy Spirit as Christ converses with Moses and Elijah around the apostles.

[45] On erecting three shelters in verse 32, Bock provides his analysis: "This key festival in Judaism looked back at God's provision in the wilderness and was regarded as anticipating God's ultimate deliverance. Apparently, Peter understood Moses' and Elijah's presence to have eschatological overtones." Bock, *Luke*, 1:873. Here in verse 34, then, God responds to Peter.

[46] Aquinas, *ST* III.34 art. 1. I extrapolate from Legge's theological interpretation of the dove at the first visible mission: the Holy Spirit's invisible substance was not seen, nor did the Third Person unite with a visible creature become a cloud—"the Spirit is not 'in' the sign [the cloud]." Aquinas, *ST* III.39 art. 6 ad. 2, cited in Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 50–51. The cloud signifies the Holy Spirit's presence in creation in a new way, "'in' someone else. . . . [It] points to the Spirit's mission to, and presence in, Christ." Legge, 51. This temporary mode as a cloud visibly reveals an already existing, invisible reality: the Holy Spirit's invisible mission to Christ, beginning at Mary's conception. The cloud manifests and glorifies the Holy Spirit's principle, the Son.

saw no one except Jesus alone" (vv. 7–8). While the apostles lie prostrate on the ground, Moses, Elijah, the cloud, and the voice leave (so to speak) and Christ remains. God reveals the Trinitarian dynamics in the transfiguration.

The Father chooses the Son to carry out the work of salvation and the apostles ought to listen to the Son's message about the messianic kingdom: Jesus is greater than Moses and Elijah because the incarnate Son is the Messiah-Servant who leads human beings back to the Father.[47] The Father's voice and the Holy Spirit's appearance as a cloud spotlight Christ's work and ministry. "The reason for this," interprets Aquinas, "is that the grace of Christ, which is given through the Holy Spirit, was to be derived to us . . . through teaching (and thus he descended in a luminous cloud). Hence also Christ is there shown [to be] a teacher, so it says 'Listen to him.'"[48] God manifests himself in a visible sign to the creature's benefit. As Bock summarizes, "God is saying, 'sit at [Jesus's] feet, so you can learn from him the way to me.'"[49] As the church gathers around Christ, the typological fulfillment of Moses and Israel, Christ teaches his followers about their future hope, the typological fulfillment of Elijah and the old covenant.[50] The apostles do not fully understand the meaning behind the event (cf. Luke 9:45), but they will realize it in time by the Holy Spirit's illumination.[51]

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[47] See the discussion in Bock, *Luke*, 1:873–74. Bock writes, "Jesus is identified as the Messiah-Servant, the fundamental christological category that Luke has presented up to this point."

[48] Legge cites Aquinas, *In Ioan.* c. 20 lect. 4 (no. 2539). Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 57.

[49] Bock, *Luke*, 1:874.

[50] Bock explicates, "Moses, the founding figures of the nation, and Elijah, the prophet of the eschaton, testify to [Christ] and are subordinate to [Christ]." Bock, *Luke*, 1:876. Bock states, "The cloud probably alludes "to the Shekinah glory of Exodus" (1:866). Bock cites I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 387; Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 200; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 802.

[51] Aquinas contends, "The Son, as the Word, gives us his teaching, but the Holy Spirit makes us capable of receiving that teaching." Aquinas *In Ioan.* c. 14 lect. 6 (no. 1958), cited in Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 225. The Holy Spirit leads Christians to know his principle.

Following the transfiguration, the Son commands his disciples, "Don't tell anyone about the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead" (Matt 17:9; cf. Mark 9:10). Nevertheless, despite momentary lack of clarity, Christ briefly reveals his glory, though not in full. Moreover, God communes with his people through the Holy Spirit's presence. With the apostles, God's people will enjoy a fuller experience of God's glory the beatific vision in the eschaton.

The Holy Spirit's Third Visible Mission: Christ's Breath (John 20:19–23)

After Christ's resurrection, the disciples discover the empty tomb. Although "they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead" (John 20:9), the disciples obey Christ's instruction to wait for him in Galilee (Matt 28:7, 28:10; Mark 16:7). On Sunday evening of Easter weekend, the disciples gather behind locked doors in fear of the Jews (John 20:19). Then, "Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, 'Peace be with you'" (v. 20). Joy at Christ's return replaces the disciples' fear. Christ proves the efficacy of his death and the legitimacy of his resurrected life by appearing to his disciples, who witness their embodied, scarred Lord (v. 20). Christ reiterates the idea of peace (cf. v. 19) as he sends out his followers in a manner that reflects how the Father sent Christ (v. 21). The disciples will forgive or retain the sins of any person through the Holy Spirit (v. 23).[52]

Christ "blows" (ἐνεφύσησεν) the Holy Spirit to the disciples,[53] and he instructs them to "receive the Holy Spirit" (v. 22). Edward Klink connects "blows" to two

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At Christ's return from the grave and the Holy Spirit's future visible mission, the apostles will understand Christ's incarnation more clearly.

[52] I will speak more directly on the notion of apostolic succession in a later section. The Catholic Church identifies Christ's breath as vital evidence for giving primacy to the apostles and eventually the papacy.

[53] Edward Klink provides information on the use of the verb: "This term only occurs here in the NT, though it occurs ten times in the LXX. . . . When compared to other uses in the LXX, its sense is much stronger than 'breathe,' for it is used in Job 4:21 of a hot wind and in Sirach 43:4 of igniting coals of a blazing furnace." Klink cites H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed.

important uses of the same verb in the LXX. (1) Genesis 2:7 states, "Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and *blew* [ἐνεφύσησεν] into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living person." (2) Ezekiel 37:9 reads, "*Blow* [ἐμφύσησον] into these slain that they may come to life." The two concepts suggest that John's "Gospel guides the reader to see here an act of creation."[54] By the Holy Spirit, Christ establishes his followers "as a ministering agent in the world, and by the same Spirit Jesus . . . [empowers] this new humanity to do what Adam and others failed to do," namely, represent God and minister in the world.[55] Christ "declares in word *and* deed" that the Holy Spirit re-creates God's creation and enables the disciples to participate in God's work of salvation.[56]

A Theological Interpretation of God's Trinitarian Relations at Christ's Breath

John emphasizes the notion that the Father sends the Son in previous chapters of his Gospel account, such as the Farewell Discourse in John 14–17. John succinctly repeats his affirmation of this sending in verse 21: "[A]s the Father has sent me." A similitude exists between the Father sending the Son and the Son sending his disciples. However, it would be wise to stress the dissimilitude between the Son's visible mission and the disciples' mission, which subsequently informs the nature of the church's mission (cf. Matt 28:18–20). The parallel sending is not univocal.[57] Christ's human nature

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(Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 551; see Edward W. Klink III, *John*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2016), 862. Hence, Klink believes that "this particular verb is more commonly used to describe a stronger or more powerful breathing, best translates as a kind of 'blowing.'"

[54] Klink, *John*, 862.

[55] Klink cites Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 569–572; see Klink, *John*, 862.

[56] Klink, *John*, 863.

[57] D. A. Carson points out that "any parallel must be entirely derivative." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 648.

receives the Spirit "in the fullest possible measure, and consequently every grace, gift, charism that a human nature can receive."[58] I notice three points of dissimilitude between the Father sending the Son and the Son sending his apostles.[59]

First, the Father sending the Son reflects an eternal procession (generation); the apostles are not eternally begotten of the Son. The Son enjoys perfection, fullness of life, and omnipotence as God;[60] finite creatures depend on God.[61] God imparts new spiritual life to Christians and empowers their work as sent ones through the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence.

Second, a real distinction does not exist between a divine person and that person's eternal relations in God. Additionally, the Father eternally generating the Son is conceptually (and not really) distinct from the Father sending the Son on a temporal mission since the divine missions do not posit a change in God. Taking the two concepts together, the Son's procession *via* filiation and being sent in the incarnation is to continue his immutable subsistence as the Second Person. Creatures, however, possess potentiality; thus, they are subject to receive accidents.[62] A creature's essence and existence are not identical. When God sends Christians, the Holy Spirit gives grace to Christians to obey, resulting in a real change in the sent one's disposition. The Holy Spirit formally causes Christ's followers to grow in their love for God as evidenced in their obedient mission.

Third, the Son in his human nature receives the Holy Spirit and his gifts in full. For Christians, "[t]he Holy Spirit is given partially [to creatures], not with respect to his

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[58] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 178.

[59] This is not an exhaustive list of dissimilarities.

[60] I will discuss these divine attributes in chapter 6.

[61] Creatures are beings by participation; God is essential being. Aquinas, *ST* I.4 art. 3 ad. 3.

[62] There are no accidents in God. Aquinas, *ST* I.3 art. 6.

essence and power (in this sense, he is infinite), but with respect to the gifts which are given by measure."[63] For the apostles, the Holy Spirit will fully dwell in them *via* an invisible mission after Pentecost, and they will also receive gifts partially.

By clarifying three dissimilarities, I offer a Trinitarian explanation for Christ's breath as a unified act of God and its implications for the disciples' mission. To speak anachronistically, (1) Christ's disciples await the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and (2) Christ's breathing on them prepares them for their mission. Christ's breath on the apostles is a visible mission of the Holy Spirit—the breath is a sign of the otherwise invisible reality of the Holy Spirit's power that the apostles will receive. This event promises a future reality,[64] pointing to the Holy Spirit's visible mission ensuing the Son's ascension. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will inaugurate the church; in the meantime, the apostles symbolically receive the coming Holy Spirit. Theodore Mopsuestia exegetically argues "that v. 22 is to be regarded as a symbolic promise of the gift of the Spirit later to be given (*i.e.* at Pentecost)."[65] In Scripture, the words "wind," "breath," and "spirit" can represent (1) God because he is immaterial in essence, commonly speaking, as well as (2) the Third Person, relatively speaking.[66] God is spirit, and "Holy Spirit" is a proper name

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[63] Legge cites Aquinas, *In Ioan.* c. 3 lect. 6 (no. 542). Aquinas references Ephesians 4:7, "Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 161.

[64] Gregg Allison and Andreas Köstenberger characterize this breathing event "as an enacted parable or harbinger of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (John 20:19–23; Acts 2:1–4, 33)." Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 259.

[65] After supplying three alternative views, Carson unpacks his own, which follows Mopsuestia's: "Although [Theodore's] view [is] . . . condemned at the fifth ecumenical council at Constantinople in AD 553, and is usually given short shrift today, much can be said in its favour." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 651. Further, Carson names verse 22 an *acted parable*: "Jesus' 'exhalation' and command *Receive the Holy Spirit* is best understood as a kind of acted parable pointing forward to the full enduement still to come (though in the past for John's readers)" (655; emphasis original).

[66] Carson comments, "Both the Hebrew word rûaḥ and the Greek word pneuma can mean 'breath' or 'wind' as well as 'spirit', though in the New Testament any meaning other than 'Spirit' is extremely rare." Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 197.

for the Third *Hypostasis*. Fittingly, the Son (and Father) breathes forth the Holy Spirit in this third visible mission.

As the Holy Spirit's eternal principle, the Son discloses the second eternal procession to the apostles in his breath.[67] In Aquinas's estimation, Christ's breath is the Holy Spirit's visible mission because creation experiences the Third Person in a new mode. As a result of the apostles' impending reception of the Holy Spirit, Christ tasks them with a unique responsibility: Christ gives the apostles the keys of the kingdom of heaven to lay the church's foundation following its inauguration (Matt 16:18–19).[68] Signified by the third visible mission, Christ sends the Holy Spirit by virtue of his divine (active spiration with the Father) and human (Christ's capital grace) natures.[69] D. A. Carson underscores the context of John 20:23, which supports the idea of the apostles' divinely appointed mission: "[W]here the context is the mission of Jesus' disciples (v. 21)

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[67] Cf. Augustine comments on Christ's breath as a "convenient symbolic demonstration that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father." Augustine, *The Trinity* 4.5.29 (Hill, 182). The Father's eternal generation of the Son gives the Son his mode of subsistence in the divine essence, including spirating the Holy Spirit from eternity. Moreover, because the Father and the Son together spirate the Holy Spirit, the Son can make two affirmations: (1) the Father sent him, and (2) he sends the Spirit. "Consequently, acting as both God and man," Legge clarifies, "Christ sends the Holy Spirit visibly to the apostles on the evening of the resurrection . . . so that they would in turn give a share of the Holy Spirit to all the faithful. In this way, Christ's humanity serves as a fount of living water, pouring forth salvation for the whole world." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 221.

[68] "To the apostles the mission was directed in the form of breathing to show forth the power of their ministry." Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 7 ad. 6. However, contrary to Aquinas's understanding of the apostles dispensing the sacraments, I posit that the present passage and others, such as Matthew 16:18–19, does not warrant the development of the doctrine of apostolic succession. Christ is not describing an ongoing church office (apostleship), which in time is developed into the Catholic Church's papacy; rather, only the apostles of the early church function in this office because Christ delegated the unique responsibility to found and build the church to these men. An entailment to their death is the end of that office. By God's power and under their labor, the church was established.

[69] Legge explores Aquinas's notion of capital grace: "Christ's grace . . . as an individual man . . . is so full and perfect that Christ himself becomes the fount from which all others receive grace." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 163. See Legge's discussion on Christ's capital grace in Legge, 219–22. For an evangelical position, I offer Fred Sanders's explanation:

> The Holy Spirit communicates Christ's capital grace to Christians: What is redemptive about the incarnation is that God did not simply add more grace to a foundation which was already demonstrably unable to bear it; instead God provided a new foundation within humanity on which his grace could establish itself securely. Christ is the vicarious recipient of our grace and our deification; he receives the gifts of God perfectly and holds them for us from his location within humanity. (Fred Sanders, *The Image of the Immanent Trinity: Rahner's Rule and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, Issues in Systematic Theology [New York: Peter Lang, 2005], 26)

and the Spirit who empowers them (v. 22), the focus is evangelism."[70] The Holy Spirit will aid Christ's followers' mission through gifts of grace, and the charisms point back to the Holy Spirit's principle. The apostles may not yet understand the supernatural symbolism behind Christ's breath; however, the Holy Spirit's visible mission at Pentecost will bring clarity.

The Holy Spirit's Fourth Visible Mission: Tongues of Fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–12)

Christ prepares his disciples for his ascension to heaven. He commands them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the Father's promise (Acts 1:4) of which the Son previously spoke at his baptism: "[F]or John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days" (v. 5; cf. Matt 3:11). In their baptism with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will come upon and empower the disciples to fulfill their mission of witnessing about the inauguration of God's kingdom under the new covenant (v. 8). Following this conversation, the Son ascends to heaven (vv. 9–10), the disciples obediently return to Jerusalem (v. 12), and Christ's followers continually pray in unity (v. 14).

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[70] Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 655. The Spirit's invisible mission to every Christian gives grace to carry out the church's mission.

Further, an accurate interpretation of these passages warrants the practice of church discipline for the church's health and purity. For example, the church binds and looses in disciplinary cases, and the verdict reflects the preceding divine action to bind or loose someone (Matt 16:18–19; 18:18). Fundamentally, God bears the responsibility for pardoning or not pardoning sin; therefore, "who can forgive sins but God alone?" question the scribes and Pharisees (Mark 9:5, 7; Luke 5:20–21; Matt 9:2–3; cf. Exod 34:6–7; Isa 43:25).

In sum, strictly speaking, the apostles lay the church's foundation as representatives on Yahweh's behalf; generally speaking, the church removes unrepentant people from their congregation because, ontologically, regenerated human beings compose God's new covenant people.

Then, Pentecost arrives (2:1). While congregated together,[71] an unexpected and aggressive wind comes from heaven and fills the house,[72] and tongues resembling flames come upon the individuals in the room (vv. 1–3). The author, Luke, interprets the events for readers. In chapter one, Christ instructs his followers to wait in Jerusalem for the Father's promised Holy Spirit (1:4–5). As a result, God fills all the gathered disciples with the Holy Spirit, a filling supernaturally demonstrated by their tongues—that is, their ability to speak different languages they did not know (2:3–4). Eckhard Schnabel contends, "Wind and fire often accompany, and symbolize, the presence of God. . . . In light of Luke's description of the visible phenomena that the followers of Jesus experienced on the day of Pentecost, [he likely regards] . . . the wind and the light shaped like tongues of fire as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Luke 3:16."[73] The personal "optical phenomenon" of tongue-like fire appears "above each believer . . . [and] symbolizes 'the diversified power of speech that comes upon them.'"[74] This unnatural speech, enabled by the Holy Spirit (v. 4),[75] confuses the Jewish people who journeyed to Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven" (v. 5). The travelers hear their language spoken by Christ's

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[71] While some scholars do not see a connection between Sinai and Pentecost, Eckhard Schnabel willing postulates this reading: "If this connection is a valid background for Acts 2, Peter (and Luke) suggests that the Holy Spirit of God, poured out by the crucified, risen, and exalted Lord Jesus Christ, is in some way the Spirit of the new covenant." Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), 113. Schnabel draws a conclusion: the Holy Spirit renews the covenant and restores Israel.

[72] According to Schnabel, "This 'wind' (πνοή) is not identical with the Spirit—the Greek term (πνεῦμα), which means both 'Spirit' and 'wind,' is not used here; rather, the 'wind' signifies the coming of the Spirit." Schnabel, *Acts*, 114.

[73] Schnabel references Isaiah 11:1–4, 4:2–6: 9:2–7; Malachi 3:2–3; see Schnabel, *Acts*, 115.

[74] Schnabel cites Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Anchor Bible, vol. 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 238; see Schnabel, *Acts*, 115.

[75] Schnabel comments on the term "filling": "As fulfillment of Luke 3:16 and Acts 1:5, 'filling' (πίμπλημι) with the Holy Spirit is synonymous with 'immersion in' or 'being washed by' the Holy Spirit. Luke uses the aorist indicative form (ἐπλήσθησαν) with genitive of divine Spirit to designate 'short outbursts of spiritual power/inspiration, rather than the inception of long-term endowment of the Spirit.'" Schnabel, *Acts*, 115, citing Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 168. This distinction may explain "why a person might be 'filled with the Holy Spirit' on many occasions while at the same time remaining 'full' of the Spirit." Schnabel, 115. The Holy Spirit gives them their words.

disciples: “They were astounded and amazed, saying, ‘Look, aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language’” (vv. 6–8; cf. v. 12). The crowd witnesses the Holy Spirit-filled disciples declare God’s magnificent acts in their native tongues (vv. 11–12) and attribute this perplexing phenomenon to insobriety (vv. 12–13).

A Theological Interpretation of God’s Trinitarian Relations at Pentecost

Unlike the Holy Spirit’s first and second visible missions, this final mission finds similitude to the third;[76] the events at Pentecost more clearly display God’s internal ordering of the divine persons’ relations. Christ tells his apostles to remain in Jerusalem where they wait for the Father to fulfill his promise, the sending of the Holy Spirit (v. 4). When the apostles inquire into the time of Israel’s restoration, Christ speaks of the Father’s sole authority to know the periods he sets (v. 7). In these statements, Christ prepares the apostles for the Holy Spirit’s visible mission and discloses the nature of the Trinitarian persons’ relations.[77] The authoritative Father promises to send the Holy Spirit because the First Person is the principle (*auctor*) or source (*fons*) who proceeds from no one and from whom the Son and Holy Spirit (*a Filio*) each proceed.[78] Through a visible mission, the Third Person will empower Christ’s followers to witness about the kingdom of God (v. 3) and Christ (v. 8).

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[76] Given the conceptual complexity of Christ’s two natures in relation to divine missions, the first and second visible missions require a unique dexterity that navigates classical doctrines, (1) a model of the Trinity and (2) an interpretation of the hypostatic union.

[77] Christ is not revealing a real ontological distinction between the divine persons, nor is he describing authority and submission relations in the Trinity.

[78] The Father is *auctor* and *auctoritas*. Both names appropriately belong to the Father, though *auctor* is uniquely the Father’s name. Emery cites Aquinas: “[E]ven though the Son can be called principle [of the Holy Spirit], only the Father is named *auctor*.” Aquinas, I *Sent.* d. 29 q. 1 art. 1, cited in Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 159. On *fons*, Emery cites Aquinas: “[T]he Father is named source under his aspect of ‘principle without principle’ *auctoritas*.” Thomas Aquinas, *In Librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis nominibus expositio*, ed. Ceslas Pera (Turin: Marietti, 1950), chap. 2, lect. 2 (no. 155); lect. 4 (no. 181), cited in Emery, 159.

On Pentecost, the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit to the praying disciples, who experience the mission audibly and visually through fire. Legge clarifies that the Holy Spirit is not in the fire; instead, the flames signify the divine person's new mode of existence: "[T]he tongues of fire point to the Spirit's mission to, and presence in, those gathered in the upper room."[79] The Holy Spirit begins to exist in a new way from the creature's perspective. As a consequence of indwelling the disciples, the Holy Spirit enables them to speak in different languages. The tongues of fire expose the otherwise unseeable reality of the Holy Spirit coming upon Christians—by resting on each of the disciples.[80]

The Father fulfills his promise of sending the Holy Spirit, the other Paraclete (cf. John 14:26), and Christ baptizes the obedient apostles with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4; cf. Matt 3:11–12).[81] As the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from his principle, so the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit on his fourth visible mission to indwell the disciples.[82] Pentecost, then, is a momentous event in salvation history. The Holy Spirit's visible mission results in the birth of the church, God's new covenant people. The tongues resembling flames of fire reveal the sent Holy Spirit, who conforms Christians to resemble the Spirit's principle and the exemplar of Christian sanctification.[83] The disciples join Christ's mission of testifying of the inaugurated kingdom of God and the

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[79] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 51.

[80] Schnabel offers a distinction in this visible mission: "[T]he disciples' speaking in unlearned language is not presented by Luke as a means to facilitate the communication of the good news of God's mighty acts; rather, this miracle demonstrated the presence of God's Spirit, whose outpouring had been promised as a reality that would transform God's people." Schnabel, *Acts*, 125. The manifestation of fire teaches the disciples that God fulfilled his promise (Acts 1:4).

[81] Following the Spirit's visible mission at Pentecost, God dwells in every Christ follower, a unique reality under the new covenant. The tongues of fire inform readers of the personal or intimate nature of the Holy Spirit's invisible mission at the Christian's conversion.

[82] In his divine and human natures, the Son spirates the Holy Spirit. See Vidu's discussion on the necessity of Christ's human nature's gradual deification and final ascension before sending the Holy Spirit. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 44–45.

[83] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 224, 226.

way to the Father, first in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).[84]

The divine mission results in the disciples speaking in tongues and testifying that God's kingdom welcomes people from all ethnic backgrounds. While the Holy Spirit's visible mission at Pentecost remains a singularly unique occurrence in redemptive history, God sends the Holy Spirit *via* invisible missions to indwell all of Christ's followers. In both cases—the visible mission at Pentecost and the invisible mission to regenerate human beings—the Holy Spirit's mission is to the church. These two temporal sendings are different because the unique mission at Pentecost results in the inauguration of the universal church. In Acts 1–4, "[t]he Spirit appears in flames of fire and the miraculous speaking of many languages, [which] is to signify the flame of love and courage that alites in the hearts of the apostles, giving them the loving zeal and fortitude to preach the gospel publicly, even under threat of death.[85] Thomas J. White continues, "The many languages brought into unity represent the Church as a new universal font of truth, a reversal to the curse of Babel in Genesis 11:1–9, which signifies the many divisions of human culture that stem from the sins and illusory pretensions of the human race."[86] Yet in both scenarios, the triune God draws his people to himself, to know and love Christ. The Holy Spirit supplies power for God's message of salvation to go forth from Jerusalem to all nations under heaven (Acts 2:5). Regenerated creatures return to God as the church participates in the Third Person's *reditus*.

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[84] For the apostles, the fire discloses their unique teaching ministry in building the foundation of the church. Aquinas, *ST* I.43 art. 7 ad. 6.

[85] Thomas J. White, *The Trinity: On the Nature and Mystery of the One God*, Thomistic Ressourcement 19 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 661–62.

[86] White, *The Trinity*, 661–62.

Conclusion

A traditional doctrine of the Trinity satisfactorily interprets the biblical text on the Holy Spirit's visible missions.[87] I contended that the nature of the eternal Trinitarian relations function as a blueprint for explaining the Father and Son's temporal sending of the Holy Spirit, manifested in created effects for the benefit of creatures. From eternity the Father and the Son together spirate the Holy Spirit *in* se. In time, the Son (1) assumes a human nature; (2) receives the Holy Spirit, who fills Christ's human soul with grace; and (3) sends the Holy Spirit to Christians by virtue of his divine and human natures. The indwelling Holy Spirit's circular movement of *exitus* and *reditus* informs Christian living: the Holy Spirit makes known his principle and conforms the Christian to his principle.

In this chapter, I argued that the Son (with the Father) is the principle of the Holy Spirit—*ad intra* (eternal procession; active spiration) and *ad extra* (temporal mission)—so that even during the Son's visible mission (incarnation), the Father and Son remain the Holy Spirit's originating relation while the Holy Spirit simultaneously works in the human life of Jesus Christ. I accomplished this by focusing on Aquinas's Trinitarian theology that explains the traditional Christian doctrine of the divine Son's assumption of a human nature. By assessing Scripture's presentation of the four visible missions of the Holy Spirit as a triune act of God, I clarified the nature of the Holy Spirit's work in God's people.

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[87] A classical Trinitarian Christology ought to balance a Logos and Spirit Christology, which is not to say that Spirit Christology over-emphasizes the Holy Spirit's work in Christ's life; in fact, Sánchez's Spirit Christology seeks to remedy the under-emphasis of the Holy Spirit. To strengthen Trinitarian theology, Sánchez aims to bring together Logos and Spirit Christologies, respective to the local church context and tradition. His retrieval work shows sensitivity to a theologian's theological heritage and realizes that strengths and weaknesses differ per tradition. However, in this chapter, I demonstrated how the tradition provides a coherent explanation for the Holy Spirit's involvement in the incarnation. As an entailment, I do not believe theologians require developing a specific "Spirit Christology" as such to honor the Holy Spirit's personhood and work. A classical account of the Trinity proves to deliver a rich heritage that instructs interpreters to accurately know and love God the Holy Spirit.

I considered the Holy Spirit's four visible missions—Christ's baptism, Christ's transfiguration, Christ's breath, and Pentecost. In each scriptural passage on a divine mission, I offered a classical interpretation of the Holy Spirit's actions surrounding the event of the incarnation. I focused on the Holy Spirit, his person and work, while maintaining that the triune God operates inseparably *ad extra*. Even in the incarnation, the Father and the Son continually spirate the Holy Spirit such that the Son remains the Holy Spirit's principle. The final two divine missions provide clearer implications for the church's mission. Christ's followers participate in the Holy Spirit's circular movement, witness to Christ's mission, and return to God in glory.

CHAPTER 5

AN APPLICATION OF AMANDUS POLANUS'S "AXIOMS ABOUT THE MOST HOLY TRINITY" TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PROCESSION

Early Reformed theologian, Amandus Polanus,[1] produced eighteen axioms, *Axioms about the Most Holy Trinity, or the Three Persons of the One Deity*, which can be found in book three, chapter eight of his larger corpus, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*.[2] As important as Polanus is—a theological "consolidator and synthesizer" of the period of Reformed Scholasticism in the early Reformation, who delineated doctrinal distinctions between the Roman Catholic and Reformed theologies[3]—only small portions

[1] In his abstract in "Amandus Polanus: A Neglected Theologian?" Robert Letham introduces readers to Polanus and overviews Polanus's theological style:

> Amandus Polanus (1561–1610) is a key figure in the development of early Reformed orthodoxy. His major systematic works are marked by Aristotelian causal analysis and, most strikingly, by the methodology of Ramism. He is scholastic in his concern for precision and clarity of presentation and in his polemical defense of Reformed doctrine. Yet he shows little interest in metaphysical speculation. His doctrine of God is central but it and predestination are balanced by other interests: Christology, covenant, ethics, and praxis. A consolidator not an innovator, his concern is to preserve Reformed teaching, so serving the contemporary needs of the church. (Robert Letham, "Amandus Polanus: A Neglected Theologian?," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, no. 3 (1990): 463)

[2] This chapter has been adapted from S. M. S. Cheng, "The Holy Spirit's Procession in God's Triune Life: An Application of Amandus Polanus' Eighteen Axioms on the Trinity," *SBJT* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2024): 114–51. Used with permission.

[3] Stephen Tipton highlights the significance of Polanus's work by setting the historical stage: "The period of early Reformed Scholasticism was . . . a period wherein the newness of the Reformation gave way to the systematic exposition of the whole of Post-Reformation thought, stressing as appropriate both points of continuity and discontinuity with the past." Stephen Tipton, "Defining 'Our Theology': Amandus Polanus on the Fundamental Task of the Theologian," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 10, no. 4 (2016): 291–92. Polanus, then, "is an important figure in the development of the Reformed tradition generally, and of the Reformed Scholastic period specifically" (293). His writing represents "what the Reformed church of the early Reformation period generally thought on these issues" from his Reformed orthodox perspective. Specifically, the *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* is "a systematic work touching upon every head of Christian doctrine—both in terms of what a Christian is to believe (faith) and do (ethics)."

of his work have been recently translated into English.[4] Both the Post-Reformation period and contemporary theological discourse may look to Polanus's dogmatic writing as a representative voice of the Christian tradition "to define what is 'our theology.'"[5]

The axioms on the Trinity generally focus on the eternal relation between the Father and the Son. This chapter seeks to move through Polanus's eighteen axioms and reflect on them with a focus on developing the classical doctrine of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.[6] The axioms will function as a framework as I aim to rehearse the manner in which the Third Person is constituted by relations and distinguished by his unique personal property, passive spiration. I will consider the eighteen axioms in the following pattern: (1) summarize the axiom; (2) provide commentary on the axiom in view of the Holy Spirit's procession;[7] and (3) include secondary literature written from a classical Trinitarian perspective to substantiate my commentary.

Axiom One

In axiom one, Polanus foregrounds God's unity of being in his definition of "Trinity": "The sacred Trinity is God—indeed, the single, only God." In speaking of threeness in God, Polanus employs redoublement, or doubled-speech, in which "the

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[4] I have in mind a recent publication, Casey Carmichael and Zachary Purvis, trans., *Justification by Faith Alone: Selected Writings from Theodore Beza, Amandus Polanus, and Francis Turretin* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2023), which translates Polanus's *The Free Justification of Man the Sinner before God* (1615) into English. At large, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* remains untranslated.

[5] Tipton, "Defining 'Our Theology,'" 293.

[6] I will use Ryan M. Hurd's translation of Polanus's eighteen axioms, which Fred Sanders and Hurd share on the Torrey Honors College website; see Amandus Polanus, "Eighteen Axioms on the Trinity," in *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*, bk. 3, trans. Ryan M. Hurd, https://scriptoriumdaily.com/axioms-on-the-trinity/. I will rely on Sanders and Hurd's discussion as they work through the axioms in an attempt to uncover Polanus's doctrinal implications on the procession of the Holy Spirit. For an English translation of the *Syntagma*'s table of contents, see Travis Fentiman, trans., Reformed Books Online, "The Table of Contents to Amandus Polanus' 'Syntagma,'" accessed April 13, 2023, https://reformedbooksonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/polanus-amandus-table-of-contents-to-the-syntagma.pdf.

[7] Fundamentally, I base this theological section on a biblical understanding of the doctrine, even though Polanus does not consistently provide biblical exegesis in the axioms.

[Church] Fathers set 'unity' opposite 'Trinity' and say that one considers the unity in essence and Trinity in persons."[8] Polanus follows the traditional practice of redoublement to affirm that (1) God as such is singular in being and essence, and (2) the three *hypostases*—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are each individually identical to the "one and the same divine essence."[9]

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person who is really distinct from the Father and the Son and only rationally distinct from God's essence: "[T]he persons of the deity are not outside of the Trinity, nor is the Trinity outside the persons of the deity."[10] As a divine person, the Holy Spirit is not a third of the one divine nature because God is not composed of three "things" that make the whole. The Holy Spirit is not a third being, absolutely speaking, essentially distinct from the Father and Son, of whom the three are "numbered in the essence."[11] Rather, "God is the essence subsisting in [the Holy Spirit]"[12] along with subsisting in Father and Son. By affirming a rational distinction between the Holy Spirit and the one divine essence, Polanus prevents wrong affirmations of quaternity—a fourth "other thing" distinct from the three persons—in God.[13] God is one, and the Holy Spirit is the Third of the Trinitarian persons.

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[8] Polanus, *Axiom* 1.

[9] Polanus, *Axiom* 1.

[10] Polanus, *Axiom* 1.

[11] Polanus, *Axiom* 1.

[12] Polanus, *Axiom* 1.

[13] Letham defines God's subsistence:

> The manner by which the three hypostases are related to the one simple divine essence. This is not a real distinction (that is, a distinction between a thing and a thing), or else there would be a quarternity, not a Trinity. Nor is the distinction merely formal, or it would be purely in our own minds. Rather, it is modal, between a thing (the indivisible being of God) and the manner in which the thing is. Thus, while the three hypostases are distinct in real terms (the Father is not the Son, etc.), each is identical with the one indivisible divine being, the three subsisting in the one divine essence. (Robert Letham, *The Holy Spirit* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R], 306)

Axiom Two

In axiom two, Polanus highlights God's essence is numerically singular and the divine persons are numerically plural (three). In employing the term "Trinity," Polanus refers to the distinct persons that are the divine essence. Polanus follows a church tradition of affirming the unity of God's essence and the Trinity of the divine persons;[14] the single nature of God is not contrary to the tri-personed God: "[T]he unity of the Monarchy is the Trinity of the economy, and the one does not destroy the other."[15] In affirming the Holy Spirit's subsistence in the one divine nature, creatures make a logical judgment that has a real referent or terminus in God, such that the Holy Spirit is a distinct *hypostasis*.[16]

Polanus cites Aquinas, who numbers the persons within the unity of the divine nature, and Polanus shows his affirmation in two ways.[17] First, "the divine essence is not broader than the actual three persons"[18] because each person is identical to the one essence. The Holy Spirit is identical to God's one divine essence and a distinct person by virtue of his eternal relation to the Father and the Son. Second, these real distinctions that relationally constitute the persons do not affirm that "God is multiplex or triplex, because

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[14] For an introduction to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, see Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), chap. 3 ("'Always with him are his Word and Wisdom': Early Patristic Developments in the Doctrine of the Trinity"). After Holmes's survey of biblical data for the divinity of the three persons, he gives evidence of Christians' worship of "the Trinity from the first [century]; the tale of the development of Trinitarian theology is an account of how they came to find a satisfying way of speaking of the One they worshipped." Holmes, 57–8. Additionally, the Latin tradition's doctrine of God is known to begin teaching *de Deo uno* before moving on to *de Deo trino*.

[15] Polanus cites Tertullian, *Contra Praxean* 2, 3.

[16] Basil of Caesarea helps pave the road to Constantinople whereby he "distinguishe[s] . . . the *hypostases* clearly, a development from Nicaea, where *hypostasis* and οὐσία were apparently interchangeable[.] . . . By using *hypostasis* to denote the way in which God is three, and for reserving οὐσία of the way in which he is one, Basil open[s] . . . the way for clearer language to speak of the Trinity and thus of the internal procession." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 17, citing Basil of Caesarea, *Holy Spirit* 5.7 (Hildebrand, 34–35).

[17] Polanus cites Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.31 art. 1 ad. 4: "When we say Trinity in unity, we do not impose number into the unity of essence, as if there was three times one; rather, we intend the numbered persons in the unity of nature." Polanus believes "this affirmation works both ways." Polanus, *Axiom* 2.

[18] Polanus, *Axiom* 2.

he is absolutely simple under the concept of essence."[19] Divine simplicity prevents predicating parts into God or describing God as a compounded being, made up of three persons or three divine essences that compose God's being.[20] The Holy Spirit does not possess an essence or an absolute property that uniquely distinguishes him from the Father and Son; God does not have parts. Instead, the real distinctions between the Holy Spirit and the Father-Son are constituted relationally. For creatures, the mental judgment of affirming the Holy Spirit is the divine essence, the Son is the divine essence, and the Father is the divine essence are three separate acts. But creaturely arithmetic of the quantity of persons (who each are the divine essence) ought not to produce three divine essences. Divine simplicity robustly upholds two biblical notions of the divine life—God's unity of essence and the Trinity of persons.

Axiom Three

Following his discussion in the first two axioms on God's one essence, in axiom three Polanus further considers God's essence with respect to the divine persons. The divine persons' οὐσία are neither dissimilar (ἀνόμοιος) nor similar (ὁμοιούσιος) to the other persons' essence. To consider the Holy Spirit specifically, Polanus does not affirm that the Holy Spirit is dissimilar (ἀνόμοιος) in his essence from the Father and the Son. If one affirmed the Holy Spirit's dissimilar essence to the other divine persons, then more than one God exists—this is tritheism. Polanus preserves the doctrine of God's

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[19] Polanus, *Axiom* 2.

[20] D. Glenn Butner Jr. defines the doctrine of divine simplicity: "The doctrine that God is not composed of parts. In its strongest form, simplicity denies material parts, a real distinction between the divine attributes, and a distinction between God's essence and God's existence." D. Glenn Butner Jr., *Trinitarian Dogmatics: Exploring the Grammar of the Christian Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 228–29. For another definition for "simplicity," Adonis Vidu explains, "The doctrine that affirms the absolute aseity (*a se*—from himself), unity, and transcendence of God by denying that any composition exists in him. God is not composed of parts, he has no body, and he has no passions. . . . God is not a combination of nature and attributes." Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 116. Divine simplicity guides Polanus's Trinitarian grammar to speak of God's attributes, essence, and existence while resolving the discussion's varying aspects into God's unity of being.

unity of being and a view of monotheism that does not duplicate the divine essence. There is one who occupies the category of being of God; one being exists as Creator between the Creator-creature divide.

