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Dipolarity and God

by

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A thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Theology)

The University of Auckland, September 1999

• *A b s t r a c t* •

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is about one God in three divine persons, with one of these three becoming human (without ceasing to be divine) in Jesus of Nazareth. The concept of dipolarity is about the combination of complementary but opposite principles. The most widely recognised examples of this concept are *one-many* and *being-becoming*. But what is not so recognised is that these dipolarities are clearly illustrated in the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity. By contrast, philosophers and theologians throughout history have often attempted to reconcile or synthesise these dipolar 'opposites', or to place one over the other. This quest, enshrined in Neoplatonic philosophy, has influenced the development of the Christian doctrine of God (less so in regard to the particular doctrine of the Trinity just mentioned). Divine 'Oneness' and 'Being' have often been regarded as exclusive of 'many' and 'becoming'. But the theological insight that God the Trinity is a relational and active personal being, may be contrasted with this depiction of God as singular absolute and beyond becoming. From a trinitarian foundation, a theology of God can be developed which expresses both the being-becoming and one-many dipolarities. This means revising elements of traditional Christian theism, especially in regard to understanding the eternal and unchangeable God as also becoming and many (in relation).

• *A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s* •

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The Reverend Professor Colin Gunton, DD (London), Hon. DD (Aberdeen), D.Phil, M.A., was one of the examiners of this thesis both in 1997 and of the revised thesis in 1999, while at King's College (University of London). His own writings in theology were much appreciated and are referred to a number of times in this thesis. He died suddenly, aged 62, on 6 May 2003.

• *Table of Contents* •

Introduction	1
Thesis Outline.....	5
What is Dipolarity	6
I. The Trinity and Dipolarity	10
1. Historical Development of Trinitarian Doctrine	12
1.1. Old Testament	12
1.2. New Testament	14
1.3. The Worship of the Early Church	17
1.4. The Early Fathers	18
1.5. Sabellianism & Modalism	19
1.6. Tertullian	19
1.7. Origen	21
1.8. Arius and Nicea	22
1.9. Athanasius	23
1.10. 'Hypostasis' and 'Ousia'	25
1.11. The Cappadocians	27
2. Constitutional Unity - Order	31
2.1. The Monarchy of the Father in the Economy	32
3. Perichoretic Unity - Movement	37

4. The One, and the 'Unitarians'	40
4.1. Augustine.....	40
4.2. Thomas Aquinas.....	43
4.3. John Calvin.....	44
4.4. Karl Barth and the Rejection of 'Person'.....	45
5. The Many, and the 'Socialists'	47
6. The Immanent & Economic Trinity: Being & Becoming	49
6.1. The Split in Patristic theology	50
6.2. Economic Trinity = Immanent Trinity	51
6.3. Correspondence	51
6.4. From Economic to Immanent	56
6.5. Relational Trinity.....	58
7. Conclusion	61
II. One or Many, Being or Becoming?	62
1. Early Quests for Unification	62
1.1. The Milesians	63
1.2. Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans	65
1.3. Heraclitus.....	68
1.4. The Eleatics.....	75
1.5. Eclectics and Atomists.....	76
1.6. Plato.....	78
1.7. Aristotle.....	82
1.8. Later Platonism.....	85
2. Coincidentia Oppositorum	88
2.1. Hermes Trismegistus	88
2.2. Nicholas of Cusa	90
2.3. Pico to Bruno	93
2.4. Dipolarities of Pascal & Coleridge	97

3. Dreaming about an Ultimate Principle	102
3.1. Georg W. F. Hegel.....	102
3.2. Theories of Everything.....	105
3.3. Randomness, Unpredictability, Chaos, Novelty	107
3.4. Order, Law, Parameters, Boundaries.....	108
4. Conclusion	111
III. Athens, Jerusalem, and Alexandria	112
1. Dipolarity in Biblical Theology (Jerusalem)	112
2. God and Platonism (Athens)	120
3. Platonism and the Christian God (Alexandria)	130
Impassibility	133
IV. God: Being <i>and</i> Becoming	147
1. Does 'becoming' have Priority?.....	147
2. God is Living.....	152
3. God is Personal	156
4. God is Complex, not Simple.....	159
5. God is Self-Existent, but is God Self-Sufficient?	163
6. God is Perfect, and Changes	165
7. God as Actual and Potential.....	170

8. Is there a Best Possible World?	175
9. God becomes what he was not before, without ceasing to be what he always was	176
10. He became what we are, in order that we might become what he is.	185
11. God Crucified - the Suffering God	187
12. God and Space	191
13. Conclusion	193
V. God and Time	195
1. God and Temporality	199
1.1. What is Time?	199
1.2. Time as an Objective Reality	200
1.3. Time as Subjective Consciousness	204
1.4. The Cyclic-Linear Distinction	206
1.5. A Timeless God has no freedom	211
1.6. Creating is Temporal	220
1.7. 'Personal' Beings are Temporal	221
1.8. The Incarnation of a Temporal God	223
1.9. The Trinity and the eternal existence of Time	226
1.10. The Relativity of Time	229
1.11. Conclusion	232
2. God, Freedom and Foreknowledge	233
2.1. Foreknowledge and the Bible	234
2.2. Foreknowledge and Preordination	235
2.3. Fortune and Fate	236
2.4. Between Two Errors	239
2.5. John Duns Scotus	243
2.6. God & World - Necessary & Contingent	245

Conclusion	248
Appendix One: A Calculus for Polarity	250
Bibliography	251

Introduction

It is my intention in this thesis to make a contribution to the Christian understanding of God by showing that the concept of dipolarity explains much about the nature of God as Trinity. This might seem presumptuous following two millennia of Christian doctrinal development, fundamental to which is the understanding that God is Trinity. Have so many theologians missed something? From their understanding that God is somehow both one and three, they have actually encountered the principle of polarity. Yet, frequently a failure to appreciate the nature and significance of dipolarity has led to the doctrine of the Trinity being regarded as enigmatic and for some even irrelevant.

Almost without exception during the last five years, when asked about this 'little pamphlet on God', the question to me has been "what is dipolarity, and what has it to do with God?" If there is no question, there may be a suspicion of doctrinal deviation, for there is no mention of 'dipolarity' in the Bible or any creed. However, this thesis is about a concept already central to Christianity, even if rarely named. It is then my intention in this thesis to explain both its significance and relevance for understanding God.

So what is dipolarity? It is a concept illustrated by the nature of a magnet. The two ends or poles are magnetic opposites (north and south poles), yet both are necessary together for a magnet to be a magnet. Our earliest scientific experiments with magnets likely included observing the opposite properties of attraction and repulsion belonging to the same metal object. I will shortly explain the concept in more detail, with other examples. Put concisely, dipolarity is a concept about completeness in complementary opposites. In this thesis I will follow both physicists and metaphysicians who have attempted to explain features of reality as dipolar in nature.

But from this I am not going to say that God, like a magnet, *is* dipolar, because God is not a singular entity with two polar features. That could be a misunderstanding which arises from reading only the title to this thesis – that

God is two, rather than Trinity. But this would be to turn the *concept* of dipolarity into an ontological description of God ('God is dipolar'). Rather, God is understood using the *concept* of dipolarity when described as 'one God in three persons - Father, Son, and Spirit.' Hence the similarity between the concept of dipolarity and 'trinity'. The term 'trinity' has been used to name the oneness *and* threeness about God, just as the concept of 'dipolarity' has been used to understand seemingly paradoxical features of reality, like magnetism.

In some Process theology, it has been suggested that 'God is dipolar' (e.g. A.N. Whitehead's God-World dipolarity).¹ This ontological description seems to offer an alternative to trinitarian theology, and therefore in my opinion loses reference to the most significant example of dipolarity. In this thesis I will not agree that dipolarity can replace trinitarian theism. Despite this, I will still show appreciation of those Process theologians who have developed a theology of God using the philosophical concept of dipolarity, especially where this offers an alternative to the monism of so-called Classical Theism.

Within traditions of philosophical reflection, many ideas have been developed which have been utilised and sometimes further developed by metaphysicians better known as theologians. St. Paul's dialogue with the Athenians is one early Christian example (Acts 17), the use of the 'logos' term in the prologue to St. John's Gospel is another (John 1). Ideas and terms drawn from 'pagan' philosophy have helped Christians formulate creeds (e.g. the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds), and also helped make their message about God intelligible and plausible to non-Jews.² However, alongside the benefits such philosophical concepts and terms brought, there are also examples of departures from orthodoxy when philosophical ideas reshaped Christian theology. With regard to this, Chapter Three will evaluate the influence that Neoplatonic philosophy had in shaping and modifying much early Christian theism.³ Despite this sometimes negative impact on Christian theology, we continue with dialogue between theology and metaphysical reflection,⁴

1 Alfred N. Whitehead *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

2 W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology - Volume I* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1991) 72.

3 See also W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Collected Essays Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 119-183.

4 W. Pannenberg *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* (trans. Philip Clayton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 6 - "... a theological doctrine of God that lacks metaphysics as its discussion partner falls into either a kerygmatic subjectivism or a thoroughgoing demythologization - and frequently into both at the same time!" Pannenberg, in his *Systematic Theology - Volume I*, criticises theologians during the

believing that a philosophical concept like dipolarity may be appropriately utilised as a tool to articulate God's self-revelation as Trinity without this concept becoming the hermeneutical framework or basis for theological construction and apologetics. This thesis does not presuppose a commitment to the metaphysics of dipolarity, but to the self-revelation of God as Trinity.

Dipolarity is not then to be regarded as the philosophical root for a subsequent doctrine of the Trinity. While the concept of dipolarity, as applied to theism in this thesis, does have antecedents in the concept of dipolarity found in various religious and philosophical traditions, these have not become, as this thesis will show, Trojan horses (to use Karl Barth's analogy) for bringing in the notion of the 'Christian' God as trinity.⁵ In fact each 'horse' is seen to collapse before the gates! The chosen methodology for this thesis is not then an *a priori* application of a philosophical concept to theological tradition. But neither is it an approach which takes as its only reference the divine revelation within Christian tradition. So, reference is made in Chapter Two to the concept of dipolarity in the thinking of theologians and philosophers who predate Christianity. But these are evaluated according to what this thesis considers to be the definitive expression of dipolarity in the Christian concept of God as Trinity.

The methodological approach of this thesis may be compared with Colin Gunton's quest for 'transcendentals' in his book *The One, the Three and the Many*.⁶ It is from the doctrine of the Trinity that Gunton derives 'transcendentals' such as relationality and substance, also particularity *and* relatedness.⁷ While dipolarity (as a concept about concepts) may not be regarded as another transcendental, it is interesting to note that some of those

last century, particularly Albrecht Ritschl, who have opposed the role of metaphysics in the Christian doctrine of God. cf. *Systematic Theology - Volume I* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1991) 98ff.

⁵ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Vol 1.1: The Doctrine of the Word of God* (trans. G.T. Thomson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936). Reference here to Barth's analogy cf. p.386.

⁶ Gunton refers to Daniel Hardy's understanding of 'transcendentals': 'these are the forms through which being displays itself, through which being is determinate; they constitute an answer to the search for the fundamental features of the cosmos.' cf. Daniel W. Hardy 'Created and Redeemed Sociality' *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community* edited by C.E. Gunton and D.W. Hardy (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989) 21-47, 25. cf. Gunton *The One, the Three and the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 136. See also the review of Gunton's book in Stephen N. Williams *Revelation and Reconciliation: A Window on Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) especially 166-167.

⁷ It is interesting that Gunton observes, like I do in this thesis, a failure in much theological thinking to hold together both the 'one' and the 'many', and to rather collapse both the many and becoming into Parmenidean oneness and immobility. Yet this monism/immobility, as he illustrates, is overcome in the trinitarian theology of the Cappadocian Fathers. This gives rise to the 'transcendental' of particularity *and* relatedness. cf. *The One, the Three and the Many* 150.

transcendentals which Gunton identifies are dipolar in character or in relation to each other. However, my point here is that for Gunton the 'transcendentals' are not a philosophical *a priori* for explaining reality, but are themselves derived from a discussion of God as Trinity.

Gunton discusses the concept of analogy to speak of the relationship between the Creator and creation,⁸ concluding that for both God and creation there is one ontological dynamic of being and relation, or being in communion.⁹ The doctrine of the Trinity again provides an analogy of being/becoming which gives meaning to the structures of the created world. To put this another way, it is the trinitarian generated 'transcendental'¹⁰ which enables Gunton to say that "of both God and the world it must be said that they have their being in relation."¹¹ If I understand correctly Gunton's meaning of transcendent fundamentals, then this thesis is proposing something similar for the concept of dipolarity. Rather than imposing an *a priori* philosophical category on the being of God,¹² dipolarity is a concept which can be used to order our thinking about God in that God is self-revealed in the Christian tradition as one-many and being-becoming (two dipolarities). So I have referred to Gunton's work at this point to identify a similarity between his methodology and that adopted in this thesis.

My first realisation that the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity offered a solution to previous philosophical theology which tried to reconcile opposites, came with reading Charles N. Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture*.¹³ In this work, Cochrane observed the failure of classical culture to reconcile virtue and fortune,¹⁴ also being and becoming.¹⁵ In contrast to this impasse, Cochrane noted that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, for the first time brought

⁸ A full discussion of the nature and meaning of theological language as analogous is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁹ Colin Gunton *The One, the Three and the Many* 141.

¹⁰ Colin Gunton *The One, the Three and the Many* 145.

¹¹ Colin Gunton *The One, the Three and the Many* 230.

¹² A methodology from which Gunton distances himself. "The error of imposing a priori philosophical categories on the being of God must also be avoided. If there are transcendentals, they have their being in the fact that God has created the world in such a way that it bears the marks of its maker. They are not then the 'forms through which being displays itself', because that might suggest a priority of 'being' over God, but notions which can be predicated of all being by virtue of the fact that God is creator and the world is creation." *The One, the Three and the Many*, 136-137.

¹³ Charles Norris Cochrane *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944).

¹⁴ C.N. Cochrane *Christianity and Classical Culture* 99. However, my account of dipolarity in early Greek Philosophy (Chapter Two) contradicts this claim.

¹⁵ C.N. Cochrane *Christianity and Classical Culture* 102.

together order and motion (progress), and "the one and the many," as complementary on the same plane of reality.¹⁶ The Trinity is the first principle, the fundamental *arche*, showing the dipolarities of one-many and being-becoming. As Cochrane said, "in the Trinity, Christian wisdom discovers that for which Classicism had so long vainly sought, viz, the *logos* or explanation of being and motion, in other words, a metaphysic of ordered process."¹⁷

Thesis Outline

Chapter One of this thesis affirms that the two polarities, one-many and being-becoming, are most clearly found in the historical development of the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity. The two 'trinitarian' polarities of one-many and being-becoming are then used in **Chapter Two** as the basis for a critique of philosophers and theologians throughout history who have searched for an ultimate principle, often failing to appreciate dipolarity and that principles in dipolar relation to each other cannot be synthesised. **Chapter Three** demonstrates the impact of unification theories (and/or quests for the transcendent One), on Greek, Jewish, and Christian theologies of God. The purpose of this chapter is to show that even though the early Church theologians developed a one-many and order-movement dipolarity in their doctrine of the Trinity, much of their doctrine about the nature and attributes of God remained bound to one pole, i.e. oneness, being. **Chapter Four** attempts a reformulation of the Christian doctrine of God, especially in terms of the being-becoming polarity, in deliberate contrast to 'classical' theism. **Chapter Five** confronts the main obstacle to working out fully a concept of being-becoming, namely the Platonic/Plotinian concept of eternity. When adopted by Christian theologians the 'eternity' concept has precluded the 'becoming' pole in divine reality. This chapter brings us back to the Trinity as dipolar in nature, in which case time is real for God who is being-becoming. The focus then of the last two chapters is on the being-becoming dipolarity. However it should be noted that being is often explained with regard to oneness, and becoming with regard to what is many. The two dipolarities are then very much related.

¹⁶ C.N. Cochrane *Christianity and Classical Culture* 236-238. So we should not speak of "the one and the many." The One is the Many. cf. Gustav E. Mueller 'The One and the Many' *Philosophical Review* 53 (1944) 46-61.

¹⁷ C.N. Cochrane *Christianity and Classical Culture* 437.

Oneness and being have been historically associated with God as indivisible, singular and static perfection. This is the ontology of Neo-Platonism. Along with this, 'many' and 'becoming', as the second and third chapters of this thesis will show, have often been regarded as less than divine features, entailing division and so instability and movement. So the focus on 'being that becomes' in the last half of the thesis,¹⁸ is an extension of the one-many dipolarity given focus in the first half of the thesis (Chapters one to three).

What is Dipolarity?

The word 'dipolar' is derived from the Latin *polus* and the Greek *πόλος*, referring to the poles or ends of an axis.¹⁹ The most familiar usage of 'dipolarity' is in explaining the oneness *and* opposition between magnetic poles. The two poles complement or complete one another, and cannot exist without the other (*contraria sunt complementa* - 'opposites are complementary'). This example from physics also demonstrates that opposites attract, and that 'positive' and 'negative' charges stabilise each other (e.g. the atom). There is no electrical 'current' unless both the positive and negative terminals on a battery are connected. Another illustration is that of stereoscopic vision, as given by Joan Crewdson:



Each eye has its own image and these provide contradictory data. When we integrate the two images, we achieve stereoscopic vision, but this does not *replace* the two separate images. We still depend on their existence for seeing stereoscopically, and the new, in-depth image is different from either, yet not just a synthesis of both. By integrating the separate images, we are able to see a new reality, on a new level, with a new qualitative unity that was not present in either of the other images.²⁰

There is integration, but not a synthesis which transcends the dipolarity. For there is no perspective or 'depth of field' without *both* eyes open. The above illustration is inadequate in showing the 'two' as polar *opposites*, but it serves to

¹⁸ That is, continuing from the discussion on divine impassibility in chapter three.

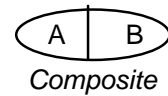
¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary - Vol. XII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, Second Edition) 11; C.T. Lewis and C. Short *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966 edition) 1393; H.G. Liddell and R. Scott *A Greek-English Lexicon - Vol. II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925) 1436. While not related etymologically, the Greek *διπλοῦς*, means 'double' or 'two-fold'.

²⁰ Joan Crewdson in *Christian Doctrine in the Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge: A Personalist Theology* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1994) 131.

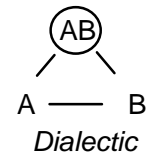
indicate that recognising polarity prevents a collapse or reductionism to an undifferentiated identity.

Nor is polarity to be confused with a continuum which plots gradations between two infinite and therefore undefinable extremes. Rather, the one is manifest in two, without a reduction to an ultimate unitary principle, or being stretched into the extremes of a continuum.

With dipolarity, oneness is found in the combination of opposites. This is not a $1 + 1 = 2$ formula, such that two discrete elements remain (dualism; $\delta\upsilon\omicron$), a collection or aggregation of elements.²¹ The christological controversies of the fifth century Church illustrate this. The orthodox argued that Christ is 'fully human, fully divine', not a composition of half human - half divine. The relation between the two could not be reduced by mathematical formula, since the two together were said to be true of the one person. Instead, the relation between the 'divine' and 'human' was described in terms of reciprocal relation and interpenetration (*communicatio idiomatum*, *περιχώρησις*).²² This relationship between poles is further explored in Louis Norris' "calculus for polarity" (Appendix One).



Dipolarity recognises a unity or holism in many other 'opposites'. For example, in the one - many, and being - becoming. It is the purpose of this thesis to demonstrate the value of these dipolar concepts for understanding theological truth, and in particular the doctrine of God.



²¹ For this reason the terms 'dyadism' or 'binarity' are inadequate, even though Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) may have used them in a dipolar way. For example, in explaining binarity he says, "Imagine two objects which are not merely *thought* as two, but of which something is true such that neither could be removed without destroying the fact supposed true of the other." cf. C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss (eds.) *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce - Vol. II Elements of Logic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932) 44; and *Vol 1 - Principles of Philosophy* (1931) 249. Peirce later came to emphasise reality as continuous (synechism) cf. C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce Vol VI - Scientific Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935) 117ff., 343. Charles Hartshorne criticises Peirce for falling back confusedly into monopolarity, with talk about *ens necessarium*. cf. 'The Dipolar Conception of Deity' *The Review of Metaphysics* 21.2 (1967) 273-289, 280.

²² The principle of *communicatio idiomatum* was expounded by Cyril of Alexandria in his argument with Nestorius. However, the concept remained paradoxical since the Logos was considered unable to suffer. The term *περιχώρησις* was used later to describe the interchange or reciprocation between the two natures of Christ, by Maximus the Confessor (580-662 AD). John of Damascus (675-749 AD) extended the meaning to include 'interpenetration' or 'coinherence' of the two natures, and the three persons of the Trinity. cf. G.W.H. Lampe (ed.) *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) 1077; L. Prestige 'ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΕΩ and ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΗΣΙΣ in the Fathers' *The Journal of Theological Studies* Vol. 29, No. 115 (1928) 242-252; Aloys Grillmeier *Christ in Christian Tradition: Volume One - From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)* (trans. John Bowden; London: Mowbrays, 1975 - second revised edition).

A distinction must be made between dipolarity and dialectic. Dialectic is an approach to truth (whether that truth is dipolar or not) by debating or reasoning (διαλογίζομαι) from two or more angles by making a distinction (διακρίνω). The two concepts (i.e. 'dipolarity' and 'dialectic') are however frequently related, since the dialectical form of argument sometimes reflects a dipolar truth. The debating skill of the dialectician (τεχνή διαλεκτική) was first developed by Socrates, but its use was employed primarily for arriving at a unitary principle, thus removing the ambiguities and tensions of dipolarity.²³ The history of philosophy provides many examples, some of the most influential in recent times being Immanuel Kant, Georg W. F. Hegel (a synthesis of thesis-antithesis), and Karl Marx.²⁴

A distinction may also be made between dipolarity and paradox. There is a completeness in the combination of opposites in a polar structure, whereas 'paradox' tends to leave us with a contradiction. This is especially so according to Søren Kierkegaard, who deliberately opposed the idealism of Hegel by emphasising the paradoxical and unresolvable nature of reality.²⁵ However dipolarity is neither synthesis (Hegel) nor antithesis/paradox (Kierkegaard). Polarity is not mere contradiction. So this thesis will not consider the logical contradictories of 'being' and 'non-being' as a polarity. Non-being has no part in being. Neither can 'good' and 'evil' be polar opposites. There is no wholism, or mutual contribution to each other. These opposites do not involve and complete each other.²⁶ So John Buckham uses the term *contrapletion* for polarity:

In contrast to contradiction, contrariety and correlation - in the first of which one of the terms of the dyad eliminates the other, in the second opposes the other, and in the third is subordinate to the other - here [i.e. contrapletion] the two *fulfill* each other.²⁷

23 Plato, and Neoplatonists after him, regarded opposites as merging in a truth which absorbs and denies their differences. Aristotle regarded opposites in relation to a third principle, which functions as the 'mean' or defining agent. cf. *Physics* 1.5, 6 - *Aristotle's Physics, Books I and II*, translated with Introduction and Notes, by W. Charlton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) 10-15.

24 Howard Williams *Hegel, Heraclitus and Marx's Dialectic* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989) ix - x.

25 We have a choice of either/or, rather than Hegel's "mediation." cf. R. Bretall (ed.) *A Kierkegaard Anthology* (New York: The Modern Library, 1936) 19ff., 130. Kierkegaard does however believe that paradoxes, which result from the conjunction of eternity and time, are eliminated in the subjective 'moment' of faith. cf. p.218ff. and other sections from the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the "Philosophical Fragments"*.

26 These logical contractions, mistaken for 'polarities', are discussed by Louis W. Norris in his reply to A.J. Bahm's article on Polarity (1949). cf. "Existence and its Polarities" - Revision and Supplement' *The Journal of Philosophy* 47 (1950) 96-99.

27 John W. Buckham 'Duality and Dialectic' *The Monist* 46 (1936) 175-189, 183. Buckham had earlier illustrated this concept in his article 'Immanence - Transcendence' *Journal of Philosophy* 28:8 (1931)

This thesis agrees with F.F. Centore, that "any Christian philosopher today worth his or her salt must have a philosophy of being which can simultaneously account for both change and permanence, flux and fixity, existence and essence, and so on, within Being."²⁸ Aristotle said much the same thing when defining nature (φύσις). It is "the substance of things which have a principle of motion in themselves qua what they are."²⁹ It is the purpose of this thesis to restore the polarities of one-many and being-becoming to their fundamental place in the Christian doctrine of God.

204-211: "Logically considered, the concept "*immanence*" is incomplete and impotent without its polar concept "transcendence"... Immanence - transcendence, that is, belongs to the class of polar relationship which may be termed *contrapletion*, in which one contraplete requires the other as its antithesis, in order to fulfil its meaning, as e.g. above-below, light-darkness, whole-part, subject-object, human-divine, finite-infinite, etc." (207). See also Nels F.S. Ferré 'Beyond Substance and Process' *Theology Today* 24 (1967) 160-171, 169-170.

28 F.F. Centore 'Classical Christian Philosophy and Temporality: Correcting a Misunderstanding' *Monist* 75 (1992) 393-405.

29 *Metaphysics* Δ 1015a, cf. *Aristotle's Metaphysics* - translated with Commentaries and Glossary by Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell: Peripatetic Press) 78. Martin Heidegger made the same observation in regard to the concept of *physis* (φύσις) in the earliest Greek philosophy: "*Physis* means the power that emerges and the enduring realm under its sway. This power of emerging and enduring includes 'becoming' as well as 'being' in the restricted sense of inert duration." cf. M. Heidegger *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (trans. R. Manheim; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) 14. The Latin translation, *natura* (later to be focused in the substance-oriented ontology of Aristotle), loses this dipolar meaning (p.13). cf. John Macquarrie *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1966) 205f.

The Trinity and Dipolarity

A fundamental belief of Christianity is that God is both One and Three, a unity in plurality. This concept of polarity found in the doctrine of the Trinity, reflects the "basic grammar or ground or structure of Christian theology",¹ and in fact of all reality.² However, the influence of "Platonic" thought on the early theologians of the church threatened to dissolve this conceptual polarity into a unity. This 'unifying' urge was irresistible when it came to describing God as a perfect and simple being, and therefore immutable (see chapters three and four). It also proved irresistible to many who grappled with the doctrine of the Trinity (e.g. Sabellius and Augustine alike). But over against unitarian tendencies there developed an understanding of God as not only a unity but a community, a communion of persons.

According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The early Church fathers interpreted this as indicating a distinction-within-unity. God is both one and many - a dipolarity expressed by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is the purpose of this chapter to explain the significance of this dipolarity for Christian doctrine. The other main dipolarity, being-becoming, is the subject of the final section of this chapter. I conclude that God the Trinity illustrates the dipolarity of 'being-becoming' in regard to who God is (intrinsic/immanent Trinity), and in relation to the world (economic Trinity) - a theme which will be argued further in Chapter Four.

1 T.F. Torrance *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985) 161; *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (University of Virginia Press, 1980) Chapter 6.

2 Or to use Samuel Taylor Coleridge's description of the Trinity as the "idea of ideas." cf. *Notebooks*, 4, 5294; 'Notes on Waterland's Vindication of Christ's Divinity' *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. W.G.T. Shedd (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853) Vol. 5, p.407; and these works quoted by Colin Gunton *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity - The Bampton Lectures 1992* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 144. Lesslie Newbigin says, "it is right to see the Blessed Trinity as the true paradigm, to recognize that ultimate reality is not to be understood in monistic terms but in terms of relationship." - 'Ecumenical Amnesia' in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 18.1 (1994) 2-5, 3.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the methodological approach for using the concept of dipolarity for understanding God, is the discovery of its primary derivation from God's self-revelation as Trinity. According to Christoph Schwöbel, it is a failure in Christological studies to adopt this same methodological approach in which the doctrine of the Trinity provides a hermeneutical structure, which has given rise to various dualisms or antinomies (hence its modern crisis). These are the “antinomies of the historical and the ultimate, past and present, meaning and being...” He later identifies them as also the dualisms of time and eternity, spirit and matter, necessity and contingency.³ To overcome or correct this, Schwöbel suggests that we must return to a methodological priority where as he puts it, the “trinitarian logic of the Christian faith,” as found particularly in the New Testament, provides the starting point for firstly trinitarian theology and secondly the development of Christological doctrine.⁴ There is an “underlying proto-trinitarian depth structure” in the New Testament, which must be the foundation for subsequent theological reflection. The Cappadocian formula developed centuries later (μία οὐσία τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις) is the classic expression of this “conceptuality which reflects the trinitarian logic of faith.”⁵ The basis then for the following discussion on the doctrine of God as Trinity, elucidating the way in which this Trinity shows the dipolarities of one-many and being-becoming, is not by developing a particular Christology, but rather observing the dynamic between persons evident in God's self-revelation as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This, as Schwöbel points out, must be the trinitarian hermeneutic for Christology,⁶ just as it is for this thesis the starting point for exploring a doctrine of God in dipolar terms. Rather than grounding the doctrine of the Trinity in Christology *per se*, it is rather grounded in the story of divine relationships as depicted in Scripture, especially the Gospels, and in the worship of the Church. This is a story about Jesus, declared by the Father to be his Son, and anointed by the Holy Spirit as Messiah/Christ. There is included in the telling of this story both

3 Christoph Schwöbel 'Christology and Trinitarian Thought' in *Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on Divine Being and Act* ed. Christoph Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 113-146, 120, 137.

4 Christoph Schwöbel 'Christology and Trinitarian Thought' 126.

5 Christoph Schwöbel 'Christology and Trinitarian Thought' 132-133. Schwöbel says that “we have in their work the most significant attempt in patristic thought to provide a coherent ontology for the trinitarian logic of Christian faith...” 133.

6 So Christ is understood, not in terms of natures, but in terms of his relationship as Son to the Father and the Spirit. See Christoph Schwöbel 'Christology and Trinitarian Thought' 138-139.

Christological and Pneumatological reflection.⁷ This cannot be separated from the Trinitarian logic described by Schwöbel, since the person of Jesus is defined in relation to God the Father and the Spirit. But rather than emphasising that God is revealed in Christ *per se* (as an individual about whom is written a Christology), it is preferable to begin with saying that God is self-revealed in this story, revealed in the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. This is the basis for our speaking about God, our language for saying who God is. Our theological language principally derives from God having spoken in this story, including the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.

1. Historical Development of Trinitarian Doctrine

1.1. Old Testament

From the Old Testament it is clear that the people of Israel worshipped only one God.⁸ The main statement of faith for the Jewish people throughout their history was "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD".⁹ This belief in the one God is continued by the early Christians.¹⁰ Yet in the Old Testament there are also indications that God is more than 'one' - a plurality in unity.¹¹

1. The Hebrew word for God, *Elohim*, is a plural word.¹²
2. There are also places where God refers to himself as "us" or "we".¹³
3. The 'image of God' is plural - male and female.¹⁴

⁷ The Pneumatological reflection is particularly to identify that Jesus is the promised Messiah (anointed one). For further discussion on the Holy Spirit in relation to Jesus, and the importance of the trinitarian relationship of the Spirit to Jesus and the Father, see Jürgen Moltmann *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

⁸ Exodus 20:2-3.

⁹ Deuteronomy 6:4.

¹⁰ Mark 12:29; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19.

¹¹ For a discussion of these inferences see A.W. Wainwright *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1962) 17-40.

¹² However, *Elohim*, like many other Hebrew nouns is plural in form and singular in meaning.

¹³ Genesis 1:26, 11:7, Isaiah 6:8. However, rather than a 'trinitarian' reference, most recent commentators understand these verses in the following ways.

- a) The plural is used because God is addressing his heavenly court, i.e., the angels (cf. Isaiah 6:8).
- b) This is a plural of deliberation or self exhortation (most recent commentators).

For other views see G.J. Wenham *Genesis 1-15* (Waco: Word, 1987) 27-28.

4. The name of Yahweh can dwell in the temple,¹⁵ while God himself is in heaven.¹⁶ In the same way the glory of God is in some sense a distinct entity, according to Ezekiel.¹⁷
5. There is a special relationship between the Spirit, Wisdom and Word, to God in the Old Testament.¹⁸ These seem to be the same as God himself.

In connection with this last point, there is a significant development within some Jewish thinking near the time of Jesus. Within Hellenistic Judaism there developed a concept built around the passages in Proverbs which mention wisdom as a person separate from God, yet who also worked with God at creation (cf. Prov 8,9). These Jewish thinkers began to develop the idea of a distinction within God - between God as he is in himself and God going out of himself, to reveal himself and to save humankind. This enabled these Jewish scholars to modify monotheism without abandoning it. One example of this is Philo of Alexandria, who described the Logos as "the second God."¹⁹ In yet a further development, as represented by John's Gospel and the Apologists of the second century, Jesus as the Son of God is identified with, yet differentiated from, God.²⁰

14 Genesis 1:27. cf. A.I. McFadyen *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 31, 32.

15 Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 21, etc.

16 Deuteronomy 26:15.

17 Ezekiel 43:4, 7.

18 Proverbs 8, 9; Wisdom 7:25f.

19 *Qu. in Gen.* II, 62 - as quoted by H.A. Wolfson *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Vol. 1; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947) 234; R.H. Fuller *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965) 75. However, Wolfson elsewhere states that Philo did not regard the Logos as God. The Logos is only 'second God' in that it is divine (θελος)- H.A. Wolfson 'Greek Philosophy in Philo and the Church Fathers' in *The Crucible of Christianity* ed. A. Toynbee (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969) 309-316, 312.

20 J.D.G. Dunn says, "But because it was the one God of Jewish faith whom those first Christians recognized in and through this Jesus it was a redefinition and not an abandoning of that monotheism. It is thus a fundamental insight and assertion of Christianity that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is but a restatement of Jewish monotheism." 'Was Christianity a Monotheistic Faith from the Beginning' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39.4 (1982) 303-336; cf. L.W. Hurtado *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (London: SCM Press, 1988).

1.2. New Testament

The New Testament gives the foundation for a trinitarian hermeneutic. As Jürgen Moltmann explains, it “talks about God by proclaiming in narrative the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, which are relationships of fellowship and are open to the world.”²¹ This is shown in the following ways (the examples are discussed in detail by J. Moltmann in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* – Chapter III).

At the baptism of Jesus, there are the Father's words "you are my beloved Son," along with the Spirit's anointing; Jesus talks about a mutual knowing and loving between himself and his Father; Jesus reveals the kingdom of his Father in his ministry of teaching and works of power; Jesus understands himself to be on a mission as one sent by the Father. Then in relation to the Spirit, the Father sends the Son through the Spirit and in the power of the Spirit (conception, baptism, ministry). The story climaxes with the passion which takes place between the Father and the Son - the stories of Gethsemene and Golgotha. The Son suffers a death of God forsakenness, and the Father suffers the death of the Son. This is for the Son his self-offering 'through the eternal Spirit' (Heb. 9:14). Then the Father raises the dead Son, and reveals him to the world, through the life-giving Spirit.²² A relational change then occurs. "Whereas in the sending, in the surrender and in the resurrection, the Spirit acts on Christ, and Christ lives from the works of the creative Spirit, now the relationship is reversed: the risen Christ sends the Spirit; he is himself present in the life-giving Spirit; and through the Spirit's energies - the charismata - he acts on men and women."²³ Finally, the divine rule given to the Son reaches fulfilment in all things, and is given back to the Father by the Son. This then, in summary, is the New Testament account of God's being and becoming as one and many - a history of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

²¹ J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1981) 64.

²² Jürgen Moltmann, more than any other theologian this century, has explored the suffering of God on the cross in trinitarian terms (the only way we can talk of God's suffering). See especially *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation of Criticism of Christian Theology* (trans. R.A. Wilson & J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1974). The theme is developed in his more recent works, including *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, *God in Creation*, *The Spirit of Life* (see bibliography). For a theology of the cross, see also the Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter* (trans. Aidan Nichols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

²³ J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* 89.

While throughout the New Testament there is no clear trinitarian *definition* of God, it is clear when the three are mentioned together that they are one.²⁴ For example, in Matthew 28:19-20, the disciples of Jesus are told to baptise others in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ The three are differentiated in the book of Acts (eg. Acts 1:1-6; 2:33), and in one of Paul's prayers: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."²⁶ But there is no notion that God is other than one.

The New Testament revelation of God as Trinity contains the seeds of later Christological doctrine, for Jesus is somehow considered equal with God.²⁷ This can be seen for example in the "I am" sayings in John's Gospel, his being referred to as "Lord" (in terms of Psalm 110) by the disciples, and his being the creator who existed before all things.²⁸ Jesus is even referred to as "God."²⁹ However, God is not *identified* with Jesus as if there is no difference between the two. For example, Jesus refers to God as someone other than himself; he prays to God; and finally he gives his spirit to God as he dies. At no point does the New Testament even hint that the word 'God' ceases to refer to one who is in heaven (the Father), and so refer only to Jesus during the time of his earthly existence.

Yet on the other hand, Jesus was understood to act *as God and for God* : whoever saw him, saw God; when he spoke, he spoke with the authority of God; when he made promises, he made them on behalf of God; when he judged people, he judged as God; when his disciples later worshipped, they

24 C.F.D. Moule concludes that, "there are... plenty of phrases in the New Testament containing God, Christ, and Spirit together. But it is far from evident that any of these is strictly trinitarian as distinct from simply threefold' cf. 'The New Testament and the Doctrine of the Trinity: a short report on an old theme' *Expository Times* 77:1 (1976) 16-20, 18. The same could be said of the writings of the earliest Apostolic Fathers eg. Clement, Ignatius of Antioch.

25 "The formula says nothing about the relations of the persons, though the one name that covers all of them is undoubtedly the divine name." W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology : Vol. 1* (trans. G.W. Bromiley : Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 301.

26 2 Corinthians 13:14. C.F.D. Moule 'The New Testament and the Doctrine of the Trinity' 17.

27 According to John's Gospel, Jesus says "The Father and I are one" (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἑσμεν - John 10:30). George Beasley-Murray comments on the functional unity indicated when Jesus says "I and the Father are ἓν," not "εἷς," i.e., one in action, not person. cf. *John* (Word Biblical Commentary Vol 36; Waco: Word Books, 1987) 174.

28 Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; John 1:1-18.

29 John 20:28, Hebrews 1:8, Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1. cf. Murray J. Harris *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992). "The very rarity of the designation of Jesus as "God" is evidence that θεός never becomes a proper name when used of Jesus but remains a descriptive title. In accord with this, one never finds θεός applied to Jesus without an accompanying identification of the person so titled... Unless the context refers explicitly to Jesus as the person whom the title θεός is being predicated, this term will refer to the Father and be a virtual proper name." 274-275, cf. 282ff.

worshipped the risen Christ as God; and so on. Jesus is the one who can be called God and Lord, because he acts as creator, saviour and judge, he is worshipped, and prayers are addressed to him.³⁰ So we are led to conclude that Jesus is God in one sense, but he is not *identical* with God (for God is more than Jesus³¹). But he may be *identified* with God, in that the New Testament has no hesitation in describing Jesus in ways that one could only describe God.³² The same may be said of the Holy Spirit.³³ Regarding the Trinity, Wolfhart Pannenberg says, "the NT statements do not clarify the interrelations of the three but they clearly emphasize that fact that they are interrelated."³⁴ Because the activity of the three persons of the Trinity could not be clearly distinguished, the early Fathers of the Church were reluctant to go beyond the baptismal formula to define the three 'persons' by their particular functions.³⁵

30 This functional Christology has ontological presuppositions. Oscar Cullmann is well known for his statement that "functional Christology is the only kind which exists" in the New Testament. Yet Cullmann also says that "we can neither speak of the person apart from the work or of the work apart from the person. From the very beginning all Christology shows both aspects - even when the ultimate logical conclusions have not yet been drawn." *The Christology of the New Testament* (trans. S.C. Guthrie & C.A.M. Hull; London, SCM, 1963 ed.) 326. In response to his critics, Cullmann continues by affirming that acting implies being. Therefore, "the Church did not allow itself to be led away upon a dogmatic enterprise *contrary* to the New Testament. The passages which I have designated as limit passages prove it; the fact that the 'functional' divinity of the Son of which the New Testament speaks implies in every case the being of His divine Person authorises us to pose the question outside exegesis." 'The Reply of Professor Cullmann to Roman Catholic Critics' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 15:1 (1962) 36-43.

31 Hence the New Testament nowhere contains the statement ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν θεός. Nor is Jesus said to be the Father or the Trinity.

32 John Thompson *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), with reference to A.T. Hanson *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1965).

33 John 16:14; 20:22; Acts 5:9; 8:39; 16:7; Romans 8:9, 26, 34; 1 Corinthians 3:17-18; 1 John 4:2; 5:8.

34 W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* 269. "Scripture clearly refers separately to the deity of the Son and the Spirit. But even in these passages it is not clear how the deity of the Son and Spirit relates to that of the Father, whom the NT obviously has in view when it speaks about God in the absolute." 303.

35 Maurice Wiles concludes on this basis that, "our Trinity of revelation is an arbitrary analysis of the activity of God, which though of value in Christian thought and devotion is not of essential significance." This conclusion is reached by (1) rejecting revelation in the form of propositional statements eg. the baptismal formula, and (2) noting the difficulty the early fathers had in differentiating between the persons of the Trinity because of their common activity. cf. M. Wiles 'Reflections on the Origins of the Doctrine of the Trinity' *Working Papers in Doctrine* (London: SCM, 1976) 1-17. However, as the following survey of the development of trinitarian theology shows, the three are distinguished by their activity (particularly in relation to the cross), though the concern to demonstrate their unity of action dominates.

1.3. The Worship of the Early Church

The above examples of 'threeness' from the New Testament, show that statements such as these do not provide a clear 'formula' explaining God as Trinity. The reasons for this absence of a 'developed' Trinitarian theology in the New Testament may be explained as follows. Firstly, the early Christians were interested in the message of salvation rather than theological speculation. They were concerned with the activity rather than the nature of God. For example, the divinity of Christ was described by the functions which he fulfilled.³⁶ Secondly, the early Christians would have been aware of the problem of bringing together the thoughts of Jesus being God, with the strong Jewish belief in only one God.³⁷

It is not until the end of the first century that a 'trinitarian' pattern of worship becomes more explicit. This is reflected in the fourth Gospel's presentation of the relationships between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This trinitarian understanding of God appears to have its root in the worship and song of the early church. What could not be rationally explained could be confessed by faith. Worship was the most suitable environment for this confession, and so Jesus is occasionally referred to as 'God' in the liturgical passages of the New Testament.³⁸ In the light of their monotheistic origins and continued association with Judaism, the Christians found it necessary to rationalise their belief in Jesus as God. It was primarily this need which gave rise to the development of trinitarian theology. The deity of the Holy Spirit was given little attention until the fourth century, until which time the Spirit was primarily regarded as the divine agent in the incarnation of the Son and the divine breath of inspiration. So trinitarian theology first developed on the assumption that Jesus was somehow God himself. Jaroslav Pelikan summarises this central belief of the early post-New Testament Church:

³⁶ But this again does not deny that they were aware of ontological implications (cf. footnote 23). The progression from a functional to an ontic Christology may even be present in John's description of Jesus as θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος (John 1:1c), though the functional aspect of the Logos still remains.

³⁷ However, this explanation may not sufficiently recognise a level of rational acceptance that Jesus was 'God' while retaining monotheistic belief. As Murray Harris points out, "If the early church was embarrassed by the ascription of θεός to Jesus or if the ascription was regarded as heterodox by some elements in the church, it is strange that four NT writers (John, Paul, the author of Hebrews, and Peter) should have examples which represent both a Jewish Christian setting (John 1:1, 18; 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1) and a Gentile Christian milieu (Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13)." *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* 281-282.

³⁸ This liturgical setting is again seen in Pliny's correspondence to the emperor Trajan, (about 112 AD) where he notes that the Christians of Asia Minor sing hymns to Christ as to a God (*Letters* 10:96).

The oldest surviving sermon of the Christian church after the New Testament opened with the words: "Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God..." The oldest surviving account of the death of a Christian martyr contained the declaration: "It will be impossible for us to forsake Christ... or to worship any other. For him, being the Son of God, we adore, but the martyrs... we cherish." The oldest surviving pagan report about the church described Christians as gathering before sunrise and "singing a hymn to Christ as though to [a] god." The oldest surviving liturgical prayer of the church was a prayer addressed to Christ: "Our Lord, come!"³⁹

1.4. The Early Fathers

The Apostolic Fathers, and later the Apologists, frequently refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but do not define their relationship with a 'trinitarian' term.⁴⁰ It is not until Theophilus of Antioch (c. 170 A.D.) that the word 'triad' is used, meaning a collection of three objects rather than tri-unity.⁴¹ This word 'triad' continues to be used (eg. by Hippolytus, Origen), even though Tertullian later coined the term 'trinitas' which became more popular. This still meant the same as 'triad'. To describe the 'oneness' or unity of God, the word 'monarchy' (*μοναρχίαν*) was used.⁴² This is a unity of power, or of rule, rather than an ontological statement.⁴³

A.H. Williams draws a significant parallel between the concept of 'monarchy' in early trinitarian theology, and the political concept of kingdom or kingdom of God. Both Yahweh and Jesus are Kings according to Scripture, just as the rule of Roman Empire was held by the shared rule of the Triumvirate. "The power of the empire was one, even though the power and authority were shared."⁴⁴ This plural concept was weakened when 'monarchy' came to be used as a philosophical term to describe one principle (*mon-arche*), giving rise to both subordinationism (Origen & Arius) and modalistic monarchianism (Sabellius).

³⁹ J. Pelikan *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine: Vol 1., The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 173. Pelikan refers to 2 *Clem.* 1. 1-2; *M. Polyc.* 17.2-3; *Pliny Letters* 10.96.7; 1 *Corinthians* 16.22.

⁴⁰ J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976 ed.) 90-108.

⁴¹ For a discussion on Theophilus' 'triad' not meaning 'trinity', see Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966) 82-85.

⁴² G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952) 87-96.

⁴³ E.J. Fortman *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 51; H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers : Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (3rd ed. revised: Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) 312ff.

⁴⁴ A.H. Williams 'The Trinity and Time' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39.1, 1986, 65-81, 69.

1.5. Sabellianism & Modalism

One of the first trinitarian heresies in the early third century is identified with the teachings of Sabellius. He said that God is One, and takes three forms.⁴⁵ The Father, Son and Spirit are three manifestations of the One God. Behind each mask there was the same actor, who portrayed himself in the roles of creator, redeemer and then sanctifier. The belief that God was one, to the exclusion of his being 'three' meant that God only appears *as* Father, *as* Son and *as* Spirit. This language itself indicated the unreal nature of the three. The Sabellian heresy is also known as Modalistic Monarchianism, and reappears in all modalistic and unitarian descriptions of the Trinity.

1.6. Tertullian

The heresy of Sabellius and his colleague Praxeas, came under attack from Tertullian (AD. 160-220) in his *Adversus Praxean*. Tertullian is well known for his statement that God is 'one substance, three persons' (*una substantia, tres personae*). This attempted to say that God is a unity, but that there is also differentiation in this unity.⁴⁶

What did Tertullian mean by *tres personae*? It was possible for the term to lack ontological content, in that humans could be thought of as a part of an ordered cosmos or society, with their identity as a 'person' added when they played a rôle in society. This parallels the use of the word when used of the mask worn by an actor in Greek drama. Tertullian's 'three persons' would then be no different than the Sabellian masks.⁴⁷

However, this meaning for the theological use of the word 'person' is contested by a number of Patristic scholars, in favour of the meaning

⁴⁵ His formula was τρεῖς ὀνομασίαι ἐν μιᾷ ὑποστάσει ἢ μιᾷ ὑπόστασις καὶ τρεῖς ἐνέργειαι. cf. C.N. Cochrane *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944) 233.

⁴⁶ Tertullian described the distinctions in the unity as: *distincti, non divisi; discreti, non separati*.

⁴⁷ John D. Zizioulas *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985) 31-38. Some of Tertullian's analogies may be interpreted as modalistic. For example - the Father is the root, the Holy Spirit is the fruit plucked from the branch (the Son); or, the Father is the spring, the Son the river, and the Holy Spirit the stream; or, the Father is the sun, the Son is its sunbeam whose point (*apex*) is the Holy Spirit, bearer of warmth and life. cf. Mary T. Clark 'The Trinity in Latin Christianity' in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* ed. B. McGinn & J. Meyendorff (New York: Crossroad, 1987) 276-290, 279.

'individual'.⁴⁸ Tertullian's use of *persona* in his work against Praxeas, substantiates this. For example, Tertullian says, "the Son acknowledges the Father, speaking in His own persona", and again, "whatever therefore the substance of the Word was, that I call persona..."⁴⁹ G.L. Prestige goes on to note that many of the Fathers accuse the Sabellians of teaching a single person, though under three names (eg. Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Eusebius), and it is not until Basil that the Sabellians are accused of maintaining three πρόσωπα, and in this rare case the term is used in the sense of 'mask'. In most cases however the critics of Sabellianism accuse them of denying the existence of three πρόσωπα. So the Latin *persona* and the Greek πρόσωπον appear to be used at the beginning of the development of trinitarian theology, including Tertullian's formula, to describe objective forms or persons of the Godhead.⁵⁰

To further illustrate Tertullian's understanding of real differentiation in the Trinity, reference may be made to his comment on the verse, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), where he rejects a "singularity of number" (*ad substantiae unitatem non ad numeri singularitatem*).⁵¹ For each of the three in the Trinity are a certain thing or person (*res et persona quaedam*).⁵² It may be concluded then that the Latin *persona*, as well as its Greek equivalent πρόσωπον, could by this time mean 'individual', and that *res*, which in Roman Law is contrasted with *persona*,⁵³ is used by Tertullian as the equivalent of *persona*.⁵⁴ So Novatian

48 G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* xxviii, 113, 157-162, 211; J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 115, 122-123; H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 325; A distinctive Christian usage of the word 'person' may also have developed in connection with a common exegetical method at that time, which sought to identify the 'voice' of a particular divine person of the Trinity in each biblical text ("prosopographic exegesis"). Michael Slusser draws attention to this type of exegesis in the writings of Justin, Tertullian, and Athanasius, in his article 'The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology' *Theological Studies* 49 (1988) 461-476; cf. Eric Osborn *The Emergence of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 191-193.

49 Tertullian *Adv. Prax.* 6-7 - "Whatever therefore the substance of the Word (*substantia sermonis*) was, that I call a Person, and for it I claim the name of Son: and while I acknowledge Him as Son I maintain He is another (*secundum*) beside the Father." As quoted by E.J. Fortman *The Triune God* 111. Fortman also notes that Tertullian regards the three as numerically distinct, for they are 'capable of being counted' (*Adv. Prax.* 2)

50 G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 159; E.J. Fortman *The Triune God* 113 - Tertullian, "is one of the first, if not the first, to use the term *person* for the three and he seems to mean it not in the juristic sense of a title-holder but in the metaphysical sense of a concrete individual, of a self." 115.

51 T.E. Pollard 'The Exegesis of John X.30 in the Early Trinitarian Controversies' *New Testament Studies* 3.4 (1956-57) 334-349.

52 Tertullian *Adv. Prax.* 7, as quoted and commented on by H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 323.

53 In Roman law, a slave had no personhood (*servus non habet personam*), but was regarded a thing (*res*), precisely because they were denied social relationships. The underlines the Roman notion of *persona* as rôle. See David Brown 'Trinitarian Personhood and Individuality' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* ed. R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga, Jr. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 48-78, 54.

likewise, against the modalists, draws attention to the fact that the Father and Son are plainly two persons as are Paul and Apollos.⁵⁵

Another important observation on Tertullian's formula *una substantia, tres personae*, is that the unity of persons is grounded in *substantia*, interpreted as *substratum* (= ὑπόκειμενον), a 'material' or 'stuff' denoted as *spiritus*,⁵⁶ rather than 'genus'.⁵⁷ Augustine would later follow Tertullian on this point, though would not follow Tertullian in identifying this substratum with the Father, as the Cappadocians were to do.⁵⁸ However, Novatian was not prepared to follow Tertullian in asserting a *unitas substantiae*, but rather a *societatis concordia*, or a *substantiae communio*.⁵⁹ On a more traditional line, Tertullian maintained the concept of a shared *monarchia* or rule to describe the unity of the three.⁶⁰

1.7. Origen

The trinitarian speculations of Origen (185-254) set the scene for future controversy. According to Origen, the Father alone is God (αὐτόθεος) and 'ingenerate' (ἀγέννητος). Since he is outside of time and immutable, the Father begets the Son *eternally* (ἀεὶ γεννᾷ αὐτόν) and is the 'fountain-head of deity' (πηγὴ τῆς θεότητος). The Son therefore has no beginning. Origen may call him a 'secondary God' (δεύτερος θεός), but this is in the sense of being eternally begotten and not created. The Son derives his deity from the Father, and the

54 H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 325, and fn. 44. See also Eric Osborn *The Emergence of Christian Theology* 189-191. Osborn quotes Tertullian's "most diligent interpreter," J. Moingt [*Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien II* (Paris, 1966), 333], as saying, "There are in God several things (*res*) which have each the determination of substance, which all have together the condition of the same substance, which are therefore identical in physical constitution and nature: that is the first aim of Tertullian's argument... The second aim is to understand and to express the particularity and the individuality of these things... Tertullian called these things *personae*." (189).

55 Novatian *De Trinitate* 27. cf. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. 'Social Trinity and Tritheism' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* ed. R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 21-47, 30.

56 C. Stead *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 62; Eric Osborn *The Emergence of Christian Theology* 188-189.

57 See a definition of these terms later in this chapter.

58 H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 353, 326. Wolfson quotes from *Adv. Prax.* 9, 4, 26.

59 Novatian *De Trinitate* 27 - as referred to by T.E. Pollard 'The Exegesis of John X.30 in the Early Trinitarian Controversies' *New Testament Studies* 3.4 (1956-57) 334-349, 337.

60 A.H. Williams 'The Trinity and Time' 69 - referring to Tertullian's *Against Praxeas*. However, Tertullian is not "concerned to transfer the secular monarchy concept of pagan theology to the Trinity" - Eric Osborn *The Emergence of Christian Theology* 193, with reference to E. Peterson *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (Leipzig, 1935), 50f., and A. Schindler (ed.) *Monotheismus als ein politisches Problem* (Gütersloh, 1978).

Spirit derives his deity from the Son.⁶¹ There is evidence here of the influence of Origen's Platonic background, especially the the concept of hierarchical subordinationism.⁶² His teaching pushed the 'traditional' subordination teaching of the Son to the Father in the economy of salvation⁶³ to the level of ontological speculation, thereby softening the ground for subordinationist heresies which were to follow, namely Arianism in its different forms.

1.8. Arius and Nicea

Arius said that Jesus was created, and was not God.⁶⁴ This demanded from the church an ontological explanation which avoided the subordinationism of Origen and its extreme development in the heretic Arius. How was Jesus equal to the Father, at the level of the intradivine relationships? The formula determined by the Council of Nicea (325 AD) said that Jesus was of the same substance/being (*homoousios*⁶⁵) as the Father.⁶⁶

61 In Origen's Commentary on St John's Gospel, "he clearly taught there that the Spirit came into being through the Word, although he is revered more than any other creature that has come into being through the Word of the Father." T.F. Torrance *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM Press, 1965) 211; cf. E.J. Fortman *The Triune God* 57.

62 J.N.D. Kelly gives a number of further examples of this subordinationism. cf. *Early Christian Doctrines* 131-132. Origen seems to be dependent upon the Middle Platonic philosopher, Numenius. cf. E.P. Meijering *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1975) 123; John Dillon 'Origen's Doctrine of the Trinity and Some Later Neoplatonic Theories' in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* ed. D.J. O'Meara (*Studies in Neoplatonism Vol. 3*; Norfolk, Va., 1982) 19-23, reprinted in John Dillon *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990).

63 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992) 23ff; R.P.C. Hanson *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) xix, 64, 287.

64 Arius said, "If the Father begat the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this it is evident, that there was (a time) when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows, that he had his subsistence from nothing." Those who responded to Arius made a distinction between 'begotten' (γεννητός) and 'created' (γενητός) in describing the Son. cf. Alasdair Heron 'Homoousios with the Father' in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981) 58-87.

65 The word is a compound adjective deriving from *homou* (meaning 'together', 'in solidarity') and *ousia* (being). The term is first found in the writings of Origen. cf. Archbishop Methodios 'The Homoousion' in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981) 1-15, 5. Origen appears to use the term in a generic sense rather than as speaking of identical substance.

66 According to Catherine LaCugna, this intradivine perception of the Trinity affected the Church's liturgy. After Nicea, liturgies and prayers changed from the Biblical pattern of addressing the Father, to addressing Christ, since Christ was considered *homoousios* with the Father. While the *homoousios* doctrine was intended to combat the ontological subordinationism of Arianism, it also tended to suppress the subordinate and mediatory role of Christ in the economy. These changes to the liturgy took place along with a growing belief in the 'saints' (especially Mary) as mediators. cf. Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 111-135.

We believe in one God...
 and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
 begotten of the Father as unique (*monogenes*),
 that is from the *ousia* of the Father,
 God from God, light from light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
homoousios with the Father,
 through whom all things were made...

The intent of the *homoousios* formula was negative, to exclude the Arian heresy. It was only afterwards that its positive meaning was explored and debated. In some way God is a 'being' in a relationship. The Father and the Son share a common 'being' (οὐσία).⁶⁷

1.9. Athanasius

Athanasius continued to refute Arian ontological subordinationism, by arguing that we cannot think of the Father as Father without the Son and the Spirit. He could agree with Origen that the three are eternally related, and so the Son being 'caused' is not a temporal occurrence. His starting point was the Nicene formulation of the *homoousion*, to underline the oneness of the Trinity in terms of a complete mutual indwelling of the three divine persons (each contains the other). "The Holy Trinity is thus homogeneous and unitary, not only in the oneness of his activity (μία ἐνέργεια) toward us, but in the indivisibility of his own eternal being."⁶⁸ So Athanasius could have affirmed the Nicene creed which says that the Son is 'of one being with the Father' (ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρὶ), though his preferred position was to say that the Son is 'from the being of the

⁶⁷ If a numerical identity was meant by *homoousia*, rather than a generic identity, then the Nicene formula would have appeared Sabellian. cf. E.J. Fortman *The Triune God* 67. That the Fathers of Nicea most likely understood the term in this generic sense is argued by Christopher Stead *Divine Substance* 247ff. But as Stead says, this generic sense should not "exclude inequality of status or power. Secondly... the term is often used to indicate a relationship which in fact is closer than mere membership of the same species or similar constitution, for instance that of a stream to the actual fountain from which it flows, or that of an offspring to his own parent. To call a son *homoousios* with his father implies more than merely their common membership of the human race; and the further implication need not be merely that of their physical linkage; the term can evoke their whole biological and social relationship." 247-248.

⁶⁸ T.F. Torrance *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) 305, 307. Torrance refers to Athanasius, *Ad Serapionem*, 1.2, 9, 14, 16f, 20, 28-33; 3:6.

Father (ἐκ της οὐσίας του Πατρός).⁶⁹ Athanasius then speaks of the Father as the eternal ἀρχή of the Son, though not as ἀρχή without the Son.⁷⁰ This leads T.F. Torrance to the mistaken conclusion that Athanasius "declined to advance a view of the Monarchy in which the oneness of God was defined by reference to the **Person** of the Father... The Μία Ἀρχή or Μοναρχία is identical with the Trinity, the Μονάς with the Τριάς, and it is precisely in the Τριάς that we know him to be Μονάς."⁷¹ While this concept of Μοναρχία may respect Athanasius' concern to acknowledge the one being (μία οὐσία), Torrance overstates this concept of the three constituting the monarchia, since he also must acknowledge that Athanasius retained the thought of the Father alone as ἀρχη (a point to be developed later by the Cappadocians).⁷² There is indeed an identity of being, but also an asymmetrical relationship in which the Father is ἀρχη and eternal source of being in the Trinity.⁷³ The particular emphasis in

69 Athanasius *Ad Serapionem* 2.2-5 - as quoted by T.F. Torrance *The Trinitarian Faith* 308. Torrance affirms that Athanasius used the phrase ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρὶ, but this claim is contested by Christopher Stead : "Athanasius never says that the Father and Son are *homoousioi*; still less, of course, that the Father is *homoousios* with the Son. Nor does he ever connect the term with a noun referring to the Godhead as a whole; he does not speak of the 'consubstantial Trinity' (as he does the 'indivisible Trinity'), nor of the 'consubstantial Godhead' (as he does of the 'one Godhead'). There is in fact a built-in asymmetry in his use of the term, which suggests that he is moving only very cautiously away from the moderate Origenism of Alexander. And this conservative disposition is fortified by his constant insistence that the Father is the ultimate source, so that the Son is 'from the Father' (*Syn.* 50), or more precisely 'from the substance of the Father'; for these expressions suggest both the Son's essential unity with the Father and his distinct existence as derivative, not source." *Divine Substance* 260-261.

70 Athanasius *Contra Arianos* I. 14; II. 57. E.P. Meijering says that for Athanasius, "the Son is neither an *addendum* in time to the Father (as he accuses the Arians of saying) nor a kind of an eternal *addendum* to the Father (as Origen's position seems to imply), but that to Athanasius the Father's divine perfection consists in the fact that He is the Father of the Son." - 'Athanasius on the Father as the Origin of the Son' in *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1975) 89-102, 96-97.

71 T.F. Torrance *The Trinitarian Faith* 312, 313. But see also C. Stead *Divine Substance* 263ff. Stead draws attention to Athanasius' three physical analogies : fountain and stream, source and ray of light, vine and branches. "All three convey the notion of a common stuff (water, light, vine-tissue) emerging in markedly different forms. They also convey the notion of organic continuity, indeed of one-way communication: the stream comes *from* the fountain, the ray *from* the source, and not vice versa;... Once again, it is clear that Athanasius does not mean (e.g.) that the ray is identical with its source in any exact sense, for an asymmetrical relationship obtains between them. Nor does 'one *ousia*' mean that they *together constitute* a single reality." 263-264.

72 Christopher Stead argues that "there is a romantic (or dogmatic?) misreading, which represents him as leading an advance towards an unrestricted view of the unity of the Persons, and as upholding their 'numerical identity of substance'..." However, Stead shows that there is a more conservative element in Athanasius' thinking in which the Father is the source of the divine being. cf. *Divine Substance* 266.

73 Meijering concludes his study on this topic by saying that "Athanasius uses the notion of the Father as the origin or the cause of the Son within his doctrine of the Trinity in such a way that it excludes any kind of theogony, that it stresses the ontological unity of Father and Son and at the same time implies a certain distinction between Father and Son, a distinction which indicates that there is no lonely godhead in splendid isolation, but that the living God is καρπογόνος from all eternity and has in His Son an eternal ἐνούσιος ἐνέργεια." - *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* 99.

Athanasius' trinitarian theology, is upon the incarnation of the Son as the revelation of the Trinity.⁷⁴

Hilary (Bishop of Poitiers, 315-368), refused to join other Western bishops in condemning Athanasius. Consequently, during a four year exile he wrote his *De Trinitate*, in defence of the orthodox position. Like Athanasius, he affirmed both the equality of the Father and the Son in nature, *and* that "the Father is the principle or source from which the Son derives His eternal origin."⁷⁵ The Godhead is not one person, but a plurality of persons who are "mutually in each other."⁷⁶

1.10. 'Hypostasis' and 'Ousia'

It may be helpful at this point to explain the terms used in the trinitarian theology of the early church, and something of their evolutionary development. In the Greek language of the first centuries AD, there were two synonymous words which meant 'being' or 'substance'. These words were *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) and *ousia* (οὐσία).⁷⁷ The word *ousia* was more often used to refer to the reality common to the three Persons of the Trinity.⁷⁸

A description of relative unity had been given by Aristotle, in five ways, three of which were relevant to Trinitarian discussion: (a) a unity of 'substratum' (ὑποκείμενον) - common underlying matter, (b) a unity of 'genus' (γένος) eg. horses, men, and dogs are all animals, and (c) a unity of 'species' (εἶδος) eg. both Aristotle and Plato are men. While the terms 'substratum', 'species', and 'genus' were interchangeable both for Aristotle and the early Church Fathers, W.A. Wolfson points out a difference between 'substratum' and 'genus/species' which became important in later trinitarian theology.

⁷⁴ George D. Dragas 'The Eternal Son (An Essay on Christology in the Early Church with Particular Reference to St. Athanasius the Great)' in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981) 16-57, 44.

⁷⁵ Stephen McKenna 'Introduction' to *The Trinity* by Saint Hilary of Poitiers (*The Fathers of the Church - Vol 25*; trans. S. McKenna; Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1968) x.; see particularly *The Trinity*, Book 12, section 54.

⁷⁶ St. Hilary of Poitiers *The Trinity*, Book 3, section 4.

⁷⁷ At the Council of Nicea (325 AD), the two terms were used as synonymous.

⁷⁸ This word had an ontological resonance, derived as it is from the verb εἶμι, "to be," and could be well used to stress the ontological unity of divinity, especially as one also finds it in the term ὁμοούσιος, already Christianized by the council of Nicea, to denote the co-essentiality of the Father and the Son. For a discussion on the meaning of οὐσία, see Christopher Stead *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) - Chapter 14: 'Unity of Substance'.

Sometimes the Greek term *ousia* is used, which, in its Aristotelian sense of "second *ousia*," may mean either "species" or "genus." Sometimes the Latin term *substantia* is used, in which case either it is a translation of the Greek *ousia* in the sense of "second *ousia*" and hence it means "species" or "genus" or it is a translation of the Greek *hypostasis* in the sense of *hypokeimenon* and hence it means "substratum."⁷⁹

The word *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) came to take on a secondary sense in the Eastern Church, where "the emphasis lay not in content, but on externally concrete independence; objectivity, that is to say, in relation to other objects."⁸⁰ The word *hypostasis* was then used differently from *ousia*, to refer to distinct 'persons'.⁸¹

The initial reluctance to speak of three *hypostaseis* for the three persons of the Trinity was due to the Arian presentation of three divided *hypostaseis* or *ousia*.⁸² The theologians of the Western Church were suspicious of a plurality of *hypostaseis* (suspecting the Eastern Church of Arianism) since they themselves failed to differentiate *hypostases* from the Latin *substantia*.⁸³ They fell back on the doctrine of three *prosopa* (meaning modes or aspects) to avoid the assertion of three *ousia/substantia*, and as a result the theologians of the East suspected the Western church of Sabellianism.⁸⁴ To help clear the confusion, a council was held in 362 at Alexandria, where it was pronounced orthodox to confess either three *hypostaseis* (τρεις ὑποστάσεις) in the sense of 'persons', or one *hypostasis* (μίαν

79 H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 316, cf. 334. The 'substratum' meaning of '*hypostasis* / *ousia*' was held by the Stoics. A summary of the Greek and Latin terms used by the Fathers to express trinitarian doctrine, may be found in H.A. Wolfson 'Greek Philosophy in Philo and the Church Fathers' in *The Crucible of Christianity* ed. A. Toynbee (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969) 309-316, 314.

80 G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 169-178. The first use of this term for the three 'persons' is found in Origen's writing cf. E.J. Fortman *The Triune God* 60.

81 See especially Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration 42: The Last Farewell*, section xv, dated 381 A.D., delivered during the 2nd Ecumenical Council held at Constantinople. cf. *Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen* translated by C.G. Browne & J.E. Swallow, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (2nd Series) edited by P. Schaff & H. Wace (Vol VII; reprinted 1983; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 391.

82 The Council of Nicea condemned the Arian belief that the Son is ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἡ οὐσία.

83 The Greek *hypostasis* in its intransitive sense meant that which underlies or gives support to an object. In this way it was equivalent to the Latin *substantia*. However the transitive or active use of *hypostasis* meant the external character of a substance in relation to other objects. As G.L. Prestige puts it, "*substantia* corresponded in sense with the intransitive sense of *hypostasis*. A Latin could hardly be expected to realise that *hypostasis* had also an active sense, and that the active sense was in fact the sense in which the term was being applied to theology in the East." *God in Patristic Thought* 185.

84 Sabellius taught that in the Godhead there are τρία πρόσωπα (using this word in the sense of modes), but would not allow τρία ὑποστάσεις (i.e. three distinct persons).

ὑποστάσιν) in the sense of 'substance'. This council was a reply to the Western bishops who had in 347 condemned the doctrine of three *hypostaseis* as Arian.

