

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE MUTUAL LOVE OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

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IN TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY St. Augustine is renowned for his doctrine of the *filioque*: the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single principle. This doctrine gave to Western trinitarian thought and indeed to Western theology in general a distinctive stamp, which despite the upheavals of its history has remained with it ever since. Alongside the *filioque*, however, Augustine offered an alternative way of conceiving the Trinity, in which the Holy Spirit appears as the mutual love of Father and Son, the so-called mutual-love theory. Though it is less well known and indeed held suspect by some Western theologians, this second way has always managed to keep alive in the West, and has even found sympathetic echoes in Eastern Orthodoxy, despite the fact that in general the East has not been well disposed to Augustine's idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of divine love. Indeed, the hope has been expressed that this theory will prove to be the key to full agreement between East and West on the procession of the Spirit.¹

In my own work on the Trinity as both immanent and economic the mutual-love theory has figured prominently.² In my view it provides the only correct way for understanding and expressing, in the context of the Trinity, the data of "ascending" theology, i.e. the return to God of Jesus and of ourselves with him. In this theology the *filioque* and the Eastern ways of formulating the procession of the Spirit, i.e. the *per filium* and monopatrism, rightly apply only to the data of "descending" theology, i.e. to the outward movement from God which results in the mission of Christ and the offer of grace to us.

In view of these considerations it is all the more important that the mutual-love theory itself be soundly based. This raises the question: How well founded from the methodological viewpoint is this theory? And if its foundation is not sufficiently secure, what, if anything, can be done

¹ Cf. Edward J. Kilmartin, "The Active Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Sanctification of the Eucharistic Elements," *TS* 45 (1984) 245.

² David Coffey, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Faith and Culture, 1979); "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ," *TS* 45 (1984) 466-80; "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," *TS* 47 (1986) 227-50.

to make it so?³ And what further insights into the theory and its application can be gained from this investigation? These are the matters with which I shall deal in this essay.

The essay will have three parts. The first will deal with the mutual-love theory as elaborated by Augustine. As this will uncover a number of shortcomings in his methodology, it will be necessary in the second part to return to Scripture to discover the true basis of the theory. The third part will then address the question of the full-fledged theory and its place in trinitarian thought today.

THE MUTUAL-LOVE THEORY IN AUGUSTINE

On the subject of the *filiouque* Augustine shows some awareness of the importance of correct theological method for guiding the theologian to trustworthy conclusions. He realizes that it is only by working from, and being controlled by, what is found directly revealed in Scripture that the theologian can hope to arrive at reliable new knowledge of God.

Nor can we say that the Holy Spirit does not proceed also from the Son, for it is not without reason that the same Spirit is said to be Spirit of both the Father and the Son. Nor do I see what else he intended to signify when he breathed in the face of the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." For that bodily breathing, proceeding from the body with the sensation of bodily touching, was not the substance of the Holy Spirit but a manifestation through a fitting sign that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son.⁴

Admittedly, what we have here is far from a satisfactory methodology by modern standards. Augustine draws a conclusion about the immanent Trinity directly from a material sign, constituted by breathing and words, which was placed by Jesus, though he does not claim for this conclusion the status of a new discovery but rather, from the fact that Jesus names the Holy Spirit, maintains that it must have been explicitly present in Jesus' mind. For Augustine it is new simply in the sense that he has clarified what is conveyed only obscurely in Scripture. He confuses, or makes no distinction between, the economic and the immanent Trinity, or, to put it in another and rather anachronistic way, he regards the immanent Trinity as directly revealed in the New Testament.

Many theologians today would agree with him here but would want to situate between the sign and the immanent Trinity an intermediate reality, the economic Trinity. I would be critical of this. I see the economic Trinity as the *last* step of the argument, the integration of the biblical

³ I touched on this theme in "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit" 475-76, 479-80, but intend to address it here directly and more rigorously.

⁴ *De trinitate* 4, 20 (29) (PL 42, 908).

data with the knowledge of the immanent Trinity that has been extrapolated from them. But the biblical data, while they do not go so far as to embrace either the economic or the immanent Trinity, are more than a mere material sign: they constitute a certain doctrine of the Trinity which cannot be classified as either economic or immanent. For want of a better word, I shall call it the "biblical" doctrine of the Trinity. This is a doctrine in which the Father is Yahweh, called Father by Jesus because of the unique nature of his relationship to Him, a relationship which combines authority with intimacy; a doctrine in which the Son is Jesus, though his Sonship is not yet understood as an ontological reality requiring an incarnation in the metaphysical sense; and a doctrine in which the Holy Spirit appears now impersonally as the spirit, or power, of God, and now as this same power impregnated with the human personality of Jesus, though not yet grasped as a person in his own right. It is from *these* data that the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is inferred by the Church over a period of four centuries, and along with it, by an automatic process of integration, the doctrine of the economic Trinity as the conclusion of this illative process.⁵

It may be thought that Augustine's methodology is left in tatters by this criticism, but not so. It may have been primitive but it was not essentially unsound. At least in regard to the *filioque*, he showed that he realized that theological statements about God must be grounded in what is said directly in Scripture and also that their form is indicated from that source.

It is different, however, when we come to the mutual-love theory. Here we find no serious attempt to argue from Scripture. The one exception I can find is in an early work, *De fide et symbolo*, where Augustine is claiming to be reporting the opinion of other theologians.

This Godhead, then, which they wish to be understood likewise as their [i.e., of the Father and the Son] mutual love and charity, they say is called the Holy Spirit. And this opinion they support by many proofs from the Scriptures, for

⁵ James D. G. Dunn, in his *Christology in the Making* (London: SCM, 1980), reaches, on the basis of critical exegesis, the conclusion that Jn 1:14 is the sole NT text which speaks of the Incarnation in a metaphysical sense (239-47). In my article "The Pre-Existent and Incarnate Word," *Faith and Culture: Contemporary Questions* (Sydney: Faith and Culture, 1983) 62-76, I carry this critical process further and show that even Jn 1:14 does not speak of a metaphysical incarnation, but rather of a change of state or condition on the part of Jesus, who in John's Gospel is thought of as pre-existent. Moreover, it is now generally agreed that, despite the fact that Jn 15:26 (and this text alone in the NT) says that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father," it is not the immanent Trinity that is here spoken of (cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII-XXI* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970] 689). Thus it is clear that the doctrine of the immanent Trinity, though based on the biblical doctrine, is not itself given in the NT.

example, "For the love of God is shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us," and many other such testimonies.⁶

It is hard to see how this text (Rom 5:5) constitutes a proof of Augustine's theory. In the first place, it is concerned with God's relations to us rather than with the immanent Trinity; and secondly, it speaks of the love of God rather than the mutual love of the Father and the Son. It would be churlish to press the first objection against Augustine, considering how early was his place in trinitarian speculation. And perhaps the same should be said of the second objection too, but with the difference that, whereas the first is superable, the second is not. As one reads on from the passage quoted, it is clear that for Augustine the love of God *was* the mutual love of the Father and the Son. It did not occur to him to conceive of it in any other way. But later theology was to distinguish clearly between these two loves. Even if one could show from Scripture that the Holy Spirit is the divine love, that He is also the mutual love of the Father and the Son would still remain to be shown.

Apart from this example, Augustine is content to argue from the *filioque* rather than from Scripture. The argument begins, then, with the assertion that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father. In one form it ends with the statement that the Spirit is the "communion" that exists between them. Between beginning and end there can occur another and quite ingenious way of conceiving the Holy Spirit:

... The Holy Spirit ... is properly called Holy Spirit relatively, since He is referred to both the Father and the Son, because He is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. But the relation is not itself apparent in that name, but it is apparent when He is called the gift of God, for He is the gift of the Father and of the Son, because "He proceeds from the Father," as the Lord says, and because that which the Apostle says, "He who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him," he certainly says of the Holy Spirit. When, therefore, we say the gift of the giver, and the giver of the gift, we speak in both cases relatively in reciprocal reference. Therefore the Holy Spirit is a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son.⁷

To move from the *filioque* to the idea of the Holy Spirit as the communion of the Father and the Son, Augustine here invokes the idea of the Holy Spirit as "gift," the common gift of Father and Son. In principle there is nothing wrong with conceiving the Holy Spirit in this way, though Scripture never says it, and neither does it say directly that Christ gives the Spirit. When Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit as gift,

⁶ *De fide et symbolo* 9, 19 (PL 40, 191).

⁷ *De trinitate* 5, 11 (12) (PL 42, 919).

He is the gift of the Father, not of Christ.⁸ Of the latter it is simply said that he "sends" the Spirit as his own. Presumably, this is because properly speaking the Spirit is only "given" by Him from whom He issues ultimately, i.e. the Father. But if Christ can make the Spirit his own, he too can "give" Him. In showing this from Scripture, Augustine regularly cites Jn 4:7-15, Acts 8:20, Rom 5:5, and Eph 4:7-8. Of these, only the first and the last are relevant, as the others fail even to mention Christ. The Ephesians text has Christ "giving" us "grace," not, therefore, the Holy Spirit, though this may be implied. And the Johannine text has Jesus telling the Samaritan woman of the "living water," later identified in 7:39 as the Holy Spirit, that he "would have given" if asked. However, two qualifications are to be noted: first, the language of giving occurs in the context of giving someone a drink; and secondly, even in this passage (v. 10) the Holy Spirit (probably) is referred to as "the gift of God" (the Father). We can accept Augustine's doctrine of the Spirit as the common gift, but in so doing we should take care not to lose the full import of the clear scriptural doctrine of the Spirit as the gift of God the Father.

In the text quoted, but more clearly in *De trinitate* 5, 15 (16) and 16 (17), Augustine shows awareness that he is speaking of the economic Trinity when he says that the Holy Spirit is the common gift of the Father and the Son, i.e. he is saying that He is their gift *to us*. This raises the question as to whether the Spirit may be called Gift also in the immanent Trinity. Augustine does not address the question thus clearly put, but he does, in the section just referred to, consider whether the Spirit is a gift "eternally" (*sempiternae*), to which he answers in the affirmative. However, this is not the same question, and his answer is not particularly helpful. He argues that, as God is eternally Lord but becomes our Lord only in time, so the Spirit is eternally Gift but becomes gift to us only in time. While this is true, it still only tells us about the Spirit's relation to us and not about His relation to the other two persons in the immanent Trinity, though obviously there has to be an inferential relationship between the two. However, despite the attractive contrast between Giver and Gift, paralleling that between Father and Son, the Holy Spirit cannot be the common gift of the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity. This is because it is of the essence of a gift that it be bestowed gratuitously, whereas all that happens in the immanent Trinity does so with a necessity of nature. Later I shall take up again the question of what is implied for the immanent Trinity by the statement that the Holy Spirit is the common gift of the Father and the Son to us.