In addition to the three persons not subsisting in dissimilar essences, Polanus describes the error of stating that the Holy Spirit, essentially speaking, is similar (ὁμοιούσιος) to the Father and the Son. Polanus identifies two incorrect distinctions people make in affirming a similarity of essences. The first incorrect distinction follows: the Holy Spirit "being similar in essence" means that while the three divine persons subsist in the one divine nature of God, each person also possesses a divine perfection that distinguishes the persons from the others.[21] However, classical Trinitarianism teaches that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and Son by virtue of the fact that the Holy Spirit is the only *hypostasis* who proceeds from the Father and Son. This distinction is strictly relational; the personal property that constitutes the person of the Holy Spirit is an eternal relation.

The second inaccurate result if one affirms that the Holy Spirit is ὁμοιούσιος is that the Holy Spirit subsists in his personal essence, which is the same type of essence while numerically distinct from the Father's and Son's personal essences. This results in "[making] three essences," which is tritheism. In sum, Polanus does not affirm the Holy Spirit's essence is dissimilar nor similar to the Father and Son's essence.

Polanus identifies the Aristotelian categories of existing things in the second half of axiom three to make the point that considering God's essence under the "quality" of dissimilarity and similarity is technically inappropriate.[22] To place God within an

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[21] Hurd likens "being similar in essence" to the method of social trinitarians. Polanus, *Axiom* 3. Butner defines social trinitarianism as "[a]n approach to the Trinity that emphasizes the distinctions between the persons and tends to identify divine persons as distinct minds or centers of consciousness." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 229.

[22] Strictly speaking, the ten categories pertain to creaturely beings, which by definition precludes the Creator—"God is free from quality." Sanders footnotes Basil the Great, *Letter 8*, section 3; see Polanus, *Axiom* 3.

Aristotelian category is a categorical mistake. Nevertheless, analogical speech about God clarifies one's affirmations about God's essence, knowing that creaturely language is not univocal or equivocal and yet can be accurate and truthful. The axiom ends with an affirmation that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and Son.[23]

Axiom Four

Although Polanus commits to the triune God's ὁμοούσιος, in axiom four he considers four negative and one positive -ούσιος constructions before describing the superior view of ὁμοούσιος. Pedagogically, Polanus sequentially demonstrates what he affirms about ὁμοούσιος and ends by clarifying a classic Trinitarian confession that the Holy Spirit is ὁμοούσιος with the Father and Son.

First, the Holy Spirit is not ἑτερούσιος, "of another or different substance,"[24] from the Father and the Son. Second, the Holy Spirit is not συνούσιος, "conjoined in essence,"[25] from the Father and the Son. While συνούσιος confirms singularity and identicalness of essence, this category does not affirm a *taxis* between the persons and thus denies that the Holy Spirit is "from another," that is, his principle of origin.[26] Third, the Holy Spirit is not μονούσιος, "a solitary essence" from the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit's essence is neither distinct in number nor distinct in type from the Father and Son's essence. Unlike "the sun, moon, and heavens," the triune God is not composed of three distinct subjects, each with their "own substance" in which only one person

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[23] Sanders footnotes Athanasius, "Contra Hypocrisim Meletii . . . de Consubstantialitate," and mentions that this "work is dubiously attributed." See Polanus, *Axiom* 3. The quote references the Father and the Son, but by extension, I affirm that the Holy Spirit is neither dissimilar nor similar in essence with the Father and Son, for such an affirmation would "take away from . . . [the Holy Spirit], with the result that . . . [the Holy Spirit] is not consubstantial with the Father, but makes . . . [the Holy Spirit] similar to the Father, [and thus] denies that the . . . [Holy Spirit] is God."

[24] Polanus, *Axiom* 4.

[25] Polanus, *Axiom* 4.

[26] Letham defines "order" (*taxis*): "The irreversible order disclosed by the relations among the three persons. In eternity, the Father begets the Son and sends the Holy Spirit in or through the Son." Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 303.

subsists. Fourth, the Holy Spirit is not ταυτούσιος, "identical in substance."[27] Fifth, and positively, the Holy Spirit is ἐνούσιος: the Holy Spirit subsists in the divine substance. Polanus cites Hebrews 1:3, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature." The subject in this verse is the divine Son, who as "the radiance" is relationally distinct from and yet is in "God's glory." The verse continues in a logically parallel fashion: the divine Son is not the Father ("exact expression") and yet is in "his [God's] nature."[28] *Mutatis mutandis*, I apply this logic to the Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit is a divine person, distinct from Father and Son, who subsists in the divine essence.

Sixth, and more specifically, not only is the Holy Spirit ἐνούσιος; the Holy Spirit is ὁμοούσιος, "of the same substance," with the Father and Son.[29] By affirming ὁμοούσιος, Polanus means that the Holy Spirit is "coessential, consubstantial, or having one and the same essence, even a singular essence and same in number with the distinction and procession of one from another."[30] Properly speaking, I offer three points

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[27] Sanders cites Epiphanius of Cyprus, *Ancoratus* 6. Polanus, *Axiom* 4. Hurd and Sanders seem unclear with the meaning and implication of ταυτουσιοι, although they note that Polanus points to Epiphanius, who wrote *Against Sabellius*. Perhaps Polanus has the divine persons' mode of subsistence in mind. Sabellianism is the heretical view of God that teaches that God appears to creation in three temporal identities: as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If the persons' substance is identical and each person subsists in the essence in the same way, then the three persons are only true about God insofar as this is God's method of self-revelation, as opposed to three eternal persons truly subsisting eternally within the divine life.

[28] Polanus does not seem to imply the rich exegetical history of the classic doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son for ἐνούσιοι, despite a traditional understanding of this verse. Instead, his final option, ὁμοούσιος, develops the doctrine. Nevertheless, the following four points summarize Scott Swain's theological implications for the doctrine of eternal generation from Hebrews 1:3: (1) I note "a series of 'family resemblances' across the registers"; (2) "there is a discernible order in relation to the action or activity that defines the relationship between the two relatives" whereby "the first relative is the principle of the action"; (3) "The First Person of the Trinity is, properly speaking, the fatherly principle to the Second Person with the result that the two relatives share a common name (John 17:11–12) and a common nature (see, e.g. John 5:26)"; (4) "the relation between the divine Father and the divine Son whereby the Father naturally radiates the Son and consequently the Son is the exact imprint of the Father's substance is in essence all that the doctrine of eternal generation seeks to identify." Scott R. Swain, "The Radiance of the Father's Glory: Eternal Generation, the Divine Names, and Biblical Interpretation," in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, ed. Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 40–41.

[29] Sanders cites Athanasius, *Expositio Fidei*; the precise location of the quote is unclear. See Polanus, *Axiom* 4.

[30] Polanus, *Axiom* 4.

of clarification in affirming ὁμοούσιος: (1) the Holy Spirit is a numerically distinct person from the Father and Son; (2) Holy Spirit's essence is numerically identical to the Father and Son;[31] and (3) the Holy Spirit subsists in God's singular essence as the one who is from the Father and Son. On the third feature of ὁμοούσιος, affirming that the Holy Spirit is ὁμοούσιος with Father and Son means that the Third Person proceeds from the Father and the Son. A traditional definition of ὁμοούσιος includes the divine persons' eternal *taxis*.[32] As the Spirit's originating principle, the Father and Son eternally give the Holy Spirit the divine essence *via* active spiration.

Axiom Five

Axiom five's content recapitulates the axioms discussed thus far: "The persons of the deity are one according to essence."[33] Numerically, God's essence is one: the Holy Spirit is a divine person whose essence is identical to the Father's and Son's. The Holy Spirit's existence in the singular, divine essence must never duplicate God's oneness of being. "Further," Polanus continues, "when compared among themselves, they are on par or equal, because each possesses commonly the essential perfection which is whole in all of them and whole in the individual persons. This is because it is the whole deity equal in its perfection."[34] When considering the Third Person in relation to God's singular essence, Polanus follows the classical confession that the Holy Spirit possesses the "essential perfection" of the "whole deity." Two implications follow: (1) the Holy Spirit

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[31] Polanus follows a classical use of consubstantial. Conversely, Paul Samosatenum takes "taking the word [consubstantial] in a corporeal way" to say "the Son is consubstantial with the Father parallel to how a man is consubstantial with another man, with the result that the two substances belong to the same species." Polanus, *Axiom* 4.

[32] Sanders gathers a pattern of singular directional fromness of ὁμοούσιος in writings by Athanasius and his contemporary Church Fathers. So Polanus: "This is because one says those who are properly ὁμοούσιοι only where one of them is from another and receives the divine essence from him." Polanus, *Axiom* 5. This was the definition of ὁμοούσιος used by the "Fathers of the Nicene Council" Polanus, *Axiom* 4.

[33] Polanus, *Axiom* 5.

[34] Polanus, *Axiom* 5.

possesses and subsists in the same essence as Father and Son, and (2) the Holy Spirit is equal in deity to Father and Son.

Axiom Six

The previous axiom focuses on ὁμοούσιος to explain how distinctions ought not to be made regarding the triune God's divine life. Polanus then transitions to affirming certain Trinitarian distinctions in axiom six. Negatively stated, "the persons of the deity are not distinguished essentially nor according to existence."[35] The triune God's essence is one, and the Holy Spirit subsists in the same divine essence as Father and Son. Moreover, the Holy Spirit's existence in the one divine essence is not really distinct from the Son's existence and the Father's existence. To summarize, in God there is no real distinction between (1) the three divine persons' essence and (2) the three divine persons' existence.

Polanus distinguishes the persons by virtue of one person's production from another: "And for that reason the persons differ by an incommunicable property—namely, according to the subsisting which is proper to each person."[36] Traditionally, an incommunicable property is the only accurate differentiating property between the Trinitarian persons. Personal properties are identified relatively as opposed to absolutely:

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[35] Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[36] Polanus, *Axiom* 6. Richard A. Muller defines "property" (*proprietas*):

> specifically, an intimate, incommunicable property; thus the incommunicable attributes of God and the personal properties (*proprietates personales*) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *paternitas* (paternity), *filiatio* (filiation), and *processio* (procession), which belong to the persons of the Trinity individually. Considered as descriptions of the relations between the persons, these personal properties are termed personal relations (see *relatio personalis*). (Richard A. Muller, *DLGTT*, s.v. "proprietas" [p. 296])

Butner defines personal properties this way: "That which is proper to the persons due to the procession. The Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten, and the Spirit is spirated." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 227. Divine simplicity prevents positing an absolute property to the Holy Spirit.

"[T]he Holy Spirit receives his subsisting from Father and Son . . . as from the principle of his personality."[37]

Polanus maneuvers between two categories, the principle and the principled, which "are not the same in reality."[38] In the divine life, persons may be categorized as the principle or the principled, depending on the persons and terminus considered, and this concept distinguishes the persons in actual reality. First, the Holy Spirit's single principle is the Father and the Son. Together, Father and Son produce the Holy Spirit.[39] Second, "the Holy Spirit receives existence from Father and Son."[40] The Holy Spirit is the principled of the Father and Son's unified act of production; he cannot produce himself for "it cannot be the case that someone is produced from himself."[41] Each divine person is "distinguished among themselves in actual reality so that . . . the Holy Spirit is another reality" from Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is not the Father, nor is he the Son. Rather, he is the person who subsists in the divine essence as the unique one whose relative personal property, also known as the notional act of passive spiration, is eternally given to him from the Father and the Son.[42] The Father and the Son's corresponding notional act is the active spiration of the Holy Spirit.

Polanus lists biblical support for positing real distinctions in the triune God (John 1:1; 1:14; 1:18; 1:32–34; 5:17–19 ff.; 5:32; 14:10; 14:16; Rom 8:11) and exposits

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[37] Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 227.

[38] Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[39] This production is not temporal. Polanus does not infer a moment in which the Father and the Son created the Holy Spirit as though the Holy Spirit were not eternal God, ὁμοούσιος with the Father and Son.

[40] Since the Holy Spirit is ὁμοούσιος with the Father and Son, Polanus does not imply that the Holy Spirit's principle gives to him his existence in a temporal sense whereby he was non-existent until the Father and Son caused his existence.

[41] Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[42] The Holy Spirit's incommunicable property of passive spiration accords with his subsisting. He proceeds from or is produced by his single principle, the Father and the Son, by way of emanating from the Father and Son's act of willing. Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.27 ad. 4.

John 14:16 with technical precision. Christ's words are recorded: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" (John 14:16). Considering the phrase "another Counselor," Polanus emphasizes the persons are other: "[T]he Holy Spirit [is said to be] other than the Father and Son."[43] Polanus distinguishes between *alius* and *aliud* in the Trinity: "[T]he Holy Spirit is *alius* . . . because the Holy Spirit is another person."[44] Conversely, the Holy Spirit is not *aliud* because there is not one essence of the Holy Spirit, another distinct essence of the Father, and another distinct essence of the Son. "Rather," Polanus clarifies, "there is one essence the same in number belonging to all three persons."[45] Furthermore, since God's essence is identical to his existence, the existence of the Holy Spirit is the existence of the Father and Son, and the Holy Spirit's essence is the essence of the Father and Son. The Council of Florence (1431–1449) specifies "that the Holy [Spirit] . . . is eternally from the Father and the Son, and has His essence and subsistence at once from the Father and the Son; and that He eternally proceeds from both as from one Principle and by one Spiration."[46]

An improper method of distinguishing the persons would be to believe that the persons subsist in distinct, personal essences. Instead, "the unity of the divine essence in three persons is supreme and individual," which is to say, God's one divine nature "is common to all three persons . . . just as the attribution of 'God' is. . . . [T]he divine nature of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit."[47] The person of the Holy Spirit is identical to the

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[43] Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[44] Polanus, *Axiom* 6. *Alius* is an adjective in the nominative case, singular in number, and masculine in gender. *Aliud* is an adjective in the nominative case, singular in number, and neuter in gender. Polanus's technical use of *alius* and *aliud* help him distinguish the divine persons from each other while refraining from positing a real distinction between a divine person and the divine essence.

[45] Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[46] Joseph Pohle quotes the Council of Florence in his defense of the Western church's doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son. Joseph Pohle, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2, *The Divine Trinity*, trans. Arthur Preuss (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co, 1912), 172.

[47] Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

one God. Furthermore, the doctrine of divine simplicity grounds Polanus's affirmation that the persons are not absolutely distinct from the divine nature, which subsists in the persons.[48] In sum, there is a rational distinction between the person of the Holy Spirit and the divine nature, and there is a real distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Father and the Son.

Axiom Seven

In axiom seven, Polanus systematically constructs the concept of a real distinction between the Trinitarian persons with more theological specificity.[49] Polanus writes, on the one hand, "in God, there is nothing except essence . . . and all absolute things [which] are common"; on the other hand, the latter alone distinguishes.[50] Numerically, God's essence and all that can be attributed absolutely to God is always one—these absolute distinctions concerning God's essence are not grounded in a relation.[51] However, the Trinitarian relations are attributed relatively; relations give rise to real, numerical distinctions.[52] To consider a divine person, a relation exists between the

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[48] So Polanus: "This is because one considers the nature as determinate and subsisting in the person, each being simple, both nature and person, but distinct in reason." Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[49] Sanders and Hurd discuss axioms seven, eight, and nine together because considering the following concepts closely will prove fruitful. In these three axioms, Polanus conceptually builds a theological reason for distinguishing the divine persons with real, opposed relations. Polanus, *Axioms* 7–9.

[50] Polanus, *Axiom* 7.

[51] The type of relation Polanus has in mind will be further developed in axioms eight and nine.

[52] Polanus cites the Council of Toledo and has the Creed of the Eleventh Council (675) in mind. One translation states, "This Holy Trinity, which is the one true God, is not without number; yet it is not comprised by number, because in the relationships of the persons there appears number, but in the substance of the Godhead nothing is comprised that could be counted. Therefore they imply number only in so far as they are mutually related, but they lack number in so far as they are by themselves (ad se)." The Eleventh Council of Toledo, "Symbol of Faith," Fordham University, accessed January 18, 2023, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/toledo.txt, 313.530. Another source translates the text this way:

> nor more when all three persons are called one God.—Therefore, this Holy Trinity, which is the one and true God, neither excludes number nor is it contained in number.—For in the relation of persons number appears, but in the substance of divinity, what might be enumerated is not understood. Therefore, in this alone they imply number, that they are related to each other; and in this, that they are to themselves, they lack number. (The Eleventh Council of Toledo, "Symbol of Faith," Sensus Fidelium, accessed January 18, 2023, https://sensusfidelium.com/the-sources-of-catholic-dogma-the-denzinger/council-of-toledo-xi-675-creed-of-faith/)

Holy Spirit with the Father and Son within God's inner life, which logically grounds the affirmation of the Holy Spirit's relational distinction from Father and Son.

Axiom Eight

According to Polanus, since the deciding factor for positing a real distinction in God is based on a relation, Polanus qualifies the type of relation in axiom eight and clarifies "only opposed relations" sufficiently ground one's ability "to make the distinction" and "relations that are not opposed do not distinguish."[53] An opposed relation in God contains a subject and a term.[54] The subject and term "face the other" (so to speak), have a two-way relation, and require "an other as other."[55] I apply these concepts to the person of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is only in an opposed relation with the Father-Son; therefore, there is one relation in the Holy Spirit: passive spiration. In the relation of passive spiration, the Holy Spirit faces toward his term, and the term likewise faces toward the subject. The outward force of the relation (passive spiration) in the Holy Spirit (the subject) faces his term (Father-Son), making this term (Father-Son) other as other than the Holy Spirit himself (the subject).

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[53] Polanus, *Axiom* 8. As Gilles Emery points out, "The idea of 'opposition' [is found as] early as Basil of Caesarea" (in *Contra Eunomius* II.28). Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 98. Aquinas's investigation into relative oppositions fine-tunes "the concept of *opposition* in order to determine the nature of the *distinction* in God. The word 'opposition' . . . must be taken in its formal definition meaning: opposition is the *principle of a distinction*." Emery, 98. S.a. Letham's definition of relative opposition in Letham, *The Holy Spirit*, 305.

[54] N.B.: Emery suggests the preferability "to speak of 'relative opposition', and, when one wants to refer to a pair of relations (such as . . . [active spiration and procession]), of 'opposed relations'" rather than "the phrase 'relation of opposition,'" which is an inapt phrase for Aquinas. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 99.

[55] "Face each other," "an other as other," and "pushes out" is Hurd's language. Polanus, *Axiom* 8. I follow Hurd in these three clarifying points as Hurd portrays the dynamic between the subject and the term, which may be used synonymously with Aquinas's use of "person" (a "relative") and their "correlative." The concept of a "relative opposition shows that the persons are *distinct* and *inseparable*." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 99 (emphasis original).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirated- and Breathed-Forth-Breath of the Father and Son, and this opposed relation constitutes the person of the Holy Spirit. "On account of the fact that" this singular relation in the Third Person is an opposed relation, the Holy Spirit is a distinct person: "[T]he relations must actually be opposed so they can distinguish."[56] In the next axiom, Polanus further develops the definition of this specific type of relation that makes real distinctions in the triune God.

Axiom Nine

In axiom nine, Polanus adds another adjective to modify, or specify, the type of opposed relation that distinguishes: a real relation.[57] I will consider the real, opposed relation in the Holy Spirit. In God, "[t]he equality" of the Holy Spirit "to another [person] is . . . a relation of reason, because the equality does not differ from the essence except in our reason."[58] We employ creaturely conceptions to identify and compare opposed relations in God; these are relations of reason and not real.[59] "The foundation of equality," that is, God's unicity of being, "is the essence alone, which is one in number. Thus, real opposed relation in God occupies the place for the principle of individuation."[60] Polanus's theological judgment does not distinguish the persons by "any opposed relations" or by the essence of God.

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person and not the First or the Second because he is the only divine person who faces the Father-Son. We call this relation passive spiration. Father-Son face the Holy Spirit together, and this relation is active spiration.

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[56] Polanus, *Axiom* 8.

[57] Hurd notes the unique order that Polanus takes in the content of axioms eight to nine. Polanus switches a conventional teaching order where the components of a relation move from real relations prior to opposed relations. Polanus, *Axiom* 9.

[58] Polanus, *Axiom* 9.

[59] In axiom nine, a real opposed relation should not be confused with "any opposed relations."

[60] Polanus, *Axiom* 9.

Together, these two relative oppositions constitute the Holy Spirit, and Polanus refers to this constitution as the principle of individuation. This principle leads to affirming three, really distinct persons in God. The divine essence, however, "serves as the place for the nature of the species"[61] and therefore does not really distinguish the Holy Spirit as a divine person. In summary of the past three axioms, Polanus develops his definition of distinctions that pertain to the triune God's life. The Trinitarian persons are distinguished by relations (axiom seven) that are opposed (axiom eight) and real (axiom nine).

Axiom Ten

After laying down the rule of properly distinguishing within God through the principle of individuation that rests on real, opposed relations, Polanus in axiom ten adds, "In God, relation and divine essence are the same in reality. One and the same divine essence is identical to . . . procession through [passive] spiration."[62] Polanus covers the following ideas: relation, divine essence, and the procession of passive spiration. Relation as the individuating principle in God is not really distinct from the divine essence. The Holy Spirit's passive spiration is only rationally distinct from the essence of God. Polanus affirms a rational distinction between the Third Person and the divine nature by utilizing the doctrine of divine simplicity. The locus of the Holy Spirit's individualizing principle is the real and opposed relation, active spiration and passive spiration.

Axiom Eleven

Polanus introduces formal distinctions in axiom eleven in addition to real distinctions: "The relations of the persons really differ between themselves; and they differ merely formally from the essence, but not really from the essence."[63] Naming the

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[61] Polanus, *Axiom* 9.

[62] Polanus, *Axiom* 10.

[63] Polanus, *Axiom* 11.

distinction between a person and the essence as a formal distinction communicates the conceptual distinction creatures make to speak rightly about the divine life. Moreover, creaturely mental deductions have a true correspondence in God even though divine simplicity prevents us from suggesting the divine essence is really distinct from God's opposed relations: "[I]n God, no things are distinguished essentially, because all that are in God are the one, individual, absolutely simple essence."[64]

Formal distinctions are also mentioned in the Gabriel Biel quotation that Polanus includes: "[T]he things constituted is of a piece with the distinction of the constituting principles . . . and the relations are distinguished formally from the essence. . . . [T]he relations which are not opposed . . . are only formally distinguished from each other, not really."[65] Biel formally distinguishes a divine person from their relation or relative opposition. In reality, simplicity prevents us from positing a real distinction; therefore, a divine person is identical to and formally distinct from their relation. I recognize four implications for the procession of the Holy Spirit from axiom eleven, although more may be made: (1) a relation, such as passive spiration, is formally distinct from the underlying essence; (2) creatures make a rational distinction (*ratio rationes*) when affirming the real relation (passive spiration) constitutes the Holy Spirit;[66] (3) the Holy Spirit is formally distinct from passive spiration, while passive spiration is

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[64] Polanus has affirmed and relied upon divine simplicity up until this point of his axioms. Here, he references the doctrine aggressively in quoting Gabriel Biel (1420–1495). Sanders believes that the quotation is found in Biel's commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Polanus, *Axiom* 11. Biel was a "German philosopher, economist, and one of the most distinguished Scholastic theologians of the late Middle Ages." Most notably, "Biel's *Collectorium circa IV libros sententiarum,* a classical commentary on the . . . *Sentences* by . . . Peter Lombard, . . . gives a clear and methodical exposition of the teaching of . . . William of Oackham, whose doctrine Biel supported." Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Gabriel Biel," last modified April 17, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gabriel-Biel.

[65] The Holy Spirit is the subject of only one relation, passive spiration, and so the examples of a formal distinction between (1) the Father's relations of paternity and active spiration, and between (2) the Son's relations of filiation and active spiration cannot be applied in the same way to the Holy Spirit.

[66] Hurd believes that Biel speaks imprecisely at the end of the quote because Aquinas and other neo-Scholastics use *rationes attributorum* to explain how creaturely ideas have a true correspondence and terminate in God. Polanus, *Axiom* 11. Utilizing *rationes attributorum* still upholds the doctrine of simplicity that Polanus follows in his axioms to convey that the creaturely ideas we make about the divine life are not parts of God.

really distinct from the Father-Son, the corresponding term who is constituted in this opposed relation; and (4) the Father-Son's relative opposition is active spiration, and this relation is "really distinguished from what is constituted by the opposed relation," the Holy Spirit.

Axiom Twelve

Axiom twelve expounds on how the concepts of composition and distinction are not the same: "Relations which are proper to the persons do not compose but only distinguish."[67] Polanus provides precise ways to talk about the triune God that consistently returns to God's singularity as highlighted in axiom one. The concept of composition in axiom twelve suggests how taking separate elements together build the whole, that is, God. Two points of application ensue.

First, in the discussion of the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person, Polanus defines a person in relation to God's essence. To speak about God essentially may require making rational and formal distinctions. These distinctions—even the real, relational distinction between the Holy Spirit from Father and Son—do not compose the Holy Spirit as though his notional act is a section or piece of the whole person. The relation passive spiration is not a part of the Spirit or an accident that inheres in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is really identical to his relation to the Father and the Son. God is simple, and there is no composition in the divine person of the Holy Spirit.

Second, in the discussion of the Holy Spirit *qua* God, Polanus defines the divine person in relation to the notional act of passive spiration. The definition of a notional act contains logical parts to explain the meaning of the Holy Spirit's principle of individuation. Yet passive spiration never introduces composition into God. The Holy Spirit is not a part of God that composes God's substance. An affirmation of divine

[67] Polanus, *Axiom* 12.

simplicity results in upholding all things in God are absolutely one, simply God.[68] There is no composition in God.

Axiom Thirteen

In axiom thirteen, Polanus differentiates between distinct persons and persons who are separated: "The divine persons are distinct, but not separated like three men are separated in actual reality, even though they are one in species."[69] Passive spiration is the Holy Spirit's individualizing principle that distinguishes him as the Third Person (and not the First nor Second). Yet this personal distinction is unlike the analogy of three human beings—three separate instantiations of a person in their own, isolated, independent reality. The distinction that overlaps between creatures and God is the real distinction between three human beings and the three divine persons. But the analogical language used to describe real distinctions in God requires qualification: all language for God is analogical. There is greater dissimilarity in real, creaturely distinctions than similarity in real, divine distinctions.

For instance, three distinct human persons individually instantiate the species of humanity. If one person would cease to exist, the species of humanity would continue to exist. This concept is not univocally applied to God. Polanus states that the Trinitarian persons "are one in species." However, he is not implying, *per impossibile*, that if one divine person would cease to exist, God would continue to exist. Instead, it may be said that the "species" of God is intrinsically tied to each divine person's existence: the Holy

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[68] *Deo omni sunt unum, uni non obviate relations oppositio*. Hurd highlights session eleven, *Bull of Union with the Copts*, from the Council of Florence (1438–1445): "These three persons are one God not three gods, because there is one substance of the three, one essence, one nature, one Godhead, one immensity, one eternity, and everything is one where the difference of a relation does not prevent this." Ecumenical Council of Florence (1438–1445), "Bull of the Union with the Copts," Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, accessed May 26, 2023, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/ecumenical-council-of-florence-1438-1445-1461; see Polanus, *Axiom* 12. The individualizing principle is the only proper place to constitute a divine person and posit a real distinction in God.

[69] Polanus, *Axiom* 13.

Spirit is all of God, and what constitutes God *qua* God is identical to the person of the Holy Spirit. Polanus uses the biological taxonomy of living things, considers the narrowest category on the rank (species), and classifies the divine persons as being the same species because of their one shared characteristic (purely intellectual nature).[70] Greater dissimilitude than similitude qualifies this analogical comparison between human persons and divine persons.

Axiom Fourteen

The length of axiom fourteen requires subsections.[71] Polanus emphasizes accurate ways to posit true affirmations to each divine person.[72] Each distinction made in axiom fourteen is by way of a rational distinction since what he considers is only in respect to a divine person to the divine essence. With that clarification, I will consider the axiom in eight parts.

14.1

Polanus presents two ways to consider a divine person: "One can consider any divine person either *commonly/in common*, or *individually*."[73] First, the Holy Spirit is God, considered "under the concept of the common essence," because the Third Person is really identical to the one, divine nature. The Holy Spirit has the divine essence; that which is divine is identical to the Third Person. "Thinking *commonly*," Polanus

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[70] Hurd offers a *provisio* on the definition of a person: A person is characterized as one who possesses two elements: (1) a person is an individual, and (2) a person possesses an intellectual nature. By this definition, the Holy Spirit is a person, albeit a divine person, along with the Father and the Son. Polanus, *Axiom* 13.

[71] I follow Sanders and Hurd's discussions and divide axiom fourteen into eight subheadings that are not originally found in Polanus. Hurd's English translation word count is approximately 3,000 words, and the word count for the translated eighteen axioms in total is approximately 6,000 words. My goal is to clearly present the substantial amount of Polanus's content while using Sanders and Hurd's subheadings.

[72] Sanders suggests naming this axiom "the persons considered with respect to x."

[73] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1 (emphasis original).

continues, "one can consider each person in the essence as he is God. The divine essence does not have existence in the . . . Holy Spirit that is other than its existence in the Father [and the Son], because the essence and the divine existence do not differ."[74] I will further explore the categories of essence and existence as it pertains to a divine person.

While a creature's essence requires instantiation in an individual, God's essence is not instantiated in the Holy Spirit distinctly from the essence that instantiates in the Father and Son as separate, temporal acts. The divine essence instantiated in the Holy Spirit does not cause the Holy Spirit's existence or individualize him as a divine person.[75] Instead, the Holy Spirit's existence (that God is) is identical to his essence (that God is God as such). Considered commonly, all three persons are the same act of existence. The Holy Spirit's existence is the existence of the divine essence, and this existence is not a really distinct existence of the Father or Son's essence because "all persons of the deity subsist in one and the same essence."[76] The Holy Spirit's existence is not actualized, and he subsists in God's singular divine essence by virtue of being a divine person.

Second, the Holy Spirit is God without reference to the Father and Son "under the concept of the individual person."[77] Polanus states that divine persons can be considered individually, or singularly in two ways: absolutely or relatively. I consider an individual divine person absolutely.[78] The Holy Spirit is God "in himself or where he is with respect to himself, i.e. according to his nature as he is God and according to his act

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[74] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1 (emphasis original).

[75] According to an Aristotelian philosophy, a subsisting divine person cannot receive accidents. Accidents are not proper to nor able to particularize the Holy Spirit's divine nature.

[76] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1.

[77] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1.

[78] I consider an individual person relatively in Axiom 14.2.

of subsisting whereby he subsists in himself and through himself."[79] The Holy Spirit's subsistence is not actualized by the Father or Son, and "[i]n that [absolute] way, the person [the Holy Spirit] considered with respect to himself is αὐτοθεος: God [the Holy Spirit] having the divine essence which exists from the essence itself and through itself and not from another essence or through another essence."[80] The Holy Spirit is God in himself.

Polanus provides an example: God's wisdom. Although the Son is the Wisdom of God or "the wisdom of the Father,"[81] it would not be correct, absolutely speaking, to say that the Holy Spirit is wise by virtue of eternally being from the Son (and Father). Rather, "the Holy Spirit is wise with respect to himself, because the Holy Spirit is God, and in God 'being wise' is the same as 'being God.'"[82] To be a divine person—to be God—is to be wise with respect to oneself. God the Holy Spirit is absolutely wise in himself.

14.2

After analyzing divine persons individually and absolutely, Polanus follows by looking at the persons individually and relatively. I will apply the principles of axiom fourteen to the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person in relation to the essence, having in mind the relation presently considered is not a real opposed relation. The Holy Spirit "is indeed the divine essence in actual reality, but still distinguished from it in our reason, on account of the relation which says something beyond the essence."[83] Creaturely reason

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[79] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1.

[80] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1.

[81] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1.

[82] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1.

[83] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2. Creatures conceive of God's essence and the persons as distinct concepts, but in God's inner life, the Holy Spirit is really identical to the divine essence.

accounts for rational explanations to distinguish the Holy Spirit "from the essence as a mode of a thing from the thing, or formally."[84] Since a relation is formally distinct from the essence in creaturely conceptualization, the Holy Spirit's principle of individuation of passive spiration formally distinguishes him from God's essence. In God, this does not add to the divine essence; this individualizing principle helps us grasp how passive spiration relates to the divine essence in which it is within.

Polanus lists ten rules in which a relation may be posited "between [the] divine essence and person,"[85] properly speaking. I will give attention to each rule as their elements apply to the Holy Spirit.

First, "[e]ssence pertains to substance, while person pertains to relation."[86] The Holy Spirit's divine essence pertains to considering what God is, or God *qua* God. The Holy Spirit is a divine person because he is in a real opposed relation to Father and Son.

Second, "[e]ssence is communicable, and person incommunicable."[87] This can be taken in two ways: (1) attributing the same, identical divine essence to each person does not permit an affirmation that the Holy Spirit is either the Father or Son; (2) the Holy Spirit is identical to the essence, and he has the essence in a manner fitting to his notional act of passive spiration.

Third, "[e]ssence, in accordance with its perfection, has the concept of being 'common'; person, in accordance with its relation due its opposition to other persons, has the concept of being 'particular' (just as . . . one usually speaks of a divine person) who subsists in one common existence."[88] We individualize the numerically one common

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[84] Sanders cites Aquinas, *ST* I.1 as a possible reference since Polanus does not specify. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[85] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[86] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[87] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[88] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

essence that each divine persons instantiates in their particular way. The Holy Spirit *qua* divine person particularly subsists in the divine essence proper to him *via* passive spiration.[89]

Fourth, the Holy Spirit *qua* person includes an origin: "[T]he Holy Spirit is from Father and Son. But essence lacks every origin—equally in the . . . Holy Spirit as in the Father [and Son]."[90] *Taxis* (order) does not apply to God's essence; the Holy Spirit's divine essence does not have an origin. Strictly speaking, the essence is not from the Father and Son; rather, the Holy Spirit *qua* person is from the Father and the Son. The Third Person has the divine essence from the Father and the Son.

Fifth, "the Holy Spirit proceeds, but the divine essence does not proceed."[91] Similarly to the fourth rule, that which is an abstract concept (divine essence) cannot act. The Holy Spirit, who has and is the divine essence, proceeds.

Sixth, concrete and abstract definitions apply to person and essence, respectively. Considered concretely, the Holy Spirit's essence is identical to the divine essence. Considered abstractly, one may formally define the divine essence.[92]

Seventh, Polanus warns against attributing "person" to the Holy Spirit "according to substance" in light of comparing person and essence, "but properly in the relation."[93] The Holy Spirit is not constituted by his relation to the substance. The Holy Spirit's individualizing principle is in relation to divine persons.

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[89] Neither the Father nor Son subsist in the common essence in opposition to Father-Son; this relation is particular to the Holy Spirit.

[90] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[91] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[92] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[93] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

Eighth, God's "essence is something undivided, but Father, Son, and Spirit are something divided."[94] Since the Spirit really stands in relative opposition to Father-Son and *vice versa*, the persons are "divided." This division does not apply to God's essence.[95]

Ninth, "[o]ne person is not predicated of another; for . . . the Holy Spirit is not the Father or Son. But the divine essence is predicated of each person."[96] The Holy Spirit's essence is identical to the Father and Son's, but the person of the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son.

Tenth, and finally, Polanus integrates *alius* and *aliud* into his rules: "Adjectives attributed to person and essence vary in the grammatical genus."[97] Polanus shows us the strict applications of these two terms.

(1) Polanus addresses the use for divine persons: "Masculine adjectives added or subjected to the names of the persons or attributed to them signify the person: e.g., . . . the Holy Spirit is *alius*; or . . . [the Holy Spirit] is *alius* than the [Father] and Son . . . because the person of the . . . [Holy Spirit] is *alia*, that of the [Father] is *alia*, [and] that of the [Son] is *alia*."[98] Christ speaks of an other (*alius*) person in John 5:32, which communicates a real distinction within the same essence, and not another, which communicates a real distinction between separate essences (*aliud*).

(2) Polanus addresses the proper use of cases pertaining to the divine essence:

> Adjectives in the neuter denote essence—such as when we say in the deity there is not *aliud et aliud*, because the essence of the . . . Holy Spirit is not *alia*, the essence of the [Father] is not *alia*, and the essence of the [Son] is not *alia*, but one and the

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[94] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[95] Sanders notes the language found in the Athanasian Creed, which Polanus may be using here: "[N]ot confounding the person nor the divine essence." The essence is never divided. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[96] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[97] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[98] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

> same. . . . The [Holy Spirit] is that which the Father [and Son] is; for each is God or belongs to that very essence. But the [Holy Spirit] is not he who is the Father [nor Son], for they are not one person.[99]

In summary, Polanus provides a twofold rule for the use of adjectival masculine and feminine genders for "person" and neuter gender for "essence."