1.11. The Cappadocians

It was the Cappadocian Fathers,⁸⁵ especially Basil, who worked out the Greek formula 'one *ousia*, three *hypostaseis* (μία οὐσία τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις).⁸⁶ Like Origen, *ousia* was considered a generic term to describe the unity,⁸⁷ and the distinction (or as Basil calls it, 'identifying particularities') between the three *hypostaseis*, is in their 'mode of existence' (πρόπος ὑπάρξεως) by which the divine substance is present in distinct objective expression. These three modes, according to Basil, are 'paternity' (πατρότης), 'sonship' (υιότης), and 'sanctity' (ἁγιασμός). The other Cappadocians defined these three modes of existence respectively as 'ingenerateness' (ἀγεννησία), 'generateness' (γέννησις), and 'mission' or 'procession' (ἐκπεμψις; ἐκπόρευσις).⁸⁸ This phrase "modes of existence" is not to be confused with modalism (Sabellianism) which essentially denied objective plurality.⁸⁹ This is appreciated when we turn to the more frequent terms used by the Cappadocians to identify the three differentiations in God. These are the now synonymous words *hypostasis* and *prosopon* (person).⁹⁰ Person, not in the sense of a Sabellian 'mask', but a person distinguished by their particular properties or characteristics (ιδιότητες).⁹¹

⁸⁵ Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. The relationship between these men is well summarised by Frances Young *From Nicea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 92ff.; Thomas Hopko 'The Trinity in the Cappadocians' *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* ed. B. McGinn and J. Meyendorff (New York: Crossroad, 1987) 260-275.

⁸⁶ Though, as T.F. Torrance notes, the phrase may go back to Didymus of Alexandria. cf. *The Trinitarian Faith* 323.

⁸⁷ Christopher Stead *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 162. Against the accusation of tritheism, Basil replied, "let it be answered that we confess one God not in number but in nature" (*Letter* 8, 2). cf. Thomas Hopko 'The Trinity in the Cappadocians' 270.

⁸⁸ J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 265.

⁸⁹ G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 245ff.

⁹⁰ Basil could say that each πρόσωπον has a natural existence in a real ὑπόστασις. cf. Basil, *Ep.*, 210.5 - referred to by T.F. Torrance *The Trinitarian Faith*, 316, and John J. Lynch 'Prosopon in Gregory of Nyssa: A Theological Word in Transition' *Theological Studies* 40.4 (1979) 728-738, 734.

⁹¹ Gregory of Nazianzus *Oration 42: The Last Farewell*, section 16; and *Oration 43: The Panegyric on S. Basil*, section 30. For summary of the various synonymous terms used by Basil, see H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 339. J.J. Lynch concludes his article saying that, "the fact remains that Gregory seems to be limiting his theological applications of the word in *Ad Graecos* to rational, or spiritual, or self-conscious beings... Gregory has consciously begun to use *prosopon* in a fashion which *ex professo* signifies an individual and concrete existent and, by implication, includes the further note of rationality" - cf. 'Prosopon in Gregory of Nyssa' 738.

Of particular significance is the step in describing *hypostasis* (as person) as logically prior to *ousia* (substance), and therefore as the ultimate ontological category. John Zizioulas summarises this revolutionary shift in Christian philosophy:

No substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, *but* the ontological "principle" or "cause" of being - i.e. that which makes a thing to exist - is not the substance or nature but the *person* or hypostasis.⁹²

This understanding of hypostasis gave priority to the particular over the universal, though despite its revolutionary significance the concept was soon reversed under the influence of Neoplatonism, such that "abstractness rather than concreteness became the chief note of divine being."⁹³ But a dipolar concept may arise in which hypostasis and substance define each other. Personhood or relation describes 'how' the nature of being exists.⁹⁴ In the case of the Trinity, the *hypostasis* or person who is the "cause" (ἀρχή) of being, is the Father.⁹⁵ The Cappadocians thereby identified the basis of unity in the Trinity with the person or *hypostasis* of the Father, rather than simply substance/*ousia*.⁹⁶

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- ⁹² John D. Zizioulas *Being as Communion* 41-42. Consequently, the Council of Constantinople (381), "took the bold step of altering the Creed of Nicaea at the point where it referred to the Son as being 'from the substance of the Father' (*ek tes ousias tou patros*) and making it simply read 'from the Father' (*ek tou patros*)." cf. J.D. Zizioulas 'The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: The Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution' in *Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on Divine Being and Act* ed. C. Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 44-60, 51.
- ⁹³ Colin Gunton *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity - The Bampton Lectures 1992* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 192. For an argument against Neoplatonic influence, especially Plotinian influence, on the trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians, see John M. Rist 'Basil's "Neoplatonism": its Background and Nature' in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic* ed. Paul J. Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981) 137-220 - reprinted in John Rist *Platonism and its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985).
- ⁹⁴ So W. Norris Clarke argues "that to be real is to be a *dyadic synthesis* of substance and relation; it is to be *substance-in-relation*." cf. 'To Be is to Be Substance-In-Relation' in *Metaphysics as Foundation: Essays in Honor of Ivor Leclerc* ed. Paul A. Bogaard & Gordon Treash (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1993) 164-181, 166.
- ⁹⁵ T.F. Torrance notes that Didymus of Alexandria, a contemporary of the Cappadocians, may have been the first to replace the Nicene formula 'from the *being* of the Father (ἐκ της οὐσίας του Πατρός) with 'from the *Person* of the Father (ἐκ της ὑποστάσεως του Πατρός). cf. *The Trinitarian Faith*, 325; see also Jaroslav Pelikan *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine: Vol 1. - The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971) 222-223.
- ⁹⁶ There are at least two developments in theology which prepare the way for this new understanding of 'being': 1) The Fathers of the Church had already spoken against Greek philosophy in asserting that the world was not ontologically necessary, but that it was created *ex nihilo* by the free will of God; 2) Athanasius had argued against the Arians, by saying that communion belongs not to the level of will and action but to that of substance. He therefore established 'communion' as an ontological category. See John D. Zizioulas *Being as Communion* 39-40, 83-86.

This also means that 'person' is no longer thought of as a category added on to being, but rather it is the person of the Father who constitutes the being of God.⁹⁷ The Father is the "cause" of the other two persons of the Trinity - the eternal generation of the Son and eternal procession of the Spirit. This does not mean that the Son and the Spirit are created by the Father (their 'generation' and 'procession' are eternal and without beginning), but that the Father is the source of their divine nature and equality. Each person of the Trinity is primarily defined by their *relation* to each other, and in such a way that is consistent with the revelation of the Trinity in the economy of salvation.⁹⁸ John Zizioulas draws attention to this theology in the correspondence between Basil and Apollinarius:

Basil asks Apollinarius to explain to him how one could avoid assuming "a substance lying above" (οὐσία ὑπερκειμένη) - a reference to Platonism - or a "substance lying underneath" (οὐσία ὑποκειμένη) - a probable allusion to Aristotelianism - in dealing with God, and particularly with the relationship between the persons of the Holy Trinity... Apollinarius' reply seems to be fully acceptable to Basil and consists in the following significant thesis: there is no need to suppose either a "substance above" or a "substance underneath" the particular human beings, since human beings derive their being *not from a "common substance"...* but from the person of Adam... Equally, he argues, in the case of God such a supposition of a substance either above or below is unnecessary, because it is *God the Father* (θεός ὁ πατήρ) and not divine οὐσία that is likewise the ἀρχή and ὑποθεσις of divine being. God's being, the Holy Trinity, is not caused by divine substance but by *the Father*, i.e. a particular

⁹⁷ John Zizioulas (*Being as Communion* 39) explains it this way...

(a) The person is no longer an adjunct to a being, a category which we *add* to a concrete entity once we have first verified its ontological hypostasis. *It is itself the hypostasis of the being.*

(b) Entities no longer trace their being to being itself - that is, being is not an absolute category in itself - but to the person, to precisely that which *constitutes* being, that is, enables entities to be entities. In other words from an adjunct to a being (a kind of mask) the person becomes the being itself and is simultaneously - a most significant point - *the constitutive element* (the "principle" or "cause") of beings.

Christos Yannaras likewise explains the significance of this shift in philosophy: "It is not the *essence* which precedes and defines the existence, but it is the *person* who constitutes the initial possibility of existence, the beginning possibility of being." *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology* (trans. K. Schram; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991) 34. For a history of the concept of personhood, see Mary T. Clark 'An Inquiry into Personhood' *The Review of Metaphysics* 46.1 (1992) 3-28. The claims for a Cappadocian revolution seem less significant in the light of Clark's study.

⁹⁸ Catherine LaCugna notes that through its ontology of relation and person, and by starting with the plurality of *hypostasis* (rather than one divine substance), Greek theology is tied to the economy. This tie is considerably weakened by the time of Gregory Palamas or even John of Damascus (C. LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 246, 308 fn.8). But for the Cappadocians, "their ontology of personhood follows the *taxia* of the economy: Father ∅ Son ∅ Spirit." This "prevents it from looking at the divine persons "in themselves," or from seeking a more ultimate principle than the Father that grounds or unites the persons." (248).

being. The one God is the Father. Substance is something common to all three persons of the Trinity, but it is not ontologically primary...⁹⁹

The word *ousia* had been used in a generic sense since Origen,¹⁰⁰ and it is likely that the Nicene Fathers understood it in this way. The idea is certainly present with the Cappadocians.¹⁰¹

The unity of the Trinity is further explained by Basil in terms of a unity of divine action or 'energies' (ἐνεργεῖα). The energy of one person of the Trinity is coordinate with that of the other two, so that none of the persons possesses a separate operation of His own, but one identical energy passes through all three.¹⁰²

The Eastern church looks to Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) as the main exponent of God's 'energies', though he appears to compromise the Cappadocians' achievements in describing the Trinity. Palamas distinguished three aspects of God's being: (i) the divine essence; (ii) the uncreated energies; (iii) the three divine *hypostases*, Father, Son, Spirit. His interest was primarily to describe how it is possible for a human to be united with God, or to partake of the divine life (divinisation). "Only the three divine persons are united to each other in the divine essence. Union with God according to *hypostasis* occurs only in Christ. Every other creature is therefore united with God according to energy."¹⁰³ One negative consequence of this differentiation is that the divine persons are then known to us only indirectly through the energies. The main criticism of Palamas however, is that he effectively overturns the theology of the Cappadocians which states that the divine essence *only exists* hypostatically and is grounded in the person of the Father. Palamas effectively places the

99 J.D. Zizioulas 'On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood' in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology* eds. C. Schwöbel & C. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991) 41.

100 Following Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria used the words ὁμογενής and ὁμοφυής as near-equivalents of ὁμοούσιος, indicating that "for him the unity of the Father and Son is not essential but generic." - T.E. Pollard 'The Exegesis of John X.30 in the Early Trinitarian Controversies' *New Testament Studies* 3.4 (1956-57) 334-349, 339.

101 Archbishop Methodios 'The Homousion' in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981) 1-15; E.J. Fortman *The Triune God* 56; H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 337. Wolfson also notes that the Fathers regarded the hypostases as individual species, and their common unity as their specific genus (p.348). Wolfson restates the above mentioned discussion between Basil and Apollinarius, to emphasise the importance of *ousia* as a generic term (p.345-346).

102 J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 267. However, this common activity was not constitutive for the persons or their distinction. cf. W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* 278; Maurice Wiles *Working Papers in Doctrine* (London: SCM, 1976) 11ff.

103 C. LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 184.

divine *ousia* beyond the divine persons.¹⁰⁴ In this regard his trinitarian theology is close to that of Augustine and Aquinas. Before discussing further the failures of this 'Augustinian' perspective, we return to the Cappadocian formula.

2. Constitutional Unity - Order

As already stated, the Cappadocians regarded the person of the Father as the eternal 'cause' of the other two persons of the Trinity. Is there any biblical basis for this notion?

In the New Testament it seems that the Father does have a 'first' place in the Trinity, so that at the end of time, even Jesus will give the Kingdom back to him (1 Cor 15:28). But this does not mean that the Father is more important or rules over the Son and the Spirit as their 'boss', in the way we often think of human masters. The three persons are equal, and their equality is shown to us in the life they live for each other, lives of service which involve giving and receiving between them. So the three persons do not exist for themselves, but for each other. This explains why the Bible says that God is Love (1 John 4:16). This is expressed in a complementarity of function in the actions of the Trinity. The Gospels show that the Son is both dependent upon the Spirit e.g. his birth and resurrection, and that he also comes to be the one who pours out the Spirit on the disciples. This is a voluntary and functional subordination in which perfect relationship exists. The Son and the Spirit serve the Father (and each other), not because they are forced to, but because love and unity is most perfectly expressed in this relationship of one person serving another. God is a relationship of persons, and it is in these relationships that he reveals himself to us.

¹⁰⁴ C. LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 192-197. "... by making it seem as if the divine *ousia* exists 'by itself', beyond the divine persons, and that it cannot be known as it is 'by itself', Gregory has built a theology around an idea of *ousia* that not only cannot stand up to philosophical scrutiny, it also breaks the back of orthodox trinitarian theology. In contrast, and to be more consistent with what the Cappadocians sought to achieve, when the highest principle in God is recognised to be a person, the Unoriginate Origin, thus affirming that personhood has primacy over substance (or 'first substance'), *then essence and energy are modes of predication concerning the divine persons.* "Neither the *ousia* nor the *energeia* are or can be subjects of predication in their own right." (194). In this last sentence LaCugna quotes R. Williams 'The Philosophical Structures of Palamism' *ECR* 9/1-2 (1977), 19-26. A bibliography of works critical of Palamas, is found on p.201-202. For a defence of the Palamite essence-energies differentiation, see Eric D. Perl 'St. Gregory Palamas and the Metaphysics of Creation' *Dionysius* 14 (1990) 105-130.

There is then no priority of being in the Trinity, for each serves the other as an equal. But there is an order of relationship in which the Father is 'over' the Son and the Spirit. The marriage relationship may provide an analogy. Two equal beings, yet distinct as persons and complementary by gender, relate to each other by mutual service and submission toward each other. If there is any 'constititional' order here, it is like the Pauline concept of the headship of the husband (Eph. 5: 21-33) within a marriage of two equal partners (Eph. 5:31; 1 Cor 7:3-4). But this is not to mean that roles are fixed (cf. later section on perichoretic unity).¹⁰⁵ Economic subordinationism is voluntary, and must be distinguished from the heresy of ontological subordinationism (Arianism, Patriarchalism).

2.1. The Monarchy of the Father

The theologians of the fourth century were the first to use the term 'monarch' (μόνη ἀρχή) for the Father, to describe him as the divinity-source. The Father, who is without beginning, is the common source of divinity, and the bond of unity between the three. The Son and the Spirit are defined in terms of their relationship to the Father: the Son is 'begotten' by the Father, the Spirit 'proceeds' from the Father.

The 'generation' of the Son does not refer to his origin cosmologically (as the Arians argued). He is not created *ex nihilo*, but proceeds from the same substance as the Father and so receives his divinity and being as a person from the Father. This is an eternal generation, as J. Moltmann explains...

The generation and birth of the Son come from the Father's nature, not from his will. That is why we talk about the eternal generation and birth of the Son. The Father begets and bears the Son out of the necessity of his being. Consequently the Son, like the Father, belongs to the eternal constitution of the triune God.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ J. Moltmann 'The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37.3 (1984) 287-300. Moltmann compares the 'monarchical form' of the Trinity (the Father creates *through* the Son *in* the power of the Holy Spirit) with the 'eucharistic form' (in complaint, in thanksgiving, in praise and in the glorification of the Father all activity proceeds from the Holy Spirit).

¹⁰⁶ Jürgen Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1981) 166.

The exact difference between these terms, 'begotten' for the Son, and 'proceed' for the Spirit, is impossible to define according the Greek Fathers.¹⁰⁷ However, it must be said that the Spirit is not the second Son of the Father.¹⁰⁸ Nor is it correct to say that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (if this 'constitutional' understanding of the Trinity is accepted), for the Father alone is the source of divinity and unity in the Godhead. The procession of the Spirit from the Father is a relationship peculiar to himself.¹⁰⁹

Ontological subordination is ruled out by the theologians of the Church in their combat against Arianism. Not all recent commentators on the Cappadocians agree.¹¹⁰ According to their argument, whereas Athanasius' description of the divine persons implied that each defined the other (e.g., the Father is Father of the Son, and so cannot be Father without the Son), the Cappadocians made the Father the basis of definition, as origin and source of deity for the Son and Spirit. A relapse into subordinationism is then unavoidable according to these critics. However, this conclusion is based on a misunderstanding of the Cappadocians' teaching. They did not argue that the Father is equal to the divine substance, so that the Son and Spirit are subordinate *hypostaseis* of that substance.¹¹¹ Like Athanasius, the Cappadocians affirmed the *homoousios* formula of Nicea to make clear both the equality and

¹⁰⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus says, "Do you tell me what is the Unbegottenness of the Father, and I will explain to you the physiology of the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Spirit, and we shall both of us be frenzy-stricken for prying into the mystery of God." (*Fifth Theological Oration: On the Holy Spirit*, vii).

¹⁰⁸ Nor a grandson through the Son. cf. Gregory of Nazianzus' *Fifth Theological Oration: On the Holy Spirit*, vii.

¹⁰⁹ The inclusion of the phrase "from the Father and the Son" (*Filioque*) by the Western church into the creed of 381 A.D., led to the schism of the Western and Eastern church in 1054 A.D. The fourth century creed was concerned to affirm the Spirit's full divinity, rather than to make a statement on the Spirit's relationship to the Son. However, it seems difficult now to find a solution to the political polarisation and theological arguments which surrounded the *filioque* inclusion. On the one hand it must be affirmed with the Eastern Church that the Spirit uniquely proceeds from the Father, and not from the Father and the Son. But with the Western Church it must also be affirmed that the Son is not uninvolved. Even the Russian Orthodox theologian - Boris Bolotov, while rejecting the *filioque*, has also spoken of the proximity of the Son to the Father such that the Son is to some extent involved in the Spirit's procession (Jürgen Moltmann refers to Boris Bolotov's 1898 article in his book *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 180). The Father is never without the Son, and nowhere acts without him, just as he is never without, and never acts without, the Spirit. However, to uphold the Eastern Church's main contention, the hypostatic procession of the Spirit from the Father must be distinguished from his relational, perichoretic form (see next section in this chapter) with respect to the Father and the Son (cf. J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 186f.).

¹¹⁰ Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* 280; T.F. Torrance *The Trinitarian Faith* 318ff.

¹¹¹ The interpretation of W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* 279 (fn. 70), 283. According to Pannenberg, "the idea of the Father as the source and origin of deity so fused the person of the Father and the substance of the Godhead that the divine substance is originally proper to the Father alone, being received from Him by the Son and Spirit." 280; "If the Father, unlike the Son and Spirit, were to be equated with the divine substance, then the Son and Spirit would necessarily be hypostases that are subordinate to the supreme God." 283.

unity of the three persons.¹¹² Hence the Cappadocian statement *μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις*. Also, the word 'existence' (*ὑπάρξεως*) in their term 'mode of existence' (*τρόπος ὑπάρξεως*) to define the particularities of the *hypostaseis* (as *ἀγεννησία γέννησις, ἕκπεμψις*), had no temporal sense of beginning, but was utilised to express eternal relations. The Father's mode of *hyparxis* (*ὑπαρξις* - existence) as *ἀρχή* is likewise a logical rather than a temporal priority, thereby involving no superiority of the Father.¹¹³ This also distinguishes the Cappadocian notion of the Father as *ἀρχή* from the Neoplatonic (especially the Plotinian) concept of the second divine principle as ontologically inferior since it is caused.¹¹⁴

At the same time, it may be said that in the temporal sphere (the economy) the monarchy is affirmed through the Father giving the 'kingdom' to the Son and to the Spirit, and its return again to the Father (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24). This shows that the monarchy of the Father is both the presupposition and the outcome of the mutual servanthood of the three in history.¹¹⁵ But this is not to suggest inequality among the persons of the Trinity.

T.F. Torrance believes that Gregory of Nazianzus differs in his teaching from the other Cappadocians regarding the Father as the person of origin (*ἀρχή*) and cause (*αἴτιος*) of the Son and the Spirit. He says, "at first Gregory Nazianzen went along with this teaching, although with a more Athanasian sense of the oneness of the Godhead complete in each of the three divine Persons as well as in all of them. But then he became anxious and drew back."¹¹⁶ This was

¹¹² G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 226ff.

¹¹³ G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 249. "The unity appears the more real, when the triplicity is seen to be throughout a strongly organic triplicity, and when it is recognised that the act of procession is not so much a new act as the completion of the act of generation, which is in turn no less fundamental a characteristic of God than the fact of His being *agenetos* or uncreate."

¹¹⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus attacks this Neoplatonic concept in his third theological oration. cf. E.P. Meijering 'The Doctrine of the Will and of the Trinity in the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus' in *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* 103-113. However, Thomas Weinandy regards (incorrectly in my opinion) the Cappadocian doctrine of the Father as *ἀρχή* to be influenced by Neoplatonic emanationism, and so fails to understand Athanasius' defence of the *homoousios*. cf. *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 10-13.

¹¹⁵ This is in contrast to Pannenberg, who says, "the monarchy of the Father is not the presupposition but the result of the common operation of the three persons." cf. *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* 325. More in line with my statement is his later comment, "the monarchy of the Father is God's absolute lordship. The Son serves it, and so does the glorifying of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. But the monarchy of the Father is mediated by the Son, who prepares the way for it by winning form for it in the life of creatures, and also by the Spirit, who enables creatures to honor God as their Creator by letting them share in the relation of the Son to the Father." 389.

¹¹⁶ T.F. Torrance 'The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin' *Sobornost* 12:1, 1990, 7-24, 14; see also 'The Trinitarian Foundation and Character of Faith and of Authority in the Church' in *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985) chp 5, see p. 88. See the above section on Athanasius, which indicates that Torrance overstates his case for an Athanasian concept of the Monarchy. It is to be acknowledged however, that while Gregory of Nazianzus spoke of the Father alone as cause, he could also write, "When we look at the Godhead, or the First Cause, or the Monarchia, that which we

apparently because of the subordinationist implications. However, Torrance's claims are difficult to accept.¹¹⁷ In all his writings on the Trinity, and particularly his last orations delivered in the years 380-381, Gregory underlines the equality and unity of the three persons, *and* the Father as eternal cause.¹¹⁸ For example:

How then are They not alike unoriginate, if They are coeternal? Because They are from Him [the Father] though not after Him. For that which is unoriginate is eternal, but that which is eternal is not necessarily unoriginate, so long as it may be referred to the Father as its origin. Therefore in respect of Cause They are not unoriginate; but it is evident that the Cause is not necessarily prior to its effects, for the sun is not prior to its light. (*Oration 29 : The Third Theological Oration: On the Son.* section iii)¹¹⁹

The Father is Father, and is Unoriginate, for He is of no one; the Son is Son, and is not unoriginate, for He is of the Father. But if you take the word Origin in a temporal sense, He too is Unoriginate, for he is the Maker of Time, and is not subject to Time. The Holy Ghost is truly Spirit, coming forth from the Father indeed, but not after the manner of the Son, for it is not by Generation but by Procession (since I must coin a word for the sake of clearness). (*Oration 39: Oration on the Holy Lights,* sections xi and xii, dated Epiphany 381)¹²⁰

I should like to call the Father the greater, because from him flows both the Equality and the Being of the Equals (this will be granted on all hands), but I am afraid to use the word Origin, lest I should make Him the Origin of Inferiors, and thus insult Him by precedencies of honor. (*Oration 40: The Oration on Holy Baptism,* section xliii, dated 6 Jan. 381, Constantinople)¹²¹

conceive is One; but when we look at the Persons in Whom the Godhead dwells, and at Those Who timelessly and with equal glory have their Being from the First Cause - there are Three Whom we worship. (*Fifth Theological Oration: On the Holy Spirit,* section xiv) *Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen* translated by C.G. Browne & J.E. Swallow, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (2nd Series) edited by P. Schaff & H. Wace (Vol VII; reprinted 1983; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 322.

¹¹⁷ Contrary to Torrance's conclusions, Gregory raised no objection to his contemporaries' theology of the Father as 'cause' and made no statement hinting at a return in his own thinking to the trinitarian theology of Athanasius. cf. T.F. Torrance 'The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin' 14; cf. *The Trinitarian Faith* 318. Torrance's argument may better apply to Epiphanius of Salamis cf. *The Trinitarian Faith* 326ff.

¹¹⁸ In his earlier work, *The Trinitarian Faith*, Torrance concedes this, as "Gregory Nazianzen fell in with the line of thought put forward by Basil..." 319. However, see E.P. Meijering's argument, that "unlike Athanasius, Gregory declares repeatedly (which shows that this is of great importance to him) that the Father is the cause of the Son and as such more than the Son," though not ontologically 'more' - *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* 108-109.

¹¹⁹ *Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen* translated by C.G. Browne & J.E. Swallow, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (2nd Series) edited by P. Schaff & H. Wace (Vol VII; reprinted 1983; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 302.

¹²⁰ *Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen* 355-356.

There has been strong opposition to the monarchy of the Father by both liberation and feminist theologians. Catherine LaCugna has criticised both for their 'leveling' of the Trinity to support "a vision of egalitarian human community."¹²² In the light of Jürgen Moltmann's severe critique of political and clerical 'monotheism' with its attendant subordinationism, it is likewise significant to find him affirming a constitutional order within the Trinity in which the Father has primacy.¹²³

There is then illustrated in this 'constitutional' picture of God as Trinity, the dipolarity of one-many. It is a 'one-many' in which there is oneness as unity among plurality and equality in the context of an order of persons related in a particular way. Also, because this order is both always and unchangeably Trinity, yet also an order which is not static, the 'constitutional order' model illustrates a being-becoming dipolarity.

¹²¹ *Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen* 376.

¹²² Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992) 274-277. She identifies the paranoia in both by saying, "There is *no* monarchy of the Father in these theologies for fear that this would lead to subordinationist patterns within human community." (276). That this does not reflect the truth about God is indicated in her comment: "... feminism, as much as patriarchy, projects its vision of what it wishes would happen in the human sphere, on to God, or on to a transeconomic, transexperiential realm of intradivine relations." (274).

¹²³ J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 162-166. For his 'Criticism of Political and Clerical Monotheism' cf. p.191-202.

3. Perichoretic Unity - Movement

At the beginning of the eighth century, one of the clearest expressions of Eastern trinitarianism was composed by an anonymous author using the pseudonym 'Cyril'.¹²⁴ Most of this person's work was copied by John of Damascus (AD 675-749) into his treatise - the *Orthodox Faith*. It used the term *perichoresis* (περιχώρησις is equivalent to the Latin *circumincessio*¹²⁵) to express the co-inherence of the three Persons in one another. This doctrine put to rest any mistaken notions of ontological subordinationism which might arise from the Father as 'cause' doctrine, and it likewise avoided the mistake of locating the divine unity in a substance.

The word *chorein* (χωρειν - contain) had been used to describe God pervading all created things, and was taken up by Hilary of Poitiers and Gregory of Nyssa to describe the mutual relations of the divine Persons.¹²⁶ "The Father and the Son are receptive and permeative (χωρητικός) of one another, and, as thus 'containing' one another, would be equal in extension; the one is enveloped in the other (περιέχασθαι)."¹²⁷ This metaphor was however restricted because of its use in indicating physical capacity.

The word *perichoresis* (περιχώρησις), meaning 'reciprocate', 'interchange' was a step beyond this and the more static conception of 'coinherence'.¹²⁸ It had first been used (as a verb) in the Christological discussions, to describe the relationship between the human and divine natures of Christ. Pseudo-Cyril is the first to use the word for the Persons of the Trinity. In Christological usage the term was 'perichoresis to' one another of the two natures, but in Trinitarian usage the term became perichoresis 'in' one another - indicating that the three Persons are coterminous and co-extensive. The idea is summarised for us by Jürgen Moltmann:

124 This work, *de sacrosancta Trinitate*, is usually included at the end of the collections of Cyril's writings. cf. G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 263, 280-281, 294ff.

125 According to John Honner, this Latin word has a double significance: a passive mutuality (*circum-insedere*) and a dynamic 'moving around' (*circum-incedere*). cf. 'Unity-in-difference: Karl Rahner and Neils Bohr' *Theological Studies* 46.3 (1985) 480-506.

126 Athanasius had already expressed the idea, though had not used the term 'coinherence'.

127 G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 289; H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 420.

128 Colin Gunton describes *perichoresis* as "a concept heavy with spatial and temporal conceptuality, involving movement, recurrence and interpenetration; and second that is an *implication* of the unity-in-variety of the divine economic involvement in the world." cf. *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity - The Bampton Lectures 1992* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 163.

The Father exists in the Son, the Son in the Father, and both of them in the Spirit, just as the Spirit exists in both the Father and the Son. By virtue of their eternal love they live in one another to such an extent, and dwell in one another to such an extent, that they are one. It is a process of most perfect and intense empathy. Precisely through the personal characteristics that distinguish them from one another, the Father, the Son and the Spirit dwell in one another and communicate eternal life to one another. In the perichoresis, the very thing that divides them becomes that which binds them together. The 'circulation' of the eternal divine life becomes perfect through the fellowship and unity of the three different Persons in the eternal love... Interpreted perichoretically, the trinitarian persons form their own unity by themselves in the circulation of the divine life.¹²⁹

The description of the Trinity both constitutionally and perichoretically is for some a dubious distinction, the one undermining the other.¹³⁰ However, the two concepts are complementary. The Trinity is both constitutional order *and* perichoretic realisation of identity, and each also show the importance of trinitarian theology for understanding God's relationship to the world as transcendent constitutionally and immanent perichoretically. The distinction is therefore not a "two-level existence of the Trinity,"¹³¹ but two approaches in probing the unity *and* plurality of the Trinity (the one-many polarity). So it is possible therefore to have a social model of the trinity (which is also a dipolar model) without appealing to a unipersonal analogy for underlining ontological unity.¹³²

Unipersonal analogies (i.e. of a singular subject), as the following discussion of the Augustinian tradition shows, effectively undermine plurality in the Trinity. The concern to maintain one divine consciousness results in one divine subject, rather than unity of consciousness existing in three conscious subjects.¹³³ Cornelius Plantinga discusses the problem this way:

¹²⁹ Jürgen Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 175.

¹³⁰ Roger Olson 'Trinity and Eschatology: The Historical Being of God in Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36:2 (1983) 213-227, 224; Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* 325, 336.

¹³¹ Roger Olson 'Trinity and Eschatology: The Historical Being of God in Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg' 226.

¹³² Contrary to John Gresham's analysis of social models. Gresham concludes that, "social union provides a beautiful analogy for the eternal communion of the trinitarian life, but to portray adequately the divine unity the social model must be complemented by another model or analogy which more clearly expresses the ontological unity of God," eg. the psychological analogy of Augustine. cf. J.L. Gresham, Jr. 'The Social Model of the Trinity and its Critics' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46:3 (1993) 325-343, 342.

¹³³ "A social view of the trinitarian relationships as interpersonal does not require the denial of the unity of divine consciousness and will, but only the affirmation of its existence in a threefold way. Thus Boff... admits that there is only one consciousness in God, but there are nonetheless interpersonal relations within God because the 'one substantial consciousness' is 'really expressed by three divine conscious

Suppose there is only one consciousness in the divine life, only one flow of thought and perception. This generic flow could contain within it knowledge of the truth that the Father is distinct from the Son and that each is distinct from the Holy Spirit. And, accordingly, each person, tapping terminal-like into the general flow, could know this truth. The Father, for instance, could know specifically the truth of the proposition, *The Father is a center distinct from Son and Spirit*. And the Son could know that same proposition. But the trouble is that, on this scheme, what the Father could not know is the truth of the proposition, *I am the Father*. And what the Son could not know is the truth of the proposition, *I am the Son*. For, if the Father knew the truth of the proposition *I am the Father*, he would know something different from what is known by the Son and Spirit - who could not know the truth of that proposition. In other words, if the Father were truly self-conscious, he would have to have a partly different consciousness from that of Son and Spirit. It could not be the case that Father, Son, and Spirit each had precisely the same consciousness while each was moreover distinctly self-conscious.¹³⁴

This accords with the story of the Gospels, where Father and Son, while 'one', dialogue with each other.

beings'." J.L. Gresham, Jr. 'The Social Model of the Trinity and its Critics' 330-331. cf. L. Boff *Trinity and Society* (trans. P. Burns; Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988) 89. An argument for the logic of this possibility is presented by Thomas V. Morris 'God and the World' in *Process Theology* ed. R. Nash (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 298-300. An argument for Father, Son, and Spirit as "distinct centers of consciousness" is made by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. 'Social Trinity and Tritheism' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* ed. R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 21-47. Plantinga replies to Donald Baillie's accusation that three distinct persons implies three finite persons (35). See also David Brown 'Trinitarian Personhood and Individuality' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* ed. R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 48-78, 69 - "we need consciousness to affirm personhood of the three individuals, while self-consciousness as something social is equally needed to explain how such individuality is transcended in the affirmation of one God..."; T.G. Weinandy *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 120; W. Kasper *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1986) 285-290.

¹³⁴ Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. 'Social Trinity and Tritheism' 42-43.

4. The One, and the 'Unitarians'

4.1. Augustine

Augustine could not accept the argument of the Cappadocians. As already mentioned, by the time of the Cappadocians, the Greek *hypostasis* had come to be used in distinction from *ousia* to refer to the concrete particularity of Father, Son and Spirit. But Augustine did not accept this kind of distinction, if in fact he understood it at all.¹³⁵ For him there is an unknown substance (immutable essence) which is absolutely simple and without composition, rather than God being constituted by a relationship between three persons.¹³⁶ The influence of Neoplatonic thinking on Augustine's thinking at this point is obvious.¹³⁷ This inevitably lead to an individualistic concept of God in the Western theological tradition, and also one in which the three of the Trinity are regarded as impersonal. If a divine substance, and not the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the basis of the being of God, then the world and everything in it derives from what is fundamentally impersonal.

Augustine also spurned Marius Victorinus' trinitarian theology, probably because it was too dependent upon the ideas of the anti-Christian philosopher - Porphyry. In relation to the Cappadocian's theology, Victorinus' use of Porphyry's concept that act precedes substance, is of particular interest to our study. As Mary Clark explains, "from Porphyry he [Victorinus] accepted and worked with the First Principle as *Esse* and for the first time designated Being as activity, simple and infinite, a Principle from which substance is constituted."¹³⁸ This was one novel piece of Neoplatonism, with obvious parallels to the Cappadocians' trinitarianism, but Augustine had no time for it.

¹³⁵ Augustine could not read Greek. Jaroslav Pelikan notes, "It is shocking, then, to find Augustine having to admit that he "does not know" what the Greek theologians meant by their distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*." - *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986) 10.

¹³⁶ "Because Augustine continues to use relation as a logical rather than an ontological predicate, he is precluded from being able to make claims about the being of the *particular* persons, who, because they lack distinguishable identity tend to disappear into the all-embracing oneness of God. It is for reasons such as this that there is in Augustine, and in most Western theology after him, a tendency towards modalism..." Colin Gunton *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991) 41-42.

¹³⁷ Though more obvious in his earliest thinking as a Christian. cf. Mary T. Clark 'Augustine's Theology of the Trinity: Its Relevance' *Dionysius* 13 (1989) 71-84; Thomas A. Wassmer 'The Trinitarian Theology of Augustine and his debt to Plotinus' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 14.3 (1961) 248-255.

¹³⁸ Mary T. Clark 'Marius Victorinus Afer, Porphyry, and the History of Philosophy' in *The Significance of Neoplatonism* ed. R.B. Harris (Norfolk: Old Dominion University, 1976) 265-273, 272; see also Mary T. Clark 'The Trinity in Latin Christianity' 279-286.

Augustine recognised differentiation within the Trinity, but this was expressed in terms of subsistent relations (*ad aliquid relatio*) along similar lines to Aristotle's philosophy of relation as a category of being.¹³⁹ For Aristotle there were ten categories of being. Firstly:

(1) Substance.

Primary substance, or individual substance (that tree), and

Secondary substance, or kinds of substance - genera and species (that tree is an oak).

The remaining nine categories are 'accidents', non-essential characteristics which may reside in a substance:

(2) Quantity, (3) Quality, (4) Relation [if it implies the other, eg. master to slave, father to child], (5) Place, (6) Time, (7) Posture, (8) Having, (9) Acting, (10) Being acted on.

However, for Augustine, 'relation' was essential to God's 'substance', and therefore not an 'accident' (God is substance without accidents¹⁴⁰). God somehow subsists relatively.¹⁴¹ This enabled him to use the same terms as the Cappadocians - 'begetting', 'begotten' and 'proceeding', and the Father being the divine source.¹⁴² However, in line with his philosophy of God existing as a single principle,¹⁴³ the analogies used to describe these relations lacked objective differentiation,¹⁴⁴ a charge which could however also be made against analogies used by the Fathers before him.¹⁴⁵

139 *De Trinitate*, Books 5-7 cf. Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 85, 87ff. It is important to note that the Aristotelian distinction between primary ousia and secondary ousia seems to have had no influence on the Christian Fathers before Nicea. cf. Christopher Stead *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* 165, 182.

140 R.J. Teske 'Augustine's use of *Substantia* in Speaking about God' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 147-163.

141 H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 355.

142 J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 274-276.

143 Augustine rejected the Neoplatonic notion of three descending principles, as taught by Plotinus i.e. The First Principle, the Second *Nous* or *Logos*, and the World-Soul. However, it should be noted that Porphyry (a pupil of Plotinus, and regarded by Augustine as Christianity's enemy) changed this into a 'horizontal' triad of Being-Life-Intelligence, a concept taken up Marius Victorinus who had some influence on Augustine. cf. A.H. Armstrong 'The Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism' in *Hellenic and Christian Studies* (London: Variorum, 1990) Essay VIII, p. 94-96; Mary T. Clark 'The Neoplatonism of Marius Victorinus the Christian' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 153-159; Mary T. Clark 'Marius Victorinus Afer, Porphyry, and the History of Philosophy' in *The Significance of Neoplatonism* ed. R.B. Harris (Norfolk: Old Dominion University, 1976) 265-273; R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 106.

144 Augustine considered a social analogy and rejected it (*De trinitate*, XII c.5). The main analogy he then used was the human soul - a triad of memory, understanding, and will. This is derived from

After working on *De Trinitate* for about twelve years, Augustine began *De Civitate Dei*. In book ten of this later work, Augustine may have moved closer to the Cappadocians in his use of the noun *subsistentia* to describe the persons of the Trinity. Yet it is still unclear what connection this word 'subsistence' had to 'relation' in Augustine's thinking, and therefore whether or not he identified the two.¹⁴⁶ What is clear, is that Augustine firmly rejected Sabellianism, even if his own theology does not completely avoid its appearance.

Jerome, like his contemporary Augustine, likewise failed to appreciate the nuance of the Greek 'hypostases'. He went further than Augustine, and denounced the formula of 'three hypostaseis' as heretically Arian.¹⁴⁷ Scholastic theology, again building on Augustine, would later blur the differences by saying that any one of the divine persons could have become incarnate.¹⁴⁸

Neoplatonic beliefs about knowledge as recollection. According to the Neoplatonists, the human mind is constituted in a threefold way because it contains, first, as its hidden storehouse the memory of the forms which, according to classic Platonist theory, it brings into the world from eternity but forgets by virtue of its embodied state; second, the so to speak mental screen on which the contents of its store can be actualized; and third the power by means of which the content is brought to actuality. How does this illustrate the trinity? The Father is parallel to the function of memory in the human mind, the Son to understanding, and the Spirit to will. Augustine then says, "This triad of memory, understanding and will are not three lives, but one; not three minds, but one. It follows that they are not three substances, but one substance..." (*De Trinitate*, Book 10). cf. Jaroslav Pelikan *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* 66-67; Wayne Hankey 'The Place of the Psychological Image of the Trinity in the Arguments of Augustine's *de Trinitate*, Anselm's *Monologion*, and Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*' *Dionysius* 3 (1979) 99-110; J. Moltmann 'The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37.3 (1984) 287-300, 290-291.

¹⁴⁵ For discussion on the analogies used by the Fathers, see H.A. Wolfson *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* 359-361.

¹⁴⁶ Gerald Bray 'The Doctrine of the Trinity in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*' *European Journal of Theology* 1:2, 1992, 141-149. Bray says that, "it is certainly true that such an equation is there for the making, and that Augustine's remark on relation in *De trinitate* V,5, lead us to suppose that it had in his mind an objective quality different from that of *substantia*, but which might reasonably be expressed as *subsistentia*. Nevertheless, Augustine does not himself do this, and the fact that he is free to describe the Holy Spirit as a *substantia* (XI, 24), by which he means *hypostasis* and not *ousia*, shows that he had not worked the distinction out in his own mind." 147.

¹⁴⁷ G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* 237.

¹⁴⁸ Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 99. According to LaCugna, this view is first found in Anselm.

4.2. Thomas Aquinas

In his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas begins by examining first the unity of the divine substance (*De Deo Uno*) as the basis for his subsequent discussion on the Trinity (*De Deo Trino*). This pattern was adopted by most Catholic and Protestant theologies (eg. Calvin's *Institutes*) which followed.¹⁴⁹

Following Aristotle and Augustine, the category of relation was for Aquinas the supreme ontological predicate when speaking of God as Trinity. The trinitarian relations are intrinsic or subsist within God and as such are identical with the divine essence. This is to be contrasted with God's relation to the world, in which the 'relation' is an accidental feature and not an essential part of God's nature. So the divine persons are described by Aquinas in their 'relations of opposition', and in terms of processions. Yet any real difference is eliminated in that a divine person is a subsisting relation, equated with the totality of the divine nature.¹⁵⁰ Various actions may be 'appropriated' to a divine person, but the action as such is a property of the divine essence and not a particular person. As Catherine LaCugna notes, "this defunctionalizes the divine persons with respect to their proper roles in creation and redemption."¹⁵¹ Aquinas' theory of a simple God without composition, is inconsistent with his theory of Trinity. According to Christopher Hughes, Aquinas tried to "eat his cake and have it too."¹⁵²

149 For a defence of this pattern, see T.G. Weinandy *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 59-60, fn 14. He argues that the order is pedagogical, and moreover follows the order of revelation itself. However, Weinandy admits problems when discussing ontology in these terms.

150 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 154.

151 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 160. "Thomas' position here is inconsistent with the biblical and creedal statements that God the Father creates *through* the Son. Thomas' position also depersonalizes the creative act of God by linking it generically with the divine nature rather than identifying it as the *proprium* of a particular person. The same logic allows Thomas to say that when we pray the Lord's Prayer and say to God "Our Father," we address the whole Trinity! Neither can this view be supported by the economy." 166.

152 Christopher Hughes *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 188. Hughes provides a detailed study of Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity on pages 176-186, and chapter 6 - 'Identity and the Trinity' (187-240). "The moral is that Aquinas' theory of the Trinity is logically flawed at the core... For Aquinas, God is the simplest possible being, in whom there is no distinction between person and nature, or part and whole, or subject and attribute. Now, it is on the face of it incredible that such a being could have enough structure to be three persons in one nature. But an impression is not an argument: so I have tried to show exactly how we can move from Aquinas' conception of God and the divine persons as absolutely simple to the Sabellian claim that the divine persons are all the same as one another. Aquinas does have a strategy for blocking this move, but since it depends on denying an evident logical truth about identity, it is unsuccessful." (239).

4.3. John Calvin

Calvin spoke of the Father as 'cause', in much the same way as the Cappadocians. He wrote, "when we denote the relation which he bears to the Father, we correctly make the Father the beginning of the Son (*filii principium*)."¹⁵³ But not a temporal beginning.

For though we admit that, in respect of order and gradation, the beginning of divinity is in the Father, we hold it a detestable fiction to maintain that essence is proper to the Father alone, as if he were the deifier of the Son.¹⁵⁴

The Father, according to Calvin, is "the principle and fountain of all the Godhead." In the same breath he also says, "the essence both of the Son and Spirit is unbegotten".¹⁵⁵ It is not clear what Calvin then means by saying that the Father is the "beginning of divinity" (above quote), unless 'beginning' refers to order.¹⁵⁶ He goes on to say about the Son,...

His essence is without beginning, while his person has its beginning in God. And, indeed, the orthodox writers who in former times spoke of the Trinity, used this term [i.e. 'beginning'] only with reference to the Persons.¹⁵⁷

This is not true, even of Gregory of Nazianzus who is much esteemed by Calvin.¹⁵⁸ The Cappadocians regarded the Father (as Person) to be the cause both of the divine essence and the *hypostaseis*. But for Calvin, the monarchia *is* the three persons, and therefore one cannot be caused by the other, for each wholly indwell each other. The result is that generation and procession is not from the person or *hypostasis* of the Father, but from *essentia*.¹⁵⁹ In this conclusion, Calvin shows his dependency on Augustine.

¹⁵³ John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol 1* (trans. H. Beveridge; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 13.19, p.127. See also 13.23 - "although the name of God is common also to the Son, yet it is sometimes, by way of excellence, ascribed to the Father, as being the source and principle of Divinity."

¹⁵⁴ John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol 1* 13.24.

¹⁵⁵ John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol 1* 13.25.

¹⁵⁶ John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol 1* 13.26; This is the way T.F. Torrance interprets Calvin's statement that the Father is the *Fons et Principium Deitatis*. cf. 'The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin' 15.

¹⁵⁷ John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol 1* 13.25.

¹⁵⁸ See the above quotations from Gregory's orations. On Calvin's recognition of Gregory, see *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol 1* 13.17.

¹⁵⁹ T.F. Torrance 'The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin' 18.

4.4. Karl Barth and the Rejection of 'Person'

Karl Barth spoke about God having one nature and therefore one self-consciousness. But God also exists simultaneously in 'three modes of being' (*Seinsweisen*)¹⁶⁰: in the mode of the Father, in the mode of the Son, and in the mode of the Holy Spirit. Barth's term is a literal translation of the Cappadocians' expression 'mode of existence' (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως), without their synonymous understanding of *hypostasis* (person). This appears to be a form of modalism,¹⁶¹ but "whether this modalism is Sabellian could be debated."¹⁶² The result for Barth is that God is essentially uni-personal and sovereign Subject. As W. Pannenberg observes, Barth's "model of a Trinity of revelation is easily seen to be structurally identical with that of the self-conscious Absolute, especially when God's revelation has to be viewed primarily as a self-revelation. The subject of the revelation is only one."¹⁶³

Others have taken up Barth's Trinity of revelation. For Claude Welch the doctrine is more about our threefold experience of God than any propositional statement about God being somehow three.¹⁶⁴ Karl Rahner's understanding of

¹⁶⁰ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics* I/1, (2nd edition: Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 355; *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 (trans. G.W. Bromiley & T.F. Torrance; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956) 205; cf. R.D. Williams 'Barth on the Triune God' in *Karl Barth - Studies of his Theological Method* ed. S.W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) 147-193; Alan J. Torrance *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) 239-262.

¹⁶¹ Despite Barth's rejection of modalism cf. *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 196ff. It is also difficult to understand how the Holy Spirit can be a 'third' hypostasis when this *Seinsweise* is a function of the other two i.e. the Spirit as the bond of communion between Father and Son (CD I/1, 469). cf. R.D. Williams 'Barth on the Triune God' 169-170.

¹⁶² Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 252; cf. Jürgen Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1981) 140-144.

¹⁶³ Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1 296. "Barth could thus think of the doctrine of the Trinity as an exposition of the subjectivity of God in his revelation. This being so, there is no room for a plurality of persons in the one God but only for different modes of being in the one divine subjectivity." 296. Also R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga Jr. 'Introduction' to *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 5 - "Barth's own statement of the God-God relation emerges as disappointingly monist. All the harmonious communion and mutuality in God of which Barth speaks so eloquently gets assigned to a single divine "individual," a sole subject, whose fellowship is merely self-reflexive." However, John Thompson notes that "Barth moved to a more communitarian view in his later works... In the Table Talk, Barth states on the one hand 'The notion of a "social trinity" is fantastic' (p.50), but on the other hand says 'I admit a social threeness', though this is not to be understood as 'three distinct centres of consciousness' (p.58f.)." - cf. 'Jüngel on Barth' in *The Possibilities of Theology: Studies in the Theology of Eberhard Jüngel in his Sixtieth Year* ed. John Webster (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) 143-189, 163.

¹⁶⁴ Claude Welch *In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952). A summary of Welch's thinking in this book can be found in Ted

the Trinity is also little different than Barth's. The 'three' however, are given a little more particularity in his term "distinct modes of subsisting" (*Subsistenzweisen*),¹⁶⁵ but not enough particularly to warrant calling them persons. Because for Rahner (like Barth), person implies a centre of consciousness, and God has only one centre of consciousness.¹⁶⁶ This notion of a 'person' as a centre of consciousness accounts for Rahner's failure to recognise developments in philosophy and psychology in which persons have been defined relationally.¹⁶⁷ More recently, Alister McGrath has described the Trinity as 'three essential models' for God.

The first model is that of the transcendent God who is beyond the world as its source and creator; the second is the human face of God, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ; the third is that of the immanent God who is present and active throughout his creation. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that these three models combine to define the essential Christian insights into the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.¹⁶⁸

This presentation of the doctrine is essentially Barthian. By avoiding the word 'person' there is a denial of the 'threeness' as three persons and centres of action, revealed as the communion of the divine persons in the New Testament.¹⁶⁹ Ted Peters goes even further in his language for the Trinity as the symbol of the Father, the symbol of the Son, and the Holy Spirit as love which

Peters' *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 82-90.

¹⁶⁵ Karl Rahner *The Trinity* (trans. J. Donceel; New York: Herder & Herder, 1970) 103-115. Rahner considers Aquinas' definition of person for the three of the Trinity, to be more adequate than the concepts of Boethius or Richard of St. Victor. Thomas Aquinas said that a person is *subsistens distinctum in natura rationali* (that which subsists as distinct in a rational nature) cf. p.104, n.25. For a critique of Rahner's term - *Subsistenzweisen* - see Alan J. Torrance *Persons in Communion* 262-280.

¹⁶⁶ Rahner also stresses that "there are not three consciousnesses; rather, the one consciousness subsists in a threefold way." *The Trinity* 107. This means that "in God there is only *one* essence, hence *one* absolute self-presence, but also... only *one* self-utterance of the Father, the Logos. The Logos is not the one who utters, but the one who is uttered. And there is properly no *mutual* love between Father and Son, for this would presuppose two acts." *The Trinity* 106.

¹⁶⁷ "Both Barth and Rahner worked with a narrow interpretation of person as centre of consciousness. However, in reaction to the atomism and solipsism of critical philosophy, new currents of thought had arisen in science, philosophy, and psychology that emphasized the social and relational character of personhood and indeed of all reality. Already in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Feuerbach, Fichte and Hegel had argued that persons exist only in relation.... The personalist philosophies of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Felix Ebner and others would have been a distinct alternative to Descartes, Locke, and company." Catherine LaCugna *God For Us* 255. See also John Wren-Lewis 'Modern Philosophy and the Doctrine of the Trinity' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 5:20 (1955) 214-224.

¹⁶⁸ A. McGrath *Understanding the Trinity* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1987) 136.

¹⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:10f; Mark 1:11; Matthew 11:27; John 3:35; 5:20; 14:31; 15:9f.; 16:13f.; 17:24. The term 'centres of action' is taken from Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* 319.

binds the two into one divine reality.¹⁷⁰ He concludes with a strong rejection of the social doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁷¹ However, the social doctrine has had many advocates since the Cappadocians, and it is to this understanding of the Trinity that we now turn.

5. The Many, and the 'Socialists'

Richard of St. Victor, born in Scotland, was the first Western theologian to develop a social concept of the Trinity in preference to the Augustinian psychological model which had become dogma by the Middle Ages. While Richard of St. Victor was not interested in personhood as such, and so did not develop an alternative view of personhood to Boethius, he clearly defined the trinity as persons in relation to each other, in a way different than the 'subsistent relations' explanation which found its climax in Aquinas.

In the third book of Richard's *De Trinitate* there is a proof of the plurality of the divine persons. Since love is an eternal characteristic of God, and perfect love must be directed to another, then God must eternally exist as a plurality of persons. But this is not just the mutual love between a couple, which may become introverted, but love which is perfected in sharing with a third person.

Certainly in only a pair of persons there would be no one with whom either of the two could share the excellent delights of His pleasure. For this reason it is given to be understood that the consummation of true and supreme goodness cannot subsist without completion of the Trinity... Shared love is properly said to exist when a third person is loved by two persons harmoniously and in community, and the affection of the two persons is fused into one affection by the flame of love for the third.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Ted Peters *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 174.

¹⁷¹ Despite his borrowing from Pannenberg's 'social' trinitarian theology, Peters himself says, "Social doctrines of the Trinity, though increasingly popular, are, in my judgment, wrongheaded." Peters eventually drops the "second order symbol" of the Trinity in preference for the Biblical symbol of the Kingdom of God, to argue for God's relationality and temporality. *God as Trinity* 184-186.

¹⁷² Richard of St. Victor *The Twelve Patriarchs; The Mystical Ark; Book Three of the Trinity* (trans. G.A. Zinn; London: SPCK, 1979) - Book Three of the Trinity, chapters 18, 19 (p.391-392).

While Richard grounded the unity of persons in Divinity (his preferred term to 'substance'¹⁷³) his emphasis on a trinity of persons coexisting eternally prevented him from reducing that unity to single divine subject. Also, unlike Augustine's scheme, where the third 'person' is love (a force) that binds the lover and the beloved, Richard's third person is a distinct 'individual', receiving love from two, and with another loving a third.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a number of other British theologians were attracted to the social doctrine of the Trinity, namely W. Richmond (1900), J.R. Illingworth - (1907), R.C. Moberly (1913), C.C.J. Webb (1918), L.S. Thornton (1926),¹⁷⁴ and most distinctly Leonard Hodgson, who described the Trinity as an organic unity.¹⁷⁵ During the 1980's T.F. Torrance, beginning from the Barthian position, attempted to move the doctrine more into the social camp with the aid of those who rejected the Boethian and Cartesian concept of person in favour of understanding persons as relational and communal (e.g W. Sorley, C.C.J. Webb, Martin Buber, John Macmurray, Michael Polanyi).¹⁷⁶ One of the most outspoken contemporary British theologians for this social perspective is Colin Gunton, joined by others who have contributed to the British Council of Churches conference on Trinitarian theology in 1989.¹⁷⁷

To this list we must add two German theologians - Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg; Leonardo Boff from among the Liberation theologians, Patricia Wilson-Kastner and Catherine LaCugna representing Feminist theologians, Cornelius Plantinga, Royce Gruenler and Clark Pinnock as North American evangelicals, Joseph Bracken representing a few of the Process theologians,¹⁷⁸ Pope John Paul II,¹⁷⁹ and as one would expect, a large number

¹⁷³ Book Three, chapter 8 (p.381).

¹⁷⁴ For a summary of these theologians see Claude Welch *In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952) 29-34, 133-151.

¹⁷⁵ Leonard Hodgson *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1944); *How Can God Be Both One and Three?* (London: SPCK, 1960).

¹⁷⁶ Especially Torrance's *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985) 160-206.

¹⁷⁷ Colin Gunton *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991); cf. *The Forgotten Trinity. 1. Report of the BCC Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today* (London: British Council of Churches, 1989).

¹⁷⁸ Jürgen Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1981); *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine: A Dialogue by Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); 'The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit - Trinitarian Pneumatology' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37.3 (1984) 287-300; *History and the Triune God: Contributions to Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); 'Some Reflections on the Social Doctrine of the Trinity' in *The Christian Understanding of God Today* ed. J.M. Byrne (Dublin: Columba Press, 1993) 104-111; Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology : Vol. 1* (trans. G.W.

of recent theologians from the Eastern Orthodox Church e.g. Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Kallistos Ware, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas.¹⁸⁰ The theology of many of these scholars has been conveniently summarised by others,¹⁸¹ the dominant factor being the concept of 'person' as a relational identity, enabling us to think of the Trinity as a community of divine persons bound in unity by their shared perichoretic life. This view is not without its 'Augustinian' opponents.¹⁸²

6. The Immanent & Economic Trinity

The main focus of this chapter so far, has been a study of the Trinity as the polarity 'one-many', God is one as a trinity of persons, unity in community. But alongside the question of 'number' in trinitarian theology, theologians have made an epistemological differentiation between the Trinity as revealed

Bromiley : Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Leonardo Boff 'Trinity' in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* ed. I. Ellacuría and J. Sobrino (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993) 389-404; *Trinity and Society* (trans. Paul Burns; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988); Patricia Wilson-Kastner *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Catherine Mowry LaCugna *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992); Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. 'The Perfect Family: Our Model for Life Together is found in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' *Christianity Today*, 4 March 1988, 24-28; 'Social Trinity and Tritheism' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* ed. R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 21-47; Royce Gordon Gruenler *The Trinity in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986); Clark Pinnock *Tracking the Maze* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990); Joseph Bracken *The Triune Symbol: Persons, Process, and Community* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985); 'The Holy Trinity as a Community of Divine Persons' *Heythrop Journal* 15 (1974) 166-182, 257-270.

179 "Our God, in his most intimate mystery, is not a solitude, but a family. For he intrinsically contains paternity, filiation, and the essence of the family that is love..." - from Pope John Paul's address to the Latin American bishops at Puebla, January 28, 1979. Quoted by Leonardo Boff 'Trinity' in *Mysterium Liberationis : Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* ed. I. Ellacuría and J. Sobrino (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993) 389-404, 389.

180 Vladimir Lossky *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (trans. I. & I. Kesarcodi-Watson; New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989); *In the Image and Likeness of God* (London: Mowbrays, 1974); *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1957); J. Meyendorff *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends & Doctrinal Themes* (London: Mowbrays, 1974); *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today* (trans. J. Chapin; London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1962); K. Ware *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964); *The Orthodox Way* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979); Christos Yannaras *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology* (trans. K. Schram; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991); John D. Zizioulas *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985).

181 For example: John L. Gresham, Jr. 'The Social Model of the Trinity and its Critics' *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 46:3 (1993) 325-343; Ted Peters *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993); Catherine LaCugna 'Current Trends in Trinitarian Theology' *Religious Studies Review* 13:2 (1987) 141-146.

182 For example, James P. Mackey 'Are there Christian Alternatives to Trinitarian Thinking?' in *The Christian Understanding of God Today* ed. J.M. Byrne (Dublin: Columba Press, 1993) 66-75.

(economic Trinity) and the Trinity in itself (immanent Trinity).¹⁸³ This distinction has been inappropriately used to separate the 'being' from the 'becoming' of God, two features of God which this thesis argues are dipolar.

6.1. The Split in Patristic theology

One theological motive in Patristic theology was to preserve the immanent Trinity from the mutability and passibility revealed in the incarnation and crucifixion of the Son: to differentiate between the suffering of Christ in his humanity, and an untouched divine nature. For Arius the impassible God is to be distinguished from the passible, and less than divine Logos. For Athanasius this impassible God as Logos, is to be distinguished from the passible human nature of Christ. So, according to the 'orthodox' Athanasius, the Logos suffers in his humanity (*kat' oikonomian*), not his divinity (*kata theologian*).¹⁸⁴ It is here that a split between the immanent and the economic Trinity is first apparent.¹⁸⁵

The later Augustinian emphasis on unity and substance compounds the problem by isolating the Trinity in intra-divine speculation, rather than showing the real connection between God and the revelation of himself in history.¹⁸⁶ As already mentioned, this led Aquinas to write two separate treatises *On the One God* and *On the Triune God*, where the immanent and the economic Trinity are treated as two separate topics, the former becoming philosophical and abstract with little reference to salvation history. This is in contrast to the theology of the Cappadocians, in which the Trinity is defined with explicit reference to salvation history and where the doctrine of the Trinity thereby becomes the framework for all theology.¹⁸⁷

Disagreement with Augustine does not mean that the substance metaphysics of the early Christian creeds should be abandoned in order to speak of God's temporality or 'becoming'. After a detailed study of the word *ousia* in both classical literature and the writings of the early church, Christopher Stead defends the continued use of the term for describing God as both immutable

183 The term 'Immanent Trinity' is synonymous with 'essential', 'inherent', or 'intrinsic' Trinity. This refers to the relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit to each other, the intradivine relations, God *in se*, God's relations *ad intra*. The term 'Economic Trinity' refers to the manifestation of the Trinity in history, God's relations *ad extra*.

184 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 42.

185 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* 34-44.

186 Karl Rahner *The Trinity* (trans. J. Donceel; New York: Herder & Herder, 1970) 18.

187 This observation is also made by Karl Rahner *The Trinity* 18, fn. 13.

and mutable. Firstly, he says, "its principal function, as I see it, is to claim that God is not limited or prescribed by our experience of him, but exists in his own right... To characterise God as a substance is to stake a claim against reductionist theories which in effect represent God as dependent on the human experience which he is invoked to explain."¹⁸⁸ Then Stead goes on to show that the substance notion does not preclude time and change, having found examples of this in ancient usage (e.g. Heraclitus, Posidonius the Stoic, the Nassenes according to Hippolytus).¹⁸⁹ This suggests that a description of God in terms of divine substance, is compatible with both 'being' and 'becoming', even if the vast majority of theologians in the early church would not allow for the latter, irrespective of the precedent within their own cultural tradition.

6.2. Economic Trinity = Immanent Trinity

Karl Rahner has argued that since God reveals himself, and in fact gives himself, in the course of his relationship with humankind, the God we see in this act is the real God and not some hidden God (*deus absconditus*). The God revealed is the real God, even if this revelation goes beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Rahner summarised this thinking in his now famous axiom, "the 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity, and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity,"¹⁹⁰ which is accepted as a necessary starting point for most modern theologies of God, though interpreted in a number of different ways.

6.3. Correspondence

Firstly, there is the notion of correspondence, as expressed by Karl Barth.¹⁹¹ But the problem with Barth's concept is a breakdown in correspondence between the eternal/changeless immanent Trinity, and the 'history' of God in the economy. Jürgen Moltmann compares this with the Platonic relationship of

¹⁸⁸ Christopher Stead *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 273.

¹⁸⁹ C. Stead *Divine Substance* 273-275, 106, 171.

¹⁹⁰ Karl Rahner *The Trinity* 22, cf. 99ff.

¹⁹¹ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 123, 235ff.

the Idea to its appearance.¹⁹² The two are different, since one is eternal and immutable, the other temporal and mutable, though Barth endeavours to maintain a relationship by including the temporal in the eternal (see Chapter Five).

Eberhard Jüngel takes up Barth's thesis by saying that God's relationship to the world *ad extra* corresponds to the internal relationality within the divine life *ad intra*. A distinction between 'economic' and 'immanent' Trinity "is legitimate only when the economic doctrine of the Trinity deals with God's history with man, and the immanent doctrine of the Trinity is *its* summarizing concept."¹⁹³ But what is this 'summarising concept'?

Where the economic doctrine of the Trinity speaks of God's *history* with man, the immanent doctrine of the Trinity must speak of God's *historicity*. God's history is his coming to man. God's historicity is God's being as it comes (being in coming). We must ponder this if we want to take God's history with man seriously as an event in which God is God. In the process, of course, the immanent doctrine of the Trinity, which considers the historicity of God, must take seriously that God is *our* God.¹⁹⁴

Jüngel does not mean by God's 'historicity' (the summarising concept) that God becomes,¹⁹⁵ but that history (the economic Trinity as revealed by the agency of Spirit as a 'vehicle of eternity'¹⁹⁶) is a reflection of the eternal immanent Trinity in our temporal world. The 'economy' of the divine relations

192 J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 158-159.

193 Eberhard Jüngel *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (trans. D.L. Guder; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 346.

194 Eberhard Jüngel *God as the Mystery of the World* 346-347.

195 Since God is eternal in relation to all time, according to Jüngel, God always comes to where he already is. Therefore, Jüngel speaks of God's coming to himself, God's being *in* coming, but not of progression since there is in God's eternity a union between origin and goal. cf. *God as the Mystery of the World* 380, 388. John Thompson detects a problem in Jüngel's distinguishing between God's eternal being as triune and his creaturely becoming as the Son of God. The conflict is between 'eternity' and 'time' cf. John Thompson 'Jüngel on Barth' in *The Possibilities of Theology: Studies in the Theology of Eberhard Jüngel in his Sixtieth Year* ed. John Webster (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) 143-189, 176-177.

196 Eberhard Jüngel *God as the Mystery of the World* 370, 388. Jüngel does not regard the Holy Spirit to be a divine person (or a "person," cf. 371, fn.9), but the bond of unity between Father and Son (374, 379), the "event of love between the Father and the Son" (375), the "relationship between Father and Son which constitutes the life of God" (379). The Spirit is the link between 'immanent' and 'economic' trinity, just as the eternal Son is made identical with the man Jesus 'in the Holy Spirit' (388). cf. Colin Gunton 'The Being and Attributes of God. Eberhard Jüngel's Dispute with the Classical Philosophical Tradition' in *The Possibilities of Theology: Studies in the Theology of Eberhard Jüngel in his Sixtieth Year* ed. John Webster (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) 7-22, 20-21.

is then reduced to mythological representations,¹⁹⁷ a story in temporal human language. Because this story is mythological (the temporal conveying truth about a God who has no history), Jüngel regards the immanent Trinity to be 'psychological' differentiations ('modes of being'¹⁹⁸) within the one being.¹⁹⁹ These self-differentiations, are revealed in the eternal God's historical relation with others, particularly the man Jesus.²⁰⁰ In the temporal story of this man Jesus, that eternal God is invisibly discerned²⁰¹ and the immanent Trinity is defined for us anthropomorphically in visible and temporal terms.²⁰² So the correspondence between 'immanent' and 'economic' is tenuous, and all the more so since it is temporary.²⁰³

The problem here is seen in John McDade's defence of Barth and Jüngel, when he draws a distinction between narrative theology in which a 'history' of the trinitarian relationships are told, and an ontological description of the Trinity which must remythologise this into a 'gigantic complex metaphor' devoid of sequence.²⁰⁴ The whole concept of correspondence, according to

197 Eberhard Jüngel *God as the Mystery of the World* 302. Jüngel says, "The Christian doctrine of the triune God is the epitome of the story of Jesus Christ, because the reality of God's history with man comes to its truth in the differentiation of the one God into the three persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity basically has no other function than to make the story of God so true that it can be told in a responsible way. In the doctrine of the Trinity, God's historicity is thought as truth. In the power of this truth, God can be spoken of in a Christian way, God's being can be told as history." 344.

198 Eberhard Jüngel *God as the Mystery of the World* 369

199 "Thus God is differentiated in a threefold way in his unity: in the encounter of Father and Son, related to each other as Spirit. But in the fatal encounter, God remains *one* God. For he remains as Father and Son in the Spirit the one "event God." (*God as the Mystery of the World* 368).

200 "Self-differentiation as the implication of identification with another is, however, the expression of the fact that that other profoundly defines my own being from outside of myself. That other one steps between me and me, so to speak. In this sense, God's identification with the dead Jesus implies a self-differentiation on God's part. The being of this dead man defines God's own being in such a way that one must speak of a differentiation between God and God." (*God as the Mystery of the World* 363, cf. 368 - "... in the death of Jesus he [God] encounters himself as *God the Father* and *God the Son* without becoming disunited in himself.").

201 The invisible and eternal God "came to the world as *man*. As that man, he was visible." (379). Also, "given the conditions of the world, God's coming to the world cannot be seen. If this were to be made visible, then, as one option, the end of the world would have to be postulated. For God's divine way of appearing would surpass the world's possibilities, which are divided into space and time and thus within time into the various tenses of time, and consequently cannot facilitate the appearance of the eternal God in an eternal or divine way." (*God as the Mystery of the World* 378).

202 "The Trinity of God implies, within the horizons of the world, the self-differentiation of the *invisible* Father in heaven from the Son on earth, *visible* as man, and from the Spirit who reigns as the bond of unity and love between the invisible Father in heaven and the visible Son on earth and who produces in an *invisible* way *visible* results in us." (*God as the Mystery of the World* 379).

203 Jüngel believes that time and being will finally both dissolve into the eternal life of God. cf. *God as the Mystery of the World* p.395, 385. This view is developed by Pannenberg and Peters cf. the next section in this chapter, and Chapter Five - pages 204f.

204 John McDade 'The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery' *Heythrop Journal* 24 (1988) 175-191. McDade says: "Since they tell a story about God, Trinitarian narratives work with a structure of past, present and future. It would be a mistake either to imply or deduce that, since a Trinitarian narrative uses this

these theologians, depends on their notion of eternity (in the Plotinian/Boethian sense) and time as relative, which as I argue in Chapter Five is mistaken.