In the light of these observations it is possible to say that in the biblical

⁸ Cf. Coffey, *Grace* 158-59.

Trinity the Father and the Son jointly send the Spirit and that therefore in the immanent Trinity He must proceed from them both (this is close to the *filioque*), and this would justify the conclusion that the Spirit, insofar as He is one, must be the communion that exists between them. In my view this is the limit of what can be legitimately deduced, in this direction, from such a statement. (Moving in a different direction, one can, of course, deduce the *filioque*.) We can accept, therefore, Augustine's conclusion that the Holy Spirit is the communion of the Father and the Son, and also, though with qualification, his assertion that He is their common gift to us. But if he is also saying, as so it seems, that the Spirit is the common Gift in the immanent Trinity, we cannot agree with him. However, his imprecision of thought on the distinction of the immanent and the economic Trinity does not permit us to clarify this point further.

In another form Augustine's argument moves from the *filioque* to the idea of communion between Father and Son and from there to the mutual-love theory. Just before the passage quoted above from *De fide et symbolo* he said:

Some, however, have gone so far as to believe that the very communion of the Father and the Son, and, so to speak, their Godhead, which the Greeks call *theotēta*, is the Holy Spirit, so that, since the Father is God and the Son God, the Godhead itself, in which they are united to each other, the former by begetting the Son and the latter by cleaving to the Father, should thereby be constituted equal to Him by whom He is begotten.⁹

The passage then continues as quoted. We observe that the transition from communion to mutual love in the second part of it is made without argument, though, as I noted, an attempt is then made to justify the mutual-love theory from Scripture.

Clearly, Augustine sees no great difference between communion and mutual love. One passes naturally from the former to the latter, and no argument is needed: "Therefore the Holy Spirit, whatever it is, is something common to the Father and the Son. But this communion itself is consubstantial and coeternal; and if it may fitly be called friendship, let it be so called; but it is more aptly called love."¹⁰ Nor is any appeal made to Scripture to justify this conclusion.

In one place toward the end of the *De trinitate* Augustine argues from the mutual-love theory as the given to the existence of communion between the Father and the Son. This shows that by this time the two ideas have become for him practically interchangeable: "And if the love by which the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father ineffably

⁹ *De fide et symbolo* 9, 19 (PL 40, 191).

¹⁰ *De trinitate* 6, 5 (7) (PL 42, 928).

demonstrates the communion of both, what is more suitable than that He should properly be called love who is the Spirit common to both?"¹¹ This passage contains the remarkable reflection that, because He is the communion of the Father and the Son, what the Holy Spirit is called as proper to Himself, they are called in common—in this case, love; but its validity depends on the truth of the mutual-love theory, which is here taken for granted.¹²

In a passage close to the last one in the *De trinitate* we see an inference directly from the *filioque* to the mutual-love theory, without reference to communion. This is explained by the fact that the two ideas have become practically identical for him: "The Holy Spirit, according to the Holy Scriptures, is neither of the Father alone nor of the Son alone, but of both, and so reveals to us the common love with which the Father and the Son love each other,"¹³

In its earliest formulation Augustine felt some obligation to provide scriptural foundation for the mutual-love theory, though he was unable to do this in a satisfactory way. But by the end of the *De trinitate* it had become for him an almost self-evident variation or extension of the *filioque*, and so did not require any justification beyond mere mention. Certainly, no attempt is there made to substantiate it from Scripture. In fact, though, as I shall show, the *filioque* and the mutual-love theory are very different from each other.

In the course of this brief examination we have seen a number of shortcomings in Augustine's theological methodology, some of which are quite serious by present-day standards. However, as it would be both pedantic and unjust to judge him in general by these standards, I shall here concern myself only with the question of whether in his presentation of the mutual-love theory all that is necessary is correction and updating, or whether in his thought the theory lacks all proper foundation and so should be judged to be not proven. It is my contention that the latter alternative is the case.

We do find in Augustine the necessary scriptural foundation for the *filioque*. In brief, if the NT tells us that Jesus sends us as his own the Holy Spirit from the Father, as Augustine is able to assure us it does, then ultimately in the immanent Trinity the Holy Spirit must proceed from the Father and the Son as from a single principle. Further, if the Holy Spirit proceeds as one hypostasis from the Father and the Son, then He must in His person be the communion that exists between them.

¹¹ Ibid. 15, 19 (37) (PL 42, 1086).

¹² "It is not for nothing that He is properly called the Holy Spirit, for since He is common to both, He is properly called that which both are in common."

¹³ *De trinitate* 15, 17 (27) (PL 42, 1080).

However, with this last statement we have left the biblical control behind. It is simply something that we feel reason forces us to say as an extension of the *filioque*. What Scripture has been telling us about hitherto is the outward movement that starts from the Father, is continued, and indeed revealed, in the mission of Christ the Son, and is completed in the mission of the Holy Spirit to us in the Church, *Christus pro nobis*. Here we have what is acknowledged as having become the typical Augustinian emphasis on the unity of God, the one God of the OT who reveals Himself now as Father, now as Son, and now as Holy Spirit, in His "condescending" (and eschatological) intervention in salvation history. The *filioque* is Augustine's way of expressing this vision in the context of what we call the immanent Trinity. The same line is pursued by Rahner, and perhaps to the end of its possible extension, when without being at all modalist he says at the conclusion of his treatise on the Trinity that "the one God subsists in three distinct manners of subsisting."¹⁴ But with Augustine's talk of communion between the Father and the Son we are not on this traditional line. Rather, we are concerning ourselves with a new question, the relationship that exists between Father and Son. The emphasis on unity and continuity has given way to a new emphasis, on duality (of persons) and opposition (their relationship). What we have here is not just a personal model of the Trinity but an interpersonal one. What justification have we from Scripture for talking thus? Until we find such justification, we are not only on new ground, we are on shaky ground from the methodological point of view. And we have already stepped onto it with talk about communion, even though what Augustine says about it seems logically incontrovertible.

We can let pass what Augustine says about communion, but can we do the same with mutual love? Is he justified in practically equating mutual love with communion? I think not. The communion of which he is entitled to speak here is ontological communion. If the Holy Spirit proceeds as a hypostasis from the Father and the Son, it is insofar as He is a hypostasis that He is the communion between them. The Father and the Son commune in the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit. Methodologically, one may go no further without more evidence as it were from below. It is possible for human persons to commune ontologically without communing in love. The same may not be true of divine persons, but this does not by itself justify the conclusion that it is the *property* of the Holy Spirit that He be the mutual love of Father and Son. What Augustine's principle that the proper names of the Holy Spirit are given in common

¹⁴ Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Burns & Oates, 1970) 109.

to the Father and the Son means, is that what Scripture asserts, or allows to be asserted, as a proper name of the Holy Spirit can be awarded in common to Father and Son. It therefore needs to be established from *Scripture* that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of Father and Son. Not distinguishing between the divine love and the mutual love, Augustine has not even succeeded in showing from Scripture that the Holy Spirit is the divine love in some special way, let alone the mutual love. In the *De trinitate* he has candidly admitted that "Scripture . . . has not said, the Holy Spirit is love. If it had done so, it would have done away with no small part of this inquiry."¹⁵ His attempts to show that despite this there exists reasonable biblical foundation for identifying the Holy Spirit with the love of God are considerably less than convincing.¹⁶ I am not saying that the exercise cannot be done. I am only saying that in attempting too much Augustine has failed all the more: he has used texts which might be invoked to show that the Holy Spirit is the divine love, to show that He is the mutual love.

In order, therefore, to be able to accept the mutual-love theory as valid, we must do what Augustine himself did not: we must discover whether Scripture can justify the theological statement that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son. This I shall now attempt to do.

THE MUTUAL-LOVE THEORY FOUNDED ON SCRIPTURE

From what has been said about the three forms of the doctrine of the Trinity it will be clear that the mutual-love theory, which has to do with the immanent and the economic Trinity, cannot simply be demonstrated from Scripture. But if it is true, it must be founded on Scripture in some way. In this part of the essay I shall uncover the biblical foundations of the theory. The exercise contains two parts. The first concerns the proposition that the Holy Spirit is the Father's love for Jesus; the second, that the same Spirit is Jesus' answering love for the Father. Because of this structure of gift and response, with the second part we shall have attained the biblical foundation of the theory.

The Holy Spirit as the Father's Love for Jesus

That Jesus is the beloved, only-begotten Son of God is the clear teaching of the NT. His divine Sonship, or divinity as we say today, is not conceived there as the Church would later conceive it in its official teaching, i.e. ontologically, and hence as a metaphysical incarnation, but functionally, in terms of the role he was predestined to play in salvation history. Even where the NT speaks of the pre-existence of Jesus, as it

¹⁵ *De trinitate* 15, 17 (27) (PL 42, 1080).

¹⁶ Cf. *De trinitate* 15, 17 (PL 42, 1079-82); *De fide et symbolo* 9, 19 (PL 40, 191-92).

does in the Gospel of John (and only there), it thinks of his divine Sonship in a functional way. It thinks, therefore, of the Incarnation also in functional terms, as a change of state, the exchange of immortality for mortality (for flesh, doomed to die) by a glorious pre-existent man, rather than as the assumption of humanity by a hitherto purely divine being.¹⁷ The dogma of a metaphysical incarnation, as taught by Chalcedon, represents development of doctrine and also hermeneusis, the reinterpretation of truth from one cultural framework into another, based on this Johannine vision.