14.3

This present section considers Polanus's final thoughts on the Third Person in relation to the divine nature before moving on to consider the Third Person in relation to other persons. He begins with person and nature: "[O]ne can say something of God in the concrete which cannot be said of the deity or divine essence in the abstract."[100] For example, one may concretely say "God is spirated by God" but not abstractly say "Deity is spirated by deity."[101] However, "if the word 'essence' is not said abstractly, but said figuratively for the divine person or said personally, then it is said by some individuals that the divine essence" actively spirates the Holy Spirit.[102] Referencing the Third Person by name "restricts the common word 'essence' to the person of the Father [and Son]: for subjects are such as they are permitted by the predicate."[103] Polanus formulates a sentence structure for proper Trinitarian syntax: "[I]t is clear that the person is not so absolutely speaking the divine essence"[104] insofar as essences do not actively spirate because essences do not perform actions, nor is the essence synonymous with Father and Son. The sentence is assembled such that the subject is Father-Son who actively breathes forth the Holy Spirit, the predicate. Syntax pushes readers to identify the subject(s).

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[99] Polanus cites John 10:30, "I and the Father are one," to substantiate his claim that the incarnate Son and the Father share "one and the same essence." Polanus, *Axiom* 14.2.

[100] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[101] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[102] Sanders provides a specific reference for Polanus's citation (Lambert Daneau, *Commentary on Lombard's Sentences*, I). Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[103] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[104] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

Next, Polanus considers "the person comparatively to the other persons both with respect to communion and with respect to distinction." First, he gives attention to "the communion of the divine persons" under three terms, "ὁμοούσια, ἰσότης, or περιχώρησις ἐναλληλος."[105] As Polanus discussed in a previous axiom on οὐσία, he repeats his affirmation of the three persons' "consubstantiality or coessentiality." The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit "are of one same substance or essence singular and one in number; or, that whereby they are one according to essence, because the essence that belongs to them all is one and never is one essence of the Holy Spirit, [one essence of the Son, and one essence of the Father]."[106] The Holy Spirit's οὐσία is the identical οὐσία that the Father has and is and that the Son has and is.

Polanus provides biblical warrant for ὁμοούσιος, such as John 10.[107] I apply Polanus's theological points pertaining to Father and Son to Father-Son and Holy Spirit: "[T]he nature of the [actively spirated] . . . is the same as the nature of the [actively spirating], . . . even though he who is [actively spirated] . . . possesses his existence otherwise."[108] Several chapters later, John's Farewell Discourse provides a traditional biblical passage for affirming the Holy Spirit's consubstantiality.[109] Christ comforts his disciples before his crucifixion: "When the Counselor comes, the one I [Christ] will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify

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[105] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3. This discussion on considering a person (Holy Spirit) comparatively to the other persons (Father and Son) with the respect to communion extends from 14.3 to 14.5. For reference, Polanus begins to compare a person to other persons with respect to distinction at axiom 14.6.

[106] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[107] In John's Gospel, Christ answers the Jews at the Festival of Dedication, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Later, Christ ties his mighty works to God's unity of essence. His miraculous works testify and give credence to the truth of his teaching: Christ is one with the Father (cf. John 10:38). In Sanders's program notes, he flags a potential citation error in Polanus's reference of Basil the Great ("Basil the Great, *Against Eunomius* Book 4, Ch. 1, sect. 32."). Sanders comments, "One problem is that Basil's *Against Eunomius* only has three books" and may have "been re-numbered since . . . [the] edition Polanus consulted ca. 1600." Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[108] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[109] See my discussion in chapter 3.

about me" (John 15:26). I draw two theological points: (1) "the Spirit . . . who proceeds" describes the eternal relation between a principle (Father) and the principled (Holy Spirit); (2) "the Spirit of truth" also describes the same eternal relation between a principle (Son) and the principled (Holy Spirit). Taken together, "the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father" supports the orthodox notion of the divine persons' essential communion; the three are one.[110]

"The community of essence"—the single οὐσία common to each person—"is as a single thing to its modes which are in the thing."[111] The Holy Spirit's mode of having and being the essence is in a form that is proper to the Third Person (in a passively spirated manner). But a personal mode does not affect one's divine nature: "Thanks to this ὁμοούσια," which is identical to each of the divine persons, "the Holy Spirit is just as αὐτοθεος as the Father and Son."[112] The term αὐτοθεος only pertains to one's nature and not the mode of personhood. The Holy Spirit is God in himself because he is of the same divine substance.

14.4

I consider the Holy Spirit individually, relative to the other persons, in communion *via* equality:

> The ἰσότης of divine persons is that whereby the three persons are equal among themselves in the essential properties of deity, in the act of subsisting, in their works, and in their dignity and honor. Anything said substantially of God is

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[110] In describing how the scope of God's economy relates to the doctrine of the Trinity, which Fred Sanders calls "the economic-immanent axis," he remarks that "[t]he doctrine of the Trinity is a conceptual foregrounding of the entire matrix of economic revelation. Only in this comprehensive context can the Christological monogenesis of John 1:18 be combined with the pneumatological *ekporeusis* of John 15:26 to produce a doctrine of the eternal Trinity." Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 49. Christians traditionally interpret John 15:26 with passages such as John 1:18 to argue for God's tri-personed unity.

[111] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[112] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

> attributed equally of the individual persons. For they are equal in wisdom, goodness, power, glory, and majesty.[113]

Building on the theological argument that the Holy Spirit is "just as αὐτοθεος as the Father [and Son],"[114] the Holy Spirit, along with Father and Son, deserves equal worship. Polanus uses God's goodness among other attributes as an example for affirming the Holy Spirit is God in himself. The third subsisting relation can neither receive nor participate in accidents, such as goodness.[115] The αὐτο- prefix serves to communicate that the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person is substantially good, or is self-good: he is himself goodness. Furthermore, goodness is equal to the Father and Son.

In addition to the equality of essential properties, Polanus includes the equality of the persons' subsistence. The accident of existence is not proper to a divine person who subsists in the divine nature. Nevertheless, the three persons "are equal in the act of subsisting which belongs to the person in himself.[116] By the act of subsisting in the divine essence, the Holy Spirit "exists in himself, because he subsists in himself and through himself."[117] The three persons' work *ad extra* are equal: "They equally create and conserve all things; [they] equally justify and regenerate and give the elect salvation and eternal life."[118] The only correct creaturely response to God the Holy Spirit is "worship and adoration."[119]

Polanus ends his discussion of equality with additional points of application. He attributes "the names that signify essential properties or operations [*ad extra*] equally

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[113] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[114] Polanus argued this in the previous section; see Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[115] The Holy Spirit does not participate in the divine attributes; rather, *per* divine simplicity, the Holy Spirit is identical to the attributes.

[116] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[117] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[118] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[119] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

to each person of the deity distinctly in the singular number, and to the persons conjoined also in the plural number."[120] I apply these instructions, again using "good." Based on equality, the Holy Spirit is good, the Son is good, and the Father is good. The three persons are good because "good" has been attributed three separate times. Nevertheless, attributing goodness "is to be without mention of the persons ever in the plural number, but only in the singular, because God is single, a single divine essence not many divine essences."[121] We do not affirm three really distinct good gods.

Polanus also considers equally attributing "the names [such as goodness] that signify . . . operations" in creation to the three persons. The three numerically distinct persons add to three who are good. Yet the triune God's work *ad extra* is singular: "[E]ven though the [Holy Spirit] . . . is infinite, eternal, wise, good, omnipotent, creating and governing all," just as the Father and Son equally, "there are not three infinites, eternals, wisdoms, goods, omnipotences, creators and governors of all."[122] God's acts in creation are not worked by three Goods or Goodnesses who work divisively or in a divided way; "Rather, there is a single infinite eternal, wise, good, omnipotent creator and governor of all."[123] By this affirmation, Polanus upholds a classic Trinitarian axiom on God's unity of being: the Trinitarian persons' work in creation are indivisible (*opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*).

14.5

Perichoresis is the third and final way Polanus compares the communion of the Trinitarian persons. Polanus defines *perichoresis*: "The περιχώρησις or εμπεριχώρησις ἐναλληλος of divine persons is that tightest union whereby" the Holy

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[120] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[121] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[122] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

[123] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.4.

Spirit is in Father and Son, "not like an accident is in a subject, but such that [the Holy Spirit] . . . permeates another whole in all respects and embraces it always and inseparably, thanks to the essence one and the same in number, which the individual persons possess as a whole."[124] Polanus biblically references the Father and Son's *perichoresis* (John 1:1; 10:38; 14:10–11), and I apply this concept of communion to the Holy Spirit.[125] The Holy Spirit is related to the Father and the Son in their perichoretic communion.

In addition to biblical support, Polanus lists synonymous words for *perichoresis* from the Greek and Latin traditions. Two patterns emerge: first, some terms portray the persons as spatially around each other; second, some terms illustrate the persons as spatially inside other persons.[126] *Perichoresis* is based on the idea of God's unity of essence; *perichoresis* logically supports the unity of essence: "Thanks to this περιχώρησις and the identity of or the absolutely singular, maximally one unity of the essence in the persons, the persons are ενὑπόστατοι."[127] I take the Holy Spirit as an example: "[T]he Holy Spirit is in the Father and Son, whereof there is essential virtue and ενὑπόστατς to each, in such a way that despite this the persons and their personal properties are not confounded between themselves."[128] As the Holy Spirit is in the Father

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[124] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5. Butner's glossary defines *perichoresis*: "A term referring to the mutual interpenetration and coinherence of the divine persons and of the two natures in Christ. This concept is often explained with reference to metaphors of motion and space and the unity of love, consciousness, and will." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 227.

[125] Emery believes Aquinas makes this point about the persons perichoretically indwelling each other in Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* IV.21; see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 310. Furthermore, the invisible missions of the Son and the Spirit result in the indwelling of the entire, perichoretic Trinity in the Christian.

[126] Sanders and Hurd point out how Polanus may be providing the two patterns of spatial metaphor (permeate and embrace) as a list and in a mixed manner to emphasize "that tightest union where one person is in another." Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5.

[127] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5.

[128] N.B.: After broadly tracing the historical precedence of *perichoresis* in the Christian tradition, Emery relates the concepts of ὁμοούσιος with *perichoresis*: "[T]he genuine idea of perichoresis is no substitute for that of the unity in nature. Perichoresis is a richer concept than unity of nature, but one cannot replace the idea of consubstantiality with that of perichoresis, because unity of nature is included

and the Son, his personal principle of individuation is not confounded with the other persons. The concept of mutual indwelling does not blur or negate the concept that opposed relations really distinguish the persons.

According to *perichoresis*, to locate the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person is to locate the Father and the Son at the exact place, metaphorically speaking: "Due to this περιχώρησις ἐναλληλος, these three persons are absolutely always simultaneous both in every single place and in every single thing and each always in themselves, such that wherever . . . [the Holy Spirit] is in actual reality, likewise also the . . . [Father and Son are] present there in actual reality."[129] A divine person's mutual indwelling within and around other persons may also be a way to interpret God's unified presence in creation. God's unified act *ad extra* is always a singular act with a singular actor because "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the essence one in number; therefore, [the Holy Spirit] . . . is necessarily in [Father and Son]."[130] The unity of essence fundamentally explains the perichoretic manner in which God acts as a singular principle in creation.

14.6

Following the consideration of Trinitarian persons in communion, Polanus considers the persons in regard to each other by distinction.[131] He cites Aquinas to refresh readers' memory on how to make distinctions, properly speaking: "The distinction of the divine persons is that whereby one person is differentiated from the other persons due to

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within the concept of perichoresis." Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 304. The Trinitarian persons' unicity of being grounds the manner in which the persons mutually indwell each other in "that tightest union." Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5. Both concepts help us grasp how the three persons exist in communion.

[129] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5.

[130] Polanus lists references in the text, and Sanders traces the citations by the original authors: Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity* 4; Ambrosiaster, on 2 Cor 13:13; and Augustine, *The Trinity* 6.12. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5.

[131] Recall that Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3–5, considers a person compared to other persons with respect to communion. This section compares a person to other persons with respect to distinction.

a specific notion."[132] The Holy Spirit is the subject, and the relation of passive spiration is in him. The Holy Spirit "pushes out" of himself the Father-Son as other. Passive spiration conceptualizes for creatures the relation between the Holy Spirit and Father-Son; in God, this relation is the Holy Spirit, since a divine person is a subsisting relation. This clarification aids the task of maintaining the smallest distinction as Polanus cautions.

Polanus introduces a new term: "The relation of the divine persons is the τρόπος ὑπαρξεως, mode of existence [subsistence], that is proper and incommunicable to each person, and does not compose the person but constitutes and distinguishes him from other persons without composition."[133] The Third Person's mode of subsistence is proper to him; his way of existing as God is incommunicable to Father and Son. To uphold divine simplicity, this mode of subsistence does not compose and add parts to the Holy Spirit such that he becomes a composite person. The Holy Spirit's mode of subsistence depends on a relational distinction (passive spiration) and not on the essence.[134] "Flowing out of" the personal relations that really distinguish the persons' mode of subsistence, "there follows the distinction of divine persons according to their origin, order, and operation."[135] Polanus provides three subcategories under this relational distinction of the persons.

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[132] Sanders provides an exact citation for Aquinas, *ST* I.40 art. 2 ad. 3. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6. A notion— "[t]he smallest distinction is by relation"—is the individualizing principle that really distinguishes the persons relationally; yet the relation, which is in a subject and pushes forth the other person(s) in the opposed relation, and which really distinguishes the persons, is the subject of the relation. Again, I follow Hurd's verbiage and explanation of an opposed relation and what it means for a subject to push forth a person from axiom 8. Polanus, *Axioms* 7–9.

[133] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6.

[134] Sanders provides the specific footnote for Basil (*Against Eunomius* 4), whom Polanus quotes: "[T]he persons of the Holy Triad are not distinguished in οὐσία but in τρόπος ὑπαρξεως." Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6.

[135] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6.

Polanus begins with origin: "The origin of the divine persons is the procession of one person from another."[136] Although procession is a technical word (only the Son and Spirit eternally proceed from an origin), Polanus means that the Trinitarian persons' relations considers "fromness."[137] I consider the second eternal procession: "The Holy Spirit, as Spirit, is likewise from another—i.e. from Father and Son. Therefore . . . the Holy Spirit . . . in the arising or origin of his person, is not from himself, but from Father and Son, whose Spirit he is."[138] The Holy Spirit is the only person who is from the single principle, Father and Son. This eternal origin uniquely belongs to the Holy Spirit, cannot be communicated to other divine persons, and constitutes the Third Person, and distinguishes the Spirit from the Father and the Son.

14.7

The second way in which a relational distinction can be made between the Holy Spirit from Father and Son is according to the Holy Spirit's order.[139] So Polanus: "The *order of persons* is that whereby one person is prior to another in nature or class. Thus one calls . . . the Holy Spirit, the third. And for that reason each are respectively first, second, or third in order of existing, because . . . the Holy Spirit is from Father and Son, and from one principle."[140] Creatures can interpret the three persons' eternal *taxis*

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[136] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6.

[137] Sanders employs the term "fromness" to describe how the Father is from no one, the Son is from the Father, and the Spirit is from Father-Son. Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 95.

[138] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6. Hurd notes the singular number for the pronoun "whose" in this sentence, which may emphasize the Holy Spirit's singular principle of origin, Father-Son.

[139] Recall from *Axiom* 14.6 that Polanus provides three subcategories under this relational distinction of the persons: origin, order, and operation.

[140] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7. The language of causation in this axiom should only allude to one's principle, relation to other persons, and fromness. Steven J. Duby explains improper uses of cause according to Aquinas: "He distinguishes a catholic view of the processions from the Arian and Sabellian views by stressing that procession in God is neither the procession of an effect from a cause (as Arius understood the Son's procession) nor the procession of a cause to an effect (as Sabellius understood the Father to 'proceed' in assuming flesh and to be called the Son in that respect)." Steven J. Duby, "Trinity and Economy in Thomas Aquinas," *SBJT* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 30. I will use "principle" to convey the orthodox idea of proceeding from an eternal relation of origin.

based on the revealed notions of the persons' eternal relations of origin.[141] Within God's inner life, the Holy Spirit is the divine person who is from the Father and the Son; therefore, the Holy Spirit is the Third Person, third in his order of eternal existence. The internal order never introduces "grade, i.e., superiority, excellence, eminence, dignity, and neither such in time";[142] thus, to be prior is qualified as an eternal priority such that the three persons eternally coexist outside of time.

The third and final category Polanus outlines as a relational distinction between a divine person to the other persons is according to the divine operation. Polanus demonstrates two ways the persons may be distinguished under the category of operation: "[I]t either concerns the *order and way of acting in essential operations*, or deals with *personal operation*."[143] Both types of operations function under Polanus's controlling statement, "the order of operation in the divine persons is as in being so in acting."[144] Fundamentally, the fullness of God's divine life, the eternal relations, and the eternal order of being grounds creatures' interpretation of the triune God's *opera ad extra*.

First, "[t]he way of acting in essential works is distinct . . . The Father acts through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Said again, the Father acts from nothing; the Son acts from the Father . . . and the Holy Spirit acts from both (John 16:13)."[145] Linguistically, Scripture provides a set of prepositions (from, through, in) to reveal a true order between the Trinitarian persons. Based on the triune God's eternal *taxis*, Polanus affirms that "the

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[141] The Father is the First Person and the principle without principle. The Son is the Second Person who "is from the Father as from a principle." Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7. The Spirit is the Third Person who is "from Father and Son, as from a one principle."

[142] Polanus references Tertullian generally, and Sanders specifically cites *Against Praxeas*. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[143] My consideration focuses on the Holy Spirit. Based on God's eternal order of being, we can interpret the Holy Spirit's operations in two ways. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[144] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7. Cf. An action follows upon being (*agere sequitur esse*). Aquinas, *SCG* I.43.

[145] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

Holy Spirit exists from Father and Son"; furthermore, Polanus affirms that "the will of Holy Spirit finalizes the will of both—not in time, but in order."[146] The eternal order of being—from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit—guides our interpretation of the divine persons' ordered actions in God.

In light of the Holy Spirit's "way of acting" essentially, Polanus transitions to consider God's work *ad extra*.[147] Traditionally, Christians "attribute . . . our sanctification to the Holy Spirit"[148] even though God's works in creation "remain common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[149] The Father sanctifies, the Son sanctifies, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies; the three persons perform the one, undivided work of God in creation as the God who sanctifies. Yet Polanus appropriates sanctification to the Holy Spirit because sanctification reveals that the Third Person is eternally from the Father and the Son.

Second, a "[p]ersonal operation constitutes both an internal and external distinction of persons. For, . . . [the] Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and Son, thereby receiving from Father and Son the divine essence and all essential attributes of deity in his being spirated."[150] Within the eternal being of God, there are personal acts that are distinct and unique to each person. Polanus further distinguishes between a personal operation internal to God (eternal procession) from a personal operations external to God's inner life (divine mission). First, the Holy Spirit's personal and internal operation, or his notional act, is passive spiration.

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[146] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[147] The Holy Spirit, whose single principle is Father and Son within God's eternal order of being, provides a framework for understanding God's undivided work *ad extra*.

[148] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[149] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[150] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

14.8

The second angle to consider the Holy Spirit's personal operation in creation: "The external personal operation is the mission of any person."[151] Polanus describes the proper description of a divine mission as "merely the new way of manifesting the person and his efficacy without a change of place, because the divine person who is sent is God, and God is everywhere."[152] God is sent unlike the way creatures are sent. Creatures are not omnipresent but bound by space and time. God is in all places, and the divine missions are not spatial relocation. The temporal missions are patterned after the eternal processions: "[P]ersons are sent according to their mode of origin, such that, under a certain concept, one person is sent without another."[153] The Trinitarian persons' eternal processions limit what constitutes a divine mission.[154]

As an example, Polanus considers the Holy Spirit indwelling "the hearts of the faithful."[155] Eternally, the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from Father and Son. At a human being's conversion, the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit on a divine mission as an extension of the Holy Spirit's procession to the human being's soul. The Holy Spirit's procession is manifested in a created effect at the terminus of the divine mission. The

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[151] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8.

[152] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8.

[153] This classical processions-missions scheme helps interpret why "The Father only sends, and is not also sent. The Son is sent from the Father, from himself, and from the Holy Spirit, so he can assume flesh and send the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the faithful." Polanus, *Axiom* 17.8. Sanders underscores a "great advantage" of "a well-ordered trinitarianism . . . in the processions-missions model," which "[displays] the distinctiveness of . . . the Holy Spirit . . . The same momentum of fromness helps us recognize and confess (on the one hand) . . . the eternal Holy Spirit who came from the Father . . . and (on the other hand) . . . the same eternal-now-outpoured Holy Spirit here among us in the economy." Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 95. I discuss the procession-mission model in chapter 6.

[154] Although Polanus suggests that the Holy Spirit sends the Son, I recognize the Son's origin is the Father alone, and the Holy Spirit only "sends" the incarnate Son by virtue of the Son's new human nature.

[155] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8.

Spirit indwells the Christian and begins to exist and be present in a new way from the creature's perspective.[156]

Moreover, since the act of sending is common to the triune God, Polanus may also state that the Holy Spirit is not only sent from Father and Son but also from himself. The Holy Spirit's temporal "mission and obedience" to be sent "does not overturn" his "ὁμοούσιος and equality of power, but only distinguishes" the Holy Spirit from Father and Son "and their duties. Thereon, the mission of persons is only under the concept of their external operation, and is only temporal."[157] As the Holy Spirit's eternal relation of origin, the Father and the Son may send the Holy Spirit.[158]

An improper application of the divine missions is to affirm that the Father is sent "to Daniel under the auspice of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7), but he [the Father] is not sent." The Father does not eternally proceed from an origin in God; only the Son and Holy Spirit may be sent. However, an "appearance" may apply to sightings of God in the Old Testament, for "[m]ission and appearance differ."[159]

In sum, Polanus's twofold way of understanding the divine persons' operations is distinguished essentially and personally, and personal operations further dichotomize into internal and external operations.

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[156] This is a mixed relation. Based on the logic of mixed relations, this created effect causes a real change for creatures; this is a rational relation for God.

[157] The triune God acts in his freedom and unity to temporally send the Son and Holy Spirit on divine missions. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8.

[158] As discussed in chapter 4, the Holy Spirit's visible missions have two components: the Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and the Son and a created effect. The created effect manifests an otherwise unseen reality: Holy Spirit's divine mission to a creature.

[159] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8. Vidu relies on Augustine's strict definition of a divine mission as opposed to an Old Testament theophany or appearance: "[O]lder theophanies, although similarly employing created effects, do not truly manifest the persons but, at best, only represent them." A divine mission is reserved for the New Testament because God intended to progressively reveal and "lead [us] to an understanding of the persons." Furthermore, "the forms produced by the angels [in the Old Testament were] not united to the eternal persons," which a mission, by definition, requires. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 14.

Axiom Fifteen

Axiom fifteen outlines proper speech for the triune God: "One cannot say, speaking substantively, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three beings; even though speaking adjectivally, one can say three beings subsisting, and likewise also three things, as also in Greek τρία ἐνυποστατά."[160] The Holy Spirit, who is the divine essence, subsists in the divine essence *via* passive spiration. There are three who subsist, and the Holy Spirit's personal subsistence is unique to him.

Axiom Sixteen

In axiom sixteen, Polanus lists another pair of nouns and explains the proper way to speak about the triune God: "God is three in persons, but not triplex: the former pertains to God, while the latter does not in any fashion. Just as he is simple without complexity, so also triplex denotes a complex of three, and likewise so does triple."[161] God is neither triplex nor triple because God is not a complex being with compounded parts that are combined to constitute his oneness of being. God's divine simplicity guards and directs creatures' speech: God is three persons.

Creatures conceptually add the persons—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—who really are distinct and total three persons. Nevertheless, the mental act of addition does not create composition into God's unicity of being; hence, Polanus discourages the use of the terms "triplex" and "triple" in theological language. "Due to this, Augustine asserts that God can be spoken of as three and Trinity, but not at all as triple. Therefore," Polanus reasons, "we avow that God is absolutely simple, i.e. devoid of any composition according to those things which are said to be principles; but we avow he is three according to procession or persons, all the while leaving the simplicity fully intact."[162]

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[160] Polanus, *Axiom* 15.

[161] Polanus, *Axiom* 16.

[162] Polanus, *Axiom* 16.

Polanus follows Augustine and approves of the terms "three" and "Trinity" because divine simplicity is maintained. With Aristotelian philosophy in mind, Polanus states that God is not a complex being, he does not fluctuate between the poles of act and potency and thus cannot be composed by principles.

Axiom Seventeen

In axiom seventeen, Polanus continues his affirmation that the triune God lacks composition: "God is three in persons not by a composition, but by an eternal [συνύπαρξις] . . . i.e., by an eternal coexistence."[163] The divine persons are not collected in the ways appropriate to human persons: "This is not the sort of coexistence that one man is with another or with another man, with the result that he subsists outside of him, because human essence is finite."[164] The human nature restricts finite human beings' existence.

Polanus's illustration of a human being coexisting with another human being emphasizes the coexistence of human beings who are outside of one another. This illustration does not apply to God: "God's essence is infinite—further, an infinite which according to its existence is single. Therefore, one divine person is not outside another person, but one is in the other, or with another, in the infinity of the essence."[165] Since the unity of God's infinite being—his infinite essence—is not restricted by God's existence, the Holy Spirit is not outside of Father and Son but is in or with Father and Son in God's infinite essence. The three divine persons share the exact single existence.

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[163] Polanus, *Axiom* 17. The Trinitarian persons are not parts that can be gathered together to compose God's oneness.

[164] Polanus, *Axiom* 17. All human beings exist in or have the same type of human nature, and each individual person exists in and is limited by their personal essence.

[165] Polanus, *Axiom* 17.

Axiom Eighteen

In the final axiom, Polanus briefly considers the Son's incarnation as a test case to show his commitment to his axioms. Polanus asserts, "A quaternity does not come about in the deity due to the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God; the Trinity of persons abides."[166] The addition of the human nature that properly belongs to the Son—that subsists only in the divine Son—does not introduce a fourth person (or fourth thing) into God. Polanus justifies this by comparing the *quiddity* of the human nature to the *quiddity* of the divine: "The same God the Word, even with his own proper flesh, is one of the Trinity—not that his flesh is of the substance of the Trinity, but because that flesh belongs to the Word of God, who is one of the Trinity."[167] A human being's nature and essence is not the same as God's, and it would be a categorical mistake to affirm the Trinity's substance changes when the Son assumes a human nature.

As for the Holy Spirit's role in the incarnation, he participates in God's unified work. As Adonis Vidu contends, "The operator of all of Christ's operations is the whole Trinity, from whom come the efficient energy moving and instrumentalizing his human operation."[168] The Holy Spirit, along with the Father and divine Son, is the efficient cause of Christ's human operations.

Conclusion

Polanus's eighteen axioms may be theological distillations of his larger systematic work on the triune God from his work *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*. The majority of Polanus's original examples provided in his axioms considered the eternal relation between the Father and Son. This chapter followed the shape of the axioms'

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[166] Polanus, *Axiom* 18.

[167] Polanus, *Axiom* 18.

[168] Vidu continues, "[T]he natural operation of his human nature, on the other hand, belongs exclusively to the Son, since the humanity subsists exclusively in him." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 37. The pertinent factor in my present discussion seeks to reconcile the triune God's immutability (that is, the three eternal persons remain as three) with the divine Son who also subsists in his human nature.

teaching. I sought to apply Polanus's arguments from each axiom to the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit. Methodologically, in this chapter, (1) I rehearsed each axiom, (2) I provided commentary with an emphasis on the Holy Spirit's procession, and (3) I included secondary sources from a classical Trinitarian perspective to support my commentary.

Beginning with God's singular essence and throughout Polanus's construction of subsequent axioms, he carefully never undermines his affirmation that the Holy Spirit is ὁμοούσιος with the Father and Son. The copious variations of distinctions that Polanus continuously employed proved to be insightful tools used to navigate the concepts concerning the triune God, the ultimate *sui generis* being. Polanus relied on rational distinctions to relate the Holy Spirit to the numerically singular divine essence. Then, he demonstrated how real distinctions identify the Holy Spirit as a subsisting relation who is eternally constituted by his opposed relation with the Father-Son. The Holy Spirit's principle of individuation or incommunicable property, passive spiration, distinguishes the Holy Spirit as the divine person who eternally and uniquely subsists in the essence as the one who is from the Father and Son. Polanus showed his commitment to the classical doctrine of divine simplicity, which he often includes in light of the distinctions made regarding God's inner life. Although the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, and each divine person is not really distinct from the one divine essence, Polanus follows the tradition and underscores there is no composition in God.

The Holy Spirit always operates from his principle or eternal relation of origin. The concepts of the Trinitarian *taxis* and the divine persons' mode of subsistence can explain why the triune God's undivided work *ad extra*, such as sanctifying Christians, is appropriated to the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, Polanus's meticulous categorization of the Trinitarian relations helpfully highlighted the unity of God's being and successfully preserved a biblical and classical account of monotheism, particularly in axiom fourteen. On the other hand, Polanus weaved in appropriate ways to apply the idea of

redoublement to communicate the ways in which the Holy Spirit, along with the Father and Son, is God.

Polanus's axioms functioned as helpful guiding posts that aids one's biblical understanding of God's intra-Trinitarian relations within the Reformed orthodox tradition. Indeed, God is one in Trinity, "blessed forever."[169] I now turn to consider a classical account of the eternal procession, focused on Romans 8.

[169] Polanus, *Axiom* 18.

CHAPTER 6

"THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT": A CLASSICAL ACCOUNT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PROCESSION IN ROMANS 8

Amandus Polanus's eighteen axioms offer substantial content on the doctrine of the Trinity, yet more can said. In this chapter, I will build on topics from chapter 5 such as Trinitarian *taxis* and the doctrine of appropriation. I cover additional theological ideas surrounding the Holy Spirit's eternal procession: the divine attributes, a mixed relation, and the circular movement in God. I apply these theological ideas to consider the Holy Spirit's existence in the triune God and work in creation. Specifically, I will focus on Romans 8 to explain how the Holy Spirit operates in creation since I give attention to the Gospels in chapters 3 and 4.[1] A biblical passage from the Pauline epistles will round out my assessment of scriptural support for the doctrine of the Father and Son's eternal spiration of the Holy Spirit.

In this chapter, I offer my interpretation of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession and thirdness in the triune God based on Romans 8, which follows a traditional Thomistic concept of God's life as a circular movement. I present my explanation in three parts, focusing on God in himself before *ad extra*: (1) an account of classical theism's definitions for God's aseity and omnipotence that explains Thomas Aquinas's notion of mixed relations between God the Holy Spirit and creatures; (2) an interpretation of Romans 8 to underscore why the Son's divine mission precedes the Holy Spirit's divine

[1] I have in mind Sarah Coakley's critique of the Gospels' emphasis on the Father-Son dyad while Paul emphasizes the Holy Spirit. I will respond to Coakley's claim in chapter 7.

mission to Christians; and (3) an argument for how the Holy Spirit's temporal mission reveals his principle of individuation.

The Holy Spirit's Eternal Procession, Divine Aseity and Omnipotence, and Mixed Relations

Classically, God's perfections include aseity and omnipotence.[2] I will explore a definition of God's perfection, fullness of life, and omnipotence, respectively, by relying on Thomistic definitions to justify the biblical and traditional reasons for confessing these divine attributes.[3] By consulting a historical Christian perspective, I will present the wisdom of a Christian tradition: the Holy Spirit, along with the Father and the Son, enjoys absolute fullness of being and is omnipotent. I outline how a tradition marries the concepts of God's aseity and omnipotence with the Holy Spirit's procession to creatures, thereby supplying Christians with God's divine power (2 Pet 1:3) to reach the Christian's *telos*.

God's Perfection

An entity is deemed perfect (*perfectum*) when it attains and possesses "all the excellencies of which it is capable and toward which it strives."[4] God absolutely possesses all the excellencies of divine perfection. Matthias Scheeben categorizes God's absolute perfection in the sense that the divine being is substantially perfect.[5] Based on an affirmation of God's absolute existence, Scheeben deduces God's nature is also

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[2] I limit my interaction with the divine attributes pertinent to my assessment of contemporary systematic proposals of the Holy Spirit's procession in chapter 7.

[3] My discussion on the classical attributes relies on Matthias J. Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *Doctrine About God, Or Theology in the Narrower Sense* (St. Paul: Emmaus Academic, 2021). To be more precise, in Scheeben's discussion of the divine attributes, he does not dedicate a section to discuss divine aseity. For Scheeben, divine aseity seems to be part and parcel of his definition of God's absolute perfection (generally speaking) and omnipotence (more specifically).

[4] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 73.

[5] In total, Scheeben outlines three senses of God's absolute perfection. I only include the first sense because it pertains to this discussion. For the second and third senses (universal and sovereign perfection), see Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 75–78.

absolute—without origin, independent, and unconditional.[6] Consequently, God is "substantially and essentially perfect[,] . . . self-sufficient for His perfection[,] . . . enclosing His entire perfection in His substance from the start without any internal development, external influence, and free activity of His own."[7] God is substantially free and possesses absolute freedom, independent from other entities outside himself.[8] All that belongs to divine perfection is the Holy Spirit's substantially. This substantial perfection means that the Trinity is self-sufficient, and all created things depend on God.[9]

God's Fullness of Life

Closely tied to the notion of God's absolute perfection is the notion of God's fullness of life in himself. The Holy Spirit never obtains or acquires the fullness of being; rather, God's perfect essence "expresses His possession of this fullness [of being] and thus implies the power to lead other entities to their perfection."[10] Within God's Trinitarian life, the *a se* Holy Spirit eternally exists in the enjoyment of the plenitude of the immutable essence.[11] Divine aseity formally constitutes "the divine nature . . . as the principle from which are deduced all the Divine Perfections."[12]

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[6] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 74.

[7] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 74.

[8] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 74. Scheeben offers scriptural support for God's substantial possession of absolute perfection (Matt 5:48; Acts 17:25; Rom 11:35; Isa 40:13).

[9] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 75.

[10] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 74.

[11] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.3 art. 4. John Webster speaks of God's aseity as "the spontaneous, eternal[,] and unmoved movement of [God's] being in relation as Father, Son[,] and Spirit." John Webster, *God without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *God and the Works of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016), 20. For another trinitarian definition, Steven J. Duby defines divine aseity or absolute fullness of being as God's "life eternally fulfilled in the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Steven J. Duby, *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism: Biblical Christology in Light of the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 23.

[12] This formal constitution ultimately distinguishes self-subsisting Being "as the principle from which are deduced all the divine perfections." Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *God, His Existence and His Nature: A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies*, vol. 2, trans. Dom Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: Herder Book, 1936), 11.

In close conceptual proximity to aseity is God's goodness because the Good presupposes plenitude of being. Out of the fullness of God's "self-subsisting being (*aseity, ens a se*),"[13] God freely creates *ex nihilo*. God, as *Actus Purus*, is the First Cause of all things.[14] Moreover, the most perfect being is the end of himself and of creatures.[15] Through a mixed relation, creatures have a real relation with God. The Holy Spirit brings human beings into communion with God to share in God's goodness.

The Holy Spirit's Mixed Relation with Creatures and the Divine Missions

The classical tradition desires to uphold a robust Creator-creature distinction whereby the infinite and finite's respective natures maintain their integrities.[16] On one side of the relationship, God's divine nature does not have potentiality and cannot experience the succession of events as is the creaturely experience. On the other side of the relationship, human beings in general are truly affected by God. In the Holy Spirit's divine mission to Christians, the change includes regeneration and communion with God. Thomas Aquinas coins the two-sided relationship as a mixed relation, which respectively allocates the proper experience, so to speak, for the Holy Spirit and the creatures in whom he indwells.[17] Aquinas opines, "Since therefore God is outside the whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him, and not conversely, it is manifest that

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[13] Garrigou-Lagrange, *God, His Existence and His Nature*, 2:11.

[14] "[A]ccording to this view" that reinterprets Aristotle's notion of *Actus Purus*, "God is '*He who is*,' as revealed to Moses (Exod., ch. iii)." Garrigou-Lagrange, *God, His Existence and His Nature*, 2:11. The triune God creates *ex nihilo* in Genesis and relies only on the perfection of his absolute nature to work *ad extra*.

[15] Aquinas, *ST* I.5.

[16] For example, God does not have accidents. See Duby's discussion of "the signification of the classical metaphysical terminology and the Bible's teaching about God's aseity." Duby, *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism*, 42–43.

[17] Building on Aristotle's terms of the "known" and the "knower," Aquinas makes a distinction between a relation of reason (*relationes rationis*) in God and a real relation (*relationes reales*) in creation. Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* II.18. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XIV 1, 1088a2–35, trans. W. D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, Modern Library Classics (1941, repr., New York: Random House, 2001), 913–14.

creatures are really related to God Himself; whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but a relation only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him."[18] A mixed relation has two relations: (1) the rational relation (*relationes rationis*) in the Holy Spirit and (2) the real relation (*relationes reales*) in the human being. A divine mission results in a mixed relation.

The triune God sends the Holy Spirit on an invisible mission to remain in Christians (1 John 4:12–13). Suitably named the invisible mission because "no one has ever seen God," the Holy Spirit resides in the Christian *via* a divine mission.[19] Despite this visually imperceptible residing, Christians' new reality manifests itself outwardly as they love one another (1 John 4:12), testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world (1 John 4:14), and "know and believe the love that God has for us" (1 John 4:16).