One strength of Barth's and Jüngel's understanding of the relationship between the economic and immanent trinity (despite my disagreement with them over 'eternity'), is that there cannot be a strict identity discerned in revelation, for there always remains the freedom of God to reveal himself in different ways.²⁰⁵ There is a link between these epistemological perspectives, but because these are *two* perspectives (divine and human, therefore asymmetrical) there is also a distinction. The revelation is consistent with the immanent, but the nature of immanent trinitarian relationships, the existence of God, still remains transcendent to our finite perspective. This point is made by Yves Congar, and summarised for us by Catherine LaCugna:

The mode of the economy is condescension, *kenosis*. Thus there remains a certain degree of disparity between what God is *in se*, and what God is able to be *ad extra*... Thus Congar points out, while the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, the reverse affirmation requires care. What God is remains ineffable, and not fully identical with God's economic self-expression.²⁰⁶

The notion of correspondence between the economic and the immanent Trinity may historically be traced back to Athanasius, who maintained a unity between God's act and being in the incarnation. This argument is especially found in his *Epistolae ad Serapionem*.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are so intimately and totally coordinated in the economy of revelation and salvation that we cannot imagine them to be different in nature or being. To confess this is necessary but to explain how it is so in the being of God is quite impossible. We know God in

sequential pattern, the object of the narration - the divine act of being - must be said to exist in a sequential mode of being in which there is a 'beginning, middle and end.'" 180. This presupposition regarding the 'eternity' of God, leads McDade to reducing the plural and historical elements of narrative sequence to a 'mythos' which is simple (181). McDade likewise defends Barth's notion that the historical incarnation of the Son is but the revelation of the Son who is eternally *ensarkos* (182-183). The becoming is a drama (an historical orientation), not something real of the immanent Trinity. The immanent Trinity is logically prior to the economic Trinity (185). There is no 'historical' correspondence.

²⁰⁵ P. Schoonenberg 'Trinity - The Consummated Covenant: Theses on the Doctrine of the Trinitarian God' *StudRel* 5 (1975-1976) 111-116. - "Although trinitarian theology presupposes that God really revealed Himself, His own being, to us, it must at the same time recognize the ineffability of that being." (thesis 25). According to Catherine LaCugna, "Schoonenberg's thesis points to an inherent asymmetry between economic and immanent Trinity; there can be no strict ontological identity because we must leave room for the freedom of divine self-expression in salvation history, *and* the freedom of the recipient to accept the divine self-communication. It is the nature of *self-communication* to take place within an ongoing relationship between persons." *God For Us* 219.

²⁰⁶ Yves Congar *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Seabury, 1983) III:15; cf. C. LaCugna *God For Us* 219-220.

the act of his self-disclosure as it impinges on us and as we are actually involved with him. We do not know God as an object of ontological abstraction.²⁰⁷

However, as any reader of Athanasius' writings will soon discover, the notions of immutability and impassibility cause problems for the unity. Even when we come to Rahner's 'rule', statements about the limited human perspective on these philosophical dogmas have given some, including Rahner, the excuse to once again drive a wedge between an immanent timeless or immutable Trinity and an economic Trinity as temporal or changeable.²⁰⁸ However, as our discussion on God's temporality in Chapter Five will demonstrate, there is no warrant for such a return to the immutable and timeless God who to us must then always be *deus absconditus*.

T.F. Torrance likewise argues for a correspondence between 'economic' and 'immanent', yet also an epistemological differentiation on the basis of different levels of order.²⁰⁹ The correspondence, ontological and epistemological, is grounded in the *homoousion* description of Christ. "This means that our experience of God in Christ is not somehow truncated so that it finally falls short of God, but is grounded in the Being of God himself."²¹⁰ This correctly affirms the identity between God's being and God's act. Nevertheless, Torrance

²⁰⁷ George D. Dragas 'The Eternal Son (An Essay on Christology in the Early Church with Particular Reference to St. Athanasius the Great)' in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981) 16-57, 45. Dragas also makes the following observations from Athanasius' work : "The total image of Jesus Christ reveals the Holy Trinity in humanity. To fail to acknowledge this is to fail to believe in God. And to fail to confess the Trinity in the faith of Christ is to set up another God who is *deus absconditus* and not *deus revelatus*." (40-41); "We know both the being of God and his trinitarian parousia actively in and through the economy of salvation." (44). A similar observation regarding Athanasius is made by T.F. Torrance *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 6-7 : "... thinking from a centre in the incarnation of God the Son in space and time, he claimed that, as the Logos revealed in the Son is internal to the being of God, so the act of God manifest in the work of the Son is internal to the being of God, for any separation between God's activity and his being would imply that God is not in himself what he is toward us through the Son and in the Spirit. The really decisive point for Athanasius is that in Jesus Christ it is God himself who has come among us savingly to make our existence and hurt his own, without ceasing to be what he is in his eternal reality."

²⁰⁸ Karl Rahner: "Since God is unchangeable, we must say that God who is unchangeable in himself can change in another (can in fact become man). But this 'changing in another' must neither be taken as denying the immutability of God in himself nor simply be reduced to a change of the other... The mystery of the incarnation must lie in God himself: in the fact that he, though unchangeable 'in himself' can become something 'in another'." 'On the Theology of the Incarnation' in *Theological Investigations Volume IV* (trans. K. Smyth; London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974) 105-120, 113-114 n.3.; The same dichotomy, particularly between the eternal and temporal God, is found in Leonard Boff's theology (cf. Peters' *God as Trinity* 113), and even in Catherine LaCugna's *God for Us* 231.

²⁰⁹ T.F. Torrance *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (University of Virginia Press, 1980) chapter 6 - p.146-178.

²¹⁰ T.F. Torrance *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* 161.

warns against "a sacrilegious intrusion into the inner holy of holies of God's being."²¹¹ Reverence is certainly required before God's majesty, but like Barth, Jüngel, and Rahner, the immanent Trinity becomes inaccessible as an 'eternal' level of order.²¹² The essence of God (οὐσία) is invisible and incomprehensible, as the Cappadocians were fond of saying, but God is visible in his operations (ἐνέργεια).²¹³ As already noted (Section 1.1; 'The Cappadocians'), Gregory Palamas took this further by suggesting that the divine *ousia* is beyond the divine persons.

6.4. From Economic to Immanent

Could Rahner's equation be an eschatological reality yet to be realised? Ted Peters believes this is so. "The immanent Trinity is the product of pious imagination, an abstraction from the concrete economy of the divine life that is actualized in history."²¹⁴ All we have at present is the economic trinity, in the process of becoming the immanent Trinity. God's relations *ad extra* become God's relations *ad intra*. As Peters puts it, "Instead of interpreting Christ's deity as a separate entity that always was, we should interpret it as a final outcome. And as a final outcome, it thereby becomes eternal."²¹⁵ The emphasis here is upon the process of becoming at the expense of a continuity of being.²¹⁶

²¹¹ T.F. Torrance *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* 166.

²¹² T.F. Torrance *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* 163. "A critical edge enters into the *homoousial* reference, especially from the second to the third level, in the movement of thought from the economic activity of God toward us in space and time to what he is ontologically or immanently in himself."

²¹³ Gregory of Nyssa: "Now the divine nature as it is in itself, according to its essence, transcends every act of comprehensive knowledge and it cannot be approached or attained by our speculation" (*On the Beatitudes*, Sermon 6); cf. Thomas Hopko 'The Trinity in the Cappadocians' in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* ed. B. McGinn and J. Meyendorff (New York: Crossroad, 1987) 262-263.

²¹⁴ Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 107-108.

²¹⁵ Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 134.

²¹⁶ Catherine LaCugna says, "the divinity of the eternal God is in the process of being determined and defined in the historical events of Jesus' destiny. The eternal nature of God is at least in part dependent upon temporal events." ; "If actual historical events and relations are constitutive of the relations between the divine persons, then who the Son truly is and who the Spirit truly is and even who the Father truly is will be eschatologically determined. The personhoods of Son or Spirit cannot be reduced to their origin in generation or procession from the Father. Personhood is rather a process or a result." *God as Trinity* 137, 139.

Pannenberg adopts Rahner's principle, especially as it is expounded by Walter Kasper,²¹⁷ to affirm that "God is the same in his eternal essence as he reveals himself to be historically."²¹⁸ This rules out, according to Pannenberg, any notion of an evolving God who finally becomes the immanent trinity with the eschatological consummation, as Peters believes. What is important about the final consummation is that the Trinity, particularly the deity of God displayed in his Lordship, will be finally vindicated and confirmed. This is the object and goal of the three persons of the Trinity, as presently revealed in the economy.²¹⁹ There is then a real link maintained between the immanent and the economic trinity throughout history, and for this reason the early church was not wrong in trying to express the nature of this immanent trinity, even though its understanding of divine substance in Hellenistic philosophical terms resulted in a rupture between the dynamics of the economic Trinity and their definition of an immutable, immanent Trinity.²²⁰ Pannenberg prefers to link the unity and plurality, the immanent and the economic, and the being and becoming, in the history of the eternal relations between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A similar view is held by Jürgen Moltmann, who likewise goes beyond the simple correspondence notion. But Moltmann goes further in emphasising 'becoming'. He says...

What this thesis is actually trying to bring out is the interaction between the substance and the revelation, the 'inwardness' and the 'outwardness' of the triune God. The economic Trinity not only reveals the immanent Trinity; it also has a retroactive effect on it... The relationship of the triune God to himself and the relationship of the triune God to the world is not to be understood as a one-way relationship - the relation of image to reflection, idea to appearance, essence to manifestation - but as a mutual one.²²¹

God's relationship to the world has a retroactive effect upon himself.²²² So, for example, the event of the cross had an impact on God, a "growth of

²¹⁷ Walter Kasper *The God of Jesus Christ* (trans. M.J. O'Connell; London: SCM, 1984); cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Volume 1* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 330-331.

²¹⁸ Wolfhart Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Volume 1* 331.

²¹⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg - "the eschatological consummation is only the locus of the decision that the trinitarian God is always the true God from eternity to eternity." *Systematic Theology Volume 1* 331.

²²⁰ W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology Volume 1* 332-333.

²²¹ J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 160-161.

²²² Paul Fiddes understands Moltmann to mean that what affects the immanent trinity is the economic relationship as such, rather than the world itself. Fiddes refers to Moltmann's comment that "the

knowledge of the immanent Trinity," an "impress on the inner life of the triune God."²²³ For Moltmann, the process has a goal.

The economic Trinity completes and perfects itself to immanent Trinity when the history and experience of salvation are completed and perfected. When everything is 'in God' and 'God is all in all', then the economic Trinity is raised into and transcended in the immanent Trinity.²²⁴

But for as long as God has relationships *ad extra*, it is difficult to see how the retroactive process would ever end. A relationship of love between God and his creatures, unless it comes to an end sometime, will always involve mutual experiences, even if suffering is eventually eliminated in the final kingdom of glory. So even though Moltmann has spoken here of a final perfected state in static terms, he elsewhere acknowledges that the kingdom has no final timeless conclusion, but involves a continuous process of transformation. "In the kingdom of glory there will be time and history, future and possibility, and these to an unimpeded degree..."²²⁵ So while Moltmann prefers to frame his eschatology in terms of what is coming (*adventus*), such that "God's being is in his coming,"²²⁶ he cannot finally avoid the notion of the future as process (*futurum*), such that God is also becoming.

6.5. Relational Trinity

I conclude this chapter with a description of Catherine LaCugna's trinitarian theology. Her understanding of the immanent - economic relationship, demonstrates the being-becoming and one-many polarities in the doctrine of the Trinity, though she makes no reference to these dipolar concepts.

LaCugna regards the distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity as conceptual rather than ontological.²²⁷ There is one God who reveals himself.

suffering of God is God's supreme work on God himself." *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 136-137; cf. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 99.

²²³ J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 161.

²²⁴ J. Moltmann *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* 161.

²²⁵ J. Moltmann *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1985) 213-214.

²²⁶ J. Moltmann *God in Creation* 133.

²²⁷ Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992) 212.

If the distinction is epistemological, then *oikonomia* is our means of access to *theologia*, and, it is truly *theologia* that is given in *oikonomia*.... *theologia* is fully revealed and bestowed in *oikonomia*, and *oikonomia* truly expresses the ineffable mystery of *theologia*... The economy is not a mirror dimly reflecting a hidden realm of intradivine relations; the economy is God's concrete existence in Christ and as Spirit... Economy and theology are two aspects of *one* reality: the mystery of divine-human communion.²²⁸

And again...

If God is truly *self*-communicating, then we do know the essence (personal existence) of God: we know God as God truly is, in the mediation of God's self-revelation in Christ and the Spirit. The immanent Trinity is not transhistorical, transempirical, or transeconomic. Nor is the immanent Trinity a "more real" God - more real because the mode of discourse used to describe it is ontological. Rather, to speak about God in immanent trinitarian terms is nothing more than to speak about God's life with us in the economy of Christ and the Spirit.²²⁹

Once again, this is no identity between immanent and economic, for the doctrine of the Trinity is more than the doctrine of salvation,²³⁰ just as the being of God transcends human perception.²³¹ LaCugna does not abandon the ontological distinction between God and creatures, but God's transcendence

228 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us* 217, 212, 222. cf. William Temple : "I must dissociate myself from any attempt to conceive the Divine Being 'in Himself', if by that is meant 'apart from His relation to the world'; and that for two reasons. In the first place it is only from His relation to the world that we know anything about Him for even the most direct imaginable revelation is itself a relation to the world. And secondly, as He is actually in relation to the world, I do not know why we should suppose we come closer to His true Nature when we leave that relation out of account. God as He is in Himself is God in relation to the world; God out of that relation is precisely God as He is not, either in Himself or otherwise." *The Nature of Personality* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1911) 97.

229 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us* 229.

230 "... the doctrine of the Trinity is more than the doctrine of salvation. Theology cannot be reduced to soteriology. Nor can trinitarian theology be purely functional; trinitarian theology is not merely a summary of our experience of God. It is this, but it also is a statement, however partial, about the mystery of God's eternal being. *Theologia* and *oikonomia* belong together; we cannot presume to speak about either one to the exclusion of the other. A theology built entirely around *theologia* produces a nonexperiential, nonsoteriological, nonpneumatological metaphysics of the divine nature. A theology built entirely around *oikonomia* results in a scepticism about whether how God saves through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is essentially related to who or what God is. The unity of *theologia* and *oikonomia* shows that the fundamental issue in trinitarian theology is not the inner workings of the 'immanent' Trinity, but *the question of how the trinitarian pattern of salvation history is to be correlated with the eternal being of God.*" Catherine LaCugna *God For Us* 4.

231 "The distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity is a way of holding on to the truth that God is personal, that God is free, that God cannot be reduced to human history or human perception. The mystery of *theologia* exceeds or transcends what can be expressed in *oikonomia*, just as our own personhood exceeds any one self-expression or even a lifetime of self-expression." Catherine LaCugna *God For Us* 304.

and immanence in relation to creatures are both revealed in the economy, for God does not exist separately from this realm.²³²

The real distinctiveness in LaCugna's approach is to affirm that God's life is open to humankind. There are not two levels of the Trinity (*ad intra* and *ad extra*), but one life of the Trinity which is open for our inclusion as partners. The divine life then does not belong to God in isolation. "The doctrine of the Trinity is not ultimately a teaching about "God" but a teaching about *God's life with us and our life with each other*."²³³ LaCugna is at one point ambivalent about the meaning of the word 'person' for defining the Trinity.²³⁴ But at other times she affirms the three in community, upholding Cappadocian theology.²³⁵ Because God's existence, like ours, is a personal existence, a real understanding of God and a relationship between him and human persons is possible. This link enables us to replace the immanent - economic terms, for the God who is with us and other than us, is this as persons (or 'person'). The notion of personhood is inclusive of both the mysterious otherness of self and the relational and knowable self. This category of personhood does not remove an epistemological distinction between the economic and the immanent (if we wish to retain these terms), as some of LaCugna's readers suppose she has done.²³⁶ An epistemological distinction must be made because God's being is ontologically different than human being, even if the two can be united (e.g. the incarnation) enabling God's life to be revealed. An epistemological distinction also remains in that persons are always separate, though related.

232 Thomas Weinandy regards this as a reduction of the Trinity to the economy, such that the Trinity becomes merely a pattern of revelation. I believe this is a mistaken reading of LaCugna, as the above footnotes demonstrate. cf. 'The Immanent and the Economic Trinity' *The Thomist* 57.4, 1993, 655-666; T.G. Weinandy *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 123-136. Colin Gunton also misreads LaCugna's 'economy = immanent', accusing her of pantheism. Gunton picks up LaCugna's ambivalence over a social trinity, but his accusations of modalism and impersonalism are, in my opinion, mistaken. cf. Gunton's review of *God for Us* in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 47.1 (1994) 135-137.

233 Catherine LaCugna *God For Us* 228.

234 "It does not so much matter whether we say God is one person in three modalities, or one nature in three persons, since these two assertions can be understood in approximately the same way. What matters is that we hold on to the assertion that God is *personal*, and that therefore the proper subject matter of the doctrine of the Trinity is the encounter between divine and human persons in the economy of redemption." *God for Us* 305.

235 "Instead of thinking of persons or relations 'in' God, we should think of God existing concretely, as persons in communion with other persons. The genius of the Cappadocians was to think of God's *ousia* as concrete, as a nature that cannot be something by itself or in itself but exists hypostatically as Father, Son, and Spirit." *God For Us* 225.

236 e.g. Joseph Braken's review of LaCugna's *God for Us*, in *Theological Studies* 53 (1992) 558-560, 559.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has been foundational in establishing the argument that the concept of dipolarity is found most clearly in the doctrine of God as Trinity. The self-revelation of God in history, and in particular the story of Jesus and his relationship to God the Father and Spirit, is the basis for the development of a trinitarian theology of God. The dipolarity of one-many is expressed in this theology about one God in three persons. The dipolarity of being-becoming is likewise expressed in the same theology which describes one of these three becoming human without ceasing to be God.

While the initial development of trinitarian theology focused on the issue of 'number' (one-many), the dipolarity of being-becoming regarding the three is present from the beginning. The revelation of trinitarian relationships in the Gospel is, as with any relationship, a dynamic between being as order/structure and becoming as movement within and beyond those relationships. Later theology was to express the being pole in terms of unchangeable structure (e.g. the monarchy/*arche* of the Father) and the becoming pole in terms such as active energies, generation, procession, incarnation, and perichoretic life.

The concept of God in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was a significant development in the theological tradition. Yet that same tradition, under the influence of Neoplatonism, made it difficult for many to break from the monistic concept of God as one/being. This chapter has shown, for example, that substance ontology threatened to reduce the many to singularity, and that the distinction between God *ad intra* and God *ad extra* threatened to separate the being from the becoming of God.

The following chapter will trace the history of the concept of dipolarity, and the failure of philosophical theology to conceptualise God in these terms until the trinitarian formulations of the early Church.

One or Many; Being or Becoming?

From the earliest period of Greek philosophy there has been an attempt to reconcile 'one' and 'many', 'being' and 'becoming'. In this philosophical tradition, the 'one' dominates over the 'many', and 'being' tends to exclude 'becoming' in theories of what is foundational. This chapter is a survey and critical evaluation of various periods and disciplines in which the quest for dipolarity has been undertaken, and apart from some exceptions, without success. This failure, as the next chapter will demonstrate, has had a significant influence on the development of Christian theology, especially the dominance of 'classical' attributes for describing God.

1. Early Quests for Unification

The major quest in pre-Socratic philosophy was to find the basic reality underlying all things, the unity behind the multiplicity of phenomena. Next to this there was the problem of change, and how to reconcile both being and becoming, rest and motion.¹ On the assumption that the universe was a closed system, the early philosophers attempted to distinguish the basic elements (στοιχεῖα, *elementa mundi*) so as to uncover a principle underlying nature, the

¹ According to E. Zeller, "this problem was all the more likely to occur to the Greek in that the etymological meaning of his word for nature φύσις led him to regard it not as something complete and finished, but rather as something still in the stage of formation and growth, as a process." cf. *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy* (13th ed. revised by W. Nestle; trans. L. Palmer; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1931) 25. However, scholars disagree over whether or not the word φύσις does include the meaning 'growth'. cf. J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1953) 27. Burnet refers to Aristotle's *Met.* Δ 4. 1014b, 16., and articles on the meaning of φύσις by Heidel and Lovejoy. However, see my reference to Aristotle and Heidegger at the end of the 'Introduction' to this thesis.

ἀρχή, the ultimate being or reality.² The following outlines the thought of some of the major representatives.

1.1. The Milesians

Following Thales, who regarded everything as deriving from water, his contemporary Anaximander (c.610-545 B.C.) described the primary substance or *arche* (ἀρχή) as the 'boundless' (τὸ ἄπειρον³). While Anaximander gave no detailed explanation of the nature of this *arche*, he regarded it as infinite, unoriginated, indestructible, divine (τὸ θεῖον),⁴ and its motion⁵ as eternal.⁶ This *archelapeiron* is the substratum in which opposites (τῶν ἐναντιῶν) are present,⁷ and from which there is a 'separation' (ἐκκρίνεσθαι) into earth and air, hot and cold, wet and dry, etc. So as Guthrie observes, "If the opposites could be separated out from the *arche*, we may say, it must have contained them all the time and therefore could not be described as a unity."⁸ So it is perhaps here,

² "The central feature of an *arche* insofar as it is constitutive of an explanation is that, unlike an ordinary starting point, it must be somehow different from that which it serves to explain." - L.P. Gerson *God and Greek Philosophy: Studies in the early history of natural theology* (London: Routledge, 1990) 6.

³ Τὸ ἄπειρον describes something which is spatially unbounded, and unending in time. cf. E. Hussey *The Presocratics* (London: Duckworth, 1972) 17; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962) 83-89. This description of the divine *arche* as τὸ ἄπειρον may also mark the beginning of 'negative' theology (using the ἀ-privative). So for Anaximander the ἄπειρον is also ἄγηρω (unaging), ἀπέραντον (infinite), and ἀόριστον (indeterminate). See also Aryeh Finkelberg 'Anaximander's conception of the apeiron' *Phronesis* 38.3 (1993) 229-256.

⁴ George B. Burch 'Anaximander, the First Metaphysician' *The Review of Metaphysics* 3 (1949-50) 137-160, 141.

⁵ Anaximander's *apeiron* is an animate self-moving stuff, not moved by a separate force (as in the later views of Empedocles and Anaxagoras). It is this 'life' of the *arche* which suggested divine status, on Aristotle's reading of Anaximander. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 88 & 91, with reference to Aristotle's *Physics* 203b6; C. Joachim Classen 'Anaximander and Anaximenes: The Earliest Greek Theories of Change?' *Phronesis* 22 (1977) 89-102.

⁶ 'Eternal' meaning temporally infinite or everlasting. According to Aristotle (*Phys.* 203b13), Anaximander called his *arche* 'deathless and imperishable'. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 83.

⁷ Simplicius (*Phys.* 150.22) says: 'Anaximander says that the opposites were in the substratum, which was a boundless body, and were separated out: he was the first to name the substratum *arche*.' cf. W. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 77. cf. J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 22-23; C.H. Kahn *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 163.; Morris Cohen *Reason and Nature: An Essay on the Meaning of Scientific Method* (Glencoe: The Free Press Publishers, 2nd ed. 1953) 165; Gad Freudenthal 'The Theory of the Opposites and an Ordered Universe: Physics and Metaphysics in Anaximander' *Phronesis* 31.3 (1986) 197-228.

⁸ W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 87. "Aristotle in the *Physics* (187a12) divides the natural philosophers before his time into two classes. There are those who regard the underlying substance of things as one, identifying it with water, air, fire or an intermediate body, and generate the rest from it by a process of rarefaction and condensation; and there are those who suppose the contraries to have pre-existed in the single principle, from which they can then be separated out. Their 'one' is therefore in reality a mixture, and among these he puts not only the pluralists Empedocles and Anaxagoras, but also Anaximander, to whose *apeiron* his more analytic mind could not concede true unity." (120).

that a dipolar 'one-many' description of existence first arises in Greek philosophy.⁹ Alongside this dipolarity we may also place the dipolarity of the boundless 'being' of the *apeiron*, and its eternal 'becoming' (separation) due to its eternal motion.¹⁰

Something of the dipolar nature of the *arche* (as being-becoming, and one-many) is lost by Xenophanes of Colophon (c.570-475), who described everything as the All-One (ἐν καὶ πᾶν). Aristotle traced the origin of monism to this philosopher, whose disciple Parmenides, he says, developed the concept with more insight.¹¹ Xenophanes' All-One is itself motionless. This, and other 'monistic' theological dogmas from the surviving fragments of Xenophanes' poetry, may be listed as follows:¹²

1. God is motionless.

"Always he remains in the same state, in no way changing;

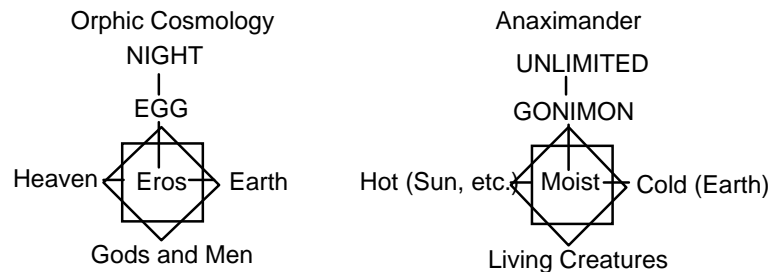
Nor is it fitting for him to go now here now there." (fr. 26).¹³

2. God is ungenerated.

3. There is one god (εἰς θεός), greatest among gods and men (fr.23).

4. God is not anthropomorphic.

⁹ There is a parallel between the physical system of Anaximander and the mythological cosmology of the Orphics (sixth century BC), which may be depicted as follows:



In the Orphic theogony, Phanes - the creator of all things, is swallowed by Zeus, from whom all things again emerge. Orpheus' pupil Musaios likewise said, 'Everything comes to be out of One and is resolved into One' [Diog. L. *prooem.* 3]. Yet behind this there is the belief that Night, as the 'singular' first principle, laid the egg from which sprang Eros-Phanes. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1935) 223, 104, 74-75; James K. Feibleman 'History of Dyadic Ontology' *Review of Metaphysics* 6 (1952-53) 351-367, 352f.

¹⁰ W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 89. "The *arche* of Anaximander, the doxographers tell us [A11 (Hippolytus), 12 (Hermeias)], was in eternal motion." 91.

¹¹ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Book A, 986b10ff., cf. *Aristotle's Metaphysics* translated with Commentaries and Glossary by Hippocrates G. Apostle (Gennell: The Peripatetic Press & Indiana University press, 1966) 22. For a discussion of the accuracy of Aristotle's comments regarding the relationship between Xenophanes and Parmenides, see W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 368-370.

¹² J. Barnes *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1 - Thales to Zeno* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 84-94.

¹³ Guthrie translates fr. 25 and fr. 26 - "Always he remains in the same place, not moving at all, nor indeed does it befit him to go here and there at different times; but without toil he makes all things shiver by the impulse of his mind." cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 374.

"not at all like mortals in form or even in thought" (fr. 23)

5. God thinks and perceives 'as a whole'.

"He sees as a whole, he thinks as a whole, and he hears as a whole" (fr. 24)

6. God moves things by the power of his mind.

"Without effort, by the will of his mind he shakes everything." (fr. 25)

7. God is morally perfect. (cf. fr. 12)

The consensus of ancient commentators on Xenophanes' philosophy, is that his god was also spherical and identical with the universe.¹⁴ In line with this, Guthrie translates Aristotle's comment about Xenophanes in *Metaphysics* 986b - "He concentrated his attention on the whole heaven and said that the One exists, the god'.¹⁵ If God is equated with the world, then paradoxically Xenophanes has a God who is unmoved (fr. 26) and also moving (alive), since there is motion in the world. Pantheism or hylozoism allows for this dipolarity, even though Xenophanes chose to place the emphasis on being over becoming so as to distance philosophy from Homeric theology.

1.2. Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans

Pythagoras (570 - c.495 B.C.) supplemented previous discussion on nature with a theory of 'form' (εἶδος), to be defined by his doctrine that all things are numbers. This explains his interest in music and medicine. In both there is a 'harmony' in the blend (κρᾶσις) of opposites. Health is being in tune, and the "opposites on which health and disease depend may combine in various patterns."¹⁶

Pythagorean teaching was influenced by Orphic mysticism (which included, for example, immortality and transmigration of souls),¹⁷ Homeric mythology, possibly also Egyptian and Persian religions, and the Ionians (e.g. Thales,

¹⁴ Guthrie cites Simplicius, Hippolytus, Cicero, Sextus, and Theodoret. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 376ff.

¹⁵ W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 380.

¹⁶ J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 51. The ancient concept of the four 'humors' in the body, as powers standing in opposition to one another, is frequently referred to in the Hippocratic Corpus. The humours are identified with the opposites of hot and cold, and dry and wet. cf. C.H. Kahn *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* 128ff.; G.E.R. Lloyd *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966) 94-96.

¹⁷ W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 182ff; *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* 216-221.

Anaximander).¹⁸ The mystical and cultic dimension of Pythagorean teaching explains why the disciples of Pythagoras came to be divided into two groups, the *acusmatici* who were the more 'religious' practitioners and devotees of their master, and the *mathematici* who were the more 'philosophical'. But the two groups were probably not separate, just as the philosophy of the Ionians (the more rationalistic) and Italian Greeks (the more religious) were never separated, though each had a distinctive emphasis.¹⁹ So, it is interesting to note that in the Pythagorean school, reason and belief were complementary. Both strands are present in Pythagoras, so that the purification of the soul was a matter of both religion (initiation and ritual) and philosophy (observation and reason). Both reflected on limit and order in the universe.²⁰

Limit (*peras*) was considered good, and the unlimited (*apeiron*) evil. The limited has purpose in that it is complete and whole, and the word *cosmos* was used to denote the corresponding order. In such a cosmos all things are related, including the divine and human. In this way the cosmos is manifest in both the philosopher and God on the basis that 'like is known by like'.²¹ The rational and mystical qualities of this cosmos could further be discerned in numbers. The Pythagorean school eventually arrived at ten principles of opposites (συστοιχίαν) defined in relation to numbers: limit-unlimited, odd-even, one-plurality, right-left, male-female, at rest-moving, straight-crooked, light-darkness, good-bad, square-oblong.²² But it is debateable whether or not these pairs themselves were considered ultimate principles, since for the Pythagoreans the unit stood for what was limited, in opposition to the unlimited. Music is evidence of a limit imposed on the unlimited, in which notes and music result from dividing the unlimited continuum of pitch into numerical ratios. The unlimited becomes "confined within an order, a *cosmos*, by the imposition of Limit or Measure."²³ But then one could still say that the cosmos was simultaneously evidence of both, as is shown by the Pythagorean

18 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 217f., 251-256.

19 According to Guthrie, "They may be summed up in the words θνητὰ φρονεῖν ('think mortal thoughts') on the one hand and ὁμοίωσις θεῷ ('assimilation to God') on the other." cf. *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 198-199; J. Barnes *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1 - Thales to Zeno* 101-102.

20 And so Guthrie notes that Apollo was the patron deity for the Pythagoreans, since he represented the ideas of limit, moderation, and order. On the temple of Apollo there was inscribed the words 'Nothing too much', 'Observe limit'. cf. *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 205.

21 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 205-212.

22 Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book A, 986a.; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 245.

23 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1* 248.

problem of the unlimited still existing between notes. So W. Guthrie concludes...

Pythagoreanism before the time of Plato was frankly dualistic in its account of ultimate principles, unlike the Milesian systems, which were in intention monistic, although we have seen the monism of this early stage of rational thought could not bear a critical scrutiny. The opposite view has been taken by Cornford. He saw the Pythagoreans as believing in an ultimate One behind all else. From this were derived limit and the unlimited themselves, although this ultimate One or Monad must be distinguished from the unit which is the first number, point or physical atom, since that is clearly described as a product of these two opposite principles.²⁴

The monistic interpretation was taken up later by Plato, and fits naturally with the concept of the whole *cosmos* being a unity and a *harmonia*.²⁵

Tables of opposites become commonplace in Greek philosophy from this point onwards. However, one column of the table is usually regarded as superior, indicating that these opposites do not form a true polarity:²⁶

<i>Superior</i>	<i>Inferior</i>
hot	cold
dry	wet
right	left
male	female

24 Guthrie sides with Aristotle's exposition of the Pythagoreans, and J.E. Raven's study in *Pythagoreans and Eleatics* (Cambridge, 1948), over against F.M. Cornford. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 248-249.

25 But Guthrie replies, "the principle of limit did indeed exist in the beginning, but was opposed by the formless and evil principle of the unlimited. By imposing itself on this... it produces out of unorganized chaos an organic unity or *kosmos*. There are regions of the universe in which the unlimited still maintains its undesirable haphazard character, but in its main structure, as displayed to man by the harmonious motions of the heavenly bodies, it has achieved the unity of a perfect organism. The *kosmos*, by virtue of its ordered and beautiful (that is cosmic) nature, is divine. The good is in the end, the *telos*, not the *arche* in the sense of the beginning." *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans*, 250-251.

26 G.E.R. Lloyd incorrectly uses the term polarity for the following opposites. cf. *Polarity and Analogy* 48ff. Lloyd gives a good summary of different theories on the origin of the 'opposites' notion in Greek philosophy and in other ancient cultures (p.27-80. For example, the opposites evident in sex, cycles of nature, social structures, religion), and of the origin of the tendency towards unification (p.83).

1.3. Heraclitus

A major departure from the unifying tendency of Xenophanes came about in the philosophy of Heraclitus of Ephesus (c.544-484 B.C.).²⁷ He stands out as the most significant Greek philosopher to represent reality as dipolar,²⁸ for which, as we have seen, some precedent is provided by the Milesians,²⁹ particularly Anaximander³⁰ and Pythagoras (though it is unlikely that Heraclitus knew of Pythagoras).³¹

The *arche* of the Milesians was always something intermediate between two opposites, owing to their assumption that it contained and concealed both members of the pairs of opposites which could therefore subsequently emerge from it and develop in opposite directions. Such were water and air, and the *apeiron* of Anaximander was described by later writers as 'something rather like water but denser than air'.³²

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- 27 He is referred to by the Christian Hippolytus as Heraclitus the Obscure and source of heresy. cf. *The Refutation of all Heresies* (trans. J.H. Macmahon; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1868) - Book IX, Chapters 3-5 (p.333-335).
- 28 Hegel was mistaken in thinking that flux or change was Heraclitus' ultimate principle cf. G.W.F. Hegel *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* - 3 Vols. (Vol.1; trans. E.S. Haldane; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1892) 278-298, esp. 283. Change is certainly of importance to Heraclitus, though not as a transcendent principle.
- 29 After studying the possible origins of Anaximander's elements and opposites, C.H. Kahn suggests that the Milesians regarded the following as opposites: "hot-cold, dry-wet, bright-dark, and perhaps a fourth, male-female. This last pair reappears in the Pythagorean table, together with darkness and light (Vors. 58 B 5). It is, however, dropped by Anaxagoras, whose more severely scientific scheme is based upon the three inanimate couples just named, together with a fourth, rare-dense (ἀραιόν πυκνόν)." cf. C.H. Kahn *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 161. W.K.C. Guthrie says, "the Heraclitean doctrine of the simultaneity of opposites and its paradoxical consequences is the result of intense concentration on a mental phenomenon common in the early Greek world, to which the name 'polarity' has been given." cf. *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 446.
- 30 Anaximander is the forerunner to Heraclitus, especially on the concept of change from one thing to its contrary. cf. C.H. Kahn *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* 159-163; P.E. Wheelwright *Heraclitus* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1959) 6. Anaxagoras is also linked with Heraclitus' identity of opposites, by Aristotle (cf. *Metaphysics* K1063 b24).
- 31 P.E. Wheelwright *Heraclitus* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1959) 8. G.E.R. Lloyd makes the important observation that "Heraclitus' conception of the relationship between opposites is quite different from that of the Pythagoreans in this, that he repeatedly stresses not only the interdependence of opposites (e.g. Fr. 10, 51, 67, 111), but also the constant war or strife between them (Fr. 80)." cf. *Polarity and Analogy* 99.
- 32 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 457.

The unity of existence, according to Heraclitus, is formed by the combination of opposites.³³ He even goes so far as to say that opposites are identical (τὸ αὐτό) or one (ἓν).³⁴ For example:

fr. 88. And as the same thing there exists in us living and dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old...

Commentators of Heraclitus, beginning with Parmenides (see next section) have generally taken offence at this apparent absurdity or 'obscurity'.³⁵ For Aristotle, it meant a violation of the laws of logic, namely the law of contradiction.³⁶ But this is to miss the 'dipolar' nature of Heraclitus' arguments (cf. fr. 34, 17, 1, 32), which are not to be dismissed as the rhetorical device of later dialectic, but a serious argument to express the actual unresolvable nature of reality itself.³⁷ Examples may be found in the following:

fr. 15. If they omitted to make the procession to Dionysus and to sing the hymn to the shameful parts, they would be proceeding most irreverently;³⁸ but Hades and Dionysus are the same (ὡντὸς),³⁹ no matter how much they go mad and rave celebrating bacchic rites in honour of the latter.

fr. 32. One thing, the only truly wise, does not and does consent to be called by the name of Zeus.

fr. 48. For the name of the bow is life, but its work is death.

33 The phrase τὰ ἀντία does not actually appear in the Heraclitean fragments. T.M. Robinson believes that rather than a doctrine of *coincidentia oppositorum*, Heraclitus' idea is of a cyclic connectedness - the interconnectedness of opposites. cf. 'Critical Note on Charles H. Kahn *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 13:4 (1983) 607-621.

34 See Appendix Three for a list of Heraclitean fragments with translations.

35 C.J. Emlyn-Jones refers to W.K.C. Guthrie, M. Marcovich, and G.S. Kirk, who appear to "believe that Heraclitus cannot be taken to mean precisely what he says." cf. 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' in *Phronesis* XXI (1976) 89-114, 91. Hence the popular epithet for Heraclitus – σκοτεινός, *obscurus*.

36 C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 90 - ref. to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Γ 1005 b 17-10, b24-25.

37 C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 97-98. Uvo Hölscher also says that "the essence of Heraclitean saying is not didactic, but assertive and apodictic... All Heraclitean sayings are *discoveries* : insights that dawn upon the thoughtful soul like the solution to a riddle... Thus Heraclitean utterance mirrors exactly the character of Heraclitus' knowledge: in its use of similes the hinting or signifying quality of phenomena; in its antithetical construction the paradoxical unity of contradiction; in its stylistic isolation the immediacy of "intuitive judgement"..." cf. 'Paradox, Simile, and Gnostic Utterance in Heraclitus' in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. A.P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Books, 1974) 229-238, 238.

38 i.e. what is shameful is revered.

39 i.e. the gods of life and death are the same.

In his comment on the word play in fr. 48 (i.e. βίος = bow; βιός = life), C.J. Emlyn-Jones says:

In this particular example the polar ambiguity of name and function reflects a polar ambiguity existing in the world. The bow contains simultaneously the two opposites life and death. In this context it is important to note that Heraclitus made no attempt to explain, or otherwise resolve his paradox.⁴⁰

That opposites are common is indicated further in fr. 59, 60, and 103.⁴¹

fr. 59. Of letters,... the way is straight and crooked...: it is one,... and the same.

fr. 60. The way up and down is one and the same.

fr. 103. In a circle beginning and end are in common.

These appear to be truisms, in which case they are hardly worth saying. But Heraclitus intends to say that dipolarity is not just a matter of observation (which humans usually get wrong anyway, cf. fr. 1, 123), for the same thing can have two opposite qualities. For example:

fr. 61. Sea,... is the most pure and the most polluted water; for fishes it is drinkable and salutary, but for men it is undrinkable and deleterious.

fr. 58. Doctors, who cut and burn and torture their patients in every way complain that they do not receive the reward they deserve.

This last fragment indicates that pain can simultaneously be good (the wounds inflicted in surgery to bring a cure) and evil. The patient misses the paradox when asked to pay for inflicted pain, and the doctor also fails to understand when not rewarded for his painful cure. A similar paradox is found in the following:

fr. 111. It is disease that makes health pleasant and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.

fr. 23. (Men) would not know the name of Justice if these things [i.e. wrongdoing or injustice] did not exist.

⁴⁰ C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' in *Phronesis* 21 (1976) 89-114, 98-99.

⁴¹ According to C.J. Emlyn-Jones, these fragments indicate "that (genuine) opposites are (unequivocally) common." cf. 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 102.

Without pain there is no pleasure, and without injustice there is no justice.

No firm distinction seems to be made by Heraclitus in his understanding of 'one', between the ideas of connection and wholeness.⁴² In describing the attunement of opposites being like a string and bow, he uses the word 'harmony' (ἁρμονία), a word also used of opposites in sexual union.⁴³

fr. 51 They do not apprehend how being at variance it agrees with itself: there is a connection working in both directions, as in the bow and the lyre.

There is, according to Heraclitus, a unity in the world, but it is a unity in diversity, or rather, in the strife between opposites. The cosmic order is maintained through the equilibrium of opposing forces, the "simultaneous interaction of contrary forces tending in opposite directions."⁴⁴ This opposition is more important than the notion of connection, the latter being explicit in fragment 26 - "when asleep a man is in contact with (or next to) the death, even in life."⁴⁵ But the idea of oneness or wholeness, rather than connection, is emphasised in fragment 10:⁴⁶

fr. 10. Things taken together are wholes and not wholes, what is in agreement differs, what is in tune is out of tune, and from all things one thing and from one thing all things.

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- 42 M.C. Stokes *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1971) 101.
- 43 M.C. Stokes *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* 95. This is not the same as the Pythagorean 'musical' kind of harmony, for it is a harmony of opposites involving strife. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 435-439, 'Flux and Logos in Heraclitus' in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. A.P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Books, 1974) 197-213, 199.
- 44 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 459. See also G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven & M. Schofield *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (2nd edition; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 193.
- 45 T.M. Robinson says, "for Heraclitus the supposed sameness of opposites - a doctrine too often attributed to him - is in fact the much more interesting and defensible doctrine of the *interconnectedness* of opposites." *Heraclitus: Fragments - A Text and Translation with a commentary by T.M. Robinson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) 184. However, I side with Emlyn-Jones, in disagreeing with this conclusion. cf. the comments on fr.10, and the next footnote.
- 46 But this is only so if the fragment begins with the word συλλάψιμες (taken together) rather than συνάψιμες (fitting together, or conjunction). The MSS are evenly divided between these two readings. cf. K.M.W. Shipton 'Heraclitus fr. 10: A Musical Interpretation' *Phronesis* 30.2 (1985) 111-130.

Wholeness is composed of the opposites, the "things taken together".⁴⁷ The statement, "from one thing all things," is also taken up in fragment 50, as ἕν πάντα εἶναι.⁴⁸ There is no reason from this to associate "Heraclitus' unity of all things with a common origin,"⁴⁹ for his unity is itself a duality. It is then a mistake to say that fire is a substratum for Heraclitus.⁵⁰ Rather, like all reality, "God is day night, winter summer, war peace, surfeit famine..." (fr. 67).⁵¹ But this indicates a problem with Heraclitean unity. In contradiction to what has been said above, it is not just the combination of opposites, but also their identity (τὸ αὐτό).

For many commentators, the concept of flux between opposites is important for interpreting Heraclitus. However, Emlyn-Jones warns against a hasty deduction:

The causal connection of the identity of opposites with the doctrine of flux does not occur in the extant fragments of Heraclitus; the tendency, moreover, of Plato to connect these two elements in a causal relationship arouses suspicion of the authenticity of the connection in the case of Heraclitus.⁵²

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- 47 The elements comprising unity are simultaneous rather than successive. Emlyn-Jones says, "This fragment is of particular importance as evidence that Heraclitus was consciously aware of the two fundamental elements in his doctrine of opposites, namely the unity or identity of opposites and, at the same time, the contrariety which underlies an apparent unity..." 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 108. In commenting on fr. 10, J. Barnes says, "I take 'conjunctions' to mean 'composite things'... 'all composite things are both unities and diversities'. cf. *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1 - Thales to Zeno* 318.
- 48 "Heraclitus is saying neither that all things may be viewed under two aspects, nor that all things are connected, but that all things are one thing, which was surely intended as a genuine paradox." - C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 109.
- 49 M.C. Stokes *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* 105.
- 50 M.C. Stokes *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* 102; C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 91; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 432 - "The material aspect of the Logos is fire." cf. 457, 461. According to Aristotle, "Hippasus of Metapontium and Heraclitus of Ephesus posited fire as the principle." *Metaphysics* Book A, 985, cf. *Aristotle's Metaphysics* translated with Commentaries and Glossary by Hippocrates G. Apostle (Gennell: The Peripatetic Press & Indiana University press, 1966) 17; C.D.C. Reeve 'Ekpurosis and the Priority of Fire in Heraclitus' *Phronesis* 27 (1982) 299-305.
- 51 E. Hussey *The Presocratics* (London: Duckworth, 1972) 46.
- 52 C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 92. Also, according to J. Burnet, the theory of flux is not Heraclitus' central thought, but rather it is the combination of opposites. cf. *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1953) 59. That the concept of flux is a Platonic and Aristotelian interpretation, is also noted by G.S. Kirk 'Natural Change in Heraclitus' in *The Presocratics: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. A.P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Books, 1974) 189-196. Plato attributes to Heraclitus the doctrine that 'all things are in flux' – πάντα ῥεῖ or πάντα χωρεῖ. See further G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven & M. Schofield *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (2nd edition; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 185-186. Kirk attacks Karl Popper's uncritical adoption of the flux interpretation in 'Popper on Science and the Presocratics' in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy: Vol 1* ed. D.J. Furley & R.E. Allen (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1970) 154-177. Popper's essay 'Back to the Presocratics' appears in the same volume - p.130-153 (also published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 59, 1958-9).

Nevertheless, there is some support for the idea in fragments which indicate succession from one state to another (cf. fr. 88). For example:

fr. 126. Cold things become warm, warm thing becomes cold; moist thing becomes dry, dry (parched) thing becomes wet.

Between these two antitheses there is a constant flux (reality is like a living fire),⁵³ for everything is in a continual process of change, alternating from one state to its opposite.⁵⁴ This change is the result of conflict. So for Heraclitus "war is the father and king of all" (fr. 53, cf. fr. 80) for it maintains the harmony of opposites, instead of giving rise to a "permanent domination".⁵⁵

The idea of a unity over time and change is also expressed in fragment 12 : "Upon those who step into the same rivers, there flow different waters in different cases." The river is constantly changing through time, but still remains the same river. There is stability through change (another dipolar opposite).⁵⁶ Heraclitus also says, "The barley-drink (*kukeon*) comes apart if not stirred" (fr. 125). The different components of this cocktail (wine, honey, and barley-grains) separate into layers unless the drink is kept in motion. Unity is maintained not only through the combination of opposites, but also through constant movement.

The farmer observes that the land is constantly changing from day to day, yet there is also stability (fr. 126). Or again, "a man's body is constantly changing its temperature and humidity, as he breathes and digests: the surface stability of the human shape hides a hubbub of operations without which men would soon cease to be."⁵⁷ Jonathan Barnes summarises this Heraclitean concept of flux, and draws the following conclusion:

53 Therefore some commentators regard change to be an important ontological reality for Heraclitus e.g. P.E. Wheelwright *Heraclitus* p.29, 138-140); W.K.C. Guthrie 'Flux and Logos in Heraclitus' in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. A.P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Books, 1974) 197-213 - see especially Guthrie's apology on p.203, fn. 19.

54 According to E. Zeller, Heraclitus believed that everything, "contains in itself the contraries between which it is poised." *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy* 46; J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy* 60.

55 G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven & M. Schofield *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* 194.

56 The more commonly known version of this fragment - "you cannot step twice into the same river" may be an interpretation by Cratylus. cf. E. Hussey *The Presocratics* 55. But there is strong disagreement among scholars over which text is Heraclitean. cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 488-492; J. Barnes *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1 - Thales to Zeno* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 66.

57 J. Barnes *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1 - Thales to Zeno* 67.

... constituent stuffs are in a constant flux: they are always changing in one respect or another. And those changes are no chance contingencies. They are essential to the being of all that the stuffs constitute; for those things would cease to exist, and hence to exercise any of their powers, if their natures ceased to change: there is no river if the waters cease to flow; the barley-drink is destroyed as soon as its parts settle..."

The world of space and time is God, a cosmos characterised by a continual oscillation or flux between co-existing opposites, so that change, rather than permanence, is the ultimate law.⁵⁸

fr. 67. God is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger,... and undergoes alteration in the way that fire, when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the scent [pleasure] of each of them.

However, once again Emlyn-Jones warns against placing too much emphasis on flux (as in a continuum between opposites). God is both dipolar opposites simultaneously. Commenting on fr. 67, he says...

The change of ἡδοναί [pleasures, scents] refers not to members of each individual contrariety, but as most commentators have supposed, to change between the various pairs. Therefore the fundamental relationship between either opposite of each pair is not affected. Interpreting the fragment we may perhaps assume that ὁ θεός takes on different aspects at different times. What Heraclitus tells us, however, is simply that God is the opposites, from which it is possible to deduce that the various pairs of opposites are to be identified with the controlling power of the universe.⁵⁹

We should also be cautious about finding in Heraclitus' references to *logos*, a unifying principle.⁶⁰ The *logos* for Heraclitus is a universal law of truth and measure, the material aspect of which is fire.⁶¹ It is revealed in opposites, and not in a unitary principle.

58 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol. 1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 461. See p.465 for Guthrie's disagreement with G.S. Kirk, who believes that Heraclitus did include the notion of stability. Guthrie later allows for some permanence, in Heraclitus' doctrine of the divine, the Logos (p.479).

59 C.J. Emlyn-Jones 'Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites' 107. And again, "The opposites were not merely extremes of a continuum or examples of the variety of πάντα, but concrete entities whose mutual dynamic relationship was one of Heraclitus' main preoccupations." 111.

60 fr. 1, 2, 50, 72.

61 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol. 1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* 419-434, cf. 470-473.

1.4. The Eleatics

Parmenides of Elea (c.540-470) took up the ideas of Xenophanes, possibly in deliberate opposition to Heraclitus,⁶² and so resumed the unifying tradition. Whereas for Heraclitus everything changes, for Parmenides, what exists does not change but *is*. Parmenides said:

One way alone is left to tell of, namely that 'It is'. On this way are marks in plenty that since it exists it is unborn and imperishable, whole, unique, immovable and without end. It *was* not in the past, nor yet *shall* it be, since it now *is*, all together, one and continuous. (Fr. 8.4)⁶³

What exists, just is, without beginning, change, or end. It is eternal.⁶⁴ It is also continuous - without internal divisions, indivisible (fr. 8.22-5), and motionless (fr. 8.26-33). Change and plurality are therefore unreal. The basis for Parmenides' argument is the rather dubious reasoning that whatever can be thought of must exist at all times. There is no such thing as non-being. So no thing comes into being or ceases to be.⁶⁵ And the basis for this epistemology is that true knowledge is contact with this actual and immutable object of knowledge. This epistemology and the metaphysical concept of immutable being⁶⁶ came to have a major influence on Plato.⁶⁷

⁶² However, according to the evidence weighed by M.C. Stokes, there is no reason to suppose that Heraclitus and Parmenides were known to each other. cf. *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* 109-126; Leonardo Tarán *Parmenides - A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) 4-5.

⁶³ A translation by W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II - The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965) 26. For other translations see *Parmenides of Elea : Fragments - A Text and Translation with an Introduction* by David Gallop (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) 65.

⁶⁴ For an argument against Parmenides' reality as atemporal (timeless), but instead of "infinite duration", see David Gallop *Parmenides of Elea : Fragments - A Text and Translation with an Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) 13-14. Alexander Mourelatos interprets Parmenides to mean the "nontemporality of reality. That this is a doctrine of the time-independence or time-neutrality of *έόν* (independence of any one part of time) is certain; it is not at all certain that this should be glossed as a doctrine of timelessness (independence of all time)." - *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Image, and Argument in the Fragments* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) 110. Rather than asserting atemporality, Parmenides is saying that Being is everlasting, without *γένεσις* and *ἄλεθος*. It exists now (*νῦν*), at this present time, in completeness - unity and continuity. Parmenides denies any process to Being, but not necessarily time. For a defence of this interpretation, see especially Leonardo Tarán *Parmenides - A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* 175.

⁶⁵ fr. 6.1. - "What can be spoken and thought of must be (i.e. exist)." cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 17.

⁶⁶ That reality is immobile, is argued in fr. 8.26-31. This immobility (*ἀκίνητον*) refers not just to locomotion, but also to change-in-general. cf. Alexander Mourelatos *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Image, and Argument in the Fragments* 117.

Zeno, a pupil of Parmenides, defended his teacher's argument by arguing the logical absurdity of holding to plurality and motion. According to Zeno, there can be no division into limited size (parts, plurality), since anything which has size is 'unlimited' as infinitely divisible. So "motion is impossible because an object moving between any two points *A* and *B* must always cover half the distance before it gets to the end. But before covering half the distance it must cover the half of the half, and so *ad infinitum*. Thus to traverse any distance at all it must cover an infinite number of points, which is impossible in any finite time."⁶⁸ From this reasoning arises Zeno's famous paradoxes, 'a moving arrow stays in the same place', 'Achilles and the tortoise, and the 'Stadium'.⁶⁹

1.5. Eclectics and Atomists

The fifth century B.C. is characterised by various philosophies which attempted to draw together the thinking of both Heraclitus and Parmenides to account for both eternal unchangeable reality and also motion or change. With Parmenides they agree that ultimately there is no coming into being (γένεσις) and ceasing to be (φθορά) of the All, but on another level reality is a plurality within this unity. Becoming and change are also real. There is then a rejection of Parmenidean monism.

We begin with Empedocles of Agrigentum (c.495-435 B.C.), who regarded the All⁷⁰ to be composed of a plurality of unchangeable elements or *archai*.⁷¹

67 Guthrie cites the following: At *Phaedo* 78d we read concerning 'each thing in itself which is, the existent (τὸ ὄν)', that 'being of one form it remains by itself, constant and the same, and never admits of any alteration in any respect whatsoever'. This unchanging reality a man may only grasp in full clarity with his mind (65c, e), 'not employing sight in his thinking nor dragging in any other sense along with his reasoning', for sight and hearing hold not truth for men (65b). Then there is the *Timaeus* (27d): "In my opinion we must first of all make the following distinction: what is it that always is and has no becoming, and what on the other hand becomes continually and never is? The one comprehensible by the mind with reasoning, the other conjectured by opinion with irrational sensation, coming to be and passing away, but never really *being*." - W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 38-39.

68 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 92.

69 For a summary of Zeno's arguments, see E. Hussey *The Presocratics* 99-106; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 92-96; Wesley C. Salmon (ed.) *Zeno's Paradoxes* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970).

70 With Parmenides, Empedocles agreed that the All is without beginning and end. The sum of being is constant. cf. fr. 11-12; 17.32f.; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 139.

71 "With him [Empedocles] for the first time the four take the rank of genuine *archai*: none is prior to any other, nor is there anything else more fundamental." - W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 142. Plato develops this into his theory of forms.

Empedocles called these "the roots (ρίζωματα) of all things,"⁷² and they comprise fire (πῦρ = Ζεύς), air (αἰθήρ or ἀήρ = Ἥρη), water (ὔδωρ = Νῆστις) and earth (γαῖα = Ἄιδωνεύς).⁷³ Movement or change in the things which are made of these changeless 'roots',⁷⁴ is explained by two forces; one a uniting force called Love (Φιλότης, also Ἀφροδίτη, Ἀρμονίη, στόργη), and the other a separating force called Hate (Νεῖκος, κότος).⁷⁵ The original state of Love, from which Hate was banished, included a blissful combination of 'roots'. However, the present world was formed with the inclusion of the opposite pole, in which the roots were separated and things pass away. Nevertheless, plurality and unity have always been, just as there is eternally being (the four roots, Love, and Strife) and becoming (mixing or blending, and separation).⁷⁶

Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (500-428 B.C.) dispensed with Empedocles' forces of Love and Hate when describing composition and change. Instead, everything is formed, or rather separated from a mass of substances (σπέρματα),⁷⁷ by a rational mind (νοῦς) which is distinct from matter, and which unlike composite matter is absolutely simple (ἀπλόος).⁷⁸ Anaxagoras then introduces a mental principle and force in distinction from matter,⁷⁹ a dualism which is quite different from a world of spirits and a material world of earthly

⁷² Fragment 12/6. cf. Brad Inwood *The Poem of Empedocles - A Text and Translation, with an Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 209.

⁷³ For a discussion on the divine names given by Empedocles to the four elements, see W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 144-146.

⁷⁴ For a discussion of what 'becoming' meant for Empedocles, see Brad Inwood *The Poem of Empedocles* 30-31. Becoming is the mixture and separation of the basic elements (the four roots, as well as love and strife). However the totality does not change, but *is* - in the Parmenidean sense. "These very things are." cf. Brad Inwood *The Poem of Empedocles* 33.).

⁷⁵ "The elements alone are everlasting; the particular things we know are unstable compounds, which come into being as the elements "run through one another" in one direction or another. They are mortal or perishable just because they have no substance (φύσις) of their own; only the "four roots" have that. There is, therefore, no end to their death and destruction (fr. 8). Their birth is a mixture and their death is but the separation of what has been mixed. Nothing is imperishable but fire, air, earth and water, with the two forces of Love and Strife." - J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 73-74.

⁷⁶ Brad Inwood *The Poem of Empedocles - A Text and Translation, with an Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 46ff.

⁷⁷ Each of the seeds contained the traditional opposites, hot and cold, wet and dry, etc. "Everything is called that of which it has most in it," though, as a matter of fact, it has everything in it. Snow, for example, is black as well as white, but we call it white because white so far exceeds the black. cf. J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 79. The debate among scholars regarding the meaning of Anaxagoras' 'seeds', is summarised by Malcolm Schofield *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) 122ff.

⁷⁸ "It is completely separate from 'things' (χρήματα), and entirely homogeneous and self-consistent (ὁμοιος), whereas the 'things' display an infinite variety." - W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 279.

⁷⁹ This 'mind', "enters into some things and not into others, and that explains the distinction between the animate and the inanimate." - J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 79-80.

existence, since these alike were part of the one organic world. This Mind (life) sets in motion and controls what was otherwise in a state of rest.⁸⁰

The Atomists who followed, primarily Democritus, explained motion not by any external forces, but by motion which is inherent in substances themselves. Each minute particle or atom (ἄτομα) is in a state of rotary motion. This motion has no beginning, and changes are explained as the shifting position and arrangement of atoms by the physical forces of impact and pressure.⁸¹ The Atomists also strongly rejected the ultimacy of a duality, as M.C. Stokes explains:

Their prohibition of ἐξ ἑνὸς πολλά and ἐκ πολλῶν ἓν may in part have rested on the absence of plural parts to be extracted from a true unity. It was necessary, to be sure, in order to avoid the dissolution of the atom, to make it physically unsplitable; it was necessary, in order to escape what the Atomists thought were the implications of infinite divisibility, to make the atom theoretically indivisible. Now, theoretical indivisibility forbids not only the process, in thought or action, of taking something apart but also the existence of many parts into which the object may be divided. The prohibition of theoretical divisibility is a veto not only on what is one becoming many but also on what is one being many.⁸²

After the pluralism of the above, there was a return by some to the monism of the Eleatics (i.e. the school of Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus), and a deliberate rejection of the dualism of Anaxagoras in favour of pantheistic notions.

1.6. Plato

In formulating the concept of an unchanging world of Ideas or Forms, Plato (427-347 B.C.) drew upon the work of his predecessors. "The question of what is essential, permanent and unchanging was bound to lead Plato to the doctrines of the Eleatics, especially those of Parmenides, who declared the world of sense to be mere appearance... while Heracliteanism, as the negative foil of the world

⁸⁰ The way in which it separates and orders things is by producing rotary motion (περιχώρησις), which begins at the centre and spreads further and further. cf. J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 79-80; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. II* 279.

⁸¹ The founder of Atomism, Leukippos, said that "Naught happens for nothing, but all things from a ground and of necessity." - J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 99.

⁸² M.C. Stokes *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* 235.

of ideas, was put to use in explaining the realm of matter, the μή ὄν.⁸³ The result is a dualism of conceptual and sensible, of two worlds - the permanent atemporal⁸⁴ real world of ideas and this earthly Heraclitean world of change. The former world belongs to thought, the latter to sense.⁸⁵

Plato took a further step and located the origin of the ideas in the One, the ἀρχή (the ἄτμητον εἶδος), the monad, the ultimate basis of all being. But the problem for Plato and his successors was in bridging the gap between the transcendental One with the world of ideas, and further with the phenomenal world of the senses. How is the world of pure being related to the world of becoming (τὸ ὄν and τὸ γιγνόμενον)? This was apparently achieved by inventing a second *arche*, a creator being (δημιουργός) who shaped eternal matter into the cosmos, after the patterns (παραδείγματα) in the world of ideas.

Against the prevailing monistic and absolutist interpretation of Plato, some have suggested that in his later writings Plato's philosophy resembles dipolarity.⁸⁶ Some who adopt this view discern a shift from emphasising being, forms, and fixity in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and the *Republic*, to questioning this in the *Parmenides*,⁸⁷ and then allowing for both fixity and mobility as ultimate

83 E. Zeller *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy* 127. The Platonic world of ideas also seems to come from the later Pythagoreans. After discussing Zeno's theory of the infinite divisibility of a line, J. Burnet says of Plato's two worlds that they "originated from the apparent impossibility of reconciling the nature of number with continuity (τὸ συνεχές) as the Eleatics called it, or the unlimited (τὸ ἄπειρον) as the Pythagoreans said. There was something in the latter that seemed to resist the power of thought, and it was inferred that it could not have true reality (οὐσία), but was at best a process of becoming (γένεσις). You may go on bisecting the side and the diagonal of a square as long as you please, but you never come to a common measure, though you are always getting nearer to it." - J. Burnet *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* 89-90.

84 Plato *Timaeus* 37d-38a. cf. Leonardo Tarán *Parmenides - A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* 183-184.

85 The threefold significance of the Platonic philosophy of ideas is summarised by E. Zeller: "Ontologically they represent real being, the thing in itself (οὐσία ὄντως ὄν). Each thing is what it is only through the presence (παρουσία) of the idea in it or through its participation in the idea (μέθεξις κοινωνία). Thus the ideas as the one stand in opposition to the many; they are changeable, it remains always the same. The ideas have furthermore a teleological or paradigmatic significance. All becoming, including human conduct, has its end and aim in a being. These ends can only be in the realisation of that in which thought recognises the unchanging, primary patterns of things... To this extent the ideas have also the meaning of causes and moving forces which make the things of the world what they are. In their logical aspect the ideas enable us to bring order into the chaos of individual beings, to recognise the similar and distinguish the dissimilar and to apprehend the one in the many." *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy* 131.

86 C. Hartshorne & W.L. Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) 54-57. See also Gregory Vlastos 'Creation in the *Timaeus*: Is it a Fiction? (1964)' in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 401-419; Robert Bolton 'Plato's Distinction between Being and Becoming' *The Review of Metaphysics* 29.3 (1976) 66-95; Leonard J. Eslick 'Plato as Dipolar Theist' *Process Studies* 12:4 (1982) 243-251; Daniel A. Dombrowski 'Hartshorne and Plato' in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle: Open Court, 1991) 465-487.

87 Some regard the position of *Parmenides* as seriously reflecting Plato's own philosophy. e.g. G. Ryle 'Plato's *Parmenides*' in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan

in the later dialogues e.g. *Sophist*, *Timaeus*. It is because of this that some wish to date the *Timaeus* as one of Plato's earlier works, since it does not reflect Plato's apparently more mature concept of immutable Forms.⁸⁸

To illustrate this apparent dipolarity the *Sophist* may be cited, where Plato has Theaetetus and the stranger affirming that being and becoming are separate (248 a), but then later they agree, "to say that all that is motionless and in a state of motion are both together 'that which is' and the all" (249 d).⁸⁹ W.K.C. Guthrie excuses Plato by saying that his language here is "bewilderingly loose," and is contradicted by every other writing of Plato's except the *Timaeus*. If this statement (i.e. *Sophist* 249d) is true to Plato's thought, it would represent, according to Guthrie, a recantation, or at least a "callous indifference to his reader's comfort."⁹⁰ Guthrie himself cannot accept that:

The Forms, as I have said, remain unmoved and impassive [even the Form Motion, as Guthrie later explains cf. p.150]. Their causal function, in which some have seen a kind of motion, resembles rather that of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover: the mere existence of their perfection excites the development of potentialities in physical things, which strive, in the *Phaedo*'s terms, to emulate them. This is perhaps to emphasize the 'paradigm' conception of the Forms at the expense of the notions of 'sharing' and 'presence *in*'.⁹¹

G.M.A. Grube regards Plato's admission in the *Sophist* (quoted above), that movement and soul are part of the 'real', to open the way for gods to appear

Paul, 1965) 97-147. W.G. Runciman 'Plato's Parmenides' in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) 149-184. Others regard the *Parmenides* as a parody or joke e.g. J. Burnet and A.E. Taylor.

88 G.E.L. Owen dates the *Timaeus* at the end of the *Republic* group. The *Parmenides* comes later, as a fresh start. cf. 'The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's Dialogues' in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) 313-338. However, a more convincing argument for its later date is given by H.F. Cherniss 'The Relation of the *Timaeus* to Plato's later Dialogues' in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) 339-378. "Now, as we have seen, it is chiefly in order to eliminate from Plato's mature philosophy this theory of the relation between the ideas and the world of becoming that Owen would have the *Timaeus* antedate the *Parmenides*." (360).

89 Translation by Seth Benardete - *The Being of the Beautiful - Plato's Theaetetus, Sophist, and Statesman, Translated and with a Commentary by Seth Benardete* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984) p. II.43.

90 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Volume V - The Later Plato and the Academy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 142, 144.

91 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Volume V* 146. Yet Guthrie adds an interesting note - "I would be the last to claim certainty for what is said here. The temptation is always with us to adapt Plato's words to a preconceived idea of his philosophy..." 146. See further: C. Stead *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 46, with reference to C.J. de Vogel *Philosophia I, Studies in Greek Philosophy* (Assen, 1970) 176-82.

with the Ideas as inhabitants of the suprasensuous world.⁹² This is in fact what happens in the *Timaeus*, as described above in reference to Plato's δημιουργός. However, it must be reiterated that the forms themselves (as separate from the gods, or the world - soul), even the forms of life or movement, are the λόγοι or patterns for this life and activity. They are passive objects of knowledge, thus remain devoid of activity or movement themselves. There is then no dipolarity within the world of Forms, but Plato does seem to admit that both being and becoming somehow belong there paradigmatically.

Not only is there a place for the dipolarity of being-becoming in Plato's concept of the ultimate, but also the one-many. Plato defines the unit without parts, and secondly a complex unity which comprises parts. The distinction is made in the *Parmenides* to show the impossibility of mere oneness, or mere plurality.⁹³ So, as Merle Walker argues, for Plato 'one' and 'many are polar or "co-implicative" concepts.⁹⁴ The result of separating them is nihilism for both categories, via monotonous sameness for 'oneness' (Plato's objection to Parmenideans) and via chaos for mere 'plurality' (Plato's objection to the Heracliteans).

The ultimate outcome of the complicated argument in *Parmenides B* shows that it is impossible to do away with either pair of opposed categories by virtue of the the fact that, under analysis, one always and inevitably presupposes the other.⁹⁵

⁹² G.M.A. Grube *Plato's Thought* - with a new introduction, bibliographic essay, and bibliography by Donald J. Zeyl (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980, First ed. 1935) 161ff.

⁹³ Plato *Parmenides* - Translation and Analysis by R.E. Allen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

⁹⁴ Merle G. Walker 'The One and Many in Plato's *Parmenides*' *Philosophical Review* 47 (1938) 488-516.

⁹⁵ Merle G. Walker 'The One and Many in Plato's *Parmenides*' 496.

1.7. Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) rejected the concept of a transcendent realm which is changeless, a transcendent real world as the object of true knowledge over against this world of becoming (this is what Aristotle understood to be the view of Plato).⁹⁶ Instead particular substances are both form and matter, which also entail both being and becoming (*stasis* and change) - "Every product of nature has within itself a principle of motion and rest."⁹⁷ Instead of the dualism of Plato, reality at all levels exhibits this dipolarity. This is a dipolarity of actual - potential, and the dipolarity of opposites between which matter is in change.⁹⁸ W.K.C. Guthrie summarises Aristotle's ontology this way...

Each separately existing object in the sensible world is resolvable into a compound (Greek *syntheton*, 'composite' or 'concrete' object), consisting of a substratum (*hypokeimenon*, 'underlying'), also called its matter (*Hyle*), informed by, or possessing, a certain form (*eidōs*). Since sensible substance changes from one state to another (*Phys.* 205a6, 'everything changes from opposite to opposite'), the forms are seen as pairs of opposites, and are often so called.⁹⁹

The term 'organic' describes well the holism of substances. They are complex yet single wholes. The unity of a substance is not an aggregate of parts (e.g. matter, form, and properties), even interrelated parts, for this would require an extra 'unifying' explanatory part *ad infinitum*.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Aristotle *Metaphysics* A, t, 987b 5-9, cf. W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol VI - Aristotle, An Encounter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 101-102.