If the concept of a metaphysical incarnation was not available to the NT writers for making understandable the divine Sonship of Jesus, how did they conceive the action or process of his divinization? I have already indicated that this was not a question that occurred in the purview of the Johannine theology. But it does occur in the Synoptics, and they answered it by reference to the Holy Spirit. According to them, Jesus' divine Sonship was brought about by the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on him by God (the Father). And the Holy Spirit, as the power of God, gave to Jesus the power to adhere to and fulfil his predestined role of Savior. This latter power is conceived both negatively, in terms of never acting against God's will, and hence as perfect sinlessness, about which the NT is emphatic in the case of Jesus, and positively, in terms of always seeking and acting in accordance with God's will, therefore perfect obedience, about which the NT is no less insistent. It is by his obedience that a man is shown to be a true son to his father. In Synoptic theology the divine Sonship of Jesus is actualized in his perfect obedience to God's special will for him, along which path he is guided by the empowering Spirit to his unique destiny. All three elements belong together as constituting the full reality of Jesus' divine Sonship: it is (a) created by the bestowal of the Spirit, and it is (b) realized not only by a general obedience on his part, but by a particular obedience which leads to (c) the fulfilment of his unique vocation, his mediatorial and representative role as Savior of humankind. His fidelity to this vocation led inexorably to the cross but also beyond it to the resurrection. In Synoptic theology, therefore, the divine Sonship of Jesus is produced by the bestowal on him of the Holy Spirit by the Father, and, in the power of this Spirit, is actualized in the obedience of his life and death and is completed and revealed in his resurrection. This theology has emerged in recent times as a real alternative to the hitherto dominant Johannine theology of incarnation. In contrast to the latter, the method is that of ascending theology, despite the fact that the Christology of the Synoptics is high rather than low.

¹⁷ Cf. n. 5 above.

The English theologian James D. G. Dunn has rendered NT scholarship a service by drawing attention to the close relationship existing between the divine Sonship of Jesus and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on him by God.¹⁸ Dunn is more concerned to discuss Jesus' *experience* of Sonship and his *experience* of Spirit than the objective realities themselves. However, in reference to the baptism of Jesus by John (Mk 1:9-11 pars.), he states: "In the accounts as we have them the words of proclamation are obviously intended to *explain* the descent of the Spirit: the Spirit anoints Jesus as Son."¹⁹ On this key NT event, recorded in all four Gospels, Mark is quite clear: the bestowal of the Holy Spirit brings about the divine Sonship of Jesus. The bestowal of the Spirit enters into the very constitution of his Sonship. This Marcan theology represents a revision and relocation of an earlier theology in which the action of the Spirit and the "designation" of Sonship are situated at the resurrection (Rom 1:4). The overtones of adoptionism in both this text and Mark, which are so obvious to us, evidently presented no problem for the respective early communities. Matthew and Luke solve, or avoid, the problem by situating bestowal of the Spirit and creation of Sonship at the very beginning of Jesus' life, though they also retain the accounts of the baptism, for which, then, they have to find new meanings.²⁰

For our purposes Matthew (1:18-25) and Luke (1:26-38) convey essentially the same message as each other. Each correctly places the creation of the divine Sonship at the beginning of Jesus' life, seeing it as achieved in the same act as that in which he is brought into existence as a human being. Neither shows any idea of pre-existence, which has no place in the context of the ascending method. The Father's bestowal of the Holy Spirit is therefore seen as bringing Jesus into being as the unique Son of God. It is true that he is not actually referred to by this title in the Matthean text, as he is in the Lucan, but the theme is definitely implied.²¹ The Lucan text, particularly v. 35, represents the pinnacle of NT reflection on the Synoptic conception of Jesus' divine Sonship: "And the angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be

¹⁸ Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975) 62-67.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 65.

²⁰ In Matthew the baptism scene is the public revelation of Jesus' divine Sonship; cf. John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1980) 26-28. In the Lucan writings the baptism is interpreted as the anointing of Jesus as the eschatological prophet in accordance with Isa 61:1; cf. Ignace de la Potterie, "L'Onction du Christ: Etude de théologie biblique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 80 (1958) 225-52, though *pace* de la Potterie this theme is not evident in Luke's actual account of the baptism.

²¹ Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977) 135 n. 9.

called holy, the Son of God.' " Through the power of the Spirit the child is created, and so made holy, or sanctified, that he is the Son of God.

In the Marcan baptismal account the words of proclamation contain allusions to probably three OT texts: Gen 22:1, Ps 2:7, and Isa 42:1. Of these the last is of special interest here. The Suffering Servant of God, God's chosen one, in whom He delights, He has equipped with His Spirit so that, thus endowed, he might accomplish his saving ministry. It is highly likely that Jesus identified himself with this figure. In any case, the NT writers were prompt to make the identification. There was no OT figure that provided a more suitable background for understanding the person and work of Jesus. We therefore need to compare the Son of the NT with the Servant of the OT. There is considerable overlap but, in a word, the Son transcends the Servant.

Both figures are elected by God; both are endowed with the Spirit and act by His (Its) power; both, as their titles indicate, live out their lives in obedience to God, an obedience which is not just general but particular, obedience to a specific vocation; their vocations coincide remarkably. Both are loved by God because of what He has accomplished in them and what He will accomplish through their obedience. What distinguishes them is the special intimacy and love that a father has for a son over and above that which a master has for a faithful servant. A son is everything a servant is and more. There is more than a hint of this in the parable of the wicked tenants (Mk 12:1-9 pars.). It is this special love that is the staple of Jesus' religious experience and that which moved him to address God as "my Father" in prayer. As we have seen, Jesus' experience of God is objectively stated to be an experience of the Spirit of God, but for him subjectively it is essentially an experience of God's fatherly love. God's Spirit, seen in OT terms only as creative and empowering, is seen in the NT, in the actual event of Christ, as the communication of God's love. It still conveys His creative and inspiring power, but it transcends this and conveys His love, a love which includes or subsumes creation and inspiration. The baptismal text does not just say "Son" but "beloved (*agapētos*) Son"; the love that is conveyed by the word "Son" is through this addition expressed in the strongest possible way. This is not just because of the reference to Isa 42:1 and Gen 22:1; it is because God's giving of the Spirit has been in the case of Jesus as radical and total as it could be. In the context of the baptism Mark is not able to express the full radicality of this bestowal, because there it is open to the interpretation of adoptionism. Only its location at the conception as in Matthew and Luke permits this, for there it is seen to be radically creative as well: it calls Jesus into existence, so precluding adoptionism from the outset.

The Spirit, without losing its OT denotation of power, gains in the

NT, in the person of Christ, the denotation of love. This is not stated in so many words, as Augustine pointed out. But just as the Trinity stands revealed in the person of Christ, not originally in words but in the event, such that the appropriate words are found only later (though they begin to be found in the NT itself), so the true and deepest nature of the Spirit is revealed in the Christ event itself. Its being spelt out in the vocabulary of love is dependent on the event of Christ as the Son of God.

Thus we are entitled to conclude that the NT justifies the statement that, while the Holy Spirit has other functions leading up to Christ and deriving from him, He (It) stands essentially revealed as the love of God the Father for Jesus, a love that calls the latter into human existence, and so sanctifies him that he comes into being as His beloved Son.

The Holy Spirit as Jesus' Love for the Father

If it is not immediately evident in Scripture that the Holy Spirit is the Father's love for Jesus, that He (It) is Jesus' love for the Father is even more difficult to show. This is because in general the NT is much more interested in spelling out the significance of Jesus for us, which is public, than in dwelling on his personal relationship with God, which is private. In this section I shall proceed in three stages. I shall (1) draw out the implications of what was established in the last section for Jesus' relationship to the Father in the Spirit, (2) pursue these implications further in the light of two NT texts bearing on the death of Jesus, and (3) examine the relevance to our question of Jesus' relationship in the Spirit to his followers as presented in the NT.

In the Synoptic theology Jesus, like the Servant, accomplishes every aspect of his work in the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke, for whom the Holy Spirit is a special theme, is at pains to show the Spirit active at the beginning of each stage of his narrative: the Period of Jesus, the Period of the Church, and also the Period of Israel.²² As to the first of these, Fitzmyer writes, "The entire beginning of Jesus' ministry is put under the aegis of the Spirit."²³ And we can be sure that what God sets up at the beginning He carries through to the end. The Holy Spirit is the driving force of the whole of Jesus' ministry.

This is true particularly of Jesus' relationship with God. As his obedience, tested and established in suffering, purified him and eventually, in death, made him perfect (Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8-9, 2:10), so he became, in life ever more completely and in death perfectly, the Son of God. But this Sonship, which depended not just on his obedience but on his love,

²² Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981) 228.

²³ *Ibid.* 230.

a love which was a response to that of the Father, was not just his own work. It was that, but before that it was made possible, was initiated and carried through by the Spirit bestowed on him by God. Indeed, its initiation took place without co-operation on his part. In other words, the love with which Jesus drew ever closer to the Father through the events of his life and which reached its perfection in his death was primarily the work of the Holy Spirit in him. From this perspective the Spirit appears as truly the "bond" between Jesus and the Father. Established by the Father in the first place, this bond drew Jesus into an ever closer union of love with Him in his life and in his death. If the Spirit gave Jesus the power to fulfil his ministry, more importantly, as God's love for him, it evoked from him the love for God which was the wellspring of that ministry.

I turn now to the two texts which focus on the death of Jesus. The first of these is Jn 19:30: "When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished'; and he bowed his head and gave up the spirit."

Before commenting on this text, I must make some points from Johannine theology. Unlike Mark, John does not believe that Jesus *became* Son of God through the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, as for him Jesus pre-existed his earthly appearance and was divine from all eternity (cf. Jn 1:1). Precisely as Word and Son, Jesus lived in communion with, and centredness on, the Father from eternity (1:1, 18). John does not think of this relationship as being dependent on the Spirit. For him the Holy Spirit is God's activity in the world, or God over against the world (4:24). Jesus does not need to have the Spirit conferred on him to bring him into communion with God, because he has this already by virtue of being Word and Son. His object in the world is to bring men and women into the communion that he has with the Father (Jn 14:23, 17:21; 1 Jn 1:3). To do this he must act in the power of the Spirit,²⁴ but the necessity

²⁴ An excellent Johannine support for this statement would be Jn 3:34, provided it were clear that the "he" who there gives the Spirit is the Father and not Jesus. In favor of Jesus is Jn 6:63, but in favor of the Father is Jn 3:35. Since the latter reference occurs in the context of the disputed verse, while the former does not, the argument favoring the Father appears the stronger. But against it is the argument that in John gifts from the Father to the Son are nearly always expressed by the perfect tense and not the present as here. Against this, however, it must be said that the meaning that would favor the Father here calls for the present. That is, it is because the Father gives Jesus the Spirit in a continuous and permanent action that Jesus himself is able to act in the power of the Spirit. Add to this my own point that it would be most unlikely for John simply to say that Jesus "gives" the Spirit, particularly so early in the Gospel. On balance, the argument favoring the Father appears much the stronger. On this interpretation Jesus conducts his saving activity in the world in the power of the Spirit given to him without measure by the Father. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I-XII* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) 158,

arises from the fact that *they* do not belong to the sphere of the Spirit; it does not arise on *his* side, because as Son he belongs to this sphere by nature. When in the Prologue John says that the Word "became flesh," he implies that his previous condition was "spirit," since "flesh" and "spirit" are correlatives in biblical theology. But he does not say this. That as Word and Son Jesus belonged by right to the sphere of the Spirit was for him too obvious to be said.