This is the benefit of upholding the concepts of mixed relations and divine missions. (1) A mixed relation preserves the Creator-creature distinction in the Holy Spirit's divine mission to Christians. (2) A mixed relation between God and human beings upholds God's aseity and accounts for the divine mission's created effect, which really changes creatures. God does not exist in mutual relationality with creatures because the notion of God as pure act prevents real change in God. However, God sends the Holy Spirit to indwell Christians, and this created effect is real for creatures.

I underscore the importance of maintaining, on the one hand, the Holy Spirit's aseity through mixed relations: the Third Person is not ordered to or dependent on creatures, even in light of the invisible mission to indwell Christians. This is a relation of reason for the Trinitarian person because, with respect to creatures and created effects in creation, the Holy Spirit does not change. On the other hand, Christians participate in a

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[18] Aquinas, *ST* I.13 art. 7 co. 5.

[19] Cf. Amandus Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7; 14.8.

real relation with the one to whom they are oriented. When Scripture states that the Holy Spirit is given to (John 7:39; Eph 1:13) and dwells in God's people (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19), the Spirit indeed "is in a creature according to a new relation"[20] from the creature's perspective.

Divine Omnipotence

God's aseity orients the following discussion of God's omnipotence (*omnipotens*) or absolute power, "the ability to bring forth or to bring about something positive."[21] Based on God's intrinsic perfection and ontological fullness, God possesses absolute power. Concerning creation, God's proper or productive power "is the foundation for the power to bring forth being," underlying "the power to communicate life"[22] and communicating "His perfection to other subjects."[23] I will summarize Scheeben's four sections on his discussion of omnipotence.

The first section disentangles the "[*n*]*ature and properties of the divine power*."[24] God's absolute perfection and absolute fullness of being constitute absolute power (1 Tim 6:15).[25] The second section explicates the "[*s*]*pecific object and character of the operation of the divine power*."[26] God is *esse subsistens*,[27] and drawing from his

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[20] Dominic Legge cites Thomas Aquinas, I *Sent*. d. 30 q. 1 a. 2 ad 4. Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19.

[21] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 197. Divine omnipotence is not a divine attribute monopolized by one Trinitarian person. While the following discussion seeks to emphasize the Holy Spirit's omnipotence, it should not be interpreted as though the Father and Son are not also omnipotent. All absolute perfections must be attributed to God because God is a self-subsisting Being. Garrigou-Lagrange, *God, His Existence and His Nature*, 2:19. Nor should readers interpret God's work *ad extra* as divisible.

[22] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 198.

[23] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 197.

[24] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 198.

[25] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 198. Scheeben outlines six properties "endowed . . . to the peculiarities of God's [mighty] being."

[26] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 199.

[27] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 200.

perfect nature, "God's *omnipotens*—a power that holds and supports everything and precisely thereby rules and thoroughly governs everything"—creates *ex nihilo* (cf. Rom 4:17) and sustains the effect's lasting existence through his continued influence (cf. Hab 3).[28]

The third section covers "[t]he *singular extent* or the *objective scope of the divine power*."[29] The all-powerful God is (1) "able to bring forth everything . . . *capable of realization*" (Job 42:2; Matt 19:26);[30] (2) capable of everything that really is *conceivable*," that is, concepts that are "*thought and known by God Himself* in His ideas" (cf. Eph 3:20; Jer 32:17; Luke 1:37);[31] and (3) "capable of everything that He wills," in theory and reality.[32] God's power always corresponds with and corresponds to his will, such that his "power extends so far that His will cannot extend further."[33] God can only do what he wills or is capable of willing.[34]

The fourth section correlates the positive relationship between God's power and all other powers and faculties.[35] God's power is the source, foundation, root, and soul "of all powers and faculties apart from Him."[36]

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[28] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 200.

[29] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 201.

[30] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 200.

[31] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 202.

[32] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 202. Under section 3, Scheeben highlights the ways God manifests and communicates his positive, inexhaustible, infinite omnipotence in and outside of the divine nature: (1) the Trinity, (2) the hypostatic union, and (3) spiritual creatures. First, "in the Trinity . . . the Second and the Third person . . . become absolutely infinite in Themselves through their substantial identity with God's essence" (203). Second, in the Son's incarnation, the assumed human nature "acquires an infinite dignity" through "its hypostatic union with a Divine Person." Third, by grace, God offers his essence to spiritual creatures "as an object of possession and enjoyment . . . [to] participate in God's infinite blessedness" in glory.

[33] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 202.

[34] Scheeben cites Augustine, "Sermon 214," in *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Mary S. Muldowney (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 134.

[35] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 205.

[36] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 205–6.

To briefly survey other theologians in the tradition on the divine perfection of omnipotence, Reformed theologians such as Francis Turretin[37] and Herman Bavinck[38] likewise qualify their acceptance of God's absolute power and his ordained power with distinctions. God's absolute power refers to God's ability to do anything compatible with his nature. God can do more than he actually does so long as the acts are bound to his nature, that is, the acts are not contradictory to God's nature. Reformed theologians find consensus in endorsing this classical concept of God's power.

The Holy Spirit Proceeds in Power[39]

I conclude this discussion on the Holy Spirit's omnipotence with a final, three-step consideration: the types of relations between a divine person, the divine essence, and divine attributes.[40] First, I note the relationship between a divine person (the Holy Spirit) to the divine essence of God. A divine person is a subsisting relation: the Holy Spirit's procession is not really distinct from the person.[41] Second, I observe the relationship

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[37] Francis Turretin writes, "The power of God (the executing principle of the divine operations) is nothing other than the divine essence itself productive outwardly (through which he is conceived as able to do whatever he wills or can will)." Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George M. Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 244. In his infinite power, God can do that which he can will; God can do anything in accordance with his will "since the will deduces power into act and whatever God can do, that he can also will to be done" (249). Ontologically, omnipotence explains how "God cannot do more than he can will since both his power and will form the law to himself from his nature" (250).

[38] Herman Bavinck develops the doctrine of God's omnipotence according to Scripture's testimony of God's nature and works. For his full discussion of biblical support for God's omnipotent nature, see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 245–46. Within God and Israel's covenantal relationship, God demonstrates his kingship over his people by offering protection and salvation throughout the Old Testament (2:246). The New Testament continues to name God in a manner that signifies the ability to act in power and with authority (2:246). In light of God's works, Bavinck devotes attention to acknowledging the evidence of God's omnipotence from divine operations *ad extra* (2:246–67).

[39] For Aquinas, any perfection found in creation is "to be ascribed to God in the same way as effects are found in their equivocal causes, which effects are in their causes virtually." Aquinas gives the example of God's wisdom: we say God is wise because (1) he causes wisdom and (2) insofar as creatures are wise, we imitate in some way the virtue by which God makes us wise. In this discussion, I consider God's power in a logically corresponding manner. Aquinas, *SCG* I.32, 2.

[40] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 6; 10; 12.

[41] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 1; 2; 6; 10; 11; 13.

between the divine essence and the divine attributes. Divine power is not really distinct from the divine essence. Since "the essence and all absolute things," such as omnipotence, "are common,"[42] the Holy Spirit has power. Third, the Holy Spirit *qua* divine person is not really distinct from the divine attributes.[43]

We are now positioned to develop a fuller explanation for 2 Peter 1:3–4, a biblical text that underscores God's power and the Christian's *telos*—elements pertinent to this discussion.[44] The all-powerful Holy Spirit proceeds to empower God's people, personally indwelling Christians: "[E]very mission of the Holy Spirit entails the Spirit's presence according to his personal procession."[45] The apportioned gifts of grace in Christians, which elevate the human nature, witness to the Holy Spirit's empowering presence.[46] As recipients of the Holy Spirit who "has given us very great and precious promises" (v. 4), God supplies Christians with his divine power (v. 3). Human beings possess the potential to return to God because the Holy Spirit's "[*o*]*mnipotence as such*

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[42] Polanus, *Axiom* 7. D. Glenn Butner Jr. identifies a virtual distinction between the divine essence and attributes "in that it specifies that the basis for the mental distinction between attributes lies in God. There is something real about the divine essence that makes it capable of being the cause of differing created effects that lead us to call God [*a se*]." Butner's explanation depends on divine simplicity. D. Glenn Butner Jr., *Trinitarian Dogmatics: Exploring the Grammar of the Christian Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 79. Butner cites James E. Dolezal, *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 133–34.

[43] Dolezal contends, "Properly speaking, God . . . is powerful by virtue of God, not power. . . . And when we say that God is . . . power itself . . . we . . . simply [mean] that He is all that is involved in these terms by virtue of His own divine essence as such." Dolezal, *All That Is in God*, 43; cf. John Owen, *Vindiciae Evangelicae*, vol. 12 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Gould (1850–1853; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), 72. Following Dolezal and Owen in their definitions of divine simplicity, I affirm that the Holy Spirit is not really distinct from divine omnipotence.

[44] This exegesis of 2 Peter 1:3–4 builds on the idea introduced by Scheeben, who noted the "three worlds" in which God manifests and communicates his omnipotence. By grace, God shares his positive, inexhaustible, infinite omnipotence with spiritual creatures.

[45] Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 161.

[46] Legge distinguishes between receiving the Holy Spirit from the gifts of grace (charisms). Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 161.

. . . [is] the power to bring forth everything possible per se."[47] By grace, Christians enjoy this union with God; in glory, the Holy Spirit will perfect this beatitude.

In summary, I make a twofold affirmation: (1) the Holy Spirit proceeds in power, and (2) the Holy Spirit graces human beings whom he indwells to act in power, to the glory of God.

The Son and the Holy Spirit's Divine Missions in Romans 8

In part 2, I will present a biblical and theological interpretation of the order of the Son and the Holy Spirit's respective divine missions in three sections. First, I consider Adam, a biblical-theological type of Christ, from Genesis 1–3 and Romans 1–7. Paul does not mention Adam by name in Romans 8. Yet unpacking the typological fulfillment of Adam in Christ helps make sense of the "sonship" category in Paul's letter—a category Paul continuously stresses in chapter 8—and within the larger storyline of the Bible. Second, I revisit Romans 1–7 to emphasize the divine Son's penal substitutionary atonement displayed on the cross, the altar where God's wrath against sin was completely satisfied.[48] Third, once I employ what I believe is a more accurate biblical hermeneutic, I argue for an ordered view of God's work in Romans 8 (textually and in reality). The Son's divine mission precedes the Holy Spirit's divine mission. Overall, I emphasize how Romans 8 grounds rational creatures' return to God on the Son's penal substitutionary atonement.

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[47] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 206.

[48] It lies beyond the scope of this project to argue for a penal substitutionary view of the atonement over alternative views; I assume the view's accuracy. This should not deter the overall thrust of the argument: the Son's atoning work necessarily temporally precedes the Holy Spirit's application of the Son's work. In the next part of this chapter (part 3), I will argue this order of sending is grounded in the Trinitarian persons' eternal *taxis* and the order of the two eternal processions from their relation of origin.

The Divine Son Appointed to Fulfill Adam's Sonship

Adam, the first human being, was the first creature made in God's image.[49] As God's covenant partner, God expects Adam to obey and love God, evidenced through upholding God's instruction.[50] By failing to uphold his covenantal responsibilities, Adam distrusted God's word, incurred guilt upon himself, and forfeited his human nature's original created state. Moreover, as God's son, Adam uniquely represents all human beings born in him—that is, his progeny. Scripture continues to develop the meaning behind the "son" category in salvation history such that Adam and his originating sin in the garden bears repercussions for the rest of humanity. I turn to Paul's epistle to the Romans for an explanation.

Romans 5 illuminates the function of an appointed covenantal representative (Rom 5:12).[51] By virtue of Adam's "originating sin" (*peccatum originans*), those born

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[49] The technical term "son" is used to describe Adam's function as God's representative on earth. In my discussion, although Adam and Christ's sonship does depend on their biological sex, this does not exclude women from being in Adam or in Christ. Both covenantal figures represent humankind in the two types, female and male (Gen 1:26–27).

[50] Theoretically, Adam could have continually enjoyed his life in Eden in a state of original righteousness: "[T]he righteousness of Adam and Eve, as first created by God, which was lost in the fall, also termed . . . natural righteousness, inasmuch as it was natural to human beings as originally created." Richard A. Muller, *DLGTT*, s.v. "iustitia originalis" (p. 186).

[51] Whether one follows the logic that humans inherit (1) only Adam's corrupt nature or (2) both Adam's corruption and guilt, I assume that in either position on "fallenness," every individual has a corrupt human nature and will sin against God. I have in mind Oliver D. Crisp's modern Reformed view of original sin. His fourth point on the matter from his list of seven states: "Fallen humans are not culpable for a first, or primal, sin either. That is, they do not bear original guilt (i.e., the guilt of the sin of some putative first human pair or human community being imputed to them along with original sin)." Oliver D. Crisp, *Atonement and Participation: An Analytic and Constructive Account* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 158.

On the transmission of primal sin to all human beings, Crisp rejects both historic Reformed views, representational and Augustinian realism. I am unable to address Crisp's account at present, but one wonders if it is possible to uphold inheriting a corrupt nature only while holding "representationalism" (that is, keeping the typological and covenantal categories, pertinent to linking Adam and Christ). Crisp seems to believe this is not possible. Crisp, *Atonement and Participation*, 159. But to my understanding, this theological combination is coherent.

For the purpose of my argument, one does not need to affirm an inheritance of original sin's corruption and guilt but corruption only, as long as Adam stands as a covenant representative on behalf of all humanity. Stated differently, whether one believes that human beings inherit sin from the seed of the woman or from Adam's representational act of sin, my interest in this chapter lies within the result of original sin. Neither of the aforementioned views ought to hinder the present discussion so long as one upholds the necessary category of the covenantal head.

In the end, all are judged sinful by their personal moral failure against God's law. So Crisp's fifth point: "This morally vitiated condition normally inevitably yields actual sin." Crisp, *Atonement and*

from Adam's lineage inherit a sinful human nature because Adam is a covenantal head (Rom 5:16-19; cf. Gen 3:8–9). As such, humans act in their morally distorted state and inevitably sin against God, amounting to (1) guilt that requires just payment and (2) death.[52]

However, even while God announces judgment over the serpent, Eve, and Adam following the original act of sin in Genesis 3, God does not leave human beings in a state of destitution. Scripture typologically ties Adam to Christ, and through Christ's incarnation, God realizes his promise from Eden (cf. Gen 3:15). The functional aspect of Adam's life representing his progeny points forward to Adam's antitype, "the Coming One" (Rom 5:14). More than a merely effective literary device to enhance the narrative, Paul identifies this connection between Adam and Christ to show that the two are both uniquely positioned in salvation history as covenantal representatives who act on behalf of humanity before God. Both individuals were responsible for perfectly obeying their covenant promises, and only the Second Adam successfully carried out his work throughout his life. Consequently, those who "have the grace of God and the gift which comes through the grace of the one man Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:15) do not remain in Adam. Christ's "one righteous act" (5:19)—that is, Christ's life of flawless adherence to

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Participation, 163. This result is inescapable because all human beings are "in Adam," and by virtue of instantiating the nature of a *Homo sapien* by birth, all of Adam's progeny inherit a fallen human nature. It lies beyond the scope of my discussion in this chapter to respond to Crisp's view. For a historic Reformed view of sin, Herman Bavinck offers, "Guilt and pollution are two simultaneous consequences of one and the same sin, two aspects of the same occurrence [originating sin]." Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 108. S.a. *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, vol. 1, *Disputations 1–31*, ed. William den Boer and Riemer A. Faber, trans. Riemer A. Faber (Landrum, SC: Davenant Press, 2023), Disputation 15.24 (den Boer and Faber, 149–50).

[52] Adam "is a type of the Coming One" (Rom 5:14) because "by the one man's trespass the many died" (Rom 5:15). Gregg R. Allison defines "typology": "In regard to biblical interpretation, the method of noting the correspondence between what went on previously in the Old Testament (the type) and something later in the New Testament (the antitype). . . . Typology also highlights the promise-fulfillment theme, that earlier Scripture anticipates later Scripture, which presents its realization." Gregg R. Allison, *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), s.v. "typology" (p. 215).

God's law, culminating in his work on the cross—brings about "justification leading to life for everyone" (Rom 5:18; cf. 5:19).

The Divine Son's Penal Substitutionary Atonement in the Incarnation

The problem for human beings in Adam is that human beings inherit a fallen human nature, do not love God, and rebel against God's law (cf. Rom 3:23).[53] God must punish sin because God is the perfect moral standard for righteousness, and God cannot deny himself.[54] Moreover, God's wrath toward sin requires reckoning and just payment (Rom 6:23; cf. 3:19). As such, the repercussions are covenantal, ontological, and ethical. Sinful people in Adam are unable (1) to live out their God-given purpose of worship, and (2) to be reconciled to and have a morally right relationship with their holy God.

Following Adam's primal sin, the span of the Old Testament trains us to decipher how God requires payment for unrighteous, wicked behavior. God's provision of a cultus system of sacrifice and purging of sin teaches God's people that he always demands just punishment when his law is broken (Rom 2:12).[55] The entire thrust of the Old Testament waits in anticipation for God to provide an offspring who will lead human beings to a typological Eden where God and creation exist in holy communion (cf. Rom 3:21).

The temple altar was the place to offer sacrifices in substitution for human punishment and experience communion with God again. The altar primed God's people

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[53] Neither Jewish people nor non-Jewish people are excused from their created purpose of loving and obeying God.

[54] Against an essential, impersonal view on the atonement, Stephen J. Wellum underscores why God's forgiveness "goes deeper, into the nature of God himself. . . . God is not like a human judge, who adjudicates law external to him; God *is* the law." Stephen J. Wellum, *The Person of Christ: An Introduction*, SSST (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 44.

[55] The temple sacrifices functioned as a placeholder for Israel, who believed by faith that the system God provided would sufficiently deal with their sin. Although Israel's sin may have been temporarily dealt with through blood offerings at the temple's altar, God's wrath toward human beings was in fact stored up in heaven: "[I]n his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed" (Rom 3:25).

for the ultimate sacrifice for sin, which God presents to himself. Paul opens his letter with a thesis in chapter 1, which summarizes the divine Son's work in the incarnation (Rom 1:16–17). Paul teaches that Christ was sent and "presented . . . as the mercy seat by his blood" (Rom 3:25) to finally appease God's wrath against sinners in Adam. Even though Christ sinlessly and perfectly carries out his covenantal responsibilities, God demonstrates his righteousness (Rom 3:25) in Christ, who receives the punishment due to sinners as Christ dies on the cross, the altar where God's legal demands were met.[56] Since Christ's sacrificial death completely satisfied God's wrath, Christ was "raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25). Evidently, God upholds his just nature *via* sending Christ as the Second Adam to function as the son who obediently keeps his covenantal responsibilities and immaculately images God's likeness. God then becomes the one who justifies because God provided atonement for Christians' sin in Christ's penal substitutionary death (cf. Rom 4:24).

The Son and Holy Spirit in Romans 8

In this section, I give attention to the mechanism by which Christ's penal substitutionary atoning work applies to human beings. Specifically, I contend that a theological interpretation of Romans 8 accurately explains how the Holy Spirit's divine mission applies Christ's righteousness to humans. I believe the triune God's ordered work in salvation—the acquisition and subsequent application of the covenantal Son's obedience—reflects the nature of God's inner life.[57]

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord," God rescues Christians from their "body of death" (Rom 7:24). Anyone who has faith in Christ's atoning work on the cross is no

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[56] Thus, Christ atones for sin through his penal substitution. Douglas J. Moo identifies "the theme of the letter [as] . . . the gospel. And the message of the gospel is that God brings guilty sinners into relationship with himself and destines them to eternal life when they believe in his Son, Jesus the Messiah." Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 27.

[57] That is, one must always act according to one's nature.

longer condemned for their sin because Christ paid the penalty to God on their behalf (Rom 8:1). To consolidate this point in chapter 8, Paul distinguishes between two real and opposing metaphysical positions in which humans find themselves: in the flesh or law, or the Holy Spirit.

This fleshly mindset does not and, in fact, cannot submit to God's law, and therefore human beings are naturally hostile toward God, much less please God (Rom 8:7–8). Describing the latter, the new law of the new covenant radically differs from the old. Christ sets God's people free from the former law and places Christians under "the law of the Spirit of life" (Rom 8:2). Subsequently, Christians walk "according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:4) and "live according to the Spirit [—that is, to] have their minds set on the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). Paul emphasizes the indwelling Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9). Anyone who receives the Spirit of Christ belongs to Christ (Rom 8:9) and is currently already made spiritually alive in Christ. The Holy Spirit of Christ helps Christians "put to death the deeds of the body," they will live (Rom 8:13) as God's (daughters and) sons who are led by God's Spirit (Rom 8:14).

An analogous parallel exists between the Holy Spirit's invisible mission to (1) the Son's human nature in the incarnation, and (2) Christians. Based on the Son's perfect obedience as a covenant head, he bears the title of God's son; Christ's sonship means that God gives him all of the rights and privileges he deserves.[58] Moreover, those who are in Christ share in this inheritance by grace. The divine Son becomes the appointed Son who loves and obeys God perfectly, thus earning righteousness that he graciously shares with adopted sons through the Holy Spirit, who applies Christ's righteousness to the Christian. For this reason, Paul affirms in verse 15 that Christians "received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father!'"

[58] Stated differently, the divine Son had the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34); after the Son's ascension, the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit onto God's people, thereby making them sons.

The Holy Spirit joins Christians with the divine Son's status as God's children. Through this gracious adoption, the Holy Spirit causes them to refer to God as Father, an analogous privilege the eternally begotten Son enjoys.[59] The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence testifies that Christians are children of God (Rom 8:16) and thus "heirs of God and coheirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17). Christ's sonship, a position he earned during the incarnation through perfect obedience, results in his rightful inheritance.[60] The Holy Spirit aids redeemed human beings to testify to their gracious share in Christ's inheritance, in which Christians have the privilege to participate, only because the divine Son fulfills God's law and functions as the new covenantal head.

God foreknew and predestined human beings "to be conformed to the image of his Son," who (the Son) is "the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Rom 8:29). I stress the necessary order of events: first the divine Son was appointed as son and recapitulated Adam's sonship in obedience to God; then, the Holy Spirit conforms human beings who are positionally in the Son into the image of the Son. Christ is designated the firstborn because he creates a new lineage for human beings. Christians are God's adopted children and are no longer considered Adam's progeny. Put differently, God "did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all" (Rom 8:32). The Son lived in perfect obedience to God when Adam did not; on the cross, the Son propitiated God's wrath that Adam and his progeny deserved to eternally experience. The Holy Spirit applies Christ's atoning work to Christians, who are now justified (Rom 8:33),

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[59] Speech about sonship for Christians is analogous to God's eternal Trinitarian relations. Although Christ is the Father's Son and the Christian's brother, Christians participate in the Son's relation to the Father in a creaturely way.

[60] I believe this is a pertinent aspect of Christ's sonship that is argued in Hebrews 1:2, for example. However, I am unable to develop this point further due to the length limitations of the project.

inseparable from God's love (Rom 8:39), and waiting for a future resurrection in glory (Rom 8:34–35).[61]

The Holy Spirit's Divine Mission Reveals the Eternal Procession

In this third part, Aquinas and Polanus represent a classical model of the triune God: his eternal relations formulate the divine missions of the Son and Holy Spirit in creation. As such, I answer this question: Why does the Holy Spirit's divine mission follow the Son's? In the following steps, I unpack my understanding of the divine missions as God's self-revelation of his triune inner life within the context of Scripture's storyline.

First, I present the classical meanings of the divine processions and the Trinitarian *taxis* to define the divine missions. Second, following Fred Sanders's insight on the triune God's self-revelation through the progressive revelation of Scripture, I consider the moment of the Son's visible mission in salvation history. Third, I bring the previous points together to demonstrate the necessity for preserving the traditional *taxis* of the divine persons to interpret the *ratio* of God's *opera ad extra*. The *taxis* explains why in Romans 8 the Son's visible mission, resulting in atonement for sin, precedes the Holy Spirit's divine mission to the church.

The Divine Processions and Trinitarian *Taxis* Shape the Divine Missions

God's processions and *taxis* are distinct yet related concepts. Built into the definition of a procession is a necessary, eternal ordering of the divine persons. The Trinitarian persons and their respectively ordered origin provide the *ratio* for the divine

[61] I have in mind the "golden chain of salvation" or simply the "golden chain." Moo, *Romans*, 553.

missions.[62] Together, they help deduce God's acts in creation and shed light on why God acts in certain ways.[63] As finite creatures, we cannot comprehend the scope of God's being and his acts. Nevertheless, God graciously condescends to reveal who he is through what he does.[64] One acts according to their being or nature: "[A]s in being so in acting."[65] To act and to be "from another" does not constitute a lesser divine being; rather, it only denotes a person's manner of subsisting and acting.[66] Understanding the Trinitarian relations in the divine life (the processions and *taxis*) will help decode the meaning of God's self-revelation.

Sanders proposes that interpreters consider the doctrine of salvation and the eternal generation of the Son against the "conceptually rich" background of the doctrine of the Trinity.[67] He urges us to "make extensive use of the traditional categories of eternal relations of origin within the divine essence" because "this revelation happened at the level of the economy of salvation, resulting in adoption, reconciliation, and indwelling at the level of personal experience in the church. Eternal processions ground temporal missions which ground full salvation."[68] The traditional definition of the divine processions, which includes the persons' *taxis*, articulates and reveals the being of God through the acts of God in creation.[69] The Son is sent in the incarnation to atone for sin

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[62] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8; cf. Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 226.

[63] I consider *taxis* a concept under the larger idea of the eternal divine processions.

[64] Scripture authoritatively reveals God's acts and therefore who God is.

[65] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[66] Polanus, *Axiom* 12; 14.3; 14.6.

[67] Sanders clarifies: "By 'conceptually rich' we mean a doctrine of the Trinity that, in line with the great, central tradition of Christian thought, has made explicit the biblical dynamic of how the one God reveals himself in a way that corresponds to the manner of his existence in eternity: as the begetting Father, the begotten Son, and the proceeding Spirit." Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 99–100.

[68] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 100.

[69] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 100.

because the Son eternally proceeds from the Father. *Mutatis mutandis*, the Spirit of Christ is sent to indwell Christians and brings creation back to God because the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and Son.

The Triune God's Self-Revelation in the Son and Holy Spirit's Divine Missions

The tradition's theological interpretation of Scripture's wording surrounding the Holy Spirit's "ofness," as Sanders coins, recognizes the eternal relations between the Trinitarian persons. Specifically, "the fundamental pattern of in the Spirit's self-naming is ofness," and as such this ofness is the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.[70] According to a "mission-procession theology," which "[anchors] the theology of the revealed names,"[71] the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit on temporal missions because the Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit. The ofness of the Holy Spirit in eternity means that the Third Person is ordered to the First and Second; therefore, the Holy Spirit's mission is ordered to the Son's visible mission.

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[70] In his argument, Sanders demonstrates how this ofness of the Holy Spirit is "the real biblical root of the doctrine of procession." Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 113.

[71] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 124; cf. 95; Augustine, *The Trinity* 4.5.29 (Hill, 174). To be precise, the missions-to-processions approach did not originate with Augustine. However, the Christian tradition inherits Augustine's procession-mission model because, in the words of Fred Sanders, "*The Trinity* is such a classic and consistent working out of it. . . . Augustine perfected that method . . . and solved some of the problems involved in its misuse." Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 94; s.a. Torey J. S. Teer, "The Promise of the Father, the Spirit of the Son: A Framework for a Trinitarian Christological Pneumatology" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), 140. Others recent projects further developed Augustine's interpretive tactic, and I follow their lead. I have in mind Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 275–77; Sanders, *The Triune God*, 93–98; Teer, "The Promise of the Father, the Spirit of the Son," 140–50; Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 6–8.

Sanders suggests two major benefits to following the processions-to-missions sequence:

> First, [this exegetical sequence] guides the reader along the order of being by giving priority to treating what God is in the internal divine life and then moving to the actions God freely undertakes time. . . . The second major benefit is the sense of proportion that accrues from handling the elements of the doctrine in the sequence. the processions are theology proper, while the missions are soteriology, and God is as much bigger than salvation as he is prior to it. (Sanders, *The Triune God*, 97)

Moving forward, I use variations of Sanders's term, such as "procession-mission," and mean the same as he reasons here.

I mean "an ordered" way in two senses. First, God teaches human beings who he is—the Trinity—in salvation history. The timing is calculated; the biblical development reveals the characters of the Trinity in an order: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.[72] Second, and building on the first sense, God patterns the self-revelation of his divine life after his eternal ordering of the Trinitarian persons. We meet the Father first because the Father is the First Person.[73] Scripture introduces the Second Person after the Father. The divine person who is by nature the Son becomes the appointed covenantal Son.[74] In other words, although the Bible does not dogmatically state that the First Person of the Trinity is the Father, Christians observe the Father is first because he is introduced first. Following the Father, logically speaking, we realize there is a Son who constitutes the Father as a person.[75]

We meet the Holy Spirit third; his divine mission follows the Son's visible mission because the Holy Spirit is third in the *taxis*. The persons are relationally (not essentially) distinguished based upon their relation of origin, and the *taxis* is a theological component integrated into the definition of the Trinitarian persons' eternal principles.[76] Scripture most clearly reveals the Holy Spirit as a divine person through the Son's

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[72] Sanders perceives a pattern in Scripture: within "the structure of the entire economy of salvation, [whereby] the Spirit, never absent but always anonymous in the early phases of God's work, is conspicuous precisely at the New Testament fulfillment of God's promises, when his name and character and distinctive work come into their own and become a matter of proclamation and teaching." Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 126.

[73] Sanders encapsulates this point by summarizing the entire Bible in a sentence: "The Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit." Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 15. Adam, the created son in Genesis, corresponds to the Father. As noted above, this covenantal Son category forces readers to recognize a parent from whom the offspring generates. I only focus on the relationship between Adam and Christ, although Scripture presents other covenantal Son figures. For example, God graciously chooses Israel out of all the nations as the elected son. Also, within the monarchy, God selects David as the son who governs, reigns over, and protects Israel on God's behalf. I underscore the logical necessity of a parent to function as a principle of their child.

[74] Adam, a son by grace, points forward to the eternal Son's visible mission.

[75] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 2; 9; 10.

[76] In *Axiom* 14.6, Polanus states that distinctions in God are only made relationally, not essentially. Then, in *Axiom* 14.7, Polanus notes "order" as the second way in which a relation distinction can be made between the Holy Spirit from Father and Son. Personal distinctions between the Trinitarian persons are made based on origin, order, and operation. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7, 14.8.

ministry in the incarnation.[77] The Holy Spirit inspired New Testament writers to teach the church about the eternal Holy Spirit of God more clearly than in the old covenant, which only hinted at the personhood of God's Spirit. Supremely fittingly, the Son's temporal mission precedes the Holy Spirit's temporal mission because of their eternal and ordered relations in the divine life.

A caveat: the divine missions reveal God's life only follows insofar as one also believes that God intentionally inspired Scripture with a salvific metanarrative.[78] That is, God's plan of redemption begins in Genesis, unfolds in the Bible, builds up to the Son's visible mission, and includes adopted daughters and sons *via* the Spirit's divine mission.[79] According to this hermeneutic of both Scripture and the triune God's inner life, God intentionally reveals himself to creatures in an ordered manner that reflects the nature of his Trinitarian relations.

The Trinitarian *Taxis* Provides the *Ratio* for God's *Opera ad Extra*

This final section combines the previous points to demonstrate the necessity for preserving the traditional *taxis* of the divine persons to interpret why the Son's visible mission precedes the Holy Spirit's divine mission to the church. The traditional *taxis* within the procession-mission schema aids our interpretation of the divine missions as God's self-revelation of his triune inner life within the context of Scripture's storyline. As previously explored, the Son's divine mission (the incarnation, culminating in the

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[77] For example, the Son prepares the apostles for the other Paraclete.

[78] Put negatively, if one does not believe that Scripture is a unified story of redemption, one also loses the blueprint for God's self-revelation of the Trinity. However, I do not mean that the Bible packages doctrines, such as the Trinity and the person of the Holy Spirit, for readers. Theology attempts to unpack the meaning of Scripture in its entirety and put together coherent doctrines concerning specific subject matters.

[79] "In the divine missions," Webster states, "the divine processions, and the specific personal characteristics which derive from them, are echoed in God's relations with the world in the works of nature and grace." Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:31. I contend that "the specific personal characteristics" in the Holy Spirit's work in nature and grace must be "echoed," or patterned, along his eternal relation from his principle and simultaneously fits within the biblical narrative.

atonement) and the Holy Spirit's divine mission (indwelling believers) depend on the processions and *taxis*. *Pro nobis*, "the inseparability of the two missions is essential, but so is the order of the missions."[80]

The Holy Spirit's invisible mission to the church, which in the future results in Christians' *reditus* to the divine life in glory, must be preceded by Christ's visible mission because God's righteous demand for sin required satisfaction.[81] As contended in a previous section, God requires justice for human beings' sins against him. By the incarnate Son's penal substitutionary atonement on the cross as a sin offering (Rom 8:3), he fulfills the law as the obedient, covenantal Son and meets God's righteous requirements by finally satisfying God's justice (Rom 8:4). The Son's visible mission ends with his ascension into heaven, where he now sits in a position of authority, reigning as the new covenant mediator between God and human beings.

Following the Son's visible mission, the Holy Spirit is sent on his visible mission to indwell Christians. The Holy Spirit's eternal procession (spiration) from his relation of origin (Father and Son) extends "into space and time through a created term."[82] After Pentecost, the Father and Son (the Holy Spirit's principle) continually send the Holy Spirit on his invisible mission to individual Christians at the moment of their conversion (Rom 8:11). The Spirit's divine mission results in the creation of a new humanity through adoption into God's family (Rom 8:16–17). The Holy Spirit applies the Son's atoning work to Christians, making them (daughters and) sons by grace.

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[80] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 47.

[81] The problem Israel continued to face ever since Adam's original sin is how God's people could ever return to a morally right relationship with God when their desires were distorted in creation's fall into sin. Left to their own devices, human beings were hopeless.

[82] Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 226.

Sanctification and the Form of the Holy Spirit's Invisible Mission

The triune God's unified work of sanctification is appropriated to the Holy Spirit because "thirdness" is the *ratio* of applying Christ's righteousness to Christians and elevating their human nature. Sanctification, in my view, is a mighty work of God in the *ordo salutis* whereby God restores the redeemed fallen human nature by grace as the Christian works alongside God to reach their *telos*: a glorified human nature in the new heavens and earth.[83] The Holy Spirit sanctifying Christians proves his deity.[84]

Moreover, the form of the Third Person's invisible mission to rational creatures' souls resembles his personal property of proceeding from the Father and Son, like that of the will within Aquinas's intellectual model of the Trinity.[85] The will (the shape of the Holy Spirit's procession) is complementary to and logically follows from the intellect (the shape of the Son's procession). The will is the person's inclination and affection that impels them toward another.[86] Analogically, the Holy Spirit's procession may be characterized as the loving movement of the will, drawing toward an other.[87]

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[83] Allison defines sanctification:

> The cooperative work of God and Christians (Phil. 2:12–13) by which ongoing transformation into greater Christlikeness occurs. Such maturing transpires particularly through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:16–23) and the Word of God (John 17:17). Unlike other divine works, which are monergistic (God alone works), sanctification is synergistic. God operates in ways that are proper to his divine agency (e.g., convicting of sin, empowering by the Spirit, willing and working to accomplish his good pleasure), and Christians work in ways that are proper to their human agency (e.g., reading Scripture, praying, mortifying sin, yielding to the Spirit). (Allison, *Baker Compact Dictionary*, s.v. "sanctification")

[84] Aquinas biblically asserts that the Holy Spirit is God because the divine work of sanctification is appropriated to the Holy Spirit. Aquinas, *SCG* IV.17, 3.

[85] By "anatomizing . . . [the] internal processions," Aquinas aptly refers to the first procession as that of the intellect and the second procession as that of the will. Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 37.

[86] Within God, "another" refers to another (*alius*) divine person. So Aquinas: "That which . . . loves itself is in itself, not only by a real identity, but also in the capacity of . . . the beloved in the lover." Aquinas, *ST* I.37 art. 1.

[87] Vidu identifies the two distinct yet complementary forms of the Son and Holy Spirit's divine missions: knowledge and love. The form of the Son and Holy Spirit's divine missions depend on their mode of subsistence in God. Like Vidu, I follow the Thomistic tradition to name the second person Son, Word, and Knowledge as well as to name the Third Person Holy Spirit, Love, and Gift (see chapter 3). Vidu believes there is a formidable tradition that speaks "about Love as the precise formality of the Spirit's indwelling." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 52.

Love is willing good to another, and in light of the Holy Spirit's love-shaped divine procession and mission, the gift of "love, as sanctifying grace, [is] . . . the created participation of the creature in the uncreated relations of the Trinity."[88] The Holy Spirit moves creatures back to God because love is the form of his divine mission to human beings. As the Spirit imparts sanctifying grace (in the form of love) to Christians, the human being is drawn back to the source of love as the object of their love. As the terminus of the Holy Spirit's presence in the will, the Holy Spirit attracts and dynamically moves Christians to return (*reditus*) to God: "This dynamic of movement is love itself."[89]

The Holy Spirit's love-shaped divine mission explains his sanctifying grace of love, which he imparts to the human soul: "He assimilates into our . . . love, perfecting [this love] with himself and yet preserving their integrity."[90] The human soul is the term of the Holy Spirit's invisible mission of love. By grace, God disposes, elevates, and transforms human nature through the created gift of love, which the Holy Spirit imparts. The triune God's "self-love is poured into the creatures by the Holy Spirit" through the invisible mission, "such that God is present in them as the beloved is present in the lover."[91] Here, I appreciate how the tradition intricately consolidates the Holy Spirit's work in disposing creatures to attain to God while keeping a pulse on God's inner life. This gracious divinization through gifts of love to human beings forms Christians according to the Holy Spirit's personal property: "[O]ur volition receive[s] the

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[88] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 56.