⁹⁷ Aristotle *Physics* 192b13-14; *Metaphysics* 1059b16-18. That becoming or process is central to Aristotle's philosophy, is argued by James P. Etzweiler 'Being as Activity in Aristotle: A Process Interpretation' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1978) 311-334; John Herman Randall 'Substance as Process' *The Review of Metaphysics* 10.4 (1957) 580-601. For Aristotle, "οὐσία is what it does, the ἐνέργεια of its δυνάμεις, the actualisation of its potentialities. Substance is κίνησις or μεταβολή, 'motion' or 'activity' in accordance with a specific φύσις or 'nature'... In a word, Substance is what we today call 'Process,' and what Aristotle called κίνησις." (Randall, 585).

⁹⁸ The opposites do not change, but the matter (Aristotle *Metaphysics* Δ, 1069 b3). "The permanent element which does remain through change and development is the matter or substratum (*Phys.* 194b24). The opposites do not change but withdraw." - W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Vol. VI*, 123. cf. Aristotle *Physics* 190b32 "It is impossible for the opposites to be affected by each other, but this difficulty too is resolved by the presence of a substratum different from the opposites."

⁹⁹ W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol VI*, 103. cf. Theodore Scaltsas *Substances and Universals in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) 26-27.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1031b28-1032a4. cf. Theodore Scaltsas 'Substantial Holism' in *Unity, Identity, and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* ed. T. Scaltsas, D. Charles, and M.L. Gill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 107-128, 120.

The resolution of the dilemma is a measure of Aristotle's genius. It rests on the introduction of the notion of *potentiality*, which allows for something to be present without being present! The potentiality is present although that which determines the nature of the potentiality, namely the actuality, is not present. Hence, what is *shared* between the potential and the actual *cannot be a component they possess in common*.¹⁰¹

The actual - potential are not then parts, but the dipolar aspects, of one complex substance (in definitions - matter relates to potentiality, form to actuality).¹⁰²

In addition there is the eternal dipolarity of unmoved mover (Aristotle's god, *Met.* 1005a32-b2) and motion. The Unmoved Mover as pure actuality, is superior in respect of being to motion or potentiality (as final cause). But not chronologically prior, since with Plato, Aristotle agrees that time and movement are co-eternal with forms (actuality). The necessity for an Unmoved Mover is explained in *Metaphysics* 1049b24-25 (cf. *De an.* 431a3-4): 'From the potential the actual is always produced by the agency of what is actual.' Something cannot be actual and potential at the same time in respect of the same act of change, according to Aristotle, since this contravenes the law of contradiction. Prior to motion then, there is the actual, the universal *arche*, that which has the power of initiating motion without being itself moved. Yet along side this must be placed an apparently contradictory observation, or as this thesis argues, the corresponding pole of eternal motion and time (*Metaphysics* Δ, introduction to chp. 6-10; cf. *Physics* 8 ch. 1). Aristotle's concept of eternal motion demands an eternal, changeless mover.¹⁰³ So unlike Plato (following Parmenides), movement and change must be regarded as central to Aristotle's ontology.¹⁰⁴

101 Theodore Scaltsas 'Substantial Holism' 120.

102 Sally Haslanger 'Parts, Compounds, and Substantial Unity' in *Unity, Identity, and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* ed. T. Scaltsas, D. Charles, and M.L. Gill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 129-170, 156.

103 John Ackrill explains Aristotle this way - "there is change, and change (like time) is necessarily eternal; to guarantee that necessary eternality there must be one eternal movement, and *its* cause (final cause) must itself be an eternal unchanging mover." cf. John Ackrill 'Change and Aristotle's Theological Argument' in *Aristotle and the Later Tradition* ed. H. Blumenthal & H. Robinson (Oxford *Studies in Ancient Philosophy - Supplementary Volume* 1991; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 57-66, 57; also W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol VI, 272*; H.J. Easterling 'The Unmoved Mover in early Aristotle' *Phronesis* 21 (1976) 252-265.

104 Aristotle *Physics* 8.3, 253a32-b6; Aryeh Kosman 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*' in *Unity, Identity, and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* ed. T. Scaltsas, D. Charles, and M.L. Gill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 195-213; John Ackrill 'Change and Aristotle's Theological Argument' 57-66; Sarah Waterlow *Nature, Change, and Agency in Aristotle's Physics: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

To define something one must know its essence, and to know its essence is to know its *ergon*, what it is *for*. Once more we see the parallelism of the two scales, matter-form and potentiality-actuality. Aristotle's commonest word for actuality or the *complete* realization of form is not *eidos* but *energeia*, the normal Greek for 'activity'.¹⁰⁵

Complete realization of form is not a state (*hexis*) but an activity (*energeia*).¹⁰⁶

Being and becoming, form and primary matter,¹⁰⁷ and thus actual and potential are co-eternal realities. It is in this sense that Aristotle could have spoken of dipolarity. That he does not is likely due to his fundamental principle, "For the same thing to hold good and not to hold good simultaneously of the same thing and in the same respect is impossible... This, then, is the firmest of all principles."¹⁰⁸ This applies to any one thing, and to distinguish between true and false (against Heraclitus).¹⁰⁹ But of the 'organic' whole of reality, and of any one substance (all of which are complex), there is both rest and change, actual and potential.¹¹⁰

105 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol VI* 218.

106 W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol VI* 232.

107 In the beginning there is ultimate or primary matter (ὕλη). This is the common indeterminate substratum of all things. cf. Aristotle *De generatione et corruptione* 329a24-b1, which Guthrie (Vol. VI, p.228) translates... "Our view [sc. as opposed to Plato's] is that there is indeed a matter of sensible bodies. It does not however exist by itself but always in conjunction with a contrariety. From it are generated what are called the elements. These have been treated in more precise detail elsewhere, but since they too are derived in this way from matter we must say something of them also, assuming as primary principle the matter which is not separable but underlies the opposites. (Hot is not matter for cold, nor cold for hot, but the substratum is matter for both). First then as originative principle we have that which is potentially perceptible body, second the opposites like heat and coldness, and thirdly we come to fire, water and the like [i.e. the simplest corporeal elements], for these change into one another."

108 Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1005b18., cf. *Aristotle Metaphysics, Books Γ, Δ, and Ε* trans. Christopher Kirwin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 7.

109 Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1012, cf. trans. Christopher Kirwin, 24-26.

110 Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1012b22, cf. trans. Christopher Kirwin, 26.

1.8. Later Platonism

In Middle Platonism (80 B.C. - 220 A.D.) the simple 'one' came to describe divine transcendence, and the complex one described divine immanence.¹¹¹ This allowed for Albinus to take up Philo's theory that the Ideas are actually contained in the divine Mind. When we come later to Plotinus (205-270 A.D.) and the Neoplatonists, the One is transcendent, beyond knowledge and speech, without name and unnameable, simple and pure, is one and only one.¹¹² By contrast the Mind and Soul are one and many, present everywhere, and penetrating all things.¹¹³ Real multiplicity was true of this lower level divinity, but not of the One.¹¹⁴ The source of such thinking was probably Neopythagorean, as A.H. Armstrong notes:

Most philosophically serious Neopythagoreans seem to have thought in terms of a generation of the universe from the primal One by a kind of self-explication through the First Principle's production either of a pair of principles, a second One as principle of limit and a principle of indefinite multiplicity (Eudorus) or of the principle of multiplicity, the Indefinite Dyad, alone, which it forms and limits itself (the Pythagoreans known to Alexander and Moderatus).¹¹⁵

The 'One', therefore, is the negation of all plurality. So Plotinus agrees with the Pythagoreans who gave to 'One' the name Apollo, on the etymology α = not,

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- 111 E.F. Osborn *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* 19. This view may be compared with the Neo-Pythagorean theory of three principles. There is the supreme principle, called One or Nous (existing beyond categories), who is above a pair of opposites called a Monad (representing form) and a Dyad (representing matter). Real being is limited to the One, the Monad and Dyad being less than real. With Stoic philosophy, the Platonic division between the two worlds of being and becoming is weakened into a distinction of active and passive. God is the active principle in the cosmos, and matter is the passive principle.
- 112 Plotinus *Enneads* III, 2; VI, 9, 4-5; VI, 2, 9 (trans. Stephen MacKenna; London: Penguin Books, 1991). The One is then also beyond being, since subject and predicate constitute a duality, and what is predicated always has a definite finite form.
- 113 Plotinus *Enneads* IV 8,3; IV, 8,3; IV 8, 1. cf. Andrew Smith 'Potentiality and the Problem of Plurality in the Intelligible World' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 99-105. For a particularly clear summary, see R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 54ff.
- 114 R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* 56 (see also p.58-59) - "Plotinus' conception of the One can best be understood if we recall that in his view multiplicity is never a valuable addition to an initial unity, but connotes rather a fragmentation of that unity (VI. 6.1, VI. 7.8.19-22). Hence at each stage of his universe the descent into greater multiplicity imposes fresh limits and restrictions, disperses and weakens the power of the previous stages, and creates fresh needs requiring the development of new faculties previously unnecessary."
- 115 A.H. Armstrong 'The Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism' in *Hellenic and Christian Studies* (London: Variorum, 1990) Essay VIII, p.90.

πολλῶν = many.¹¹⁶ But how is the simple 'One' related to the inferior plurality which emanates from it? Plotinus regards the plural contents of the Intelligible world as present in the One in a singular 'unfragmented' form, that the One is all things in a transcendent mode. So, "he justifies his description of the One as pure Act of Thought on the grounds that the One, though it does not itself think, causes thought in other beings (VI. 9. 6. 52-5)."¹¹⁷

This posed an unresolvable problem for Christian theologians (e.g. St. Augustine) who wished to maintain the Middle Platonic theory that the multiple archetypal ideas were in the mind of God, yet at the same time affirm with the Neoplatonists that this God is simple and absolute One. Some violation of Neoplatonic axioms had to take place. W. Norris Clarke summarises the change this way...

First, knowing a distinct multiplicity of objects, even only as ideas, is no longer considered an inferior mode of being, weakening and compromising the radical purity of unqualified unity and simplicity in the One. To know multiplicity is no longer a weakness, but a positive perfection, part of the glory, of a One that is *personal*. To *know* multiplicity is not to *become* multiple oneself. Secondly, purely relational multiplicity even within the real being or nature of the One is no longer a compromise or destruction of its unity, but an enrichment. The highest form of unity is now not aloneness but communion of Persons with one mind and will.¹¹⁸

This second point applies especially to the trinitarian doctrine of the Cappadocian Fathers, as described in Chapter One of this thesis. Yet not all the Church fathers acknowledged real multiplicity in God as represented in the doctrine of the Trinity. The main example is Saint Augustine, who stayed firmly with Plotinus in his concept of the transcendent One, and so consequently never dealt with the problem of how multiple ideas could be real in the One.¹¹⁹ With John Scottus Eriugena (810-877) there is a return to the Neoplatonic theory of the multiple ideas (*Nous*) being separate from the One, as the immutable real world (the first level of creation) and pattern for the

¹¹⁶ Plotinus *Enneads* V. 5. 6. 26-28.

¹¹⁷ R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* 60.

¹¹⁸ W. Norris Clarke 'The Problem of the Reality and Multiplicity of Divine Ideas in Christian Neoplatonism' in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* ed. Dominic J. O'Meara (Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies) 109-127, 113.

¹¹⁹ "Perhaps he did not see clearly the difficulty of the ideas as real multiplicity in God, as did Plotinus; or perhaps he did see it, but did not know quite what to do with it, and just quietly let it drop. At any rate, he gives us no clear philosophical principles by which to solve it." - W. Norris Clarke 'The Problem of the Reality and Multiplicity of Divine Ideas in Christian Neoplatonism' 115.

temporal and changeable world. Yet until these ideas take form in the temporal world, Eriugena still regarded them as somehow one in simplicity and without differentiation. Even Plotinus did not require this simple unity of the divine *Nous*, but regarded it as a complex unity. It would appear as if this contradiction in Eriugena (plurality in simplicity) is the main source of what later came to be called the coincidence of opposites,¹²⁰ an idea already present with Pseudo-Dionysius (whose writing Eriugena translated), but which never comes to express real dipolarity. The concept of multiple ideas really existing in a simple God is finally rejected by some medieval scholastics. Gabriel Biel (1420-1495), a follower of William of Ockham, said...

These two, namely, immutability or eternity, and multiplicity or plurality, do not seem compatible (for the divine essence, which is immutable and eternal, does not allow that plurality which is posited among the ideas - for each creatable thing has its own proper and distinct idea - and although this plurality is proper to the creature, immutability and eternity are not, but are proper to God alone).¹²¹

Returning to the final phase of pagan Neoplatonism, note should be taken of Iamblichus (250-326) and Proclus (412-485), two philosophers who multiplied the Plotinian triad of divine hypostases into a great number of triads related to some fundamental triad such as Being-Life-Intelligence. Of particular interest is Iamblichus' Law of Mean Terms, where the middle term of the triad becomes the link between two extremes (A-AB-B). This 'law' paradoxically establishes continuity between the two extremes, and at the same time keeps them apart.¹²² The middle term is thus in some sense representative of the whole, in its dipolar nature. However the other two principles remain. There is the One which is imparticipable. In contrast, the gods (or henads) are participable and have a knowledge which is both plural and unitary. Primordial simplicity is the essence of divinity and belonging only to the One.¹²³

¹²⁰ W. Norris Clarke 'The Problem of the Reality and Multiplicity of Divine Ideas in Christian Neoplatonism' 115-119.

¹²¹ Gabriel Biel, *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 5C (Tübingen, 1501), as quoted by W. Norris Clarke 'The Problem of the Reality and Multiplicity of Divine Ideas in Christian Neoplatonism' 125.

¹²² R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 131-132; E.R. Dodds *Proclus - The Elements of Theology - A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (2nd edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) xxii; A.E. Taylor 'The Philosophy of Proclus' in *Philosophical Studies* (New York: Arno Press, 1934) 160-161.

¹²³ Proclus' *The Elements of Theology*, propositions 116, 124, 127. cf. E.R. Dodds *Proclus - The Elements of Theology* 103, 111, 113.

The clearest example which Proclus gives of an intermediary mean, is that which exists between eternity and time. This is that "which perpetually comes to be."¹²⁴ The 'perpetual' element or pole reflects what is timeless (the eternal nature), what is "perpetual steadfastness", and what is "concentrated in a simultaneous whole." The 'coming to be' inferior element or pole reflects "perpetual process", and "temporal extension." Yet the timeless One remains untouched, and has no contact with the Gods who are in some respect temporal.¹²⁵

The view that the One transcends any opposites seems to be the main view of the Neoplatonists. However, Iamblichus also mentions another view held by some Neopythagoreans, that the One combines in itself the opposites. The One is both odd and even, male and female.¹²⁶ These suggestions were not adopted by those who preferred the apophatic theology of the transcendent One beyond any opposites and even unity.

2. Coincidentia Oppositorum

To pick up the plurality trail it is necessary to go back to the Hermetic tradition, and then trace its progress through attempts at systematisation during medieval times.

2.1. Hermes Trismegistus

The *Corpus Hermeticum* has its origins in ancient Egypt, the mythical author being Hermes Trismegistus (or Agathodaimon, Asclepius, Ammon, Tat), and reaches its final shape about the fourth century A.D. It has similarities to Orphic mysticism and Neoplatonic philosophy, and as with the Pythagorean tradition already mentioned, is divided into the 'technical' and the 'popular', the latter existing as separate fragments on magic, alchemy, healing and astrology. The *Corpus Hermeticum* comprises eighteen philosophical treatises, which have

¹²⁴ Proclus' *The Elements of Theology*, proposition 55 - Dodds p.53. See also propositions 106-107, Dodds p.95-97.

¹²⁵ W. O'Neill 'Time and Eternity in Proclus' *Phronesis* 7 (1962) 161-165.

¹²⁶ John Whittaker *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984) - Essay XI - NeoPythagoreanism and the Transcendent Absolute'.

a distinctive gnostic character,¹²⁷ and which have a significant influence on later philosophy, particularly on those who hovered on the fringe of orthodoxy or who openly advocated a return to the occultism of the past.

Regarding dipolarities, Hermes instructed Asclepius with the following:

"How then, O Trismegistus, are the things of this world moved conjointly with their movers? You have said that the planetary spheres are moved by the spheres of the fixed."

"This motion, Asclepius, is not conjoint but opposed, for the spheres are not moved in the same way; they move contrary to one another, and the contrariety keeps the motion balanced through opposition. Resistance is the stilling of motion. Since the planetary spheres are moved contrarily to the fixed {by a contrary encounter with them, they are moved because of their balance in relation to the contrariety itself}. It cannot be otherwise. For example: those bears that you see neither setting or rising but turning about the same point, do you think they are moved or at rest?"

"They are moved, Trismegistus."

"What sort of motion, Asclepius?"

"Motion revolving about the same points." (II. 6b-7a.)¹²⁸

For all learning is incorporeal, using as instrument the mind itself, as mind uses body. Both enter into body, then, the mental and the material. For everything must be the product of opposition and contrariety, and it cannot be otherwise." (X.10.)¹²⁹

Frances Yates has argued that the Renaissance revival of magic, partly spurred by an interest in the Hermetic literature,¹³⁰ provided the context for the flowering of science in the seventeenth century, the ability to manipulate the cosmos. While this occult tradition was later scorned by the likes of Francis Bacon, it was however an important basis for the development of mathematics and mechanics, including the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Yates goes further by suggesting that the new age of science, in eventually rejecting its Hermetic

¹²⁷ Brian P. Copenhaver *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation, with notes and introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) xiii - lxi.

¹²⁸ Brian P. Copenhaver *Hermetica* 9.

¹²⁹ B.P. Copenhaver *Hermetica* 32. Walter Scott regards this last sentence as "more or less remotely derived from Heraclitus." - *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which contain Religious or Philosophical Teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus - Volume II.* edited with English Translation and notes by Walter Scott (Boston: Shambhala, 1985) 247.

¹³⁰ The Hermetic texts were translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). cf. Edgar Wind *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 1968), Chapters 3-6.

roots, lost contact with one aspect of reality (the subjective).¹³¹ Rationalistic science fell prey to Parmenidean and Plotinian idealism. But before the pendulum swung this way, the magical mysticism of the hermetic tradition provided the context for a philosophy of the dynamism or potency of combined opposites.

2.2. Nicholas of Cusa

One of the most famous disciples of Francis of Assisi is Bonaventure (1217-1274), a master at the University of Paris who became the leader of the Franciscan Order. Ewert Cousins has recently shown that implicit in his theology is the concept (or metaphysical principle) of *coincidentia oppositorum*,¹³² a concept under the surface of the Christian Neoplatonic tradition Bonaventure develops,¹³³ but which is not given explicit formulation until two centuries later by Nicholas of Cusa.

Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) refers to Hermes Trismegistus in his *De Docta Ignorantia*, in the context of discussing God's oneness encompassing all things, and that as such, God cannot be given a name, except perhaps something like "Oneness."¹³⁴ In saying this Nicholas reacted against the *analogia entis* theology popular in his day, which may have resulted from his visit to Constantinople as papal delegate. The Byzantine Church's apophatic perspective would accord well with the tone adopted in *De docta ignorantia*, a work inspired during the sea voyage returning to Venice, along with the Emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and other officials from the Greek Church.¹³⁵ But on the positive side, though never adequate as it is always less true than *via negativa*

131 Frances A. Yates 'The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science' in *Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance* ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967) 255-274. For an evaluation of Yates' pioneering work in this area, see Brian P. Copenhaver 'Natural magic, hermetism, and occultism in early modern science' in *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* ed. D.C. Lindberg & R.S. Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 261-301.

132 Ewert H. Cousins *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978); 'Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites: A Response to Critics' *Theological Studies* 42:2 (1981) 277-290. George H. Tavard disputes this, arguing that Bonaventure "discarded" the *coincidentia oppositorum* doctrine. cf. 'The Coincidence of Opposites: A Recent Interpretation of Bonaventure' *Theological Studies* 41.3 (1980) 576-584, 583.

133 From Pseudo-Dionysius, Anselm, the Victorines, Alexander of Hales, Meister Eckhart.

134 *De Docta Ignorantia* chp. 24.75 - *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia* by Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1981) 80.

135 Pauline M. Watts *Nicolaus Cusanus: A Fifteenth-Century Vision of Man* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982) 5. P. Watts does not draw this conclusion, but provides this interesting biographical detail.

according to Nicholas, the names that we do use for God are based on his relationship to created things. Once again he refers to Hermes...

Hermes said that not only all [species of] animals but also all [species of] nonanimals have two sexes; wherefore, he maintained that the Cause of all things, viz., God, enfolds within Himself both the masculine and the feminine sex, of which he believed Cupid and Venus to be the unfolding.¹³⁶

This appears consistent with the doctrine of the coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*). But more than this, as Nicholas' opponent Johannes Wenck noted,¹³⁷ the *coincidentia oppositorum* doctrine "represents his efforts to controvert and go beyond scholastic logic and natural philosophy, circumscribed by the law of contradiction."¹³⁸ John Macquarrie compares this with the dialectical theology of those before Nicholas,¹³⁹ which took the form:

Affirmation - God is A
Negation - God is non-A
Resolution - God is above or beyond (*hyper* or *super*) A.

But for Nicholas of Cusa, the form was ...

Affirmation: God is A.
Counter-affirmation - God is B (where B is, in logical terms, the contrary rather than the contradictory of A).
Resolution - God is, in an incomprehensible way, both A and B.

One of the clearest examples is given by Nicholas in the following discussion of God being both the "absolute maximum" and the "absolute minimum."

Hence, since the absolutely Maximum *is* all that which can be, it is *altogether* actual. And just as there cannot be a greater, so for the same reason there cannot be a lesser, since it is all that which can be. But the Minimum is that

¹³⁶ *De Docta Ignorantia* chp. 25.83. Nicholas is referring to *Asclepius* 21. cf. B. P. Copenhaver *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation, with notes and introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 79.

¹³⁷ Jasper Hopkins *Nicholas of Cusa's Debate with John Wenck: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Ignota Litteratura and Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1981).

¹³⁸ P.M. Watts *Nicolaus Cusanus: A Fifteenth-Century Vision of Man* 46.

¹³⁹ John Macquarrie *In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism* (London: SCM Press, 1984) 99.

than which there cannot be a lesser. And since the Maximum is also such, it is evident that the Minimum coincides with the Maximum.¹⁴⁰

Elsewhere he says, "God is the enfolding of all things, even of contradictories."¹⁴¹ But as Jasper Hopkins notes, Nicholas nowhere affirms that *Deus est coincidentia oppositorum*.¹⁴² In fact it would seem that the opposites or contradictions actually coincide in God, such that "God is beyond the coincidence of contradictories,"¹⁴³ even oneness and plurality.¹⁴⁴ So, despite the novelty of the *coincidentia oppositorum* doctrine, Nicholas ultimately falls back on his Neoplatonic heritage in affirming God's simplicity, a truth reflected when the human intellect also transcends the oppositions that govern the senses and reason.¹⁴⁵ This agrees with Pauline Watts' assessment:

The *coincidentia oppositorum* is, in the final analysis, a figurative or metaphorical term. It is designed to establish divine freedom and transcendence. It promises no knowledge of the divine itself. The *coincidentia oppositorum* is not the heresy that the "Aristotelian sects" would make it, but rather the "beginning of the ascent into mystical theology."¹⁴⁶

Paradoxical statements are meant to be a way into transcendence of the opposites. So Nicholas describes Christ as the finite united to the Infinite, and through him the believer approaches the unapproachable God. In *De Visione Dei*, the main oppositions "are between the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, the imaging and the exemplifying, the creatable and the uncreatable, the unequal and the nonequal, the immanent and the

¹⁴⁰ *De docta ignorantia*, Book I, chapter 4. cf. *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia* by Jasper Hopkins, p.53.

¹⁴¹ *De docta ignorantia*, Book I, chapter 22. cf. *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia* by Jasper Hopkins, p.77. So, God alone has the maximum degree of form (e.g. maximum hot, maximum cold). cf. W.H. Hay 'Nicholas Cusanus: The Structure of his Philosophy' *Philosophical Review* 61 (1952) 14-25.

¹⁴² *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia* by Jasper Hopkins 6.

¹⁴³ *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae Discipuli ad Discipulum* 15 - cf. translation by J. Hopkins in *Nicholas of Cusa's Debate with John Wenck: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Ignota Litteratura and Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* 52.

¹⁴⁴ J. Hopkins observes that "Although it sounds different to say that *in Deo contradictoria coincidunt* and to say that *Deus super coincidentiam contradictorium est*, Nicholas does not draw any distinction by means of these expressions but simply uses them interchangeably." - *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: A Translation and an Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia* 6.

¹⁴⁵ P.M. Watts *Nicolaus Cusanus: A Fifteenth-Century Vision of Man* 45. Nicholas of Cusa is famous for his private library of ancient and Patristic texts in the Platonic tradition.

¹⁴⁶ P.M. Watts *Nicolaus Cusanus: A Fifteenth-Century Vision of Man* 49. See also Werner Beierwaltes 'Cusanus and Eriugena' *Dionysius* 13 (1989) 115-152.

transcendent, the seeable and the unseeable, the revealable and the unrevealable, the contractible and the uncontractible, the mutable and the immutable, that which is able to satisfy and that which is not able to satisfy."¹⁴⁷ This dialectical reasoning is meant to be the aid for the mystical transcending of the obstacle the opposites present. In *De Visione Dei* Nicholas gives an 'icon' illustration:

In this [icon's] painted face I see an image of Infinity. For the gaze is not confined to an object or a place, and so it is infinite. For it is turned as much toward one beholder of the face as toward another. And although in itself the gaze of this face is infinite, nevertheless it seems to be limited by any given onlooker. For it looks so fixedly upon whoever looks unto it that it seems to look only upon him and not upon anything else.¹⁴⁸

Despite all talk about transcending opposites, this illustration indicates that while the mystic might scale a rung or two on the dialectic ladder in a vision of God, the paradox remains, the finite and the infinite.

2.3. Pico to Bruno

The quest to identify opposites and then overcome them, continues throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), named himself the harmoniser of oppositions (*'Princeps Concordiae'*).¹⁴⁹ His ambition was not so much to suggest new ideas, but to uncover the wealth of philosophical truth existing in available literature e.g. ancient, Patristic, Arabic, Jewish. But as Ernst Cassirer observes, there is in Pico's writings a quest for reconciliation between the one and the many, and this is by the Renaissance revival of the Neo-Platonic and Dionysian concept of creation as an emanation from God.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism: Text, Translation, and Interpretive study of De Visione Dei* by Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1985) 37.

¹⁴⁸ *De Visione Dei*, chapter 15. cf. *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism: Text, Translation, and Interpretive study of De Visione Dei* by Jasper Hopkins p.193.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Grudin *Mighty Opposites: Shakespeare and Renaissance Contrariety* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

¹⁵⁰ Ernst Cassirer 'Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola: A Study in the History of Renaissance Ideas' in *Renaissance Essays* ed. P.O. Kristeller & P.P. Wiener (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1968) 11- 60.

More emphasis is given to the unreconcilable nature of opposites in the teaching of Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529),¹⁵¹ Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), and Paracelsus (1494 - 1541). This put them in direct conflict with the Neoplatonist tradition which attempted a synthesis, and the Aristotelians who regarded opposites as negating each other. Instead, there is a potency in the interaction between opposites.

The most influential of these thinkers in this direction was Paracelsus¹⁵² - perhaps best known for his rejecting Galenic humoralism, and thereby becoming a pioneer of modern medicine in the treatment of diseases. Regarding opposites, Paracelsus regarded the universe, and each individual within it, to be involved in the struggle between two cosmic forces, epitomised in the matter/spirit dichotomy. This opposition cannot be overcome, but understood for the wise control of the two contrary powers. One novel use of this wisdom is Paracelsus' theory of homoeopathic cure. Instead of an opposite countering an opposite, Paracelsus' formula was *similia similibus curantur*. If contraries give strength to each other, then likes (*similia*) weaken each other. This idea is likely behind Shakespeare's lines...

Within the infant rind of this fair flower
Poison hath residence and medicine power;
(*Romeo and Juliet*, II.iii.23-23).¹⁵³

Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) extended the Copernican revolution in cosmology by suggesting that space is infinite, and that the sun is merely one star among all stars which have their own planets moving about them freely. This infinite universe is an 'organic' whole, and as such is permeated by one eternal and indivisible spirit. It is in this One that Bruno regarded opposites to be harmonised and ultimately synthesised. There is an obvious similarity here with the thinking of Nicholas of Cusa.¹⁵⁴ But Bruno's philosophy builds on a century of advancement in science since Nicholas, resulting in a dialectical

¹⁵¹ Knowledge of both good and evil generates virtue. Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528) is summarised by R. Grudin *Mighty Opposites* 18-22.

¹⁵² Paracelsus *Selected Writings*, ed. Jolande Jacobi (trans. N. Guterman; New York: Pantheon Books, 1951); W. Pagel *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance* (Basel and New York: S. Karger, 1958); R. Grudin *Mighty Opposites* 22-30.

¹⁵³ R. Grudin *Mighty Opposites* 36. The second chapter of this book is titled - 'The Infant Rind: Contrariety and Shakespeare's Intellectual Milieu.' Grudin sees a direct influence of Paracelsian theories on Shakespeare.

¹⁵⁴ Bruno highly admired both Nicholas of Cusa and Copernicus. cf. P.H. Michel *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* (trans. R.E.W. Maddison; Paris: Hermann Press, 1973) 45, 47.

philosophy which respects the diversified and relativistic nature of the universe.¹⁵⁵ It is also in the constant flux of matter and its form within this whole, that Bruno deals a blow to both Plato and Aristotle (though he never completely breaks from them). There is no fixed realm of ideas, nor is there a fixed substratum of form in matter, but rather within the whole infinite universe there is the potentiality for infinite form and change. The 'real' is the whole, including change.

You have heard more than once that some, in whose composition fire doth predominate, are by their own quality bright and hot. Others shine by reflection, being themselves cold and dark, for water doth predominate in their composition. On this diversity and opposition depend order, symmetry, complexion, peace, concord, composition and life. So that the worlds are composed of contraries of which some, such as the earth and water, live and grow by help of their contraries, such as the fiery suns. This I think was the meaning of the sage who declared that God createth harmony out of the sublime contraries; and of that other who believed this whole universe to owe existence to the strife of the concordant and the love of the opposite tensions.¹⁵⁶

But for all this, the many and change (in quantity) are still incorporated in the changeless transcendent One (ultimate quality),¹⁵⁷ whether this is called nature, God, or infinity.¹⁵⁸ While Bruno's universe is infinite, it is still closed. Dialectical movement is finally negated in the infinity of the whole.¹⁵⁹ There is eternal movement throughout the infinite universe, but the universe itself does not move.¹⁶⁰ So in *De l'infinito universo et mundi* he says:

155 Irving L. Horowitz *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno* (New York: Coleman-Ross Company, 1952) - Chapter 1 - 'The Revolution in Cosmology' 21-31.

156 Giordano Bruno *On the Universe and the Worlds* (Singer translation, p. 323-24), as quoted by I. Horowitz *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno* 45. In this quotation Bruno first refers either to Cusanus or Pseudo-Dionysius, and lastly to Heraclitus.

157 I. Horowitz *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno* 112-113. "Processes are quantitative, they enter into qualitative relations in so far as they are part of the substantive quality." "He [Bruno] devised a theory of change that amounted to an empty categorical formula: the quantitative is the Becoming whereas the qualitative is the Being." (115). "Bruno held firm to a dualistic and metaphysical notion of the relation of quantity (the infinite number of finite things), to quality (the One Universal Substance); they both operated in different realms with relative independence from each other." (116)

158 Opposites also disappear in the minimum, the smallest, the monad. cf. K. Atanasijevic *The Metaphysical and Geometrical Doctrine of Bruno, as Given in His Work - De Triplici Minimo* (trans. G.V. Tomashevich; St. Louis: Warren H. Green Inc., 1972) 30, 106; P.H. Michel *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* 80ff.

159 Some regard this synthesis in Bruno's philosophy to be a middle ground between the opposites. cf. A.M. Paterson *The Infinite Worlds of Giordano Bruno* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1970) 58.

160 I. Horowitz *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno* 56. "The calling forth of Cusanus' closed dialectic enables Bruno to grant movement to the aspects of infinity, but since the motion is cancelled

Our philosophy... reduces itself to a single origin and relates to a single goal, and makes contraries to coincide so that there is one primal foundation both of origin and end. From this unity of opposites, we deduce that ultimately it is divinely true that contraries are within contraries; wherefore it is not difficult to compass the knowledge that each thing is within every other, an idea which Aristotle and the other Sophists could not comprehend.¹⁶¹

Also, in his *De gli eroici furori*, the philosophical ascent culminates in a vision of Diana - the attainment of a realm of perception where contraries are ultimately reconciled.¹⁶² Monism wins the day, and Bruno, despite his radical ideas, never escapes the idealism of the scholastic tradition which nurtured him.¹⁶³ Frances Yates' study - *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*,¹⁶⁴ must also place our comments about Bruno's cosmology and philosophy in perspective.

Bruno was an out-and-out magician, an "Egyptian" and Hermetist of the deepest dye, for whom the Copernican heliocentricity heralded the return of magical religion, who in his dispute with the Oxford doctors associated Copernicanism with the magic of Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*, for whom the Copernican diagram was a hieroglyph of the divine, who defended earth-movement with Hermetic arguments concerning the magical life in all nature, whose aim was to achieve Hermetic gnosis, to reflect the world in the *mens* by magical means, including the stamping of magic images of the stars on memory, and so to become a great Magus and miracle-working religious leader. ¹⁶⁵

by the infinite as infinite, his system of the universe remains devoid of genuine motion and development." (57). cf. p.91. For a commentary on Bruno's concept of the universe itself as a whole being motionless, see P.H. Michel *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* 101-102.

161 Giordano Bruno *De l'infinito universo et mundi*, Dialogue V, as quoted by I. Horowitz *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno* 50. See also p.73 for an explanation of this quotation in terms of the interpenetration of opposites. In addition to this quotation, Paul Michel notes that Bruno's references elsewhere, "sometimes neo-Platonic, sometimes re-Socratic, seem to betray a wavering between two manners of conceiving unity and the relation of oneness to the manifold, between procession and inclusion, between the Monist oneness of Parmenides and the transcendental oneness of Plotinus, whence the diverse breaks away and proceeds." cf. P.H. Michel *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* (trans. R.E.W. Maddison; Paris: Hermann Press, 1973) 78.

162 R. Grudin *Mighty Opposites* 34.

163 Horowitz concludes his study of Bruno by saying, "No matter how 'revolutionary sounding' his theory of an infinite universe may appear (and in fact it was an extension of astronomical theory), objectively, it represents Bruno's cardinal concession to the static ontologies supported by medieval philosophy. He failed to understand that it was the *universe in motion* which was itself the totality of the rational universe." - *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno* 125.

164 Frances A. Yates *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

165 Frances Yates *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* 451.

Bruno's Hermetic magic was considered the means of overcoming opposites (despite their own magical potency!), for arriving at the underlying unity of all things.¹⁶⁶

Fourteen years after Bruno was burnt at the stake, the Hermetic corpus fell into disrepute. In 1614, Isaac Casaubon proved that these writings were not the work of an ancient Egyptian priest, but were written in post-Christian times. The animistic universe operated by magic, then gave way to the mathematical universe operated by mechanics.¹⁶⁷ René Descartes (1596-1650) was a pioneer in this new world, marking another phase of idealism whereby both the objective and rational poles of the dipolar structure of reality were emphasised in reaction to the vitalistic and mystical tradition.

2.4. Dipolarities of Pascal & Coleridge

Like Descartes, Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a brilliant mathematician, physicist, and philosopher. However, unlike Descartes, Pascal was critical of an over confidence in reason, including the science of Descartes. Good reasoning (*raisonnement*) must be combined with sensitive feeling (*sentiment*). There is both the mind and the heart, the former demonstrates logically, the later knows intuitively and by instinct and feeling. Alongside the *esprit de géométrie* - the spirit of mathematics and analysis, must be placed the *esprit de finesse* - the intuitive mind.¹⁶⁸ But by this is not meant a Cartesian-Thomistic separation of reason and faith. Both form a dipolar whole; what is known and what is believed cannot be adequately distinguished from each other.¹⁶⁹ The parts and the whole are in dialectical relationship.¹⁷⁰

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834) was much impressed by Pascal's arguments against Cartesian rationalism,¹⁷¹ and adopted the faith-reason

¹⁶⁶ Frances Yates *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* 199.

¹⁶⁷ Yet the mystical tradition remained. cf. Kent Emery 'Mysticism and the coincidence of opposites in sixteenth and seventeenth century France' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984) 3-23.

¹⁶⁸ Hans Küng *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today* (trans. E. Quinn; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 49-51; J.H. Broome *Pascal* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1965) 76ff.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas V. Morris *Making Sense of it All: Pascal and the Meaning of Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), chapter 10 - 'Faith and the Heart' (p.183-194).

¹⁷⁰ Lucien Goldmann *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (trans. Philip Thody; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964) - chp. 1 : 'The Whole and the Parts', especially p.5-6.

¹⁷¹ J. Barker *Strange Contrarities: Pascal in England during the Age of Reason* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975) 224-227.

dipolarity in his own definition of unity.¹⁷² Coleridge elsewhere describes the corresponding dipolarity of the objective - subjective, a truth which evades the mystic and materialist alike,¹⁷³ but which is revealed in the character of human personhood.¹⁷⁴

According to Coleridge there is a unity in nature, a unity in diversity or polarity, which provides the basis for glimpsing the "real" world.¹⁷⁵ In a footnote to his comments on the dipolar coexistence of law and religion being one power (i.e. state and church), he says:

Every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite, as the sole means and condition of its manifestation: and all opposition is a tendency to reunion. This is the universal law of polarity or essential dualism, first promulgated by Heraclitus, 2000 years afterwards republished, and made the foundation both of logic, of physics, and of metaphysics by Giordano Bruno. The principle may be thus expressed. The identity of thesis and antithesis is the substance of all being; their opposition the condition of all existence, or being manifested; and every thing or phenomenon is the exponent of a synthesis as long as the opposite energies are retained in that synthesis.¹⁷⁶

This polarity is supremely revealed in the Logos¹⁷⁷ as God other and the same (*Deus alter et idem*). For Coleridge the Logos is the principle of polarity.¹⁷⁸ Following Philo, the Logos is the separator, the bond, and the mediator of all opposites;¹⁷⁹ the 'Mesothesis' of all polarities, the point at or within which

172 The dipolarity, as Coleridge explains it, is the holding together the two polar opposites of ultrafidianism (e.g. Tertullian's - "It is certainly true because it's impossible") and minimifidianism (what we now call 'rationalism'). He explains this dipolarity by discussing Archbishop Leighton's aphorism, "Faith elevates the soul not only above sense and sensible things, but above reason itself. As reason corrects the errors which sense might occasion, so supernatural faith corrects the errors of natural reason judging according to sense." cf. S.T. Coleridge *Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1913 edition) 137-156.

173 S.T. Coleridge *Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* 261ff.

174 S.T. Coleridge *Logic* ed. J.R. de J. Jackson (*The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Vol. 13*; Princeton University Press, 1981) 80ff.

175 Coleridge speaks of unity in diversity or plurality, but also of polarity. cf. *Logic* ed. J.R. de J. Jackson, 78, 83. For a study of polarity in Coleridge's writings, see James S. Cutsinger 'Coleridgean Polarity and Theological Vision' *Harvard Theological Review* 76.1 (1983) 91-108.

176 Samuel Taylor Coleridge *The Friend: A Series of Essays* (London: George Bell and Son, 1890) Section I, Essay 13, p.55.

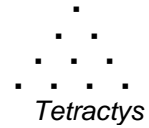
177 Coleridge recognised the polarity principle in Heraclitus' idea of divine Logos. cf. Mary A. Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy: The Logos as Unifying Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 10-11 (fn.34), 113 - Coleridge "hoped (as he wrote to C.A. Tulk) to expound the philosophy of 'Heraclitus redivivus.'" cf. *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.L. Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1966-71) iv. 775.

178 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 38, fn.4.

179 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 135.

extremes meet.¹⁸⁰ This was Coleridge's answer to the extremes of both dualism and monism.¹⁸¹

The distinction-in-unity theme, according to Coleridge, also finds its perfect expression in the *tetractys* symbol.¹⁸² He was much interested in its Pythagorean origin,¹⁸³ and significance for Plato, Philo, the early Christian Fathers,¹⁸⁴ Jewish cabbala, and medieval alchemy.¹⁸⁵ It was a failure to utilise the sacred *tetractys* which Coleridge believed led to an inadequate explanation of the Trinity.¹⁸⁶



When he writes against his earlier alliance with Unitarianism,¹⁸⁷ Coleridge contrasts unity (or 'unition') in polarity with an "indistinguishable unicity or sameness." He points out that "Unity is assuredly no logical Opposite to Tri-unity, which expressly includes it."¹⁸⁸

But it is Coleridge's enthusiasm for the *tetractys* symbol which raises suspicions about his theology of the Trinity.¹⁸⁹ In this scheme there is Prothesis,

180 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 117.

181 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 20, 21 - "This was the basis of his response to what he saw as the loss of the human ideal and the alienation within thought and within individual and social experience produced by the extremes of dualism and monism which either divided physical from metaphysical or spiritual reality, or subsumed these distinctions in an undifferentiated identity... He argued that the reality of Logos provided a mediation not only between idealism and atomistic materialism or 'mechanistic' philosophy, but between all oppositions which had been misinterpreted as contradictions, or as mutually exclusive."

182 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 62-67. Coleridge was familiar with Henry More's discussion on the Pythagorean *tetractys* and Jewish cabbala in *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653).

183 Johan C. Thom *The Pythagorean Golden Verses: With Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995). "For the Pythagoreans the τετρακτύς was a complex symbol, the meaning of which still remains enigmatic." (174).

184 Perkins refers to: *Ex Origene: Selecta in Psalmos*; Psalmus, ii. 539 (Migne, 12. 1104B); Hippolytus' *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, 6. 34 (Migne, 16.3246A); Irenaeus *Adversus Haereses*, I.i.I (Migne, 7. 448A). cf. Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 65, fn.82.

185 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 57. Coleridge was attracted to the combination of Christian theology and the use of the symbols of alchemy in the writings of the German mystic Jacob Böhme.

186 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 64-65. cf. unpublished manuscript - N 52, fo. 16^v. I have not been able to determine the meaning and significance of the *tetractys* symbol for Coleridge.

187 Coleridge was influenced by Unitarianism for much of his life (since his Cambridge days), as were most republicans in politics and 'up to date' church ministers. However, his beliefs changed to Trinitarianism in 1806, such that he could say, "neither of these Three can be conceived *apart* nor *confusedly*, so that the Idea of God involves that of a Tri-Unity." cf. Basil Willey 'Coleridge and Religion' in *S.T. Coleridge* ed. R.L. Brett (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1971) 221-243, 240.

188 Samuel Taylor Coleridge *Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1913 edition) 138-139. On the term 'unicity', he elsewhere says "We never speak of the *unity* of attraction, or of the unity of repulsion, but of the unity of attraction and repulsion in each one corpuscle as the twin attributes or its oujsia or constitutive sense." *Logic* ed. J.R. de J. Jackson (*The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Vol. 13*; Princeton University Press, 1981) 250.

189 J. Robert Barth *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 94ff. Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 192, with reference to D. Newsome *Two Classes of Men* (London, 1974) appendix C, 109; Daniel Hardy attempts a defense of Coleridge's orthodoxy (though not successfully in my opinion) in 'Coleridge on the Trinity' *Anglican Theological Review* LXIX:2, 1987,

Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis.¹⁹⁰ The Prothesis (θεός, "absolute will or Identity) is logically prior to the Thesis (ὁ θεός, the Father), and the antithesis (ὁ υἱὸς θεοῦ, the Son), as the ground of both. The Synthesis is the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Godhead, community of love). The Prothesis or Absolute is logically prior, and cannot be identified with Being.¹⁹¹ There are overtones of 'Augustinian modalism' here (cf. previous chapter),¹⁹² lingering features of Coleridge's Unitarian past.

145-155. cf. *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring, 2 vols., *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Bollingen Series, xiv (London, 1990) i. 77; *Marginalia*, ed. George Whalley, 3 vols. to date, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Bollingen Series, xii (London, 1980-) ii. 880.

190 This is set out most clearly in Coleridge's *Formula Fidei de Sanctissima Trinitate* (1830):

THE IDENTITY

The absolute subjectivity, whose only attribute is the Good; whose only definition is - that which is essentially causative of all possible true being; the ground; the absolute will; the adorable πρόπρων, which, whatever is assumed as the first, must be presumed as its antecedent...

But that which is essentially causative of all being must be causative of its own, - *causa sui*, αὐτοπάτωρ. Thence

THE IPSEITY

The eternally self-affirmant self-affirmed; the "I Am in that I Am," or the "I shall be that I will to be;" the Father; the relatively subjective, whose attribute is, the Holy One; whose definition is, the essential finific in the form of the infinite; *dat sibi fines*. (cont.)

But the absolute will, the absolute good, in the eternal act of self-affirmation, the Good as the Holy One, co-eternally begets

THE ALTERITY

The supreme being; ὁ ὄντως ὦν; the supreme reason; the Jehovah; the Son; the Word; whose attribute is the True (the truth, the light, the *fiat*); and whose definition is the *pleroma* of being, whose essential poles are unity and distinctivity; or the essential infinite in the form of the finite; - lastly, the relatively objective, *deitas objectiva* in relation to the I Am as the *deitas subjectiva*; the divine objectivity...

But with the relatively subjective and the relatively objective, the great idea needs only for its completion a co-eternal which is both, that is, relatively objective to the subjective, relatively subjective to the objective. Hence

THE COMMUNITY

The eternal life, which is love; the Spirit; relatively to the Father, the Spirit of Holiness, the Holy Spirit; relatively to the Son, the Spirit of truth, whose attribute is Wisdom; *sancta sophia*; the Good in the reality of the True, in the form of actual Life.

cf. J. Robert Barth *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* 93-94.

191 Coleridge "repeatedly emphasized that the Prothesis of Will is 'an Absolute Identity antecedent in order of Thought, to the unity of Personal Being... the ground and eternal Antecedent of all Being, even of it's own' (N 41, fo. 82v). Only in the necessary order of human thought (unable itself to comprehend what is by its nature beyond being and thought) can (and must) the Absolute be understood as *prior* to God self-realized in Trinity; it must never be identified with *Being*... Thus the first principle of Coleridge's 'logosophic' system is, paradoxically, *beyond* all system in that it is neither Reason or Being, but Will." - Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 192.

192 J. Robert Barth *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* 95. This modalism may also be detected in the following observations by Mary Perkins (*Coleridge's Philosophy* 228, 230): "Both Coleridge's 'logosophic' theme and his attempt to overcome the difficulty of reconciling personality with infinity in the idea of God, hang on the assertion that 'the Logos, the only-begotten, is the *Person* of the Eternal Father' (N 48, fo. 7), and that 'In the Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity the Son alone is the *Person* (the exegesis) of the Godhead' (N 42, fo. 41)." And again, "Coleridge's distinction between the 'personèity' of the Father and the *personality* of the Son is important in the context of his 'theanthropology', his

There is polarity in the Logos, but in accordance with Proclus' Neoplatonic philosophy (and in disagreement with Schelling's dipolar Absolute¹⁹³) this polarity is strictly excluded from the Absolute.¹⁹⁴ This Absolute (Prothesis) is a *tertium quid* - a higher principle emerging as the source (or the primary base) of unity of all thesis and antithesis (or dipolar) relations. It is then no surprise to find Coleridge in agreement with Thomistic Aristotelianism, that God is pure Act, in whom there is no becoming. On this point he stands in contrast to his contemporary Georg W. F. Hegel, though, with Hegel, he arrives at an ultimate principle which transcends dipolarity.¹⁹⁵

idea of the relation between finite and ideal Humanity (in Christ). The Father is the source and origin of personality; the latter is begotten as $\delta\ \acute{\omicron}\nu$, the Being and Person of the Father (CN iv, §5297)."

193 Robert F. Brown *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809-1815* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977) 201-224.

194 Mary Perkins *Coleridge's Philosophy* 114. fn. 49 - "Perhaps this is the important inspiration that Coleridge reported to Henry Crabb Robinson he had found in Proclus and from which point he had begun the development of his philosophy (H.C. Robinson, *On Books and their Writers*, ed. Edith J. Morley, 3 vols. [London, 1938], i. 70 [3 May 1812]). Proclus declares 'as the Pythagoreans say, the One is prior to all oppositions' (*In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, 54D). Coleridge would, no doubt, have been familiar with Thomas Taylor's translation of Proclus (*The Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato* [1820])." This reconciliation of opposites is not sufficiently accounted for in Paul Scott Wilson 'Coherence in *Biographia Literaria*: God, self and Coleridge's "seminal principle." *Philological Quarterly* 72 (1993) 451-469, especially 458-460.

195 Mary A. Perkins 'Logic and Logos - The Search for Unity in Hegel and Coleridge: II. The 'Otherness' of God' *Heythrop Journal* 32.2 (1991) 192-215.

3. Dreaming about an Ultimate Principle

3.1. Georg W. F. Hegel

Hegel (1770-1831) is regarded as one of the most influential philosophers of modern times. Central to his philosophical system is the notion of the absolute as comprising all things, the universe as a whole. The historical antecedent of this concept, which Hegel openly declared, was Spinoza's vitalistic materialism,¹⁹⁶ a tradition which goes back to Giordano Bruno. The Absolute then is the universe as a whole, including the infinite and the finite; nothing stands outside of this. When Hegel refers to 'Spirit' as the absolute, this "spirit is only the highest degree of organisation and development of the organic powers within nature."¹⁹⁷ There is no metaphysic beyond this. The all embracing category, which Hegel calls the Absolute Idea, is reached by means of dialectic¹⁹⁸ whereby 'apparent' contraries are transcended. Michael Forster explains Hegel's dialectical method as follows.

Beginning from a category A, Hegel seeks to show that upon conceptual analysis, category A proves to contain a *contrary* category, B, and conversely that category B proves to contain category A, thus showing both categories to be self-contradictory. He then seeks to show that this negative result has a positive outcome, a new category C (sometimes referred to as the "negative of the negative" or the "determinate negation"). This new category unites - as Hegel puts it - the preceding categories A and B. That is to say, when analyzed the new category is found to contain them both. But it unites them in such a way that they are not only preserved but also abolished (to use Hegel's term of art for this paradoxical-sounding process, they are *aufgehoben*). That is to say, they are preserved or contained in the new category only with their original senses modified. This modification of their senses renders them no longer self-contradictory (and not a source of self-contradiction in the new category that contains them both). That is because it renders them no longer contraries, and

¹⁹⁶ In his *History of Philosophy*, Hegel says of Spinoza: "To be a follower of Spinoza is the essential commencement of all philosophy. For, when man begins to philosophize, the soul must commence by bathing in this ether of the One Substance, in which all that man has held as true has disappeared..." As quoted by Hans Küng *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today* (trans. E. Quinn; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 133, with reference to Hegel's *Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Werke G XIX*, p.376. Küng draws upon his own earlier book - *Menschwerdung Gottes. Eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie* (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, 1970); cf. Hans-Christian Lucas 'Spinoza, Hegel, Whitehead: Substance, Subject, and Superjet' in *Hegel and Whitehead: Contemporary Perspectives on Systematic Philosophy* ed. G.R. Lucas (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986) 39-57.

¹⁹⁷ Frederick C. Beiser 'Introduction: Hegel and the problem of Metaphysics' in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* ed. F.C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 1-24, 9.

¹⁹⁸ Hegel attributes the reintroduction of dialectic into philosophy to Kant. cf. Terry Pinkard *Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988) 18-19.

therefore no longer self-contradictory in virtue of their reciprocal containment. At this point, one level of the dialectic has been completed, and we pass to a new level where category C plays the role that was formerly played by category A. And so on. Hegel understands each step of this whole process to be necessary.¹⁹⁹

Karl Popper aptly described this dialectical method as "thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis,"²⁰⁰ though it is not a completed process but one which is propelled into the emergence of new contradictions, as the above words of Michael Forster indicate. However, it may be that the quest for an inclusive idea motivates the move to a new category or set of categories, more than the dialectic process as such.²⁰¹ An example may be the contraries of Being and Nothing as 'reconciled', and in the process modified, in the category of Becoming.²⁰² The Absolute Spirit as the ultimate category represents a unity of subject and object, real and ideal in the process of becoming. This 'Absolute Spirit', or 'God' if you like, is a coming to be in which all opposites are 'taken up' in the process of dialectical 'sublation' or 'integration' (*aufheben*).²⁰³ This is the history of the life of God, the infinite *in* the finite, transcendence in immanence, and not some separate being from the world.

But some of Hegel's interpreters remain unconvinced that a successful 'sublation' of opposites is achieved in a knowledge of Absolute Spirit.²⁰⁴ This remains a demand and claim.

199 Michael Forster 'Hegel's Dialectical Method' in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* 130-170, 132-133, with reference to: Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, pars. 79-82; *Science of Logic*, pp. 53-59, 431-43, 830-38 / WdL I, pp.48-56; WdL II, pp.64-80, 556-67.

200 Karl Popper 'What is Dialectic?' *Mind* 49 (1940) 403-426, 404.

201 Terry Pinkard *Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility* 19. Also Morris Cohen's *Reason and Nature: An Essay on the Meaning of Scientific Method* (Glencoe: The Free Press Publishers, 2nd ed. 1953) 166 - "This principle of polarity seems to me to represent what is sound in the Hegelian dialectic without the indecent confusion at which we arrive if we violate the principle of contradiction and try to wipe out the distinctions of the understanding." 166.

202 The asymmetrical relation between the two poles (Being-Becoming) is what Charles Hartshorne argues (see the Introduction to this thesis), but fails to adequately acknowledge in Hegel, according to John E. Smith 'Neoclassical Metaphysics and the History of Philosophy' in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle: Open Court, 1991) 489-507, esp. 502ff. But in replying to his critics at the end of this volume, Hartshorne says, "I am in three senses an Hegelian (and so was Whitehead). I believe that becoming is *more* than mere being; that metaphysical truth is in the unity of ultimate contraries; and that subjectivity is the key to objectivity, or that 'subject overlaps object.' But I definitely generalize this one-way overlapping to cover many other contrarieties. For instance, contingency overlaps necessity." 730-731.

203 Hans Küng *Does God Exist?* 146; Terry Pinkard *Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility* 26; George S. Hendry 'Theological Evaluation of Hegel' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34.4 (1981) 339-356, 353.

204 Küng refers to R. Kroner *Die Selbstverwirklichung des Geistes. Prolegomena zur Kulturphilosophie* (Tübingen, 1928) 222, 224; K. Nadler *Der dialektische Widerspruch in Hegels Philosophie und das Paradoxon des Christentums* (Leipzig, 1931) 130-43. cf. Hans Küng *Does God Exist?* 163, 719.

In the Hegelian system the all-embracing reconciliation is in fact always merely intended, but never attained and accomplished in practice, for we human beings remain finite. Finiteness and infinity, faith and knowledge, God and man, were the determining factors of Hegelian philosophy. The solution could not be maintained, the questions persisted, but it will remain to Hegel's credit that he reopened these questions in great depth.²⁰⁵

We are left then with a "disguised dualism,"²⁰⁶ since Hegel's absolute Idea cannot be the final stage of the dialectical process, but the emergence of new contradictions.²⁰⁷ Hegel himself described Spirit and the Idea as "eternal restlessness,"²⁰⁸ indicating that dialectic is not finally eliminated, but is the eternal character of Becoming. It may therefore be said that Hegel's absolute Idea *is* dialectic, and that our highest category will remain dipolar. Nevertheless, in practice, as with Whitehead who followed a century later, becoming and process tend to leave behind any dialectical interaction with 'being', in an endeavour to get away from classical philosophies of substance. Instead, the dialectical process of *aufhebung* should preserve what has been 'superseded' rather than making this obsolete in a new unitary synthesis. There is no pinnacle (e.g. the final realisation of Absolute Spirit or Idea) to the dialectical hierarchy of categories, no non-dialectical determination is reached, as Hegel would have it.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ J. Möller *Der Geist und das Absolute. Zur Grundlegung einer Religionsphilosophie in Begegnung mit Hegels Denkwelt* (Paderborn, 1951) 155-56 - as quoted by Hans Küng *Does God Exist?* 164, with further reference to similar criticisms by E. Przywara, T. Litt, I. Iljin, H. Niel, E. Coreth, H. Ogiermann, and P. Henrici. I have found a similar criticism of Hegel in Charles M. Perry 'Back to Dialectic' *The Monist* 40 (1930) 381-393, especially p.383.

²⁰⁶ A term used by Hans Küng, taken from I. Iljin - "Hegel's philosophy sways unceasingly between dualism in a disguised form and the attempt to 'expunge' the empirical-concrete by his own power." - *Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre* (Berne, 1946) 358, as quoted by Küng *Does God Exist?* 166.

²⁰⁷ Terry Pinkard *Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility* 172.

²⁰⁸ Errol E. Harris 'The Contemporary Significance of Hegel and Whitehead' in *Hegel and Whitehead: Contemporary Perspectives on Systematic Philosophy* ed. G.R. Lucas (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986) 17-28, 18.

²⁰⁹ Stephen Bungay 'The Hegelian Project' in *Hegel Reconsidered: Beyond Metaphysics and the Authoritarian State* ed. H. Tristram Engelhardt & Terry Pinkard (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994) 19-42, 26. According to Hegel's *Logic* - "At every stage, the earlier stages can be understood in terms of the one just reached, so at the end of the process the whole implementing procedure can be understood as a unitary one." (Bungay 26).

3.2. Theories of Everything

The same conclusion may be made in regard to the quest of modern science for a 'theory of everything'. John Barrow, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Sussex, has argued against the possibility of this discovery.²¹⁰ He commences by noting that "Einstein wasted the latter part of life in a fruitless and isolated quest for just this Theory of Everything."²¹¹ For those who work from Laplacian/Newtonian deterministic presuppositions (and even Einstein recoiled from quantum indeterminacy), the possession of this theory would enable an interpretation of nature - past, present, and future. Such a quest regards Platonic timeless universals as ultimately more real than the particulars which we observe and experience in nature.²¹² Such a theory, reducing all laws to one integrated theory, also *a priori* excludes the unique, and it regards the ultimate explanation to be wholly objective and mathematical. Yet as Barrow observes...

... we find nothing mathematical about emotions and judgements about music or art. How then, when we speak of 'Theories of Everything' and pursue them with mathematics confident that all diversity will evaporate to leave nothing but number, can we draw the line that divides those elusive phenomena which are intrinsically non-mathematical from those which are encompassed by a Theory of Everything? What are the things that cannot be included in the physicist's conception of 'everything'? There appear to be such things, but they are more often than not excluded from the discussion on the grounds that they are not 'scientific' - a response not unlike that of the infamous Master of Balliol of whom it was said that 'what he doesn't know isn't knowledge'.²¹³

No non-poetic account of reality can be complete... there is more to Everything than meets the eye.²¹⁴

We are brought back to the observation that there is a dimension of reality which is dipolar in nature, including both the objective and subjective, being

²¹⁰ John D. Barrow *Theories of Everything: The Quest for Ultimate Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). For a discussion on the need for both 'unifiers' and 'diversifiers' in science, see Freeman J. Dyson *Infinite In All Directions* (Gifford Lectures 1985; New York: Harper & Row, 1988), chapter 3 - 'Manchester and Athens' 35-53. Dyson says, "that every science needs for its healthy growth a creative balance between unifiers and diversifiers. In the physics of the last hundred years, the unifiers have had things too much their own way." 47.

²¹¹ John D. Barrow *Theories of Everything* vii.

²¹² And so more fundamental in terms of explanation.

²¹³ John D. Barrow *Theories of Everything* 206.

²¹⁴ John D. Barrow *Theories of Everything* 210.

and becoming. This last mentioned polarity is certainly one of the most significant paradigms in modern science. Twentieth-century physics has overturned many of the 'absolutist' assumptions of *Newtonian physics*, as the following points summarise:²¹⁵

1. Newtonian epistemology was *realistic*. Theories were believed to describe the world as it is in itself, apart from the observer. Also, space and time were held to be absolute frameworks in which every event is located, independently to the frame of reference of the observer.²¹⁶
2. Newtonian physics was *deterministic*. In principle, it was held, the future of any system of matter in motion could be predicted from accurate knowledge of its present state. The universe, from the smallest particle to the most distant planet, seemed to be governed by the same inexorable laws.
3. The Newtonian outlook was *reductionistic* in holding that the behaviour of the smallest parts, the constituent particles, determines the behaviour of the whole. Change consists in the rearrangement of the parts, which themselves remain unchanged. Here was a powerful image of nature as a law-abiding machine, an image that strongly influenced the development of science and Western thought.

However, Einstein's theories of relativity indicate that space, time, matter and energy are mutually interrelated and *variable*. Quantum theory further indicates the unpredictability of nature, which must also (along with Relativity) complement a degree of 'Newtonian' predicability which reflects order. Without the corresponding pole of order we are left with Jacques Monod's conclusion that, "pure chance, absolutely free but blind, is at the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution."²¹⁷

²¹⁵ The following three points are adapted from Ian G. Barbour *Religion in an Age of Science: The Gifford Lectures 1989-1991. Volume 1* (London: SCM Press, 1990) 95-96.

²¹⁶ It should be noted that the question of relativity is separate from the issue of realism (that reality is independent of our theorizing).

²¹⁷ J. Monod *Chance and Necessity* (London: Collins, 1972) 10.

3.3. Randomness, Unpredictability, Chaos, Novelty

The dipolarity of being-becoming may then be illustrated by the contrasting characteristics of the physical universe discussed in this and the following section (3.3 and 3.4).

Henri Poincaré showed that absolute predictability is not possible with Newtonian mechanics, since this requires accurate knowledge of the initial conditions of a system.²¹⁸ Many sequences of natural events possess an extremely sensitive dependence upon their precise starting conditions, and these cannot be known with absolute precision.²¹⁹ Quantum theory further postulates "an inexplicable *arationality* in the random behaviour of sub-atomic particles, pointing to the conclusion that individual events in the quantum world are causally irreducible, i.e. *uncaused*."²²⁰ However, while there is unpredictability, the laws of probability remain. Random events happen within 'lawful' parameters, a fact referred to in Arthur Peacocke's description of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle:

In a collection of radioactive atoms it is never possible to predict at what instant the nucleus of any particular atom will disintegrate; all that is known is the probability of it breaking up in a given time interval. However, with a given particular kind of atom (e.g. radium) it is perfectly possible to predict with complete accuracy how long it will take for a given fraction, say, one half, to disintegrate, on the basis of earlier observations. Here then is an instance of

²¹⁸ H. Poincaré *The Foundations of Science* (trans. G.B. Halsted; Lancaster, PA.: The Science Press, 1913) 163-173. See also Chapter IV - 'Chance' 395-412.

²¹⁹ Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human* (Enlarged Edition; London: SCM, 1993) 48-49. Peacocke gives the following example: "... in a game of snooker suppose that, after the first shot, the balls are sent in a continuous series of collisions, that there are a very large number of balls (so collisions with any edges can be ignored) that the collisions occur with a negligible loss of energy. One might assume that the ordinary laws of collision in Newtonian mechanics would allow one to predict indefinitely which balls were moving and with what velocities and in what directions. This was the assumption on which Laplace based his famous assertion that, given knowledge of all the forces controlling nature and of the values of all relevant parameters at any instant, then all future states of the universe would be predictable to a powerful enough intelligence. However, the results of collisions between convex bodies are exquisitely sensitive to errors in the angle of their impact. If the average distance between the balls is ten times their radius, then it can be shown that the error of one decimal digit at the *n*th place of decimals in the angle of impact of the first collision leads to the conclusion that after *n* collisions all certainty in the directions of the balls is lost - it will not be known whether any particular ball is moving in any given direction or one at right angles to it. For example, an error of one in the 1000th decimal place in the angle of the first impact means that all predicability is lost after 1000 collisions. Clearly infinite accuracy is needed for the total predicability that Laplace assured us was possible. The uncertainty of movement grows with each impact as the originally minute uncertainty becomes amplified and there is an exponential amplification of the uncertainty in the directions of movement after each impact."

²²⁰ Paul Avis 'Apologist from the World of Science: John Polkinghorne FRS' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43.4 (1990) 485-502, 492-493.

relative unpredictability (or, better, only probabilistic predicability) at the micro-level in conjunction with statistical predictability at the macro-level.²²¹

Not only is there unpredictability at the micro-level, but there is also unpredictability at the macro-level of observable behaviour in non-linear dynamical systems. e.g. turbulent flow in liquids; predator-prey patterns; reactor systems that involve autocatalytic relations; yearly variation in insect and other populations in nature; and the weather (the 'butterfly effect' - Edward Lorenz).²²² This is popularly known as 'Chaos Theory,' but chaos defined as "stable chaos," "deterministic disorder," "regular irregularity," and "within the chaos, astonishing geometric regularity."²²³

3.4. Order, Law, Parameters, Boundaries

All that exists in the universe is the fruit of chance and necessity.

- Democritus (470-380 B.C.)

As mentioned above, even Quantum mechanics operates within 'lawful' parameters. The consequences of the fall of the dice depend on the rules of the game. "If all were governed by rigid law, a repetitive and uncreative order would prevail: if chance alone ruled, no forms, patterns or organizations would

²²¹ Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age* 47. There is good deal of opposition to the quantum conclusion, by scientists who regard it as a "capitulation to irrationality" in contrast to the quest of science to continually search for causal explanations. Paul Avis refers to the opposition of Einstein, Schrödinger, de Broglie, and Popper. cf. Paul Avis 'Apologist from the World of Science: John Polkinghorne FRS' 493; T.F. Torrance *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 11ff.

²²² Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age* 51. "What has transpired is that the mathematicians find that when they build up piecemeal, usually with the help of modern computers, the kind of solutions that are given by the non-linear equations governing many natural complex dynamical systems, they find that they do not have such 'closed' solutions and that the following can occur. Variation of a key controlling parameter (or parameters, in some cases) can at first lead to a single unique solution and all seems quite 'normal' and well-behaved from a determinist viewpoint; all is still predictable. But at a certain critical value of this key parameter, the solutions bifurcate into two possibilities, either of which may occur first as this critical point is passed - but *which* one is not predictable. As time proceeds, the system can 'flip' between these two alternative allowed states and, under some circumstances, these interchanges can constitute regular oscillations. As the key parameter increases all kinds of further complexities can occur: successive bifurcations; periods of entirely erratic behaviour, mathematically 'chaotic'; and yet further bifurcations. Finer and finer numerical subdivisions of the key parameters keep on repeating such sequences. It is important to stress that in these cases this unpredictability is an ineradicable one not removable even by an absolutely accurate knowledge of the initial conditions, if this were attainable."

²²³ Quoted from James Gleick *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), by S. Paul Schilling 'Chance and Order in Science and Theology' *Theology Today* 47 (1991) 365-376, 368.

persist long enough for them to have any identity or real existence and the universe could never be a cosmos and susceptible to rational inquiry. It is the combination of the two which makes possible an ordered universe capable of developing within itself new modes of existence. *The interplay of chance and law is creative.*"²²⁴ Karl Popper likewise concluded that "our universe is partly causal, partly probabilistic, and partly open: it is emergent."²²⁵

It is this immanent rationality and order in the universe which makes scientific inquiry possible.²²⁶ In his book *Pi in the Sky*, John Barrow argues that mathematics is an existing reality which is discovered, and is not therefore an invention of the mind. However, this is not to suggest that there is an abstract Platonic world of forms which we interact with. "We exist in the Platonic realm itself."²²⁷ Barrow, along with Frank Tipler, has marshalled much evidence for this order to substantiate the 'anthropic-cosmological principle'.²²⁸ Freeman Dyson likewise concludes, "The more I examine the universe and the details of its architecture, the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known we were coming."²²⁹ Some of the evidence pointing to *order*, include the following:²³⁰

224 Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age* 65.

225 K. Popper *The Open Universe* 126.

226 T.F. Torrance *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 16-17.

227 John D. Barrow *Pi in the Sky: Counting, Thinking, and Being* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 282, cf. 296.

228 John D. Barrow & Frank J. Tipler *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). The weak Anthropic Principle states that we have to observe a Universe finely tuned, because no Universe which was not finely tuned could contain any observers. The Strong Anthropic Principle goes further. It states that there is a compulsion in the Universe to generate intelligent beings, this being the reason for the fine tuning. cf. E.J. Ambrose *The Mirror of Creation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1990) 36; F. Bertola & U. Curi (eds.) *The Anthropic Principle: Proceedings of the Second Venice Conference on Cosmology and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

229 F. Dyson *Disturbing the Universe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979) 250 - as quoted by Ian G. Barbour in *Religion in an Age of Science* 136. Robert Pirsig - "Why, for example, should a group of simple, stable compounds of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen struggle for billions of years to organize themselves into a professor of chemistry? What's the motive?" - as quoted by John D. Barrow *Pi in the Sky: Counting, Thinking, and Being* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 284.