Yet John (1:29-34) retains the baptism scene of the Synoptic tradition complete with the descent of the Spirit (but without actually mentioning the baptism). But just as Matthew and Luke had to find new meanings for this piece of Marcan theology, so too did John. As for him the incarnation of the Word marked a new phase not only in the latter's existence but also in salvation history, so did this incarnation call for a new revelatory act, the bestowal of the Spirit on the newly enfleshed Word. This was because in the sacramentalism of John the flesh of Jesus is the divinely appointed means by which men and women penetrate by faith to the Spirit (Jn 6:53-57, 63; 1 Jn 4:2; Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:6-8); and given that the initiative comes from God, this presupposes that through the flesh of Jesus the Spirit reaches out to men and women, as intimated above. This is the point of John's repeated statement (1:32 and 33) that the Spirit "remained" on Jesus, and of the fact that John alone of the evangelists has Jesus designated at the baptism as the source of the Spirit for others (1:33). Yet if the visible descent of the Spirit on Jesus at the baptism did not make him Son of God, it was what enabled John to recognize him as God's Servant, His "chosen one" (1:31, 33, 34), who is also His Son.²⁵ In John's version of the baptism, Jesus, the incarnate Word who by his words and deeds reveals God to the world, is the Servant of God, as he is also in the Synoptic versions.

The static incarnational theology of John does not allow for any growth or increase in the divine Sonship of Jesus. It only allows a progressive revelation of this Sonship culminating in Jesus' death. As suggested above, the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus personally is found purely in this domain of revelation "to the outside." The conferment of the Spirit at the baptism is simply in view of revelation and salvation. Here the Spirit bears witness to Jesus, as He is said to do also in Jn 15:26 and 1 Jn 5:7. The Baptist bears witness to him too (Jn 1.34), but his witness is made possible only by that of the Spirit, for prior to this, John "did not know him" (1:31, 32).

We can now move on to consider our text, Jn 19:30. It is its concluding

161-62; George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist, 1976) 343-44.

²⁵ Cf. Brown, *John I-XII* 57.

words, "and (he) gave up the spirit," that are of special interest to us. I note first the unusual verb, *paredōken* ("handed over"), to be contrasted with Matthew's *aphienai* ("yielded up") in "and he yielded up the spirit" (Mt 27:50). This has given rise to the question whether John is here referring, in a deliberate higher meaning, to the conferment of the Holy Spirit by Jesus on his mother and the beloved disciple as representatives of the nascent Church. I defer discussion of this point to the third stage of this section, where it rightfully belongs. And we begin by taking up the observation of Raymond Brown that the verb is the same as that used by the Septuagint to describe the sacrificial death of the Suffering Servant in Isa 53:12.²⁶ Indeed, the whole clause is similar, for the Septuagint states that "his soul was handed over to death." Significantly, though, John, like the Hebrew text of Isaiah, has the verb in the active voice, thus emphasizing the freedom of Jesus, whereas the Septuagint has the passive, thus stressing the inevitability of the Servant's fate. We note also that the Septuagint says "soul" (*psychē*), whereas John, like Matthew and Luke, has "spirit" (*pneuma*). If in John the change from "soul" to "spirit" is deliberate, it is explained by the difference in emphasis of the two words. While there is considerable overlap between them, "soul" refers more to the natural life, whereas "spirit" indicates life lived before God.²⁷ This bears out what is implicit in the text in any case, that while the Servant's soul is handed over to death, Jesus hands over his spirit to God. The Johannine text has Jesus in his death oriented to God, in a way not dissimilar to Luke: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46). In John, Jesus' embracing of his death is but the climax of the life of the Servant become Son, a life lived and ended in obedience to, and love of, God.

Another significant point to be taken from this text comes from the last words of Jesus as recorded by John: "It is finished." This is a statement of finality, of the completion of Jesus' work seen as being from beginning to end the execution of God's will in obedience and love.²⁸ This reinforces the Servant/Son theme spoken of above.

The conclusion to be drawn from our study of this text is that in it Jesus is presented as the Servant and Son of God who in a supreme act of obedience and love surrenders his life to the Father. In so doing he gives complete expression to the eternal loving communion that exists between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the text, nor, in this basic meaning, even alluded to. However, that the Spirit is the force behind the revelation becomes clear once the text is

²⁶ Cf. Brown, *John XIII-XXI* 910.

²⁷ Cf. *TDNT* 9, 654-56.

²⁸ Cf. Brown, *John XIII-XXI* 907-8.

related to John's account of Jesus' baptism. The Holy Spirit, therefore, has a role, but not in regard to Jesus' relationship with the Father. Of necessity, the descending and incarnational theology of John can find no room here for the role for the Spirit that exists in the Synoptic theology. Because later church doctrine and much of its theology have in this regard followed John almost exclusively, it too has been unable to grasp Jesus' Sonship and his loving relationship with the Father in terms of the action of the Holy Spirit. However, from our point of view this Johannine text is far from being without interest; in the third stage of this section we examine its higher meaning.

The second text for our consideration is Heb 9:13-14: "For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

I shall confine myself here to aspects of the text which relate directly to our question, and not embark on an exegesis of the text as a whole. It is clear that it refers to Christ's death, which is seen, consistently with the rest of the Letter to the Hebrews, as his obedient self-offering to the Father. It is stated explicitly that he performs this consummating action of his life "through eternal spirit." (Note that "spirit" is anarthrous here.) The point of the text is to show the superiority of Christ by reference to the spiritual nature of his sacrifice as able to produce purification of conscience and service of the living God, in comparison with the blood sprinklings of the Old Law, which were confined to the sphere of the flesh and able to produce only ritual purification. Christ's sacrifice attained this spiritual status by virtue of its being offered "through eternal spirit." Our question is: Who or what is this eternal spirit?

Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, surveying the history of the interpretation of this text, distinguishes a "Catholic" interpretation, shared also by a number of Protestants, in which "spirit" is identified as the Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, and an unlabeled interpretation according to which it is "the essential nature of Christ as the divine and therefore eternal Son of God."²⁹ But if this second interpretation means that Jesus is to be identified with the Spirit of God by means of a metaphysical incarnation, it is ruled out by what is now known of the Christology of Hebrews, to which such a notion is foreign.³⁰

A minimalist interpretation would eschew the alternatives offered by

²⁹ Cf. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977) 358-59.

³⁰ Cf. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* 51-56, 206-9.

Hughes, and identify the eternal spirit here with "the power of an indestructible life" of Heb 7:16 and thus with the human spirit of Jesus in the light of his resurrection.³¹ (This would mean that "eternal" indicates lack of end but not lack of beginning, but clearly this is the meaning it has in the immediate context, where, in Heb 9:12, "an eternal redemption" is spoken of.) This would bring out also the freedom and voluntariness of Jesus' sacrifice, the fact that it was not laid down by, or performed under, the Law. These are points, however, which are not lacking in other interpretations.

Attractive though this interpretation is, there are at least six objections that can be brought against it. (1) It locates Jesus' self-offering in the heavenly sphere, whereas in the text it appears firmly situated as an action of his earthly life, indeed its consummating action, with, of course, eternal implications. (2) The anarthrous occurrence of "spirit" in conjunction with the adjective "eternal" would suggest divine rather than human spirit. (3) If the human spirit of Jesus is meant, why does not the text say "his" eternal spirit? As F. F. Bruce writes, "If our author had meant this, he could have said so quite simply."³² (4) The "flesh" spoken of in the text is not that of Jesus, and therefore it is unlikely that the spirit is meant as his either. (5) The use of the word "through" (*dia*) would indicate in the context a distinction between the spirit and Jesus and not an identity as in the interpretation under discussion. (6) The seven other occurrences of the word "spirit" in Hebrews (2:4, 3:7, 4:12, 6:4, 9:8, 10:15, and 10:29) all denote the Holy Spirit with the single exception of 4:12, where the human spirit is clearly indicated. It is therefore most likely that in Heb 9:14, where the denotation is not immediately obvious, it is the divine Spirit that is meant.

This does not mean, however, that we are thrown back on the "Catholic" interpretation, at least as formulated by Hughes. It is not possible for any part of the Bible to present the same doctrine of the Holy Spirit as that of the First Council of Constantinople. But it does mean that Jesus is equipped with the Holy Spirit (in the biblical sense of the term) and that this is the explanation of his ability to offer a spiritual sacrifice and secure an eternal redemption. How does Hebrews understand Jesus' equipment with the Spirit? To me the explanation of F. F. Bruce is the most convincing:

Behind our author's thinking lies the portrayal of the Isaianic Servant of the

³¹ Cf. Montague, *The Holy Spirit* 317; Myles M. Bourke, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990) 936-37 (section 53).

³² F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1964) 205.

Lord, who yields up his life to God as a guilt-offering for many, bearing their sin and procuring their justification. When this Servant is introduced for the first time, God says: "I have put my Spirit upon him" (Isa. 42:1). It is in the power of the divine Spirit, accordingly, that the Servant accomplishes every phase of his ministry, including the crowning phase in which he accepts death for the transgression of his people, filling the twofold role of priest and victim, as Christ does in this epistle.³³

If the reader finds this introduction of the Servant theme unconvincing because isolated, it should be noted that there is a second, and unmistakable, allusion to Jesus as the Servant just 14 verses later in the same chapter (9:28), where it is said that he has been offered "to bear the sins of many," a reference to Isa 53:12, from the fourth Servant Song.