[89] Vidu cites Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 382: "When we have an intellectual presence, the known reality is present through its likeness, whereas, in the will, the beloved entity is present through a dynamic momentum, as attracting us toward itself." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 60.

[90] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 60. Here, Vidu discusses knowledge and love together. I focus on the latter while acknowledging the necessity of their order; we cannot love that which we do not first know.

[91] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 60.

supernatural gifts that dispose [us] to enjoy" the Holy Spirit and, ultimately, the triune God.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered my biblical and theological interpretation of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession and thirdness in the triune God based on Romans 8, which followed a traditional Thomistic concept of God's life as a circular movement.

The Holy Spirit's procession can help us understand how the *a se*, omnipotent God exists in a mixed relation with creatures. I argued that the eternal processions are the *ratio* for God's *opera ad extra.* Additionally, the trinitarian *taxis*—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—present the logic behind the Holy Spirit's multifaceted work outlined in Romans 8. Christ's atoning work on human beings' behalf must precede the Holy Spirit's invisible mission. The Holy Spirit's appropriated work of sanctification depends on the Son's visible mission in the incarnation. Changing the Christians to Christ's likeness, or sanctification, is appropriated to the Spirit of Christ. The Father and Son send the Spirit *via* an invisible mission to indwell and bring creatures back to God. Epistemically, God's self-revelation grounds our knowledge of the Holy Spirit.[92] Ontologically, the Holy Spirit's procession in the form of love shapes and guides the Christian's *reditus* to God.

I believe the classical notions I covered coherently fit together and reveal the Trinity's divine life to creatures. Notably, the procession-mission scheme provides the *ratio* for the Son and the Holy Spirit's divine missions. However, some theologians dissent from the traditional model of God. I now turn to consider revisionist models of the Trinity.

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[92] Vidu calls this experiential (rather than discursive) knowledge. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 65.

CHAPTER 7

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO, AND DEFENSE OF, THE ETERNAL PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this chapter, I will present revisionist proposals of the divine persons' relations in God according to Katherine Sonderegger, Elizabeth A. Johnson, and Sarah Coakley. In contrast to my three interlocutors' respective contemporary models of the triune God, I believe that the doctrine of God's processions, historically confessed in the Latin tradition, most accurately teaches Scripture's revelation of God's singular, undivided divine nature and the Trinity of divine persons.

In part 1, I consider Sonderegger's proposal. I will argue that Sonderegger loses the real relational distinctions between the Trinitarian persons—distinctions that Scripture and the tradition demand preserving in the triune God's inner life—in her attempt to emphasize the unicity of God's fiery processional life, primarily developed from Israel's sacrificial system, and thus cannot account for the Holy Spirit's unique mode of subsistence in the one divine essence and unique mode of acting in creation.

In part 2, I cover Johnson's work. I will contend that Johnson's redefinitions of God's aseity and omnipotence fail to interpret Scripture's description of God's relationality with creation, whereas traditional definitions more capably address the Christian feminist's concerns in theological discourse: the all-powerful Holy Spirit proceeds and liberates and secures justice for the oppressed woman.

In part 3, I assess Coakley's project. I will propose that Coakley's reliance on Romans 8 to reverse the Trinitarian persons' *taxis*—prioritizing the Holy Spirit before the Father-Son dyad—loses the *ratio* for interpreting the incarnate Son's penal substitutionary atoning work, a necessary framework to understand the purpose and *telos*

of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence—to bring adopted daughters and sons back to the Father.

In each part, I will argue for a traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit with Amandus Polanus as my main representative voice of a classical view of the Trinitarian persons' relations because the axioms summarize a superior model of the triune God that consistently coheres with God's revelation of the divine processions in Scripture's redemptive-historical storyline.

Processions and Persons: An Assessment of the Holy Spirit's Procession in Katherine Sonderegger's Account of the Triune God's Processional Life

Our Christian confession of God follows the divinely inspired pattern God taught Israel: "Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4; cf. Exod 19:3; Deut 5:7). God's people desire to know and love him as he is in his inner life, and systematic theologian Katherine Sonderegger seeks this exact goal in her work, *The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons*.[1] In response to eighteenth-century accounts of the Trinity in the West that focuses on God's inner life through the incarnate Son's visible mission, she avers, "Trinity becomes a type of *Christology*."[2] To move Trinitarian dogma away from Christology, Sonderegger believes considering the Hebrew Scriptures benefits our understanding of God as such, for the "Holy Trinity is contained in Scripture, and more, in the glorious pages of the Old Testament."[3]

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[1] Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, *The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020).

[2] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xvii. Elsewhere and in a similar vein, Sonderegger contends, "The economy of our salvation is not the revelation of the Triune Mystery" (2:26). Again, she distinguishes, "Religion, we might say in shorthand of this prevailing temper, just is salvation, the incomparable good news of our deliverance. . . . Such is the broad consensus in modern Trinitarianism, in modern theology as a whole. And it is just here that I think we must set our bold counterstroke: for all is not soteriology" (2:33).

[3] See her discussion of the relation between the Old and New Testament in Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xxv–xxvi.

Sonderegger rethinks the traditional Christian model of God's triune life by giving her account of the sacrificial-shaped Trinity outlined in Leviticus. She proposes that the imagery of fire ontologically reveals the pattern of God's eternal triune existence and, therefore, argues for a new processional model of God. Sonderegger constructs an account of the Trinity that moves the discussion around the living God's unicity of being or oneness in being prior to considering the Trinitarian persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who exist in the divine processional life.

I will assess Sonderegger's proposal from a classical theistic perspective. Traditionally, the doctrine of the processions distinguishes the Holy Spirit from his eternal relation of origin, the Father and the Son, yet explains how the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with his origin. Ultimately, Sonderegger's emphasis on God's unicity and not distinguishing the persons relationally yields problems in the doctrine of the Trinity that do not cohere with the Bible's presentation of the eternal processions.

I will defend my thesis—that Sonderegger's model of the Trinity cannot account for the Holy Spirit's unique mode of subsistence in the one divine essence and unique mode of acting in creation—in two sections: (1) a presentation of Sonderegger's arguments concerning God's sacrificial, processional, divine life in Leviticus; and (2) a response to Sonderegger's criticisms against the traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit by upholding strong distinctions in God and considering the manner in which the Holy Spirit brings God's people back to their creaturely origin.

God's Processions in Sonderegger

According to Sonderegger, modern theological discourse on the Trinity emphasizes God's work in the divine missions to the detriment of the Christian's understanding of God's inner life. To counter, I will first (1) outline Sonderegger's proposal to ground the Trinity in processions by focusing on Israel's sacrificial system in four parts, of which the former two provide some conceptual tools for the latter two; and

(2) consider the procession of the Holy Spirit, which she argues uniquely expresses God's dynamic life. Second, I will focus on the procession of the Holy Spirit as a test case to elaborate on Sonderegger's understanding of the unicity of the divine processions and the act of sacrifice as triune holiness.[4]

In her estimation, the processions-missions schema whereby a created effect attached to a divine procession reveals a Trinitarian person cannot be the grounds for interpreting God *in se*. Sonderegger agrees with scholasticism's notion of personal temporal missions revealing God;[5] however, she believes "[n]ot Persons but rather *Processions* are the foundation of the dogma of Trinity."[6] She aims to direct our theological senses to the processional holy life of God rather than the distinct persons because "the doctrine of the Trinity should be conceived as a form of the qua relation in which one reality is, and is seen to be, *as* another, all the while remaining the same."[7] The triune God fundamentally teaches his people about his divine existence in Scripture through the processions.

Redoublement in God's Processional Life

Leviticus teaches God's unicity of being: Israel has one God; God is one and there is none like this God. Furthermore, Sonderegger believes that the Levitical system of sacrifice enacts the movement of God's inner life, and God's people meet Triunity in the Old Testament.[8] By following the traditional notion of redoublement and by looking

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[4] The Son also proceeds in God; however, I will uniquely give attention to the Holy Spirit's procession.

[5] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xx.

[6] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xx.

[7] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xxvii.

[8] Sonderegger focuses on Leviticus to reorient dogma on the Trinity away from Christology and to give both respective doctrines their rightful place in theology.

at the Old Testament—that is, uniquely to the sacrificial system—she discovers God's unicity: the appropriate place to interpret God's life begins at Israel's altar.

Following Gilles Emery's notion of redoublement—"a category of the relation of identity"[9]—Sonderegger's account of God's processional life employs this theological doubling pattern in various ways to explain God's fiery life. Thomas Aquinas employs a redoublement tactic in his doctrine of the Trinity to consider God "*under the aspect* of the essence and *under the aspect* of the distinction: (that which concerns the essence, and that which concerns the distinction of persons)."[10] While the substantive content matter may differ, the practice of redoublement aids the theological synthesis of God's procession, and Sonderegger utilizes this notion of doubling speech to interpret the doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture.

God's Processional Life in Leviticus

On the one hand, God is holy mystery, and Sonderegger keenly preserves the sense of the divine in her interpretation of Scripture.[11] God's processional life is transcendent mystery, and creatures cannot fully comprehend God. On the other hand, Sonderegger's doctrine of Scripture depends on the theological perfect tense,[12] which allows her to explore Israel's history, consider the fiery temple sacrifice, and use Israel's

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[9] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:13.

[10] Gilles Emery, "Essentialism or Personalism in the Treatise on God in Saint Thomas Aquinas?," *The Thomist* 64, no. 4 (2000): 532; cf. 534. This doubling approach in the tradition can also be found in the writing of the church fathers who formulated doctrine for God's essence and distinct *hypostases*. Sonderegger attributes her employment of this unity in distinction as following Bonaventure and Emery, who use a doubling pattern to speak about God in terms of the essence and to speak again in terms of the distinction of the divine persons.

[11] Following Karl Barth's irritation of *Kultur Protestantismus* that does not take "the full measure of the living God," she contends, "The attempt in modern Protestant circles, especially—but not exclusively—to domesticate God, to find in Him only the kindly only the friendly, the avuncular, is nearly proverbial." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:358–59.

[12] A definition of the theological perfect tense: "[A]n action inaugurated or begun in the past, completed there—it is 'perfect'—yet continues into the present, making its effect known, disclosing its still vital power. . . . [It marks] an event in the historic past and gives shape and life to the present day." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:366.

altar as a referent to and an idiom of God's processional inner life. She searches for the proper doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament and situates the people of Israel within the larger structure: the processional life of God.[13]

Grounded in Scripture, a unique creature with the intrinsic properties for guiding and grounding doctrinal development,[14] Sonderegger accounts for God's inner life, which "can be seen as something else that both descriptions [the inner life of God and the doctrine of the Trinity] of that one reality are true and truly present."[15] Ancient Israel's cultus practices in the Old Testament reveal the Holy Trinity, who in the inner life is processional.[16] Divine procession is "the Engine of Unity" in God.[17] Sonderegger believes that, by grace, Yahweh's Triunity and processional life can be seen in Israel's temple worship rituals as "the Spirit of Holiness opens our eyes," first to Israel and subsequently to Christians, so that all of God's people may enter into the presence of the Holy One.

Levitical Sacrifice and Sin

Based on Sonderegger's proposal of the nature of Scripture—that "Israel's temple sacrifices manifest and correspond to the Triune Lord's Self-Offering"[18]—one notes the notion of redoublement in the triune God's sacrificial nature and Israel's cultus.

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[13] The triune God's processional life enacts in history; Israel's history, now recorded in the Old Testament, reveals God's nature. Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:389; cf. 2:366.

[14] Sonderegger considers divine revelation through Scripture as realism and a creature, and this (the Levitical sacrificial system) lays the conceptual groundwork from which Sonderegger draws to establish her doctrine of the Trinity. See Sonderegger's discussion on the doctrine of Scripture and realism in Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:355–75.

[15] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:12–13.

[16] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:457.

[17] Sonderegger evaluates, "[T]he doctrine of the Trinity [in the Christian tradition] needs robust recovery of the Engine of Unity, the Divine Procession." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:457. As I will consider later in this chapter, her project centers on "processionality" in God to emphasize God's unicity.

[18] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:375.

The Levitical system functions as an idiom for God's unicity of being.[19] She considers Yahweh as cloud and fire,[20] leading his people in the wilderness, as an earlier iteration of the holy temple, the place God designed for revelatory purposes. Yahweh gives instructions for various types of sacrifice in Leviticus because this pattern of self-offering surrounding temple worship reveals Yahweh's inner life.

Sonderegger approaches Leviticus 8 as "the inauguration of the tabernacle sacrifice."[21] The rites Yahweh bestow to Moses, who then directs Aaron and the Levitical priesthood, take up a full week, "from Sabbath to Sabbath,"[22] and reach their pinnacle on the eighth day. After Moses and Aaron come out of the tent of meeting, they bless God's people, and "the *Kabod*, the Glory of the Lord, manifest[s] . . . itself to all the people. . . . The Lord God Himself, His own Glory, has lit the altar fire with His own Combustible Life, the Explosion who is God"[23] (cf. Lev 9:24). Sonderegger supports the fiery processional life of God with other biblical passages. In the next chapter of Leviticus, for example, Nadab and Abihu offer "alien fire" to Yahweh. As a result, "the Fire who is the Holy One explodes from the Divine Presence and consumes the creature, a whole burnt offering of the Divine Wrath."[24] In Sonderegger's account, the fiery procession of glory is God himself, and in the climax of the sacrificial cult, after sacrifice and atonement are offered, we meet the one, true, tri-personed God.[25]

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[19] God's "Divine Structure, . . . the concrete Living Movement who is God, is taught, in sacrificial idiom, in the Law and the Prophets, and forms the fundament, as it were, . . . of the Living God, Trinity." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xxviii.

[20] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:376.

[21] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:382.

[22] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:384.

[23] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:386.

[24] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:391.

[25] The rites on the Day of the Atonement requiring the two animals—one sacrificed on the altar and one sacrificed as it is driven into the wilderness—receive less attention in Sonderegger's account. However, the fundamental ideas of sacrifice and atonement for sin are likewise emphasized: "[T]he Holy

The Levitical rituals surrounding sacrifice are patterned after God's personal divine life. The sacrifices offered to God are consumed by fire from heaven, which signifies God's sacrificial nature and God's holiness. Epistemologically, therefore, God's people can learn about God's dynamic and unified life in the fiery idiom that just is God.[26]

Sacrifice as Triune Processions

The cultus offering of Israel's stipulations for God's people—to set themselves apart from the surrounding nations—manifested the mystery of God. Israel's law concerning holiness and sacrifice is at the heart of the temple.[27] Together, holiness and sacrifice reveal the transcendent Trinity; creation experiences God as he lives eternally. God himself "blazes forth [as Holy Fire] from the tabernacle and consumes to ash the altar sacrifice: this is the Divine Life of the Transcendent God."[28] According to Sonderegger, this "Living Fire" ought to be the divine procession in the church's theological discourse. Unique to her exegesis, the Trinitarian processions are epistemologically accessible to God's people in the Old Testament because God's glorious life is processional; at the temple, rather than encountering a representation of God, Israel truly encounters God, who is fiery procession.

Life of the One God . . . is exemplified, manifested, and taught under the act and idiom of sacrifice." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:395.

[26] Instead of separating the components of fire into three distinct images to represent triunity, Sonderegger considers the whole fire as an idiom for the processional movement that is God.

[27] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:395. Fred Sanders underscores Sonderegger's theological move to tightly link God's holiness and aseity to the triune life: "If the God of the Bible is really triune all the way down and all the way back, then that triunity must be present also without reference to the salvation of humans, and without reference to revelation to humans. This is why Sonderegger links triunity to holiness, and especially to aseity." Fred Sanders, "Permanent Self-Hallowing and the Processional Life of God," Carl F. H. Henry Center Periodical *Sapientia*, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, January 22, 2021, https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2021/01/permanent-self-hallowing-and-the-processional-life-of-god/.

[28] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:412–13.

Christians traditionally profess two eternal processions in the Triune God.[29] But Sonderegger distances her theology—"that begins all Trinitarian reflection on the Processional Life of God"—from Latin theologians. By Sonderegger's estimation, the doctrine of divine relations of origins lends itself to creating "troubling" distinctions in God. The divine persons' unique personal predicates detrimentally affects God's unicity of being: "[I]t seems that Trinity must teach Divine Parts, eternal distinctions that can never be unified and must be thought in some fashion to *constitute* the Triune Reality of God. The twin Processions of Son and Spirit from the Father seem to encapsulate all these dangers, to magnify them and enshrine them in dogma."[30] Instead, her model of God's inner life does not "eclipse the doctrine of Procession(s) through a sole affirmation of" personal properties tied to eternal relations of origin.[31]

While speaking about the Son and the Holy Spirit, Sonderegger suggests that procession functions as "a general or class noun," which the Levitical system helps interpret.[32] More specifically, she seems to deny the problematic traditional distinction of two processions and offers her account of God's unitary life. In an attempt to locate the processions at the altar, she avers that Scripture presents a singular fire. God is Holy Fire: "The Processional Life of God, that is, cannot have Two Processions that are, *per se* and *as such*, different acts within the Godhead."[33] Sonderegger believes Trinitarian dogma ought to emphasize God's oneness of being; therefore, instead of following the traditional understanding of two distinct processions in God, she argues that the one God lives in

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[29] Sonderegger affirms the double procession of the Holy Spirit. Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xix; cf. 2:421.

[30] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:423.

[31] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:424.

[32] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:428. Sanders remarks, "Procession in the plural . . . does not seem to have a true place. This is, I think, the most obviously revisionist moment in an unusual book." Sanders, "Permanent Self-Hallowing and the Processional Life of God."

[33] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:429–30.

processional fire. Certainly, she endorses the existence of processions in the inner life of God. However, according to Sonderegger, the classical distinctions of relations of origin grounding two internal and eternal processions in God create "pluralism and complexity" whereas the dynamic life of God proceeds as one holy fire.[34] Procession functions as a single-class noun and uniquely describes the Holy Spirit.[35]

The Procession of the Holy Spirit

Once the unicity of God's fiery life receives proper treatment, Sonderegger places the Trinitarian persons in the fire, thus uncovering the uniqueness of the Holy Spirit's procession in her model of the Trinity.[36] Sonderegger seems to believe that, to maintain the unicity of God, one personal procession is indistinguishable from another personal procession. Nevertheless, "[t]he Fire that is the Processional Life of God is distinctly identified with the Spirit. It is His Mighty Rushing; His Free, Unbounded Wind; His Leaping Flames; His Procession. So, we must say that the Movement, the Processional Life of God, proclaims the Realm of the Spirit."[37] The procession of the Holy Spirit functions like a *ratio* from which Sonderegger draws, informing her use of the term "procession." In fact, while Sonderegger does speak about the Son in God's processional life, Sonderegger claims that the eternal generation of the Son is an aspect or

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[34] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:430.

[35] She postulates that she follows Aquinas "in his deft analysis of the Divine Procession." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:431.

[36] While the Son is discussed in Sonderegger's work, my interest in this section lies in the Holy Spirit's procession; however, the twin processions are closely held together conceptually. In discussing God's divine life in relation to the altar, Sonderegger emphasizes the *relatio* of the fire that "races out" from heaven and has a *telos*: "The Processional Life of God ends, is defined, in the Person of the Son, the Word of God. . . .The Fire is the Living Nature of the Son." See her treatment of the Son's procession in Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:443.

[37] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:444.

mode of the Holy Spirit's procession, for the notion of procession most fittingly describes the Spirit.[38]

To make sense of this act of procession, Sonderegger connects procession with divine holiness in two ways. First, God sacrifices within his processional life; processional movement in God's inner life is a unified Act and issues forth the Holy Spirit.[39] She describes the Holy Spirit as "the Ascending Gift" and notes that "[t]he Fire that escapes from the Holy of Holies is the Procession of the Spirit, for God is Spirit."[40] The Holy Spirit's procession is the circular movement in God's fiery glory, and creatures witness the triune God's unified act—God's holy life of sacrifice—on the sacrificial altar. God's sacrificial life explains why Sonderegger believes the divine fire manifests God as such at the altar of the Levitical system. God enacts the shape of his inner life, and the Holy Spirit's procession in God uniquely reveals God's movement: "The Procession of the Spirit is the gathering up of the Offering, joining with It and raising It up, completing and returning It to the Giver of every good and perfect Gift."[41] God enacts his holy life, *mutatis mutandis*, in creation, specifically at the altar, because God eternally sacrifices in himself.[42]

Second, God sanctifies within his processional life; God self-hallows himself. No one sets him apart, consecrates, or purifies God; rather, this "is God's own Self-

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[38] This is an example of God's unicity explained by means of doubling. Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:445. Focusing on the procession of the Holy Spirit allows Sonderegger to also address the Son's procession: "The Processional Act is principally and most specifically Spirit; It also is Son, Son of the Father" (2:457).

[39] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:454.

[40] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:443.

[41] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:466. For example, God gives the good gift of new spiritual life to his people: "God is Holy Spirit because All are alive in Him" (2:459). This gift comes from God and follows the Holy Spirit's movement to his term.

[42] God demonstrates his self-offering and self-giving in his fiery procession because this is the eternal movement of triune life: "Trinity means: I, the Lord, sanctify Myself. Holiness is also Sacrificial Love." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:477.

Act."[43] Moreover, God's eternal act of dynamic procession in his life is "principally and most specifically Spirit."[44] The Holy Spirit's procession instructs Sonderegger of God's life of holy love, which "has an animate shape" that moves down "as Self-Giving, and taking it up, back into the Utter Depths, who is God."[45] She contends:

> The Processional Fire enacts Its Infinite Movement as Descending Son, Eternally Begotten from the Holy of Hollies, broken on the Altar of Perfect Self-Offering—but then—wonderful joy!—ascending, rising in the Spirit, the Gift consummated and utterly free in the Highest Heaven. . . . This is the Structure of Holiness . . . . It is the inner Life of God, the Most Holy and Blessed Trinity. The Triune Lord has sanctified Himself.[46]

Israel meets the triune Lord at the altar; through the Holy Spirit's unique processional movement, Sonderegger gains further insight into God's sanctifying inner life of fire.

In summary, the divine act of procession that manifests God as Holy is sacrificial and sanctifying. Sonderegger will not allow Trinitarian dogma to move in the direction of separating the triune God into "Divine Parts." She suggests that the classical category of mutual relations does not adequately describe the triune persons, despite the uniqueness of the Spirit's procession over the Son's.[47] Instead, the Holy Spirit's procession clarifies God's unicity of being as God manifests his processional life in the sacrificial system.

Assessment of Sonderegger's Model of God

In this second section, I will compare and contrast Sonderegger's dogma and revisionist processional model of the Trinity with a traditional model. The two-step

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[43] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:471.

[44] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:458. Later, Sonderegger clarifies that God's movement of *exitus* and *reditus* cohere with God as *Actus Purus* and does not introduce potentiality in God (2:469).

[45] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:477.

[46] For Sonderegger, it seems as though this circular movement in God is for God to sanctify himself. Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:481.

[47] Sonderegger's model of God's triunity decidedly does not rely on classical personal distinctions: "Notice, now, that we do not insist on a doctrine of the Divine Persons in mutual operation and relation here in order to speak fully and richly of Divine Love." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:477.

comparison begins with the strengths of Sonderegger's view and moves to weaknesses and disagreements. I will end my comparison by giving attention to the procession of the Holy Spirit in the hopes of providing a constructive response to Sonderegger's model of God's processional life in conjunction with a classical interpretation of the doctrine of God's processions.[48] I desire to follow the church's tradition to preserve God's transcendent, triune life while maintaining what constitutes the Holy Spirit as God without reference to the economy.

Sonderegger's Strengths

Israel learns through divine revelation that the true God is one, and Yahweh sets his people apart so that they worship him only. With Sonderegger, I confess that God is one.[49] Sonderegger's choice of "unicity" as a word to refer to God's being accurately underscores God's uniqueness as the holy one.[50] "It is this holy one" who dwells in his temple, and creation ought to respond in worship.[51]

As the Creator who has unicity of being, God's aseity enjoys a prominent place in Sonderegger's account. As I described in chapter 6, God possesses the fullness of life in his triune existence and, as the Creator of all things depends on nothing external to himself for anything that would constitute his being, even prior to the incarnation. The *a se* God experiences the plenitude of being in himself.

I consent that "not all is Christology."[52] Although Christ's visible mission in the incarnation reveals the nature of God, Christian dogma on God's triunity would

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[48] Polanus's axioms represent a classical view of God's processions in God.

[49] Polanus argues that God's essence is numerically singular; see Amandus Polanus, *Axiom* 1; 2; 3; 7; 15; 16; 17.

[50] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 3. Yahweh is the only *sui generis* being who exists on the side of the Creator-creature divide.

[51] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:210.

[52] Sonderegger makes this point in her first volume; see Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), xvii, 322, 331, 363, 417.

develop incorrectly if the doctrine of the Trinity exclusively depends on what is revealed during Christ's life.[53] Sonderegger finds procession and mission language clearer than "immanent" and "economic" terminology in reference to the Trinity because she postulates that God's life is processional.[54] The terms immanent and economic seem to create an unbiblical chasm between how God exists in himself and how God reveals himself to creation. The triune God's existence does not experience change, nor does God reveal himself to creatures other than as he truly is.[55]

If what could be known about the triune God was only understood in light of the incarnation, one might conclude from Christ's words—"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38) and "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28)—that (1) the Father and the Son have two distinct eternal wills, or (2) the Father has authority over the Son in God's inner life.[56] Sonderegger references the first option, social trinitarianism, and notes how some Trinitarian dogma creates parts in God, which is contrary to the biblical and traditional interpretation of God's oneness in being. I assent to her protestation against a model of triunity that teaches the three

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[53] Or, following the schema of other theologians, the visible missions reveal the eternal processions in God. Fred Sanders cautions against rejecting the divine missions' revelatory purposes in relation to the eternal processions: "Failure to recognize that they [the divine missions] are manifestations of eternal processions has kept much modern Trinitarianism abstract and brittle." Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 21. S.a. R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman's description of "principle seven" and "rule ten: from another" in R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), chap. 9 (pp. 179–212); cf. p. 241.

[54] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xx. Sanders notes how "Sonderegger is very careful with her language in this context [of] . . . the fiery sacrifice [which] cannot be a divine mission, but must be a theophany. The life of God is manifest on the altar, . . . not primarily instruction or historical deliverance at all, but presence and manifestation. . . . The sacrifice at the altar is theophany to Israel." Sanders, "Permanent Self-Hallowing and the Processional Life of God."

[55] That is, the incarnation does not alter the ontological nature of God, temporarily or otherwise.

[56] Sonderegger does not explicitly mention the second option, although it may be implicitly referenced when she mentions Trinitarian theology that views Christ's earthly obedience "to be ingredient in the Eternal Persons, [as] the Father eternally [commanding, and] the Son, in all Eternity, freely obeying." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xviii.

persons each possess their distinct, personal wills whereby the unified Three exercise their wills in agreement.[57] In her assessment, "this is an Immanent Trinity commandeered by Christology and conformed to it."[58] I affirm she correctly avoids the notion of using soteriology and Christology to interpret all theological loci. As such, I extrapolate and apply this logic to other accounts of the Trinity, specifically to the view of the eternal functional subordination of the Son (EFS).[59]

Both options set forth may be substantively different: social trinitarians believe God has three divine wills, whereas proponents of EFS believe that each divine person's exercise of the one will differs depending on their eternal relations with the other persons. Nevertheless, both views move away from classical theism's traditional teaching of God's one, undivided, divine will that belongs to each of the three divine persons. Contrary to a view that attempts to import numerically three wills into God or attaches the elements of authority and submission to God's will, the classical view of God's will

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[57] Gregg Allison defines social trinity:

> The perspective on the Godhead that emphasizes that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are intimately and dynamically related to each other in a divine community or society (hence, social). As three distinct persons, they are characterized by three centers of consciousness, equal in essence and expressing love, glory, will, and purpose. At the same time, the three are personally related and perfectly united in harmony because of the divine perichoresis, or mutual indwelling, of the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, the Father in the Spirit, and so on. They are three "persons-in-community." (Gregg R. Allison, *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016], s.v. "social trinity")

[58] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xviii.

[59] D. Glenn Butner Jr. defines eternal functional subordination (EFS): "A common evangelical theology of the Trinity that argues that the Son eternally submits to the Father, being subordinate in role or function but not in ontology or being. This position is also called Eternal Relations of Authority and Submission (ERAS) and the Eternal Submission of the Son (ESS)." D. Glenn Butner Jr, *Trinitarian Dogmatics: Exploring the Grammar of the Christian Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 223.

I agree with Sonderegger that an emphasis on Christ's life may import a view of divine eternal relations in God that is not biblically accurate and does not align with the traditional understanding of God's will that belongs to each divine person in accordance with their personal and unique mode of subsistence, which does not include authority and submission.

For an example of an EFS position, see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), chap. 14 (pp. 269–337). Grudem specifies that the Father is *homoousios* with the Son and Holy Spirit. But as the First person of the Godhead, the Father leads, possesses authority, and has priority in relation to the Son. In turn, the eternal Son obeys and functionally submits to the Father. Further, the Holy Spirit obeys and submits to the Father and the Son because this also reflects the Holy Spirit's mode of subsistence "from Father and Son" (302).

better preserves the unity of God's being. "The smallest distinction is by relation," and although a relation of origin really distinguishes the persons, Polanus cautions us not to disproportionately magnify this distinction because each divine person subsists in the one, identical divine essence.[60] For Sonderegger, God's unicity of being ought to be upheld even in light of the incarnation, and she charges theological accounts of the Trinity with introducing compartments and diversity into the God of Israel who is one.[61] In agreement with Sonderegger, I support a doctrine of the Trinity that interprets biblical passages in a manner that does not theologically forfeit God's oneness of being and aseity, even in developing other dogmatic loci.[62] Sonderegger's concern for God's unicity motivates her continual return to Israel's monotheism.

I appreciate Sonderegger's impulse to draw from Israel's Scriptures because God inspired both the Testaments, and the Old Testament may at times be wrongfully neglected. Positively, "the word of our God remains forever" (Isa 40:8), and the new covenant people inherit the Old Testament, which God graciously supplies as a blueprint for interpreting the New Testament. I may disagree with Sonderegger's conclusion on seeing the unified tri-personed God as such in the Pentateuch, but I sympathetically value her emphasis on God's unchanging nature—that is, his triunity—which enables her to deduce that God is triune in the Old Testament. Moreover, establishing God's holiness and aseity in Leviticus such that God's unicity of being fundamentally constitutes Israel's monotheism theoretically allows Sonderegger to set forth an argument for God's threeness without abandoning God's oneness. She rightly intuits the need to correct twentieth- and twenty-first-century formulations of Trinitarian doctrine.

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[60] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.6.

[61] Sonderegger promises to treat all theological loci in their rightful place; her subsequent volumes will specifically cover Christology and the incarnation.

[62] In *Axiom* 18, Polanus marshals the classical notion that the incarnation does not produce a quaternity in the deity.

In accord with Sonderegger, I confess that God is set apart, unlike any other being, and is dedicated to himself. Thus, the Holiness School in Leviticus reveal rites and rituals that instructs Israel on the meaning of the holiness of God.[63] An ethical separation exists between God, who is clean and holy, from that which is unclean, unholy, and morally defined by sin. Through the Levitical system and atonement for Israel's sin, it can be said that God enacts his holiness at the temple. Israel tangibly learns about God's holy character due to the separation of sin from God; moreover, through the material means of priestly sacrifices, Israel grasps the nature of God's inner life. Simply stated, the sacrificial system manifests God's holiness.

Sonderegger's emphasis on redoublement may be helpful. Following Sonderegger and Polanus in *Axioms 1* and *6*, I see the need for Christian theology to rely on redoublement to speak accurately about God as God. Wisely practiced by the Christian tradition, repetition focuses on a different aspect of a subject matter and potentially offers clarity to the area of discussion. Further, I also assent to her use of *exitus* and *reditus* in God which, by God's grace, uniquely belongs to his people.[64] Aquinas's development of redoublement helps clarify Trinitarian processions at least in two ways: the Son and Holy Spirit personally proceed from their principle of origin, both in God and without reference to the missions, and Christians participate by grace in a divine procession's movement back to the Father.

Sonderegger's Weaknesses

Traditionally, God's eternal processions affirm a principle of origin from which a divine person proceeds. The processions are true affirmations about God's inner life—that is, the processions really exist in God—independent of creation. One could

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[63] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:14.

[64] See chapters 4 and 6 for my discussion on Aquinas's notions of *exitus* and *reditus*.

follow Sonderegger's assertion of using the class noun, procession, in referring not only to the Son and the Holy Spirit's respective originating principles but also to a dynamic movement in God's holy life. However, I find the latter use confusing because it seems as though Sonderegger loses the Trinitarian distinctions, thereby giving up any clear method to truly distinguish the divine persons.

Certainly, Sonderegger's project welcomes the loss of traditional personal properties to emphasize God's unicity.[65] God is mystery, and creatures cannot fully comprehend God, posits Sonderegger, even while we assert truthful claims about the Holy One. Yet this elevated interpretation of God's fiery movement at Israel's altar to ground God's processional life does not seem theologically warranted.

As I argue in chapter 6, the terms "procession" and "persons" closely relate.[66] Polanus's technical language for processions helps make sense of why and how the church can confess there are numerically three, really distinct persons who eternally subsist in the one divine essence, while also interpreting God's internal relations, which are numerically four. Sonderegger argues that her work is "a doctrine of the Holy Processions, concluding in the Persons,"[67] and I believe that Polanus unequivocally shows us this pattern in the logical order of his axioms, beginning with underscoring the singular divine essence in *Axioms 1* to *5* before explaining the divine persons' subsistence in the essence.[68] But Sonderegger, while also following this pattern of developing God's processions before the Trinitarian persons, campaigns for more: she utilizes the doctrine of the processions as a class noun to characterize all that is in God. Sonderegger equates

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[65] Cf. Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xix–xx.

[66] In *Axioms* 7, 8, and 9, Polanus demonstrates how the two conceptually distinct and ordered terms aid one's consideration of God *qua* God from specific vantage points. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I.27.

[67] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xx.

[68] As previously mentioned, Aquinas's *quaestio* 27 unfolds similarly, beginning with a brief commentary on the logical priority of discussing the unity of divine essence before treating the persons in the triune God. Aquinas, *ST* I.27 art. 2.

procession with the entire being of God such that "to proceed from one's principle" can no longer account for the Holy Spirit's unique eternal procession.[69]

It may be beneficial to clarify the adjectival function of processionality in the processional life of God. Classical theists would contend that the procession of the Holy Spirit is, on the one hand, equivalent to all that is God to be God, since the Third Person, his notional act of proceeding, and God's one essence are not really distinct: the Holy Spirit "differ[s] merely formally from the essence."[70] This might sound similar to Sonderegger's understanding of processionality: God's processionality upholds God's oneness. But her emphasis on God's unicity of being does not make theological space for real distinctions in God and thus cannot differentiate the Trinitarian persons.[71] In other words, while a classical view may define the Holy Spirit as a subsisting relation whereby he subsists in the divine essence as the person whose principle is the Father and the Son, I find it difficult to see how one can numerically count to three in regard to the divine persons in Sonderegger's account.

The intentional move away from the classical language in Trinitarian dogma attempts to advance the theological discourse. But I disagree with Sonderegger's direction "into the Land of Unlikeness,"[72] away from the traditional "schema [in] the fear of multiplying the metaphysical elements,"[73] because I do not concur that language surrounding "the Processions, the Relations, the Properties or Notions, the Person, [and]

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[69] Nor can it account for the Son's eternal generation.

[70] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 11.

[71] One may reject the classical method of distinguishing the persons *via* relations of origin, but another distinguishing factor must replace it or else the question of how to distinguish the persons remains unanswered.

[72] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:xxix.

[73] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:441.

the Nature"[74] creates parts in God.[75] A robust affirmation of a type of divine simplicity that does not see any real distinctions between the metaphysical elements (except for personal properties)[76]—the Holy Spirit's unique principle of origin is the Father and Son—gives clarity on how "these distinctions and sophisticated relations" uphold God's undivided being.[77] It is by virtue of ordering and layering these elements "artfully placed within the whole"[78] that prevents this doctrine from confessing God is not one. Put positively, Polanus's classical treatment of processions maintains a more biblically accurate and theologically robust view of God's unicity of being and the Trinitarian persons; it is difficult to grasp what enables Sonderegger to distinguish the divine persons, metaphysically speaking.[79] Since she does not ultimately conclude that there are personal properties that translate into two distinct processions, yet all the while affirms the Son and Holy Spirit can be known in the fire of God's life that pours out at the altar, one wonders about the epistemological viability of her account. How can we know the divine persons? For Sonderegger, it seems as though God can appear to be Father and/or Son and/or Holy Spirit in God's processional life and thus in creation in a similar,

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[74] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:441.

[75] I disagree with Sonderegger's assessment of the traditional model of the Trinity. However, as I previously assessed, a social trinitarian model of God does in fact problematically create parts in God. Yet, I believe that Sonderegger wrongly faults the classic model of God, as presented in this project, because the tradition carefully seeks to avoid creating parts in God.