230 Quoted from Ian Barbour's book *Religion in an Age of Science* 135. There are a variety of theories which attempt to explain these "remarkable coincidences" eg. Successive cycles of an Oscillating Universe; Multiple Isolated Domains; Many-worlds Quantum theory; Quantum Vacuum Fluctuations. cf. Ian G. Barbour *Religion in an Age of Science* 136ff.

1. *The Expansion Rate.* Stephen Hawking writes, "If the rate of expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million it would have recollapsed before it reached its present size." On the other hand, if it had been greater by a part in a million, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for stars and planets to form. The expansion rate itself depends on many factors, such as the initial explosive energy, the mass of the universe, and the strength of gravitational forces. The cosmos seems to be balanced on a knife edge.

2. *The Formation of the Elements.* If the strong nuclear force were even slightly weaker we would have only hydrogen in the universe. If the force were even slightly stronger, all the hydrogen would have been converted to helium. In either case, stable stars and compounds such as water could not have been formed. Again, the nuclear force is only barely sufficient for carbon to form; yet if it had been slightly stronger, the carbon would all have been converted to oxygen. Particular elements, such as carbon, have many other properties that are crucial to the later development of organic life as we know it.²³¹

The precision found in the 'anthropic' picture of the universe is dependent upon the constancy and uniformity of various physical 'laws'.²³²

This discussion inevitably brings about the question of whether or not intelligence or mind precedes matter, along with theories of cosmological cause and design, and teleological purpose.²³³ Both scientists and theologians come to this discussion to postulate the ultimate ground and source of both law and chance.²³⁴ The archonic and deistic view of the universe's origin and nature has

231 John D. Barrow *Theories of Everything* 96. - "... if the constants of Nature were not within one percent or so of their observed values, then the basic building blocks of life would not exist in sufficient profusion in the Universe. Moreover, changes like this would affect the very stability of the elements and prevent the existence of the required elements rather than merely suppress their abundance."

232 For example, the rest mass of the electron and proton, Planck's constant controlling energy jumps (quanta), the strong and weak nuclear force constants, the gravitational field structure constant, and the speed of light.

233 William L. Craig & Quentin Smith *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

234 Paul Davies *God and the New Physics* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1983) 210; V.S. Fiddes *Science and the Gospel* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987) 76; Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age* 118-119 : "This givenness, for a theist, can only be regarded as an aspect of the God-endowed features of the world. The way in which what we call 'chance' operates within this 'given' framework to produce new structures, entities and processes can then properly be seen as an eliciting of the potentialities that the physical cosmos possessed *ab initio*. Such potentialities a theist must regard as written into creation by the Creator's intention and purpose and must conceive as gradually being actualized by the operation of 'chance' stimulating their coming into existence. One might say that the potential of the 'being' of the world is made manifest in the 'becoming' that the operation of chance makes actual. Hence we infer *God is the ultimate ground and source of both law ('necessity') and 'chance'*."

been replaced by the epigenetic, in which evolutionary development exhibits both law and openness for novelty and creativity.²³⁵

4. Conclusion

This chapter has been an analysis of the way in which the concept of dipolarity has been understood and utilised by philosophers and theologians at various periods in history, concluding with contemporary science. There is a trajectory of thinking about dipolarity, which sometimes rises to expression as a fundamental concept about reality (e.g. Heraclitus). The highest point of the trajectory, omitted from discussion in this chapter but the focus of the previous, is the development of trinitarian doctrine in the early centuries of the Christian era. This trajectory tends to fall in subsequent Christian theology (cf. Chapter Three) as it did so after the earliest Greek philosophers, after Plato. This is largely because the concept of dipolarity is considered either too enigmatic, contradictory, or inferior to ultimate concepts that are thought to be singular in nature and all embracing. However this chapter concludes with the observation that some recent scientists value the interpretive power of the concept in much the same way as early Greek philosophers. Can a corresponding high point of the trajectory in theology be regained? This is my purpose in the next three chapters - firstly by recognising why the concept of dipolarity lost ground in the development of Christian theism, and then to revive the concept for a Christian understanding of God.

²³⁵ Ted Peters 'Cosmos as Creation' in *Cosmos as Creation: Theology and Science in Consonance* ed. T. Peters (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) 61-62.

• Chapter Three •

Athens, Jerusalem, and Alexandria

The previous chapter has plotted the philosophical and theological quest away from the polarity of the Ephesian Heraclitus towards 'Platonic' transcendence ('Athens'), and concludes by observing the recovery of a dipolar principle in modern science (Dyson's 'Manchester'¹). Chapter Three now begins by showing that Biblical theology (Tertullian's 'Jerusalem'²), like the Heraclitean exception in Greek philosophy, maintained a dipolar alternative. However, the subsequent 'Alexandrian' hellenization of Christian theology, especially regarding the doctrine of God, presents a deviation from Biblical theology resulting in contradiction and Platonic idealism/dualism. In response, the critique of classical theism this century has demanded the dehellenization of dogma. The concept of dipolarity provides an 'orthodox' trinitarian framework for the reformulation of doctrine (Chapters 4 & 5), and a key to reutilising Scripture in this process.

1. Dipolarity in Biblical Theology (Jerusalem)

The Bible begins with the creative acts of separation. God separated the light from the darkness (Gen. 1:4,18), and the sea from the sky (the waters from the waters; Gen. 1:6-7), complementary aspects of the one cosmos. But further to this 'physical' duality in wholeness, there are in Scripture themes which are composed of two elements held together (not continuous or connected) which may be described more precisely as dipolar.³ For example: form and reform

1 Freeman J. Dyson *Infinite In All Directions* (Gifford Lectures 1985; New York: Harper & Row, 1988), chapter 3 - 'Manchester and Athens' 35-53.

2 Tertullian *Apology* 46.

3 In addition to the following, Bernhard W. Anderson also describes the primeval 'chaos' and 'order' as complementary aspects of God's good creation. cf. 'The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory: The Sovereignty of God in the Bible' *Theology Today* 53.1 (1996) 5-14.

(being and becoming),⁴ individual and community. These could be taken as reflections of the 'trinitarian' dipolarities described in Chapter One of this thesis.

The one - many dipolarity is evident in the biblical observation that humans are created 'living beings' (נֶפֶשׁ; Gen. 2:7, NRSV), and this נֶפֶשׁ may be extended to include (corporate representation) or influence others (blessings and curses). In some cases the singular נֶפֶשׁ is used for a whole social group.⁵ The story of Achan (Joshua 7) is a classic case of the נֶפֶשׁ of the one representing many, particularly the household (בֵּית). There is a corresponding concept in the idea of God. Just as the 'spirit' of humans might be extended, so also with the רוּחַ of Yahweh, his 'word' (דְּבַר), and his name.⁶ Even with God's name as the plural אֱלֹהִים there is sometimes an oscillation in meaning between the one and the many.⁷

Other themes comprising two elements may be diachronic and/or dialectical, rather than dipolar - for example, election-universalism.⁸ There is a move from one to the other, rather than the two coexisting. Election is for the purpose of all, light finally dispels darkness, as promise gives way to fulfillment. But that is not the end of duality. The themes of creation and redemption often fall together in a dialectical fashion, and it is here that we may detect a dipolarity which continues.⁹ God's ongoing involvement in the world to maintain its

4 V. Turner *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Actions in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1974) 266-67 - any enduring social system (including religion) must hold together structure and anti-structure; R.L. Cohn *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* (AARSR 23; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981) 22; P.D. Hanson *The Diversity of Scripture: A Theological Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) 4, 148, 14-36; *Dynamic Transcendence* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978) 67.

5 Numbers 21:4f.; 11:6; Genesis 23:8; Isaiah 3:9; Psalm 124:7; 2 Kings 9:15; Isaiah 66:3. For further examples, and exposition, see A.R. Johnson *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1942; rev. ed., 1961). It is interesting that Johnson finds a parallel between this concept of the soul encompassing both the one and the many, and a saying of Heraclitus - "Though thou shouldst traverse every path, though couldst not discover the boundaries of 'soul'; it has so deep a meaning" (p.13, 37).

6 A.R. Johnson *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* 15ff. This extension may also take the form of the angel or messenger of the Lord eg. Genesis 32:23-32, 16:7-14; Judges 13; 6:11-24; Genesis 18-19; Isaiah 22:15-19. cf. Johnson 28ff.

7 Psalm 58:11; Genesis 3:22, 11:5ff; Isaiah 6:8; cf. A.R. Johnson *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* 23f. Johnson shows a parallel usage of the divine name in Babylonian and Assyrian religion.

8 One theme dominates in some Biblical books. For example, in the Old Testament the election theme is dominant in Deuteronomy, Nahum, Malachi, Joel, Esther, Ezekiel; whereas the universalism theme is strong in Isaiah 19:19-25, Ruth, and Jonah. See further J. Goldingay *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 192-193.

9 John Goldingay says, "These analyses overlap and contradict each other, showing that the models cannot be set up in a sharp-edged way, even though it is heuristically useful to polarize them in one way or another." And again, "The OT itself both interconnects them (in the Hexateuch) and sets them side by side (if one considers the broad sweep of the narrative books and that of the poetic books

being, and his acts of continued development (becoming; restoration primarily) are two strands of one action toward the world.¹⁰ Redemption, like election, is a restorative work to bring what is broken back into a whole. The result is a return to dipolarity, not an arrival beyond it at singular oneness or static being.

Just as modern science has become sceptical about finding a fundamental theory of explanation, so also some New Testament scholars have abandoned the quest for a central theme in Pauline theology (e.g. justification by faith). J.P. Sampley regards Paul's theology as a series of dipolarities, with Paul's letters often addressing an imbalance with a corresponding overemphasis on the neglected pole. For example, in the Corinthian correspondence Paul stresses community over against individualism, in order to restore the equilibrium. It is not only the neglected 'pole' which is to be rescued, but the whole dipolar truth. The whole is lost if one member disappears; together they convey "a larger picture than either item alone."¹¹

J. Christian Beker further suggests that Pauline dipolarities are cast in a coherence - contingency form. The 'coherence' pole of Pauline thought is the stable, constant element, whereas the 'contingency' pole is the "variable element, that is, the variety and particularity of sociological, economic, and psychological situations..."¹² Paul has distilled a 'core' theology from the various Gospel traditions and then re-incarnates this into particular situations. Beker prefers the term 'coherence' to 'core', since the latter term suggests a fixed and non-pliable frame of reference. However, no examples are given of a development of this 'coherence' structure. In a critique of Beker, Paul J. Achtemeier notes that Beker cannot easily rid himself of the 'core' idea, especially when the death and resurrection of Jesus are non-contingent

over against each other), without clearly making one subordinate to the other. The OT, then, speaks both of God's everyday involvement in the ongoing life of nature and cosmos, of nation and individual, with the insights that emerge from an empirical study of these realities, and of his once-for-all acts of deliverance on behalf of his particular people Israel, with the specific insights that are given in association with those acts, and raises the question for us here of how we correlate them without subordinating one to the other." *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* 214, 215.

10 "The model of polarity is complemented by that of counterpoint, the interweaving of two independent tunes which combine to form a greater harmony." - J. Goldingay *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* 191.

11 Other Pauline dipolarities discussed by Sampley include faithfulness - freedom, and "all things are permissible" - "not all things build up." J. Paul Sampley 'From Text to Thought World: The Route to Paul's Ways' in *Pauline Theology: Volume 1* ed. J.M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 3-14, 6-7.

12 J. Christian Beker 'Recasting Pauline Theology: The Coherence-Contingency Scheme as Interpretative Model' in *Pauline Theology: Volume 1* ed. J.M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 15-24, 15.

elements, despite his desire for flexibility in the 'coherent' element.¹³ It would seem as if Beker's failure is in recognising that his 'core/coherent' element could itself be dipolar in nature, thus accounting for its fluidity, and that his contingency field is rather the contextualised expression of this theology. It is only through the multiple contingent expressions of Paul's theology that a coherent account of his thought can be pieced together. More than that, the coherence is only achieved through the contingent expressions.¹⁴ The real strength of Beker's model is that his 'coherence' element allows for change and development, despite his disavowal of attempts to find development in Paul's theology.¹⁵

The Pauline epistles address particular situations and needs in the first century church, and in their often singular emphasis do not present a complete picture of Paul's theology. This is probably also true of the entire collection of Pauline literature included in the New Testament canon. It is therefore in the canonical process, and the completed canon of Scripture, that we may best see the various dipolarities of biblical theology.

The canonical process is the crystallisation of various traditions, and as such reflects both unity and diversity within the church of the first century.¹⁶ The unity is a common tradition (especially concerning the 'Christ event') cemented by interaction with the written texts circulated among the churches. There is here a dialectical relationship between Scripture and tradition, each mutually formative.¹⁷ The final selection of texts for inclusion in the canon of Scripture was determined not only by faithfulness to this common tradition, but also by the accepted diversity of perspective on that common tradition. This explains the rejection of both Marcion's 'Pauline' canon, and Tatian's *Diatesseron* which excluded a plurality of perspectives on the Gospel story. In contrast, the final canon of Scripture encapsulates both 'the one and the many'. So the church at different places and times may find special relevance in the 'particular' parts of

13 Paul J. Achtemeier 'Finding a Way to Paul's Theology: A Response to J. Christian Beker and J. Paul Sampley' in *Pauline Theology: Volume 1* ed. J.M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 25-36, 29.

14 Paul J. Achtemeier 'Finding a Way to Paul's Theology' 28.

15 J. Christian Beker 'Recasting Pauline Theology: The Coherence-Contingency Scheme as Interpretative Model' 21-22.

16 L.T. Johnson *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) - especially the epilogue 'The New Testament as the Church's Book' 530-551.

17 This corresponds to the further dipolarity of canon - church. "Without the church there is no canon; without canon there is no Scripture in the proper sense. As the church stands under the norm of Scripture in every age, finding life and meaning in the reading of it, so do these writings find their realization as Scripture by being so read by a community, age after age, as the measure of its life and meaning." L.T. Johnson *The Writings of the New Testament* 545.

the canon which address its need (or imbalance), but it is also the 'whole' collection which binds together the dialectical truths necessary for its balanced life and growth. The canon is the Church's working bibliography, the basis for a unity and plurality of living conversations with its truth. This dynamic potential is the product of its dialectical nature, and as such it stands in contrast to the reductionist or relativistic results from imposing on it a unifying concept or principle. Reacting against such attempts, Luke Johnson writes:

In all its forms, NT theology is simply another attempt to reduce the many to the one by the discovery of some abstract and unifying principle, whether it is called salvation history, or justification, or liberation, or kerygma, or *regula fidei*, or narrativity, or existential decision. All such principles demand the selection of some texts as more central and governing than others. All fit the writings themselves to frames of greater or lesser abstraction. The canon resists such attempts precisely because it is made up of multiple and irreducible writings. They cannot without distortion be shaped into a static symbolic system.¹⁸

Two British scholars - C.F.D. Moule and J.D.G. Dunn, are notable exceptions to Johnson's generalisation on New Testament theology at the beginning of this quotation (i.e. they endorse Johnson's argument).¹⁹ Both agree that the New Testament is a coherent collection of writings by virtue of its witness to Jesus and his teaching. But beginning with the differences in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 6), and spreading from there to the wider world, they map the growing diversity in the church's identity - culturally, liturgically, doctrinally, etc., eventually giving rise to expressions of faith which went beyond the boundaries of acceptable diversity. An important function of apostolic teaching, and later the canonical process, was to define the boundaries indicating acceptable unity and diversity, in the light of various theological trajectories

¹⁸ L.T. Johnson *The Writings of the New Testament* 546.

¹⁹ C.F.D. Moule *The Birth of the New Testament* (3rd edition; London: A & C Black, 1981) - especially chp. IX 'Variety and Uniformity in the Church'; J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry Into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977). Luke Johnson makes no reference to Dunn's book, and only to an early edition of Moule's work. The same criticism can be made of J. P. Sampley and J. Christian Beker, mentioned above, even though an essay by James Dunn appears in the same publication as their essays (cf. *Pauline Theology: Volume 1* ed. J.M. Bassler). James Dunn responds to those who have misunderstood *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, particularly conservative evangelicals in North America, in his book *The Living Word* (London: SCM, 1987) 16-18. He refers, for example to, "D.A. Carson 'Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology', in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D.A. Carson and J.D. Woodbridge, Zondervan, 1983, p.79; R. Nicole, 'The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture: J.D.G. Dunn versus B.B. Warfield', *Churchman* 98 (1984), p.200 ('a jarring multiplicity of irreconcilable accounts and teachings'); and even the more sensitive treatment of C.H. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, p.71. Regrettably also B.S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*, SCM Press 1984, pp.20, 29." (Dunn, 175).

which seemed to have jumped this boundary by having neglected their polar opposite. This canonical process went hand in hand with the historical exclusion of the Judaizers, the Gnostics, the Montanists, etc. But this was not to eradicate the roots of these diverse theological trajectories.²⁰ The church from its beginning was a body of diverse members, interdependent for its existence, in the same way that theological truths require their polar opposites in order to remain 'healthy', to use a Pythagorean term.

In line with this, a number of scholars have shown that the church at the end of the first century cannot be reduced to one pristine form, and that in fact "the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Independent can each discover the prototype of the system to which he himself adheres."²¹ But each church, while having a particular structural emphasis, becomes an aberration when it neglects its polar opposite. The charismatic freedom at Corinth required the corrective of community consciousness and order, just as the hierarchical tendencies at Jerusalem required the corrective of freedom and grace. Both mutual servanthood and order are necessary dipolar aspects of ecclesiastical structure, and the New Testament contains both elements in its overall teaching.

So given the particular pastoral or theological emphasis in most of the New Testament writings, the canonical process is something of a balancing act. Further examples may be given. Polar differences are brought together when writings which emphasise God's grace and human helplessness (Pauline Epistles) are joined with those which emphasise human duty and righteousness (Epistle of James, Matthew's Gospel). Another example is the concept of union with Christ (Pauline and Johannine writings) over against following and imitating Christ (the Synoptics, Epistle to the Hebrews). The process is likely modelled on dipolar ordering which predates canonisation, as is evident in some of the New Testament writings themselves. According to C.F.D. Moule, the Pastoral Epistles could be "a confluence of the two streams - a second-generation Christianity which repeats the Gospel of the free grace of God ('not by works...', Tit. iii.5) but which, in a more widely Christianized setting, finds it

20 "Despite Ebionism the letter of James gained a place in the canon; despite Marcion the letters of Paul were accepted as canonical; despite Montanism the book of Revelation was accorded canonical status." J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 377.

21 B.H. Streeter *The Primitive Church* (London: MacMillan and Co, 1929) ix; cf. Eduard Schweizer *Church Order in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1961) 13 - "There is no such thing as the New Testament Church order."; H. Von Campenhausen *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (trans. J.A. Barker; London: A & C Black, 1969). On the development of church order see J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 103-123, 351-359; Hans Küng also suggests a similar development in three phases - *The Church* (London: Search Press, 1968) 522-528.

not unnatural to think of man's ability to keep the law (? I Tim. i.8ff)."²² In the same way, the Johannine Epistles may be taking a mediating position between the individual and the corporate expressions found in earlier traditions.²³ John's Gospel holds together gnostic and anti-gnostic thoughts (17:25f.), seeing and believing, faith and works, election and decision.²⁴

James Dunn's *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, is the classic treatment of this topic. He commences by exploring the unity and diversity within a variety of beliefs and a practices in the first century Church, and then in the second half of the book his findings are collated under four different traditions or trajectories: Jewish Christianity (conservative), Hellenistic Christianity (liberal), Apocalyptic Christianity, and Early Catholicism. These are general categories, since "each 'type' of Christianity was itself not monochrome and homogeneous, rather more like a spectrum."²⁵ So to some extent the dipolarity of conservative-liberal was to be found within each of the churches and the traditions they most closely resembled, though not without some bias. Dunn reiterates Moule's observation, that some of the New Testament writings are written to unify diverse traditions, address imbalances, restore equilibrium. In this way they, "served as bridge-builders or connecting links between different strands within first-century Christianity."

Thus Matthew and Hebrews served not so much as Jewish Christian party statements, but rather as bridges between a more narrowly conceived Jewish Christianity and a Jewish Christianity much more influenced by Hellenistic thought... Similarly Mark and Paul seem to be fulfilling a similar function, holding together Gentile Christianity and diaspora Jewish Christianity.²⁶

Particular unifying elements are identified as the preaching of Christ crucified and risen, the Jewish Scriptures, consciousness of identity as the people of God continuous with Israel, baptism and Lord's Supper, and love of neighbour. But Jesus is the primary unifying factor. Yet Dunn is quick to note that "no form of Christianity in the first century consisted simply and solely of the unifying strand..."²⁷ The unifying strands are always interwoven with

²² C.F.D. Moule *The Birth of the New Testament* 223.

²³ C.F.D. Moule *The Birth of the New Testament* 226.

²⁴ C.K. Barrett *New Testament Essays* (London: SPCK, 1972) - Chp. 4 'The Dialectical Theology of St John' 49-69.

²⁵ J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 373-374.

²⁶ J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 384.

²⁷ J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 372.

diverse elements to form various patterns. The unity and diversity of this polarity may be compared to a jig-saw puzzle comprising interlocking parts and an overall picture.²⁸ So, in what way then is Jesus a unifying centre? Dunn regards Jesus' life and ministry to be the centre of New Testament unity, the irreducible minimum against which all diverse representations are relative. This is not a centre in isolation, but the centre of diversity, much like the way branches grow from a central trunk.²⁹ So "diversity which abandons the unity of faith in Jesus the man now exalted is unacceptable; diversity which abandons the unity of love for fellow believers is unacceptable."³⁰ Dunn also uses the word 'boundary' to identify the unity of acceptable diversity.³¹ This is a more suitable term than 'centre' or 'core', which can easily be mistaken as representing a simple unitary concept. By contrast, the canon as a whole has a unifying function in holding together diverse contextualisations of truth about Jesus and his significance.

At various points in his concluding chapter, Dunn speaks of Jesus as a 'canon within the canon', and as such he is the "other pole of the dialogue" between the contemporary church and its 'centre'. This too would be misleading were it not for Dunn's qualification that, "in Jesus as the centre we have not so much a canon *within* the canon, as a canon *through* the canon, a canon embodied in and only accessible through the NT."³² This thought is not developed by Dunn, but I take it to open the way for speaking about Jesus as himself being a 'unity in diversity', and as such a paradigm or 'canon' for Christian and church life. Instead, Dunn isolates the apostle Peter as a focal point of unity, which he undeniably was. This most likely came about because he stood between two other great men, James and Paul. "Peter, as shown particularly by the Antioch episode in Gal. 2, had both a care to hold firm to his Jewish heritage which Paul lacked, and an openness to the demands of developing Christianity which James lacked."³³ Jesus stood in the midst of an even more diverse group, and his life and teaching reflects many dipolarities

28 "The NT is canonical not because it contains a rag bag of writings documenting or defending the diverse developments of the first century, not because it contains a cross section of first century 'party manifestoes', but because the interlocking character of so many of its component parts hold the whole together in the unity of a diversity which acknowledges a common loyalty." J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 387.

29 Dunn's own analogy cf. *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 381.

30 J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 378.

31 J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 379.

32 J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 382.

33 J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 385.

(cf. above comments on John's Gospel). Though once again we are dependent upon the accounts given by the New Testament writers, who themselves had theological interests and a pastoral agenda.

Before leaving Dunn, it is interesting to note that he identifies conservatism as the first 'heresy' in Jewish Christianity, and the trajectory that went largely unchecked at the end of the canonical process in its form as early Catholicism. This resulted in perhaps the biggest heresy of all, "the insistence that there is only one ecclesiastical obedience, only one orthodoxy."³⁴ Adherence to this principle is often characterised by narrow rigidity and intolerant exclusiveness. In contrast, the church (like Judaism³⁵) must walk a tightrope, with its Scriptures held like a horizontal pole in order to maintain balance.³⁶ Dunn is surely right about conservatism as an early 'imbalance', but as the following will argue, the taking hold of hellenistic philosophy resulted in a more serious loss of equilibrium (polarity). Jerusalem and Rome come to represent one aberration, Alexandria another.

2. God and Platonism (Athens)

Despite occasional awareness of dipolarity (cf. chapter two), monistic tendencies in early Greek philosophy shaped its concept of deity. This section will show the profound influence of this 'theism' on early formulations of the doctrine of God. Hendrikus Berkhof is one theologian who regrets this heritage, and suggests an alternative:

The easier road of classical theology, which denied any change to God, is no longer open to us. Precisely in his revelation God is himself. His entire being is involved in it. God defines and involves himself completely in the encounter with us; else it would not be a real encounter. There is no other God behind the God who participates with us in history. It would be blasphemous to say that this history would leave him unmoved. But it would also be blasphemous to say that together with us, he would be controlled by this history.³⁷

³⁴ J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* 366.

³⁵ For a discussion on the polarity of *Halacha* and *Agada* in Judaism (i.e. law & faith), see Abraham Heschel 'The Problem of Polarity' in *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1955) 336-347.

³⁶ This analogy is suggested by C.F.D. Moule *The Birth of the New Testament* 230.

³⁷ Hendrikus Berkhof *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith* (trans. S. Woudstra; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 140.

Berkhof reacts against a one-sided emphasis in theology on God's transcendence (the dominant philosophies of Athens and Alexandria), by recognising in Scripture a "ring of duality" or "biunity" of transcendence and condescendence.³⁸ This also enables him to move beyond the impersonal divine being of both Classical theism and Process theology, to a personal God. This is none other than the God of the Old Testament, revealed as related to the world. God comes to Moses in a personal way :

"The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty." (Exodus 34:6-7, NRSV).³⁹

This brief statement indicates elements of the divine character which are both constant and contingent. God is always gracious and just, but sometimes angry. God's relationship to the world is a mutually affecting relationship. These themes will be taken up in Chapter Four of this thesis.

This picture is radically different than the Platonic rewriting of biblical theology, begun by Philo of Alexandria and developed by most of the Church fathers, in which God's transcendent otherness is emphasised to the virtual exclusion of the personal. There are certainly grounds in Scripture for saying that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly good.⁴⁰ But in addition certain philosophical notions were added which precluded the God referred to in Scripture from becoming known and experienced (e.g. simplicity, immutability, timelessness). Wolfhart Pannenberg identifies these in his partial agreement with Adolf von Harnack's claim that the process of "hellenization" left Christianity with a deistic creed.

Immutability and timelessness, simplicity, propertylessness, and namelessness have repeatedly forced the concept of God into an unbridgeable distance from the contingent changes of historical reality in which the salvation of men is decided, and the assertions of faith regarding God's historical acts of salvation

38 Hendrikus Berkhof *Christian Faith* 115. "... we may not do away with the plural to save the singular" (p.121); "... these attributes never exist apart from their apparent or real opposite." (p.123).

39 cf. Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; 103:8,17; 145:8; Jeremiah 32:18-19; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3. See also similarities in Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:9-10; 7:9; 1 Kings 3:6; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Nehemiah 9:31; Psalm 106:45; 111:4; 112:4; Jeremiah 30:11; Lamentations 3:32; Daniel 9:4.

40 E.R. Wierenga *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 1-11. Wierenga refers to Anselm's ontological argument, Augustine, Aquinas, and Leibniz.

were purchased only at the expense of violating the strict sense of these attributes.⁴¹

Some of the early Church Fathers were critical of Greek philosophy. For example, Tertullian asked, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"⁴² Others, like Clement of Alexandria, had no hesitation in using current philosophical ideas to explain the Gospel. However, in the process the message was changed,⁴³ though not to the extent claimed by Harnack.⁴⁴ While not taking this extreme position, many scholars since Harnack have nevertheless shown the real (and detrimental) impact of Greek philosophy on early Christian theology, especially on the doctrine of God.⁴⁵ The following is a brief survey of the depersonalising of the concept of God in Greek philosophy, and the subsequent influence of this tradition on Christian theology.

The gods of early Greek mythology were immoral, deceptive, and often fighting against each other. This understanding of a god was quite unsatisfactory to many of the earliest Greek philosophers, and they began a process of explaining away these apparent anthropomorphic inadequacies by describing the 'human' features as merely symbolical. In the place of the popular belief about the gods generated through the mythology of Homer and Hesiod, Xenophanes (c.570-475 BC) proposed that God is motionless, ungenerated, one, not anthropomorphic, thinks and perceives 'as a whole',

41 W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 119-183, 180.

42 Tertullian *Apology* 46. - "What does a Christian have in common with philosophy, a disciple of Greece with a disciple of heaven, one who preaches only words with one who sets deeds."

43 S.R.C. Lilla *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 232.

44 Adolf von Harnack *The History of Dogma* (trans. N. Buchanan; 7 Vols.; reprinted Russell & Russell, 1958) 2:224.

45 W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 119-183. Pannenberg concludes: "the negative judgement of Harnack retains a limited justification." (179). The same assessment is made by E.P. Meijering *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1975) 37-38. For a recent criticism of this 'Harnack' position, see Eric Osborn *The Emergence of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) - Appendix 3: 'Christianity and Platonism' (p.307-313). But also T. Finan & V. Twomey (eds.) *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity* (Dublin: Colour Books, 1992); H.J. Blumenthal & R.A. Markus (eds.) *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought* (London: Variorum Publications Ltd, 1981); D.J. O'Meara (ed.) *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* (Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982); J. Rist *Platonism and its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985); L.R. Wickham & C.P. Bammel (eds.) *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in tribute to G.C. Stead* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993).

moves things by the power of his mind, and is morally perfect.⁴⁶ For Xenophanes, God is the All-One (ἓν καὶ πᾶν). The Pythagoreans, and especially Parmenides, influenced Plato in his understanding of the cosmos being a unity, with ultimate reality being changeless and without motion. There are then two distinct realms of being: (1) the permanent real world of ideas, Being, and thought. This originates in the One. And, (2) the changing world of sense, the world of becoming.

While I have described Aristotle's metaphysic as dipolar (Chapter Two), there is no dipolarity regarding Aristotle's god, the Unmoved Mover. This 'god' is pure actuality, possessing no potentiality, and therefore absolutely immutable. It "is a substance which is eternal and unmovable... without parts and indivisible... impassive and unalterable."⁴⁷ The same might be said of the One according to the Platonists who followed.⁴⁸ The One, in relation to all lower principles, may be depicted as...⁴⁹

The One, the Monad
 Nous, Zeus (cf. Xenocrates)
 primal numbers, *tetractys*, *the Decad*

imposes limit (peras) on...

The Infinite Unlimited Dyad

to generate...

Idea-Numbers

these are then received by the World-Soul

(a mediating entity)

The Psychic realm

The Physical world

There was a revival of interest in Plato's philosophy in the first century BC. It was combined with ideas from Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Pythagoreans, into

⁴⁶ J. Barnes *The Presocratic Philosophers: Volume 1 - Thales to Zeno* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) 84-94; W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol.1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962) 371.

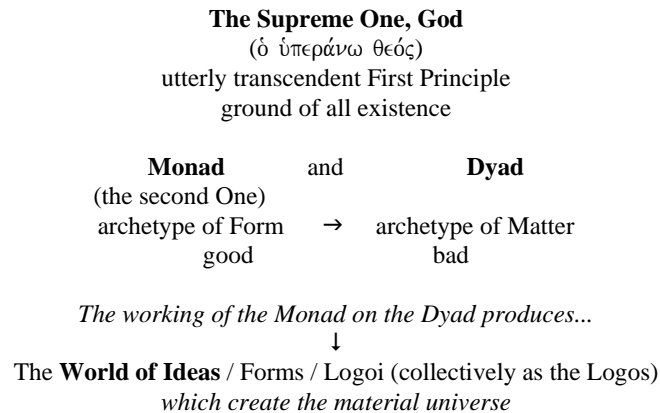
⁴⁷ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1073a; *Physics* 267b.

⁴⁸ Speusippus (c.407-339 B.C.), Xenocrates (396-314 B.C.), Polemon (c.350-267 B.C. The Stoic Zeno was his pupil), and some would include the late Plato.

⁴⁹ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1 6, 987a29ff.

what is labelled 'Middle Platonism' (80 BC - 220 AD)⁵⁰ and which later becomes 'Neoplatonism' (220 - 529 AD).⁵¹ Since this philosophy was directly influential on the development of early Christian theology, the following summarises the salient points in regard to the doctrine of God.

Eudorus of Alexandria (c.25 B.C.) is perhaps the first of the Middle Platonists. His modification of the Platonic scheme (above) may be shown as follows,⁵² in which plurality is typically excluded from the first principle which is absolutely transcendent (this theology originates with Speusippus, the successor of Plato as head of the Academy, and is also popular with the Neopythagoreans⁵³):



It was to be through Eudorus' contemporary at Alexandria, Philo the Jew, that the 'Platonic' concept of God (and God's relation to the world) was to have the greatest impact on early Christianity.⁵⁴ Philo stood within a Jewish tradition

50 John Dillon *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977).

51 There is no conscious division between these two continuous phases in the first five centuries A.D. cf. A. H. Armstrong 'The Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism' in *Hellenic and Christian Studies* (London: Variorum, 1990), Essay VIII, 80-84.

52 The following is a summary of John Dillon *The Middle Platonists* 114-139.

53 John Dillon 'The Transcendence of God in Philo: Some Possible Sources' in *Centre for Hermeneutical Studies, Protocol of the 16th Colloquy (April 1975), Vol. 16* (Berkeley, 1975) 1-8, reprinted in John Dillon *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990).

54 Henry Chadwick says, "The history of Christian philosophy begins not with a Christian but with a Jew, Philo of Alexandria (25 BC - 50 AD), elder contemporary of St Paul... Unyielding in meticulous observance of the Mosaic law... Philo is also fully Hellenised, presenting a very Greek face to the world." cf. H. Chadwick 'Philo' in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* ed. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 137. "... philosophy, and especially Platonic philosophy, matters to Philo for more than superficial reasons of apologetic expediency. Philo is not trying to pretend to a veneer of hellenization; he is hellenized to the core of his being. To him theology is much more than dressing up Moses to look like Plato. Platonism was for him true in all its essential structure..." (155). For a discussion of scholarly investigation on Philo's

of interpreting the Bible allegorically. He utilised this method to achieve a synthesis between Greek philosophy and the Bible. So when the Old Testament refers to God as angry, or changing his mind, these passages are allegorised to conform to a more noble philosophical picture of God.

Philo assumes that the Greek philosophers had borrowed their ideas from Moses (Pythagoras was a follower of Moses⁵⁵), and that God was therefore the source of both the Mosaic law and the truths of Greek philosophy. He describes God this way...⁵⁶

- the One or Monad, the ultimate ground of being beyond all multiplicity (*Leg. Alleg.* III 48; *Immut.* II f.; *Heres* 187; *Spec. Leg.* II 176; *Qu.Gen.* I 15; *Praem.* 162.).
- God is also 'beyond the Monad' (*Leg. Alleg.* II 3; *Praem.* 40. cf. *V. Contempl.* 2; *Opif.* 8; *Qu. Ex.* II 37; 68).
- Immutable (*Cher.* 19; *Qu. Gen* I 93; *Som.* II 220).
- Infinite (*Leg. Alleg.* III 206; *Fuga* 8; *Heres* 229).
- Incomprehensible (*Spec. Leg.* I 32; *Qu. Ex.* p.258 Marcus; *Leg. Alleg.* I 91; *Mut.* 8).
- Nameless (*Heres* 170; *Mut.* IIff., 29; *Som.* I 27; 230; *Abr.* 51; *V. Mos.* I 76).⁵⁷
- Self-sufficient (*Migr.* 27; 46; 183; *Qu.Gen.* IV 188).
- No language is adequate to express God's being (*Leg. Alleg.* III 206; *Post. C.* 16; 168).
- He wills pure goodness (*Leg. Alleg.* I 5; *Abr.* 268; *Spec. Leg.* IV 187).
- Created the cosmos out of non-being (*Leg. Alleg.* III 10; *Heres* 36; *Fuga* 46; *V. Mos.* II 267).
- Cosmos is given order and rationality by God's Logos (*Som* II 45; *Mut.* 135).

philosophical roots and his influence on early Christianity, see David T. Runia 'Naming and Knowing: Themes in Philonic Theology with Special Reference to the *De Mutatione Nominum*' in *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World* eds. R. Van Den Broek, T. Baarda, J. Mansfeld (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988) 69-91.

⁵⁵ John Dillon *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977) 143.

⁵⁶ Henry Chadwick 'Philo' in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* 137-157. All references are taken from this article by Chadwick.

⁵⁷ John Dillon notes that Philo is our earliest source for the descriptions of God as 'unnameable' (ἀκατονόμαστος) and 'unutterable' (ἄρητος) and incomprehensible under any form (κατὰ πάσας ιδέας ἀκατάληπτος). cf. 'The Transcendence of God in Philo: Some Possible Sources' 5.

- The cosmos mirrors the eternal, intelligible realm of Ideas which are God's thoughts (*Opif.* 17; 20; *Conf.* 63, cf. 73; 172; *Spec. Leg.* I 47-48; 329; *Cher.* 49.).

The Logos played a significant role for Philo (and later for Christian theologians), as the mediator between the world of Being and the created world of change. The Logos concept was developed in late Platonic philosophy as a 'second god' alongside the remote transcendent God, such that 'God' has two or more levels of being. Further to this, the quest for a purely simple and transcendent principle (as in the scheme of Eudorus), drives Philo beyond the God of the Hebrew Scriptures, and any order of being.⁵⁸ Philo is not always consistent with this theology. However, the following may be taken as a general representation.⁵⁹

The Supreme Principle
(cf. *On the Contemplative Life*, 2; *Praem.* 40; *QE II* 68)

The One
the God of Judaism
the Really Existing (τὸ ὄντως ὄν)
(Sophia)

creates by the **Logos**
(the active element of God's creative thought, the sum total of Ideas in activity)

and The Five Powers of God (*Fug.* 94ff., *QE II* 68)
(i.e. the Creative, the Regal, the Merciful, the Legislative, the Forbidding)

↓

The Intelligible World / Ideas / Numbers (*Opif.* 16, 102) / *logoi spermatikoi*

↓

The Physical World / sensible

There are no substantial changes in the Platonism of the next generation. Ammonius of Alexandria, became leader of a Platonic Academy in Athens,⁶⁰ and in 66-67 A.D. taught the famous Plutarch. The teacher is reported by Plutarch to have said...

God exists, if one needs to say so, and he exists for no fixed time but for the everlasting ages which are immovable, timeless, and undeviating, in which there is no earlier or later, no future or past, no older or younger. He being one

⁵⁸ About this supreme transcendent principle, Philo says: "the Existing, which is better than the Good, purer than the One, and more primordial than the Monad" (*On the Contemplative Life*, cont. 2). cf. John Dillon 'The Transcendence of God in Philo: Some Possible Sources' 5-6.

⁵⁹ A summary of John Dillon *The Middle Platonists* 155-174.

⁶⁰ Whether or not this can be called an 'academy' is a matter of debate. cf. John Dillon 'The Academy in the Middle Platonic Period' *Dionysius* 3 (1979) 63-77, reprinted in John Dillon *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990).

has completely filled "forever" with one "now"; and being is really being only when it is after his pattern, without having been or about to be, without a beginning and not coming to an end. Therefore in our worship we ought to hail him and address him with the words "Thou art," or even, by Zeus, as some of the ancients did, "Thou art one."⁶¹

In the second century A.D., alongside Athenian Platonism, another 'brand' of Middle Platonism is associated with Albinus.⁶² For Albinus, the Ideas are not a separate intelligible realm, but rather the eternal and changeless thoughts in the mind of the supreme God. This theory may originate with Philo,⁶³ and becomes an established Middle Platonic doctrine. This God is a "First God", somewhat like Aristotle's First Mover, a divine Intelligence who is the ultimate, unchanging source of all motion and order, the apex of ingenerate existence. God is not a part of the world order, like the second deity or World Soul, but is the ultimate source and presupposition of being, intelligibility and order. This 'theology' is clearly expressed in the *Handbook of Platonism*, now believed to be the work of Alcinous, rather than Albinus.⁶⁴

The primary god is eternal, ineffable, 'self-perfect'... 'ever perfect'... 'all perfect'... good.
(164.30).

God is ineffable and graspable only by the intellect, as we have said, since he is neither genus, nor species, nor differentia, nor does he possess any attributes, neither bad (for it is improper to utter such a thought), nor good (for he would be thus by participation in something, to wit, goodness), nor indifferent (for neither is this in accordance with the concept we have of him), nor yet qualified (for he is not endowed with quality, nor is his peculiar perfection due to qualification) nor unqualified (for he is not deprived of any quality which might accrue to him). Further, he is not a part of anything, nor is he in the position of being a whole which has parts, nor is he the same as anything or different from anything; for no attribute is proper to him in virtue of which he

61 Plutarch *On the E at Delphi*, ch. 20, 393Bff. Quoted by Robert M. Grant *God and the One God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) 79.

62 John Dillon *The Middle Platonists* 266-306.

63 The view of H.A. Wolfson. However, this is contested by A.H. Armstrong, who thinks it may originate "in the sort of Platonized Stoicism which we have associated with the name of Poseidonius." cf. A.H. Armstrong 'Greek Philosophy from the Age of Cicero to Plotinus' in *The Crucible of Christianity* ed. A. Toynbee (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969) 209-214, 212. John Dillon says, "The doctrine that the Ideas are in the mind of God may thus with great probability be attributed to Xenocrates (396-314 B.C.). By the time of Antiochus, at any rate, it is established doctrine..." *The Middle Platonists* 29.

64 According to recent scholarship, the author of the *Didaskalikos*, or *Handbook of Platonism*, is Alcinous rather than Albinus. cf. John Dillon's introduction to Alcinous *The Handbook of Platonism - Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by John Dillon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) ix-xiii. The following quotations are from p.18-19.

could be distinguished from other things. Also, he neither moves anything, nor is he himself moved. (165. 5-15.)

God is partless, by reason of the fact that there is nothing prior to him. (165.34.)

The above mentioned doctrine, that God is unknowable, seems to have its origin with Cicero (106 BC - 43 AD).⁶⁵ He misquotes Plato's statement, "It is a hard task to find the maker and father of this universe, and having found him it would be impossible to declare him to all mankind" (*Timaeus* 28C3ff). This was construed by Cicero to mean that God cannot be spoken of at all,⁶⁶ a teaching which became apophatic dogma in this period, and a special characteristic of Neopythagoreanism as represented in Moderatus of Gades (c. 50-100 A.D.), Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. 100 A.D.), and Numenius of Apamea (c. 150-200).⁶⁷

But perhaps a more significant channel of this 'theology' is the Neopythagorean and Platonist - Ammonius Saccas, teacher of both Origen the Christian⁶⁸ and the greatest of the Neoplatonists of the third century - Plotinus (205-270). This Neopythagorean link between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, is well summarised by John Dillon.

... its strong transcendental tendency, its emphasis on the mathematicization of reality, and its stress on the ineffability of God, even to the point of asserting his superiority to any qualities whatsoever, which might be taken to include intellectual activity. We see, in Moderatus at least, evidence of something like a system of hypostases or levels of Being, and, in Moderatus and Nicomachus, a process of emanation. It is to the Pythagorean strand in Middle Platonism, it would seem, that the great renewer of Platonism, Plotinus, was most indebted.⁶⁹

Plotinus described the 'One' (or 'God'⁷⁰) in his *Enneads* 71 :

65 John Whittaker 'Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 50-63, 50-51.

66 On the origin of the ineffable doctrine see also John Dillon's commentary to Alcinoüs *The Handbook of Platonism - Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by John Dillon* 101.

67 For a study of the philosophy of these three, see John Dillon *The Middle Platonists* 344-379.

68 Eusebius reports this to be the case (*Ecclesiastical History* VI 19), though his source is Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, and this may be referring to a 'pagan' Origen.

69 John Dillon *The Middle Platonists* 383.

70 John M. Rist 'Theos and the One in Some Texts of Plotinus' in *Mediaeval Studies* 24 (Toronto, 1962) 169-180, reprinted in J.M. Rist *Platonism and its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985).

- It is beyond being, essence, and thought (V, 6, 6).
- It is formless (VI, 9, 3).
- neither at rest nor moving (VI, 9, 3).
- is everywhere and nowhere (V, 5, 8).
- is simple and pure (V, 5, 4).
- ineffable, nameless, without need, possessions, will or thought (VI, 9, 4-5).
- cannot be known because knowledge entails plurality (VI, 9, 4).

A.H. Armstrong summarises Plotinus' understanding of the One this way:

He - the One or the Good - is wholly other than all the realities and values which He creates and is absolutely beyond all determination and limitation... He cannot be said to know Himself because this would imply a sort of minimum duality between knowing subject and known object and so would imply a degree of internal division or limitation. He cannot even be said to be, since being for Plotinus is always being something, some one particular, definite, limited, describable thing, and the One is absolutely unlimited and so indescribable.⁷²

While the 'simple' One cannot know itself, Plotinus still allows for "an absolutely simple self-apprehension... also characterised as an 'awakening' or 'hyper-intellection'... Alternatively we may describe the One not as having Intelligence, but as being a pure Intellectual Act prior to the emergence of subject and object."⁷³

⁷¹ The following summary is taken from E.F. Osborn *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957) 35-37. For extracts from the *Enneads*, see John Gregory *The Neoplatonists* (London: Kyle Cathie Ltd, 1991) 35-50, or for a more complete, but still abridged edition: Plotinus *The Enneads* (trans. Stephen MacKenna; London: Penguin Books, 1991). This Penguin Classic has helpful introductory essays by Paul Henry and John Dillon. The complete text of the *Enneads* is published in the Loeb Classical Library series (trans. A.H. Armstrong; London, 1966-88). Perhaps the best summary of Plotinus' philosophy is A.H. Armstrong 'Greek Philosophy from the Age of Cicero to Plotinus' in *The Crucible of Christianity* ed. A. Toynbee (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969) 209-214, 212ff. For a summary of Plotinus' doctrine of the One - cf. John N. Deck *Nature, Contemplation, and the One: A Study in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) 7-21; Eugene F. Bales 'Plotinus' Theory of the One' in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach* ed. R.B. Harris (Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982) 40-50.

⁷² A.H. Armstrong 'Greek Philosophy from the Age of Cicero to Plotinus' 212-213. Likewise, R.T. Wallis summarises Plotinus : "A simple affirmation of the One's existence is therefore permissible, provided this is not understood as predicating Being of the One. For, first, subject and predicate constitute duality; secondly, what is predicated is always a definite form, and form connotes limitation." *Neo-Platonism* 58; cf. John M. Rist 'The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle' *The Review of Metaphysics* 27.1 (1973) 75-87.

⁷³ R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* 59 (with references to the *Enneads*).

Yet despite the strongly negative statements, the One is for Plotinus more real and alive than any being. Personal language is not adequate, but it does seem to come closer to the truth than lifeless impersonal language.⁷⁴ So Plotinus affirms that...

- perception, life, and consciousness are attributed to the One (V, 4, 2)
- it is the power of all things (V, 3, 15-16), present everywhere.
- it is identical with the Good (II, 9, 1)

The 'One' is the head of a hierarchy of three divine principles.⁷⁵ The other two are *Nous* (Intelligence) and Soul. The *Nous* sees the whole world in a single timeless vision, but the Soul participates in the fragmented world of change.⁷⁶

A later Neoplatonist, Iamblichus (250-326), went further than Plotinus and Porphyry (pupil of Plotinus), by postulating a supreme principle that transcends the One, a principle he called the 'Ineffable'.⁷⁷ This concept, which we have encountered in earlier centuries, preserved the notion of the ultimate existing as a 'simple' unity.

3. Platonism and the Christian God (Alexandria)

... the more orthodox Christian theology made use of the Greek idea of God, the more it was imperilled not only by intellectualism and moralism but by the threatening loss of the soteriological factor and the exaggeration of the

74 According to A. H. Armstrong, Plotinus thinks "of the One or Good as a personal God, possessed of something analogous to what we know as intellect and will in a manner proper to his transcendent unity; but it must be admitted that he very often and quite naturally falls into an impersonal way of speaking and thinking about him, especially when he is considering his relationship to the beings which derive their existence from him. It would, I think, be an entirely misleading generalization to say that the Greek philosophical conception of God is impersonal; rather, there is a continual tension and interplay between personal and impersonal ways of thinking about God which appears as crude, if rather likeable, inconsistency in the Stoics but is also present in subtler forms in the thought of Plato and Aristotle." - *Plotinian and Christian Studies* (London: Variorum, 1979), Essay V - Plotinus's Doctrine of the Infinite and its Significance for Christian Thought' 57; R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* 90.

75 This concept of a hierarchy poses problems understanding the 'One' as beyond limit. As Wallis says, "As such it can no longer be merely the supreme term of the metaphysical hierarchy, for to bring it within that hierarchy is to limit it. But if we regard it as utterly transcending any such limits, what relations can there be between it and other things?" R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 91.

76 R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* 53.

77 R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* 118. Iamblichus' suggestion was in turn rejected by Proclus (cf. p.147, 150).

cosmological (understood in a Hellenistic-Platonic sense), by an open or concealed deism suspicious of any vital activity of God in the world, by a spiritualism aristocratically contemptuous of matter and flesh, by a dualism excluding an commonality between God and man. (Hans Küng)⁷⁸

Like Philo, many of the early Christian writers presented their God as the true God sought by Greek philosophy (cf. Acts 17). The apostle Paul used familiar negative 'Greek' descriptions (e.g. 'invisible and incorruptible' - Rom. 1:20ff),⁷⁹ and the Apologists of the second century take up the Platonic unity/transcendence theme. The Platonic two-worlds of Being and Becoming was also axiomatic for the early Christian theologians, especially as it was apparently confirmed by the Apostle Paul's writing, "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."⁸⁰ Paul's use of the word 'eternal' was incorrectly interpreted to mean timeless and immutable, instead of 'everlasting' (see Chapter Five), thereby giving substance to the Platonic theory of two levels of existence : the lower world of change and time, and the higher realm which is spiritual and invisible - beyond change.

Yet there were also elements of Biblical theology which were incompatible with contemporary philosophies. Luke emphasises that it was necessary that the Messiah must (δεῖ) suffer,⁸¹ and the author of the Hebrews regards this as necessary for his perfection.⁸² Such ideas of divine passibility, or even a positive role of suffering in perfection, were virtually anathema to the philosophers. Another dominant Biblical description of God, especially in the Johannine writings, is that God is love. This again does not sit comfortably with an immutable God. As Robert Grant notes, "from the writings of the early Christians after the New Testament times we can discover relatively few references to God's love, though a few writers provide exceptions. In general, the themes which were first developed were about God's transcendence and his

⁷⁸ Hans Küng *The Incarnation of God: An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology* (trans. J.R. Stephenson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987) 519 (Excursus II).

⁷⁹ Though it is the 'transcendence' theme in Jewish apocalyptic, rather than the influence of Hellenistic philosophy, which most likely shaped this theological language. cf. W.D. Davies *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, Fourth edition - 1980) 12.

⁸⁰ 2 Corinthians 4:18 – τὰ γὰρ βλεπόμενα πρόσκαιρα τα δε`μη βλεπόμενα αἰώνια.

⁸¹ Luke 24:26, 46; Acts 17:3; 26:23. cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar *Mysterium Paschale* (trans. A. Nichols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990) 17-20.

⁸² Hebrews 2:10.

relation to the cosmos."⁸³ As noted above, there were terminological bridges in the New Testament for this philosophical 'transition'.⁸⁴

Like the Platonists, many early Christians described God using negative terms (*apophatic* theology)⁸⁵ - what God is not, since this God belongs to the higher realm beyond comprehension for us temporal and physical beings. The language they used, according to J. Daniélou, was drawn from three main 'hellenistic' sources:⁸⁶

1.	word	Hellenistic Judaism	Christian
	ἄγένητος - uncreated	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i> II, 167. <i>Sibylline Oracles</i> - frag. 1,7,17	Theophilus of Antioch, <i>Ad Aut.</i> I,4; II,10. Irenaeus <i>Adv. haer.</i> II,8,3
	ἄνευδής, ἀποσδεής, ἀνεπιδεής. - self-sufficient.	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i> 211. Josephus <i>Ant.</i> VIII, 111. Philo <i>De sacrif.</i> 99; <i>De virt.</i> 9; <i>Alleg. Leg.</i> II,2; <i>De mut.</i> 28.	Justin <i>Dial.</i> XXIII,2; <i>I Apol.</i> XIII,1.; Tatian <i>Or.</i> 4 Athenagoras <i>Suppl.</i> 13. Clement of Alexandria <i>Strom.</i> VII, 3:14,1.; Paul, <i>Acts</i> 17:27.
	ἄχώρητος - uncontained.		Theophilus <i>Ad. Aut.</i> I,3. Athenagoras <i>Suppl.</i> 10. Clement A. <i>Strom.</i> II, 2:6,3.
	ἄπερίγραφος - cannot be circumscribed.	Philo <i>De sacrif.</i> 59; 124.	Clement A. <i>Strom.</i> V, 11:74, 4; VII, 5:28,1.
	ἄκατονόμαστος - unnameable. ἄνωμόμαστος	Philo <i>De somn.</i> I, 67	Justin <i>I Apol.</i> LXIII,1 Tatian <i>Or.</i> 4 Clement A. <i>Strom.</i> V,12:82,1.

⁸³ Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1966) 4-5.

⁸⁴ Others include: 'one God' (1 Corinthians 8:6); invisible attributes of power, deity, and immortality (Romans 1:18-21); invisible and imperishable (1 Timothy 1:17). For a discussion of these and other 'bridges', see Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* 5-13.

⁸⁵ Among Christian theologians this was first advanced by Basilides of Alexandria. cf. T.F. Torrance *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 185.

⁸⁶ J. Daniélou *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture* (trans. J.A. Baker; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973) 323-340. In the following table only a small selection of Daniélou's references are given.

2. word Middle Platonism Christian

Ἄναρχος – without beginning.	Albinus - the question of ἀρχαίη is basic to his thought.	Tatian <i>Or.</i> 4 Aristides <i>Apol.</i> I,4. Clement A. <i>Strom.</i> IV 25:162,5.
Ἀγέννητος - unbegotten.	Justin quotes Plato <i>Timaeus</i> 52 a.	Justin <i>Dial.</i> V, 1:4, 5-6 Athenagorus <i>Suppl.</i> 8.
Ἄρρητος – ineffable.	Albinus <i>Ep.</i> X, 1:3;4. Also in Hel. Judaism, and Paul <i>II Cor.</i> 12:4.	Justin <i>I Apol.</i> IX,3; LXI, 11. Clement A. <i>Strom</i> V,12:78,3.
Ἄμορφος - formless	Plato <i>Phaedrus</i> 247 c	Clement A <i>Strom</i> V,3:16,4.

3. word Gnosticism Christian

ἄγνωστος - unknown	By Gnostics to mean 'unknown to all beings'. <i>Hom. Clem.</i> III,2.	Clement, of the unknown made partially known in the Logos.
Ἀγέννητος, ἀκατονόμαστος, ἀνευνόητος (inconceivable)	<i>Gospel of Truth</i> 17:7.	see above.

Alongside the absolutely transcendent God of Hellenism, those in the Judeo-Christian tradition had to place the God revealed. So Philo explained that the Logos is an intermediary between the transcendent God and this world, making something of God known (cf. Origen *Princ.* II 6.1; *Contra Celsum* III 34). This is positive theology (*kataphatic* theology), often mixed with the negative in Middle Platonism, but virtually driven out in Neoplatonism. This tendency is duplicated in the theology of the early Christians, as the following case study regarding the doctrine of impassibility indicates.⁸⁷

Impassibility

Three kinds of passibility may be distinguished.⁸⁸ Firstly, the capacity to be acted upon from without. Aristotle regarded God as impassible in this sense,

⁸⁷ For a discussion on the impact of Greek philosophy on these and other early Christian theologians, see John Sanders 'Historical Considerations' (Chapter Two) in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* by C. Pinnock, R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, D. Basinger (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994).

⁸⁸ O.C. Quick *Doctrines of the Creed* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1954) 184-187; Marcel Sarot 'Patrispassianism, Theopaschitism and the Suffering of God. Some Historical and Systematic Considerations' *Religious Studies* 26.3 (1990) 363-375, 365; Peter Forster 'Divine Passibility and the Early Christian Doctrine of God' in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990) 23-51, 23.

unable to be moved or changed since perfect. Secondly, 'internal' passibility refers to passions (emotions) within a conscious being. These are further defined by some as those specifically not under the control of reason or will. Thirdly, 'sensational' passibility (an intermediate between 'external' and 'internal') refers to feelings or sensations which result from the actions of others (e.g. pain). Once again, many have most often denied this to God, though have wished to maintain some account of divine sympathy.

The concept of divine immutability⁸⁹ enters Christian doctrine from Greek philosophy, via the Apologists in their refutation of Stoic pantheism (Justin), and to support the doctrines of God's unoriginateness (Athenagoras) and immortality (Theophilus).⁹⁰ Some disagree that this concept ever 'entered' the Christian tradition, arguing that it was implicit in the world view shared both by Jews and Platonists, and therefore of the early Christian theologians.⁹¹ This is of course true by the first century A.D. However, the shadow of Hellenism, while it fell on Judaism (e.g. Philo) and Christianity alike, influenced by different degrees, and often stood in opposition to the light of Scripture.⁹²

So Irenaeus intentionally frames his theology closer to the biblical and apostolic tradition rather than the philosophical. Though even he occasionally refers to the immutable and impassible God,⁹³ possibly influenced by his contemporary Justin Martyr.⁹⁴ But Irenaeus is careful not to follow the Gnostics

89 The Latin verb *mutari* literally means "to be changed." It is then primarily this passivity which is ruled out by immutability, then secondly any other change e.g. self change.

90 W. Pannenberg *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* 159-160.

91 E.P. Meijering *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1975) 149-156.

92 For a brief summary of 'impassibility' in the early Christian doctrine of God, see Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1966) 111-114.

93 "For the Father of all is at a vast distance from those affections and passions which operate among men. He is a simple, uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to Himself, since He is wholly understanding, and wholly spirit, and wholly thought, and wholly intelligence, and wholly reason, and wholly hearing, and wholly seeing, and wholly light, and the whole source of all that is good - even as the religious and pious are wont to speak concerning God." (*Adv. H.* Book 2, 13.3.). And again, "...God alone, who is Lord of all, is without beginning and without end, being truly and for ever the same, and always remaining the same unchangeable Being." (*Adv. H.* Book 2, 34.2.). These references, and those which follow, are taken from *St. Irenaeus of Lyons - Against the Heresies: Volume 1 (Book 1)* translated and annotated by Dominic J. Unger, with further revisions by John J. Dillon (*Ancient Christian Writers Vol. 55*; New York: Paulist Press, 1992), and *Irenaeus - Against Heresies* translated by A. Roberts, J. Rambaut, revised A. Coxe (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1*; Buffalo, 1886; reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

94 Joseph P. Smith says, "it seems not improbable that Irenaeus knew Justin personally at Rome, and it is certain that he knew his works and was influenced by them." cf. 'Introduction' *St. Irenaeus - Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* translated and annotated by Joseph P. Smith (*Ancient Christian Writers Vol. 16*; New York: Newman Press, 1952). 37. See also the comments by John Lawson *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: Epworth Press, 1948) 133-134. e.g. "It is clear that the doctrine of God in S. Irenaeus is not wholly Biblical."; "The Hebraic and Greek strains are there in all fullness,

in their obvious hellenization of theology. So he emphasises the real sufferings of the Son of God.⁹⁵ God suffers.⁹⁶ Also, against the concept of absolute immutability Irenaeus speaks openly of God's creation process⁹⁷ in time,⁹⁸ and of the incarnation as a becoming for God.⁹⁹ It is rare to find anyone after Irenaeus making statements like this.

There appears to be some embarrassment over the incarnation. The philosopher Celsus (180 A.D.) attacked Christianity for its 'incarnation' in which the divine is mutable and passible, and the immortal becomes mortal.¹⁰⁰ Christians most often replied that God really does descend, but in the process remains unchanged and impassible. Philo of Alexandria had already argued that God, who in the Bible is depicted anthropomorphically (for pedagogical purposes), is unchangeable (ἀτρέπτος, lit. 'non-turning').¹⁰¹ Yet in order to show that this God somehow relates to the world (as the Hebrew Scriptures indicate), Philo is cautious not to develop a theory of impassibility,¹⁰² perhaps recognising its incompatibility with the Hebraic tradition. The same tension is present in the theology of the early Church Fathers, who endeavour to remain faithful to Scripture. But impassibility eventually surfaces as dogma.

On the one hand, Ignatius of Antioch can say, "Suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God" (*Ad Rom.* 6).¹⁰³ But also: "Wait for him who

with the Biblical, as it were, the rightful senior partner.; "The other factor at work is doubtless loyalty to the tradition of the Apologists."

95 "Thus the apostles did not preach another God, or another Fulness; nor, that the Christ who suffered and rose again was one, while he who flew off on high was another, and remained impassible; but that there was one and the same God the Father, and Christ Jesus who rose from the dead..." (*Adv. H.* III.12.2.; cf. 16.1; 16.5.; 16.9; 11.7.); "Peter, together with John, preached to them this plain message of glad tidings, that the promise which God made to the fathers had been fulfilled by Jesus; not certainly proclaiming another god, but the Son of God, who also was made man, and suffered..." (*Adv. H.* III.12.3.).

96 *Adv. H.* III.16.6.

97 *Adv. H.* V. 15.2.

98 *Adv. H.* II.28.3. Also, dynamic and active, not bound by necessity (*Adv. H.* II.5.4.), but creating freely (*Adv. H.* II.30.9).

99 "How shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man?" (*Adv. H.* Book 4, 33.4.); "The Son of God became the Son of Man, that man... might become the son of God" (*Adv. H.* Book III, 19.1); "...our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is himself" (*Adv. H.* Book V. Introduction).

100 Henry Chadwick *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

101 Philo *Quod deus immutabilis sit*, especially 22-28. cf. *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

102 Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 29.

103 This phrase from Ignatius - "the passion of my God", was according to Peter Forster "stillborn." cf. 'Divine Passibility and the Early Christian Doctrine of God' 28.

is above seasons, timeless, invisible, who for our sakes became visible, who cannot be touched, who cannot suffer, who for our sakes accepted suffering, who in every way endured for our sakes" (*Ad Ephes.* 1). He indicates that this 'paradoxical' passibility was but a passing phase in the life of God. In *Ad Ephes.* vii, 2, he says, "There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual, begotten and unbegotten, God in man, true life in death, both of Mary and of God, first possible and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Apologists of the second century, especially Aristides and Justin Martyr, consciously take up Platonic concepts in describing God as transcendent, ineffable, and immutable (ἀτρεπτος. cf. Justin *Apol.* II, 5.1.).¹⁰⁴ Justin says:

For the ineffable Father and Lord of all neither has come to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor rises up, but remains in His own place, wherever that is, quick to behold and quick to hear, having neither eyes nor ears, but being of indescribable might; and He sees all things, and knows all things, and none of us escapes His observation; and He is not moved or confined to a spot in the whole world, for He existed before the world was made.

Dialogue with Trypho 127.2

Even in the incarnation God is beyond passion. But there is some reluctance by other of the Apologists to speak of God as ἀπαθής (as Justin did), since this too closely resembled the Stoic idea of a God beyond all feeling.¹⁰⁵ So Theophilus of Antioch (c. 180) refers to God's anger, mercy, and love, but also affirms God's unchangeableness as immortal i.e as a being who cannot be changed in his essential nature (*Ad Autol.* 1,3.4). Yet in a desire to distance their theology from the emotional and somewhat unstable gods of Homeric literature, the Apologists end up emphasising impassibility *per se*. So Athenagoras says that "Neither anger nor desire nor yearning nor any generative seed is in God" (*Legatio* 21, cf. 8, 10). This is because God "is uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, illimitable, is apprehended by the understanding only" (*Plea* 10.)

The next major impetus in advocating divine impassibility came with the modalistic heresy, in which the 'Father' was said to have suffered and been crucified (Patripassianism¹⁰⁶). One can sympathise with the intention to

¹⁰⁴ For a summary of the philosophical (Aristotelian) doctrine of God in the *Apology* of Aristides, see Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* 16-18.

¹⁰⁵ So the Stoic ideal of *ataraxia* - imperturbability. cf. Gisela Striker 'Ataraxia: Happiness as Tranquillity' *The Monist* 73:1 (1990) 97-110.

¹⁰⁶ Patripassianism was a 'trinitarian' heresy. However in response, the Church refuted this on the basis of divine immutability/impassibility. Against the Patripassianists, the 'Tome of Damasus' which

maintain a unity in the Godhead, such that the suffering of the Son could not leave the Father unaffected because of the unity between the Father and the Son.¹⁰⁷ But Tertullian will not allow for this, even on the basis of differentiating between the person of the Father and the person of the Son. He says...

The Father did not suffer with the Son... What is compassion but suffering with another? If the Father is impassible, then He cannot suffer with another; if He can suffer with another, then He is passible... You fear to speak of Him as passible, whom you speak of as suffering with another. But the Father is as unable to suffer with another as the Son is unable to suffer in virtue of His divinity. (*Adv. Prax.* 29).

However, in his argument against Marcion, Tertullian does talk about God having feelings (e.g. anger).¹⁰⁸ But these are feelings on the divine level, and are therefore perfect according to the divine nature (expressive of God's goodness and justice). They are feelings which do not affect God (*Adv. Marc.* II, 16).¹⁰⁹ It appears that Tertullian was influenced by the Stoic ideal that the divine could not be disturbed by emotions or passions, but he could not go so far as the Stoics in absolutising ἀπάθεια. Rather, what motivates his relegation of feelings and emotions to a divine level of immutability is the Platonic concept that the eternal and perfect must be unchanging.¹¹⁰ He says, "Eternity has not time. It is itself all time: it acts, it cannot then suffer."¹¹¹ Therefore God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) remains impassible throughout the incarnation and crucifixion; the divine must be distinguished from the human in Jesus.

Novatian likewise regarded God as impassible, but by this he meant that God's feelings are in perfect union with his reason, and are therefore under control (*De Trin.* 5). So, God's anger simply has a remedial purpose, and is not associated with emotion or change in God, for this would indicate mortality.¹¹²

emerged from the Council of Rome (382), said: "If anyone says that in the passion of the cross it is God Himself who felt the pain and not the flesh and soul which Christ, the Son of God, had taken to Himself - the form of servant which he had accepted as Scripture says (cf. Philippians 2.7) - he is mistaken." cf. Alan Torrance 'Does God Suffer? Incarnation and Impassibility' in *Christ in Our Place* ed. T.A. Hart and D.P. Thimell (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989) 345-368, 347 - with reference to *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* eds. J. Neuner & J. Dupuis (London, 1983) 147.

¹⁰⁷ So Jürgen Moltmann's term - 'patricompassionism' cf. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1974) 243.

¹⁰⁸ So the God of the Bible is not "inactive and listless" - Tertullian *Against Marcion* 1.25.3.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 52-54.

¹¹⁰ Tertullian *Against Hermogenes* 12.3, 5. cf. Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 61.

¹¹¹ Tertullian *Against Marcion* 1.8.3. cf. Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 61.

¹¹² See also Arnobius' *Against the Nations*, discussed by Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 72-74.

This finally drives Novatian to assert the incomprehensibility of God (chp. 7). Lactantius (c.240-320), while retaining a belief that God is free from external control, responds in his treatise on divine anger (*De ira Dei*) against those (like Novatian) who think "that God is moved by no feeling" (*De ira Dei* 2).¹¹³ According to Lactantius, movement is characteristic of everything that has life. Absolute rest, along with the absence of feelings, is in death alone, so this cannot be attributed to God. Feelings then, are evidence of God being alive, rather than evidence of corruption. Some feelings are also necessary to God's providence and authority. So God is justly angry against human sin, though is not controlled by this anger. Anger represents a moral element in the divine nature. Yet alongside this very positive theology regarding divine 'feeling', Lactantius also returns to the traditional statements of "impassibile, immutable... and eternal."¹¹⁴

Alexandria became a prime locality for the hellenization of Christianity, and thus the Christian dogma of divine immutability and impassibility. It is here that Clement (c.150-215) develops the 'impassibility' doctrine further than Philo or any Christian before him, by asserting God's absolute transcendence.¹¹⁵ Consequently, God is without affections (πάθη), and passages in Scripture which refer to such are to be interpreted as metaphor (*Stomateis* V).¹¹⁶ The quest of the Christian is also to be raised above passions by the process of deification (*Stomateis* VII). Our model is Christ, who "was entirely incapable of suffering (ἀπαξαπλῶς ἀπαθήσῃ ἡν) and inaccessible to any emotion, whether of

¹¹³ Lactantius *The Wrath of God* in *Lactantius: The Minor Works* trans. M.F. McDonald (*The Fathers of the Church* Vol. 54; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1965) 61-116.