It should be added that Hebrews, like Mark, understands the Servant theme as subsumed into the unique Sonship of Jesus, and so it is as Son of God that Jesus dies on the cross in obedience to his Father's will. Although Heb 5:8 sees some kind of inconsistency between Jesus' Sonship and his suffering ("*Although* he was Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered"), this is judged as only a superficial view, for in Heb 12:3-7 we are told that good fathers always discipline their sons, and in precisely this context reference is made to the suffering of Christ, in vv. 3-4. For the writer it is only suffering that presents this small problem, not obedience itself, for from a son obedience is always to be expected. Further, in Heb 5:5-6 the high-priestly role of Christ, which was exercised on the cross, is expressed also in terms of his Sonship.

I conclude our consideration of Heb 9:13-14 by saying that it shows how the obedience and love of Christ for the Father reached its perfection in his voluntary self-offering to God as he died on the cross, and that this act, which gathered up and re-expressed the obedience and love that characterized his whole life, was performed in the power of the Holy Spirit conferred on him by God.

I come now to the third stage of my presentation of this section: Jesus' relationship to his followers in the Spirit. On Jesus' side, this relationship is initiated at his death, as is clear from the early "two-stage" Christology of the NT (cf. Rom 1:3-4; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18), which depended on the distinction of flesh and spirit in his regard. From this perspective Jesus' earthly life could be called "the days of his flesh" (Heb 5:7), while his life after death was, because of his resurrection, life in the Spirit. This meant that any relationship with Jesus after his death and resurrection was in the Spirit. Nor was this insight weakened by Luke's and John's subsequent introduction of the concept of the flesh into the life

³³ Ibid.

of the risen Jesus (Lk 24:39; Jn 20:22, 27, 21:12). And the point is valid not only from the standpoint of Jesus, but also from that of his followers. Even though they remain in the flesh, their baptism means that they now live and act in the Spirit. Thus Paul can say, "From now on, therefore, we know no one according to the flesh; even though we once knew Christ according to the flesh, we know him thus no longer" (2 Cor 5:16). That is, they know him now in the Spirit. Here the flesh spoken of is that of Christian believers, and the Spirit alluded to is the Holy Spirit as possessed by them. Thus we may conclude that on both sides the relationship that exists between Jesus and his followers after his death is in the Holy Spirit.

This relationship is established by two interconnected facts. The first is that the Holy Spirit is sent upon his followers by Jesus (Jn 4:14, 7:37-39, 15:26, 16:7, 20:22; Lk 24:49; Acts 2:33; 1 Cor 15:45). The second is that as so sent the Holy Spirit has become "the Spirit of Jesus," or "the Spirit of Christ," or the "other Paraclete." This means that the Holy Spirit is now impregnated with the personality of Jesus, and indeed precisely in his orientation to the Father, so that the Spirit is now the mode of Christ's saving presence with and among his followers after his death. The content of the experience of the Spirit is now Christ himself. Thus is explained the beginning, in the NT, of a sense of personality for the Holy Spirit: His (Its) personality (note the experiential term "personality," as distinct from ontological "personhood," about which nothing is here said) is that of Christ. These last sentences are a summary of the findings of Dunn in his study of the Spirit as issuing from Jesus in both Paul and John,³⁴ and here I am satisfied simply to endorse them and adopt them as evidence for my own study.

We are here brought face to face with the uniqueness of Jesus. Plenty of others, the prophets for example, had been given the Holy Spirit by God. But Jesus was given the Spirit in a uniquely radical way. Only he was thus made God's beloved Son, only with him did the Spirit "remain," only to him was the Spirit given "without measure" (cf. Jn 3:34 and n. 24 above). Above all, only he was given the Spirit in such a way that he could impart it to others. What is the basis in the NT of this power possessed by Jesus? To say with Matthew and John that he has been given the fulness of divine authority (Mt 28:18; Jn 3:35), which therefore includes authority to send the Spirit, is to answer the question correctly at a certain level, but the NT actually permits us to answer it at a deeper level. Among human beings, only Jesus has the authority to send the Spirit, because only he has appropriated it initially and made it more

³⁴ Cf. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* 318-26, 350-57.

and more completely his own through his life and his death. Only he *can* appropriate it, for only he has received the Spirit in a totally radical way, which is constitutive of his being. We too “receive” the Holy Spirit as “Spirit of sonship” (Rom 8:15), but in a nonradical way, for our sonship and daughterhood is only by “adoption” (Gal 4:5). While this is enough to enable us to live and act in the Spirit, it is not enough to empower us to make it our own. And it is because the Spirit has become *his* that he has the right to send Him (It) to others. The Father can bestow Him in the first place because He is the Father’s Spirit, and it is because He has in turn become *Jesus’* Spirit that he too can send Him.

This is the place for us to take up again our investigation of Jn 19:30, to try to resolve the question whether it has, in addition to the basic meaning already discovered, the higher meaning in which Jesus hands over the Spirit to his mother and the beloved disciple as representatives of the Church thus brought into being.

Barnabas Lindars rejects this interpretation on the ground that, if there is an indirect object of the verb *paredōken* (handed over), it must be God, not Jesus’ mother and the beloved disciple.³⁵ However, there is no reason why God cannot be the indirect object in the basic meaning, and Jesus’ mother and the beloved disciple the indirect object in the higher meaning. But we need some further indication in the text to validate the latter meaning as intended by the evangelist, and indeed such an indication is present. It is found in vv. 34-35, where the evangelist tells of the issue of blood and water from Jesus’ side and then goes on to lay such extraordinary store by this event: “He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth—that you also may believe.” Obviously it is not just a physiological event to which such significance is attached, but rather its spiritual import. And what this is is clear enough in the Johannine writings: the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ signify the sending of the Spirit by Jesus in his death (Jn 7:38-39; 1 Jn 5:6-8). As Brown writes, “It would seem that in the Gospel picture of a flow of blood and water from the side of Jesus, John is saying that now the Spirit can be given because Jesus is obviously dead and through death has regained the glory that was his before the world existed.”³⁶

It is not as if there are two sendings of the Spirit in John, 19:30 and 20:22, though Brown, albeit unwillingly, would encourage this idea by speaking of the first instance as “proleptic” and the second as “actual.”³⁷ It is generally agreed that the highpoint of the Fourth Gospel, at least in

³⁵ Cf. Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1972) 582-83.

³⁶ Brown, *John XIII-XXI* 950.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 931.

the order of revelation, is the death of Jesus, not his resurrection. It is, then, more in keeping with Johannine theology that the Spirit be given in his death rather than his resurrection. And it is more clearly to the death that the foretellings of the sending of the Spirit in John point (Jn 7:39, 16:7). Therefore Jn 20:22 should be seen as the spelling-out of what is presented less explicitly in Jn 19:30. After all, we cannot expect a clear commissioning statement, like that of Jn 20:22, from the lips of Jesus at the moment of expiring. In my opinion, therefore, the sending of the Spirit in Jn 19:30 is the "actual" one; I would describe Jn 20:22 as the full revelation of what is presented simply as a fact in Jn 19:30.

I conclude our reflection on this text by pointing out that in its higher meaning the Spirit is conferred by Jesus as his own. The text, determined by its basic meaning rather than its higher one, says "the" Spirit, and not "his" Spirit, but in both meanings the implication is that the Spirit is his to hand over. In its higher meaning, therefore, this text supports the more general conclusion of Dunn, that as conferred by Jesus the Holy Spirit is his own and hence is the vehicle of his unique personality.

It is interesting, and somewhat ironic, to observe that because of its descending methodology the Johannine theology, to which in part we owe the knowledge that Jesus makes the Spirit his own, does not have the capacity to explain how this is done. Only the Synoptic theology, with its insight that the Holy Spirit is the founding principle of his divine Sonship, has this capacity. But in the NT its development is not carried through to the point where this is achieved. This tends to show that the theology of John, as also of Paul, of the appropriation of the Spirit by Jesus stems from the experience of their respective communities, and so rests on an experiential rather than an intellectual base.

We are now in a position to draw the conclusion that as conferred by Jesus the Holy Spirit is Jesus' gift of himself to those who believe in him. It remains now to relate this statement to the idea of the Holy Spirit as love, and I do this with the aid of Peter Carnley's recent book on the resurrection.³⁸ Carnley's argument is elaborated in three steps, which I now present in summary form.

First, the giving of oneself to others is love, and because each person is unique in his or her particularity, each person's love is also unique. Jesus was remembered in the earliest Christian communities by the very distinctive and personal love he showed for others, and to express this the unusual word *agapē*, as distinct from *erōs* and *philia*, was chosen by Greek-speaking Christians. In the NT, therefore, *agapē* does not have a generalized meaning; it means rather "the particularity of Jesus' love"

³⁸ Cf. Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 327-39.

for other people.³⁹

Secondly, *agapē* was not just experienced as a memory from the past. It was a power active in the Christian community in the present, experienced by all. Because love is the gift of self, the experience of *agapē* pointed to the living presence of Christ in the community. But this presence was brought about through the power of the Holy Spirit as Spirit of Christ, the Spirit "which bears the distinctive Jesus-character."⁴⁰ "*Agape* itself is the gracious activity of the Spirit, the medium of the presence of the raised Christ himself."⁴¹ In other words, while the NT nowhere explicitly calls the Spirit love, the principal characteristic of the Spirit as Spirit of Christ is precisely that it bears the love of Christ for his community.

Thirdly, Christ's love was understood, by both Paul and John, as the revelation and communication of God's own love for His people (Rom 8:32; Jn 1:14). Carnley sums up his entire argument in these words:

What is remembered to have been expressed uniquely and distinctively in the life and death of Jesus and known by acquaintance in the life of the Christian community after his death is a reality that, though variously described as the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, is identified by virtue of the distinctive descriptive characteristic of *agape*.⁴²

Carnley's position as here outlined produces an explanation for the fact that, while the NT does not simply call the Holy Spirit love, in at least two texts it connects the Spirit with love. Such a connection presupposes a background, but it is a background that is not explicit in the NT; it has to be made explicit by some such reasoning as Carnley has provided. The two texts, both Pauline, are Rom 5:5, in which we are told that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us," and Gal 5:22, which significantly mentions love first in its list of the nine qualities that comprise the fruit of the Spirit. It is no problem that in the first instance it is God's love that is referred to, and in the second our own, for love begets love, as I shall have occasion to point out again soon.