[76] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 6.

[77] For recent publications on divine simplicity, see Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account* (New York: T&T Clark, 2016); James E. Dolezal, *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017).

[78] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:441.

[79] Although introducing a quaternity in God would contradict the thrust of Sonderegger's entire project, one wonders if there is a fourth *quid* that distinguishes the persons.

overlapping manner. As a result, one wonders if this model of the triune God confounds and compounds the persons.[80]

Cognizant of this type of response, Sonderegger spends considerable space outlining Sabellianism's arguments to show she has not fallen into this error; instead, she cautions the Reformed and modernist accounts of the Trinity of Sabellianism.[81] I consider both points before offering a critique. On the one hand, to distance her view from this heretical position, she avers,

> [Sabellianism] is a conceptual inability to recognize the very idea of Procession . . . [because it] fails to identify the proper locus for the Divine Life: it considers the Act of God as a work ad extra. The Processions are collapsed into a specific form of the works of God in creation.[82] [Therefore, a] . . . full and resolute turn from Sabellianism requires an insistence on the proper direction in the Mystery of Trinity, *from* Above *to* below, and beyond that, to the Dynamism of the inner Life, the metaphysically Real and Living Processions of God.[83]

In her opinion, her approach to defining God's unity of being using processionality is not Sabellianism, which strictly places the processions in creation as the conceptual tool to explain God's unity without reference to God's divine life. God's procession, according to Sonderegger, is "first and principally" about God's inner life as God who eternally is the unity fiery act:

> On the other hand, Sonderegger suggests that modernist views tend towards Sabellianism. She wants "[t]he Procession, the Divine Fire that just is God in Act, to govern and animate the entire Relatio of the Divine Persons."[84] Without her view of procession, she warns that "Trinitarian doctrine [will have] traces [of] this Sabellian-like pattern" that believes "the Reality of God is known and can be known

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[80] Lines three and four of the Athanasian Creed assert, "That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." Philip Schaff, trans., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., 6th ed., rev. David S. Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 2:66.

[81] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:452.

[82] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:449.

[83] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:455. Later, Sonderegger candidly acknowledges that she "parts decisively from [Sabellius], for the Processional Life of God is not a matter of the economy, first and principally, but foundational, wonderfully, transcendentally, it is a matter, *the Matter* of Deitas in Act, the Life of the Holy, Tri-Personed God" (2:449).

[84] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:452.

> only by reflection on the *Opera Dei ad extra*, the history of God us-ward."[85] In her estimation, "Calvin and many Reformed theologians" face this problem downstream from their over-emphasis on persons and their relations, and Trinity becomes Christology.[86]

In the end, while Sonderegger orients processionality into God's entire inner life rather than in creation and his work *ad extra*, I am unconvinced that Sonderegger's model of God demarcates the divine persons from the others, a critical matter in any orthodox explanation of triunity. If (1) God's processional fire is the Son, and (2) God's processional life is the Holy Spirit, and (3) the Son and the Holy Spirit do not have distinct relations of origin, and (4) the divine persons are not distinguishable, then would it not be the case that the Son is indistinct from the Holy Spirit, thus conflating the persons? Sonderegger insists that she has not succumbed to Sabellianism; however, it is unclear in her treatment how eternal generation is an aspect or mode of the Holy Spirit's procession and yet is not threatened by modalism.[87] My main concern with Sonderegger's project can be posed in three correlated questions: (1) How are there numerically three divine persons in God? (2) How can one know the three persons manifested through the unified life of the sacrificial fire? and (3) How can one consider the fire and know with any certainty which divine person is whom? One wonders how Sonderegger argues the tri-personed God can be known in Israel's sacrificial system.[88]

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[85] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:452.

[86] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:452.

[87] Allison defines Sabellianism under Monarchianism, which is "[a]n early heresy regarding the Trinity. Monarchianism (from Gk. *monarchia*, 'ruler') has two forms" of which the second concerns this present discussion: "*Modalistic Monarchianism* (also modalism and Sabellianism) maintain[s] . . . that the members of the Trinity are one and the same person, not three persons. The one God is designated by three different names—'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit'—at different times. They are three *modes* (thus, *mod*alism) of the one God." Allison, *Baker Compact Dictionary*, s.v. "monarchianism."

[88] Ian A. McFarland angles his speculation thus: "For the refusal to ground the doctrine in christology raises the question of why the Old Testament's depiction of the living dynamism of the God of Israel should result just in the confession of *Trinity* rather than the non-triune Unity of Islamic *tawhid* or, for that matter, a Duality or a Quaternity." Ian A. McFarland, review of *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, *The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Processions and Persons*, by Katherine Sonderegger, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 76, no. 1 (February 2023): 75–76.

Sacrifice and Sanctification at Israel's Altar

Turning to Sonderegger's two points about sacrifice and sanctification, the Levitical sacrifices supposedly echo the holy God's inner life. Not only do the burnt offerings offer a parallel to God's nature, but the fire that escapes the Holy of Holies descends and consumes the sacrifice before returning to its origin, the triune God himself. Yet I am unsure of both (1) what it means for God to sacrifice within himself, and (2) what it means for God to sanctify himself.

God Sacrifices within Himself

First, the sacrificial system in Leviticus is inaugurated to teach Israel ontological realities about Yahweh and their nation. For example, Israel learns about Yahweh's holiness, Yahweh's requirement for Israel to be holy, Yahweh's provision for Israel's sin, and ultimately, Yahweh's provision for the sin of all his people.[89] Holy is the God of Israel, who is set apart from all things and is dedicated to himself. When they fail to follow the law perfectly, thereby sinning against Yahweh, Israel accesses their sacrificial system, which allow the people to offer payment for their sins.[90] "Atonement is a means to an end," L. Michael Morales clarifies, "a means to Israel's fellowship and communion with YHWH God[,] . . . indicating reconciliation between God and

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[89] L. Michael Morales avers, "The primary theme and theology of Leviticus (and of the Pentateuch as a whole) is *YHWH's opening a way for humanity to dwell in the divine Presence*. This theme will be found to encompass the narrative storyline of the Pentateuch, as well as the prominent role of the tabernacle cultus within it." L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 2015), 23. Furthermore, Morales posits, "the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 as the book's literary centre" (27). In sum, Leviticus is the central book in the Pentateuch, and the Day of Atonement is located in the central chapter in Leviticus.

[90] Morales provides "a twofold theological meaning [for the tabernacle]. . . . [T]he tabernacle is not only God's house, the place of his presence, but is the ordained way of approaching the divine presence—through the cultic system, which includes not only the tabernacle itself but the priesthood, rituals and sacrifices, and the liturgical calendar." Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 109. Sonderegger seems to suggest more than Morales's twofold meaning, although, at minimum, both grant that YHWH appoints the tabernacle as the place of meeting with Israel. In my estimation, perhaps Morales's interpretation differs from Sonderegger as he sees God's divine presence at the tabernacle, while Sonderegger sees God and processionality, as it were, as the fire.

humanity."[91] The altar—the heart of Leviticus, which is the heart of the Pentateuch—"exists for Israel's cultic ascent to God. In other words, it is the ascension offering that fulfills the telos of the altar, and the telos of Israel is fulfilled through the altar."[92] Ultimately, it is "impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:4), for God designs the sacrifices in the old covenant to find their fulfillment in Christ.[93]

In the new covenant, Christ is the means through which human beings inherit "such a great salvation" (Heb 1:14, 2:3). Christ sacrificially tastes and suffers death (Heb 2:9) for daughters and sons to bring them to glory (Heb 2:10).[94] Furthermore, Christ fulfills the Levitical priesthood, who is tasked to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of those they represent.[95] As the high priest (3:1; 4:14; 5:5–10; 6:20; 7:26–28; 8:1; 9:11;

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[91] Atonement through the temple cultus system allows Israel to experience union with God: "[T]he Hebrew verb *kipper* typically translated 'atone' [in Scripture] . . . implies a twofold meaning: ransom from death and purification from pollution—both functions being involved by varying degrees in atonement, according to context." Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 125. God designs Israel's liturgy as "a cultic journey into YHWH's heavenly abode, a journey that entail[s] . . . the blood of atonement into the fires of consecration, but one that also [leads] . . . to joyous communion and fellowship with God—beatitude. That is the way YHWH open[s] . . . for humanity to dwell in his Presence; that is the journey of redemption of history" (141).

[92] Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 134.

[93] Leviticus 16 holds the answer to Morales's question: "*Who shall ascend into the mountain of YHWH?* The one able to ascend is the Adam-like high priest, with blood, on the Day of Atonement. This is the way YHWH has opened for humanity to dwell in his Presence." Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 177. God's people return to his presence through "the high priest's ascent of the cultic mountain of God" (180). Morales provides a twofold explanation of YHWH's holiness, YHWH's call for Israel to be holy, and the relationship between the two concepts: "First, the *need* for Israel's holiness is rooted in the essential nature of God in his own other holiness. . . . Secondly, the *source* of Israel's holiness is—and could only ever be—God himself. While Israel is called to keep laws, therefore, not doing so did not make the people holy but rather prepare them to be made holy by YHWH's Presence" (208–9). In the New Testament, God reveals that his people return to his presence through Christ, who makes God's people holy.

[94] The book of Hebrews teaches how Levitical sacrifices prepare God's people for Christ, who is sacrificed on the cross-altar "to make atonement for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17) "so that he might sanctify people by his own blood" (Heb 13:12) and obtain their eternal redemption by his blood (Heb 9:12).

[95] Thomas Schreiner points out the author of Hebrews's attention to the temple cultus and, in particular, the Day of Atonement: "High priests carr[y] . . . out their office with gifts of thanksgiving and devotion that are offered up to God . . . [and] offer . . . sacrifices to atone for sins. . . . Transgressions [are] . . . particularly atoned for on the Day of Atonement when sins committed during the entire year [are] . . . forgiven (Lev 16:1–34). The author fixes his attention on OT sacrifices and the Day of Atonement in chapters 9–10." Thomas R. Schreiner, *Hebrews*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 158.

10:21), Christ mediates the better covenant because he makes "purification for sins" (Heb 1:3) and "holds his priesthood permanently."[96] In the end, the Levitical sacrifices (1) point ahead to Christ and (2) do not biblically and theologically support Sonderegger's understanding of God's processionality in Israel's cultus system.[97] Also, I do not concur with Sonderegger when she rejects the "notion of the offering as appeasement and shield."[98] Quite the contrary, I believe that Christ's self-offering is costly precisely because of his unique appointment as a high priest: he offers himself as the sacrifice for sin—not for his sins like the priests before him since Christ is "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens" (Heb 7:26)—but for the sins of the people (Heb 5:1–3; cf. 2:17).

God Sanctifies Himself in His Inner Life

Second, and ironically, when Sonderegger believes that God sanctifies himself in his inner life, it seems as though she reads God's work *ad extra* into God's eternal existence. This is a fault she finds in modern Trinitarian dogma. In explaining the

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Recall the heart of the Pentateuch and of Leviticus—the Day of Atonement. Hebrews provides the meaning of Levitical sacrifices: "The law and its sacrifices typologically anticipate the sacrifice of Christ. . . . Only Jesus' death truly cleanses the heart of its sin and provides assurance of a right relationship with God." Schreiner, *Hebrews*, 293. Christ is the ultimate way by which God's people can return to God, their creaturely origin, and enjoy his presence as God's people participate in the Holy Spirit's *reditus*.

[96] Christ saves those who come to God through him, once and for all, since he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb 7:24–25; cf. 8:13; 9:25; 10:12; 12:24). YHWH tasks the priesthood to stoke the fire in order to continually seek YHWH's favor through temple sacrifices. Christ perfectly fulfills the cultic rituals as the high priest and as the sacrifice for God's people. See Jay Sklar's discussion on the priest's duties and the significance of their diligence—"to have a posture of continual dependence and worship before [YHWH]"—which is fulfilled in Christ. Jay Sklar, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 128–29.

[97] Sonderegger would not say these two aspects are mutually exclusive, for she also believes Christ is the ultimate Lamb of God and the High Priest of God's people. Nor do I argue these two aspects are mutually exclusive. I only understand the sacrifices and priesthood as a type of Christ and do not agree with her rationale for the processional life in God.

[98] Without entering into a sustained discussion of atonement theories, I simply mention that Sonderegger does not hold to a view of sacrifice that includes appeasing God's wrath. Sacrifice for Sonderegger is not to be taken to be an Anselmian account of the atonement, which in her opinion is "a strong misreading" and "rests on the proper horror Christian should take toward a god who would demand innocent blood as an appeasing meal, a propitiation of a Moloch." Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:398; cf. 405. See her discussion in which she attempts to nuance self-offering and sacrifice with feminist and womanist values and concerns (2:398–406).

movement of God's life as processional fire—the infinite movement as descending Son and as ascending in the Spirit that just is the structure of holiness in the inner life of the triune God—it may be the case that Sonderegger over-interprets God's purpose for the temple.

The eternal procession of the Holy Spirit provides a *ratio* for interpreting the Holy Spirit's temporal mission to indwell God's temple—sanctified human believers.[99] As Christians receive the Holy Spirit *via* his invisible mission, they also materialize the new covenant church. Thus, the old covenant temple finds typological fulfillment in a twofold manner: a Christian is a temple of God (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:17; Jas 4:5) and collectively, God's people are the temple of God (Eph 2:20–22; 1 Pet 2:5).[100]

The Bible expounds on the Christian's sanctifying experience but not God's. Sonderegger's description of God sanctifying himself seems to take Israel's rites and inappropriately apply this structure of holiness to God's life. God is *Actus Purus* and does not have potency to undergo change, for worse or for better.[101] I do not find Sonderegger's view of self-offering within God compelling, and I cannot "place sacrifice in the center of Trinitarian worship and doctrine"[102] as she does.

Having already alluded to the design of the new covenant's fulfillment of certain old covenant types, I close by briefly giving attention to God's progressive revelation from another perspective. Aware of the processions-missions model of interpreting God's work *in se* and *ad extra*, respectively, Sonderegger believes the

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[99] In other words, the Holy Spirit imparts charisms to Christians and changes their souls into greater conformity to Christ's likeness as one of the results of his divine mission. See chapter 6 for my discussion on the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification based on his "thirdness" in the Trinitarian *taxis* of divine persons. I address the eternal processions as a *ratio* for divine missions (Polanus, *Axiom* 14.8) in my treatment of Elizabeth Johnson and Sarah Coakley's projects. Specifically, see the section "The Holy Spirit Proceeds in Power" in chapter 6 for my brief discussion on charisms.

[100] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* IV.17; IV.3; IV.7; IV.16.

[101] See the section "God's absolute perfection is essential or substantial" in chapter 6 for my discussion on God as *Actus Purus*.

[102] Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, 2:399.

missions too strongly guide modernity's theological discourse on God's inner life. However, I dissent from her critique because preserving the processions-missions schema prevents reading creaturely realities into God.[103] It may well be that I share similar concerns with Sonderegger: to maintain a Creator-creature distinction, to speak truthfully about God *qua* God, and to interpret God's work in the world without ontologically altering our understanding of God in biblically impermissible ways. For these reasons, the procession-missions model theologically safeguards our dogma from drawing strong distinctions between the immanent and economic Trinity, which perhaps at times may look like two different trinities. Although the divine missions do not offer a comprehensive epistemological grasp of God *qua* God, they accurately depict the nature of God's inner life. We have epistemological certainty in confessing the third article—the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father and Son in the divine life—because the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit in a divine mission.

Conclusion on Sonderegger

This first part of the chapter gave attention to the procession of the Holy Spirit to provide a constructive response to Sonderegger's model of God's processional life from the perspective of a classical model of the doctrine of Trinitarian processions and persons. Sonderegger sought to offer a corrective for subsuming the doctrine of the Trinity under soteriology. However, I believe my interaction better preserved the unicity of God's being and God's enjoyment of the replete splendor of his being. I defended a traditional explanation of what constitutes the Holy Spirit as God: "[A]s we are taught by the authority of Sacred Scripture, we firmly hold that the Holy Spirit is true God,

[103] Sanders's exegetical sequence would not cohere with Sonderegger's interpretation of the temple cultus: "Whatever adumbrations may be found in the [Old Testament] text, no revelations are to be sought there, if we take both words literally: shadowing versus unveiling." Sanders, *The Triune God*, 22. God progressively revealed the processions and the Trinitarian relations of origin through the temporal missions in the New Testament. "For this reason," Sanders adjures, "it is best not to press the Old Testament to make it yield Trinitarian revelation."

subsistent and personally distinct from the Father and the Son."[104] Polanus's definition of processions in his axioms provides a rigorous language for the church to rightly confess the processions and persons. The Holy Spirit, while one in being with Father and Son, is also really distinct from the Father and the Son.

I argued that Sonderegger's account of processions and persons desired to uphold God's unicity but lost the real relational distinctions between the Trinitarian persons. I defended this thesis in two sections: (1) a presentation of Sonderegger's arguments concerning God's sacrificial, divine life in Leviticus, and (2) a response to Sonderegger's problems against the traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit from a classical theism's perspective by affirming real distinctions in God—distinctions based on the Trinitarian persons' relation to each other, which upholds God's unity of essence. Scripture and tradition demand the preservation of the triune God's personal distinctions to explain the Holy Spirit's unique mode of subsistence and mode of acting in the divine life and in creation. I will continue emphasizing this processions-missions schema in the next two parts that interact with Johnson and Coakley's projects.

God the Holy Spirit (She/Her): A Comparison of Elizabeth A. Johnson's Account of Aseity, Omnipotence, and the Procession of the Holy Spirit to a Classical Model of God

In part 2, I consider Elizabeth A. Johnson's work in *She Who Is*.[105] Johnson joins other theologians who labor to find the most helpful and accurate words to describe God using creature's finite language. Language in the classical tradition for God alarms Johnson.[106] As a Christian feminist theologian—one whose theology is "a reflection on

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[104] Aquinas, *SCG* IV.19, 2.

[105] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, (1992; repr., New York: Herder and Herder, 2013).

[106] I follow Johnson's use of the term "classical theism." For an example of her definition, see Johnson, *She Who Is*, 19.

God and all things in the light of God that stands consciously in the company of all the world's women, explicitly prizing their genuine humanity while uncovering and criticizing its persistent violation in sexism, itself an omnipresent paradigm of unjust relationships"[107]—Johnson sheds light on the fact that the majority of theologians in church history have been men. As a result, she contends that classical theism inevitably reflects the patriarchal and androcentric perspective to the detriment of women.[108]

Johnson proposes her model of God, seeking to free the oppressed woman and create Christian language for God that accurately reflects women's experiences.[109] Among a host of propositions resulting in women's equality to men, Johnson argues that theological discourse no longer holds to classical theism's (1) attribution of God as *a se* and omnipotent and (2) view of the triune God's relationship with human beings. In Johnson's view, men use religious authority to oppress women. God is not biologically male (or female for that matter) and traditional language in theism oppresses the female sex by exclusively naming God "he." Unless the theological discourse changes, Johnson believes that women will continue to live in subjection to men, an injustice to God's intended design for human flourishing. The human dignity of women as a lived experience rests on adjustments in the church's language for God.

My response to Johnson's claims comes from a "classical" perspective, such that I emphasize how the omnipotent and just God always requires punishment for sin,

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[107] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 8.

[108] Johnson defines patriarchy: "Patriarchy is the name commonly given to sexist social structures. . . . [P]atriarchy is a form of social organization in which power is always in the hand of the dominant man or men, with others ranked below in a graded series of subordinations reaching down to the least powerful who form a large base." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 23. On androcentrism, Johnson states that this "is the name commonly given to the personal pattern of thinking acting that takes the characteristics of ruling men to be the normative for all humanity" (23–24). Johnson adds a Christian perspective to her critique: "One of the most influential androcentric syntheses in the Catholic tradition is that of Aquinas" (24).

[109] "Feminist theology," Johnson formulates, "engages in at least three interrelated tasks: it critically analyzes inherited oppressions, searches for alternative wisdom and suppressed history, and risks new interpretations of the tradition in conversation with women's lives." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 29.

like that oppression of women. To my understanding, Johnson's "feminist values" find support in classical theism, but a traditional interpretation of the doctrine of God more accurately explains Scripture's presentation of the divine attributes, the eternal processions, and God's work in creation. Ultimately, Johnson's project generates problems with the doctrine of the Trinity and does not find sufficient biblical support.

I will argue that the Christian tradition accurately defines Scripture's presentation of God's aseity and omnipotence, and these classical definitions more capably address the Christian feminist's concerns in theological discourse than Johnson's model of God. I present my thesis in two sections: (1) a summary of Johnson's arguments concerning analogical language for God; (2) a response to Johnson's problems against traditional language for God from a classical theist's perspective, ending with consideration of the manner in which the Holy Spirit brings fallen creation to its appointed renewed end.

Johnson's Concerns and Proposal

This section of the project draws mainly from *She Who Is* to present Johnson's concerns surrounding classical theism's theological discourse.[110] I present Johnson's proposal for redefining God's attributes as a solution for language that includes women's experiences.[111] The first half of this section looks at language: analogical language, inclusive language, and proposed language. Through these three categories, I consider language's general functions, the development of language for God, and the necessity for new language to achieve a more accurate view of divine mystery, respectively. The second half ends with a test case: Johnson develops a new, inclusive language for the

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[110] In this project, space restricts me to focus on Johnson's volume, *She Who Is*.

[111] It is beyond the scope of this project to consider some of Johnson's other proposals, such as using feminine proper names and pronouns for the divine: "If God is 'she' as well as 'he'—and in fact neither—a new possibility can be envisioned of a community that honors difference but allows women and men to share life in equal measure." Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum International, 2007), 100.

Third Person, which depends on her arguments surrounding language, and she identifies the benefits of her relational language over traditional verbiage. Again, the present focus will be limited to how women's realities affect the Christian understanding of God's aseity and omnipotence as well as the Holy Spirit's procession.

Language

God condescends to creatures, and Scripture and Church tradition offer accurate ways for creatures to speak precisely to describe meaningfully revealed truth about God. Johnson characterizes speech as symbolic: speech about God meaningfully transmits true information.[112] The church's inherited heritage, rich with robust words and concepts, directs Christian worship—speech reflects theological beliefs and molds church praxis. The task for theologians, then, as one attempts to aid the church in regulating her theological discourse, bears weight because speech has consequences. As a symbol pointing to true reality, speech about God can be substantively present or substantively absent and have positive or negative results. Johnson, acutely aware of the symbolic nature of language, believes one's communicative ability reveals one's understanding of a subject matter, and this in turn bears consequences.[113] Johnson diagnoses the tradition's purposeful exclusion of women in language for God.[114] Classical theism intentionally bars symbolic, feminine language for the Divine.

Johnson's contention lies in the manipulated, male-dominated language for God employed by the church: the symbol of God functions as a teaching tool, instructing

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[112] Speech and symbols for God shape individuals and corporate faith communities. Johnson, *She Who Is*, 4.

[113] "[J]ustice toward women and right speech about God" are inseparable. Johnson, *She Who Is*, 12.

[114] The problem with using male metaphors "consists in the fact that the male terms are used exclusively, literally, and patriarchally." Johnson uses the liturgical prayer as an "outstanding example . . . directed to the Father, through the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with even the latter being masculinized through the use of grammatically male pronouns." See her discussion in *She Who Is*, 33–36. Her assessment of the tradition's use of male "speech about God has a twofold negative effect. It fails both human beings and divine mystery" (26).

Christians to wrongly associate men with the divine in a way that ostracizes and oppresses women. As a result, women pay a costly price for exclusive God-talk in classical theism, witnessed throughout church history in women's subjugation and undermined dignity. Contrary to the tradition's sexism, Johnson believes the feminist's purpose obeys "the basic commandment 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Lv 19:18; Mt 22:30). . . . [F]eminist theology advocates the reform of patriarchal civil and ecclesial structures and the intellectual systems that support them."[115] If theological discourse desires to understand divine mystery with as much creaturely accuracy possible, Johnson believes the church's linguistic pattern ought to transform from traditional, sexist language into symbolic language that incorporates meaning and significance for women and men. [116]

Analogical Language

The Christian tradition utilizes symbolic language for God. Specifically adhering to the nature of analogical language (according to the Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215),[117] Johnson proposes that women-inclusive speech about God logically depends on analogy.[118] The wisdom of analogical language for God, on the one hand, prevents creatures from perceiving holy mystery as finite and ultimately comprehensible—the error of univocal language—when in fact God is infinite and

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[115] Christian feminism seeks holistic flourishing for women and men. Johnson, *She Who Is*, 9. Conversely, Johnson suggests that the tradition historically maintaining "that persons of the male sex are inherently superior to persons of the female sex by nature, that is, by the very order of things, and has acted in discriminatory ways to enforce this order." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 23.

[116] Johnson identifies two things at stake: "[T]he truth about God, inseparable from the situation of human beings, and the identity and mission of the faith community itself." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 6.

[117] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 109.

[118] "[E]arly Christian theology articulates" analogy's threefold motion: first, the claim is stated; second, the claim is negated by comparison to creatures; third, the claim is negated by comparison to eminence. Johnson, *She Who Is*, 113. Only analogical speech for God is permissible, and Christian speech for God should reflect women and men's coequality.

incomprehensible. On the other hand, analogical language allows creatures to attribute proper and truthful language about God, contrary to equivocal language.[119] In sum, Christians possess the ability to communicate truth concerning God with accuracy despite the limits of creaturely language because inexhaustible, holy mystery can never be completely known. In a changing cultural context, Johnson proposes an evolution in the church's speech about "[t]he unfathomable mystery of God."[120] Christians can operate within the bounds of analogy to search for a language to confess "the infinite and the incomprehensibility of holy mystery."[121]

Inclusive Language

With precaution to avoid equivocal and univocal language about God, the church strives to discover language for God that most accurately reflects divine mystery. Unfortunately, as Johnson contends, twenty-first-century Christians inherit a history of patriarchal and androcentric terms for God.[122] The perpetual cycle of elevating men to positions of power allows men to dominate women. To the church's folly, men with power use the sacred text to their benefit while women remain powerless. "Religious patriarchy is one of the strongest forms of [the patriarchy]," warns Johnson, "for it understands itself to be divinely established."[123] To overcome the patriarchal structures taught in the Bible, Johnson demands inclusive language.

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[119] Butner's glossary includes an entry for univocity: "An alternative to the doctrine of analogy [is univocity, the treatment of] . . . words used of God as if they mean the same thing in the same way as when they are used of creation." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 229.

[120] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 6. God as divine mystery functions as a theological foundation for Johnson's project. Affirming God is incomprehensible mystery "implies an open ended history of understanding that is not yet finished." Since the reality of God is mystery beyond all imaging, Johnson argues for "the historical open-mindedness of God-talk" (7).

[121] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 7–8.

[122] To name a few of Johnson's examples of the inequality of women pertaining to the Bible, she notes the exclusive privilege for men to author Scripture, occupy mediatorial offices between God and Israel, function as covenantal heads to represent God's people, and, perhaps most significantly, identify the Trinitarian persons with male personal names and pronouns.

[123] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 23.

In addition to Johnson's problems with patriarchy in the Bible, she highlights two influential men who shaped the classical tradition: Aristotle and Aquinas. Aristotle's theory of sex polarity influences Western thought at large and the repercussion of Aristotle's error marks human history: the oppressed woman exists to revolve around men.[124] Picking up Aristotelian thought on women and men's ontology, Aquinas further develops Aristotle's ideas by including theological grounds for subjugating women to men.[125] Together, Aristotle and Aquinas influenced the Christian tradition such that language for God remains androcentric throughout history. Aristotle impacts Western thought, and Aquinas impacts on Christian thought, such as classical theism's exclusive male language.[126]

Traditionally, classical theists rightly affirm God has no sex, but Johnson believes the tradition in practice demonstrates otherwise. As men pen Scripture and theological work, language for God inevitably reflects male reality.[127] The church inherits

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[124] See Sister Prudence Allen on Aristotle's theory of sex polarity: "The two fundamental aspects of sex polarity are 1) that the differences between women and men are philosophically significant; and 2) that one sex is fundamentally superior to the other." Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C.–A.D. 1250* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 120. S.a. Gregg R. Allison, *Complementarity: Dignity, Difference, and Interdependence* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2025), pt. 2 ("Historical Development") for his exploration of complementarity in church history.

[125] "Aquinas accept[s,] . . . as part of the Aristotelian heritage that he [shapes] . . . into Christian language, the notion of ancient Greek biology that the male seed carrie[s] . . . all the potency for new life. . . . [U]nder optimum conditions men, who are the pinnacle of creation, would reproduce their own perfection and create sons." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 24. So Aquinas: "As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex." Aquinas, *ST* I.92 art. 1 ad. 1. A man's perfect generation is reproducing the male sex. Conversely, "the production of woman comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence; such as that of a south wind, which is moist, as the Philosopher observes." Aquinas, *ST* I.92 art. 1 ad. 1.

As for women, they need to be governed by others who are wiser. Aquinas, *ST* I.92 art. 1 ad. 2. God uses their defective nature to bring good out of evil: "Woman is created by God for a very definite purpose, namely, reproduction, which is the only thing that man cannot do better without her help." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 24.

[126] Johnson considers Aquinas as "one of the most influential androcentric syntheses in the Catholic tradition." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 24.

[127] Johnson's discussion on patriarchal image coheres with Mary Daly's line of argument concerning traditional concepts of God, such as divine omnipotence which develops in a misogynistic society. Daly deduces, "[I]f God is male, then male is God." Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 38.

an imbalanced model for God that utilizes male-dominant language in describing the divine, and the Christian tradition creates a male God who gives precedence to divinized men to function as God on earth.

Proposed Language

Both classical theists and mutual theists, such as Johnson, affirm the inappropriateness of attributing the category of gender to God: God is neither male nor female. Yet Johnson contests the church historically names God a man, or at least in male terms to the exclusion of female terms. To mitigate the problematic praxis, Johnson proposes positive and negative solutions. Positively, the development of inclusive language for divine mystery must include women's experiences and reality. Negatively, the acknowledgment that inclusive speech demonstrates God's relationality with creatures sheds the concepts of aseity and omnipotence. The negative solution—Johnson's rejection of two classical perfections—will be separated into two sections. Christian feminists search for more fitting language for God, and Johnson's goal in uncovering the need for female symbols for divine mystery results in redefining God's classical attributes.

Female and Male Symbols

For Johnson, women's liberation from traditional theism's patriarchal structure hinges on rejecting the symbolic male God. In its place, Christian language (Scripture and tradition) should necessarily include inclusive female and male terms when describing God.[128] The church may adjust traditional speech by following the pattern of attributing analogical language to God.

Language about God that focuses on men's experiences concerns Johnson because both women and men are made in the image and likeness of God. The

[128] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 45.

appropriate creaturely language about God should reflect all of humanity's experiences, and the symbols employed ought to point to a more holistic model of God than classical theism presents. When women's experiences are ignored and men's reality limits language for God, women remain undervalued and unjustly treated while the church at large suffers from a deficient understanding of God.

As a feminist, Johnson's proposal does not seek female exclusive symbols for God as a reversal of the traditional pattern, nor does she think the appropriate approach should favors female language.[129] Rather, to rectify traditional errors, Johnson desires the equality of female and male images.[130] Considering the traditional imbalance and disproportionate development of male symbols, Johnson's project highlights developing female images. Instead of dichotomizing female characteristics from male, the task aims to liberate women by using female imagery as a witness to the fact that women, as image bearers, point to God.[131] This results in the incompatibility of classical attributes for God against female and male symbols in relational theism's model for God; therefore, God's attributes require redefinition.

God's Relationality with Creatures: Rejecting Divine Aseity

Classical theism attributes aseity to God.[132] By Johnson's measure, this traditional notion of an *a se* God problematically develops in conjunction with patriarchal motives: to speak about God in a manner in which divine mystery remains the isolated and absolute ruling monarch, unable to possess real relations with subordinates.[133]

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[129] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 57.

[130] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 57.

[131] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 55.

[132] See chapter 6 for a fuller account of a classical view of the *a se* God.

[133] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 69. Specifically commenting on God's relationship with creation, Johnson finds "it is not accidental that classical theism insists on a concept of God with no real relation to

Feminists seek better language for God that coincides with an alternative model for the Divine; classic theism's God suspiciously mirrors sexist patriarchy.

Johnson believes the most fitting model of God champions a mutuality between God and creatures. From a relational perspective, God exists in mutual relation with the world. Dialectical theism upholds God's transcendence and immanence because the Creator remains infinite and creatures remain finite, respectively, such that each remains distinct.[134] Yet the mutual relation between God and human beings really affects the other. Dialectical theists cannot attribute aseity to God; God is not pure act, lacking potency.

Christian feminists value a relational God that possesses potency and mutually coinheres with creation's experiences. Present in history and existing in close communion with creatures, God really relates to creatures; an error in classical theism manifests in an imbalanced emphasis on transcendence because of a commitment to aseity, to the loss of immanence. Per Aristotle, women ontologically depend on men in a manner that constitutes their being and existence, and traditional theology incorporates this dynamic of dependence into the being of God. Johnson sees her dialectic model as the only viable option to break free from a God characterized by aseity. In a relational model of God, women find companionship with divine mystery amid pain, suffering, and degradation.[135]

Unlike classic theism, feminist discourse about God inclusively symbolizes women's experiences, a form of mutuality that includes interdependence, vulnerability, and risk.[136] Further, Christian feminists value God's ability to empathize with suffering

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the world, even when this is interpreted as an affirmation of divine transcendence. Unrelated and unaffected by the world, such a theistic God limits the ultimate patriarchal ideal, the solitary, dominant male" (225).

[134] Johnson adopts the term "dialectical theism," which is synonymous with neoclassical theism or panentheism. On Johnson's rejection of classical theism and classical pantheism, see Johnson, *She Who Is*, 230–31.

[135] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 225.

[136] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 225.

human beings and liberate the oppressed woman. Women's reality makes a difference in God such that God "transcendingly embraces all of finite existence in an inclusive relation that sets it free and calls it to communicate, personal, and cosmic shalom."[137] As God shares in women's and men's experiences through reciprocal relation, creatures likewise—albeit the sharing is different for God and human beings—share in God's work of renewal and restoration of the broken world.

God's Relationality with Creatures:
Rejecting Divine Omnipotence

Christian feminists reject the traditional attribute of God's omnipotence.[138] Problematically, contends Johnson, God as the absolute monarch reigns at an unapproachable distance to creatures, God's subordinates, and does not give an account for personal actions. God freely does as he pleases since he cannot be affected by influences outside of himself.[139]

Classical theism's omnipotent God looks identical to the patriarch, critiques Johnson. Devastatingly, oppression characterizes women's historical reality. Centralized power given to one man inevitably leads to selfish gain whereby men take from those under their rule. The subjection of women persists in this imbalanced power dynamic whereby women are incapable of attaining liberation from their oppressed state. The horrific effects worsen: men excuse themselves from their moral responsibility in oppressing women because men receive directives regarding their nature and function in the world from an omnipotent God, the ideal patriarch.

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[137] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 232.

[138] See chapter 6 for a fuller account of a classical view of the omnipotent God. Although Johnson rejects other classical definitions for God's perfections in addition to aseity, my present interest in divine omnipotence brings to the fore Johnson's liberation theology. The subsequent section on the Holy Spirit brings together two ideas: Christian feminists' liberation from traditional theism and, as women, finding freedom and meaning in mutual theism's model of God.

[139] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 21. Moreover, she questions the symbol of the tradition's patriarchal God—a God who lacks the ability for real relation outside of himself.

Dialectic theism's solution views women and men as made in the image of the divine and demands mutual relations between persons. The appropriate interpretation for God's power, then, ought to reflect God's relationality and immanence to creatures: "The kind of power [women] evidence is a vitality, an empowering vigor that reaches out and awakens freedom and strength in oneself and others. . . . Such dynamism is . . . the shape of love against the forces of nonbeing and death. And it operates in a relational manner."[140] This re-symbolized divine power liberates, and the Creator and human beings connect in compassionate love.[141] The Christian God's moral indignation concerns broken creation; as God stands in close solidarity with the weak and suffering, the divine enters the pain of the world, empowers the oppressed with compassion, transforms the broken from within, and calls for justice.[142] Johnson posits that God's almighty power empowers people to resist, heal, and liberate.[143]

The Christian feminist's account of God's power also mitigates classic theism's problem with God's will and suffering creatures. If it were the case that omnipotence properly belongs to God, thereby giving God the opportunity to prevent evil from occurring in history, God would have lovingly exercised divine power. Instead, history recounts the atrocious experiences of the oppressed who were not delivered from their suffering and in fact remained unliberated from powerful oppressive systems. Unable to permit otherwise, the relational God for Johnson could not have permissibly willed an alternative reality for the suffering. However, because of God's mutual relationship with human beings, Christian feminists find solace in a God who suffers alongside the oppressed.

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[140] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 269–70.

[141] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 270.

[142] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 270.

[143] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 270.