¹¹⁴ Lactantius *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 2.8; 3 - as quoted by Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 69-70.

¹¹⁵ For example, Clement *Stomateis* V, 81-2; II, 380, 14 to II, 381, 13. Translation and commentary in E.F. Osborn *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957) 27-31, also Clement of Alexandria *Stomateis: Books One to Three* (trans. John Ferguson; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991). For a study on the influence of Middle-Platonic thought on Clement's doctrine of God, see S.R.C. Lilla *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 212-226; Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1966) 26-27. Henry Chadwick summarises Clement's doctrine of God this way: "God is incomprehensible by the mind and inexpressible in words. He is nameless. All human language about him is relative and symbolic. His essence we cannot know. Indeed the supreme Father is not an object of our knowledge at all, our limit being the Son, who is the Alpha and Omega. Because of the limits of religious knowledge, God can be known only by revelation and grace. Yet he remains indefinable in himself... The supreme Father is the ground of being, but has no other function. The Son is the Mind of the Father, the circle of which the Father is the centre. The idea of God is wholly abstract, like the way in which the mathematical idea of a point is reached." - 'Clement of Alexandria' in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* 179. See further - E. Osborn *The Emergence of Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 52-60.

¹¹⁶ However, at times Clement also speaks of divine passibility. cf. *Protrepticus* 9.70f. in G.W. Butterworth (trans.) *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) 189, and other references quoted by Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 39.

pleasure or pain." (*Strom.* VI, 9).¹¹⁷ The Apostles likewise apparently overcame all emotion. Love then becomes a fixed state, and Christ's sufferings in no way affected him.

Origen¹¹⁸ generally follows Clement (cf. *Against Celsus* IV, 71-2).¹¹⁹ He interprets the 'passion' passages of scripture allegorically (thus of pedagogical value), and will not allow God to change, since this would imply a deterioration of the perfect God.¹²⁰

God must not be thought to be any kind of body, nor to exist in a body, but to be simple intellectual existence, admitting in himself no addition whatever, so that he cannot be believed to have in himself a more or a less, but is Unity, or if I may so say, Oneness throughout, the mind and fount from which originates all intellectual existence or mind (*On First Principles* I.1.6.)¹²¹

God does not even participate in being. For he is participated in, rather than participates (*Against Celsus* VI.64.).

However, he does sometimes allow for movement and feeling within this perfect and changeless God. On one occasion he can even say...

God endures our ways inasmuch as the Son of God bears our sufferings. The Father Himself is not impassible. If He is besought, He is pitiful and compassionate, He suffers something of love, and in those things in which

¹¹⁷ As quoted by T.E. Pollard 'The Impassibility of God' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8.4 (1955) 353-364, 358.

¹¹⁸ There has been a lengthy debate over whether or not Origen was more a Platonist or an exegete of Scripture. John Dillon observes that this is "one of the few areas of classical scholarship in which one could still conceivably get oneself excommunicated." cf. 'Origen and Plotinus: The Platonic Influence on Early Christianity' in *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity* eds. T. Finan & V. Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992) 7-26.

¹¹⁹ For Origen, God is...

- Immutable (*Against Celsus* VI 62; *Orations* XXIV 2; *Commentary on Johns Gospel* II 17; VI 38).
- Impassible (*Against Celsus* IV 72 [of wrath]; *Homilies on Numbers* XVI 3; XXIII 2; *On First Principles* II 4.4; *Homilies on Ezekiel* VI 6 accepts passibility in the sense of love and mercy)
- Transcendent (*Against Celsus* VI 64f.; cf. VII 42f.)
- Needing Nothing (*Homilies on Genesis* VIII 10)
- Creative Goodness (*On First Principles* I 4.3; *Commentary on John* VI 38; cf. *Principles* I 5.3)

¹²⁰ For example, in the *Homily on Numbers* 23:2 he says, "All those passages in scripture in which God is said to lament, rejoice, hate or be happy are written figuratively and in a human way. It is entirely foreign to the divine nature to have passion or the feeling of mutability, since it endures in unchanged and uninterrupted happiness." cf. Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 42.

¹²¹ On the identification of the Christian God with the Plato's and Aristotle's God as "mind or something beyond mind" (Plato *Republic* 509b; Aristotle *On Prayer*), see Christopher Stead 'The Concept of Mind and the Concept of God in the Christian Fathers' in *The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology* ed. B. Hebblethwaite & S.R. Sutherland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 39-54, reprinted in C. Stead *Substance and Illusion in the Christian Fathers* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985).

because of the greatness of His nature He cannot subsist He shares, and because of us He endures human sufferings" (*Homilies on Ezekiel VI*, 6).

This may be one of many occasions when Origen is affirming paradoxically both passibility and impassibility,¹²² though the latter accords more with his insistence on divine immutability.¹²³ However, some regard this late homily on Ezekiel as representing Origen's radical change of mind about complete divine impassibility.¹²⁴

Both the Arians and their opponents affirmed that God was free from passion and change. The orthodox position held this view in regard to the divine nature of Christ, which is ὁμοούσιος with God, but allowed the human nature to suffer. Athanasius, said of the Logos that "since it was impossible for Him to die, inasmuch as He is immortal and the Son of the Father, he took a human body which could die."¹²⁵ So the incorruptible and impassible Logos somehow impassibly (ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπαθεία) endures suffering in the body,¹²⁶ which means in this body he feigned anguish and ignorance for our sake.¹²⁷

The Arians however could not accept this statement regarding Jesus, since change and passion appeared to them as integral to his total being as a person, and hence the Son could not be ὁμοούσιος with God. The Son is instead a second and lesser god, since this divine person really did suffer and die. Their doctrine of the incarnation then allowed for real change, kenosis, experience, and suffering in death, in a way unparalleled in the theology of the pro-Nicenes. But, as already mentioned, the Arians' high God - incapable of suffering - was different than the "lesser god who, so to speak, did his dirty work for him."¹²⁸

122 For example, in *Selecta in Ezekiel* 16:8 he says "God is impassible, just as he is immutable and uncreated," and then a few lines later says, "God feels compassion for the one to be pitied; for God is not heartless." cf. Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 41. See also *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 10.23; *Homilies on Ezekiel* 6.6. cf. Robert M. Grant *God and the One God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) 92. For other references from Origen's later writings cf. p.93.

123 Origen *Frag. in Jo.* 51 - "God's anger is not to be considered a passion. How can an impassible being have a passion? God does not suffer, he is immutable." cf. Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 43.

124 Robert M. Grant *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1966) 31.

125 Athanasius *On the Incarnation of the Logos* 9. cf. Athanasius *Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione* trans. R.W. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 154-155.

126 Athanasius *On the Incarnation of the Logos* 54.15. cf. Athanasius *Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione* trans. R.W. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 269. Also: "The passionless Logos bore a body in himself..." *Epistle to Epictetum* 6-7, as quoted by Hans Urs von Balthasar *Mysterium Paschale* (trans. A. Nichols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990) 20. See also Athanasius *Second Apology against the Arians* 3. 32, 3.34-35, 3.54-7.

127 Athanasius *Second Apology against the Arians* 3.37-8.

128 R.P.C. Hanson 'The Arian Doctrine of the Incarnation' in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments* ed. R.C. Gregg (Patristic Monograph Series, No. 11; The Philadelphia Patristic

In his refutation of the neo-Arian Eunomius, Gregory of Nyssa (c.330-395) affirmed that God (uncreated nature) "is incapable of admitting of such movement as implied in turning or change or alteration."¹²⁹ Yet he also affirms that somehow the immutable Logos is changed in its condescension to human nature.¹³⁰ But no sooner is this insight granted, than Gregory says that "what is impassible by nature did not change into what is passible, but what is mutable and subject to passions was transformed into impassibility through its participation in the immutable."¹³¹ Immutability is not lost in the condescension, but divine nature immutably draws the mutable and passible human nature into itself thereby transforming it to become divine.

A remarkable exception to this 'orthodox' tradition has been discovered in the anonymous fourth century *Commentary on the Psalms*, from Tura.¹³² This teaches that when the Word became flesh, real change (ἀλλοίωσις) took place. The author first defines ἀλλοίωσις (as did Aristotle¹³³) as a change of quality (ποιόν), in distinction from a change of becoming, corruption, or growth. This use of the word is found in the Septuagint at Psalm 33:1, where David alters (ἠλλοίωσεν) his face before Abimelech. The passage is interpreted Christologically to say, "Alteration (ἀλλοίωσις) of the face (πρόσωπον) of the unchanging (ἄτρεπτος) can occur." This change is not a transformation (μεταβολή) but a change of form (μορφή) by addition or 'taking-to-oneself' (πρόσληψις). This author then, unlike Aristotle who denied any change of quality in the divine, affirms this without any loss to the divine nature.

While many of the 'orthodox' allowed suffering in the human nature of Christ, some thought that union of the two natures even precluded this. Hilary of Poitiers (d.367), for example, said "When, in this humanity, He was struck with blows, or smitten with wounds, or bound with ropes, or lifted on high, He

Foundation, Ltd, 1985) 181-211, 204; R.P.C. Hanson *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) 121-122; Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 79-82; Daniel Migliore 'The Trinity and Human Liberty' *Theology Today* 36 (1980) 488-497, 491.

129 Gregory of Nyssa *Against Eunomius* 3.2.10; *The Catechetical Oration* 6; *The Life of Moses* 2.25, as quoted by Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 86-87.

130 Gregory of Nyssa *Against Eunomius* 2.28 - "Although the divine nature is contemplated in its immutability, by condescension to the weakness of human nature it was changed to our shape and form."

131 Gregory of Nyssa *Against Eunomius* 2.30.

132 Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God* 93-100. Hallman refers to A. Gesché *La Christologie du "Commentaire sur les Psaumes" découvert à Toura* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1962), and the text of the *Commentary* in the five volumes of Didymus the Blind *Psalmekommentar (Tura Papyrus)* in *Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen* ed. L. Doutreleau, A. Gesché, and M. Grönwald (Bonne: R. Habelt, 1968 and years following).

133 Aristotle *Physics* 200b.

felt the force of suffering, but without its pain... He had a body to suffer, and he suffered: but He had not a nature which could feel pain. For His body possessed a unique nature of its own."¹³⁴

The meaning of *passio*, according to Augustine, is "a movement of the mind contrary to reason."¹³⁵ Excluded therefore from the divine nature, which is impassible, are any feelings or emotions since these were considered incompatible with reason. The biblical references to such are simply accommodations to human language, and represent no "perturbation of mind."¹³⁶ A good example of Augustine's view is found in his treatise *On Patience* :

Patience is spoken of as belonging even to God. So though God can suffer nothing, while patience takes its name from suffering, nevertheless we not only faithfully believe, but also healthfully confess, that God is patient. But of what kind and how great the patience of God is who can explain, when we speak of Him as suffering nothing, yet not as without patience, but rather as most patient? His patience is therefore ineffable, even as His jealousy, His anger, and any other similar characteristics. For if we think of them as though they were ours, none such exist in Him. For none of them do we experience without vexation, but far be it from us to imagine that the impassible nature of God suffers any vexation. For as he is jealous without any envy, is angry without any perturbation, is pitiful without any grief, repents without having any evil in Him to correct, so He is patient without any suffering.¹³⁷

According to Augustine, the Biblical language about God changing e.g., becoming angry, does not speak of actual change in God, but in those "who find him changed in so far as their experience of suffering at his hand is new."¹³⁸ The problem is all ours. Further to this, J.K. Mozley points out that for

¹³⁴ Hilary of Poitiers *On the Trinity* 10.23. St. Jerome does not agree with this view of an entirely passionless humanity of Christ. He uses the term '*propassio*' to refer to an initial stage of '*passio*' which affects the feelings but not the will. cf. Marcel Sarot 'Patipassianism, Theopaschitism and the Suffering of God. Some Historical and Systematic Considerations' *Religious Studies* 26.3 (1990) 363-375, 369.

¹³⁵ Augustine *City of God* 8.17.

¹³⁶ Augustine *De div. quaest.* 1.52. God is immutable. "God neither increases nor decreases, but is ever in himself and is as he is, not now one way, later another, and before still another." (*Homilies on John's Gospel* 19,11) cf. R.J. Teske 'Divine Immutability in Saint Augustine' *The Modern Schoolman* 63 (1986) 233-249, 235.

¹³⁷ Augustine *On Patience* 1.

¹³⁸ Augustine *City of God* 22.2. cf. Jaroslav Pelikan *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986) 59-60. Anselm likewise said, "Truly, thou art so in terms of our experience, but that art not so in terms of thine own. For, when thou beholdest us in our wretchedness, we experience the effect of compassion, but dost not experience the feeling... Thou art affected by no sympathy for wretchedness." (*Proslogion* VIII).

Augustine there is a real problem in maintaining unity between God's metaphysical and moral attributes. On the one hand God appears to have attitudes towards the world, though the God depicted by Augustine is too transcendent for such to be real.¹³⁹

There is little development in the Christian doctrine of God for another millennium. If there is any, it is in emphasizing further God's transcendence. John Scotus Eriugena says "in truth God neither acts nor is acted upon, neither moves nor is moved, neither loves nor is loved" (*De Divisione Naturae* p.504, sec.62 B.). Scholastic theology retreats all the way back to Aristotle's Unmoved mover.

From the fourth century onwards, Plotinian concepts about God were especially influential.¹⁴⁰ For example, on Marius Victorinus,¹⁴¹ St. Augustine,¹⁴² Boethius,¹⁴³ and the medieval scholastics who followed in their trail. This Plotinian influence in medieval times largely came via the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, an early sixth century Christian who wrote under the name of the apostle Paul's convert at Athens, Dionysius the Areopagite. His writings are heavily dependent on Neoplatonic philosophy, especially that of Proclus (412-485), and gained an authority second only to Augustine in the Western Church (e.g. for John Scotus Eriugena [810-877], Bonaventura, Anselm, Aquinas), and influenced the main theologians of the Eastern Church (e.g. John of Damascus, Maximus the Confessor).¹⁴⁴ This Neoplatonic impact goes a long

139 J.K. Mozley *The Impassibility of God: A Survey of Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926) 109.

140 James J. McEvoy 'Neoplatonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?' in *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity* eds. T. Finan & V. Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992) 155-170.

141 Mary T. Clark 'The Neoplatonism of Marius Victorinus the Christian' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 153-159; Mary T. Clark 'Marius Victorinus Afer, Porphyry, and the History of Philosophy' in *The Significance of Neoplatonism* ed. R.B. Harris (Norfolk: Old Dominion University, 1976) 265-273.

142 John J. O'Meara 'The Neoplatonism of Saint Augustine' in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* ed. D.J. O'Meara (Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982) 34-41, especially p.40; Jaroslav Pelikan *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986) 14-16; Christos Evangelou 'Porphyry's Criticism of Christianity and the Problem of Augustine's Platonism' *Dionysius* 13 (1989) 51-70. For an excellent summary of the contemporary debate, see James J. McEvoy 'Neoplatonism and Christianity: Influence, Syncretism or Discernment?' 162ff.; R.D. Crouse 'Augustinian Platonism in Early Medieval Theology' in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* ed. J. McWilliam (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992) 109-120.

143 Stephen Gersh *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: The Latin Tradition - Vol. II* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986) 647-718, especially 675ff. on the doctrine of God.

144 R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 160-161; E.R. Dodds' introduction to *Proclus The Elements of Theology - A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) xxvi-xxviii; *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete*

way in explaining the 'negative' Christian theology which emphasised God's utter transcendence and ineffability, and any positive language as merely symbolical.

The Protestant reformers remain in this tradition. Yet Martin Luther's theology of the cross boldly asserted the crucified God, in contrast to the God of Greek metaphysics. However, the hidden God remains, the God whose will remains eternally immutable. John Calvin likewise favours the use of Biblical descriptions for God, though he also resorts to the 'classical' descriptions: self-existent, simple, impassible, and immutable.¹⁴⁵ Both reformers were much influenced by the 'Neoplatonic' Augustine, and their doctrine of God differs little from Aquinas' Aristotelian God.

What R.P.C. Hanson says of the fourth century A.D. could be said of Christian theologians of any age until recently: "if any writer had had a higher education... he would perforce had imbibed some philosophy [i.e. classical Greek philosophy] and would have sucked in certain fundamental assumptions in the process." Among these philosophical assumptions he lists, "reality meant ontological permanence so that God, the highest form of reality, is most immutable of all; and he cannot in any way involve himself with *pathos* (process, change or flux or human experience)..."¹⁴⁶ Yet theologians are quick to point out that for all the philosophical assimilation, the *ὁμοούσιος* formula of Nicea was a barrier between Christianity and Platonism.¹⁴⁷ However, this point should not be over emphasised regarding the Platonists, despite their aversion to the incarnation of deity.¹⁴⁸ Also, while the theopaschite formula regarding the suffering of God the Son became orthodox at the Council of Constantinople

Works trans. C. Luibheid, P. Rorem (New York: Paulist Press, 1987); Paul Rorem *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Eberhard Jüngel *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (trans. D.L. Guder; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 233ff, 255-261.

¹⁴⁵ John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. H. Beveridge; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962 edition) 1.2.2; 1.13.2; 1.17.13; 1.18.3; 3.2.6.

¹⁴⁶ R.P.C. Hanson *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) 859.

¹⁴⁷ L.J. Elders 'The Greek Christian Authors and Aristotle' in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity* ed. L.P. Schrenk (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1994) 111-142, 122.

¹⁴⁸ For example, unlike the Platonists before him, Plotinus took exception to the world negating attitude of the Gnostics, and affirmed the world as necessary, good, and beautiful. cf. John Dillon 'Self-Definition in Later Platonism' in *Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World - Vol. 3 of Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* eds. Ben E. Meyer and E.P. Sanders (London: S.C.M., 1982) 60-75, 72, reprinted in John Dillon *The Golden Chain: Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990).

(553),¹⁴⁹ there was no reversal of the anathema regarding Patripassianism which "depose[s] from the priesthood those who dare to say that the Godhead of the only-begotten is passible."

Christians also joined the Platonists, Peripatetics, and Plotinians in opposing Stoic materialism. In this way they became "partisans in a debate within Greek philosophy."¹⁵⁰ The result was an emphasis on the spiritually transcendent, an immaterial *arche*. From the Stoics (and Middle Platonism) many Christians also took over the notion of divine providence (as determinism/law), rather than combining sovereignty with contingency.¹⁵¹

In summary, we may say that for most Christian theologians throughout history, God is...

- One, Indivisible, Ingenerate
- Nameless, Ineffable, Incomprehensible
- Immutable, Impassible
- Timeless

The Roman Catholic Church at the end of the nineteenth century affirmed that God is...

... mighty, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in his intellect and will and in all perfection. As He is one unique and spiritual substance, entirely simple and unchangeable, we must proclaim Him distinct from the world in existence and essence, blissful in Himself and from Himself, ineffably exalted above all things that exist or can be conceived besides Him (Vatican I, D 3001).

This is the same doctrine of God as held by many Protestants. For example, the Belgic Confession states that "there is one only simple spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all

¹⁴⁹ See section 8 of the next chapter, for a discussion on this.

¹⁵⁰ L.P. Gerson *God and Greek Philosophy: Studies in the early history of natural theology* (London: Routledge, 1990) 187.

¹⁵¹ W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 119-183, 137.

good."¹⁵² This tradition, more Platonic than Biblical, has had disastrous affects on Christian theology, as Emil Brunner explains:

Anyone who knows the history of the development of the doctrine of God in "Christian" theology, and especially the doctrine of the Attributes of God, will never cease to marvel at the unthinking way in which theologians adopted the postulates of philosophical speculation on the Absolute, and the amount of harm this has caused in the sphere of the "Christian" doctrine of God. They were entirely unaware of the fact that this procedure was an attempt to mingle two sets of ideas which were as incompatible as oil and water: in each view the content of the word "God" was entirely different; for each view was based on an entirely different conception of God.¹⁵³

The tradition referred to here, is still the theistic foundation for much Christian theology. Brunner has, in my opinion, correctly identified its serious limitations. My own argument is to contrast this 'tradition' with the biblical depiction of God, to make way again for showing that the dipolarities of one-many and being-becoming are concepts which helpfully elucidate the nature of God. The next chapter will endeavour to show this further.

¹⁵² Quoted by Hendrikus Berkhof *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith* (trans. S. Woudstra; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985 - revised edition) 116.

¹⁵³ Emil Brunner *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics Vol. 1* (trans. O. Wyon; London: Lutterworth Press, 1949) 242; For a similar assessment see T.E. Pollard 'The Impassibility of God' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8.4 (1955) 353-364, 354.

God Being and Becoming

God lives, as an ancient oath affirms.¹ **Chapter One** has described this living God as trinitarian relationships - the one and the many, unity and diversity. Recent studies on the concept of personhood identify another aspect of this dipolarity, that persons are both unique and related.² Not only may this be true of the persons of the Trinity, but also of God the Trinity in relation to the world (cf. this chapter, section 13). **Chapter Three** has shown that Christian theology has most often emphasised God's transcendent uniqueness as divine being, rather than holding this together with God's relatedness to the world.

The purpose of this present chapter is to restate the Christian doctrine of God, often in deliberate contrast to the 'classical' tradition depicted in the previous chapter, recognising the dipolarity of God's uniqueness and relatedness, both in regard to God-self (the Trinity) and in relation to the world. This will focus our attention (beginning with section 2 in this chapter) on the 'becoming' pole. However, I begin first with a critique of suggested dipolar theologies which appear lopsided in making either being or becoming dominant.

1. Does 'becoming' have Priority?

Process theology utilises the concept of dipolarity, though it appears that at times one pole is subordinate to the other. While God is said to be both absolute and relative, necessary and contingent, it is the relative and contingent pole which sometimes defines the other, such that becoming and relativity appear to

¹ 2 Samuel 2:27; Job 27:2; 1 Kings 17:12; 18:10.

² Alistair McFadyen *The Call to Personhood: A Christian theory of the individual in social relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); C. Schwöbel & C. Gunton (eds.) *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991).

be the ontologically and logically prior categories.³ So Colin Gunton summarises the dipolar theology of Charles Hartshorne:

The priority is on the side of the concrete pole: it is from what is believed to be the case concretely (e.g. that God is now related to all reality) that the dipolar description of him is abstracted. Hartshorne is explicit: 'The contrast of being-becoming, absolute-relative, necessary-contingent is contained as a whole in becoming, relativity, contingency' and not in the other pole of the contrast. Or, as he says, 'becoming is reality itself, and being only an aspect of this reality'. This provides yet further confirmation for the inference that God's absoluteness, being, etc., *consist in his relativity, becoming, etc.*⁴

It is true that Hartshorne regards becoming as more inclusive than being,⁵ just as he regards a *whole* to be more inclusive than its *parts*. The reason is as follows:

One must keep in mind the distinction between levels of concreteness... As mere abstractions, there is no priority between the polar contraries. But we must consider abstractions in terms of the sorts of concrete instances which they can have. For instance, take the abstractions, *whole* and *part*. Neither term has meaning unless the other does. So far, they are coordinate. Nevertheless, in any particular instance it is the whole which contains the part, not vice versa. The one is the inclusive entity, and the other the included entity.⁶

The same principle is applied to being-becoming:

If any element varies, so does the whole; but if some element does not vary, the whole may yet vary. Thus "becoming," or variability, is the inclusive term; and "being," taken here as standing for what is invariant, is exclusive... Becoming

3 D. Pratt *Being, Becoming, and God: Toward a Relational Theology - A Study in the Doctrine of God, with Special Reference to the thought of John Macquarrie and Charles Hartshorne* (University of St. Andrews; unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1984) 196ff, 231, 201 - with reference to R.E. James *The Concrete God* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967) 58 - "the inclusive concrete contains the abstract; is ontologically prior to the abstract; precedes the abstract temporally; and that the changing concrete is superior to abstractions which do not change." So Pratt is critical of Hartshorne's use of the concept of polarity. "Relativity is not only a pole *within* the being of God, it is also a fundamental ontological denominator of the being of God. Ontological primacy is given to the relative pole: the being of God is that of *supreme* relativity. The relationality of the supremely relative is all-inclusive" (234).

4 Colin E. Gunton *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 36, cf. 31ff. For a defense of Hartshorne against Gunton (that Hartshorne's dipolarity is not lopsided), see Daniel Dombrowski 'Polar Equality in Dipolar Theism' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 305-316.

5 Charles Hartshorne & William Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953). "The divine becoming is more ultimate than the divine being only in the simple sense of being more inclusive, of being concrete while the other is abstract." 24.

6 Charles Hartshorne 'Absolute Objects and Relative Subjects: A Reply' *The Review of Metaphysics* 15.1 (1961) 174-188, 175.

is a creative synthesis, and the "emergent whole" can be produced out of elements not all of which have likewise emerged or been produced.⁷

This does not contradict the principle of polarity. "God is neither being as contrasted to becoming nor becoming as contrasted to being; but categorically supreme becoming in which there is a factor of categorically supreme being..."⁸ Again, "being becomes, or becoming is - being and becoming must somehow form a single reality."⁹ One pole is not more real than the other.

Hartshorne speaks strongly against regarding one pole as superior to the other, or exclusive,¹⁰ condemning both classical pantheism and classical theism for their 'monopolarity.' Instead, "we must equally affirm both poles of each pair of ultimate contraries."¹¹ He regards the tendency in philosophy towards absolutism or 'monopolarity' to be due to it being easier and more simple than holding together contraries, it is congenial to theology *via negativa* and defining God by conceptual ultimates, it suits a substance-based ontology, and it appears to accord with *monotheism* - the one in contrast to the many.¹² Instead he defends the "principle of polarity" as defined by Morris R. Cohen.

According to this law, ultimate contraries are correlatives, mutually interdependent, so that nothing real can be described by the wholly one-sided

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- 7 Charles Hartshorne 'Absolute Objects and Relative Subjects: A Reply' 177-178. Further to this Hartshorne says, "The asymmetrical relationship between relativity (or becoming) and absoluteness (or being) may be put like this: in whatever respect a thing is relative or becomes it is inclusive; and in whatever respect it is absolute or does not become it is exclusive." (179). Four years later Hartshorne again writes: "That 'becoming includes being' means that the total reality, what becomes and what does not become, itself becomes. Similarly, the total truth, including both necessary and contingent truths, is itself (the total truth) contingent. Correlating contingency with becoming, and reality with truth, we see that becoming is the inclusive form of reality. It follows that the purely necessary, which does not become, can only be an abstraction from the total concrete reality" cf. 'Abstract and Concrete in God: A Reply' *The Review of Metaphysics* 17.2 (1963) 289-295.
- 8 Charles Hartshorne & William Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* 24. According to Hartshorne, God is both cause and effect. Yet there is always more in the effect than in the cause. cf. Charles Hartshorne 'Process Theology in Historical and Systematic Contexts' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 221-231, 227.
- 9 Charles Hartshorne & William Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* 9. Philip Clayton, after expressing concern over the dualism in the thinking of some of his 'Process' colleagues (e.g. Lewis Ford) points out that "the inadequacy of any final dichotomy should make itself felt at both extremes: being without becoming is left an empty category, inapplicable to most things which are (*Seiende*), since they *are* in the mode of being-in-change. Likewise, becoming without being remains inapplicable, for we can only apply the concept when we can conceptualize *something* as becoming." - P. Clayton 'Recent Classical/Process Dialogue on God and Change' *Process Studies* 18:3 (1989) 194-203, 197.
- 10 That is, God is wholly infinite, in no sense finite; wholly absolute, in no sense relative; pure being, in no sense becoming; wholly active, actual and simple, in no sense passive, potential, or complex.
- 11 Charles Hartshorne & William Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* 4.
- 12 Charles Hartshorne & William Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* 6-9. These reasons are reviewed by Daniel Dombrowski 'Polar Equality in Dipolar Theism' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 305-316, 309.

assertion of simplicity, being, actuality, and the like, each in a "pure" form, devoid and independent of complexity, becoming, potentiality, and related contraries.¹³

Dipolarity is conceptually symmetrical (as an abstraction), but as Hartshorne argues above, dipolarity is asymmetrical at the level of concrete instances or examples.¹⁴ This explains the relation between the two poles, and is in many respects the position argued in this thesis.¹⁵

A similar observation about 'lopsidedness' may be made about A.N. Whitehead, the father of Process theology.¹⁶ Yet here the suspicion is regarding a lopsidedness with the other pole (the 'primordial'). Whitehead says that "the theme of Cosmology... is the story of the dynamic effort of the World passing into everlasting unity, and of the static majesty of God's vision, accomplishing its purpose of completion by absorption of the World's multiplicity of effort."¹⁷ This is a very 'Neoplatonic' conclusion (cf. chapter three).¹⁸

Yet, despite my objection to some of Whitehead's examples of dipolarity (and the lop-sided tendency just mentioned), his basic description of dipolarity has much to offer. If we could substitute his 'primordial-consequent' for his invalid dipolarity (as I understand it) of 'God-World'¹⁹ as a dipolarity describing the nature of God, then I believe the following is better (even if too

13 Charles Hartshorne & William Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* 2. Hartshorne takes his definition of polarity from Morris Cohen's *Reason and Nature: An Essay on the Meaning of Scientific Method* (Glencoe: The Free Press Publishers, 2nd ed. 1953) 165-168. Cohen says, "By this [the principle of polarity] I mean that opposites such as immediacy and mediation, unity and plurality, the fixed and the flux, substance and function, ideal and real, actual and possible, etc., like the north (positive) and south (negative) poles of a magnet, all involve each other when applied to any significant entity." 165. cf. M.R. Cohen 'Concepts and Twilight Zones' *Journal of Philosophy* 24 (1927) 673-683, 678-679. For a criticism of Cohen's misapplication of the polarity concept in economic and social theory, see Lewis S. Feuer 'The Philosophy of Morris R. Cohen: Its Social Bearings' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 10.4 (1950) 471-485, and Y.H. Krikorian 'Cohen's Rationalistic Naturalism' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 29 (1968-69) 264-273.

14 These are Hartshorne's principles of Concrete Inclusion and Asymmetrical Relations. cf. Nancy Frankenberry 'Hartshorne's Method in Metaphysics' in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle; Open Court, 1991) 291-312, 301-307.

15 Hartshorne's theism, in contrast to Classical theism, is well summarised by Sterling M. McMurrin 'Hartshorne's Critique of Classical Metaphysics and Theology' in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle; Open Court, 1991) 431-443. I take up McMurrin's criticism that Hartshorne should have made more of God's temporality, in chapter five of this thesis.

16 Alfred N. Whitehead *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

17 A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality* 494.

18 F.F. Centore concludes that Whitehead replaces Cartesian dualism with Platonic dualism - an immutable world of Ideas (the primordial and 'complete' pole) and a transient world of generation (the consequent and 'incomplete pole'). cf. 'Whitehead's Conception of God' *Philosophical Studies* 19 (1970) 148-171, 168ff.

19 Each are not equal opposites, according to Biblical theism. I also reject Whitehead's dipolarity of Eternity-temporal - cf. Chapter Five of this thesis.

ontological by definition): "Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other."²⁰ In other words, neither permanence nor flux is ultimate, but both together are constituent for God's life, and for novelty against a background of order.²¹ There is a continual process or dynamic between the 'primordial'²² pole ("the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality"²³) and the 'consequent' pole (the actualization or objectivation of 'primordial' concepts), which integrates the two. The 'primordial' requires fluency for its completion, and the 'consequent' requires permanence for its completion.²⁴ There is no lopsidedness here.

Like Whitehead and Hartshorne, Karl Barth's theology has been considered dipolar. Barth incorporates both becoming and being in his concept of God, since what God *does* and what he *is* cannot be separated. There is no other God behind the God who reveals himself.²⁵ Barth is then able to take God's temporality seriously. But this temporality is secondary to 'eternity' which includes it (see chapter five).²⁶ So for all his talk about becoming and temporality, Barth's doctrine of God has been criticised for its location in the Platonic timeless and abstract forms.²⁷ However, Barth has no desire to return to the classical tradition of 'being', especially when he emphasises that "God's being is *life*."²⁸ Nevertheless one wonders how much room there is for divine

20 A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality* 494.

21 "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order." And again, "Order is not sufficient. What is required, is something much more complex. It is order entering upon novelty; so that the massiveness of order does not degenerate into mere repetition; and so that the novelty is always reflected upon a background of system." A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality* 480.

22 Primordial conceptually, rather than temporally.

23 A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality* 486.

24 A.N. Whitehead *Process and Reality* 491.

25 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Volume III/1 - The Doctrine of God* (trans. T.H.L. Parker, W.B. Johnston, H. Knight, and J. Haire; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957) 260ff.

26 God's eternity "includes... the potentiality of time." Barth *Church Dogmatics III/1* 617.; Colin E. Gunton *Becoming and Being* 179. "The truth appears to be that at times Barth defines eternity in the light of (temporal) revelation, while at others he opposes it to time." (Gunton, 180).

27 Colin E. Gunton *Becoming and Being* 183 - in agreement with the criticism of H.G. Pöhlmann *Analogia entis oder analogia fidei? Dei Frage der Analogie bei Karl Barth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 111ff.

28 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Volume III/1 - The Doctrine of God* 263.

'becoming'. There is none according to Eberhard Jüngel's interpretation of Barth. God's being is in his becoming, not God's being is becoming.²⁹

'Becoming' thus indicates the manner in which God's being exists, and can in so far be understood as the ontological place of God's being.³⁰

Barth, like Plato then, seems to regard time and becoming as the moving image of eternity. The being of God *proceeds*,³¹ and in this sense is in motion. Temporal history and becoming is then a manifestation of being, a "fulfilment of God's eternal resolve,"³² rather than its polar opposite in the ultimate reality or God. So whereas process theologians seem to elevate becoming over being, Barth and Jüngel³³ appear to reverse the priority, despite a strong insistence on God's being as act, or in motion.

2. God is Living

The 'being' language of classical theism, for example - that God is immutable,³⁴ will now be balanced with the 'becoming' language from the Scriptures which depict God as active or dynamic, language which has traditionally been devalued as anthropomorphic - but which does have content and significance for Christian theism.

The basis for using this language to speak about God is the belief that it is given by God to humanity in self-revelation.³⁵ Therefore, in his effort to restore anthropomorphic language to theology, Emil Brunner observed that, "the personhood of God is not an anthropomorphism; rather the personhood of man

29 Eberhard Jüngel *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* (trans. Scottish Academic Press; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976). Jüngel regards the phrase 'God's being is in becoming' to be a valid interpretation of Barth's thought, even though Barth himself does not use these words. cf. viii.

30 Eberhard Jüngel *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* vii. At the end of this book Jüngel says "If the becoming is comprehended as the ontological place of God's being, then the misunderstanding that God in becoming would become another, is excluded." 106, fn.159.

31 Eberhard Jüngel *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* xx., 3.

32 Eberhard Jüngel *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* 83.

33 See especially Eberhard Jüngel *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* 100, including footnotes 150-151.

34 Dipolar theism retains this term. However, 'immutability' no longer means static or unmoved, but constancy or faithfulness (see section 6).

35 Thus, "the claim of the biblical texts to speak *secundum dicentem deum* (according to God's speaking)." - Eberhard Jüngel 'Anthropomorphism: A fundamental problem in modern hermeneutics' in *Theological Essays* (trans. J.B. Webster; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989) 93.

is a theomorphism."³⁶ Rather than saying that we refer to God using human terms, we then say that God speaks about himself and humans using God's terms.³⁷ It is God who describes humanity as created in his own image (Gen 1:27).³⁸ And when *God* speaks of himself using personal terms, this indicates precisely the kind of being that God is - a personal being characterised by mercy, grace, anger, love, and righteousness (see also the next section).³⁹ Further to this there is Christ the anthropomorphism.⁴⁰ As Kierkegaard put it: "People rant so much against anthropomorphism and forget that Christ's birth is the most significant anthropomorphism."⁴¹ This is one of God's three speeches, as St. Ignatius of Antioch was fond of saying, the speeches of Creation, Scripture, and Incarnation.⁴² The acts of self-revelation itself indicate that God is living, and the same aliveness is also part of the self-description given in this self-revelation.

According to the Bible, Yahweh is the "living God."⁴³ What does it mean to say God has 'life'? In the Hebrew Scriptures the word for 'life'⁴⁴ refers to activity, as well as the length of time one lives. As David Hill says:

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- 36 Likewise, Abraham Heschel says, "God's unconditional concern for justice is not an anthropomorphism. Rather, man's concern for justice is a theomorphism." *The Prophets* (New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962) 272; cf. G. von Rad *Old Testament Theology - Vol. 1* (trans. D.M.G. Stalker; London: SCM Press, 1965) 145.
- 37 "Nowhere in the Bible is man characterized as merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in love and truth, keeping love to the thousandth generation. Pathos is a thought that bears resemblance to an aspect of divine reality as related to the world of man. As a theological category, it is a genuine insight into God's relatedness to man, rather than a projection of human traits into divinity, as found for example in the god images of mythology." - A. Heschel *The Prophets* 271. Heschel elsewhere makes the observation that "the Bible is primarily not man's vision of God but God's vision of man. The Bible is not man's theology but God's anthropology..." - *Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Octagon Books, 1951) 129.
- 38 "... if human persons are icons of the divine, then some anthropomorphism is inevitable and proper, and the label of anthropomorphism is not by itself derogatory." - Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984) 78.
- 39 So, according to John Zizioulas, 'person' is "perhaps the only notion that can be applied to God without the danger of anthropomorphism." cf. 'Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28.5 (1975) 401-448, 420.
- 40 And the anthropomorphism! This must be said against those who argue that God has no feelings, because God has no body e.g. Paul Helm 'The Impossibility of Divine Passibility' in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990) 119-140, 123.
- 41 S. Kierkegaard *Journals and Papers I* (London, 1967) § 280 - as quoted by Eberhard Jüngel 'Anthropomorphism: A fundamental problem in modern hermeneutics' 88.
- 42 Raymond Gawronski *Word and Silence: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Spiritual Encounter between East and West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 3, 88ff.
- 43 Deuteronomy 5:26; Joshua 3:10; 1 Samuel 17:26, 36; 2 Kings 19:4, 16; Psalm 42:2; 84:2; Isaiah 37:4, 17; Jeremiah 10:10; 23:36; Daniel 6:20, 26; Hosea 1:10; Matthew 16:16; 26:63 (τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος); Acts 14:15 (θεόν ζῶντα); Romans 9:26 (θεοῦ ζῶντος); 2 Corinthians 3:3; 6:16; 1 Timothy 3:15; 4:10; Hebrews 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Revelation 7:2.

"the word חַיִּים represents the state of being alive, with emphasis on the character and quality of the process..."⁴⁵

Some have compared the Biblical description of God as 'the Living God' with the Ugaritic phrase celebrating the annual return of a dead god to life - "Aliyan Baal lives, the prince, the lord of the earth exists." By contrast, the God of the Hebrews always lives. Certainly in their Scriptures, Yahweh as the "living God" is contrasted with lifeless idols (Jer. 10:10). The living God is alive and active. The same connotation of 'life' is attached to the phrase 'living water' (running water - Jer. 2:13), hence its importance in ritual purification, over against still or stagnant water. So God is also the fountain or source of life (Psalm 36:9), and this life is characteristically attributed to the ever active presence of the Spirit of God.⁴⁶

It was with this understanding of the 'Christian' God that Pascal contrasted the 'god of the philosophers' with 'the living God' revealed in the Scriptures. Our analysis in chapter three of this thesis agrees, but as chapter two has shown in regard to recent studies on Plato and Aristotle, Pascal's conclusion cannot be a generalisation. In his later writings, Plato, unlike the Neoplatonists, maintained links with the hylozoism of the Presocratics, and some distance from Parmenides, when defining the soul as 'self-moving mover', and so immortal or divine.⁴⁷ In the *Phaedrus*, he says:

Every soul is immortal, for that which is always changing is immortal. In the case of what changes other things or is changed by other things, when that stops changing, it stops living. Only what changes itself, since it needs nothing beyond itself, never stops changing. It is the source and origin (ἀρχή) of change for the other things that change, but an origin is not a thing which comes into being.⁴⁸

44 חַיִּים, *hayyim*. cf. H. Ringgren חַיִּים in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol III* eds. G.J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (trans. D.E. Green; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 324-344.

45 David Hill *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 169.

46 Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; John 6:63; Romans 8: 2-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 6:8.

47 M.L. Gill & J.G. Lennox (eds.) *Self-Motion: From Aristotle to Newton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 'Introduction' p.xiii; Leonard J. Eslick 'Plato as Dipolar Theist' *Process Studies* 12:4 (1982) 243-251; cf. E.P. Meijering *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius - Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) 134-135.

48 Plato *Phaedrus* 245c5-9 - *The Symposium and The Phaedrus: Plato's Erotic Dialogues* translated with Introduction and Commentaries by William S. Cobb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) 103; cf. Plato *Laws* x.894B-896B, 899B. This section in the *Laws* affirms that the soul is the power of self-motion, and is prior to all bodily motion. But this soul itself has an origin, which the

This dynamism may be contrasted with Plato's earlier emphasis on the static perfection of the eternal immutable Forms, which Aristotle essentially followed when postulating the ultimate *arche* to be an 'Unmoved Mover'.⁴⁹ The Stoic philosophers later departed from Aristotle (or ignored him), tracing self-motion throughout the living universe to a single eternal self-mover, the active principle (*arche*) or *logos* manifested as *pneuma*, within the organic universe.⁵⁰ William of Ockham likewise departed from Aristotle (and Duns Scotus' belief that everything moved is moved by another) in defence of Plato's concept of the soul as self-mover, thereby arguing for the freedom of the will.⁵¹ But to most medieval theologians this jeopardised the 'Aristotelian' argument for the existence of God from God's effects in the world. They argued that there is no regress to infinity in moving causes, but ultimately an unmoved mover. This also preserved the notion of God as pure actuality (Aquinas). But as I argue in the next chapter, this God as 'unmoved' cannot be 'living'. God is the ultimate self-moved mover.

Timaeus locates in *nous* and noetic activity. The above quoted passage from *Phaedrus*, that soul is not generated, conflicts with this. L.P. Gerson attempts a solution: "for Plato *nous* is a producer because it has a soul..." cf. *God and Greek Philosophy: Studies in the early history of natural theology* (London: Routledge, 1990) 76.

- 49 Yet, as we discussed in Chapter Two, this Unmoved Mover eternally coexists with motion, and as some argue - includes the principle of motion. cf. L.P. Gerson *God and Greek Philosophy* 122. James Etzweiler goes further by arguing that Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is totally and perpetually active, though immutable because not itself in process to further completion. cf. 'Being as Activity in Aristotle: A Process Interpretation' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1978) 311-334, 321, 331.
- 50 David E. Hahm 'Self-Motion in Stoic Philosophy' in *Self-Motion: From Aristotle to Newton* eds. M.L. Gill & J.G. Lennox (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 175-225; L.P. Gerson *God and Greek Philosophy* - chapter 4 - 'Stoic Materialist Theology' 142-184.
- 51 Calvin G. Normore 'Ockham, Self-Motion, and the Will' in *Self-Motion: From Aristotle to Newton* eds. M.L. Gill & J.G. Lennox (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 291-303.

3. God is Personal

That God is active being and being that becomes, may be further indicated by the understanding that God is personal. But as Wolfhart Pannenberg has noted, Greek philosophy and the Christianity so heavily influenced by it, was "unable to achieve a true understanding of the personal mode in which the living God confronted men, but could instead only construe personal language about God as an anthropomorphic mode of expression."⁵² However, what if we allow such language to communicate more to us than has been traditionally accepted?⁵³ We may conclude with H. Gollwitzer, that...

the personal way of speaking is unsurpassable for Christian talk of God. It is not a first step that could be followed by a still more proper way of speaking which expresses a relationship no longer of a personal kind. Personal ways of speaking are so much the life-blood of Christian faith that in abandoning them it would abandon also itself.⁵⁴

In contrast to the Platonic image of God as *idea*, the biblical image of God is of a *personal presence*. Rather than using the language of *essence*, the Hebrew prophets used the language of *presence*.⁵⁵ God appeared to Moses, introducing himself as "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod. 3:6). Then a discussion took place, during which this God revealed his personal name - 'Yahweh'. Some time later he said, "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'Yahweh' I did not make myself known to them" (Exod 6:3).⁵⁶

⁵² W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 119-183, 138-139.

⁵³ E.P. Meijering suggests that even Plato and Plotinus regarded their own 'personal' language for God (or the One) as more than anthropomorphic (e.g. Plotinus' masculine form of the pronoun *αὐτός* for 'the One') i.e. somehow 'personal'. cf. *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius - Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) 140.

⁵⁴ H. Gollwitzer *The Existence of God* (London: SCM, 1965) 188, as quoted by David Pailin 'The Humanity of the Theologian and the Personal Nature of God' *Religious Studies* 12 (1976) 141-158, 146. Pailin himself says, "God is said to save, love, create, call, judge, punish, reward. To say that these verbs reify and personify what are really impersonal forces in the ultimate structure of reality is not to clarify their meaning but to hold that the religious faith expressed by them is basically wrong and must be replaced by a fundamentally different kind of understanding." (145).

⁵⁵ Abraham J. Heschel *The Prophets* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962) 275.

⁵⁶ However, see Genesis 12:8; 13:4; 26:25.

The Hebrew word 'YHWH' or "Yahweh,"⁵⁷ is given as the personal name of God. This name is associated with the words *Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh* (Exodus 3:14)⁵⁸ which may be translated either "I Am Who I Am" or "I Will Be What I Will Be" - the first emphasising being, and the second becoming.⁵⁹ However, as Abraham Heschel notes, "biblical ontology does not separate being from doing. What *is*, acts... The Bible does not say how He is, but how he acts."⁶⁰ Therefore, the important feature of the name is not its linguistic value as such, but its historical associations.⁶¹ This is evident when the name *Yahweh* is linked with descriptions arising from Israel's experience.⁶²

Because the name *Yahweh* was considered too sacred to speak by the Hebrews it was substituted with the title *Adonai* ('Lord'), so that in the Septuagint 'Yahweh' is translated by κύριος. In the process something was lost. David Clines sounds the following alarm...

Somewhere between the fifth and the second centuries B.C. a tragic accident befell God: he lost his name. More exactly, Jews gave up using God's personal name Yahweh, and began to refer to Yahweh by various periphrases: God, the Lord, the Name, the Holy One, the Presence, even the Place. Even where Yahweh was written in the Biblical text, readers pronounced the name as Adonai. With the final fall of the temple, even the rare liturgical occasions when the name was used ceased, and even the knowledge of the pronunciation of the name was forgotten.⁶³

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- 57 The shortened form of this word - *Jah* or *Yah* (Exodus 15:2; 17:15; Isaiah 12:2; Psalm 118:4) occurs frequently in the term 'hallelujah' (praise *Jah*).
- 58 The personal name *Yahweh* may be linked with this description because of a common root word (*hayah* - "to be").
- 59 Christopher Stead notes that this second rendition is quoted by Hippolytus (*Ref.* 5.7.25) as 'I become what I will'. Unlike the Platonic concept of the One, this is similar to the Stoic doctrine of a self-changing God. cf. C. Stead *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 121.
- 60 Abraham J. Heschel *The Prophets* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1962) 264. Walther Eichrodt also stresses the active existence (and presence) indicated in the name *yhwh* cf. *Theology of the Old Testament - Volume One* (trans. J.A. Baker; London: SCM Press, 1961) 190.
- 61 B.W. Anderson - *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon, 1962) 2: 411.
- 62 For example: *YHWH- jireh* (Genesis 22:8, 14). 'The LORD provides'; *YHWH- shalom* (Judges 6:24). 'The LORD is peace'; *YHWH- tsidkenu* (Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16). 'The LORD is our righteousness'; *YHWH- sebaot* (1 Samuel 1:3). 'The LORD of hosts (or armies)'.
- 63 David Clines 'Yahweh and the God of Christian Theology' *Theology* LXXXIII (1980) 323-330, 323. T.E. Pollard likewise observes that "God in the LXX has no name; He only has titles. Thus the door was thrown wide open for the introduction of the perverse doctrine of the *Namelessness of God* which plays a prominent part in the theology of Philo Judaeus, and enters the stream of Christian theology through the writings of the Greek Apologists." cf. 'The Impassibility of God' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8.4 (1955) 353-364, 356.

This trend coincided with the influence of Greek philosophy on Jewish and Christian thinking, so that the word 'God' represented an incomprehensible being. The "I am who I am" of Exodus 3:14 became in the Septuagint - "I am what is" (Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν).⁶⁴ God was then thought of as a philosophical principle, rather than as personal being.⁶⁵ But by retaining the name 'Yahweh' in Christian theology, it is affirmed that God is personal being.⁶⁶ If David Clines is correct when he says, "the Old Testament's reiterated use of the personal name Yahweh is some safeguard against the transformation of God into a philosophical abstraction,"⁶⁷ then the history of Christian theology indicates a lack of attention to this section of the Bible.

The above discussion presupposes a definition of 'personal' which includes relatedness and also the uniqueness of self in this relatedness.⁶⁸ There is no great leap from this to saying God is 'person', despite the apprehension many have about such anthropomorphic language.⁶⁹ Hans Küng may say that 'God is more than person',⁷⁰ and this is to be admitted.⁷¹ But God may nevertheless be depicted as 'person' without any denial of absoluteness, especially if the

64 *Septuaginta* ed. Alfred Rahlfs (Vol. 1; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935) 90.

65 Emil Brunner is especially critical of medieval scholastic theology for its interpretation of the Exodus 3 passage in terms of Neoplatonic philosophy (particularly the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius) cf. *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics Vol. 1* (trans. O. Wyon; London: Lutterworth Press, 1949) 129. "The Greek Fathers made a great mistake (and this error bore disastrous fruit) in turning the Name of Yahweh... into an ontological definition" (120). On the Greek translation of Exodus 3:14 cf. John Whittaker *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* (London: Variorum, 1984) - Essay XXVIII - 'Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity' 55.

66 Emil Brunner - "The truly personal God is He who is not known through thought, but through the manifestation of His Name, the God of revelation... The communication of a name is the disclosure of one's self to the other, and thus the establishment - or at least the beginning - of a personal relation and communion." *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics Vol. 1* 123.

67 David Clines 'Yahweh and the God of Christian Theology' 325. Walther Eichrodt likewise regards the divine Name (Yahweh) as a safeguard for the faith of Israel becoming "an abstract concept of deity and nameless 'ground of being'." cf. *Theology of the Old Testament - Volume One* (trans. J.A. Baker; London: SCM Press, 1961) 206.

68 For discussion on definitions of 'person', and then relating these to 'God', see: Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984) 71ff.

69 For a presentation of the arguments by both Christian and Islamic theologians for and against the notion of God as 'person/personal', see Gary Legenhausen 'Is God a Person?' *Religious Studies* 22.3-4 (1986) 307-323.

70 Hans Küng *Does God Exist?: An answer for today* (trans. E. Quinn; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 633. cf. Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* 17ff. "Without doubt he is more, but not less, than personal" (p.19); T.G. Weinandy *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 117.

71 David Pailin says, "the description of supra-personal is not one to which we can give any content except so far as we regard it as a way of describing what is perfectly personal by contrast with the imperfections of our experiences of personal being." cf. "The Humanity of the Theologian and the Personal Nature of God" *Religious Studies* 12 (1976) 141-158, 149.

concept of personhood includes transcendence,⁷² or better - uniqueness.⁷³ There is both an absolute and relative aspect (pole) to God's being as supreme person.⁷⁴

If God is personal, then it may also be more appropriate to talk about God's attitudes rather than attributes. Abraham Heschel says, "to the prophets, the attributes of God were drives, challenges, commandments, rather than timeless notions detached from His Being... knowledge of God was fellowship with Him, not attained by syllogism, analysis or induction..."⁷⁵ This accounts for the radical difference between the descriptions of God by Biblical prophets and philosophers of Greece.

Talking about God as personal may also require a redefinition (or qualification) of the 'omni-' attributes traditionally ascribed to God.⁷⁶ Persons in meaningful relationship with other persons neither exhibit absolute power, knowledge, nor universal presence. This either demonstrates the limited usefulness of 'personhood' as a metaphor for God, or that *as person* God's attributes are self restricted, in which case they are no longer strictly 'omni-'. God's power, knowledge, and presence are limited by the existence of a plurality of persons, divine (Trinity) and human.

4. God is Complex, not Simple

The belief that God is being without becoming is in traditional theism argued from the premise that God is simple and not complex. The simple, by definition, is without differentiation, being without becoming. Emil Brunner has identified the roots of this idea, and its incompatibility with biblical theism.

⁷² "The dichotomy of transcendence and immanence is an oversimplification. For God remains transcendent in His immanence, and related in his transcendence." - Abraham Heschel *The Prophets* (New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962) 486.

⁷³ D.W.D. Shaw 'Personality, Personal and Person' in *Being and Truth: Essays in Honour of John Macquarrie* eds. A. Kee & E. Long (London: SCM, 1986) 155-167. In this article D. Shaw argues against the modern cliché that God is personal, but not a person. eg. Adrian Thatcher 'The Personal God and a God who is a Person' *Religious Studies* 21 (1985) 61-73.

⁷⁴ Charles Hartshorne *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948) 142ff. For a commentary on Hartshorne's attributing personhood to God, see D.W.D. Shaw 'Personality, Personal and Person' 162-163.

⁷⁵ Abraham Heschel *The Prophets* 221, 223.

⁷⁶ J.R. Lucas 'Foreknowledge and the Vulnerability of God' in *The Philosophy of Christianity* ed. G. Vasey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 125-126.

The development of the doctrine of God has been determined, not only by mediaeval theology but also by... the ontology of Neo-Platonism: God as Being, the *Summum Bonum*, the *One* who cannot be named. Hence the primacy of that doctrine of the "simplicity" of God, a doctrine which, almost more than any other, shows very clearly the difference between the speculative and the Biblical Idea of God.⁷⁷

Simplicity rather than multiplicity was thought to be the primal source of all else which is composite, according to Plato,⁷⁸ Aristotle, and particularly Plotinus.⁷⁹ Likewise, according to the Church Fathers the divine nature is simple and indivisible, and thus immutable.⁸⁰ Against the Gnostic theology of emanation, Irenaeus says that God "is a simple, uncompounded being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to himself..."⁸¹ And a few centuries later Gregory of Nazianzus emphasised that deity is "an absolutely simple and indivisible substance" (ἀδιαίρετός ἐστι καὶ μονοειδῆς καὶ ἀμερῆς), "indivisible and uniform and without parts."⁸² The reason Gregory gives for this is that "composition is a source of conflict, and conflict of separation, and this again of dissolution; and dissolution is totally foreign to God and to the first nature."⁸³ This may be deliberate polemic against notions that God is composed of 'elements' (Anaximander's earth, air, fire, and water) in opposition (e.g. hot-cold, wet-dry).⁸⁴ But Christopher Stead has pointed out logical defects

77 Emil Brunner *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics Vol. 1* (trans. O. Wyon; London: Lutterworth Press, 1949) 248. "This idea of the *simplicitas Dei* is inevitable if we make the abstract idea of the Absolute the starting-point for our thought. This is simply the undifferentiated *Monas* of Neo-Platonism modified by Theism." 293.

78 Plato further says (*Phaedo* 78a) that composite things are liable to change, whereas absolute essences which are uncompounded (e.g. beauty, equality) persist unchanging.

79 See my discussion on this concept in *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism*, in Chapter Three of this thesis (section 2).

80 Aristides *Apology* 1.5; Athenagoras *Plea* 8.2; Tatian *Address* 5.2; 15.2; Justin *Dialogue with Trypho* 5.5f.; Basil *Epistles* 8, Athanasius, *De Synodis* 39. cf. W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 165ff.; Christopher Stead adds Eusebius' *Demonstratio evangelica* 4.15.16 and *Ecclesiastical Theology* 2.14.6. cf. C. Stead 'Divine simplicity as a problem for orthodoxy' in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in honour of Henry Chadwick* ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 255-269, 258-259.

81 Irenaeus *Against the Heresies* 2.13.3.

82 Archbishop Methodios 'The Homoousion' in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381* ed. T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981) 1-15, 8, with reference to Gregory of Nazianzus *Epistles* 243.

83 Gregory of Nazianzus *Second Theological Oration (Oratio 28)* 7, as quoted by Christopher Stead 'Divine simplicity as a problem for orthodoxy' 256.

84 C. Stead makes reference to Methodius, Eusebius, Constantine, and Athanasius - in his article 'Divine simplicity as a problem for orthodoxy' 268.

with the antithesis of simple and compound which is presupposed by Gregory and adopted by most 'orthodox' theologians.

For, in the first place, an object which has no parts need not be wholly undifferentiated; it might have distinguishable features, like the colours of a rainbow, which could not properly be described as parts (whether we think of the colours themselves, or the coloured areas which merge one into the other). Again, if an object consists of parts, it does not follow that it is constructed by assembling those parts: a tree has trunk, branches, and twigs, but is not brought into being by taking those parts and putting them together, as a house is built... And the converse is also probable; it is not intuitively obvious that physical objects can only perish by the separation of their parts;...⁸⁵

This 'simplicity' doctrine, according to Wolfhart Pannenberg, is the most obvious evidence of Christian faith in Hellenistic philosophical clothing.⁸⁶ It disallows any differentiation within the divine essence, and even between the divine attributes. God is without composition. According to Thomas Aquinas, God is incomposite in the following ways:⁸⁷

- (1) He lacks composition of extended parts.
- (2) He lacks composition of form and matter.
- (3) He lacks 'composition' of act and potency, and is accordingly atemporal and immutable.
- (4) He lacks composition of essence and individuating principles or accidents; instead, He is the same as His essence.
- (5) He lacks composition of attributes: instead, His goodness, wisdom, power, knowledge, and all His other intrinsic attributes are the same as Him.
- (6) He lacks composition of essence and existence: He is His own existence, just as He is His own essence.

⁸⁵ Christopher Stead 'Divine simplicity as a problem for orthodoxy' 261; also *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 131.

⁸⁶ Pannenberg shows that the idea of a simple God, without qualities, properties, or form - derives from the philosophy of Middle Platonism, especially Albinus. cf. W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' 167.

⁸⁷ Christopher Hughes *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 149. Hughes argues that Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity, and the Chalcedonian account of the incarnation, are logically inconsistent with Aquinas' theory of divine simplicity (Part II, p.153ff.). Robert M. Burns concludes his article 'The Divine Simplicity in St. Thomas' *Religious Studies* 25.3 (1989) 271-293, "Thomas's doctrine of divine simplicity is fundamentally flawed: instead of considering it '*absurdum*' to posit plurality in the first principle he should have seen that its uncompounded complexity is precisely what needs to be affirmed if the universe is to be regarded as ultimately intelligible."

This line of argument led some of the Medieval theologians to reject the doctrine of the Trinity,⁸⁸ since it disallows any plurality, let alone polarity, in God's intrinsic nature. The concept of oneness is absolutised, such that the statement "God is simple" virtually becomes "the Simple is God."⁸⁹ The known is the knower, the object is the subject.

If God is 'simple', then God is pure being, pure act. To defend this notion, the concept of timelessness was required,⁹⁰ along with a theory of divine powers or energies as distinct from God's essence. God is then revealed to us in his activities, but the simple essence of God which is behind these, remains incomprehensible.⁹¹ This must be contrasted with the 'personal' mode of God's action depicted in Scripture,⁹² where God's essence is encountered in his act. Not only is God revealed as personal, but according to the Old Testament, "it is the experience of Israel that Yahweh is a multi-faceted personality, complex and not entirely predictable."⁹³ This change contradicts divine simplicity.

88 For example, William of Champeaux (1070-1121), and other universalists in their opposition to the 'nominalists' who emphasised the 'particulars'.

89 Paul K. Jewett *God, Creation, & Revelation: A Neo-Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 347.

90 Eleonore Stump & Norman Kretzmann 'Absolute Simplicity' *Faith and Philosophy* 2:4 (1985) 353-382. See the next chapter of this thesis for a detailed discussion of timelessness.

91 Theophilus *To Autolytus* 1.3. cf. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' 170.

92 The personal mode depicted in Scripture, entailing responsiveness, is to be contrasted with 'atemporal personhood' as described by W. E. Mann in his defence of divine simplicity and immutability. cf. William E. Mann 'Simplicity and Immutability in God' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1983) 267-276, reprinted in *The Concept of God* ed. T.V. Morris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 253-267. See also W.E. Mann 'Simplicity and Immutability in God' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1983) 267-276. For a criticism of Mann's position see D.A. Dombrowski 'Must a Perfect Being Be Immutable?' in *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology* ed. R. Kane & S.H. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 91-111, 92-93.

93 David Clines 'Yahweh and the God of Christian Theology' *Theology* LXXXIII (1980) 323-330, 327. For a recent defense of the doctrine of divine simplicity see: Brian Leftow 'Is God an Abstract Object?' *Nous* 24 (1990) 581-598 [against Plantinga].

5. God is Self-Existent, but is God Self-Sufficient?

The theology of the *aseitas Dei*, grew out of the tendency of the Greek fathers to describe God using compound words including *αὐτός* (e.g. *αὐτουσία*, *αὐτοζωή*, *αὐτοαγαθία*, *αὐτάρκης*, *αὐτοκράτωρ*, *αὐτόθεος*, etc.). The lamentable result, according to Karl Barth, was to replace *aseitas* with *independentia*, such that God is then no different than the transcendent and abstract 'idea' of Neo-Platonism. Instead, Barth suggests the following definition of God's aseity: "...He is the One who is free from all origination, conditioning or determination from without, by that which is not Himself."⁹⁴ This states the concept of *aseitas*, but does little to avoid Barth's aversion to *independentia*. But then the concept of aseity 'by nature' cannot include relatedness. It is meant to affirm that God is existentially self-existent, and thus self-explanatory,⁹⁵ rather than self-sufficient - as G.D. Pratt describes:

A distinction needs to be drawn between the aetiological meaning and the ontological interpretation of *aseitas*. In its pristine form aseity simply denotes self-existence *qua* uncaused or non-originated being. Nothing causes God to exist in the originative sense. However, the term has taken on certain ontological connotation in its theological usage and application, chiefly assuming that self-existence necessarily implies self-sufficiency in an on-going existential and ontological sense. But such an assumption of the nature of the existence or being of God, as distinct from, although following on, the origin of God, is strictly a theological *non sequitur*.⁹⁶

If self-existence entails self-sufficiency, then the existence of anything other than God seems unnecessary and superfluous, unless God creates that which plays a role in self-fulfilment. This could only be true if God is not only necessary existentially (aseity) but also contingent existentially as a relational being. The world is created for a purpose - for value and for pleasure (Gen. 1:4, 31) in relation to God. While the Creator does not necessarily have to create (as self-existent), creation is necessary for this potentiality (freedom to create, relationship with another) to become actual. Paul Fiddes takes this one stage further...

⁹⁴ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics Vol. II, Part 1* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957) 302-303, 307.

⁹⁵ Keith Ward *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 10.

⁹⁶ G.D. Pratt *Being, Becoming, and God: Toward a Relational Theology* 410.

To affirm that God is 'self-sufficient' for the fact of his existence (or self-existence) does not necessarily mean that he is self-sufficient for the whole mode of his divine life. We can think of a God who determines himself, and yet also allows his creation to participate in the causes of his own becoming. The essential point is that God should play the decisive or sovereign role in this process, as he does in a co-creation of the world.⁹⁷

God does not need the world in order to exist, but he has nevertheless chosen to create a world. The relationships which this entails fulfils a desire for such - an extension of the relationships which God is as Trinity. We add to what is already there, God's need for relationships - as a relational being.⁹⁸ There is then, in the Biblical story of God's relationship with humanity, a sense of loss when God's beloved creatures exercise independence from him (Genesis 3:9). So Abraham Heschel says, "Not self-sufficiency, but concern and involvement characterize His relation to the world... God is in need of man."⁹⁹ Heschel's book on the philosophy of Judaism, *God in Search of Man*,¹⁰⁰ describes this divine quest, the "where art thou?"¹⁰¹ The human need, is then mirrored in the divine.¹⁰²

Judaism shows it to be a need *to be needed by God*. It teaches us that every man is in need of God because God is in need of man. Our need of Him is but an echo of His need of us.¹⁰³

Thus, on this view, it may be claimed that the essential meaning of life is in the satisfaction of needs that go beyond the human ego.

⁹⁷ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 67.

⁹⁸ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 135.

⁹⁹ A. Heschel *The Prophets* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1962) 235; cf. *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1955, reprinted 1972) 413; *Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Octagon Books, 1951, reprinted 1972) 241, 243 - "His need is a self-imposed concern. God is now in need of man, because He freely made him a partner in His enterprise..."

¹⁰⁰ Abraham Heschel *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, Chapter 13 - 'God in Search of Man' 136-151.

¹⁰¹ See also *Man is Not Alone* 245 - "The Bible is not a history of the Jewish people, but the story of God's quest of the righteous man."

¹⁰² Which is absent from Augustine's much quoted prayer: "you made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it find rest in you." - *The Confessions* Book I, section 1. cf. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine: A New Translation with Introductions* by E.M. Blaiklock (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983) 15.

¹⁰³ Abraham Heschel *Man is Not Alone* 248.

6. God is Perfect, and Changes

Theologians have traditionally believed that only an immutable being can be the cause and sustainer of a changing world.¹⁰⁴ This assumes that all changeable things are caused. But this seems to confuse the following: things that are caused to exist, with things that are caused to change. "It may be true that every change in every mutable thing is caused. But it does not follow from this that every mutable thing must be caused to exist... Why cannot there be a mutable necessary being?"¹⁰⁵ One reason was given by Plato. He argued that God's immutability is a necessary aspect of his perfection:¹⁰⁶

1. God is eternally perfect
2. Any change in a perfect being is a change for the worse
3. Therefore, God does not change

The theologians of the Church have mostly followed this theory.¹⁰⁷ But, why cannot a perfect being change? A circle may remain perfectly circular while its size changes.¹⁰⁸ Plato's theory assumes that all change is for the worse. But as the circle analogy demonstrates, a perfect thing can change without becoming less than perfect. J.R. Lucas replies to Plato by observing that his argument "depends on the assumption that there is one linear scale of excellence, so that any two different states of affairs can be compared and ordered, one better, one worse. But this is not so. There are many different excellences, and it is perfectly possible to change from one sort of excellence, that is the best of its kind, to another, which is the best of its, quite different, kind."¹⁰⁹ Besides the

¹⁰⁴ Keith Ward *The Concept of God* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1974) 153, 155.

¹⁰⁵ S.T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 51.

¹⁰⁶ Plato *The Republic of Plato* (trans. F.M. Cornford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1945) II, 381B. cf. Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 2-8.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Augustine *Sermones* vii.7, Anselm *Monologion* 24, Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 1a.9.1., also "... anything in change acquires something through its change, attaining something previously not attained. Now God, being limitless and embracing within himself the whole fullness of perfection of all existence, cannot acquire anything, nor can he move out towards something previously not attained. So one cannot in any way associate him with change." *Summa Theologiae* 1a, q.9, art. 1 as quoted by J. O'Donnell in *Trinity and Temporality: The Christian Doctrine of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 17. cf. William L. Power 'On Divine Perfection' in *Logic, God and Metaphysics* ed. J.F. Harris (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992) 59-71.

¹⁰⁸ S.T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 50.

¹⁰⁹ J.R. Lucas *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality and Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 216. Lucas later makes the following comment: "The theological superlative is a potent source of

philosophical question of whether or not a perfect God can change, there is the biblical description of God, who on a number of occasions changes without ceasing to be God, let alone becoming less than perfect. Change through action/reaction and experience is itself a changeless characteristic of God's love and faithfulness, as described in further sections of this chapter. So when it comes to describing divine perfection, the Platonic assumptions may be rejected as false - not all change is for better or worse. There is change which "is consistent with and/or required by a constant state of excellence."¹¹⁰ The inability to change may then be a deficiency rather than a perfection. So *pathos* is a perfection. This is well stated by Daniel Dombrowski...

Good passivity is likely to be called sensitivity, responsiveness, adaptability, sympathy, and the like. Insufficiently subtle or defective passivity is called wooden inflexibility, mulish stubbornness, inadaptability, unresponsiveness, and the like. Passivity per se refers to the way in which an individual's *activity* takes account of, and renders itself appropriate to, the activities of others... To deny God passivity altogether is to deny God those aspects of passivity which are excellences. Or again, to altogether deny God the ability to change does avoid fickleness, but at the expense of the ability to lovingly react to the sufferings of others.¹¹¹

Again, George Schlesinger concludes his study of divine perfection, this way:

... should a particular kind of change turn out to be highly advantageous, so that undergoing it is bound to result in a greater total sum of perfection to which the various divine attributes add up, we should expect God to be subject to that desirable mutation.¹¹²

God is faithful not fickle, changing but not capricious, mutable but not malevolent. A God of moral perfection may change his mind, for 'repenting'

error. There is a sense in which God is the mostest. There is a sense in which God is the bestest. God is the ultimate reality. But there are many sorts of greatness, many sorts of goodness, incommensurate and not always compatible, and in ascribing maximality to God, we need to have in mind in what way He is the greatest or the best." (226). See also J.R. Lucas 'Foreknowledge and the Vulnerability of God' in *The Philosophy in Christianity* ed. G. Vesey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 119-128, 125f.; Thomas V. Morris 'Perfect Being Theology' *Nous* 21 (1987) 19-30.