In his third point above, Carnley takes his cue from E. Käsemann and A. T. Hanson, who in turn faithfully adhere to the NT dynamic of *Christus pro nobis*. One would not wish to be critical of this, but it is necessary to point out that between God's love of His people and Christ's love for them there is a missing link of the highest importance, and it is

³⁹ Ibid. 332.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 334.

⁴¹ Ibid. 336.

⁴² Ibid. 338.

to be identified as Christ's love of God, which is evoked from him as the central member of that people, the stone which "has become the head of the corner" (1 Pet 2:7), and "the head of the body, the Church" (Col 1:18). The reason why this link is missing in the NT has already been explained, but the fact that it is missing in no way lessens its importance. Where theology used to be satisfied with seeing Christ simply as the channel of God's blessings to others, it now insists on seeing him first as the principal recipient of these blessings, and only as such their channel for others. Not only does this add an important new dimension to theology by taking the humanity of Christ more seriously, but it considerably enhances our appreciation of the blessings in question. Two examples must suffice. The first is revelation. Christ is now seen as the recipient of divine revelation before he is seen as its medium for others.⁴³ And the second is grace. In my own work in this field Christ has to be understood as the recipient of God's grace before he can rightly be understood as its mediator.⁴⁴ The same is true in regard to God's love. We can only properly understand Jesus as the medium of God's love for us when we understand him first as its principal and active (therefore reciprocating) recipient. And, most importantly, it is only by laying hold of the missing link of Christ's love of God that we gain access to the mutual-love theory in its scriptural foundation.

I say that Christ's love of God is the missing *link* for two reasons. In the first place, necessarily the first effect of God's love of Christ, which is the love in which He loves His people (Eph 1:3-6), is what I have already shown it to be, i.e. Christ's answering love of God. Love begets love, love creates a bond. It is therefore not correct to move immediately from God's love of His people to Christ's love for them, as though Christ were merely the funnel through which God's love is poured. Secondly, Christ's love is, like that of any human being, at the same time a love of God and a love of neighbor. Therefore Christ's love for the Church will be, and will have to be, the other side of the coin of his love of God. To learn more of the nature of his love of God, therefore, we turn to what Scripture tells us of his love of neighbor.

It is to Karl Rahner that we owe the thesis, attained by the exercise of his transcendental method, that love of God and love of neighbor are not two different loves however closely united, but the two distinct, constitutive, and mutually conditioning dimensions of what is essentially the one and the selfsame love.⁴⁵ They constitute an instance of a category

⁴³ Cf. Gabriel Moran, *Theology of Revelation* (London: Burns & Oates, 1966).

⁴⁴ Cf. Coffey, *Grace*.

⁴⁵ Cf. Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbor and the Love of God," *Theological Investigations* 6 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969) 231-49.

frequently encountered in Rahner's theology: "unity-in-difference."⁴⁶ Though Scripture lacks the methodological tools to apprehend this truth in an exact way like that developed by Rahner, it nevertheless shows an intuition that the two loves (as we must still call them) are united more radically than mere juxtaposition (Mk 12:28-31), or a statement that one is the condition of the other (1 Jn 4:20), or a linking by external authority (1 Jn 4:21) can attest. Rahner points to three scriptural facts to support his contention.⁴⁷ First, Matthew (22:40) and Luke (10:28) present the combination of the two loves as the fulfilment of the OT revelation, which would argue at the least for an intrinsic relationship between them. Secondly, Paul (Rom 13:8, 10; Gal 5:14) and Matthew (25:34-46) have love of neighbor as the fulfilment of the Law and the sole criterion of divine judgment, which would indicate that in a mysterious way this love must include the love of God. Thirdly, the statement of Jesus (Mt 25:40) that a kindness to the least of his brethren is in fact done to himself requires that the man Jesus be grasped as the embodiment of God's kingdom and so implies the inseparability of God and neighbor as objects of our love. We now proceed to bring the *scriptural* intuition of the unity of love of God and love of neighbor to bear on the question of the nature of Jesus' love of God.

We know already that the radical bestowal of the Holy Spirit is the cause of the total human reality of Jesus, which is the same as his divine Sonship. We know also that this Sonship, under the continued inspiration of the Holy Spirit, comes to expression in his love of the Father in the course of his life and climactically at his death. In death he gives himself finally and definitively to the Father in loving submission to His will in the power of the Holy Spirit. Turning now to Jesus' sending of the Spirit on the Church, we know that the Spirit which he so sends he has appropriated and stamped with his own personality and love. This appropriation took place initially at his conception and gained momentum throughout his life, becoming complete at his death. But it must have happened within the bounds of his relationship with the Father, not primarily within those of his relationships with others. The Spirit was given to him in the first place as *God's* Spirit; it set up a relationship, a bond, with *God*, which was realized in the course of his life and especially in his death, though naturally this realization took place in the course of his dealings with others. Ordinary Christians, to whom the Spirit is also given, also relate to God in the power of the Spirit, and in death give themselves to Him in the Spirit, but though they "receive" and "possess"

⁴⁶ Cf. John Honner, "Unity-in-Difference: Karl Rahner and Niels Bohr," *TS* 46 (1985) 480-506.

⁴⁷ Cf. Rahner, "Reflections" 234.

the Spirit, they can never appropriate it, as Jesus does. His appropriation of the Spirit means that for him it becomes a principle of action, as it is with the Father Himself. Indeed, Jesus' appropriation of the Spirit is a pointer, as strong as any in the NT, to his divinity. The difference in the case of Jesus is that he relates to the Father in the Spirit received originally from the Father *but made his own*. And if the Spirit is also the vehicle of God's love, as the NT reveals it to be, then we must conclude that the Spirit is more than just the bond of love between the Father and Jesus His Son, as it is with us: it is their mutual love.

When we say that Jesus sends the Spirit as his own upon the Church, we are expressing the fact that in the Spirit he gives *himself* to the Church. This is precisely what he does vis-à-vis God in the course of his life and on the cross: in the Spirit he gives *himself* to the Father. Each of these actions is love. As Carnley writes, "Loving . . . is not just one of a number of attributes a person may be said to possess; a person's loving is the person himself or herself, going out and giving him or herself to another."⁴⁸ But the radical character of Jesus' self-giving to the Father is only evident in his appropriation of the Spirit, which is revealed in his sending of the Spirit as his own upon the Church. True, the ground of his appropriation of the Spirit is revealed already in the Synoptic theology of the radical nature of the bestowal of the Spirit on him at his conception, but the fact of this appropriation is only revealed in his own sending of the Spirit. This provides for us the hindsight with which we can appreciate the ground as it exists in Matthew and Luke. It is at this point that we are helped by grasping the "unity-in-difference" of love of God and love of neighbor. The character of Jesus' loving self-giving to the Church illumines that of his self-giving to God, and so enables us to understand that the way in which he gives himself to the Father in death is that he there definitively returns the Spirit as his own to the Father in love. Further, the idea of Jesus returning the Spirit to the Father only becomes meaningful when it is seen as Jesus' total *self-giving* to Him. Hence the Spirit is not only the Father's love for Jesus, but is revealed, admittedly in a way that needs to be clarified, as also Jesus' love for the Father. Thus the Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and Jesus His Son. And *thus* we apprehend the mutual-love theory in its scriptural foundation.

THE MUTUAL-LOVE THEORY AND ITS PLACE IN THEOLOGY

The Acquisition of the Theory

If we can argue from the NT that the Holy Spirit is the love of God the Father for Jesus and also the answering love of Jesus for the Father,

⁴⁸ Carnley, *Structure of Resurrection Belief* 331.

then we may conclude that the same Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and Jesus His Son. If Jesus can return the Spirit as his own and as his love to the Father, and bestow the same Spirit, again as his own and as his love, on his fellow human beings, then this shows that Jesus, like the Father, is divine. Thus is acquired the mutual-love theory in its original and primitive form as a theology of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

This theology in turn shows that the true, i.e. spiritual and eternal, nature of God is such that it contains two persons, the Father and the Son, united not just in that nature but also in the Holy Spirit as their mutual love, a love that issues from the Father and is returned to Him by the Son as his own. But the Holy Spirit thus understood must also be a divine person, equal in every respect to the Father and the Son. Thus is acquired by a correct methodology, in contradistinction to the faulty methodology of Augustine, the mutual-love theory as a theology of the immanent Trinity. But the Son in the immanent Trinity is incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth by virtue of a metaphysical incarnation brought about by the radical bestowal of the Holy Spirit on him. This means that the Holy Spirit becomes "incarnate" in Jesus, not in the sense of divine being incarnate in human being as in the Incarnation properly so called, but as divine love incarnate in human love, the love of Jesus. Just as the Son exists (subsists) in two modes or natures, the divine nature and the human nature of Jesus, so the Holy Spirit exists (subsists) in two modes: He continues to exist in the divine nature and He begins to exist as *agapē*, the human love of Jesus, for God in the first place and also for his fellow human beings. Thus is acquired the mutual-love theory as a theology of the economic Trinity.

The theory can be discussed or applied at any of these levels. But from the viewpoint of discussion, particularly ecumenical discussion, its chief importance is verified at the level of the immanent Trinity. The point at issue will always be the validity of inferences from the biblical to the immanent Trinity; what is said subsequently at the level of the economic Trinity will follow automatically from what is firmly acquired at the level of the immanent Trinity.

Features of the Theory

The main feature of the theory is that in its formulation at the level of the immanent Trinity it provides the appropriate trinitarian context for the data of ascending Christology and indeed all ascending theology. The reason for this should be obvious from what has already been said: the mutual-love theory is the theology of the Trinity that is extrapolated from ascending data. Therefore such data will harmonize with it and it

alone. Forcing such data into accommodation with either the *filioque*, the *per filium*, or monopatrism is a methodological error and leads to errors of content.