Case Study: The Amorphous Third Person

I devote this final section to considering the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a case study to demonstrate the payoff of Johnson's proposed language.[144] I will highlight the Christian feminist's desired outcomes in theological discourse by drawing together the previous sections of this chapter. These provide the theoretical building blocks for applying God's relationality with creation. I find a two-fold fittingness to focus on the person of the Holy Spirit, whom Johnson refers to as the "anthropomorphically amorphous" Third Person.[145]

First, and negatively, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is underdeveloped at best, and the tradition forgets the doctrine at worst. Johnson speculates that the close affinity between women's marginalized dignity and the Holy Spirit's work in creation results in intentional neglect of this doctrine.[146] Appropriately, then, I focus on developing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.[147] Second, and positively, "[i]t may be that the amorphous character of the Spirit allows a particular openness to being appropriated in female images."[148] Christian feminism may chart a comprehensive solution to replace the traditional model of divine mystery by further developing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Reconsidering an *a se* and omnipotent patriarch with a relational God—God, the Holy Spirit—can show that God truly communes with creatures.

Johnson brings classical theology into dialogue with feminist theology to demonstrate the biblical basis for feminist values in the Christian language. The Bible

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[144] The focus on the Holy Spirit is not meant to transgress a classical maxim *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. My goal is to highlight the Holy Spirit's divine mission and God's work that is appropriated to the Holy Spirit's work. Thus, the scope of this dissertation will not be able to cover the Son's divine mission or divine work appropriated to the Father and the Son.

[145] Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Mary and the Female Face of God," *Theological Studies* 50, no. 3 (September 1989): 512.

[146] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 130.

[147] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 131.

[148] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 132.

provides rich symbols for the Holy Spirit in creation that simultaneously highlight female images: God the Holy Spirit vivifies, renews and empowers, and graces all of creation.[149] I will survey Johnson's symbols.

The Holy Spirit Vivifies

The Holy Spirit brings creation to existence and sustains life. Scripture continually uses language to describe the "divine Spirit with life and with the breath of life" in conjunction with creation, generally, as well as with individual creatures.[150] The pattern of creation reveals the Holy Spirit's energizing presence, bringing non-being into existence (Gen 1:2).[151] Thus, whereas an *a se* God exists as a removed and uninvolved divine being, Johnson presents the Holy Spirit with feminist values: the ongoing sustainer gives, creates, and loves life, such that the Spirit pervades the cosmos and all of its interrelated creatures through continuous energizing.[152]

The Holy Spirit demonstrates divine power in a mutual relationship with creation, while creatures maintain their distinct existence from God. As Vivifying Power, God's "immortal spirit is in all things" (Wis 12:1 NRSV). On the one hand, this understands God's solidarity with creatures amidst one's struggles (Acts 17:28) because of the Spirit's intricate presence in the cosmos (Wis 1:7).[153] On the other hand, the

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[149] In her way, Johnson seems to affirm a kind of unity of action in God's economic acts, which "are in reality but aspects of the one engagement." Johnson, *She Who Is*, 133. She draws out these discrete acts by making logical distinctions.

[150] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 134. Elsewhere, Johnson asserts that vivification is "the most significant" activity attributed to the Holy Spirit: "[T]he Spirit is the creative origin of all life. In the words of the Nicene Creed, the Spirit is *vivificantem*, vivifier or life-giver. This designation refers to creation not just at the beginning of time but continuously . . . sustains the universe, bringing forth life." Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit: 1993 Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality* (Notre Dame, IN: Paulist Press, 1993), 42.

[151] Johnson cites Judith 16:14: "Let all your creatures serve you, for you spoke, and they were made. You sent forth your spirit, and it formed them; there is none that can resist your voice" (NRSV).

[152] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 134.

[153] Wisdom 1:7 reads, "The spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said" (NRSV).

world's dependence on God does not collapse creaturely autonomy, however intimate the powerful communion between the Holy Spirit and creation. Christian feminism's conception of mutuality in relation encapsulates creaturely dependence on the Holy Spirit for life. Yet the Spirit remains both the source of "individual and community, of autonomy and relation."[154]

The Holy Spirit Renews and Empowers

With hope, Christians anticipate the Spirit's powerful work of renewal (Ps 104:30), which has already begun in the renewal of the cosmos from a state of brokenness (Rom 8:22). According to Christ's fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:16–21; cf. Isa 61:1–2), the Spirit's renewing power "brings justice and peace through the world of nature and the human world . . . whenever human beings find community in mutual relations of sympathy and love."[155] Christ sets an example of action for Christians, who also are anointed by the Holy Spirit's power (cf. Isa 32:15–17). Human beings possess the capacity to exercise feminist values in the world—to bless all of creation by acting justly and peaceably (Wis 8:7).[156]

The Holy Spirit works with the oppressed and brings renewal (Ps 22:9–10). Through mutual relations, "the Spirit's renewing power is always and everywhere partial to her [the Holy Spirit's] beloved creatures suffering from socially constructed harm,"[157] and the divine changes the oppressor. In their respective broken states, Johnson believes the Holy Spirit works to liberate all human beings "from the distorted system that

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[154] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 134.

[155] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 136.

[156] Wisdom 8:7 reads, "[F]or she [the Holy Spirit] teaches self-control and prudence, justice and courage" (NRSV).

[157] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 137.

destroy[s] the humanity of [all creatures]."[158] The oppressed experience empowerment to forgive as the Holy Spirit restores what sin broke. By renewing those who suffer, the Holy Spirit heals personal wholeness, creates a changed heart (Ezek 36:26), and provides new enthusiasm for life.[159] Despite women's unjust suffering throughout history, Christians hope because the Holy Spirit shapes the "ultimate end: the liberation of the world in God."[160] As the agent of eschatological renewal,[161] the Holy Spirit will dwell among the people in the new heavens and new earth.

The Holy Spirit Graces the Church

The Spirit of God energizes the entire cosmos to guide creation's future renewal, which is good news for all human beings. Moreover, the Holy Spirit uniquely works in the church by imparting grace to God's holy people. Johnson sees the Holy Spirit's work in the Christian community in a two-fold manner: the Holy Spirit animates the church and makes the church holy.[162] This powerful work depends on Christ's earthly ministry.

Christ's incarnation marks the beginning of the eschatological end and provides rich symbols valued by feminists. In history, the Spirit-bearing Messiah demonstrates how the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowers a human being. Christ's Spirit-filled ministry evinces tender care and justice for the oppressed and suffering as Christ heals those rejected by society and preaches good news to the marginalized. Despite an exemplary righteous life, people reject Christ, who suffers and ultimately dies under corrupt leaders' influence. Still, God the Holy Spirit remains intimately present in

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[158] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 137.

[159] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 138.

[160] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 138.

[161] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 138.

[162] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 141.

the Passion, and the Holy Spirit revivifies Christ from the grave into glory, "an act of new creation that defines the very essence of the God."[163]

Beginning at Pentecost, God's Spirit empowers the church in a manner similar to Jesus's empowerment by the Spirit. God's covenant people confess new, spiritual life comes from God (Rom 4:17). Recipients of God's promise receive life so that, by grace, "everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8) may give life to others. The life-giving Holy Spirit works with and through the church (Acts 15:28), just as Christ promised (Acts 1:8). Christian feminists attest to the Spirit's revivifying power of new creation in the current eschatological age and to the continual and necessary illumination of making the church holy.

A Response to Johnson

I devote this second section to responding to Johnson's proposed doctrine of God that redefines God's attributes (aseity and omnipotence) and relation with creation.[164] I aim to address Johnson's Christian feminist concerns. In my assessment, the rich ways in which the tradition developed language for God should not be jettisoned because classical attributions of God's perfections coherently interpret biblical data concerning God's inner life and relation with creatures. Additionally, I believe the *a se* and omnipotent Holy Spirit in a classical view answers Johnson's burden to liberate the oppressed woman and find justice for sin. In three steps, I will show where "feminist values" can fundamentally find support in the tradition without compromising a classical view of the biblical God: (1) an assessment using feminine metaphors from Scripture; (2) a discussion of the *a se* Holy Spirit; and (3) an argument for an omnipotent Holy Spirit.

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[163] Johnson, *She Who Is*, 140.

[164] Not lost to my attention is Aquinas's theological development on the ontology of women. While the present classical theistic perspective relies on Aquinas's work in theology proper, I seek to follow the Thomistic tradition where I find agreement. I will diverge where I believe Aquinas wrongly interprets Scripture.

Analogical Language: Feminine Metaphors in Scripture

Classical theism's God is not sexed, and Christians ought to wholeheartedly embrace the language Scripture provides. As Johnson directs attention to God as holy mystery, she correctly understands the creature's finitude to grasp and for human speech to capture all of God's being. Johnson points to maternal metaphors for God in Scripture as a solution.[165] God inspired these metaphors to guide the church's understanding of God's covenantal relationship with his people. With balance, Johnson presses the point that God is neither female nor male in a univocal way human beings are essentially sexed; God is holy mystery and *sui generis*. Since, however, the Bible gives precedence to employing inclusive language—language that embraces women's realities—the church ought to rightly apply 2 Tim 3:16–17. All of Scripture, including the gendered metaphors, was breathed out by God. The biblical authors wrote the prophecy of Scripture "from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21). Christians ought to embrace God's Word in its entirety and seek to exegete Scripture correctly.[166] Further, the doctrine of inspiration also directs the church's understanding of God's intentional word choice.[167] In referencing God the Holy Spirit with male personal pronouns at large, Scripture instructs readers. The question, then, is: "What is taught since we rule out God has a sex?" I offer an overview of Scripture to locate an answer.

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[165] Johnson notes how Scripture metaphorically describes God maternally. Cf. Johnson, *She Who Is*, 100–103. God has a womb and gives birth (cf. 101).

[166] The church can benefit from using traditional language. The beauty of Christian tradition includes the laborious efforts behind solving theological problems that satisfy scriptural material and logical requirements. However, the language chosen may or may not arguably be precise and beneficial.

[167] Allison defines inspiration of Scripture:

> The special work of the Holy Spirit by which he superintended the biblical authors as they composed their writings. While these authors employed their own personalities, theological perspectives, writing styles, and so forth, the Spirit ensured that what they wrote was what God wanted them to write: the Word of God, fully truthful and divinely authoritative. Inspiration is plenary (all Scripture is God-breathed; 2 Tim. 3:16), verbal (inspiration extends to the words of Scripture), and concursive (the Spirit and the human authors wrote together). (Allison, *Baker Compact Dictionary*, s.v. "inspiration of Scripture")

Genesis teaches God's design in creating two human beings. God creates both in the divine image. Each human belongs to the same genus and species and is the first type of their respective sex (Gen 1:27). In Genesis 2, God also imparts the unique responsibility to the wife to help and submit to her husband and the unique responsibility to the husband to lead his wife. Adam, the first covenantal head, is the first representative of people before God.[168] God institutes subsequent covenantal heads throughout Scripture who continue the function of bearing responsibility for those under one's headship.[169] Without entering into the debates surrounding the covenants as such, I simply deduce a pedagogical pattern from God's exclusive choice of men as representatives in establishing covenants with ethnic Israel: God prepares his people to one day receive the male representative whom God will send on behalf of his people. This representative figure will be the perfect covenantal partner, unlike the previously imperfect ones. God primes his people for the coming of Christ,[170] who represents all human beings in him, both women and men.[171]

However, the doctrine of analogy limits our speech about Christ as a male covenant representative. Based on the "profound distinction between God and created being," the analogical nature of theological language recognizes a barring of authority to

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[168] The debate of whether or not God inaugurated a covenant with Adam does not detract from Adam's covenantal responsibility to Eve, who is under Adam's care because her husband is the head of their marriage (cf. Gen 27:19; Deut 21:17; Eph 5:23; 1 Tim 3:4; 5:8).

[169] Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum trace the biblical covenants and their respective covenantal heads as a revelation of God's unfolding plan culminating in Jesus. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 32–33. They believe the Bible records Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David as covenantal heads in the Old Testament.

[170] I caution against drawing conclusions about God's being from human beings' gendered existence and roles. For example, although covenantal leaders were exclusively men and were tasked with leading those under their care, I would see an error to attributing the character trait of leadership to all men, exclusively and in all spheres of life, solely on the basis of their sex. Instead, the quality of good leadership, an expectation for covenantal representatives, positively instructs Christians about God's character: God leads perfectly. By comparing biblical covenantal partners who were all men to Christ, the church can more accurately understand God's divinely revealed plans and Christ's covenantal responsibilities.

[171] Those who affirm a Chalcedonian Christology would confess that the divine Son assumes a complete human nature. Christ is a biological man insofar as he is one of the two types of sex.

ascribe any predicate "to God in the hope that it might be sufficiently adjusted to suit him."[172] Steven Duby concludes, "The nature of God's life does in fact rule out some predicates altogether (e.g., divine corporeality, complexity, ignorance)."[173] Christians cautiously embrace certain predicates for God because speech about God, although not univocal or equivocal, may exclude language that does not cohere with the nature of God's life.

On the one hand, I agree with Johnson and categorically reject sex for God; an irresponsible implication of Christ's sex divinizes the male sex into God.[174] On the other hand, using feminine speech for God in addition to masculine speech may lead to confusion in other theological loci.[175] For these reasons, and in the end, I believe it is more theologically profitable for the church to carefully navigate language for God as directed in Scripture (both feminine and masculine metaphors) and use male-gendered personal pronouns for God. I concede Johnson's point regarding the possible dangers of exclusive speech for God in classical theism. Expansive and emancipatory speech, according to Christian feminists, may mitigate historical errors in the tradition, such as equivocating the male and the divine. My conciliatory response follows: the Bible includes rich metaphors that use women's experiences—for example, God as maternal (Deut 32:18; Isa 42:14; John 1:13)—to divinely reveal aspects of God's character for the

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[172] Steven J. Duby, *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism: Biblical Christology in Light of the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 125.

[173] Duby, *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism*, 125.

[174] Per Daly's critique; see Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, 38.

[175] Butner makes this comment in discussing "the dissimilarity criterion" in naming the divine persons and processions. Although with good intentions, calling God "she" and "her" may wrongly lead Christians to embrace the language literally: "Most agree with Johnson's rejection of sex in God, but many feminist theologians have adopted approaches that differ from Johnson's language of God as Father and Mother, some going so far as to reject personal language for God altogether." In Butner's estimation, Johnson may be more careful than other theologians. Additionally, "The proposed language . . . that is intended to replace personal, gendered titles [for the Trinitarian persons] is problematic because it does not easily fit with inseparable operations . . . and it obscures the internal relations of the Godhead." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 111. For an alternative perspective for questioning the traditional masculine language for God, see Amy L. B. Peeler, *Women and the Gender of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023).

enrichment of the church. With care, then, I proceed in my discussion of the Holy Spirit's attributes to show how the classic model of God offers a preferable solution to a Christian feminist's concerns.

The *A Se* Holy Spirit

I will put forth a classical theistic interpretative framework for biblical data in support of the Holy Spirit's aseity.[176] I do not believe that redefining God's perfections in a relational model of God is the only solution to the problem of perpetuating patriarchal structures as Johnson fears. I will substantiate the claim that classical theism's *a se* Holy Spirit may be a solution to the Christian feminist's disputes against traditional theism.

One of Johnson's contentions with the tradition, and perhaps rightly so, concerns the Holy Spirit's derivativeness from other Trinitarian persons. Johnson refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Third Amorphous Person" and attaches the Western world's perception of women to correspond with such depictions of God—forgotten, marginalized, and powerless. But, according to classical theism, God's aseity grounds the theological notion of God's capacity to "freely communicate life and love to creatures."[177] The Holy Spirit is not a derivative divine person to the Father and the Son.[178] Because the Holy Spirit enjoys the fullness of life in God's intra-Trinitarian existence, the Spirit *qua* God powerfully moves to share a state of blessed existence with human beings, by grace.[179] Moreover, the traditional definition of aseity upholds the Holy Spirit's divinity more rigorously than the relational model because each divine person

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[176] See chapter 6 for my fuller explanation of divine aseity.

[177] Duby, *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism*, 25.

[178] Johnson also interprets the Spirit's derivativeness from "principle of origin." Receiving the divine essence from Father and Son entails a derivative person. Johnson, *She Who Is*, 50.

[179] Matthias J. Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *Doctrine About God, Or Theology in the Narrower Sense* (St. Paul: Emmaus Academic, 2021), 205.

subsists in the one divine nature without any potency.[180] To affirm God is pure act is to celebrate Scripture's presentation of God, who has the fullness of life in his triune existence.[181] A biblically and traditionally rich solution to Johnson's concern regarding "the Third Amorphous Person" is a robust affirmation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed's third article: I believe in the Holy Spirit.[182]

Classical theism realizes the theologically inseparable connection between affirming the one who creates *ex nihilo* requires that one to possess all-power: "Historically speaking, precisely as a philosophical idea, the affirmation of divine omnipotence developed in large part out of the biblical monotheistic tradition, due in particular to the biblical notion . . . of God's creating all things *ex nihilo*."[183] Without the use of anything outside of himself, the *a se* triune God brings everything in creation into existence by his power.[184] The brilliance of Aquinas's mixed relations preserves God's fullness of life and accounts for the Christian's real experience of the Holy Spirit's regenerating work and indwelling presence *via* a divine mission's created effect.[185] Accordingly, the church confesses the Holy Spirit is the Lord and Life-giver.

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[180] Polanus helpfully underscores that God is not a *genera* and the Trinitarian persons are one in species. Polanus, *Axiom* 13; cf. *14.1.* The Holy Spirit person is not lower in rank or hierarchy as the Third Person. The final part of this chapter will discuss the eternal *taxis* as such.

[181] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.3.

[182] "At the Council of Chalcedon of 451," Khaled Anatolios posits, "the first record of a Constantinopolitan Creed . . . declares the Spirit's divinity not by applying ontological terminology but by ascribing divine titles and activities—'the Lord, the Life-Giver'—and by affirming the equality of the Spirit to Father and Son as an object of honor and worship." Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 39–40, ProQuest Ebook Central.

[183] Thomas J. White includes a definition for *ex nihilo*, citing Lateran IV, chapter 1 in *Decrees* (ed. Tanner, 1:230) and points to Paul Clavier, *Ex nihilo*, 2 vols. (Paris: Hermann, 2011) for a historical and thematic study; see Thomas J. White, *The Trinity: On the Nature and Mystery of the One God*, Thomistic Ressourcement 19 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 342n4.

[184] Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 74, 76, 199; cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.5.

[185] Fred Sanders directs our attention to the name Gift for the Third Person: "Gift . . . is a shorthand way of referring to being given, received, and possessed. . . . What is given enters into the life of the recipient and becomes his own, which in turn relates the recipient to the giver. Gift, as presented in the Scriptures, has built into it overtones of reciprocity and mutuality." Calling the Holy Spirit Gift emphasizes the relation between God and creature. It is not a mutual relation, as per Johnson; nevertheless, the

The Omnipotent Holy Spirit

In a relational model of divine mystery, God is not pure act because potentiality prevents God from being a monarch with monopolized power and authority. Those subjected to this misuse of power remain marginalized and lack the capacity to engage in meaningful mutual relationality. On the contrary, classical theism's omnipotent Holy Spirit may be in a mixed relation with human beings, and creatures are really affected by the Holy Spirit's gracious presence and measured gifts of grace.[186] A mixed relation does not constitute God's being. However, colloquially speaking, it makes a world of a difference for the Christian: "God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom 5:5).

Christians receive God's indwelling Spirit, who is present in the world in a new way for creatures. Christians receive the person of the Holy Spirit and his gracious gift of power and are brought back to God through participating in the Spirit's personal movement of return (*reditus*) within God's triune life. The omnipotent Holy Spirit revivifies, energizes, and impels "the faithful . . . on the trajectory of their return . . . to the Father according to the pattern of the [procession] . . . of the Holy Spirit (charity assimilating them to the Holy Spirit's procession by way of love)."[187] In agreement with Johnson, I believe the Holy Spirit revivifies (Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30; Rom 8:10–11; cf. Acts 2:38). But it is clearer to call "vivifying power" a Christian doctrine as opposed to a strictly feminist value.

An omnipotent God should not be the Christian feminist's problem to solve, despite the abuse of power in some patriarchal structures that may value localized power

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Christian's relation with the Gift of God pedagogically reveals "the distinctive characteristic of the Spirit, that he is given, received, and possessed." Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 122; cf. Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 267–70.

[186] See chapter 6 for my fuller treatment of divine omnipotence.

[187] See chapter 6 for my discussion on how God gives grace to empower his church and bring them back to himself through the movement of the Holy Spirit's procession.

to the detriment of those who lack power.[188] At best, wrongly exercised power misrepresents the all-powerful God of the Bible. Conversely, classical theism's God is worthy of worship because he is omnipotent. As the perfect covenant partner, the almighty God provides salvation for his people, carries out justice, and ultimately brings healing to all creation (Ps 85:10–13). God single-handedly and all-powerfully works to bring restoration in the world so that a full renewal of the cosmos will be realized at God's wisely appointed time.

God's omnipotence is guided (so to speak) by his wisdom.[189] Thomas J. White posits how God's wisdom qualifies almighty power,[190] which may aid the present concern for the unjustly oppressed. God's wisdom in willing justice tethers, so to speak, his omnipotence: "[W]e must always avoid the philosophical temptation to think of God's omnipotence in rational abstraction from his wisdom and goodness, or, for that matter, from justice and mercy."[191] That which presently seems unordered will one day encounter God's justice. One day, the all-wise God will order all things in keeping with his wisdom and rectify every heinous evil act women have unjustly experienced. The almighty God keeps a record of all wrongs and will require righteous payment for sin. When human beings employ authority-submission structures, inaugurated in the name of religion, to abuse power for selfish gain, Christians ought to demand the dismantling of sinful systems that oppress human beings. In agreement with Johnson, I believe the Holy

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[188] At present, this discussion concerns the abuse of power within patriarchal systems, both historically and at present. Realizing that the Christian feminist may be averse to any relation—whether between God and creatures or strictly among creatures—that permits authority exclusively to men over women, I do not seek to enter any debates regarding the roles of women and men within Christian complementarity. For a definition, see Allison, *Baker Compact Dictionary*, s.v. "complementarianism."

[189] As developed by Aquinas, God's power always corresponds with and corresponds to his will, such that his power cannot extend further than his will. Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 202.

[190] Attributing power to God, as Johnson does, is not enough, although God certainly is strong (Ps 89:9). Furthermore, God has the highest degree of active power, and this immeasurable power is infinite. For Aquinas and a traditional view, God is omnipotent.

[191] White, *The Trinity*, 344. For my discussion on God's wise will moving toward the apprehended good, see chapter 6. Cf. Aquinas, *SCG* II.24, 3.

Spirit animates the church and makes her holy (1 Pet 2:9–10; cf. 1 Cor 1:2), but it is clearer to call "gracing the church" a Christian doctrine as opposed to a strictly feminist value. The Christian tradition affirms the biblical notion of the Holy Spirit imparting grace to the church. By the power of the Holy Spirit in God's people, we reform Christian practices according to Scripture's teaching by working toward an adjudication of justice. Those who experience sinful oppression can confidently believe that God will carry out his just judgment because he is omnipotent.

In keeping with God's nature, God can only do what his wisdom measures as good, and what God wills according to his good wisdom will always be fulfilled.[192] Unjust acts of sin are ultimately sins committed against God, and God will renew creation according to his goodness unto his ordained end. In agreement with Johnson, I believe the Holy Spirit renews and empowers (Rom 8:2; 12:2; 15:13; Eph 3:16). But it is clearer to call "renewal and empowering" a Christian doctrine as opposed to a strictly feminist value. The Christian tradition affirms the biblical notions of the Holy Spirit renewing and empowering Christians. Christians can celebrate God's omnipotence. The beauty of God's infinite power is that God provides Christians with certainty that, in keeping with his wisdom, that which presently seems unordered as a result of evil will encounter God's justice on the Last Day and in the age to come.

Conclusion on Johnson

After considering Johnson's relational model of God with classical theism's model, I adjudicate that the latter sufficiently accounts for biblical and traditional support over the former. I believe the church ought to maintain the classical definitions for God's aseity, omnipotence, and the relation between the Creator and creature. Furthermore, while God is neither ontologically female (she) nor male (he), God inspired Scripture to

[192] The divine will applies the divine power to bring about the intended product in the intended way. Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 199.

instruct creatures to most commonly use male personal pronouns (him) to speak about God. I caution against referring to God as "she" or "her" even when exegeting biblically grounded metaphorical feminine language for God.

Rather than following Johnson's proposal for more inclusive language about God that leads to reinterpreting God's aseity, omnipotence, and triune relations, part 2 of this chapter demonstrated how classical theism's *a se* and omnipotent Holy Spirit may offer a more favorable solution to the Christian feminist's disputes against traditional theism. This was argued in two sections: (1) a presentation of Johnson's arguments for emancipatory language, redefining traditional definitions for God's aseity and omnipotence, and looking at the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a test case for a theistic mutualism's model of God; and (2) a response to Johnson's proposal by considering how the *a se* and omnipotent Third Person works in the economy of salvation, indwelling the church and impelling God's people to their appointed end by grace.

God will not ignore the exploitation of women. Christians can trust God to liberate the oppressed and exercise justice for the marginalized because of God's unchanging nature. Moreover, the church can be certain that God will bring to fruition a final and perfect reckoning of sin with perfect justice on the Day of Judgement because God is omnipotent. On that day, the omnipotent Holy Spirit works with the Father and Son to bring creation to its appointed, renewed end in glory.

Salvation Acquired by the Covenantal Son and Applied by the Holy Spirit: A Response to Coakley's Incorporative Model of the Trinity

Sarah Coakley is developing her larger systematic theology, and the first volume—*God, Sexuality, and the Self*[193]—is her installment on the Trinity. Her volume explores the notions of prayer, contemplating God, and rightly ordered desires, and how

[193] Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). In this chapter, I restrict my focus to Coakley's volume on the Trinity.

these unique components in her account, which she calls *theologié totale,* ultimately lead the human being to participate in the triune God's life.[194] Although *God, Sexuality, and the Self* is by no means Coakley's theology of the atonement as such, my interest in the doctrine of the atonement in part 3 of this chapter flows downstream from her model of the Trinity.[195]

Coakley relies on Romans 8 as the main scriptural passage for her proposed model of the Trinity,[196] and I will assess the implications of a revised *taxis* or order of the Trinitarian persons on Christ's atonement.[197] I will aim to answer two questions. First, "Why was the divine Son sent in the incarnation?" Second, "Why does the Holy Spirit apply Christ's salvific work to Christians?" Christians traditionally base their responses on God's eternal processions, which include an eternal ordering of the divine persons: from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

I argue that a classical model of the Trinity provides a better explanation for the Holy Spirit's role in applying salvation than Coakley's incorporative model. I will argue this thesis in two sections: (1) an outline of Coakley's arguments from Romans 8 on divine desire in support of her incorporative model of the Trinity; (2) a response to Coakley that underscores how God reveals his ordered eternal Trinitarian relations in the

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[194] Coakley believes that one's doctrine of the Trinity closely associates with comprehending human sexuality.

[195] As one who advocates for a requisite dynamic between understanding God's inner life with God's work *ad extra*, I seek to follow Coakley's perceptive line of reasoning. God acts in the world according to his being. This complies with the first half of Rahner's rule (cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7). This third part of the chapter will only concentrate on limited parts of Coakley's larger project most relevant to the atonement. Due to a limitation of space, I will not be able to cover other interdisciplinary concerns for Coakley, such as human beings as sexed and gendered beings.

[196] In referencing Coakley's model, I use the terms incorporative, integrative, reflexive, and prayer-based approach synonymously since the primary and secondary literature uses these terms (i.e., Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 224).

[197] Similarly to earlier parts of this chapter, I will not argue for a view of the atonement as such; rather, I will consider the implications of the *taxis* on the atonement. My view is penal substitution. However, even if one holds to a different view of the atonement, my argumentation still applies (unless otherwise noted) since alternative views of the atonement affirm the divine Son is sent in the divine mission of the incarnation.

salvific acts surrounding the covenantal Son's incarnation, resulting in the adoption of God's daughters and sons.

The Holy Spirit in *God, Sexuality, and the Self*

In section 1, I trace Coakley's notion of divine desire and the incorporative model of the Trinity based on Romans 8 in four steps: desire in God; the Holy Spirit in Coakley's incorporative model; the Holy Spirit and human desire; and the Holy Spirit in Romans 8.[198]

God's Divine Desire and the Trinitarian *Taxis*

Central to Coakley's project, an ontological category of desire or *eros* primarily exists in God.[199] Relying on Pseudo-Dionysius, Coakley defines desire as "[connoting] that plenitude of longing love that God has for God's own creation and for its full and ecstatic participation in the divine, trinitarian, life."[200] From Dionysius, the notion of desire in the triune God's nature simultaneously (1) gives Coakley grounds for allowing the Holy Spirit to enjoy a prominent place in her model of the Trinity and (2)

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[198] Coakley uses the pronoun "it" for the Holy Spirit, which I will render as "he" even in presenting her arguments.

[199] Coakley relies on Pseudo-Dionysius's explanation of the synonyms *eros* (yearning) and *agapē* (love). God's *eros* is "a capacity . . . dealt out from the Beautiful and the Good through the Beautiful and the Good." See Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, in *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 4.12 (Luibheid and Rorem, 81).

[200] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 10. Matthew Levering assesses that Coakley's "work stands broadly in the line of Christian Platonism insofar as she sees desire as drawing us constantly toward God." Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 23–24.

God's divine attribute of desire differs from creatures' desires, for God lacks nothing. Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 10. Yearning and desire may be synonyms for God's divine love that ecstatically moves from the lover to the beloved. Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 4.13 (Luibheid and Rorem, 82).

banishes any notion of hierarchy in the Trinity.[201] In Coakley's logic, God's desire allows her to reconceive the classical Trinitarian persons' *taxis*.[202]

Traditionally, the Father is the source of the Trinity. For Coakley, based on God's natural desire *in se*, the Holy Spirit and the Son are sources in their own right.[203] In the incorporative model, the three persons are the "active plenitude and longing love" of the other persons,[204] sourcing each other's love.[205] By removing the Father from a position of hierarchical prominence, Coakley prevents relegating the Holy Spirit to a subordinate position. God's attribute of desire elevates the Holy Spirit because Coakley's theory of ecstatic sourcing does not monopolize the Father-Son relationship, a transgression Coakley finds in the linear, hierarchical model.

The Holy Spirit in the Incorporative Model

According to Coakley's reading of the tradition, the linear model is synonymous with hierarchicalism and inevitably subordinates the Holy Spirit by placing this divine person in the third position.[206] As a corrective, Coakley directs our attention to

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[201] God's *eros* unifies or "binds the things of the same order in a mutually regarding union." Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 4.12 (Luibheid and Rorem, 81).

[202] The three divine persons exists in "the perfect mutual ontological desire that only the Godhead instantiates." Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 4.12 (Luibheid and Rorem, 81).

[203] The "Spirit's reflexive propulsion and the Son's creative effulgence" source the Father. The Father, in the Holy Spirit, eternally sources the Son. Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 332. Levering offers, "The point is that each person must be the 'source,' in some way, of the other two." Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 28.

[204] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 333.

[205] The three are "giving and receiving and ecstatically deflecting, ever and always." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 333. Yet, the manner of each divine person's sourcing is not identical.

[206] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 134. In Coakley's view, the underdeveloped incorporative model detrimentally affects our worship of the Holy Spirit. The church historically foregrounds its relationship with the Father-Son dyad.

In *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, Butner lists three distinct models of communion—co-ordinate, linear, and incorporative. I summarize Butner's presentation of each model. The first, the co-ordinate model, "focuses on the unique human address to each divine person, particularly in worship." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 223. The second model "[emphasizes] our ability to discern each divine person in God's inseparable operations and in God-enabled human actions by recognizing a linear order in the actions. God's own operations come from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit, and God-enabled

the Holy Spirit by finding a (1) traditional and (2) scriptural basis for her incorporative model.

First, Coakley identifies early versions of her prayer-based approach in the second and third centuries, exploring the writings of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine.[207] Second, John's Gospel and the book of Acts may delineate the linear model, but Coakley sees Paul outlining an incorporative model, especially in Romans 8.[208] The Holy Spirit is "the primary means of incorporation into the trinitarian life of God."[209]

The Holy Spirit graciously indwells and draws Christians to participate in the communion of God's life through "the ecstatic quality"[210] of receiving the divine. Coakley retrieves a work of the Holy Spirit in salvation by highlighting the Spirit's role in Christian spirituality. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian, grounding the Christian's communion (1) with one another and (2) with the triune God.[211] Spirit-infused prayer rightly orders creatures' affections and draws us to God, our ultimate desire.

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human actions are conducted in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father" (225). Butner defines the final one as a "model of communion, named by Sarah Coakley, that focuses on the Spirit's role of drawing us to God."

I list the three models of communion to note the unique components of Coakley's contribution against the former two, which at the most basic level accentuates the Holy Spirit. As an oversimplification, the co-ordinate and linear models aim to identify the three persons while the incorporative seeks to remedy subordinating the Holy Spirit. See the full discussion in Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, chap. 8 (pp. 199–219).

[207] Coakley hypothesizes that Montanists, condemned by the early church, "gave the Spirit a bad name, and that this discouraged explicit or apologetic use of a trinitarianism giving experiential priority to the Spirit." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 126. The early church emphasized "the ecstatic quality of experience of the Spirit," which Coakley believes is "in line with" her model. Specifically, Coakley accounts for Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine in her project. Each historical figure uniquely supports differing aspects of her integrative model of the Trinity. For example, she draws on Nyssa for prayer and Augustine on gender. I am unable to consider these claims closely in this chapter. See Coakley, 116.

[208] I return to Coakley's interpretation of Romans 8 in the fourth section of part 1.

[209] The Holy Spirit is "constantly and 'reflexively' at work in believers in the circle of response to the Father's call." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 111.

[210] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 120.

[211] This central work of the Holy Spirit in creation brings this divine person to the fore. Coakley removes any concept of authoritative hierarchy between the Trinitarian persons and guards against

Human Desire and the Holy Spirit[212]

Coakley motions for a retrieval of the practice of prayer from early patristic writers to disentangle human beings' distorted desires.

First, I consider the desires of human beings.[213] According to Coakley, human beings desire because of God's divine *eros*—God divinely desires in his inner life.[214] Derivatively, human beings desire because the Creator made humans in his image and likeness.[215] Sin taints natural human desires, and there exists an "intrinsic entanglement of human sexuality and spirituality,"[216] which hinders humans from discovering the root of their longing.[217] The sinfulness of creaturely desires requires disentanglement.[218]

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an over-emphasis on the Father-Son dyad. Lest one thinks Coakley's model lacks a Trinitarian flavor by placing the Holy Spirit in an elevated position, Coakley accounts for each divine persons.

First, the Father is the "source and ultimate object of divine desire." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 114. In chapter 7, Coakley clarifies the use of traditional Trinitarian grammar with feminist sensibilities. As such, she questions the meaning and employment of the terms "Father" and "source." Coakley deduces that "Father" may strictly be used "'appropriately' (*proprie*) of God when the word is used of inner-trinitarian relations" (324). From "Father," "we learn to approach this mystery as that which is more intimate to us even than we are to ourselves, as source—*the* source—of infinite tenderness and joy" (326).

Second, the Son is the divine one into whom "the whole creation . . . is being progressively transformed (Romans 8:19–25)" (113).

Third, the Holy Spirit is the "enabler and incorporator of that desire in creation—that which *makes* the creation divine" (114).

[212] With God's divine attribute of desire and the incorporative model in mind, I am now positioned to see how Coakley interprets (1) human desires and (2) the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to creatures' desires.

[213] Fellipe do Vale summarizes Coakley's definition of gender: "[G]ender is fundamentally a desire" and "liable to transformation." Fellipe do Vale, *Gender as Love: A Theological Account of Human Identity, Embodied Desire, and Our Social* Worlds (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), 144, 153. Do Vale responds to Coakley's definition with "a Frankfurt-style critique," incorporating Harry G. Frankfurt's moral psychology to argue that "desire is not adequate to ground all the moves Coakley makes; something more robust is necessary." Do Vale, 154–55, citing Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 10; Frankfurt, *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155. See do Vale's discussion in do Vale, 145–60.

[214] The triune God's nature functions "as both the source and goal of human desires." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 6.

[215] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 10.

[216] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 2.

[217] Levering expounds Coakley's proposed solution: "[A]n analysis of desire will lead us to ascend beyond embodied sexual desire (without thereby negating its goodness) and to recognize that when we desire, we desire union with the Good, with Beauty itself." Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 24.

[218] By Coakley's lights, the problem cannot be desire *per se*; ridding a creature's natural inclination to desire and love cannot solve the issue of sin.

This leads to the second point: the role of the Holy Spirit in disentangling creatures' desires and remedying the human being's distorted love within an incorporative model.[219] Coakley theorizes that constructing a pneumatology through a prayer-based approach properly engages the Holy Spirit.[220] Epistemologically, during contemplation, the Holy Spirit purges and redirects the morally distorted impulses, and humans grow to recognize the entanglement of sexual desires with a desire for God.[221] Coakley believes that Romans 8 most clearly teaches her model of communion—deep praying in the Holy Spirit—with the triune God.

The Holy Spirit in Romans 8

In contrast to the linear, hierarchal model in Johannine and Lukan literature that elevates the Father-Son relation, Coakley believes Pauline writing outlines a "Spirit-leading approach to the Trinity,"[222] especially in Romans 8.[223] By her estimation, the

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[219] Desire is naturally good, but the Holy Spirit works to propel creatures toward divine union and chasten "human lust" that possess, abuses, and controls. Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 15. The Holy Spirit *qua* God works to allure, delight, and inflame in his propulsion of divine, Trinitarian desire (13).