¹¹⁰ William Hasker 'A Philosophical Perspective' - Chapter Four in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* by C. Pinnock, R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, D. Basinger (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994) 133.

¹¹¹ Daniel Dombrowski 'Polar Equality in Dipolar Theism' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 305-316, 307.

¹¹² George N. Schlesinger 'Divine Perfection' *Religious Studies* 21.2 (1985) 147-158, 158. See also David R. Mason 'Can God be both Perfect and Free?' *Religious Studies* 18.2 (1982) 191-200.

does not necessitate a change of character. In fact a change of mind may demonstrate consistency of character.¹¹³ There are many passages in the Old Testament which illustrate this,¹¹⁴ one of which is Jeremiah 18:7-10 (NRSV):

At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it.¹¹⁵

God changes but remains faithful to his character and purposes.¹¹⁶ This moral perfection (unchangeability) may not preclude mistakes (e.g. regarding future prediction).¹¹⁷ To make a mistake is quite a different thing from sinning.¹¹⁸ Mistakes are probable when predicting the outcome of future contingencies, otherwise the future is not really contingent.¹¹⁹ This assumes the freedom of the will, and that the future is really contingent even for God (to be discussed in the next chapter). But if we continue for a moment with the notion of a perfect God, there may be some things which God wills not to do without reducing his greatness.

113 Richard Rice 'Biblical Support for a New Perspective', chapter one of *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* by C. Pinnock, R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, D. Basinger (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994) 31.

114 Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:7-14; Numbers 14:11-20; 2 Kings 20:1ff; 1 Samuel 15:35; 2 Samuel 24:16; Psalm 106:45; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:7-10; 4:2; Joel 2:13; Isaiah 38:1-8; Jeremiah 7:16; 18:8, 10; 26:3, 13, 19; Ezekiel 20:8-9; 20:13-14, 21-22.

115 In his commentary on this passage, Origen cannot accept that a God who knows the future should change his mind. This is simply language for children. God acts as if he does not know, or acts as if he changes his mind, because like children we respond to this kind of language. cf. Origen *Homilies on Jeremiah 18*, 6 in *Documents in Early Christian Thought* ed. M. Wiles & M. Santer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 7-10.

116 The two biblical references regarding God *not* changing his mind like humans (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29) refer to the impossibility of God being unfaithful to his promises, i.e. lying. According to Adrio König, "the other texts which are used to deny that God repents (i.e. Ps. 110:4; Jer. 4:28; Ezek 24:14; Zech 8:14), actually presuppose that the Lord can repent, and therefore emphasize that under certain circumstances he will not repent" cf. *Here I Am? A Believer's Reflection on God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 66 - as quoted by Richard Rice 'Biblical Support for a New Perspective' 180.

117 J.E. Barnhart 'God, Genes and Chance' in *Existence of God: Essays from the Basic Issues Forum* ed. J.R. Jacobson & R.L. Mitchell (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) 183-197, 191.

118 Error is not necessarily the product of a moral failure or flaw.

119 J.R. Lucas 'Foreknowledge and the Vulnerability of God' in *The Philosophy in Christianity* ed. G. Vesey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 119-128.

God's will is unchanging as it pertains to moral perfection.¹²⁰ Thomas Aquinas said, "The will of God is altogether immutable. But notice in this connection that changing one's will is different from willing a change in things. For a person whose will remains unalterable can will that something should happen now and its contrary happen afterward."¹²¹ In other words there may be a constancy in purpose and will, but the application of that may change according to the circumstances. God can react or respond in many different ways, and at the same time maintain a constancy of will and purpose. God, as God, is of necessity sinless *de dicto* (that is, it is part of the concept of God that God be sinless). However, this does not impose on God the *de re* necessity not to sin. God's sinlessness is freely chosen. In this regard God's moral perfection is both a contingent and necessary property.¹²²

God is also faithful in becoming. The creation of the world and of humanity, and later the creation of a nation brought about change for God. According to Hendrikus Berkhof...

The creation of a world outside himself is the greatest change which God has made. But by making this change God also experienced it himself. From the time of creation God was changed. He had now become a creator and sustainer... And when he created man he changed again. He created a centre of freedom and initiative over against himself. He obtained a recipient for his revelation and a partner for dialogue. And when he entered into a special relationship with Israel, he became the commanding and gracious, the disappointed and tenacious covenant partner.¹²³

¹²⁰ Thus the immutability 'proof texts' used by the Fathers. e.g. Malachi 3:6; Psalm 102:18; Hebrews 6:17; James 1:17.

¹²¹ Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q.19, a.7 - as quoted by Richard E. Creel *Divine Impassibility: An Essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 18.

¹²² That *moral perfection* is not one of God's *essential* properties, is well argued by Theodore Guleserian (which poses problems for the ontological proof). Morality as such is lost if it becomes an essential property, rather than the expression of freedom to act with moral responsibility. cf. Theodore Guleserian 'Can Moral Perfection be an Essential Attribute?' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46.2 (1985) 219-241.

¹²³ Hendrikus Berkhof *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith* (trans. S. Woudstra; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985 - revised edition) 141. He goes on to say, "In Christ he [God] again experienced a profound change when the Word became flesh and he came very close to us in the form a man among men. But this man must die on the cross and shout out the pain of his God-forsakenness. Does this go on without God being involved? Then, however, in the resurrection a no less radical change takes place. And this liberation, in which God emerges from the resistance against his presence, continues and widens itself in the work of the Spirit in which God goes out to the depths of human hearts and the breadth of the earth; and that happens in order that God may once more, in the fulfilment, bring about a change which in its radicality can be compared only with that of creation."

God is dynamic, a "personal agent in a mutually affecting relationship with the world."¹²⁴ As Clark Pinnock puts it...

God is both changeless and changing. He is changeless in his nature and character - He is changing in his experience of a changing creation. There is nothing contradictory in this, as long as we differentiate what in God is changing and what is not.

...there is a passivity in God which enables him to exist in a reciprocal way and be affected by the novelty which arises out of history. In some mysterious way we cannot understand how God shares in the temporality and changeability of his creatures. The past is decided, but the future is open and undecided even for God. God's experience of the world moves forward with time as possibilities become actualities.¹²⁵

Athanasius also said of the Logos that "he became man that we might become divine."¹²⁶ The Church has hesitated in taking the "becoming human" seriously.¹²⁷ Under the shadow of the Greek notion of immutability, the incarnation came to be formulated as the assumption of human nature, rather than God becoming human (see section 8, below).¹²⁸

124 C. Pinnock 'Between Classical and Process Theism' in *Process Theology* ed. R. Nash (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 321.

125 C. Pinnock 'Between Classical and Process Theism' 322, 323.

126 Athanasius *The Incarnation* 54: αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηθρώπησεν ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν. cf. Athanasius *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione* edited and translated by Robert W. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 269. Also *Epist. ad Adolph.* 4: γεγονός γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεωποιήθῃ.

127 Athanasius goes on in the next sentence to say: "He himself was harmed in no respect, as he is impassible and incorruptible and the very Word and God, but he cared for and saved suffering men, for whom he endured these things, by his impassibility."

128 W. Pannenberg *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* 162.

7. God as Actual and Potential

In addition to the 'perfection' argument of Plato, Aristotle further excluded from the concept of God the notion that God experiences change, on the basis of the following argument.¹²⁹

1. God's potentialities are completely actualised.
2. A being changes only if it has unactualised potentialities.
3. Therefore, God does not change.

Fundamental to both Plato and Aristotle's concept of being was that the verb εἶμι ('to be') stands in contrast to and excludes 'becoming' (γίγνομαι).¹³⁰ Parmenides argument that 'that which is' (ὡς ἔστιν) does not change, had already been accepted as a fundamental ontological doctrine. Plato identified this with the εἶδη (the 'forms') which are 'true being' (ὄν ἀληθές) or 'beingly being' (τὸ ὄντως ὄν). These are Νοῦς for Plotinus, and divine being (τὸ ὄν/*esse* as divine οὐσία/*essentia*) for Augustine. Aquinas followed Augustine in regarding God as *ipsum esse* (being itself, very being), but reinterpreted *esse* as a verb and not a noun. This novel reinterpretation, with potential for a theology of divine being *and* becoming, was immediately boxed in by his following Aristotle. Aquinas allows that God moves but does not change, since this would deny his simplicity and 'sheer actuality' (*purum actum*).¹³¹ So, in agreement with Aristotle's argument outlined above, Aquinas regarded the *esse* (being) of God as *actus purus* (pure act). As Aquinas himself puts it:

Anything in change acquires something through its change, attaining something previously not attained. Now God, being limitless and embracing within itself the whole fullness of perfection of all existence, cannot acquire anything, nor can he move out towards something previously not attained. So one cannot in any way associate him with change (1.9.1.)¹³²

¹²⁹ Aristotle *Metaphysics* XII, 9 1074b. cf. translation by R. Hope (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960).

¹³⁰ For a more detailed discussion on this and the following brief historical comparisons, see Ivor Leclerc 'God and the Issue of Being' *Religious Studies* 20.1 (1984) 63-78.

¹³¹ David B. Burrell *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) 82, 37. cf. Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 1a. 2. 3; 3.1; 9.2; cf. 19.7; 22.1.

¹³² Quoted from David B. Burrell *Aquinas: God and Action* 38.

In responding to Aristotle and Aquinas, we may say that if God knows all things that are possible for everything, then their actualisation is in fact adding nothing to God's knowledge since they are known as actualities. God does not then change in his knowledge through the change from potential to actual, for the change is external to him, since they are always known as actual.¹³³ However, when something becomes actual, the change may contribute something to experience and so knowledge, even for God. It is one thing to know about everything as potentiality, but another thing to experience the change from potentiality to actuality.

Marcel Sarot has argued that experiential knowledge cannot be reduced to intellectual knowledge.¹³⁴ Experiential knowledge may be partially expressed in propositions, but the feeling of pain cannot be adequately grasped by the mind only. An omniscient God must then have experienced feelings in order to know what it is for others to experience feelings.¹³⁵ The experience may add nothing to one's conceptual knowledge (except knowing what is now actual and what is now potential), but it has been experienced rather than simply apprehended. It is as a 'living' God, that God actualises his own potentialities, and also experiences the same actualisations of creation. I will develop this point further shortly.

Richard Creel defends the notion of God's eternal knowledge of all possibilities. Yet he makes one exception to God's immutability, namely God's experience when potentialities become actualities. This "experience of change involves change," but Creel qualifies this as a change *in* God and not *to* him.¹³⁶ This is however, a significant acknowledgment, which sits uncomfortably with Creel's concept of God's impassibility as being his eternally "indexed" or disposed will to all possibilities.¹³⁷ Creel's exception to the rule of immutability means he abandons Boethian simultaneity of all time to God.¹³⁸ However, he

¹³³ This is the argument of Peter Geach *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), and is sometimes referred to as 'Cambridge change'. For a critique, see Richard E. Creel *Divine Impassibility: An Essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 88.

¹³⁴ Marcel Sarot 'Omniscience and Experience' *The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 30 (1991) 89-102.

¹³⁵ This does not require that God experiences all of our feelings (contra Hartshorne), but that having had a feeling-experience in another context God understands the feeling of all experiences. cf. Marcel Sarot 'Omniscience and Experience' 96.

¹³⁶ Richard E. Creel *Divine Impassibility* 88, 110-112. This does however contradict his earlier statement, "if God were able to change his own nature, then he could not be trusted without concern." 13.

¹³⁷ That is, a pre-programmed response to all contingencies. Creel also calls this "presponses" or "indespenses." *Divine Impassibility* 16, 209.

¹³⁸ Richard E. Creel *Divine Impassibility* 204f., cf p.92ff. for a refutation of Stump and Kretzmann.

comes back to Plotinus' "God possesses the whole of *his* life all at once," with the distinction that God does not possess the lives of all other beings at once (only his own). Somehow God is timeless in his own life, but is temporally aware of the passage from potentiality to actuality.¹³⁹ In the end Creel denies God any real experience, even suggesting that it would be foolish for God to grieve, grow angry, be troubled, or suffer pain.¹⁴⁰

The more traditional approach to immutability/impassibility, defended by Paul Helm, allows for none of Creel's concessions. As 'pure actuality' God cannot change, or be changed. What from our human perspective are recognised (via Scripture) as God's feelings or emotions, are in fact eternal dispositions that are always "maximally active", that is, without variation.¹⁴¹

The Aristotelian premise was that actuality precedes potentiality, so that nothing can change from potential to actual except by something already actual. This may be true of inanimate objects, but is not the case with persons.¹⁴² There may well be a host of antecedent causes which move a person to 'become', but this in itself is inadequate to explain the uniqueness and the spontaneous creativity of a person. Creativity is bringing about something that is new. This is significantly the first attribute or activity of God mentioned in the Bible, and stands in radical contrast to Aristotle's Pure Actuality, which by definition cannot *do* anything.¹⁴³

In his earlier works, Keith Ward makes frequent reference to the concept of "archetypal forms" as the framework or basis of divine creativity and purpose.¹⁴⁴ But this is not the Platonic idea of a Demiurge working on pre-existing matter according to an independent world of Forms outside of divine control. Augustine moved beyond this kind of dualism by identifying 'Forms'

¹³⁹ Richard E. Creel *Divine Impassibility* 106-109.

¹⁴⁰ Richard E. Creel *Divine Impassibility* 125. For a criticism of Creel's views, see Daniel A. Dombrowski 'Must a Perfect Being Be Immutable?' in *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology* ed. R. Kane & S.H. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 91-111, 103-106; Charles Taliaferro 'The Passibility of God' *Religious Studies* 25.2 (1989) 217-224.

¹⁴¹ P. Helm 'The Impossibility of Divine Passibility' in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990) 119-140, 125.

¹⁴² Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 53-54.

¹⁴³ It is against this notion that Eberhard Jüngel argues regarding God that "love without possibilities is no love. Rather love is full of creative possibilities." *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (trans. D.L. Guder; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 339.

¹⁴⁴ K. Ward *Rational Theology* - "if the world is to be intelligible, effects must be explicable from their causes; and that, ultimately, means that there must be archetypal patterns of possible effects and laws of transformation, in the originative being" 65 , cf. 112-117, 152, 154, 165, 232. Ward is beginning to think along these lines in his earlier work (*The Concept of God* 151), when he refers to "patterns' and necessary moral values.

with the being of God, to make them ideas necessarily contained in his mind. Ward builds on this insight by suggesting that this archetypal world of Forms may itself be modified by the creative intellect of God,¹⁴⁵ within the limits of goodness, intelligibility, beauty, and purpose.

As God is primarily a creative intellect, he can create new possibilities or develop and modify old ones. Thus there is no total sum of eternal ideas, but a constantly changing stock of imaginatively created ideas, limited only by God's character as wise, good and loving. This means admitting the strange-sounding axiom that new possibilities can come into being. But if one is clear that possibles only exist in so far as they are conceived by the Divine mind, then it causes no difficulty that God should come to conceive new things - as long as he can change. All one has to say is that the future is truly open and undecided, even in thought. The creator will not only be ignorant of what will be actual in the future, that he does not decree; he will not know everything that is possible. Nevertheless, this is by no means a defect in God; for if anything becomes possible, he alone makes it so, and this 'limitation' alone makes free creativity in God possible. To say that something is positively possible is to say that it is conceived by God, so he knows everything positively possible... God is both the model of creation and the architect of the world, shaping it in accordance with his own nature, which he can, within limits, creatively change.¹⁴⁶

This is a somewhat different picture than the boring monotony which existence becomes according to the deterministic God of much traditional theology. It is also different to the passive 'sponge-like' God of Process theology.¹⁴⁷ Rather, God is the personal creator, a self-determining being. God is creative, and this creativity is guided by an immutable nature and purposes. As Ward says:

¹⁴⁵ Paul Fiddes likewise says, "there must be 'new possibilities' for God in two senses: *first*, there will be those that arise from the interaction between Creator and creatures as the Creator's work has an effect upon him, and *second* there will be those that God himself conceives spontaneously from his own creative imagination as the work proceeds." *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 96. Jürgen Moltmann suggests a similar (though in my opinion, less satisfactory) dialectical relationship between God and 'heaven'. For Moltmann, the created 'heaven' is the realm of potentialities, somewhat like the Platonic world of Forms. cf. Jürgen Moltmann's *God in Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1985) 165-167.

¹⁴⁶ K. Ward *Rational Theology* 154-155; also see *Holding Fast to God: A Reply to Don Cupitt* (London: S.P.C.K., 1982) 33. Paul Fiddes illustrates this with the analogy of an artist: "He will have the potential form of it in his mind as he begins, but in his interaction with the materials of his creation he will discover new aspects to his purpose, and the actuality will have novel features to its. There is some co-creativity between artist and medium, some playful development of artistic purpose." *The Creative Suffering of God* 56.

¹⁴⁷ But "sponge-like" in only one pole. Charles Hartshorne argues for an actual-potential dipolarity. The 'actual' pole is like Aristotle's pure actuality, without potentiality. cf. J.E. Barnhart 'God, Genes and Chance' in *Existence of God: Essays from the Basic Issues Forum* ed. J.R. Jacobson & R.L. Mitchell (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) 183-197, 192.

He contains within his being certain necessary, immutable archetypes of any possible creation; these set the limits of all possible worlds, though they are not exhaustively specified to cover every actual eventuality. They will include patterns of rationality and moral ideals as well as specifications of descriptive properties.¹⁴⁸

God is open to the future, and his Love is never exhausted. Infinite potentiality implies limitless possibilities for actuality. It is then with disappointment that Peter Forster notes (with special reference to Irenaeus) that "although the patristic authors could conceive God as essentially 'rich', they did not explicate this richness in terms of resourcefulness and adaptability, because of the underlying axiom of unchangeability..."¹⁴⁹ In the tradition of Schelling, we may then affirm that God is both potential and actual,¹⁵⁰ or as Daniel Hardy says, "God is a dynamic structured relationality in whom there is an infinite possibility of life."¹⁵¹

148 K. Ward *Rational Theology*, also "The eternal archetypes, the Forms, are not themselves causes, since the realities in which they instantiated are contingent. They are used as models for actualizing entities; they necessarily limit the activity of the causal power, being parts of his nature." 165, see also p.63 - "...in the primary being, one finds, not all actual properties, but the *ideas* of all possible properties together with a principle governing the actualization of some of them."

149 Peter R. Forster 'Divine Passibility and the Early Christian Doctrine of God' in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990) 23-51, 43, with reference to his *God and the Word in St. Irenaeus* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1985).

150 Joseph A. Bracken 'Freedom and Causality in the Philosophy of Schelling' *The New Scholasticism* 50 (1976) 164-182. Bracken notes that according to Schelling, "God can indeed exist as both potential and actual Being, provided that these principles do not exist simultaneously but instead follow one another in a definite order within the world-process. That is, God chooses to exist first as potential Being, but only so that He can then exist as actual Being, its dialectical opposite. Potential Being is thus the Antecedent (*Grund*) for actual Being in the world-process and God himself is their transcendent unity." (179).

151 Daniel W. Hardy 'The Spirit of God in Creation and Reconciliation' in *Christ and Context: The Confrontation between Gospel and Culture* ed. H.D. Regan & A.J. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993) 237-258, 251.

8. Is there a Best Possible World?

Closely related to the two 'perfection' arguments of Plato and Aristotle, is the question of whether or not there can be a best possible world. If so, this precludes progress towards the 'better', of greater richness and variety, and of increased happiness or good (moral value). Therefore, various philosophers have challenged the coherence of the concept of a 'best possible world' (against Leibniz),¹⁵² and I believe their argument can be extended to asking if there is a best possible God. Plato connected the two when he held that a perfect God must create the very best world.¹⁵³ But if there is room for improvement with a finite world, without this implying a defect, why should 'perfection' be the label attached to God's creative acts? If a best possible world is the necessary creative act of a perfect God, then such a God would not only have no choice about which possible worlds to create, but also no choice not to create it - if this god is the best of all possible gods! There is a finality about the concept of 'best' which does not sit well with infinity, nor with the 'perfection' of freedom not bound by compulsion. We may compare this with the biblical notion of τέλειος, which is about maturity and wholeness rather than simply arrival at a static state or qualitative end-point.¹⁵⁴ This would indicate that perfection, besides being a term for 'completion', is also a relational term¹⁵⁵ - with 'perfection' being relative to and expressed by a given relationship rather than an abstract absolute.¹⁵⁶

152 Robert M. Adams 'Must God create the Best?' *Philosophical Review* 81 (1972) 317-332; David Blumenfeld 'Is the Best Possible World Possible?' *Philosophical Review* 84 (1975) 163-177; Bruce R. Reichenbach 'Must God Create the Best Possible World' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 19 (1979) 203-212; Laura L. Garcia 'Divine Freedom and Creation' *Philosophical Quarterly* 42 (1992) 191-213; Robert Elliot 'Divine Perfection, Axiology and the No Best World Defence' *Religious Studies* 29.4 (1993) 533-542; J.F. Ross 'Did God Create the Only Possible World?' *The Review of Metaphysics* 16.1 (1962) 14-25.

153 Plato *Timaeus* 29E-30A.

154 R. Schippers 'τέλειος' *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology - Vol 2.* ed. C. Brown (translated from *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* ed. L. Coenan, E. Beyreuther, and H. Bientahard; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) 59-66.

155 This seems to be especially the case in the New Testament epistle - 1 John, a truth which is subsequently compromised in the individualistic notions of Christian perfection/holiness (via ἄσκησις and θεωρία) under the influence of Neoplatonic mysticism.

156 See also Theodore Guleserian 'Can Moral Perfection be an Essential Attribute?' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46.2 (1985) 219-241; A.A. Howsepian 'Is God Necessarily Good?' *Religious Studies* 27.4 (1991) 473-484. Howsepian argues that God is not necessary and maximally good because God cannot *refrain* from evil, so God is contingently good (483).

9. God becomes what he was not before, without ceasing to be what he always was.

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν,... (John 1;14)

This statement from the prologue of John's Gospel, affirms the historical 'becoming' of the Logos, a becoming human. The phrase cannot be weakened to that of a divine appearance in human form,¹⁵⁷ a statement then compatible with docetism. This verse is the one explicit statement in the New Testament about the incarnation,¹⁵⁸ a change from one state of being to another.¹⁵⁹ It may therefore be polemic against such docetic notions popular in mythology and 'Gnosticism'.¹⁶⁰ Rudolf Schnackenburg underlines the significance of this verse:

157 "This is a clear assertion of the historicity and reality of the incarnation. It is not possible to weaken its force to that of a divine appearance among men (so Käsemann)." - J.D.G. Dunn *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977) 300; "The force of 'became' (ἐγένετο) cannot be weakened either by putting the emphasis on the third clause (against E. Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, 1966, ET 1968, ch. II), or by attempting to deny the most obvious meaning of σὰρξ ἐγένετο (against K. Berger, 'Zu "das Word ward Fleisch" John 1.14a', *NovT* 16, 1974, pp.161-6..." - J.D.G. Dunn *Christology in the Making: An Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: SCM, 1980) 347; "... the Logos became flesh - not merely entered into, clothed himself with (as the Spirit did Gideon - Judg. 6.34), nor merely appeared as (as Yahweh appeared to Abraham - Gen. 18), but became flesh." - *Christology in the Making* 240-241.

158 J.D.G. Dunn *Christology in the Making* - "Here we have an explicit statement of *incarnation*, the first, and indeed only such statement in the New Testament." 241.

159 G.R. Beaseley-Murray - "Σὰρξ ἐγενέτο is more emphatic than the related ἐφάερωθη ἐν σαρκί, "who was manifested in the flesh," of 1 Tim 3:16. On ἐγένετο Richter commented: "The verb γίνομαι in connection with a predicative noun expresses that a person or a thing changes its property or enters into a new condition, becomes something that it was not before" (*Fleischwerdung*, 88). In this context that "something" is *flesh*. The assertion excludes any notion of Docetism, "naive" or otherwise. The Logos in becoming σὰρξ participated in man's creaturely weakness (the characteristic meaning of "flesh" in the Bible)." - *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Texas, 1987) 13-14.

160 Raymond E. Brown says, "Is there a polemic intent in vs. 14a? Certainly its theology would not have been compatible to Gnostic or Docetic strains of thought... The Prologue does not say that the Word entered into flesh or abided in flesh but that the Word *became* flesh. Therefore, instead of supplying the liberation from the material world that the Greek mind yearned for, the Word of God was not inextricably bound to human history. Yet, while 14a would not be acceptable to some of the schools of philosophical or theological thought in the Hellenistic world, we cannot be certain that it was written against such views. The Johannine Epistles are more clearly polemic, as in I John iv 2-3: "Every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ *come in the flesh* belongs to God, while every spirit that severs Jesus does not belong to God" (also II John 7). There *may* be an element of polemic on this point in the Gospel in passages like vi 51-59 and xix 34-35. We may note finally that the hymn's stress on flesh in vs. 14a is somewhat different from the attitude in the editorial comment on the hymn in 13, where it is emphasized that God's children were not begotten by the desire of the flesh." - *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)* (New York: Doubleday, 1966) 31-32.

"This is something new (καί...) and unique, which took place only once, a real event (ἐγένετο). The καί indicates in the original hymn to the Logos a stage of historical progress (it is, therefore, a καί which really marks an advance)... That the marvellous process of the Incarnation is in the nature of a historical event, is brought out by the ἐγένετο which follows the series of ἐν (vv. 1, 4, 9, 10). It is a different γίνεσθαι from the "appearance" of John the Baptist (v.6) and the "coming to be" of creation (vv. 3, 10b); the context alone provides the key."¹⁶¹

Christ is no 'phantasma' (Marcion), but *incarnatus - incarnatio* (σαρκωθείς – σάρκωσις), according to those who opposed the docetism of the second century Gnostics.¹⁶² But by the time of Athanasius, the σὰρξ ἐγένετο has been seriously compromised by the Hellenistic notion of immutability/impassibility, resulting in a 'Space-suit Christology'¹⁶³ with docetic cracks. So Athanasius concludes that "since it was impossible for Him to die, inasmuch as He is immortal and the Son of the Father, he took a human body which could die" (*De Incarnatione* 9, cf. 20). The incarnation (and the cross) is then an 'outward' becoming (τὰ ἡμῶν ἐμιμήσατο - 'he imitated our characteristics'¹⁶⁴), but no real change¹⁶⁵ - the common interpretation which only stresses the latter part of the phrase...

The Word became flesh... and did not cease to be what he was before.

Jerome, *Adv. Jovinianum*, II, 29.¹⁶⁶

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- 161 Rudolf Schnackenburg *The Gospel According to John - Vol. 1* (trans. K. Smyth; New York: Herder & Herder, 1965) 266.
- 162 Melito, Justin, Hippolytus - cf. Aloys Grillmeier *Christ in Christian Tradition* (Vol. 1; trans. J. Bowden; London: Mowbrays, 1975 - second revised edition) 96.
- 163 R.P.C. Hanson *The Search for the Christian God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) 488, 456.
- 164 Athanasius *Orations against the Arians* iii.57. For further 'docetic' references see Hanson *The Search for the Christian God* 488.
- 165 Though in his reference to the teachings of Athanasius, John of Damascus says that in the incarnation of the Son something *new* has taken place in God - despite the unchangeableness of God. cf. T.F. Torrance *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 187 - with reference to John of Damascus *On the Orthodox Faith* 4.6, and Athanasius *Against Apollonarius* 2.1. Torrance goes on to explain, that while Athanasius affirmed the being and activity of God in the incarnation, there is no thought of a *becoming* which is "adventitious or accidental to God..." (p.200 - with reference to Athanasius *Contra Arianos* 1.17f, 20, 27f, 36; 2.38, 45; 3.65; 4.2; *De decretis* 22; *Ad Serapionem* 1.26; 3.3f; *Ad Afros* 8.). Torrance affirms that God does become (e.g. Creator), there is a before and after in God's activity, but also that in these events the 'eternal' God does not change - a "dynamic unchangeableness" cf. *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996) 208-209, 237-238.
- 166 As quoted by Rudolf Schnackenburg *The Gospel According to John - Vol. 1* (trans. K. Smyth; New York: Herder & Herder, 1965) 267.

In order to define what the Son became, Cyril of Alexandria spoke of the incarnate Logos as μία ὑπόστασις, avoiding both Apollinarianism and the earlier 'logos-sarx' Christology. Without ceasing to be God, the Logos did become human (not come into a human, or change into a human). The two natures (δύο φύσεις) are not divided in the one person – the μία ὑπόστασις (φύσις) τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη.¹⁶⁷ Pope Leo I, likewise steered a course between Nestorianism and Eutychianism,¹⁶⁸ affirming the 'dipolar' nature of the one person (ἐκ δύο φύσεων εἷς), the 'one' in whom there is *communio* or *communicatio idiomatum* (exchange of predicates) - divine and human.¹⁶⁹

The Chalcedonian creed again rejected both heresies - separation and confusion, though debate continued for centuries over the 'Nestorian' flavour of ἐν δύο φύσεσιν (so without confusion, the differences remaining) rather than 'from two natures' (Cyril), despite the Council's assertion of one person, one hypostasis.

For our purpose in relating this back to John 1:14, the Chalcedonian definition emphasised that the incarnate Son did not cease to be what he always was as deity (i.e. ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν Θεότητα), and that he was truly human (i.e. ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα), however that union may be expressed. But a suspicion lingers regarding the 'union' in which two different states remain - the impassible deity, and the passible humanity.¹⁷⁰ Despite the assertions of Cyril, Leo, and the fathers of Chalcedon regarding 'one nature', a dualistic heritage is maintained in their statements - Jesus sometimes acts as God, sometimes as man.¹⁷¹ His humanity has its *hypostasis* in the Logos

167 Aloys Grillmeier *Christ in Christian Tradition - Vol. 1.* 473-483, 482.

168 To use a metaphor commonly drawn from Odysseus' voyage between Scylla and Charybdis. cf. Homer *The Odyssey* Book XII, 217-304.

169 Aloys Grillmeier *Christ in Christian Tradition - Vol. 1.* 530-536. Yet the *communicatio idiomatum* formula is inadequate if understood as Marcel Sarot interprets the Classical doctrine: "the *communicatio idiomatum* only applies to the conjunction of concrete and concrete, not to the conjunction of abstract and abstract. The divine *nature* does not share in the attributes of the human nature, and vice versa, and one cannot say that the divine *nature* has suffered. In other words, the flesh of Christ is the *medium passionis*: it is only by his union with the flesh that the divine Logos, though his nature remains impassible, can suffer." "Suffering of Christ, Suffering of God?" *Theology* 95 (1992) 113-119, 115.

170 The fathers of the Council also decreed that, "those who dare assert that the deity of the Only-begotten is passible it expels from the college of priests." cf. T. Herbert Bindley *The Oecumenical Documents of the Faith* (London: Methuen & Co, 1899) 232-233.

171 Citations from Cyril, Leo, and the Council of Chalcedon in A.N.S. Lane 'Christology Beyond Chalcedon' in *Christ the Lord* ed. H.H. Rowdon (Leicester: IVP) 257-279, 267-268; J. McIntyre *The Shape of Christology* (London: SCM, 1966) 83f. Yet Cyril could also paradoxically say ἀπαθῶς ἔπαθεν (he suffered without suffering) - cf. F. M. Young *From Nicea to Chalcedon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 261.

(*enhypostasia*), a 'union' by assumption¹⁷² of 'passible' humanity by the Logos,¹⁷³ not a 'becoming' human of the immutable Logos.¹⁷⁴

This fault is rectified in connection with the theopaschite formula promoted after Chalcedon, by the Cyrillian 'Neo-Chalcedonians'.¹⁷⁵ John of Scythopolis phrased this as εἷς τῆς τριάδος ὁ παθῶν ('one of the Trinity suffered'), thereby underlining Cyril's emphasis that the Word is the subject of the incarnation.¹⁷⁶ But the main champion of the Neo-Chalcedonian position in this period was Leontius of Jerusalem (who wrote during the period 538-544).¹⁷⁷ He emphasised that the two natures of the incarnate Son (divine and human) are both enhypostasized in the one hypostasis of the Word.¹⁷⁸ This is a dipolarity, a dyophysitism in one (not 'in one nature').¹⁷⁹ On this basis, Leontius set out to

172 The 'assumption' (*assumptus*) theory of the incarnation gained popularity in Medieval theology, but was firmly rejected by Aquinas. However, in its place Aquinas developed the concept of *relatio rationis*. Hans Küng explains: "This means that the divine Logos remains unchanged in the incarnation; what is changed is the human nature, which is taken up into the divine person. The human nature has a real relationship - a *relatio realis* - to the Logos. On the other hand, the Logos has only a conceptual relationship - a *relatio rationis* - to the human nature." Aristotle's God then remains immutable in the incarnation. cf. H. Küng *The Incarnation of God: An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology* (trans. J.R. Stephenson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987) 531-532.

173 In which case the humanity suffers, but not the Logos - who is only aware of the suffering. However, there can be no suffering unless *someone* actually suffers.

174 Jaroslav Pelikan *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine - 1. The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition 100-600* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971) 230ff. - "... such a suggestion was, Cyril asserted, 'nothing other than sheer sophistry and trumpery' and 'the fabrication of a deranged mind'." (247) Cyril then concludes that he, "is unchangeable according to nature, remains completely what he was and ever is." (248 - with references to Cyril *That Christ is One*).

175 Peter Fuller (470) the Scythian monks (518), John of Scythopolis (519), Leontius of Jerusalem (538-544) and also Emperor Justinian's decree of 533.

176 Patrick T.R. Gray *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East; 451-553* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979) 111-115.

177 A detailed study of his theology may be found in Aloys Grillmeier *Christ in Christian Tradition: Volume Two - From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)* (trans. J. Cawte & P. Allen; London: Mowbray, 1995) 276-312.

178 "Whenever there exist natures, it is necessary for them to subsist, and to be enhypostatic. On the other hand, when they do not exist individually apart from each other, and a union of them takes place by their coming together, it is not necessary for each to subsist individually. It is evident, therefore, that they do not differ in hypostasis; rather, the enhypostasization of both of them ought to be considered in one and the same hypostasis." - P.T.R. Gray's translation of Leontius' *Treatise Against the Nestorians* (ed. J.P. Migne in *Patrologiae graecae*, Vol. LXXXVI, 1. Paris: 1865) coll. 1561C4-10, cf. Gray's *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East; 451-553*, 129, and Gray's commentary p.129-136; also Nicholas J. Moutafakis 'Christology and the Philosophical Complexities in the Thought of Leontius of Byzantium' *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 10.2 (1993) 99-119.

179 Gray summarises this achievement: "Leontius... recovers the full Cyrillian dyophysitism of Chalcedon by the highly appropriate means of developing the full Chalcedonian formula. The key to this solution is, of course, the development of the notion of 'hypostasis' to mean the concrete individual entity in which each universal nature is concretized to produce a particular example of the species. The price paid for this solution is the loss - if it is a loss - of the *homo assumptus* of the more radical Antiochenes..." P.T.R. Gray *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East* 139.

defend the theopaschite formula - 'one of the Holy Trinity has suffered in the flesh'.¹⁸⁰

We do not say that the Word suffered or was born simply by appropriation of the flesh, but since, through the union of particular [natures] into one hypostatic whole, the names of each of the natures can be predicated of the whole... It is correct, since the flesh of Christ suffered, to say that the impassible Word himself suffered through the union, and not through an appropriation only.¹⁸¹

The Council of Constantinople (553 AD) endorsed the theopaschite formula - an affirmation, which though it may still be interpreted in Cyrilline terms, is often neglected in studies of patristic Christology.¹⁸²

Leaping to the twentieth century, we may detect a trace of docetism in Karl Barth's exposition of John 1:14, in his essay 'The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country'.¹⁸³ I make this observation recognising that Barth responded against docetism by emphasising the particularity and historicity of Jesus. He stands firmly in a tradition which emphasises the reality of the incarnation. However, the 'trace' element of docetism which I refer to is indicated when Barth interprets the $\sigma\alpha\rho\zeta \ \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$ as the immutable Logos taking on the form of a servant (which he always was),¹⁸⁴ in which "he does not change in giving Himself. He simply activates and reveals Himself *ad extra*, in the world."¹⁸⁵ The

¹⁸⁰ Book 7 of *Adv. Nest.* (see Gray's *The Defence of Chalcedon in the East* 136ff., for references).

¹⁸¹ Leontius of Jerusalem *Treatise Against the Nestorians* (Migne - Col. 1768^hB9-D3), cf. P.T.R. Gray *The Defence of Chalcedon in the East* 138.

¹⁸² Richard Bauckham 'In Defence of *The Crucified God* in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990) 93-118, 109. Bauckham notes that the Council of Constantinople "maintained that 'Jesus Christ who was crucified in the flesh is true God and the Lord of glory and one of the Holy Trinity' (the statement alludes to 1 Corinthians 2:8 as the proof text for saying that God was crucified)." T.E. Pollard notes that "it took Christian theology nearly four hundred years to work this one Greek philosophical idea out of its system [i.e. impassibility]. It was not to remain outside Christian theology, however, for it was brought back by the Scholastic theology..." cf. 'The Impassibility of God' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8.4 (1955) 353-364, 359.

¹⁸³ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/1* (trans. G.W. Bromiley & T.F. Torrance; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956) 157-210. For a criticism of Barth's theology of Christ's humanity cf. R.D. Williams 'Barth on the Triune God' *Karl Barth - Studies of his Theological Method* ed. S.W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) 147-193, 172ff. with reference to Gustaf Wingren *Theology in Conflict: Nygren, Barth, Bultmann* (trans. E.H. Wahlstrom; London, 1958): "Barth's frame of reference, Wingren claims, is a model of two 'beings', a higher (God) and a lower (man), separated by an epistemological gulf... The Incarnation is seen as essentially *manifestation*... Similarly, 'The statement, "the word became flesh", ought to be rendered "the word assumed flesh". Not even in Christ can the gulf between God and man cease to exist, because God can never act as man or *in* man, only through man."

¹⁸⁴ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/1* 189-192.

¹⁸⁵ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/1* 204. Hans Urs von Balthasar likewise regards the incarnation as an 'eternal' event in the life of God, such that the temporal event is a manifestation of this in time. cf.

'flesh' of John 1:14 is then interpreted as the state of identification with sinful humanity,¹⁸⁶ not a becoming something he was not before.¹⁸⁷ As the title of the essay indicates, the incarnation is a 'revelatory' journey for God the Son (collecting baggage on the way?), but no real change for the traveller. The 'eternal' enters the temporal, without ceasing to be eternal.¹⁸⁸

John 1:14 is then interpreted (by Barth) in terms of the *kenosis* of Philippians 2:7 - the Son of God "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave" (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφῆν δούλου λαβών). But even here the new conditions, if real for the incarnate Son, involve a change - a becoming (without ceasing to be what he always was). The following is a summary of 'moderate' British kenotic Christology this century,¹⁸⁹ which endeavours to account for this change/becoming (without suggesting that God becomes other than God). This 'kenotic' theology suggests that the hypostatic union is not a combination of incompatible substances, but is based on something in common to deity and humanity, namely 'person'.¹⁹⁰ The transition from divine person to divine/human person involves a real change, but not of person.

In 1909, P.T. Forsyth said that the divine attributes were retracted in the incarnation from actual to potential: "An attribute cannot be laid down, for it is only the Being himself in a certain angle and relation."¹⁹¹ These relations determine its mode of being. "Thus omniscience and the rest are not so much attributes as functions of attributes, or their modifications." God's attributes in the incarnation therefore become 'limited' or conditioned by divine love. But corresponding to *kenosis* is *plerosis* ('filling', 'fulfilment') - the progressive

Gerald F. O'Hanlon *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 25, 28.

186 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/1* 165, 171.

187 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/1* 179. Yet Barth later contradicts this by saying "He becomes what He had not previously been." (203), but also - "God's becoming a creature, becoming man - and how this is possible to God without an alteration of His being is not self-evident..." (185).

188 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/1* 187-8. A useful contrast of Athanasius and Barth regarding the eternal God acting in time is made by E.P. Meijering *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius - Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974) 150-160.

189 It should be noted before proceeding, that kenotic Christology has often been rejected by those with a defective Trinitarian theology e.g. by W. Temple *Christus Veritus* (London: Macmillan, 1924) 142-143. The *kenosis* applies to the Son, not the other persons of the Trinity. For a positive assessment of Kenotic Christology, see O.C. Quick *Doctrines of the Creed* (London: Nisbet & Co, 1954) 132-139.

190 As Thomas G. Weinandy argues, "...the divine and eternal Son, in the Incarnation, has now identified himself with a human 'I'. cf. *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 117.

191 P.T. Forsyth *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (London: Hodder, 1909) 293f., 307-308. So, according to Forsyth, God is not made up of different components called attributes. Though we use the word 'attribute' differently when we speak about humans, we can still use a human analogy to illustrate this. One human 'attribute' is 'intellect', the ability to reason or think. The mode or form in which that intellect is displayed changes depending on who we might be communicating with.

regaining and "growth *in* what he was, and not simply *to* what he might be. It was not acquiring what he had not, but appropriating and realising what he had."¹⁹² It was coming to his own unique self. Forsyth then realised the defect in most kenotic theories, that they turn on only one side of the experience of Christ, namely his descent and humiliation. Yet even Forsyth's theory entails some Neoplatonic re-ascent (the return to 'actual'), and no real becoming.

In 1912, H.R. Macintosh followed Forsyth in regarding the divine attributes as transposed in the incarnation, from actual to potential.¹⁹³ Regarding 'plerosis', "it can only have been in mature manhood and perhaps intermittently that Christ became aware of His divinity - which must have remained for Him an object of *faith* to the very end."¹⁹⁴ In 1966, Vincent Taylor went on to describe further this 'plerosis' process:

Within the limitations of the human life of Jesus His consciousness of Sonship was gained through the knowledge that God was His Father, mediated by prayer and communion with Him in a process of growth and development which begins before the opening of the historic ministry and is consummated in decisive experiences of revelation and intuition.¹⁹⁵

Taylor adds the following points to his 'definition' of kenoticism. Firstly, the Logos did not add humanity to his divine nature, for a Christology of this kind suggests that the human form is a guise (*Krupsis*), or that the humanity of Christ was impersonal. Secondly, a pre-temporal act of the will (i.e. by the pre-

¹⁹² P.T. Forsyth *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* 342

¹⁹³ H.R. Macintosh *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912) 477ff.

¹⁹⁴ H.R. Macintosh *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* 481. Vincent Taylor comments on Macintosh's use of the word 'intermittently' in this quote. "This phrase... is not applied to the actuality of Christ's Sonship, but to its expression in His human consciousness. Christ is in truth the Son of God at all times, in His humiliation as well as in His exaltation, both when He affirms it and when He is silent. Even so the word 'intermittently' is not well chosen, since it suggests an oscillation in the consciousness of Sonship comparable to the revolving light in a lighthouse when bright illumination is followed by deeper darkness. If we have regard to the evidence in the Gospels, there are different levels of consciousness, and it is the merit of a kenotic Christology that it takes account of this evidence. As a babe, Christ was unconscious of His divine Sonship, and this condition may have extended into youth and early manhood, although, according to Lk.ii.41-52, already at the age of twelve He spoke in an intimate sense of 'My Father'. Moreover, the times when His knowledge of divine Sonship was at its full intensity imply, as their correlative, seasons when it was less intense. The analogy of the lighthouse has at least this suggestiveness that even when the beam is not visible, its potentiality is not destroyed, since after darkness light flashes yet again across the waters." - Vincent Taylor *The Person of Christ in the New Testament Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1966) 301-302.

¹⁹⁵ Vincent Taylor *The Person of Christ in the New Testament Teaching* 186. In a later chapter Taylor again states: "The *locus* or seat of the divine, if we may use such expressions, was His conscious life in decisive experiences of revelation, meditation, and prayer; but, just because of this fact, His unconscious life was also invaded by divine grace and power, and although unperceived, was a matrix through which His divine consciousness re-emerged fructified and renewed in the abiding conviction that He was in truth the Son of God." 285.

existent Jesus), makes self-limitation possible. "The renunciation of divine glory, by which the Son of God enters the world, is the supreme act of love which engages the activity of the Trinity." Further to this we may note that kenosis applies to the incarnate Son, and not a kenosis of all three persons of the Trinity (though all are affected by the event).¹⁹⁶ Thirdly, the unity of the person of Christ is maintained in kenotic Christology. "The human will is the divine will restrained by conditions which are accepted fully and completely. His will is the subject of His divine life, and by self-limitation is also the subject of His human existence."

C.F.D. Moule, in 1972, took the 'plerosis' concept one stage further. 'Emptying' is really 'fulfilling': *kenosis* actually is *plerosis*; which means that the human limitations of Jesus are seen as a positive expression of his divinity rather than as a curtailment of it.

This is a principle which is undoubtedly borne out in aesthetic experience. Anybody will recognise, for instance, that creative art involves an acceptance, and a positive use, of limitation. A craftsman in wood has to know all about the grain and the capacities of the wood he is working with, and, by accepting them and working within them, he exploits them in such a way as to express himself to the full as a craftsman in wood carving. So God the creator, when working in humanity, may be expected to express himself most fully, so far as the idiom of that medium goes, by accepting the human range of capacity and exploiting the human medium to the full. This is no more self-emptying than it is complete self-fulfilment in a given medium... Fulfilment in any given medium and on any given level of expression involves acceptance and full affirmation of the medium of the level. On that showing, it is arguable that 'emptying' is a positively misleading description of the activity.¹⁹⁷

Being is fulfilled in becoming. In this there is a continuity of being. But can we say more - that in 'becoming' more is added (not simply *kenosis* is *plerosis*)? Was not Christ made perfect in his sufferings¹⁹⁸ - a becoming which took the Son of God beyond the pre-incarnate experience? This would regard 'becoming'

¹⁹⁶ For a discussion on this point, see Ronald J. Feenstra 'Reconsidering Kenotic Christology' in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays* ed. R.J. Feenstra & C. Plantinga Jr. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 128-152, 140-144.

¹⁹⁷ C.F.D. Moule 'The Manhood of Jesus in the New Testament' in *Christ Faith and History* ed. S.W. Sykes and J.P. Clayton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 98. Jürgen Moltmann likewise says that "the traditional doctrine of God's kenosis has always looked at just the one aspect of God's self-limitation, self-emptying and self-humiliation. It has overlooked the other side: God's limitations inwardly are de-limitations outwards. God is nowhere greater than in his humiliation. God is nowhere more glorious than in his impotence. God is nowhere more divine than when he becomes man." - *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1981) 119.

¹⁹⁸ Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 7:28.

as more real than simply a sub-category of being, but rather dipolar to 'being'. Becoming is then both continuous *and* discontinuous.¹⁹⁹ In his book *Divine Substance*, Christopher Stead draws attention to this:

There must be some continuity in our experience, since there could be no knowledge at all if there were no recognition; and there must be some continuity in each individual thing if we are to be justified in calling it a single persistent reality. But this continuity does not require that some one feature of that thing persists without change throughout its existence; just as - to use an illustration of Wittgenstein's - if a rope is continuous from end to end, this does not require that one or more of its fibres must reach from end to end.²⁰⁰

God becomes, without ceasing to be what God has always been. It is here, says Karl Rahner, that "the traditional philosophy and theology of the schools begins to blink and stutter."²⁰¹ Rahner courageously goes on to affirm that the "immutable God" does have a history, and that the incarnation is "a process which *he* underwent."²⁰² Also, despite my earlier observations regarding Karl Barth's theology, Charles Hartshorne records that in his one brief encounter with Barth, Hartshorne said that God changes. Barth apparently responded eagerly, "I say that, too."²⁰³

199 James W. Flett 'Philosophical Understanding and the Continuity of Becoming' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 18:4 (1978) 375-393. This represents a midway position between A.N. Whitehead (becoming is atomic, discontinuous; the continuity is in potentiality) and Henri Bergson (becoming is continuous).

200 Christopher Stead *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 22.

201 Karl Rahner 'On the Theology of the Incarnation' in *Theological Investigations Volume IV* (trans. K. Smyth; London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974) 105-120, 113.

202 Karl Rahner 'On the Theology of the Incarnation' 113. The force of this statement is reduced when Rahner continues... "God can become something, he who is unchangeable in himself can *himself* become subject to change in *something else*." cf. J. Norman King & Barry L. Whitney 'Rahner and Hartshorne on Divine Immutability' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 22 (1982) 195-209.

203 Charles Hartshorne 'Process Theology in Historical and Systematic Contexts' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 221-231; also C. Hartshorne 'Some Causes of My Intellectual Growth' in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle: Open Court, 1991) 3-45, 40.

10. He became what we are, in order that we might become what he is.

Morna Hooker has shown that the 'formula of interchange' is a significant feature of St. Paul's theology.²⁰⁴ This is the description of the Son of God becoming what we are - sinful humanity, and so overcoming the barriers of sin and death, thereby restoring humanity to its pristine condition 'in Christ' resurrected.²⁰⁵

2 Cor. 8:9 "... though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."

Christ identifies with the 'fallen' Adam and renews this humanity becoming the 'new' Adam, the true *ἐκὼν Θεοῦ*. Salvation for humans is by participation in these two movements, the putting to death of the old *and* the recreation of a new humanity.

The title for this section, taken from Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* Book 5, Introduction), likewise indicates that the human 'becoming' in salvation (*theosis*) is dependent upon the divine becoming.²⁰⁶ This is a central idea in Irenaeus' theology.

How shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man? (*Adv. H.* Book 4, 33.4. cf. 38.4)

The Son of God became the Son of Man, that man... might become the son of God. (*Adv. H.* Book III, 19.1)

It is debatable what Irenaeus means by God 'becoming'.²⁰⁷ But if he can say that God suffers (*Adv. H.* III.16.6),²⁰⁸ it is evident that he could not follow his Gnostic opponents with the concept of complete immutability. So in radical contrast to the docetic Christology of the Gnostics, Trevor Hart says of Irenaeus that he "realizes that it is precisely the *becoming* of God within this history that

²⁰⁴ Morna Hooker *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and 'Chalcedon and the New Testament' in *The Making and Remaking of Christian Doctrine: Essays in Honour of Maurice Wiles* ed. S. Coakley & D.A. Pailin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 73-93.

²⁰⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Romans 5:12-21; 6:3-4; Romans 8; Philippians 2-3.

²⁰⁶ Compare this with Athanasius' *De Incarnatione* 54, and *Epist. ad Adelph.* 4.

²⁰⁷ Irenaeus also draws on the Platonic distinction between being and becoming to say that only God *is*, and that all else becomes. cf. *Adv. H.* II, 13.3; 34.2.

²⁰⁸ See also *Adv. H.* III.12.2-3; cf. 16.1; 16.5.; 16.9; 11.7.

saves mankind. God *becomes* a man. This is what the Greek mind cannot tolerate, and what Irenaeus knows must be proclaimed, for it is in this *becoming* that the redemption is wrought."²⁰⁹ This is the backbone of Irenaeus' theology of recapitulation (*recapitulatio*, ἀνακεφαλαίωσις).

In Christ, all of human existence and history is brought together for renewal in Christ's own life and ministry.

He has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who at the beginning had led us away captive in Adam... in order that, as our species went down to death through a vanquished man, so we may ascend to life again through a victorious one (*Adv. H.* Book 5, 21.3.).

This is a mirroring process, of two ends meeting, of movement and reversal. So Jesus goes over the same ground as Adam, but in the reverse direction. Adam trod the path in disobedience, and the new Adam travels the same path obediently in the opposite direction, with the result of passing through death to life. The disobedience at the tree in the garden of Eden, is reversed by the obedience of Jesus on the Cross (*Adv. H.* V.16.3). The barrier is broken, enabling us to pass back beyond the fall to the uncorrupted 'original' state.

... our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men, that he might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God. (*Adv. H.* IV.20.4.)

While the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is important, Irenaeus does not isolate this event from the whole process of Christ's advance and victories against the enemy. As Gustaf Wingren puts it, "recapitulation means the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation, and this accomplishment is within history, in a time-sequence, and is not an episode at one particular point in time. It is a continuous process in which the οἰκονομία, *dispositio*, of God is manifested in degrees."²¹⁰ So the whole Christ 'process', through his birth and on through to his resurrection, is integral to recapitulation. Christ returns us to

²⁰⁹ Trevor Hart 'Irenaeus, Recapitulation and Physical Redemption' in *Christ In Our Place* ed. T. Hart & D. Thimell (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989) 152-181, 178.

²¹⁰ Gustaf Wingren *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (trans. R. MacKenzie; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959) 81.

God's creation purpose, that of growth toward ever increasing maturity in relation to God.²¹¹ There is a divine becoming to enable this human becoming.

11. God Crucified - the Suffering God

Protarchus. Certainly it's not likely that the gods experience pleasure or its opposite.

Socrates. Not at all likely. Either would be quite unfitting...

(Plato *Philebus* 33a)²¹²

There has always been an alternate tradition to this 'abstract' Platonic theology in Christianity, which is more 'concrete' or realistic in its encounter with Christ's passion. Hans Urs von Balthasar recognises this "affective theology" in persons such as Ignatius of Antioch, Antony of Egypt, Francis of Assisi, and Ignatius of Loyola.²¹³ In the above section and the previous chapter I have recognised the same in the theology of Irenaeus, Lactantius, the anonymous *Commentary on the Psalms* from Tura, then also in the theopaschite formula of the sixth century (Section 9, above).

There is also the remarkable pre-Christian theology of God in the writings of the Jewish prophets, which recognises the *pathos* of God. The classic work on this is by Abraham J. Heschel.²¹⁴ His main focus is on the prophets being affected while 'caught up' in the divine pathos.²¹⁵ God is affected, moved,

211 God created humans with the potential to grow, and therefore Irenaeus compares this state with that of children (νήπιος; cf. *Epid.* 12), deliberately avoiding the notion of original completeness (*Adv. H.* IV, 38.1).

212 Plato *Philebus* - translated with Notes and Commentary by J.C.B. Gosling (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) 27.

213 Hans Urs von Balthasar *Mysterium Paschale* (trans. A. Nichols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990) 36-41.

214 Abraham J. Heschel *The Prophets* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962).

215 "... the overwhelming impact of the divine pathos upon his mind and heart, completely involving and gripping his personality in its depths, and the unrelieved distress which sprang from his intimate involvement... the fundamental experience of the prophet is a fellowship with the feelings of God, a sympathy with the divine pathos, a communion with the divine consciousness which comes about through the prophet's reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos."; "For the phenomenology of religion the prophet represents a type *sui generis*. The pathos of God is upon him. It moves him. It breaks out in him like a storm in the soul, overwhelming his inner life, his thoughts, feelings, wishes, and hopes. It takes possession of his heart and mind, giving him the courage to act against the world... In prophetic sympathy, man is open to the presence and emotion of the transcendent Subject. He carries within himself the awareness of what is happening to God." - Abraham J. Heschel *The Prophets* 26, 308, 309.

aroused, concerned, stirred, etc., and this 'disturbs' the prophet. They learn that God's attitudes are transitive - in motion, dependent upon relationship. Pathos then is not an attribute, but a form of relationship, and contingent on relationship.²¹⁶ So in contrast to the Greek philosophers, the Jewish prophets were concerned about God's presence rather than essence, God's attitudes rather than attributes, God's relation rather than revelation to humanity.²¹⁷

"The most exalted idea applied to God is not infinite wisdom, infinite power, but infinite concern."²¹⁸ According to the Old Testament, God is disappointed and distressed by his people's faithlessness, he is pained and offended by their lack of response to his love, he grieves over his people even when he must be angry with them (Jer 31:30; Hos 11:8-9), and because of his concern for them he himself suffers with them in their sufferings (Isa 63:9). This indicates, as Terence Fretheim has well described, a relationship of reciprocity between the 'Old Testament' God and humanity.²¹⁹

Then regarding the revelation of God in Christ, as depicted in the New Testament, Martin Luther observed that what is most divine about God is seen in the crucifixion of Jesus (God is revealed under his opposite - *absconditas Dei sub contrario*). This 'theology of the cross' (*Kreuzestheologie*), a theology of the crucified Son of God, has been most eloquently developed by Jürgen Moltmann.²²⁰ It is in regard to this suffering, that P. Althaus has also described God's kenosis:

Christology must be thought out from the vantage-point of the Cross. In the total powerlessness, the death anguish, of the Crucified - from which one cannot keep unscathed the 'divine nature' - the full undiminished divinity of God is at work - 'My power is made perfect in weakness' (II Corinthians 12, 9), we recognise through faith in Jesus Christ as a law of the divine life itself. With this recognition, it is true, the old conception of God's immutability breaks into pieces. Christology must take seriously the fact that, in the Son,

²¹⁶ Abraham J. Heschel *The Prophets* 223-231. "There is no nexus of causality, but only one of contingency between human and divine attitudes, between human character and divine pathos." (225).

²¹⁷ See the summary of Heschel's theology - Bernhard W. Anderson 'Confrontation with the Bible' *Theology Today* 30.3 (1973) 267-271.

²¹⁸ Abraham J. Heschel *The Prophets* 241.

²¹⁹ Terence E. Fretheim *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

²²⁰ See especially Jürgen Moltmann 'The Crucified God' *Theology Today* 31 (1974) 6-18; *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (trans. R.A. Wilson & J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1974); *Jesus Christ for Today's World* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1994).

God himself really entered into suffering, and in that very entrance is and remains entirely God.²²¹

There are two aspects of suffering present here. Firstly the suffering which the cross means within the relationships of the Trinity, which is Moltmann's emphasis (i.e. a death in God), and secondly, the human suffering of the incarnate Son. Both are the suffering of the one God.

God is either capable of suffering, or is not. God is either a God of love, or not a God of love. There is no polarity of love - no love. In the same way theologians have spoken of an identity, or at least a correspondence, between the immanent and the economic Trinity, between God himself and God revealed. Yet many who agree that such is the case, still wish to retain a paradoxical separation. So, for example, Karl Barth says:

He is absolute, infinite, exalted, active, impassible, transcendent, but in all this He is the One who loves in freedom, the One who is free in His love, and therefore not His own prisoner. He is all this as the Lord, and in such a way that He embraces the opposites of these concepts even while He is superior to them.²²²

Paul Fiddes asks, "While Barth successfully shows that God can contain a polarity of exaltation and humility, the question is whether the polarity can also be specified in such terms as absolute and relative, infinite and finite, impassible and passible?"²²³ Barth does not bring together impassibility and passibility as a polarity, no doubt recognising the contradiction. Instead passibility is relegated to the work of God in human history (the economy), and is not carried back into the being of God. While Barth affirms that the God who reveals himself is the real God, there also paradoxically remains a different God behind this side-show.²²⁴ So, according to Fiddes' interpretation of Barth, passibility is a wedge driven between the immanent and the economic.²²⁵

Process theology falls into the same trap: God suffers in his contingent nature, but remains untouched in his transcendent nature. So in his 'primordial

²²¹ P. Althaus 'Kenosis' in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Vol. III; Tübingen, 1956-65) 1245ff. - as quoted by H.U. von Balthasar *Mysterium Paschale* 33. Further sections of Althaus' article are quoted by Hans Küng *The Incarnation of God: An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology* (trans. J.R. Stephenson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987) 539.

²²² Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics IV/I*, p.187, cf. III/1, 313.

²²³ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 116.

²²⁴ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 118-122.

²²⁵ However, this reading goes against much of Barth's understanding of God.

nature' (A.N. Whitehead) or 'abstract essence' (C. Hartshorne) God is not "affected by the world, he is unconscious of it; he is 'the uncaused cause, impassible, immutable and all the rest of it'."²²⁶ For Hartshorne, God's abstract essence "is totally closed to influence by the world because it is not at all relative to it."²²⁷ Process theology then argues for a so-called impassible - passible polarity, a transcendence cut off from immanence. But there is no such thing as an impassible-passible polarity, nor Barth's God who is superior to these opposites. God loves in transcendence and immanence.

The transcendence of a suffering God can only be understood as a transcendent suffering, not a transcendence beyond suffering, for only a God who happens as an event of relationships can be both other than and yet inclusive of the world. He can include all suffering in himself as he includes all human relationships, yet he is other than the world in his unique suffering, taking our suffering into himself out of the depths of the more profound and terrible suffering which remains his own.²²⁸

God is not ruled or dominated by suffering, the notion against which the doctrine of impassibility was developed. But neither is God unaffected by it, for God suffers, and by the measure of his love identifies with the worst of it without being overwhelmed. This does not make suffering unreal, or an 'imaginative response'.²²⁹ It is as a personal and loving God, that sympathy, and therefore suffering is real for God.²³⁰ The apostle John said that God *is love* (1 John 4:8), a statement which summarises a primary characteristic of God as depicted in Scripture.²³¹ Love is God's very nature, not merely one attribute,²³²

²²⁶ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 124. cf. C. Hartshorne *A Natural Theology for Our Time* (Open Court, 1967) 44, 27; A. Whitehead *Process and Reality* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1929) 134, 524; J. Norman King & Barry L. Whitney 'Rahner and Hartshorne on Divine Immutability' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 22 (1982) 195-209.

²²⁷ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 125. cf. Hartshorne *A Natural theology for our Time* 27; *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method* (London: SCM, 1970) 232.

²²⁸ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 143.

²²⁹ H.P. Owen *Concepts of Deity* (London: Macmillan, 1971) 23-24. Paul Fiddes objects to this notion, saying "it is hard to see the difference between suffering in imagination and experiencing the actual mental pain which Owen denies to God... it is questionable whether one can talk of an imaginative response anyway unless the responder knows what it is *like* to suffer." *The Creative Suffering of God* 59.

²³⁰ Divine suffering is an aspect of divine relationality. cf. Marcel Sarot 'Divine Compassion and the Meaning of Life' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 48.2 (1995) 155-168.

²³¹ Psalm 103:8; Isaiah 54:8; Deuteronomy 7:8; Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 63:9; Romans 5:8; John 3:16.

²³² Abraham H. Heschel *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 297; Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics 2/1* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957) 279; Emil Brunner *The Christian Doctrine of God* (trans. Olive Wyon; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949) 185; W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology - Volume 1* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 396.

but the essence of God which all statements about God repeat and amplify.²³³ Love means reciprocity. The one loved alters one's own experience. As Keith Ward has said, "when God returns to himself from his encounter with the other, he returns enriched."²³⁴ But does 'return' imply spatial extension?

12. God and Space

The final section of this chapter is the bridge to the next, and attempts to describe God's 'space'²³⁵ in the dipolar terms of other - related, as the spatial framework for being *and* becoming.

While God is omnipresent or omnispatial,²³⁶ God is also at times more intensely present (or present by different modes) at different times and places, according to the biblical story.²³⁷ Against the notion of an infinite (and thus 'divine') universe, the Bible describes the universe as created by an infinite God,²³⁸ or as the Jewish cabbalistic doctrine of *zimsum* says, in the space God ceded for it *in* God.²³⁹ God is neither wholly beyond the universe (Deism), nor

²³³ Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics 2/2* 283-284.

²³⁴ Keith Ward *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 142.

²³⁵ For an historical survey of this topic see Olaf Pedersen 'The God of Space and Time' in *Cosmology and Theology* eds. D. Tracy & N. Lash (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983) 14-20.

²³⁶ Paul Helm, defending Classical theism, argues that God is spaceless (and timeless) cf. 'God and Spacelessness' in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* ed. Steven M. Cahn & D. Shatz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 99-110. Against Helm, it may be argued that God is omnispatial and infinite. cf. Ishtiyaque Haji 'God and Omnipatality' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 25 (1989) 99-108.

²³⁷ e.g. Exodus 3:5; cf. T.E. Fretheim *The Suffering God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 37-39, 60-106.

²³⁸ Temporal origin is also underlined in the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, a doctrine developed by the early Christians (Tertullian, then Theophilus) to refute other competing cosmologies of the day, namely dualism (God fashioning existing matter), emanationism, and pantheism. However the emphasis of *creatio ex nihilo* is not so much on 'origins' but on dependence and contingency. cf. Philip Hefner 'The Evolution of the Created Co-Creator' in *Cosmos as Creation: Theology and Science in Consonance* ed. Ted Peters (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989) 227; Gerhard May *Creatio ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought* (trans. A.S. Worrall; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) xi, 180; Frances Young 'Creatio Ex Nihilo': A Context for the Emergence of the Christian Doctrine of Creation' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44.2 (1991) 139-151, 147. Young notes that the *creatio ex nihilo* doctrine was not just about the world, but also about God: "For it meant that God was no longer conceived as ontologically intertwined with the world, as he was in Stoicism... Nor was he simply the active principle in relation to a passive principle. God became independent of the world as its sole *arche*-, its 'sovereign' as well as its 'beginning'. Furthermore, God was not subject to necessity but free, and that was a better and more biblical grounding for his transcendence and impassibility than a mere adoption of Platonic axioms." (150).

²³⁹ Jürgen Moltmann *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (trans. K. Kohl; London: SCM, 1985) 156.

contained or identified with the world (Pantheism;²⁴⁰ or the world as God's body²⁴¹), but the world exists in God who is immanent throughout the world *and* transcendent beyond the world (Panentheism).²⁴² The universe is finite space. God is 'absolute space',²⁴³ a term which Jürgen Moltmann distils from Isaac Newton's theology:

... he distinguishes the *absolute* space in which all things exist and move from the *relative* space of the different localizations and relations of bodies to one another. And in the same way he differentiates between relative movement and absolute movement.

What is interesting in this connection is Newton's controversial theory that 'absolute space' is an attribute of the eternal, divine Being. As a dimension of the divine omnipresence, space is 'God's sensorium', through which he perceives all things and all the movement of things.²⁴⁴

240 Michael P. Levine *Pantheism: A non-theistic concept of deity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

241 Sallie McFague *Models of God* (London: SCM, 1987) 69-78; Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984). This analogy originates with the Church Fathers, e.g. Origen. cf. Jantzen 3-4. See also Reiner Wiehl 'Hartshorne's Panpsychism' in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle; Open Court, 1991) 445-462, and Hartshorne's response 688-702.

242 Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human* 371. Peacocke gives the following definition of 'panentheism': "This term is defined (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd edn, revised, ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, p.1027) as 'The belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him but (against pantheism) that His Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe.' Since it was first defined by K.C.F. Krause (1781 - 1832) it seems to have incurred some disfavor for reasons not readily apparent. In our century it has been particularly espoused by process theologians. However the basic concept... seems to be not at all dependent on that particular metaphysical system and to be entirely consistent with Christian theism as a useful spatial model.' It does not, in my usage at least, have any implication (cf. John Polkinghorne, *Science and Creation*, SPCK, London, 1988, p.53) that the world is in some sense a *part* of God, that is, of the same kind of being as God. This would indeed deny the ultimate otherness of God from that which he has created and imply that the world was of the same stuff or 'substance' as God himself. But this does not follow from the definition of the term which allows there to be an ontological gap in mode of being between God and the world while at the same time stressing two essential features of that relation - the accessibility of all-that-is to God and God's ultimate ontological 'beyondness', expressed by a spatial metaphor in the model." See also Keith Ward *The Living God* (London: SPCK, 1984) 3-4.

243 John Earman 'Who's Afraid of Absolute Space?' *Australian Journal of Philosophy* 48:3 (1970) 287-317. This article is a partial defence of Newton. See also L.A. Whitt 'Absolute Space: Did Newton take leave of his (Classical) Empirical Senses?' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 12:4 (1982) 709-724. Newton's theory of absolute time is discussed in the next chapter of this thesis (Section 1.10.).

244 J. Moltmann *God in Creation* 154. Responding to criticisms of his theory of absolute time and space, Newton said about God that, "He is not eternity or infinity, but eternal and infinite... He endures forever, and is everywhere present; and by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes duration and space. Since every particle of space is *always*, and every indivisible moment of duration is *everywhere*, certainly the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be *never* and *nowhere*." Quoted from Newton's *General Scholium* addition to his *Principles*, by A. Cornelius Benjamin 'Ideas of Time in the History of Philosophy' in *The Voices of Time: A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time as expressed by the Sciences and the Humanities* ed. J.T. Fraser (2nd edition; Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1981) 19.