I mentioned earlier that, despite the fact that Augustine considered them together, the mutual-love theory is very different from the *filioque*. The reason is that the *filioque* is an outward-moving model of the Trinity, in that it has to do with the procession of the Son out of the Father, and then with that of the Holy Spirit as a continuation of this movement as He proceeds out of the Son as well as the Father; and the mutual-love theory is an inward-moving model, in that the Son, having moved out of the Father, is reclaimed by the Father's love and returns to Him in that love which he has now made his own. This being said, it should be mentioned that the mutual-love theory affirms the *filioque*, as it were in passing. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son inasmuch as the Son makes Him his own and returns Him to the Father as his own. The Father and the Son are therefore copinciples of the Holy Spirit, and since the Spirit is one, they must constitute a single principle. I share Dalmais's hope that the mutual-love theory will play an important part in reconciling East and West on the doctrine of the Trinity, but the fact must be faced that it presupposes the *filioque*. Perhaps it does so in a way that will prove acceptable to the East, for in it we clearly see that the Spirit issues ultimately from the Father alone, in that the Father's love for the Son has a priority of order (not of time) over the Son's love for the Father. But if the East balks at it, we should put the question: What is to be made of the *scriptural* fact that Jesus appropriates the Spirit?⁴⁹ If representatives of the East claim in reply that the correspondence of the biblical and the immanent Trinity breaks down at this point, we return by asking: Why at this point rather than some other? And is not *everything* that we know of the immanent Trinity extrapolated from our knowledge of the biblical Trinity? They would probably reply that certain facets of the immanent Trinity are directly revealed in the NT. The discussion would then revert to the NT itself, but I am convinced, for the reasons stated earlier, that the last-mentioned claim cannot be substantiated by methodologically acceptable exegesis.

⁴⁹ St. Gregory Palamas shows himself perfectly consistent with Eastern tradition on this point. In one text, quoted by Edward Kilmartin in "The Active Role" 246, Palamas comes close to the mutual-love theory but stops short at having the Son appropriate the Holy Spirit. Rather, he has the Son receive the Holy Spirit from the Father and return Him to Him, like (my analogy) a mirror reflecting a beam of light to its source. The text reads: "The Spirit of the Word most high is like the ineffable love of the Father for that ineffable begotten Word; a love which that same Word and Son beloved of the Father avails Himself toward the Father; but insofar as He has the Spirit issuing with Him from the Father and dwelling in Him connaturally."

A further feature of the theory is that it is trinitarian in itself, in that in the NT it arises directly from the relation of one divine person to another, i.e. of Jesus to the Father. This, of course, was not the case with the way the theory originated in the thought of Augustine; nor was it the case with his other mode of trinitarian theologizing. There his starting point was the one God of Neoplatonism, who unfolds into diversity through the knowledge and love of himself.⁵⁰ This fact alone should commend the theory to the East, beginning its trinitarian thought as it does with the distinction of persons, as against the West with its emphasis on the unity of the divine nature.

I promised earlier to take up again the question of the Holy Spirit as gift. He is certainly the Gift of God to us (Jn 4:10), even, one might say, the Gift of the Father and Christ (conceding that Christ "gives" the Spirit), and therefore the Gift of the Father and the Son in the economic Trinity. But we cannot say, for either the biblical or the economic Trinity, that the Father and the Son are the "giver," as Augustine would have it. Rather, they are "givers." This is clear in both the biblical and the economic Trinity from the fact that as Spirit of Christ the Spirit has a somewhat different character from that which He has as Spirit of God, for reasons explained earlier. The Father and Christ, therefore, are clearly distinguished in their respective roles as givers, and so cannot be considered as constituting a single giver. In these conceptions of the Trinity there is nothing anomalous in the Gift's having more than one giver (though properly speaking it is the gift of the one from whom it comes ultimately). In the immanent Trinity, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit is not given, because He is not bestowed *gratuitously*.⁵¹ He is, however, bestowed, but bestowed by the Father and the Son *on each other*. This is something that we know not from the *filioque* but from the mutual-love theory. Indeed, this is one respect in which the two theologies stand in sharp distinction to each other. Nor do the Father and the Son here constitute a single "bestower," for the simple reason that they bestow the Spirit on each other, and therefore in this respect stand in opposition to each other. They are therefore the "bestowers" of the Holy Spirit. The opening to the outside, to us, comes through the "unity-in-difference" of Jesus' love of God and love of neighbor, but for this to be understood systematically it is necessary to invoke Rahner's transcendental theology of the divinity of Christ, whereby "the incarnation of God is the unique and *highest* instance of the actualization of the essence of human reality,

⁵⁰ Cf. Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* 3 (New York: Seabury, 1983) 83.

⁵¹ It is significant that each of the three Denzinger references to the Holy Spirit as "Gift," *Donum* (DS 570, 1690, and 3330), occurs in the context of the economic, not the immanent, Trinity.

which consists in this: that man is insofar as he abandons himself to the absolute mystery whom we call God."⁵² This matter I have explained in detail elsewhere.⁵³

Finally, the theory enables us to reconcile the competing claims of ascending and descending Christology in a balanced way, and to appreciate the contribution of ascending Christology, which only now is beginning to assert itself, especially in Catholic theology. It is true that the descending Christology of the Fourth Gospel, and especially its prologue, determined much (though not all) of the Christological and trinitarian thought of the Church Fathers and the whole development of official teaching on these subjects in the early centuries of Christianity; and it is also true, even obvious, that all this deserves to be assessed positively. However, already in this essay we have seen that the descending method, if unchecked, simply obliterates the contribution of ascending Christology. It is indeed a blunt instrument. Our case in point is the Incarnation (the word itself belonging to the vocabulary of descending Christology).⁵⁴ Chalcedon was eventually to interpret the prologue of St. John's Gospel in the sense that the second person of the immanent Trinity assumed human nature in Jesus of Nazareth, and so formulated the faith for Christians of succeeding ages, a faith that has stayed in place despite the ravages of several major schisms. But this theology and doctrine overlook completely the role of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation, and even when later it attempted to discover that role, as in the theology of Thomas Aquinas, it fell far short of the reality that is revealed by ascending Christology.⁵⁵ The two approaches do not in any way conflict; they are complementary. So, from the viewpoint of descending Christology it is correct to say that the Word of God in the immanent Trinity at a certain point of time created (in union with the other two divine persons), and united Himself with, the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth. But from the viewpoint of ascending Christology we can see that the way in which this was done was that the Holy Spirit, as the power and love of the Father, created this humanity (again, in union with the other two persons) and so radically sanctified it that it was drawn into unity of person with the Son in the immanent Trinity, who there is the sole object of the Father's love. The descending method remains valid but, like the major and minor modes in music, seems now

⁵² Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978) 218.

⁵³ Cf. Coffey, "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit" 467-72.

⁵⁴ Other examples, discussed earlier in the essay, are revelation, grace, and divine love, as first received by Jesus that he might mediate them to others.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Sum. theol.* 3, q. 7, a. 13c.

to be exhausted, and Christology, and theology generally, like contemporary music, now need to explore other modes to meet the incessant demands of the human spirit.

Objections to the Theory

I mentioned earlier that not all Catholic theologians are enthusiastic about the mutual-love theory. Though it is part of the theological tradition and therefore not rejected outright, it is regarded with caution and even suspicion in some quarters. Speaking of Aquinas, but clearly concurring with the opinion reported, Yves Congar writes: "The theme of mutual love meant a great deal to the religious and poetical aspects of man and there is undoubtedly a deep relationship between prayer and poetry, but Thomas did not believe that this theme had sufficient intellectual force to provide a basis for organizing the treatise on the Trinity."⁵⁶

What are the grounds of this attitude? I shall consider several, but by far the most important is that which St. Bonaventure, a keen supporter of the theory, formulated, and answered in his own way:⁵⁷ *si mutuus non unicus*, i.e., if it (the love) is mutual it is not single. But the love must be single or one, as the Holy Spirit Himself is one. Congar quotes H. F. Dondaine in support of the objection: "What two friends have in common to unite them is not the reality experienced in their act of love. Each experiences his own act, which makes two loves, two acts of loving. What they have in common is the object and their common good. . . . But it is to this one object, their community in good, that they adapt their two hearts and their two wills by two loves."⁵⁸

I would question whether this is a faithful account of human experience. True, mutual love includes and depends on the distinct loves of the lovers, but to me it seems that it is a reality greater than their sum. In my view "the reality experienced in their act of love" is precisely "what friends have in common to unite them." But in the immanent Trinity the case is quite clear. There the mutual love of the Father and the Son is a single reality, because it is the divine love, identical with the divine essence (but note, only as found in the Father and the Son). This is Bonaventure's answer,⁵⁹ and it seems to me to be correct. But the question of the singularity of mutual love at the human level is not irrelevant. In the Trinity we do not expect to find a contradiction of human spiritual experience but rather its purification and perfection. In the biblical and

⁵⁶ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* 1 (New York: Seabury, 1983) 88.

⁵⁷ Cf. *In 1 sent.* d. 10, a. 1, q. 3, ad 3.

⁵⁸ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* 1, 90.

⁵⁹ Cf. *In 1 sent.* d. 11, a. 1, q. 2.

the economic Trinity the mutual love of the Father and Christ is a differentiated reality, but even so a single reality, the Holy Spirit. The differentiation arises from the disproportion which exists between divinity (as in the Father) and humanity (as in Christ), so that the Spirit has a different character as Spirit of God from what He has as Spirit of Christ. In our experience of the Holy Spirit the union of these dimensions is best expressed, I believe, in the language of sacramentality: the action of the Spirit as Spirit of Christ is the sacrament of the action of the same Spirit as Spirit of God.⁶⁰

John Cowburn does not accept Bonaventure's answer to the objection. "A defender of the mutual-love theory cannot have it both ways. If the love involved in spiration is the essentially mutual love of the first two persons for each other, then they spirate the Holy Ghost as two persons and not as one in nature and will."⁶¹ But it seems to me that defenders of the mutual-love theory *can* have it both ways, in the sense that the divine essence must provide the framework within which statements about the persons are made. If the essence is left out of account, there arises a distinct danger of tritheism. St. Thomas is correct in teaching that the formal reasons of the processions in the Godhead are the essential divine knowledge and love respectively,⁶² because the fact that there are processions in God at all must pertain to the divine essence, even though this fact cannot be acquired by unaided reason. Therefore it is correct to say that the Son proceeds by virtue of the divine knowledge, and the Holy Spirit by the divine love. But this does not prevent the Son from being the Word of the Father alone, or the Holy Spirit from being the mutual love of the Father and the Son. The transition from essence to persons is not a choice of one alternative over another, but a movement towards greater precision in the light of new knowledge. Thus we can say that the Holy Spirit proceeds *by* the essential love, but *as* the mutual love of Father and Son. The former statement delivers the *fact* of the personhood of the Holy Spirit; the latter, the *manner* of that personhood.⁶³ As the mutual love of Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is, in the words of Thomas (before he adopted the questionable opinion that love has an immanent term), a "subsistent operation" (*operatio subsistens*).⁶⁴ Since the mutual love subsists as a person, it is here objectivized.