For creatures, the Holy Spirit's outward love exists as "the vibrant point of contact and entry into the flow of this divine desire," and the Holy Spirit "is the constant overflow of the life of God into creation" (24). As Butner summarizes Coakley's explanation: "The Spirit is not the first rung on the ladder but the harness that ensures safe profession to the heights of our presence before the Father." Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 214, citing Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 133, 140, 142.

[220] The early church's neglect of an existing prayer-based approach to access "the workings of the divine" results in an orthodox view of the Trinity that lacks maturation of spiritual, ascetical, sexual, and social considerations. Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 6. Traditional Trinitarianism at large left this neglect uncorrected. Without developing a pneumatology and creating a place for prayer in the Holy Spirit, the church could not have adequately solved problems regarding human beings' sexuality—that is, sexual desire and desire for God (25).

[221] In prayer, the Holy Spirit transforms and intensifies humans' misdirected longings so that they may rightly desire God, the ultimate object of creaturely affection.

[222] Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 126; cf. Coakley, "Why Three? Some Further Reflections on the Origins of the Doctrine of the Trinity," in *The Making and Remaking of Christian Doctrine: Essays in Honour of Maurice Wiles*, ed. Sarah Coakley and David A. Pailin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 44.

[223] Coakley references Athanasius as a historical figure who outlined a type of incorporative model of the Trinity from Romans 8. See Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 135–39.

Holy Spirit leads the pray-er—the person who prays—through ecstatic experiences in the act of praying.[224]

As a whole, Romans 8:9–30 encapsulates "the co-operative action of the praying Christian with the energizing promptings of the 'indwelling' Holy Spirit."[225] In verses 26–27, Paul highlights how the pray-er experiences the Spirit by virtue of praying, a crucial point in Coakley's argument. Rather than subordinating the Holy Spirit's divinity and work to a mere "metaphorical naming of the Father's outreach to Christians," Coakley deciphers the Holy Spirit's hypostatic distinction.[226]

The human being's ecstatic prayer is precisely the experiential basis that permits them to observe the work of the Holy Spirit. Identifying the Holy Spirit's work in salvation "hypostatizes"[227] the Holy Spirit.[228] Coakley's project simultaneously rids the Trinity of hierarchicalism and hypostatizes the Holy Spirit as a divine person who works ecstatically in the pray-er.

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[224] Paul provides his "analysis of prayer in Romans 8 [that] notably involves . . . a certain loss of control to the *leading* experiential force of the Spirit." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 126. Coakley further lists two points of analysis: "(ii) and entry into a realm beyond words; and (iii) the striking use of a (female) 'birth-pangs' metaphor to describe the yearning of creation for its 'glorious liberty.'" I limit my attention to the first point.

[225] In this view, "what the 'Trinity' *is* is the graced ways of God with creation, alluring and conforming that creation into the life of the 'Son.'" Coakley, "Why Three?," 37.

[226] Coakley, "Why Three?," 37.

[227] Coakley, "Why Three?," 30–31, 48. Coakley avers, "Here, if I am right, is the only valid experiential pressure towards hypostatizing the Spirit" (37). "In sum," Christopher Holmes applauds Coakley for bringing out "the hypostatic particularity and uniqueness of the Spirit by highlighting Romans 8:26–27 . . . in relation to the life of the believer." Christopher R. J. Holmes, *The Holy Spirit*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 35–36. Butner highlights the Spirit's work of sanctification in any adopted "as beloved sons and daughters" in Coakley's incorporative model. Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 215. On the Holy Spirit's consubstantiality grounded in inseparable operations, Butner cites Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 207.

[228] When the Holy Spirit radically transforms pray-ers, they properly submit to the Holy Spirit's work and shed incorrect impressions of hierarchy and rank among the Trinitarian persons. In a person's "ecstatic participation of the Spirit," the Holy Spirit receives proper attention as the Spirit answers reflexively to the Father "in and through the pray-er." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 322, 287.

Put negatively, theologians who forsake a prayer-based approach and opt for a linear model lack the necessary "pressure" to conceive an accurate account of the Trinity and subsequently subordinate the Holy Spirit. This drives Coakley's construction of a transformational experience—"a sort of answering of God to God in and through the one who prays" (Coakley, "Why Three?," 37)—from Romans 8. Paul construes the Holy Spirit "as actually catching up the created realm into the life of God." Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 14–15.

Response to Coakley

In this second section, I respond to Coakley's interpretation of Romans 8 and the hypostatization of the Holy Spirit in four steps: (1) a description of the *a se* Holy Spirit as the third in the eternal *taxis*; (2) an assessment of desire in God; (3) an amendment to Coakley's description of the Holy Spirit and desire; (4) an interpretation of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8. I will take cues from Coakley's emphasis on affirming the Holy Spirit's divinity. A classical model of the Trinity provides a more satisfactory interpretation of the triune God's self-revelation of his processional life in the Holy Spirit's application of the Son's atonement.

The *A Se* Holy Spirit Is Third in the Eternal *Taxis*

By affirming God's aseity, one confesses that God enjoys the triune life of God. John Webster links the doctrine of the Trinity with the notion of God's aseity because God's perfect life is the relations: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[229] More specific to Coakley's concerns, the *a se* Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, enjoys the eternal lively plenitude of God's being.[230] It would be theologically irresponsible to minimize the Holy Spirit—or de-hypostatize, to follow Coakley's verbiage—in any model of God.[231] The Bible teaches the Holy Spirit is God. The Trinitarian persons are *a se* because each has and is the divine essence.[232] Thus, each divine person is God, and I reject any notion of inferiority within the Trinity. An immutable, eternal ordering of the persons is not an affirmation of one's ontological rank

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[229] For God, enjoying the fullness of life in himself *is* to exist in Trinity. John Webster, *God without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *God and the Works of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2016), 20. The "existence in the personal internal activities of God" is the divine persons' relations with each other.

[230] Polanus, *Axiom* 13. See chapter 6 for my discussion on divine aseity.

[231] Affirmations devoted to orthodox Trinitarianism caution us from de-hypostatizing the Holy Spirit within any model of the triune God.

[232] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.1; 14.3; 14.4; cf. 1.

or inferiority in divinity;[233] the Third Person is consubstantial with the First and Second. In sum, I am cognizant of Coakley's concerns about under-appreciating God the Holy Spirit. However, I believe a robust affirmation of the triune God's aseity solves Coakley's concern in a manner that better coheres with the biblical information of the Trinitarian persons' eternal relations.

Desire in God

The immediate question is whether divine desire exists in God.[234] My *a priori* assumption is that God's inner life provides a logical basis for interpreting God's self-revelation.[235] As such, Coakley's desire to locate desire in the divine life is admirable.

However, I question Coakley's definition of divine *eros*.[236] In his response to divine desire in Coakley's project, Matthew Levering identifies Thomas Aquinas's inclusion of God's desire in Aquinas' discussion of God's goodness. God's goodness is related to and yet distinct from desire, properly speaking: "To be good belongs pre-

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[233] Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7; cf. 14.4; 14.6.

[234] If desire is a divine attribute, then that could entail a human capacity. Alternatively, if desire is not a divine attribute, is it possible for creatures to desire? If this is possible, what is the ontological reason for creaturely desire? In relation to divine desire and human desire, there are two conditions that can cause a total of four possible outcomes. First, desire is a divine attribute; therefore, desire is a human attribute. Second, desire is a divine attribute; therefore, desire is not a human desire. Third, desire is not divine attribute; therefore, desire is a human attribute. Fourth, desire is not a divine attribute; therefore, desire is not a human desire. Coakley argues the first option. I will argue the third option.

[235] Responsible theology ought to begin with considering God *in se* before moving on to consider all things in relation to God, as Webster adjures. Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:4. When attributing perfections to creatures, we take our cues from God's inner life. The logic behind Coakley's quest for divine desire is thus: if God *in se* desires, then human beings, who belong to a lower order of being, are created to desire in an analogical manner (N.B.: Coakley prefers to use participation when describing rational creations' yearning and desiring). Traditionally, speech about God is analogical rather than univocal or equivocal. The Creator fashioned human beings after the divine image. As such, human capacity may include reflecting God's communicable attributes. Coakley does not make this argument, distinguishing God's communicable and incommunicable attributes. I only mean to extrapolate from her ideas and explore her position charitably.

[236] Coakley's insight to retrieve God's *eros* from Pseudo-Dionysius is uncommon in the tradition. Divine desire, per Coakley, is not a classical attribute of God. It does not necessarily follow that *eros* is or is not rightly understood to be God's divine attribute. I only intend to identify the uncommon notion of *eros* in the tradition and Coakley's unique argument.

eminently to God. For a thing is good according to its desirableness."[237] To use Aquinas's language, human beings are contingent creatures, who desire to attain God's goodness and be perfect like our Creator, the greatest good.[238]

In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas cites Dionysius and clarifies the meaning of God's love with respect to desire.[239] The good and perfect Creator is the object in whom creatures most desire to participate.[240] Aquinas's distinction between desire and love solves a critical problem that God's *eros* presents in Coakley's *theologié totale.* Desire, Levering expounds, "implies lack of a good."[241] As such, "desire can be attributed to God only metaphorically."[242] Even though Coakley does not posit a lack within God, nevertheless, I believe the connotation of lack, even when used as a metaphor, does not secure the theological mileage for which Coakley hopes to gain.

Instead, Aquinas finds a superior way to justify the innate creaturely desire for our participation in the greatest good, the triune God, who loves but does not desire *in se*. "[D]ivine goodness and love," Levering reasons, "encompass the ecstatic gifting and

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[237] Aquinas, *ST* I.6 art. 1. Levering perceptively points out that Aquinas names the Third Person "Love" and "Gift" because these proper names encapsulate the idea that Coakley and Dionysius are attempting to identify in God. Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 36.

[238] Creatures are the effect of the agent. God, the agent, is the Creator.

[239] Aquinas, *ST* I.6 art. 1. In Scheeben's analysis of God's attributes, he includes Pseudo-Dionysius's notion of God's circular divine love; see Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 341–43. Scheeben maintains that "God's love is an eminently ecstatic . . . [that is, an] outgoing love . . . that God, by virtue of His good pleasure in His superabundant goodness, allows His love, and with His love His goodness, to overflow *ad extra*" (342). Scheeben helpfully discusses Pseudo-Dionysius's circle of divine love by beginning with God and "descending to the creature." God's ecstatic love seems to be a concept reserved for God's work *ad extra*.

[240] Pseudo-Dionysius's idea of a circular movement completes when divine love leads "creatures to God as to their final goal and end and uniting them with Him as the highest good." Scheeben, *Doctrine About God*, 342.

[241] Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 19.

[242] Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 19. If desire is attributed to God non-metaphorically, "then God could not be supremely actual love and the center of all desire." Levering cites Aquinas, *ST* I.10 art. 1. This would undermine Coakley's pursuit of placing God as the ultimate object of creaturely desires.

selfless outpouring that Dionysius names by means of 'desire.'"[243] God's divine perfection of infinite love, whereby he enjoys the plenitude of blessedness in himself, sources God's act of creation—the overflow of God's abundant life of love creates.[244] The traditional attribution of goodness and love to God better specify why human beings come from God and subsequently return to God.[245]

Moreover, the doctrine of appropriation teaches that the Holy Spirit, according to the classic taxonomy of the Trinitarian persons, brings pray-ers back to God, the ultimate object of creatures' right desires.[246] In response to God's love, creatures seek God's love, or God himself, as the fundamental object of their *telos*. The tradition attributes Christian "sanctification to the Holy Spirit" because the Trinitarian persons' appropriated works are sorted, so to speak, according to the eternal *taxis*.[247]

The Holy Spirit and Desire

Coakley's aversion to the traditional definition of the divine processions and the linear model as a whole prevents her from satisfactorily answering my two-fold question posed earlier.[248] My response follows Fred Sanders's procession-mission

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[243] Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 19.

[244] So Webster: "God . . . is in himself an inexhaustible fountain of life; [therefore, he can and does bestow] life in limitless generosity." Webster, *God without Measure*, 1:135.

[245] "The aspect of good and of desirableness belong to Him." Aquinas, *ST* I.6 art. 1.

[246] Butner defines appropriation: "Attributing a divine attribute or action to the divine person with whom one most closely associates it. The term comes from the Latin *ad* + *proprium*, 'to draw toward the proper.'" Butner, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, 222. Adonis Vidu offers a definition that incorporates God's inseparable operations in creation. He posits, "[T]he principle holds that although such [economic] works [of the Trinity] are common to all Trinitarian persons[,] certain works are appropriated to certain persons. Such appropriation does not indicate any unique causality of that particular person but that this or that particular work—or particular effect, to be more precise—manifests this Trinitarian person rather than that one." Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 280.

[247] Cf. Polanus, *Axiom* 14.7.

[248] That is, why was the Son sent on his visible mission, culminating in his atonement, and, why does the Holy Spirit's invisible mission follow the Son's? Holmes asks a similar question in his assessment of Coakley's project: "[W]hat *qualifies* the Spirit to do what the Spirit does"? In a classical fashion, Holmes suggests we follow Aquinas's argument: "[T]he immanent processions ground and are expressed in the mission of Son and Spirit." Holmes, *The Holy Spirit*, 39.

theology. The divine missions (1) reveal the eternally ordered processions within the linear model of the Trinity, and (2) provide the *ratio*, or reason, for the Holy Spirit's work in rightly reordering Christians' desire for God.

The Trinitarian Taxis in the Linear Model

Although I dissent from Coakley's notion of divine *eros* in God, whereby each Trinitarian person functions as the source of the other persons, I believe the persons are eternally in opposed relations, and each relation constitutes the mutually opposed persons.[249] The traditional *taxis* within the procession-mission schema aids my interpretation of the divine missions as "God's self-revelation"[250] or "God's self-communication,"[251] as Sanders avers, of God's triune life within the context of Scripture's storyline.[252] Adonis Vidu calls the procession-mission formula "God's self-manifestation in redemptive history."[253] The Second Person is eternally from the Father, and the Third is eternally from the Father and the Son. As such, God reveals his eternal processional life in this ordered way: the Son's divine mission precedes the Holy Spirit's divine mission to the church. Moreover, the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work logically depends on the Son's, and God's processional life gives us the *ratio* to explain why "we find the Spirit [in Christ's humanity], who writes the law upon our new hearts, hearts of flesh."[254]

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[249] The Trinitarian persons necessarily and eternally depend, so to speak, on the other two persons to constitute one another accordingly.

[250] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 199.

[251] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 16.

[252] The logic of the temporal mission coordinates with God's inner life. Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 47.

[253] Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 6.

[254] "The port of entry for our return" to the Father, the principle without principle, "is precisely the humanity of Christ. In this humanity, . . . we have all the benefits of salvation." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 47.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit Sanctifies Christians' Desires in His Divine Mission

I agree with Coakley's demand to hypostatize the Holy Spirit as the divine person whom the Christian (pray-er) experiences first. "The works of God whereby grace is made effectual unto us"[255] is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, who "breaks" and "disentangles" a morally distorted human nature.[256] The Trinity fulfills Christians' desires, and the Holy Spirit shapes our volition to desire God in his divine mission.

One reason to uphold this traditional view of the Holy Spirit's love-shaped procession and mission is that it reveals the person of the Holy Spirit and his mode of subsistence to creatures.[257] Love governs the shape of the Holy Spirit's invisible mission to the Christian soul, and pray-ers receive a share in the Holy Spirit's distinct personal property.[258] Love imparts the created gift of love to creatures, which elevates their affection for God.

Compared to Coakley's incorporative model, the classic procession-mission schema interpreted with the linear Trinitarian *taxis* provides a more coherent *ratio* for the biblical data of God's intra-Trinitarian relations and his ordered triune work in salvation. We hypostatize the Holy Spirit when we affirm Love is the divine person who is eternally from the Father and the Son and sanctifies human beings so that creatures may participate in the divine life.

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[255] John Owen, *Pneumatologia*, vol. 3 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (1850–1853; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1981), 93.

[256] Stated differently, Christian sanctification is a divine work efficiently caused by the triune God, the *principium a quo*, while the work terminates on the Holy Spirit.

[257] Vidu claims that God truly reveals the divine persons in the missions for "in the missions, we are given a taste of the very life of God himself. Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 60.

[258] "The [divine] persons," Vidu suggests, "leave an imprint upon the believer, in knowledge and love." Vidu, *The Divine Missions*, 65. Elsewhere, Vidu contends, "The Holy Spirit is given to us in his hypostatic uniqueness as the end term of a relation to which we are elevated and disposed by the created effect of love. . . . In other words, love is the form in our soul through which we are disposed to enjoy God and the third person specifically." Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, 283.

The Holy Spirit in Romans 8

In this fourth and final step, I identify three theological ideas for which Coakley's project does not satisfactorily account.[259] I aim to demonstrate classical theism's approach to addressing these three concerns. I believe this solution is more biblically and theologically favorable to Coakley's incorporative model because the procession-mission schema better explains why the Holy Spirit's work in Romans 8 necessarily depends on Christ's (the second Adam's) work.[260] At the same time, this approach satisfies Coakley's concerns.

The Problem of Sin

I agree with Coakley's understanding of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in Adam's descendants. However, humans require the Holy Spirit to disentangle their broken desires because of sin—a problem that concerns Paul in Romans. When reading Romans 8 with a procession-mission theology, a solution emerges that (1) resolves the sin problem and (2) accounts for the doctrine of the Trinity in God and creation.

According to a procession-mission theology, the Third Person's invisible mission described in Romans 8 depends on the Second Person's visible mission. Christ's death on the cross atones for the sin of those in Adam, and the Holy Spirit then applies the Son's atoning work to humans and transforms desires. When Coakley's explanation of Romans 8 eliminates the divine persons' eternal *taxis* to hypostatize the Holy Spirit, she loses the *ratio* (God's processional life) behind the logical and temporal priority of the Son's visible mission.

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[259] Following Coakley's exegesis of Romans 8, I likewise believe that Paul illuminates the Holy Spirit's divinity and work in salvation. However, I argued that the Holy Spirit adopts human beings into God's family based on Christ's work. See chapter 6 for my biblical interpretation and theological understanding of Romans 8.

[260] One may refer to this as a Protestant notion of union with Christ. Due to a limitation of space, I am unable to develop this doctrine fully in this chapter, but the result of Christians' union results in the following three points.

From the perspective of the problem of sin, Romans 8 requires the Son's atonement. When the chapter is placed within the larger context of the corpus, the Son's visible mission must logically precede the Holy Spirit's divine mission.[261] The eternal divine Son assumes a human nature to atone for sin. God credits Christ's righteousness to the sinner's account to meet God's righteous demand for sin against his law.[262]

From the perspective of the Trinitarian persons in Romans 8, the Son is sent before the Holy Spirit because the Son is the second divine person and the Holy Spirit is the third. A reason the Son atones for sin and acquires salvation is because he is the eternal Second Person. Subsequently, the Third Person, by virtue of being third, is sent to indwell Christians. The Holy Spirit gives new covenant members new hearts to love God.

The Covenantal Category of Obedient Sonship

God promises his old covenant people "the complete forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:34). . . . God announces that in the new covenant, sin will be remembered 'no more' (Jer. 31:34), which entails the full payment of it."[263] In a revealed yet concealed way,[264] old covenant Israel anticipated a future work of (1) the Son's divine mission and (2) the Holy Spirit's divine mission.

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[261] At the heart of Romans, Paul's interest is to explain how sinners can be made righteous before a holy God. Romans's central argument is that sinners are justified by God's grace, through faith. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 34.

[262] Stephen J. Wellum avers that the Son's atoning sacrifice merits "the exaltation of the incarnate Son to rule over creation and ensure[s] the sanctification of his people [Heb 10:12–14]." Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 225.

[263] Stephen J. Wellum, *The Person of Christ: An Introduction*, SSST (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 47. God's people in the Old Testament longed for a complete renewal of their fallen human nature; cf. Jeremiah 31 prophecies of "the coming of David's greater Son, the work of the Spirit (Isa. 11; Eek. 36:25–27; Joel 2:28–32), the new creation (Isa. 65:17), and God's saving work among the nations." For further reading, Wellum cites Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 487–765; see Wellum, *The Person of Christ*, 47.

[264] Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation*, 199.

Readers of Romans now recognize God's promise to send the divine Son because only Christ perfectly recapitulates where Adam failed. Stephen Wellum asserts, "the *imago Dei*" begins with Adam and "moves to its own typological fulfillment in and through two other types"[265]—"son/sonship" and "the Adam-last Adam connection."[266] Adam and Eve's prophesied offspring (Gen 3:15) emerges as a better type of Adam: Christ, the second Adam, loves and obeys God perfectly. When Christ is sent on his visible mission, he proves himself as the promised "image-son-Adam" antitype. Christ flawlessly obeyed God's law. Now, Christ functions "as the last Adam and covenantal head who redeems a sinful people to share in his own sonship (Eph. 1:3–7), conforming them into his own image (Rom. 6:4; 8:29; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), and bringing them into his own obedience (John 15:1–11; 1 Cor. 1:30)."[267] Under the new covenant, Christ's obedient work "in life and in death" is for us.[268]

Furthermore, God's promise to send the Holy Spirit in his invisible mission brings God's people into true communion with himself and fellow Christians.[269] The Son's visible mission followed by the Holy Spirit's invisible mission (and in this order) makes communion with God possible. In Adam, human beings possess distorted desires; in Christ, the Holy Spirit graciously transforms and elevates one's nature such that humans enjoy God in glory.

I sympathetically acknowledge Coakley's awareness of the danger in perceiving the Holy Spirit as an afterthought to the Father-Son dyad.[270] Nevertheless,

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[265] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 117.

[266] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 118.

[267] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 130.

[268] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 224.

[269] Adam and his progeny hoped in God's promise in Genesis 3:15. Wellum, *The Person of Christ*, 47. John 14–17 describes the Paraclete's unifying work in the church.

[270] I admire Coakley's innovative reading of the Holy Spirit in the pray-er from Romans 8 with the intention to give the Holy Spirit a place of prominence in the Trinity with respect to salvation. Perhaps

Coakley's account misses an internal reality in God that helps explain the logic of God's work in creation.[271] The Holy Spirit is not relegated to "a *mere* 'third'" position due to his alleged unimportant work or the centrality of the Father-Son dyad. Rather, the antecedent of Christian communion with God depends on the obedient, covenantal Son's atonement, which the Holy Spirit applies. Moreover, the linear model identifies a "supreme fittingness," per Aquinas,[272] for the divine Son to assume a human nature and become the obedient, covenantal Son in redemption history.

By jettisoning the linear model and the classical procession-mission framework, one wonders why the Father is never sent, why the Son died, and why the Holy Spirit revivifies and indwells Christians.[273] Ultimately, the cost of reversing the *taxis* in Coakley's incorporative model over-demands and leaves the reader with a list of unintelligible, uninterpreted divine works in creation.[274] I am unwilling to part with the biblical category of covenantal sonship, which God reveals in Scripture, including Romans 8, and on which salvation hinges. The linear model more satisfactorily upholds

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Coakley notices a tendency of Christians to focus on the First and Second Persons and to relegate the Holy Spirit as "other." Such an accusation would not be new and perhaps warranted in evangelical circles.

For example, Gregg R. Allison published *God, Gift, and Guide: Knowing the Holy Spirit* (Brentwood, TN: B&H, 2023) with this corrective in mind to encourage the church to give due worship to God the Holy Spirit (and the Father and Son). From sidelining the Third Person, Coakley draws a parallel experience for women, who are arguably marginalized and forgotten, while men (like the Father and Son), are elevated into prominent positions of power. I am unable to attend to these specific concerns in this chapter.

[271] Again, I note that Coakley's incorporative model lacks the *ratio* for the biblical priority of the Son's visible mission in fulfilling the covenantal category of the obedient Son.

[272] Dominic Legge, cites Aquinas, *ST* III.3 art. 8. Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 62.

[273] We lose our ability to interpret God's *opera ad extra*. Another way to understand the Trinitarian *taxis* as the *ratio* for the divine missions is to consider why the Father sends and is never sent. Classically, we answer: the Father does not have an origin and not because he is a more highly ranked divinity than the Son and Holy Spirit. That is, the divine persons are consubstantial.

[274] A peril includes the loss of the covenantal sonship category. At the very least, abandoning this type and antitype leaves us with an unsatisfactory interpretation of Adam's sonship, Christ's obedience as the covenantal Son, and the imputation of Christ's sonship. This typology grounds the Christian adoption into God's family.

the meaning of how God is for us and brings creatures to perfect communion with him again.

The Spirit of Christ

Finally, and more briefly, I recognize the ascended Christ sending his own Spirit to indwell Christians. The Son, with the Father, sends the Holy Spirit to pray-ers in time because the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and Son, his eternal relation of origin. Wellum coherently articulates, "In him [Christ], the eschatological Spirit is poured out, the new creation dawns, and all God's promises are fulfilled."[275] Or, to follow the wording in Romans 8, Christ gives his Spirit to his church because Christ is the mediator of the new covenant: "[E]very member of the new covenant" relates to God "through the universally [distributed] . . . Spirit."[276] Those who are not in Christ do not "enjoy the promised gift of the eschatological Holy Spirit," which is Paul's point in Romans 8:9, and "[a]nyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."[277] Coakley's incorporative model does not satisfactorily explain why Christ gives his Spirit to humans. Conversely, the linear model provides the framework for why Christians—human beings under the covenantal headship of Christ—receive Christ's Spirit, through whom they cry, "Abba, Father," by gracious adoption.

Conclusion on Coakley

Coakley's incorporative approach in her prayer-based model rejects the traditional *taxis* of the three divine persons. Coakley theorizes that Romans 8 presents the Holy Spirit as the divine person who stirs the Christian's affections and draws the Christian to desire God. This gives her precedence to centralize the Holy Spirit's work in

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[275] Wellum, *The Person of Christ*, 48.

[276] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 143.

[277] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 143.

creation, perceive the Holy Spirit as a source of the Father and Son in God's life, and hypostatize the Holy Spirit. Coakley does not lay out her doctrine of the atonement in *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, which focuses on the Trinity. However, by considering the Son's atoning work in my response, I showed that Coakley's theological interpretation of Romans 8 does not sufficiently explain God's work *ad extra*. Coakley's model lacks the satisfactory *ratio* to substantiate how God's processional life as a Trinity of persons provides the logic for the divine persons' work in acquiring and applying salvation by the Son and the Holy Spirit, respectively. Revising God's intra-Trinitarian relations creates issues in how we understand the atonement.

Traditionally, the Holy Spirit's divine mission to indwell Christians is based on Christ's divine mission. The biblical and traditional doctrine of the divine missions depend on the eternal processions and the divine persons' *taxis*. The divine persons' mode of subsistence provides a schema for appropriating God's work in creation: from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. In salvation, Christ acquires righteousness on behalf of other human beings in his visible mission as the obedient, covenantal Son who atones for sins. Then, following the incarnation, the Third Person applies Christ's merit to the church. The Holy Spirit is sent on his invisible mission to the Christian by virtue of the Holy Spirit's personal property as Love, eternally from the Father and the Son. In light of Scripture's storyline, Romans 8 supports the notion of God's self-revelation of his eternally ordered processional life in salvation history.

In this final part of the chapter, I contended that a classical model of the Trinity provides a better explanation for the Holy Spirit's role in applying salvation than Coakley's incorporative model. I argued this thesis in two sections: (1) an outline of Coakley's notions of divine *eros* and hypostatizing the Holy Spirit; (2) a response to Coakley that underscores the wisdom of upholding the classical procession-mission schema to help interpret the triune God's design of creating human beings who inherently desire as a way to bring creation back to himself.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I sought (1) to retrieve the doctrine of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, a doctrine developed in the early church and faithfully confessed in the Western Christian tradition to uphold Scripture's presentation of the Holy Spirit's (a) unity of essence with the triune God and (b) distinct personal property of being spirated by the Father and Son in the plenitude of God's divine life; and (2) to provide a constructive argument for the Holy Spirit's procession based on classical Trinitarianism. This traditional model of the Trinity is superior to contemporary ones that deny a classical view of Spirit's eternal procession because it more consistently coheres with God's revelation of himself in Scripture's redemptive-historical storyline.

Chapter Review

I advanced and defended this thesis in seven chapters.

In chapter 1, I introduced my project.

In chapter 2, I presented historical arguments concerning the Holy Spirit's procession from patristic doctors, medieval scholastic authors, and Reformed orthodox scholars, with particular attention given to the church fathers' writings from the Latin West and Greek East. The historical support for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession within orthodoxy underscores its classical nature.

In chapter 3, I gave an account of classical theism's explanation for biblical support for the Holy Spirit's procession. I focused on New Testament passages that teach about the Holy Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son. The Farewell Discourse in John

14–17 served as a central text as I contend for the Western notion that the Father and the Son are the Holy Spirit's eternal principle. I follow Augustine's hermeneutical rules for interpreting the Son's eternal relation to the Father and applying them, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son. Based on John 17, I argued that a proper name for the Third Person is Love.

In chapter 4, I offered a biblical, theological account of Thomas Aquinas's theory of the Holy Spirit's four visible missions: the dove at Christ's baptism, the cloud at Christ's transfiguration, Christ's breath to the apostles, and the tongues of fire at Pentecost. By strictly adhering to a divine processions-missions schema, I trace how the divine missions reveal the Third Person's unique mode of subsistence.

In chapter 5, I constructed a theological interpretation of the Holy Spirit's divinity and unique principle of individuation in God. I transposed Amandus Polanus's eighteen axioms on the Trinity to fittingly apply to the Holy Spirit. As a significant theological figure who consolidated orthodox teaching during the period of Reformed Scholasticism, I submit that Polanus's dogmatic writing helps clarify contemporary theological discourse on the Holy Spirit's procession.

In chapter 6, I articulated a biblical and theological interpretation of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession and thirdness in the triune God based on Romans 8, which followed a traditional Thomistic concept of God's life as a circular movement. The Holy Spirit's procession can help us understand how the *a se*, omnipotent God exists in a mixed relation with creatures. I argued that the eternal processions are the *ratio* for God's *opera ad extra.* The Holy Spirit's appropriated work of sanctification or divinization depends on the Son's visible mission in the incarnation. The Holy Spirit's procession in the form of love shapes and guides the Christian's *reditus* to God.

In chapter 7, I interacted with revisionist proposals by Katherine Sonderegger, Elizabeth A. Johnson, and Sarah Coakley against the traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit. I depended on Polanus's axioms as a representation of the classical

view. Each contemporary theologian's project served as an interlocutor and provided building blocks, so to speak, for a more robust definition of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. I showed that a classical view of the Holy Spirit's mode of subsistence in the divine essence provides a better explanation for how the Holy Spirit brings God's covenant people back to their creaturely origin and appointed *telos*.

Research Implications and Areas of Future Research

I summarize the implications of my research and suggest potential areas of future research.

In my survey of the historical sources, John Calvin showed reluctance to affirm the procession of the Holy Spirit, cautioning against using extra-biblical language to describe God. Future research might trace Calvin's position on this doctrine to present-day evangelicalism. It surprised me to find contemporary theologians reject the doctrine.[1] In other words, in my project, I noted a need for retrieving the doctrine of the Spirit's procession; future historical research may supply the answers to why this decline happened. Future historical research can place the reformed tradition in conversation with the Thomistic tradition. By focusing on the writing of theologians like John Owen, we can gain greater nuance and clarity on the issues of justification and sanctification with Aquinas's teaching on the divine missions, a created effect, habitual grace, and sanctifying grace.

My focus in the project is on the Western confession of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession. This book-length treatment of the doctrine serves to provide the relevant information from a historical, biblical, and systematic perspective. A project that mirrors this study from an Eastern perspective would benefit academia. There are

[1] I have in mind Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007); John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

projects that focus on the historical development of the single procession view and constructive accounts of the Eastern view. However, to my knowledge, there are no contemporary resources that cover the single procession view from a historical, biblical, and systematic perspective. Such an introductory and comprehensive work would benefit academia.

Additionally, it is unclear to me how an Eastern view of the Holy Spirit's procession understands the divine mission or the procession-mission schema. Posed as a question, what is the Eastern version of interpreting God's inner life through the divine missions? If the missions are proper to the divine persons and reveal the divine persons' relations to creatures, research could pursue a fascinating comparison between an Eastern and a Western view of the divine missions.[2]

The procession-mission schema articulates at least two strict sequences. First, any appearance or manifestation of God before the Son's visible mission cannot be a divine mission. Before the incarnation, Scripture presents theophanies, which "are anticipations, foretelling, or *prolepses* of the missions."[3] Second, any work the Holy Spirit carries out in human life is ordered to the human's spiritual life. If the Holy Spirit draws a person to God prior to conversion, this work is appropriated to the Holy Spirit. If the indwelling Holy Spirit draws a Christian to God, this is proper to the Holy Spirit and thus results from the invisible mission. The type of work, whether appropriated or proper to the Holy Spirit, may be named using the same word, such as sanctification. However, the mechanism by which we interpret this work depends on how one views the work.

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[2] Adonis Vidu's chapter, "The Spirit's Procession Revealed in the Spirit's Mission: An Augustinian Account," in *On Classical Trinitarianism: Retrieving the Nicene Doctrine of the Triune God*, ed. Matthew M. Barrett (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2024), is a fantastic help to this topic. See pp. 489–503, especially pp. 497–503, for his critical analysis of the Eastern Orthodox view. In modern Orthodox theology, with respect to the Holy Spirit's divine mission, the divine mission reveals the Holy Spirit's "energetic manifestation, his repose upon the Son" (Vidu, 500). Further research can build on Vidu's introductory work.

[3] Adonis Vidu, *The Divine Missions: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021), 12; Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 348–49.

From the perspective of appropriation, we appropriate God's one work of sanctification to the Spirit (cf. Rom 15:16) because he is the Third Person in the eternal *taxis*. From the perspective of a divine mission, the Spirit sanctifies because he imparts created gifts in the shape of his procession (by way of love) to elevate the Christian's soul and form us into his mode of subsistence, love. Future biblical studies research can explore the Holy Spirit's love-shaped procession and mission. My New Testament biblical survey was limited to the Gospels, Acts, Romans, and Hebrews. I believe the Pauline and general epistles offer more support for a Christian's share in the Holy Spirit's distinct personal property. A biblical studies approach can survey 2 Thessalonians 3:5, 1 John 2:5, and 1 John 2:15 as other potential places in Scripture to find "God" in the subjective genitive. This exegetical work could replace Augustine's interpretation of Romans 5:5 and support his argument for Love as a proper name for the Third Person. Theologically, future research can explore the relationship between an inseparable operation and an appropriated work with the Holy Spirit's invisible mission.

Vidu's *The Divine Missions* is a contemporary book-length treatment of the doctrine at an introductory level. A more advanced monograph with biblical exegesis and historical nuances may help theologians navigate the doctrine of Holy Spirit and Son's respective invisible missions. This resource should include diagrams to help readers visualize the ways a divine mission and an inseparable operation relate.

In my response to Sarah Coakley's incorporative model of the Trinity, I focused on the divine missions, the *ratio* for the Holy Spirit's appropriated work in creation and denying hierarchicalism between the divine persons. I was unable to respond to Coakley's comments on the prayer-based approach moving pray-ers beyond the gender binary and naming the First Person "Father." Future research may build on Fellipe do

Vale's work by addressing Coakley's concerns about human sexuality from a classical Trinitarian perspective.[4]

[4] I have in mind Fellipe do Vale, *Gender as Love: A Theological Account of Human Identity, Embodied Desire, and Our Social Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023). Do Vale responds to Coakley's notion of divine desire insofar as it applies to human beings' sexuality and gender. I mean to emphasize what classical Trinitarianism can glean or apply from feminist theology.

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ABSTRACT

RETRIEVING ETERNAL PROCESSION:
A DOGMATIC WESTERN ACCOUNT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S RELATION TO THE FATHER AND THE SON IN THE TRIUNE GOD'S DIVINE LIFE

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In this dissertation, I argue for the necessity of orthodox Christianity (1) to clarify the meaning of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and the Son, and subsequently, because of contemporary denials, (2) to confess the doctrine as classically conceived because the traditional model of the Trinity more consistently coheres with God's revelation of himself in Scripture's redemptive-historical storyline. Chapter 1 introduces this project. In chapter 2, I present historical arguments concerning the Holy Spirit's procession from patristic writers, medieval scholastic authors, and Reformed orthodox scholars. The historical support for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's procession within orthodoxy underscores its classical nature. In chapter 3, I present biblical evidence for the Holy Spirit's eternal procession, focusing on John 14–17. I follow Augustine's hermeneutical rules for interpreting the Son's eternal relation to the Father and applying them, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son. In chapter 4, I offer a theological interpretation of the Holy Spirit's four visible missions surrounding Christ's incarnation, originally identified by Thomas Aquinas. By strictly adhering to a divine processions-missions schema, I trace how the divine missions reveal the Third Person's unique mode of subsistence. In chapter 5, I transpose Amandus Polanus's (1561–1610) eighteen axioms on the Trinity and apply the axioms fittingly to the Holy Spirit's procession. As a significant theological figure who consolidated

orthodox teaching during the period of Reformed Scholasticism, I submit that Polanus's dogmatic writing helps clarify contemporary theological discourse on the Holy Spirit's procession. In chapter 6, I explain Aquinas's view of the Holy Spirit's thirdness within a framework of God's life as a circular movement based on Romans 8. In chapter 7, I present revisionist proposals of the divine persons' relations in God and argue for a traditional model for the procession of the Holy Spirit with Polanus as my representative voice of classical theism. I contend that the doctrine of God's processions as historically confessed in the Western tradition better preserves God's singular, undivided divine nature and the Trinity of divine persons.

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