⁶⁰ Cf. Coffey, *Grace* 159.

⁶¹ John Cowburn, *Love and the Person* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967) 263.

⁶² Cf. *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 27, a. 3.

⁶³ In distinguishing between the fact and the manner of the procession of the Holy Spirit in *In 1 sent.* d. 10, q. 1, a. 2, St. Thomas is making essentially the same distinction; cf. Coffey, *Grace* 29.

⁶⁴ Cf. *In 1 sent.* d. 32, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4.

Cowburn says that, as all mutual love needs to be objectivized, the Holy Spirit should be called the product of the mutual love of Father and Son in the Trinity rather than the mutual love itself.⁶⁵ This seems an acceptable refinement, as it expresses the personification of the Holy Spirit without buying into the question of whether love, by analogy with knowledge, has an immanent term. And it enables us to see more clearly that the mutual love is the proximate ground, and the essential love the ultimate ground, of the procession of the Holy Spirit.

A second objection to the theory is that it is too anthropomorphic. This, in fact, is a more general form of the objection just dealt with. However, other instances are brought forward also. An important one is the use of the term "relationship" in the theory. Congar expresses this objection in the following way: "The word 'relationship' is used in the sense in which it occurs in human psychology, whereas, in the doctrine of the Trinity, it has a technical and metaphysical meaning."⁶⁶ Provided the two senses of the word are not confused, I do not see that this objection has any weight. Underlying Congar's statement there seems to be the idea that a technical and metaphysical meaning has some advantage over a psychological meaning. If so, it is a gratuitous assumption. That in the mutual-love theory relationships of a "psychological" kind are held to exist among the persons of the Trinity and are made the subject matter of theology does not immediately permit the theory to be branded as anthropomorphic, although of course the danger of anthropomorphism is present, as it is in any human speculation about the Trinity, especially where analogy is at work. Nor would I aver that this danger has never been succumbed to. The recognition of the existence of psychological relations among the persons of the Trinity means simply that we are dealing with spiritual and personal realities.

In this connection it is worth noting that the entire Christian religion rests on a psychological fact, i.e. Jesus' awareness of his unique relationship with God. Out of this comes his sense of God's loving initiative in his regard, his election, to which he sees his whole life simply as a response. From this flows his sense of the kingdom and the Fatherhood of God and so his entire gospel message, all of which is validated by God in raising him from the dead. When theology subsequently reflects on these basic data and eventually arrives at a doctrine of the immanent Trinity with its metaphysical relations, it should not forget that the whole edifice depends on one simple psychological relation. And the theological project is much weakened if psychological relations are not allowed to play their part, which is not just in prayer and poetry, as

⁶⁵ Cf. Cowburn, *Love and the Person* 295.

⁶⁶ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* 1, 92.

Congar would allow. They imply metaphysical relations and complement their contribution.

I pass on to two final objections, which I raise myself. The first is: How can a subsistent operation be a person? Or, put differently, how can an operation be subsistent? The difficulty arises at the level of imagination rather than conceptuality. Process theology would have its own way of viewing this, but in traditional thought in any being other than God an operation would be an accident. In God, however, there can be no accidents. Therefore, whatever exists in God subsists, either absolutely in the divine nature or relatively as one of the persons. Though there is such a thing as the divine love, identical with the divine nature, the mutual love of the Father and the Son is not simply to be identified with it; rather, it constitutes the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. This means that it is a distinct spiritual hypostasis, center of spiritual activity, which in the unity of the divine nature it has in common with the other two persons, unique only in its origin, the manner of its procession, and its property of being the mutual love of the other two. The latter characteristic makes it a hypostasis in an utterly different way from the others. But this should not cause surprise. The words of Rahner should be heeded here:

Every doctrine of the Trinity must emphasize that the "hypostasis" is precisely that in God through which Father, Son, and Spirit are *distinct* from one another; that, wherever there exists between the three of them a real, univocal correspondence, there is absolute numerical identity. Hence the concept of hypostasis, applied to God, cannot be a universal univocal concept, applying to each of the three persons in the same way.⁶⁷

The last objection is: How can Jesus' human love of God be the Holy Spirit?⁶⁸ To understand my answer, it is necessary to understand the transcendental Christology of Rahner, which in turn is to be seen in the light of the enhypostasia tradition which began with Leontius of Byzantium.⁶⁹ The love of Jesus cannot be identified with the Holy Spirit at the level of particular acts or at the level of the virtue of charity, both of which Jesus has in common with us, though in the highest and fullest possible way. The identification takes place at the most basic level in Jesus, at the level of the hypostatic union, where the ontological and the psychological "condition each other immanently."⁷⁰ Together with Jesus'

⁶⁷ Rahner, *The Trinity* 11-12 n. 6.

⁶⁸ For detail cf. Coffey, "The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit."

⁶⁹ Cf. David Coffey, "The Palamite Doctrine of God: A New Perspective," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32 (1988) 347.

⁷⁰ Karl Rahner, "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," *Theological Investigations* 5 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) 205.

unique consciousness it constitutes the psychological dimension of the hypostatic union itself. Not only was Jesus aware at this level of the most profound possible spiritual union with God; he also cleaved to God in the most thoroughgoing possible way. *This* cleaving, unique to him, is the Holy Spirit, uniquely received from the Father as *His* love, appropriated by Jesus, and returned as his own love, the basic love which is the explanation of the fulness of charity in him. Further, in the consummated union with God that takes place in death, this love is complete and no longer limited by the particular acts that characterize life, and while it is given primarily to God, it also embraces human beings, because of the profound unity of love of God and love of neighbor in the structure of human loving. This is the explanation of the Holy Spirit as Spirit of Christ and *agapē* poured out by Him upon the Church. It is the complete "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit in the human love of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

I shall not attempt to make a summary of my findings, but shall be content simply to say what I hope to have achieved here. I refer to the quotation given earlier from Congar, that for St. Thomas the mutual-love theory did not have sufficient intellectual force to provide a basis for organizing the treatise on the Trinity. Behind this remark lies the assumption that the procession model of the Trinity, particularly in the form of the *filioque*, did possess this force. I hope to have shown, first, that the mutual-love theory is valid, and secondly, that it has as much intellectual force as any other theology of the Trinity. Further, I hope to have shown that in Western thought it should be seen as the necessary complement of the *filioque*, providing a way of organizing and expressing the data of ascending theology in the context of the economic Trinity, as the *filioque* does for the data of descending theology. True, there is one respect in which it must be regarded as secondary: it has to do with understanding the Holy Spirit *after* (in order, not in time) His procession and its unique character are first established. In the epistemological order, the order of experience and discovery, the mutual-love theory has priority over the *filioque*, in the sense that the Christian religion arises out of Jesus' unique awareness of union with God; but in the ontological order, the order of givenness, the *filioque* comes first, because distinction of persons logically precedes their union, and their procession must precede their return. But in this same order, from another point of view, the mutual-love theory takes the priority, because it presupposes and completes the *filioque*. In the light of these remarks it will be clear that the organization of an adequate treatise on the Trinity must encompass distinction *and* union, procession *and* return, the *filioque* *and* the mutual-

love theory. Therefore it will be the NT's fundamental and comprehensive doctrine of salvation, rather than some derived and particular doctrine such as the *filioque*, that will ultimately dictate the scope of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity and indicate and moderate its contents, i.e. provide the basis for its organization.

The mutual-love theory gives us important information about the Trinity that we would not otherwise have. In particular, it tells us that the Son as it were faces the Father, as well as facing away from Him. As he faces away from the Father he proceeds from the Father, is sent into the world, and also constitutes with the Father the coprinciple of the procession of the Holy Spirit and cosender of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. But as he faces the Father he is joined to Him in a mutual love which is identical with the Holy Spirit. The return to God, of Jesus and ourselves with him, is explained in the light of *this* theology as we in our spiritual journey are caught up in this same relationship of Sonship. I remarked above that descending theology should not be allowed to obliterate the contribution of ascending theology. Therefore what the mutual-love theory can tell us about the Trinity, particularly at the economic level, should be carefully heeded, and not allowed to be blasted out of existence by the workings-out of the *filioque*.

Now a word about terminology. In my early publications on this theme I called the mutual-love theory the bestowal model of the Trinity. The word "model" is apt because this theology of the Trinity, like the *filioque* and all other trinitarian theologies, is extrapolated from just one set of data and fulfils just one methodological function. In other words, the word "model" relativizes the tendency to set up one theology as absolute, as "the" correct way of understanding the Trinity. I called it the "bestowal" model because it, and only it, has to do with the bestowal of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son on each other. But the disadvantage of this word is that it fails to bring out the contrast which exists with the *filioque*. I had called the latter and the other trinitarian theologies, i.e. the *per filium* and monopatrism, examples of the "procession" model, and I still regard this term as apt because these theologies have to do with the outward movement, the "procession," of the Son and the Holy Spirit from the Father. By way of contrast, I have come eventually to call the mutual-love theory "the model of return." This is because it has to do essentially with the return of the Son to the Father in love, their mutual love which is the Holy Spirit. This term serves better to bring out the deepest essence of the model and also its contrast with the procession model. Until a more suitable term is suggested, I shall continue to prefer it to my earlier choice.

Finally, the mutual-love theory may be destined to play a part in East-

West relations, but this can only be as it is approached through the *filioque*, which remains a major ecumenical problem. Offsetting this, though, to some extent is the clear perception that the Spirit issues ultimately from the Father alone.

I conclude with the first and fourth verses of a beautiful hymn translated from the Latin "Amor Patris et Filii," unfortunately little known (at least in Australia), numbered 438 in *The English Hymnal*, and set to a noble melody by Orlando Gibbons:

Love of the Father, love of God the Son,
From whom all came, in whom was all begun;
Who formest heavenly beauty out of strife,
Creation's whole desire and breath of life.
Purest and highest, wisest and most just,
There is no truth save only in thy trust;
Thou dost the mind from earthly dreams recall,
And bring through Christ to Him for whom are all.