It is within this 'God' space (not static or immutable, as Newton may indicate) that there is the space of creation. Creation is not then the creation of space *per se*,²⁴⁵ just as the next chapter will argue that creation is not the origination of time. Both are features of God's existence. Once again, the incarnation of the Son of God, and subsequently his bodily ascension, underlines spatial extension and limitation for God (i.e. within the περιχώρησις [interpenetration of spaces] of the Trinity). God as 'absolute space' is God the Trinity of relative persons, within and from whom²⁴⁶ there is the created world of relative things in the space made for it by God. There is uncreated being and becoming, also *created* being and becoming. Furthermore, between these two, the infinite and the finite, there is reciprocity and relatedness.

The concept of space presented here accords with the recent studies on space-time by Graham Nerlich, who argues that space is a real 'concrete' entity, which while containing objects, is not dependent upon them for its existence and shape.²⁴⁷ This is in many respects a revision of Newton's concept of space, which Nerlich terms 'realism' so as to emphasise its ontic, rather than relativistic, nature. It also accords with the neo-Lorentzian theory of relativity (which includes an 'absolute' spatio-temporal reference), which in recent decades has again been proposed as an alternative to the Einsteinian theory.²⁴⁸

13. Conclusion

²⁴⁵ Contrary to T.F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) 2, 23, 60. Rather than the panentheistic view, Torrance says that God contains the world, not spatially, but by his power (p.11), from a dimension other than space-time. This is not unlike the Platonic view (reviewed by Torrance p.4-6) in which space is separate from the Forms, as the 'receptacle' of their copies. There is an intelligible realm 'beyond' the sensible realm of space. For Torrance this becomes God's transcendent and creative relation to the created world.

²⁴⁶ Emanationism has been discredited in Christian theology because of its Gnostic/dualistic associations i.e. emanations from the higher (transcendent other) to the lower levels of material reality, and for its often pantheistic implications. Yet, creation does come from God, rather than from non-being (οὐκ ὄν). As noted above (footnote 241), the real intent of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is to underline the dependence of creation on God, rather than ontological otherness as in Greek dualism and Deism. For a positive assessment of emanation as a Christian 'model' of the God-world relationship, see John Macquarrie *Principles of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1966) 202; and especially Robert Oakes 'Emanation *Ex Deus*: A Defense' *American Philosophical Quarterly* 29:2 (1992) 163-171. Oakes' emanation theory is compatible with Divine personhood, freedom, and transcendence.

²⁴⁷ Graham Nerlich *The Shape of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 - 2nd edition); *What Spacetime Explains: Metaphysical Essays on Space and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁴⁸ William L. Craig 'The Special Theory of Relativity and Theories of Divine Eternity' *Faith and Philosophy* 11:1 (1994) 19-37.

St. Anselm's characterisation of God in his ontological argument, namely that God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," has been taken up by Charles Hartshorne, with the difference that this divine perfection includes becoming.²⁴⁹ It has been the purpose of this chapter to restore this pole to the divine perfection as being-becoming. My conclusion is summarised by Hans Küng...

... God, to whom the metaphysicians out of fear of imperfection have denied life and becoming, in fact lives, acts and becomes in perfection and from perfection. To accept this would however involve a revision of the static, Parmenidean understanding of God. It does not imply a simple decision for a philosophy of becoming as opposed to a philosophy of being. It means taking seriously the God who is wholly other, in whom being and becoming, remaining in himself and going out from himself, transcendence and descendance, are not mutually exclusive.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Daniel Dombrowski 'Polar Equality in Dipolar Theism' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 305-316, 310; Theodore R. Vitali 'The Ontological Argument: Model for Neoclassical Metaphysics' *The Modern Schoolman* 57 (1980) 121-135.

²⁵⁰ Hans Küng *The Incarnation of God: An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology* (trans. J.R. Stephenson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987) 533.

• Chapter Five •

God and Time

There is no need for a new quest for the historical Jesus,
but rather there should be a quest for the historical God.
- *Fredrick Herzog*¹

If being becomes, this must be a temporal process. Time is therefore a factor in the being-becoming polarity. It is the purpose of this chapter to say the same of God - that time is a feature of God's being-becoming. In the first chapter, God as Trinity was shown to be relationships in which there is dynamic mutuality. So movement is intrinsic to God's being. This is further manifested in God's interaction with humanity (economic Trinity). Then chapters three and four included argument against the notions of divine immutability and perfection as a static state, a theism which goes hand in hand with views that God is atemporal or timeless. Against this, chapter four put forward a theology that God is living and loving, mutable and passible, creative and free. This entails, as I argue in this chapter, that time is a feature of God's existence, rather than some other order of reality belonging properly only to the physical world.

Christianity, like Judaism,² is an historical religion. If Jesus did not die and rise again, says Paul, our faith is in vain (1 Cor 15:17). The event of the

1 Fredrick Herzog 'Praxis Passionis Divini' *EvTh* Nov/Dec 1984, 570 - as quoted by A.H. Williams 'The Trinity and Time' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39.1 (1986) 65-81, 81.

2 The 'temporal' nature of Judaism is emphasised by Abraham Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1955) "Judaism is a religion of history, a religion of time. The God of Israel was not found primarily in the facts of nature. He spoke through the events in history. While the deities of other peoples were associated with places or things, the God of the prophets was the God of events..." (200). On one occasion Heschel says of God, that "being eternal, temporality does not apply to him." Yet this seems to be immediately contradicted by his positive answer to the question, "May reflexive concern be predicated of Him?" While God may have no concern for himself, he does have a 'transitive concern' for others, and does 'act'.. cf. *Man is Not Alone* (New York: Octagon Books, 1951) 142-143. Jacob Neusner has argued that "the category 'eternity' in Judaism simply does not correspond to the category 'eternity' in Western philosophical and Christian theological thought at all..." cf. 'How is 'Eternity' to be Understood in the Theology of Judaism?' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 45:1 (1992) 29-43.

incarnation is central to Christianity, and the history of the divine - human relationship is the Biblical message or drama. This assumes the reality of time and history, even for God. So Oscar Cullmann, having studied the biblical words for time, concludes that there was no concept of a 'timeless' God in primitive Christianity.³ This agrees with the fact that the Biblical authors do not refer to the concept of 'eternity'⁴ as timelessness or an atemporal state.⁵ The Hebrew word *'olam* means 'perpetuity', rather than atemporality or the sum of time.⁶

The Septuagint translates *'olam* with αἰών,⁷ and the New Testament use of αἰών likewise refers to a temporal span. James Barr draws the following conclusion:

Αἰών, as in the LXX, continues to appear in the bound phrases of the type of ἀπὸ αἰώνος 'from of old' and εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα 'for ever'. But the use with the sense 'age', and nearly always in contexts like 'this age' and 'the coming age', is very common... Cases like 'perpetual fire' and 'eternal redemption' are done with the adjective αἰώνιος, as is more usual in the LXX... No case of a free context meaning 'eternity' is found.⁸

Biblical scholars mostly agree then that the occurrences of 'eternity' in Scripture mean everlasting duration or perpetuity.⁹ Regarding God, the writer

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- 3 Oscar Cullmann *Christ and Time* (London: SCM Press, 1962) xxvi. cf. Simon J. DeVries *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 31-36; Eric C. Rust 'Time and Eternity in Biblical Thought' *Theology Today* 10 (1953) 327-356.
- 4 "Eternal, *aeviternus*, is, by etymology, age-long." A. Seth Pringle-Pattison *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy* (Gifford Lectures 1912-13; London: Oxford University Press, 1920) 348.
- 5 Some have suggested that Ecclesiastes 3:11 may refer to 'eternity' as timelessness. However, most scholars agree that Qoheleth refers to God giving to humans the awareness of duration.
- 6 S.G.F. Brandon *History, Time and Deity: A Historical and Comparative Study of the Conception of Time in Religious Thought and Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965) 140; cf. E.C. Rust 'Time and Eternity in Biblical Thought' *Theology Today* 10 (1953) 327-356, 339-342.
- 7 In Homer, αἰών signifies the vitality or vital substance which keeps a human alive, and leaves the body together with the breath at death (cf. *Iliad* 5.696). The term then came to be used for the length of human (and divine) life. Aristotle defines αἰών as "the total time which circumscribes the length of life of every creature... also the sum of existence of the whole heaven, the sum which includes all time even to infinity, is *aeon*, taking the name from ἀεὶ αἰναι ("to be everlastingly")..." *De Caelo* Book I.9, 279a; cf. *Aristotle on the Heavens* (trans. W.K.C. Guthrie; London: Heinemann, 1939) 39; Plato *Laws* 904a; Leo Elders *Aristotle's Cosmology: A Commentary on the De Caelo* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965) 147; Erick Frank 'Time and Eternity' *The Review of Metaphysics* 2 (1948) 39-52; Rosemary R. Wright *Cosmology in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1995) 130.
- 8 James Barr *Biblical Words for Time* (London: SCM, 1962) 121. Barr is sceptical regarding a study of the Biblical words for time producing conclusive results about the writer's philosophy of time. "If such a thing as a Christian doctrine of time has to be developed, the work of discussing and developing it must belong not to biblical but to philosophical theology." 149.
- 9 Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 24ff., with reference to F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs *Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Ernst Jenni 'Das Wort *'olam* im Alten Testament' *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64: 197-248 and 65

of the Apocalypse refers to "him who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev. 1:4, 8).

This concept of time may be contrasted with Greek and Oriental views, with perhaps the exception of early China¹⁰ where time was interpreted primarily as cyclic, thereby precluding real novelty.¹¹ Connected with this is the notion that God and ultimate reality transcend time altogether.¹² So, for many of the Platonists,¹³ God is a static and timeless being along with (or transcendent over) a world of timeless ideas,¹⁴ somewhat like the Absolute being of Indian and Buddhist philosophies.¹⁵ The Platonic timeless idea became axiomatic for many interpreters of the Bible, schooled as they were in Greek philosophy, as R.A. Markus comments...

The Greek contribution to Christian theological talk about God's eternity [i.e. timelessness] has been so inwardly assimilated that most theologians are scarcely aware of it. The language of philosophy has entered that of religion so

(1953) 1-35; C.R. Schoonhoven 'Eternity' *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-88), 162-164; H. Sasse 'aion' *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. 1* (trans. G.W. Bromiley Eerdmans, 1964) 197-209; B. Long 'Notes on the Biblical Use of *ad olam*' *Westminster Theological Journal* 41 (1978) 68-83. Padgett responds to the main exception - Johannes Schmidt *Der Ewigkeitsbegriff im alten Testament* (Alttestamentliche Abhandlung; Munich: Aschendorff, 1940).

- 10 cf. Joseph Needham's essay 'Time and Knowledge in China and the West' in *The Voices of Time: A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time as expressed by the Sciences and the Humanities* ed. J.T. Fraser (2nd edition; Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1981) 92-135.
- 11 A convenient summary of different ancient world-views on time can be found in Marie-Louise von Franz *Time: Rhythm and Repose* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).
- 12 This idea appears to have its origin with Parmenides (though see Chapter Two). When speaking of the One he says, 'It neither was at any time nor will be, since it is now all at once a single whole'. cf. W Kneale 'Time and Eternity in Theology' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Vol LXI* (1960-61) 87-108, 87; Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 38-41, with reference to G.E.L. Owen 'Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present' *The Monist* 50 (1966) 317-340; Richard Sorabji *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (London: Duckworth, 1983) 98-108, 128-130; Ronald C. Hoy 'Parmenides Complete Rejection of Time' *The Journal of Philosophy* 91:11 (1994) 573-598. For a less convincing argument against Parmenides holding to a timeless eternity cf. M. Schofield 'Did Parmenides Discover Eternity?' *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 52, 113-135; John Whittaker *God, Time, Being* (Oslo: Universitetsforl, 1971); responses in Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* 39-41. See also Leonardo Tarán 'Perpetual Duration and Atemporal Eternity in Parmenides and Plato' *The Monist* 62 (1979) 43-53; P.B. Manchester 'Parmenides and the Need for Eternity' *The Monist* 62 (1979) 81-106.
- 13 Some scholars regard the Middle Platonist Plutarch (45-125 AD) as the first to have an "absolute concept of timeless eternity" when speaking of God. cf. Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 42.
- 14 Plato *Timaeus*, 37E6 - 38A6. Plato, unlike Parmenides and Zeno, believed in the existence of time as a reality for the world of change and becoming. But he reserved the category of timelessness for God and the world of ideas. It may have been that Plato regarded God as timeless, but the unchanging forms as enduring everlastingly. The ideas of eternity as a non-durational *totum simul*, or as a form of life, are later read into the *Timaeus*. cf. John Whittaker *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984) - Essay 1 : "The 'Eternity' of the Platonic Forms". See my later discussion of Plato.
- 15 Hajime Nakamura 'Time in Indian and Japanese Thought' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 77-91.

completely that not until our own day has its strangeness to the Bible's language been noticed.¹⁶

The apostle Paul regarded the things which are seen to be temporary (πρόσκαιρος), and the unseen to be everlasting (αἰώνιος).¹⁷ This was interpreted by Origen in Platonic terms to distinguish between the worlds of unchangeable 'being' and changeable 'becoming'.¹⁸ Origen locks up the unseen 'eternal' as a higher and motionless realm, a timeless realm of truth to be distinguished from the realm of time and change. The 'Christian' precedent had already been set by Ignatius, in his designating God as timeless (ἄχρονος).¹⁹ This then differs from biblical theology,²⁰ by separating the Being-Becoming polarity.²¹

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- 16 A.H. Armstrong and R.A. Markus *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1960) 127. Even Wolfhart Pannenberg, in his earlier writings, acknowledges that "the philosophical concept of eternity as separation from everything temporal was intruded into the biblical idea of the eternity of God as powerful presence to every time." W. Pannenberg 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology' in *Basic Questions in Theology - Volume II* (trans. G.H. Kehm; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971) 173. As will be seen later, Pannenberg now agrees with the Plotinian-Boethian doctrine of God's atemporality.
- 17 2 Corinthians 4:18. The word αἰώνιος is derived from ἀει, meaning 'always'. The natural meaning of 'eternal' is then everlasting existence, rather than 'timelessness'. The English 'eternal' has a similar pedigree, as W. Kneale explains. "... the Latin *aeternus* is a contraction from *aeviternus*, and this in turn is derived from *aevum*, which contains the same root as the English words 'ever' and 'aye'." cf. 'Time and Eternity in Theology' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Vol LXI (1960-61) 87-108, 87; H.G. Liddle & R. Scott (eds.) *A Greek-English Lexicon - Vol. I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925) 45.
- 18 Origen *Against Celsus* VI.20; *On First Principles* I.7.5; III.6.7; VII.46 cf. R.A. Norris *God and World in Early Christian Theology: A Study of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen* (London: A & C. Black, 1966) 116-117.
- 19 Ignatius *Epistle to Polycarp* 3.2. The Neo-Platonic philosopher Proclus, likewise described the gods as ἄχρονος. cf. Proclus *The Elements of Theology* proposition 124. - E.R. Dodds *Proclus The Elements of Theology - A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) 110.
- 20 In response, Nicholas Wolterstorff says "every attempt to purge Christian theology of the traces of incompatible Hellenic patterns of thought must fail unless it removes the roadblock of the God eternal [i.e. timeless] tradition. Around this barricade there are no detours." cf. 'God Everlasting' in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* ed. S.M. Cahn & D. Shatz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 77-98, 79.
- 21 It should further be noted that in Plotinus' hierarchical triad of divinity, time was attached to the Soul and timelessness to Nous. H.J. Blumenthal 'Plotinus in Later Platonism' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 212-222, 219; R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 53.

1. God and Temporality

1.1. What is Time?

The origin and ordering of the heavens and the earth, particularly physical motion, are topics of Scripture. There are patterns and rhythms overlaid with value and purpose. So both χρόνος and καιρός describe time; the quantity of duration and its qualitative character.²² Time is linked to the Creator of the cosmos, as music is to the composer.²³ As Arthur Peacocke says:

*God is not "timeless"; God is temporal in the sense that the Divine life is successive in its relation to us - God is temporally related to us; God creates and is present to each instant of the (physical and, derivatively, psychological) time of the created world; God transcends past and present created time: God is eternal, in the sense that there is no time at which he did not exist nor will there be a future time at which he does not exist. [author's italics]*²⁴

This statement assumes the reality of time as χρόνος, even for God. Yet a precise definition of time has eluded the philosopher, the linguist, the theologian, and the scientist.²⁵ It is there, and perhaps the most we can say is what it is like.²⁶ What is lacking in many definitions of time is the καιρός dimension, which presupposes duration (χρόνος). There is a 'right' (propitious) time, an opportune time (*opportunitas*) for decision and action, a time of fulfilment²⁷ - even for God.²⁸ Eric C. Rust regards this as the characteristic

22 John E. Smith 'Time and Qualitative Time' *The Review of Metaphysics* 40.1 (1986) 3-16; 'Time, Times, and the "Right Time"; Chronos and Kairos' *The Monist* 53 (1969) 1-13.

23 Stanley L. Jaki 'The Hymn of the Universe' in *The Only Chaos and Other Essays* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990) 233-245.

24 A. Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) 132.

25 *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser.

26 The following phrases, with comments by A. Cornelius Benjamin, indicate the problem: "Time is an ever-flowing stream." (the *stream* of consciousness, the *flow* of an electric current, the *flow* of words of a great orator?) "Time unrolls like a carpet." (*Unrolls* in the sense of uncovering something which was previously hidden but now lies exposed to view; and will it continue to be displayed or will the carpet begin to re-roll from the other end and thus hide something again?) "Clocks keep time." (As we *keep* possessions, *keep* our moral principles, *keep* a house?) "Time passes." (As we *pass* an automobile on the road, *pass* a course in a university, *pass* from life to the hereafter?) "Time is coming into being and passing out of being." (Where was it before it *came into being* and where does it *go* when it *passes out of being*?) "Time is all-embracing." (If it is all-embracing does it also *embrace time*?) "We tell time." (To whom, in what language, and *what* do we tell about time?) "We expect the future, experience the present, and remember the past." (Is time then merely a subjective image created by our mind, and having no counterpart in the world?) "Time is the relation of before and after." (But *before* and *after* refer *only* to time; hence we are saying literally that time is time). cf. 'Ideas of Time in the History of Philosophy' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 4.

27 Ecclesiastes 3:1, 11, 14-15.

understanding of 'time' for the ancient Hebrew. "Time was bound up with the events that filled it."²⁹ It is only with reference to this *kairos* dimension that we may use 'eternity' as an adjective for temporal quality.³⁰

This is similar to the New Testament use of the word αἰώνιος, which meant 'perpetual' or 'everlasting', but is used in the phrase ζωή αἰώνιος to mean the 'life of the age to come' in terms of the Jewish doctrine of the Two Ages.³¹ While the word 'eternal' in this phrase retains temporal value, it is primarily a reference to the quality of life in the age to come. According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus offers this 'eternal life' as a present reality,³² defining it in terms of a relationship of trust in himself and God the Father.³³

1.2. Time as an Objective Reality

"... most scientists believe that our perception of time is based on an objective factor that provides an external control for the timing of our physiological processes."

(G.J. Whitrow)³⁴

We are accustomed to measuring time with clocks, or by many of nature's rhythms (e.g. day & night, phases of the moon, seasons, etc.). Such measuring is made on the basis that time relates to motion. Aristotle observed that "we apprehend time only when we have marked a motion, marking it by 'before' and 'after'; and it is only when we have perceived 'before' and 'after' in motion

28 The incarnation of Christ at the 'fullness of time' (Ephesians 1:10 – εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν. cf. Galatians 4:4; Titus 1:2ff).

29 E.C. Rust 'Time and Eternity in Biblical Thought' *Theology Today* 10 (1953) 327-356, 330-332.

30 According to Eric Rust, the event of Christ has altered the mode of time. Its 'fulfilment' is related to the death and resurrection of Christ, not to the end of history, such that every present *kairos* must now be related to that supreme *kairos*. "Henceforth every succeeding "time" can be loaded with this fulfillment, with judgment and salvation, with the call to decision. Because of what was done in Christ, the present is filled with destiny." - E.C. Rust 'Time and Eternity in Biblical Thought' 347.

31 John 5:39; Romans 2:7; 5:21; etc. For a detailed discussion of the phrase ζωή αἰώνιος, see David Hill *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) - Chapter V; H. Balz 'αἰώνιος' *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament - Vol. 1* ed. H. Balz & G. Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 46-48.

32 So it is regarded as synonymous with the phrase 'kingdom of God' in the Synoptic Gospels.

33 John 3:15; 10:28; 17:2-3, etc. In addition to this temporal relocation, the fourth Gospel also depicts this 'life' as from above (John 8:23; 3:12, 31), mediated sacramentally through Christ - suggested by 'water' in John 3:3-5 (also 4:14), and 'bread' in John 6. In order to emphasise this qualitative meaning of ζωή αἰώνιος, it may be noted that in the Septuagint, ζωή translates the Hebrew *chayyim* - life as well being and security derived from communion with God. This kind of 'life' is a gift of God (Ps. 36:9), sustained and 'nourished' by obedience and righteousness (covenant faithfulness).

34 G.J. Whitrow *The Natural Philosophy of Time* (2nd edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 371.

that we say that time has elapsed."³⁵ So whenever a change occurs, a duration or moment has occurred.³⁶

It is important to clarify at this point Plato's understanding of time, as presented in his *Timaeus*. He identifies time (χρόνος) as *regular* motion or change. The creation of the cosmos from disordered matter means the ordering of irregular temporal duration into measurable and ordered time. This means there is a time before time (χρόνος) and cosmos. There is past and future, temporal succession, in the primitive chaos. Then with the work of creation there is an ordering of time, this regulated 'time' becoming the moving image of timeless and ordered forms ('the moving image of eternity' - *Timaeus* 37d). As Gregory Vlastos explains Plato...

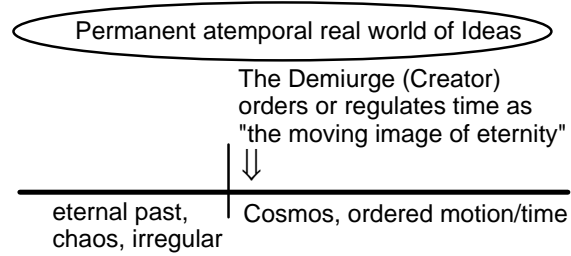
Now time so conceived is not the contrary of timeless eternity, but an approximation to it: its likeness (εἰκόνα, 37d 6), its limitation (38a 8). Time is a finished product, the end result of a raw material which the Demiurge works over with the definite purpose of making it as much like eternity as he possibly can."³⁷

³⁵ Aristotle *Physics*, Vol II, Bk IV, 219a - as quoted by G.D. Yarnold *The Moving Image: Science and Religion, Time and Eternity* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1966) 16-17.

³⁶ The following 'truth' propositions are given by Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 15-16 : "Necessarily, if no duration occurs then no change occurs... Necessarily, if a change occurs then a duration occurs... If a duration occurred, then it might be the case that a change occurred during that time."

³⁷ Gregory Vlastos 'The Disorderly Motion in the *Timaeus* (1939)' in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 379-399, 388. In a later article Vlastos explains Plato's time before time this way: "This then is what the Craftsman brought into the world: *uniform and measurable time-flow*. Let us call this 'time (U)'. Now to say that *this* is what the Craftsman created is a very different thing from saying that he introduced temporal succession, or time-flow as such, into the world. This possibility is absolutely excluded by the statement that the Craftsman made time in order to make the world 'still more like the (eternal) model' (37c 8): had there been no temporal passage before creation, matter would have been totally immune from flux and would thus have the absolute stability of the Ideas; and in that case the creation of time would have made it far *less* like the Ideal model, than it would have otherwise been. But *could* there be temporal passage in the absence of time (U)? - Certainly. We can conceive perfectly of a state of affairs where events exhibit the irreversible order of past and future... but where uniform periodic motions are non-existent and time cannot be measured... This is precisely Plato's primitive chaos: no regular motions there, hence no temporal yardsticks, hence no time (U); but there is still *irreversible temporal succession*, which we may call 'time (S)'." - "Creation in the *Timaeus* : Is it a Fiction? (1964)" in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* ed. R.E. Allen (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 401-419, 410-411. See also W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy - Volume V - The Later Plato and the Academy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 301 - "Space and becoming, Plato says (*Timaeus* 52dff.), existed 'even before the heavens came into being', and the contents of space, still untouched by the hand of God, were tossed hither and thither at random, in irregular and unbalanced movement without reason or measure. Without the heavenly bodies in their orbits, there cannot be *chronos*, but there can be what we must surely call time, that is, duration, a succession of before and after." Guthrie quotes Plutarch's (*Qu. Pl.* 1007C) interpretation of this 'Platonic' 'time before time' - "So Plato said that time came into being with the world (οὐρανός), but motion even before the world's birth. There was then no time, for neither was there arrangement, measure or mark of division, only an indefinite motion, as it were the unformed, unwrought matter (ἄλη) of time." Leonardo Tarán also understands Plato to declare that process is everlasting. cf. *Parmenides - A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

For Plato then, atemporality and temporality have always been. Both being and becoming have always been true of reality, because reality exists on two levels (the world of ideas outside of time, and the world of becoming which is in time).³⁸



This agrees with those who believe that time does not depend on events as such, for every moment of time is preceded by another moment of time. Time recedes into an infinite past, and extends into an infinite future.³⁹ But, does it? Does only the present 'now' exist, *or* does time flow past us, so that 'existing' events yet future are moving towards us - become present, and then retreat into the past? J.M.E. McTaggart referred to this as the 'A' and 'B' series respectively,⁴⁰ which may be summarised as follows:

1965) 186; W. Von Leyden 'Time, Number, and Eternity in Plato and Aristotle' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1964) 35-52.

³⁸ "Plato was the first Greek Philosopher to grasp the notion of atemporal eternity and to distinguish it from the perpetuity of infinite duration. There is no evidence that anybody made this distinction before him and there is no cogent reason, so far as I can see, to think that any pre-Platonic philosopher needed to make this important distinction. It was necessary for Plato, for he believed in two different levels of existence." - Leonardo Tarán *Parmenides - A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) 187.

³⁹ According to W.L. Craig ('God, Time, and Eternity' 497) these scholars are: R.G. Swinburne *Space and Time* (London: Macmillan, 1968) 207-208; J.R. Lucas *A Treatise on Time and Space* (London: Methuen & Co, 1973) 10-11. Certainly the most 'objective' definition of time must that given by the late Neoplatonic philosopher, Iamblichus, who regarded time to be a substance rather than a Form. He seems to have derived this concept from the incantations in the *Chaldaean Oracles*, which regarded Eternal Time (αἰὼν) as a deity. cf. H.J. Blumenthal 'Plotinus in Later Platonism' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 212-222, 219; R.T. Wallis *Neo-Platonism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 125, 130.

⁴⁰ J.E. McTaggart 'The Relation of Time and Eternity' *Mind* 18 (1909) 343-362; *The Nature of Existence - Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927) - Chapter 33 : 'Time'.

A - Theory (tensed view)	B - Theory (tenseless view)
Only the present (<i>simpliciter</i>) is real. The past has gone. The future is not yet.	Past, present, and future are equally real.
Temporal becoming is intrinsic to all events.	Temporal becoming is psychological. There is no temporal becoming, but the temporal relation of succession.
There are important ontological differences between the past and future. e.g. the past is closed, the future is open.	The B-series is objective, all events being equally real.
"Our awareness of 'time's flow' is our awareness of things changing" (Mundle) ⁴¹	"a pattern of timeless moments" (T.S. Eliot)

This chapter will indicate my agreement with the A-theory in contrast to the view of eternity which usually presupposes (though does not necessitate⁴²) the B-theory of time.⁴³ Rather, time is characteristic of change. As G.J. Whitrow puts it:

...the very essence of time is its transience, and that this is a fundamental concept that cannot be explained in terms of something still more fundamental. Time is the mode of activity, and without activity there can be no time. Consequently, time does not exist independently of events, but is an aspect of the nature of the universe and all that comprises it.⁴⁴

Becoming is a necessary condition of a temporal universe (and its temporal Creator).⁴⁵ An alternative is to take Zeno's view that movement is illusory, and therefore time and 'becoming' are also illusory.

⁴¹ C.W.K. Mundle 'Augustine's Pervasive Error Concerning Time' *Philosophy* 41 (1966) 165-168.

⁴² Linda Zagzebski argues that the existence of a timeless being does not presuppose the B-theory, and may be compatible with the A-theory. "Since there is no past and future to an eternal being, the question of whether events future relative to *t* are real at *t* does not arise." *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 48.

⁴³ William L. Craig 'Was Thomas Aquinas a B-Theorist of Time?' *The New Scholasticism* 59 (1985) 475 - 483; David J. Farmer *Being in Time: The Nature of Time in Light of McTaggart's Paradox* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990); Richard M. Gale (ed.) *The Philosophy of Time: A Collection of Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1968) - Section II, 'The Static versus the Dynamic Temporal' 65-85; Quentin Smith 'Sentences about Time' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1987) 37-53.

⁴⁴ G.J. Whitrow *The Natural Philosophy of Time* 372.

⁴⁵ L.B. Lombard 'Events and Essentiality of Time' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 12:1 (1982) 1-17.

1.3. Time as Subjective Consciousness

In contrast to Plato, who derived the notion of time (*χρόνος*, rather than temporality) from the motion of the heavenly bodies, Aristotle considered the soul as the measure of time.⁴⁶ St. Augustine agreed, when he said that time is the experience of the soul (as well as an objective created reality⁴⁷) in which the present is recognised by its relation to the past and the future.⁴⁸ "It is in you, O my mind, that I measure time" (*Confessions*, Book 11). From this deduction Augustine made a link between our soul experiences and God's 'eternity' on the basis that the human soul is on occasions able to bridge the past and future by means of a momentary now (*distentio animi*).⁴⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg further explains Augustine's view this way:

The unity of the time-bridging present is effected by means of attention (*attentio*), which is directed toward what has been and what will be. To the extent that attention can pull together that which is separated within time, and which advances moment by moment, into the unity of *one particular* present, we experience duration, the *spatium temporis*. Duration is a picture or image of eternity, a (however limited) sense of a participation in eternity.⁵⁰

But the real problem here is that for any duration or experience, however brief, there is temporality and no true experience of timelessness. The duration

46 W. Pannenberg *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* (trans. P. Clayton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 75 - with reference to Aristotle's *Physics* 219b 1ff; Plato's *Timaeus* 38a 7-8; see also Gerald J.P. O'Daly 'Augustine on the Measurement of Time: Some Comparisons with Aristotelian and Stoic Texts' in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong* ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus (London: Variorum, 1981) 171-179.

47 Though this objective 'created' aspect of time does not have the same value. As Colin Gunton says of Augustine, he "never fully distinguished the temporal from the fallen. The Manichee never quite disappears." cf. *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity - The Bampton Lectures 1992* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 82; Wilma G. von Jess 'Augustine: A Consistent and Unitary Theory of Time' *The New Scholasticism* 46 (1972) 337-351. Jess responds to J.L. Morrison 'Augustine's Two Theories of Time' *The New Scholasticism* 45 (1971) 600-610.

48 J. Pelikan *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986) 29-31.

49 This can be compared with Henri Bergson's concept of 'duration', the ability of consciousness to hold together past units of time in an integrated whole e.g. when a whole joke or musical phrase is comprehended.

50 W. Pannenberg *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* 79-80, with reference to the eleventh book of Augustine's *Confessions*. Pannenberg makes a helpful contrast between this view of Augustine's and M. Heidegger's concept of temporal awareness in which Dasein (finite individual human existence) is present to itself with the anticipation of death. cf. *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* 84, Martin Heidegger *Being in Time* (trans. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson; London: SCM, 1962).

is still measured by before and after.⁵¹ I shall return to this problem in section 1.5.

The idea that time is (or is partly) a subjective reality, has been argued by various philosophers. So for Immanuel Kant, time is a fundamental intuition of the mind (an internal sense) rather than a property of objects in themselves.⁵² For others, time is 'organic': "The stream of consciousness is not a series of points on a line, but rather a whole that grows organically... Conceived in this way rather than in terms of motion, time is conceived in terms of life."⁵³ But can there be life without motion?

It appears as if all organic life has an in-built biological clock.⁵⁴ Studies of plants, animals, and humans alike, show the existence of metabolism, and that the metabolic rate depends upon both intrinsic or innate features and external rhythms. The judgement of duration basically depends upon the rate of oxidative metabolism in the brain, and this rate is effected by external changes in temperature or interfering with the regular day-night rhythm.⁵⁵ Our biological clock may be coordinated with a "world clock,"⁵⁶ but a variety of factors can dilate or compress our sense of time. Hence the observations that "time flies when you're having fun", and "a watched pot never boils."⁵⁷

After discussing the objective and subjective aspects of time, Ted Peters concludes that "the message of twentieth century science is clear: time is as real

51 A.H. Williams 'The Trinity and Time' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39.1 (1986) 65-81, 76; Carl von Weizsäcker - "There is not even a meaning to the word *experience* which would not presuppose the distinction between past and future." - quoted by P. Davies *God and the New Physics* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1983) 119.

52 A. Cornelius Benjamin 'Ideas of Time in the History of Philosophy' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 23; Colin E. Gunton *Yesterday and Today: A Study of Continuities in Christology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983) 106.

53 A.H. Williams 'The Trinity and Time' 78.

54 G.J. Whitrow *The Natural Philosophy of Time* (2nd edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 123-173.

55 Karl C. Hamner 'Experimental Evidence for the Biological Clock'; J.L. Cloudsley-Thompson 'Time Sense in Animals'; H. Hoagland 'Some Biological Considerations of Time'; H. Kalmus 'Organic Evolution and Time'; and R. Fischer's 'Biological Time' - all essays in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 281-387.

56 J.A.M. Meerloo 'The Time Sense in Psychiatry' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 235-252, 243.

57 Our age also seems to be related to the subjective experience of time, as the following lines by Pentreath indicate:

*For when I was a babe and wept and slept,
Time crept;
When I was a boy and laughed and talked,
Time walked;
Then when the years saw me a man,
Time ran;
But as I older grew,
Time flew.*

As quoted by Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 59.

for the natural world as it is for human consciousness. Reality is temporal."⁵⁸ At the end of his study of time, J.T. Fraser ventures an hypothesis, another polarity: "that our perception of time relates to the combination of an organic or existential knowledge of rhythm with a belief in permanent existents, and that the emergence of this combination in man may be thought of as an evolutionary adaptation to reality."⁵⁹ This same polarity is reflected in the English word *time*. It originates from the root *ti*, which means 'to stretch'. Time is about duration. But from the root *ti* we also get the words *tide* (a variable rhythm) and the word *tidy* (i.e. orderliness)⁶⁰ - the dipolarity of order and movement (being & becoming).

1.4. The Cyclic-Linear Distinction

Most ancient peoples are said to have had a cyclic concept of time.⁶¹ Everything which happens is a repetition, the return of the same thing. This is celebrated (and activated) in the myths and rituals of renewal. For the ancient Greeks time itself was a god, as Marie-Louise von Franz explains:

The Greeks... identified time with the divine river Oceanos, which surrounded the earth in a circle and which also encompassed the universe in the form a circular stream or a tail-eating serpent with the Zodiac on its back. It was also called Chronos (Time) and later identified with Kronos, the father of Zeus, and also with god Aion.⁶²

The cyclic view of time has been contrasted with a linear concept, in which people regard time as 'history', depicted by unique events, promises, and goals. But this appears to be a false dichotomy.⁶³ Both concepts of time are present in

⁵⁸ Ted Peters *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 150.

⁵⁹ J.T. Fraser 'The Study of Time' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 582-594, 590.

⁶⁰ J.A.M. Meerloo 'The Time Sense in Psychiatry' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 235-256, 247.

⁶¹ M. Eliade *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (London: 1954).

⁶² Marie-Louise von Franz *Time: Rhythm and Repose* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), cf. S.G.F. Brandon *History, Time and Deity: A Historical and Comparative Study of the Conception of Time in Religious Thought and Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965).

⁶³ Both are present in the cultic traditions of Israel according to Simon J. DeVries *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* 346-347; James Barr *Biblical Words for Time* 137-141; S.G.F. Brandon *History, Time and Deity* 84.

all cultures, though with a different emphasis on one or the other.⁶⁴ Both the regular events (seasonal festivals) and the irregular (e.g. wars, natural disasters) are a feature of life. In the same way, rhythms of nature and the observance of calendar festivals, are as much a part of the Jewish-Christian tradition as the concept of progress through time towards a goal (eschatology).⁶⁵ The Bible begins and ends in a garden, though not in the same garden.

When the cyclic concept of time dominates, scientific and technological progress stagnates.⁶⁶ When the linear concept dominates, the rhythms of nature may be disregarded with consequent ecological degradation.⁶⁷ Cyclic time reflects what is timeless or permanent, whereas linear time reveals change and novelty. Corresponding to this cyclic-linear 'polarity' there are both spatial and temporal eschatologies. Spatial eschatology compares heaven above with earth below, with 'eternal life' being the quality of life which comes from above. Temporal eschatology compares the present age with the age to come, and looks forward to a future 'fulfilment' and a temporal detachment from present conditions. Both perspectives are found in the Bible, the co-existing heaven and earth, and the present-future tension.⁶⁸ The mystic tends to emphasise the former, and the apocalypticist the later.

The idea of timelessness belongs particularly to the cyclic concept of time. Nothing ever really comes into existence, and nothing ever ceases to be, for everything is a repetition of the one. So for Plato, time is the circular image of the changeless and eternal being. If an immutable being is to have contact with a temporal world, then "time must be represented as a circle on which every point is equidistant from the centre, so that eternal being is equally near to - and far from - all times."⁶⁹ In other words, a timeless being may be simultaneous with all time, when this time is depicted as circular, and is

⁶⁴ This observation was made during my six years of living in Papua New Guinea (1988-1993), a country of over 600 cultural and language groups. Ritual and myth play an essential role in Melanesian cultures, though their function is to varying degrees designed to harness power for the ongoing development and progress of the tribe. cf. G.W. Trompf *Melanesian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Garry Trompf also writes against the cyclic - linear dichotomy in *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought: From Antiquity to the Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

⁶⁵ G.J. Whitrow *Time and History: The evolution of our general awareness of time and temporal perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 51-56.

⁶⁶ S.L. Jaki *The Saviour of Science* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1990).

⁶⁷ Jürgen Moltmann *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1985) 137-139.

⁶⁸ For example, both are found in New Testament books - Hebrews and Revelation.

⁶⁹ J. Moltmann *God in Creation* 109. The concept of time as the moving circumference of a circle, to which the centre is the 'now' of eternity, is later taken up by Boethius (*De Consolatione Philosophiae* Book IV, Prose 6, lines 80-81) and Aquinas (*Summa contra Gentiles*, Book I, Chp. 66,7).

represented by the B-theory. A cyclic model of time then lacks change, whereas the linear lacks permanence (unless the B-theory is true). But permanence need not be a 'timelessness' (or a static time series), but rather a constancy or faithfulness alongside which change and novelty exist, each measuring the other. The permanence may be symbolised by rhythms which are invariable, but this is the rhythm of a circle rolling on through time. The two times are synchronised in God, in the same way as constant beat and cross-rhythms can coexist in the same music.⁷⁰

For some of the early Church Fathers, God was depicted as the composer and musician of the universe, such that his arranging of the cosmos produced a harmony not unlike that of the mystical Pythagorean 'harmony of the spheres'.⁷¹ Hippolytus refers to this Pythagorean theory of planetary rhythm and melody,⁷² and the idea is likely behind Eusebius' comment that the world is "a lyre of many strings... all well combined by the art of the Musician." Athanasius also speaks to the Logos as the one who "handles the universe as a lyre;... in combining parts into wholes... produces the unity of the universe and of its order... and produces as a result a marvellous and truly divine harmony."⁷³ This cosmic rhythm or resonance may be indicated in Genesis 1:2, where the Spirit's presence 'over the face of the waters' is described by the Hebrew word *rahaph* - which may be translated vibrating, quivering, moving and exciting.⁷⁴

It is a small step from this notion of 'God the musician' to 'God the choreographer' and dancer. Dance means rhythm, a sequential beat which is realised as actual only in time. Music and dance are temporal (and spatial) arts.⁷⁵ The rhythmic dance of all living things is therefore a feature of temporality. "The contagious nature of rhythmicity can be observed throughout the animal kingdom, and we may assert with very little reservation that every

⁷⁰ P.A. Scholes (ed.) *The Oxford Companion to Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970 - 10th ed.) 872-876.

⁷¹ W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol. 1 - The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962) 295-299.

⁷² W.K.C. Guthrie *A History of Greek Philosophy: Vol. 1* 298 - with reference to Hippolytus *Ref.* 1,2,2, *Dox.* p.555.

⁷³ Quoted by S.L. Jaki 'The Hymn of the Universe' in *The Only Chaos and Other Essays* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990) 244. - with reference to Eusebius' *On the Theophania* (1,28) and Athanasius' *Against the Heathen*.

⁷⁴ Jürgen Moltmann 'Christ in Cosmic Context' in *Christ and Context: The Confrontation between Gospel and Culture* eds. H.D. Regan and A.J. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993) 180-191, 184 - with reference to the meaning of *rahaph* in Deuteronomy 32:11 and Jeremiah 23:9.

⁷⁵ Walther Dürr 'Rhythm in Music: A Formal Scaffolding of Time' (trans. C.H. Rawski) in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 180-200.

living thing that can move does also dance."⁷⁶ Dance is a feature of most religions, including the worship of Israel and of the early church.⁷⁷ It is regarded as not only a celebration of life, but also of the God who dances. The following are descriptions of God using this image.

"Once there was a time when the whole of rational creation formed a single dancing chorus looking upwards to the one leader of this dance... And the harmony of that motion which was imparted to them by reason of his law found its way into their dancing..." (Gregory of Nyssa)⁷⁸

"O thou leader of the mystic round-dance!" (Hippolytus' Easter hymn)

"The dance is a symbol of the universal order and can be compared with the dance of the stars. For prayer is a spiritual dance... God leads the ring dance of the heavenly bodies. God leads inside the ring." (Rafaell delle Colombe, a Dominican monk, 1622)⁷⁹

Dance combines the cyclic and linear concepts of time. There is both repetition and novelty.

The divine life of the Trinity has been described by the word *perichoresis* (περιχώρησις), and has been discussed in that context in Chapter One. Of interest to our present study is the similarity between this word and 'dance round' (περιχορεύω).⁸⁰ The verb περιχωρέω means 'encircle' or 'encompass'. Gregory of Nazianzus used it for the concept of reciprocate and interchange,⁸¹ and Catherine LaCugna applies the term to the 'divine dance' of the Trinity.

Choreography suggests the partnership of movement, symmetrical but not redundant, as each dancer expresses and at the same time fulfills him/herself

⁷⁶ J.T. Fraser 'A Note on Rhythm and Time' in *The Voices of Time* 201.

⁷⁷ Exodus 15:20; 2 Samuel 6; Psalm 30:11; 149:3; 150:4; Jeremiah 31:13; A. Barton *Shall We Dance?* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1991); M. Daniels *The Dance in Christianity: A History of Religious Dance Through the Ages* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981); James Miller *Measures of Wisdom: The Cosmic Dance in Classical and Christian Antiquity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

⁷⁸ Quoted by J. Moltmann *God in Creation* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1985) 307.

⁷⁹ Quoted by M. Daniels *The Dance in Christianity* 60.

⁸⁰ The two words are etymologically separate. The word περιχορεύω - 'dance around', comes from χορεία- 'dance with circling motion'. However, the word περιχωρέω means 'go round' or 'rotate'. When used by early Christian theologians to refer to either Christ or the Trinity, it was used to mean 'encompass', 'interchange', or 'interpenetrate' (see page 37). The word comes from χώρη or χώρα, meaning 'place' or 'the space in which a thing is'. The verb χωρέω means 'contain' or it implies motion or extension. See H.G. Liddell & R.S. Scott *A Greek-English Lexicon* (revised by H.S. Jones & R. McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968 ed.) 1393, 1394, 1998, 2015, also G.W.H. Lampe ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) 1077, 1527, 1536.

⁸¹ G.L. Prestige *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1964) 291-292. cf. Gregory of Nazianzus *Orations* 18, 22, c. *Eun* 1.95.

toward the other. In interaction and inter-course, the dancers (and the observers) experience one fluid motion of encircling, encompassing, permeating, enveloping, outstretching. There are neither leaders nor followers in the divine dance, only an eternal movement of reciprocal giving and receiving, giving again and receiving again. To shift metaphors for a moment, God is eternally begetting and being begotten, spirating and being spirated. The divine dance is fully personal and interpersonal, expressing the essence and unity of God. The image of the dance forbids us to think of God as solitary. The idea of trinitarian *perichoresis* provides a marvelous point of entry into contemplating what it means to say that God is alive from all eternity as love.⁸²

The concept of the divine dance can then be broadened to envisage God's salvation as a movement outwards to redeem, with a corresponding movement of creation back towards himself. The dance is opened for the participation of humans. This metaphor assumes that both divine and human persons are temporal.

Spatial and temporal extension in dance has been connected with the eye and ear respectively. It is predominantly by the eye that we see the spatial, and with the ear that we hear the temporal,⁸³ though the roles may be reversed.⁸⁴ While some would emphasise the spatial in Greek religion, and the temporal in the Hebrew focus on history and the word spoken,⁸⁵ both are in fact elements of the same reality from the first chapter of Genesis. The dance of the Creator and the creation is both spatial and temporal.

⁸² C.M. LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992) 272.

⁸³ James Muilenburg 'The Biblical View of Time' *Harvard Theological Review* LIV:4 (1961) 225-252, 239.

⁸⁴ The eye also sees movement, and the ear can perceive space (e.g. from echoes).

⁸⁵ James Muilenburg 'The Biblical View of Time' 239; Michael Austin 'Art and Religion as Metaphor' *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 35:2 (1995) 145-153, 151 - quoting John W. Dixon - "Greece is a mediation on forms in space as Judea is a meditation on events in time." cf. *Art and the Theological Imagination* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978) 26-27.

1.5. A Timeless God has no freedom

The early Christian concept of God was much influenced by the Greek philosophical idea of an immutable God and an unchangeable world of ideas, both without change and therefore without time. It is no surprise then to find that the early theologians of the church interpreted the Biblical description of an 'eternal' God in terms of 'timelessness'.⁸⁶ This notion is modified by Boethius (480-524), following a Neoplatonic concept of eternity (see comments below on Plotinus), when he described it as "a state of perfection in which all things are simultaneous and life is limitless (*aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*)."⁸⁷ This view was widespread in both the Eastern church (e.g. the Cappadocians⁸⁸) and the Western Church (e.g. Anselm⁸⁹). Thomas Aquinas continued in the tradition when he said:

God knows (temporal) things not successively... but simultaneously... His glance is carried from eternity over all things as they are in their presentality... they are known by God in eternity, which is above time... he who goes along the road does not see those who come after him, whereas he who sees the whole road from a height sees at once all those travelling on it.⁹⁰

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- ⁸⁶ Tertullian *The Treatise Against Hermogenes* 2.3; 4.6; 12.1, 3; *Against Marcion* 1.3.1-2; 1.8.3; Novatian *The Trinity* 2 - cf. quotations in Joseph M. Hallman *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 60-61, 70.
- ⁸⁷ Boethius *The Consolation of Philosophy* Book V, Prose 6 - cf. Boethius *The Theological Tractates, The Consolation of Philosophy* - with an English Translation by H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand, S.J. Tester (Loeb Classical Library; London: Heinemann, 1973 ed.) 423. cf. Henry Chadwick *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 244-247; Ted Peters *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 148; see also William Hasker *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1989) 6-8; Brian Leftow 'Boethius on Eternity' *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7.2 (1990) 123-142.
- ⁸⁸ For example, Gregory of Nyssa said, "But the existence which is all-sufficient, everlasting, world-enveloping, is not in space, nor in time: it is before these, and above these in an ineffable way; self contained, knowable by faith alone, immeasurable by ages; without the accompaniment of time; seated and resting in itself, with no associations of past and future, there being nothing beside and beyond itself, whose passing can make something past and something future. Such accidents are confined to the creation, whose life is divided with time's divisions into memory and hope. But within that transcendent and blessed Power all things are equally present as in an instant: past and future are within its all-encircling grasp and its comprehensive view." *Against Eunomius*, 126 - as quoted by Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 153.
- ⁸⁹ Anselm *Monologion*, chps. 19-22, cf. Jasper Hopkins & Herbert Richardson, ed. & trans. *Anselm of Canterbury* 4 Vols (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1974-76) 2:38; Anselm *St. Anselm's Prosligion*, trans. M.J. Charlesworth (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965) 141. cf. Delmas Lewis 'Eternity, Time and Tenselessness' *Faith and Philosophy* 5:1 (1988) 72-86; Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* 47-48.
- ⁹⁰ Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Ia, 14, 13 and *ad* 3 - as quoted by Brian Leftow 'Time, Actuality and Omniscience' *Religious Studies* 20 (1990) 303-321, 305. W. Kneale says about Aquinas, that "the surprising thing is that he held to Plato's account of time and eternity though he must have known that it had been rejected by Aristotle." cf. 'Time and Eternity in Theology' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* LXI (1961) 87-108, 101ff. It is because God is believed to be 'simple' (without parts),

This idea of the simultaneity of past, present, and future (*tota simul*), has become a popular concept of 'eternity' for those who want to hold with this the notion of temporality for God. Karl Barth, in agreement with Boethius and Anselm, defines this simultaneity (the *nunc aeternitatis*), as not a negation of time, but the presupposition and possibility of time.⁹¹ Eternity is 'real' time.⁹² Eternity is simultaneously pre-temporal (thus all things are predetermined⁹³), supra-temporal (embracing all time - "like a child in the arms of its mother"),⁹⁴ and post-temporal ("He is, when time will be no more").⁹⁵ This bringing atemporality and temporality together (also a logical *and* temporal priority of eternity), as Grace Jantzen observes "is nonsense - but edifying nonsense nevertheless."⁹⁶ The edifying aspect is Barth's respect for both God's sovereignty and temporal involvement in the world. But need the sovereignty of God be expressed in such a way to deny process or succession for God?

In his discussion on this meaning of 'eternity' Wolfhart Pannenberg begins by quoting various Old Testament Psalms (eg. Ps. 102:25-27) to show that the "Hebrew has no other term for eternity than unlimited duration, whether past or future." Pannenberg, like Barth, attempts to hold to these verses, and so

immutable, and Pure Actuality, that Aquinas argues for God's timelessness. cf. Linda T. Zagzebski *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 40.

- 91 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics Vol. III, Part 2* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960) 526. Barth defends this concept of eternity in *Church Dogmatics - Volume II/1 - The Doctrine of God* (trans. T.H.L. Parker, W.B. Johnston, H. Knight, and J. Haire; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957) 608-640. "True eternity includes this possibility, the potentiality of time." 617. Following Plato, Barth, and T.F. Torrance (*Space Time, and Incarnation*), Tom Pierce likewise describes eternity and infinity as the presupposition of time and space. cf. 'Spatio-Temporal Relations in Divine Interactions' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35:1 (1982) 1-11.
- 92 Eternity is then a Platonic-like form of time. cf. Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Volume II/1 - The Doctrine of God* 612, 615. This is also the critical evaluation of Barth's concept of eternity in R.H. Roberts 'Karl Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its nature and Implications' in *Karl Barth: Studies of his Theological Method* ed. S.W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) 88-146, esp. 101, 105.
- 93 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Volume II/1 - The Doctrine of God* 614, and especially p. 622, where Barth describes pre-temporality as "this time, before time, everything, including time itself, was decided and determined, everything that is in time... In this time God exercised the providence and foreordination by which all the being and self-determination of created things is enclosed."
- 94 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Volume II/1 - The Doctrine of God* 623. Robert W. Jenson likewise speaks of time as "the accommodation God makes in his living and moving eternity, for others than himself." cf. 'What is the Point of Trinitarian Theology?' in *Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on Divine Being and Act* ed. C. Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 31-43, 40.
- 95 Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics - Volume II/1 - The Doctrine of God* 629ff. Similar terms are used by Hans Urs von Balthasar to describe God's eternity. cf. Gerald F. O'Hanlon *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) chapter 3, p.88ff.
- 96 Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 59, cf. 64. Jantzen however comes close to Barth in suggesting that 'eternity' is "an infinitely extended specious present." p.65. Jantzen's criticism of Barth is duplicated in Gerald O'Hanlon's criticism of Balthasar cf. *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* 102-103, 107.

avoid a timelessness concept of eternity, and at the same time join with Boethius by saying that "all time is before the eyes of God as a whole."⁹⁷ This notion of eternity (as all time as a 'whole') seems to originate in the Neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus.

Plotinus took an important step in this direction when he defined eternity as the presence of the totality of life. Life for him was the enduring self which always has the whole present to it, not one thing at one time, another at another, but the whole simultaneously as undivided perfection... In Plotinus, then, the Platonic antithesis of eternity and time persists. But the doctrine of time as the copy of eternity is changed. Time is now seen as the dissolution of the unity of life into a sequence of separate moments, and yet it is constituted a sequence by the reference to the eternal totality.⁹⁸

Pannenberg adopts this understanding of 'eternity', and then tries to show from this a compatibility between a God who knows time 'as a whole' and a God who knows temporal succession. This is a departure from Plotinus' 'eternity - time' antithesis (where eternity is atemporal⁹⁹), for eternity as a

⁹⁷ W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 401, "... God's present embraces the past as well as the future." 403. Pannenberg should perhaps look to Parmenides' poem 'The Way of Truth' as the source of this idea, rather than Plotinus. cf. E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Eternity' *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 78:8 (1981) 429-458, 431 fn.4.

⁹⁸ W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* 403-404; cf. *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* 76ff. Pannenberg refers to Plotinus *Enneads* 3.7 (6 Vols; trans. A. H. Armstrong; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). For a commentary on *Ennead* 3.7, and Plotinus' concept of eternity and time, see John Simons 'Matter and Time in Plotinus' *Dionysius* 9 (1985) 53-74; Peter Manchester 'Time and the Soul in Plotinus, III.7 [45], 11' *Dionysius* 2 (1978) 101-136; Steven K. Strange 'Plotinus on the Nature of Eternity and Time' in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity* ed. Lawrence P. Schrenk (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1994) 22-53. On p.37, Strange summarises Plotinus' concept of eternity as:

1. A sort of life (ζωή) - for Plotinus, this means a kind of conscious or intentional activity.
2. An activity that is essential to the intelligible realm (cf. Ἐν τῷ εἶναι at 3.7.3, 37).
3. Present all together (ὁμοῦ πασα, 3.7.3, 37) as a complete whole.
4. Not deficient in any respect, i.e., possessing perfect being (πλήρης, 3.7.3, 37 and 3.7.4 *passim*).
5. Without any sort of extension (ἀδιάστατος, 3.7.3, 37; cf. 3.7.3, 15).
6. Not admitting past or future - which follows from (3) and (4).
7. Infinite (ἄπειρος, 3.7.5, 36).

This 'eternity' is the life of νοῦς or intellect, a pure activity or ἐνέργεια, which contains within itself its goal or τέλος (and is therefore 'instantaneous' and not in time). Time is analogous to eternity, as the soul is to mind. "The essential feature of the soul that serves to distinguish it from intellect or νοῦς is that whereas intellect is able to think many, indeed all, of its thoughts at once, soul must think discursively, one thought at a time (cf. 5.1.7, 42-43; 5.3.17, 23-24). Hence the fallen soul, which has separated itself from νοῦς, cannot think the entirety of true being all at once (cf. 3.7.11, 20-23, interpreting *Timaeus* 37d3-4), but must think of it part by part, and must think images of being, not being itself." (Strange, 48-49). Plotinus calls this 'discursion' (διέξοδος).

⁹⁹ It is important to be clear about this, despite the fact that Plotinus defines eternity as the completeness of life. This is life without parts, and without duration. cf. Steven K. Strange 'Plotinus on the Nature of Eternity and Time' 39, fn.45. In this important footnote, Strange says, "Stump and Kretzmann interpret the classical notion of eternal life as a *totum simul* found in Boethius, which they take to be the same as Plotinus's conception, as what they call a "timeless duration," which though a duration contains no order or succession of events, and every portion of which is present to every

'whole', according to Pannenberg (and Barth), embraces time and is the eschatological goal of time.¹⁰⁰ But how can Pannenberg's 'eternity', in which all things are eternally present,¹⁰¹ and time really touch each other?¹⁰² Ted Peters has recognised this problem when he says, "If eternity cannot grasp any first or last, we must ask Pannenberg, how can it envelope and enfold the temporal history of the world without annihilating it?"¹⁰³ Yet Peters happily goes on to utilise Pannenberg's 'wholism', comparing it with the popularity of wholism in contemporary science - "that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," to maintain a 'simultaneous' notion of eternity.¹⁰⁴ "Wholeness," according to Peters, "requires an eternal reality that sweeps up all that has been into a divine presence..."¹⁰⁵ But again, the sweeping up seems to be a sweeping away of time altogether. This is the eschatological hope which Pannenberg offers,¹⁰⁶ but one wonders how God and creatures will be different in this Augustinian/Plotinian *visio beatifica* of fusion with the One.¹⁰⁷ In trying to define the difference, Pannenberg actually shows that this kind of nirvana is never possible, for the past is always a present for God:

other. Whether or not this represents Boethius's conception, it is certainly not Plotinus's, whose claim that eternity is completely ἀδιάστατος (unextended) is clearly intended to exclude any sort of duration."

- 100 A link between this thought and Aristotle's philosophy is made by Pannenberg - "Aristotle viewed the reality of beings - their actuality (*energeia*), whose content is the idea or concept (*eidos*) - as the goal (*telos*) of their becoming. The result of becoming is an entelechy or completeness [*entelecheia*: actuality, fulfillment, completedness]: literally, having the *telos* within." *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* 105-106. The 'whole' of time is thus for Pannenberg both a goal and something present in time as an "anticipatory reality of the *eidos* before its full realization." 106.
- 101 Pannenberg utilises Augustine's analogy of the time-bridging present, when we hear a melody as a whole rather than as a sequence of notes. cf. *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* 409; *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* 78 - "we hold ourselves in the present though the *memoria* of the past and the *expectatio* of the future."
- 102 The same problem may be observed in the Plotinian divine triad. The One and Nous are timeless, but the Soul is temporal.
- 103 Ted Peters *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 167.
- 104 In Peters' view, "the moment of creation is simultaneous with the moment of consummation." *God as Trinity* 179.
- 105 Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 170.
- 106 The whole is the "future goal of all striving within the realm of the finite. The path to this goal is time." *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* 77; cf. also Ted Peters, who says, "The Biblical symbol of the new creation is being interpreted here to refer to a point in the future where time will be translated into eternity..." *God as Trinity* 175; Herbert Burhenn 'Pannenberg's Doctrine of God' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28.6 (1975) 535-549, 539.
- 107 Augustine *Confessions* XI, 29. Augustine says, "You, my Father are eternal. But I am divided between time gone by and time to come, and its course is a mystery to me. My thoughts, the intimate life of my soul, are torn this way and that in the havoc of change. And so it will be until I am purified and melted by the fire of your love and fused into one with you."

In distinction from creatures, who as finite beings are subject to the march of time, the eternal God does not have ahead of him any future that is different from his present. For this reason that which has been is still present to him. God is eternal because he has no future outside himself. His future is that of himself and of all that is distinct from him. But to have no future outside oneself, to be one's own future, is perfect freedom.¹⁰⁸

Freedom to do what? The notion of freedom loses meaning when Pannenberg removes God from the 'march of time'. He takes away God's future and any space for freedom. If divine freedom is to be maintained, then all future intentions cannot be part of a timeless knowledge. For if God is free, then he must also be free to change his intentions.¹⁰⁹ "Freedom does seem problematic for one who has always known all his future."¹¹⁰ These criticisms, and others made against the timelessness or simultaneity notion, are summarised in what follows. The notion has been invoked to immunise God from what appears to be the ravages of time - mutability, passibility, decay and death.¹¹¹ But as the following points indicate, the notion of timelessness, or simultaneity, when applied to God, contradicts the revelation of God in Scripture. The logic of two separated times (within the same frame of reference) being simultaneous is also illusory, unless time itself is illusory.¹¹² The concept of simultaneity or *tota simul* (things happening together) is itself a temporal notion.¹¹³

Time is God's way of keeping things from happening all at once.

(Anonymous Texan Graffiti)¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* 410.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Swinburne *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 134.

¹¹⁰ R.R. Cook 'God, Time and Freedom' *Religious Studies* 23 (1987) 81-94, 92. Reverse-causality should be dismissed. It makes the past open, so that effects can precede causes. For an explanation of this notion see R.R. Cook 'God, Time and Freedom' 89ff.

¹¹¹ These features have been attributed to time as a deity, in a number of religions. cf. S.G.F. Brandon *History, Time and Deity*. "... in ancient Iran there was a deeply rooted predisposition both to personify Time and to see it as the ultimate factor of the universe. But in their evaluation of Time, it would also seem that the Iranians were impressed by the apparent ambivalence of its nature or operation. Regarding it as the original source or cause of the universe, they also recognized that Time brought old age, decay and death, to all things." (p.42).

¹¹² Stephen T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 15.

¹¹³ Martha Kneale - "To contrast eternity with time by saying that it is *tota simul* is self-defeating because *simul* is itself a temporal notion. Things in time happen either successively or together (*simul*) and to say that parts of time, past, present and future happen together is to deny the necessary condition of simultaneity." cf. 'Eternity and Sempiternity' *Aristotelian Society Proceedings* (1968-69) 227.

¹¹⁴ As quoted by John D. Barrow *Theories of Everything: The Quest for Ultimate Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 44.

No Movement, No Life.

We have already noted that Aquinas regarded God's perspective on the world as capturing all of time as a simultaneous instant (*tota simul existens*).¹¹⁵ This means that for God there can be no temporal identification (i.e. experiencing duration) with anyone walking along the road, since for God it all happens 'in a flash' (even though these words - 'happen' and 'in a flash' are without meaning from this perspective!). There can be no past, present, and future for a timeless/eternal God, let alone *predestination* or *foreknowledge*¹¹⁶ or *purpose*,¹¹⁷ since there is no sequence of events for God. All events are reduced into one simultaneous now,¹¹⁸ however you define that.¹¹⁹ God is then unable to experience temporal things and events as they truly are (i.e. "God has a false or inaccurate picture of temporal reality"¹²⁰). As Nicholas Wolterstorff says, God "cannot know concerning any temporal event whatsoever that it is occurring, or know that it was occurring, or know that it will be occurring, without that knowledge being itself temporal."¹²¹

There is then a contradiction in combining the notion of time as a whole (Boethius, Pannenberg), with a simultaneous 'now'. Fausto Socinus (1539-1604) was the first to object to this Boethian dogma,¹²² an objection recently revived

115 Aquinas also says that "eternity is the measure of... *esse* , while time is the measure of motion." (I.10.4). This further explains that motion and the essence of an immutable God is incompatible. cf. David B. Burrell 'God's Eternity' *Faith and Philosophy* 1:4 (1984) 389-406, 402.

116 John Zeis 'The Concept of Eternity' *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 16 (1984) 61-71, 68; E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Eternity' 453; W.P. Alston 'Divine-Human Dialogue and the Nature of God' *Faith and Philosophy* 2:1 (1985) 5-20, 12.

117 "A changeless being can have no purposes, for purposes refer to the future and the future is related to the present by change" - Charles Hartshorne *Reality as Social Process* (New York: Hafner, 1971) 159.

118 David Braine attempts to defend the traditional view (Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas) by arguing that temporal events are "present all at once (*simul*) to God, but that these events are not all *simul* to each other. However, this still does not negate the *atemporal simultaneity* of these separated events in God's presence. cf. 'God, Eternity and Time - An Essay in Review of Alan G. Padgett, *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time*' *Evangelical Quarterly* 66:4 (1994) 337-344.

119 Stump and Kretzmann reject the concept of an eternal 'instant' for an "atemporal infinite duration." Yet as Paul Fitzgerald notes, "one cannot have literal infinite duration without ordered, finitely extended subphrases." cf. Paul Fitzgerald 'Stump and Kretzmann on Time and Eternity' *The Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1985) 260-269; 264; E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Atemporal Duration: A Reply to Fitzgerald' *The Journal of Philosophy* 84 (1987) 214-218, 218.

120 Delmas Lewis 'Eternity, Time and Tenselessness' *Faith and Philosophy* 5:1 (1988) 72-84, 82.

121 N. Wolterstorff 'God Everlasting' in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* ed. S.M. Cahn & D. Shatz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 77-98, 94.

122 The Socinian heresy regarding the Trinity, unfortunately overshadowed their rejection of Boethian 'eternity'. "How, we ask, can the possession of an unlimited life be simultaneous, that is, complete in a moment" An unlimited life can only be one that everlastingly endures, how can it be confined to a

by R. Cook: "Boethius' famous definition of eternity as 'unending life existing as a complete whole all at once' is suspect, for it suggests that God has both infinite duration ('unending life') and also no duration ('all at once')."¹²³ The 'now', 'a moment', 'all at once', is impossible to grasp,¹²⁴ for it implies a smallest unit of time which cannot be further divided, or that there is no movement in which case there is no moment at all. So there is another problem with Boethius' statement. With no time and motion, it would seem impossible for life to exist at all.¹²⁵

Anyone who, like Boethius, speaks of eternity as 'the complete possession of eternal life all at once' seems to me to be running together two incompatible notions, namely that of timelessness and that of life. For I can attach no meaning to the word 'life' unless I am allowed to suppose that what has life acts. No doubt the word 'acts' may itself be taken in a wide sense. Perhaps it is not essential to the notion of life that a living being should produce changes in the physical world. But life must at least involve some incidents in time, and if, like Boethius, we suppose the life in question to be intelligent, then it must involve also awareness of the passage of time.¹²⁶

moment? Further, how can the indivisible contain in a point or moment all the stretches of time, which are infinitely divisible?" - quoted from Otto Fock's *Der Socinianismus* (Kiel: Carl Schröder & Co., 1847) 427-31, in C. Hartshorne & W.L. Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953) 225.

- 123 R.R. Cook 'God, Time and Freedom' *Religious Studies* 23 (1987) 81-94, 81. Boethius' phrase is "*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*" - 'unending life existing as a complete whole all at once' (*De Consolatione*, 5, 6). Keith Ward also notes a double contradiction: "First, there is the contradiction, noted by Anselm in *Monologion* 22, between the claim that God must exist at every time (interminably) and that he must exist wholly all at once, that is, either at only one time or at no time at all. Second, there is the contradiction between the claim that God is timeless and the claim that he perfectly possesses his being all at once, that is at one and the same time." *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 149.
- 124 For a criticism of Stump and Kretzmann's theory of 'atemporal duration' and 'Eternal-Temporal Simultaneity' (E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Eternity' *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 78:8 (1981) 429-458), see Stephen T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 17-18; Paul Fitzgerald 'Stump and Kretzmann on Time and Eternity'; E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Atemporal Duration: A Reply to Fitzgerald' *The Journal of Philosophy* 84 (1987) 214-219; and especially Katherin A. Rogers 'Eternity has no Duration' *Religious Studies* 30 (1994) 1-16.
- 125 This same contradiction is noted by William Hasker *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 148; Paul Fitzgerald 'Stump and Kretzmann on Time and Eternity' 263; Eric Rust with reference to Althaus (*Die letzten Dinge*, 1949, p.331): "Althaus has pointed out that what he calls the 'eleatic view of eternity,' the static idea of timeless being, involves a transcendence by God of the time process at the price of the denial or negation of life. Such an idea of eternity is, as he rightly sees, fatal to the Biblical thought of God. He points out that any view of God's eternity involves the opposite poles of rest and work." cf. 'Time and Eternity in Biblical Thought' *Theology Today* 10 (1953) 327-356, 343.
- 126 William Kneale 'Time and Eternity in Theology' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1961) 87-108, 99. But see also the criticism of Kneale's reading of Boethius in E.J. Khamara 'Eternity and Omniscience' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1974) 204-219, 206.

The timeless (or 'simultaneous') God is a frozen God,¹²⁷ one who gazes (atemporally) at everything, including himself, as a *fait accompli*. The notions of 'atemporal duration' and 'atemporal life' should therefore be rejected.¹²⁸ Time and timelessness cannot be coupled.

Duality - An Eternal World

Another problem with a timeless God (or eternity as a whole), is that this belief contradicts the intent of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. A timeless God would always have the universe present to him, which amounts to a duality which has always existed.¹²⁹ Augustine saw this problem, and so bypasses the Plotinian view of eternity which he otherwise utilises to explain the presence of 'eternity' to all of time.¹³⁰ In the *Confessions* he asks, "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?"¹³¹ Augustine answered that God created time along with the universe, therefore the question of what God was doing

127 J.I. Tomkinson objects to this 'caricature'. "An atemporal being cannot be frozen in endless immobility because it does not exist in time." cf. 'Divine Sempiternity and Atemporality' *Religious Studies* 18 (1982) 177-189, 182. But this objection does not stand. While 'frozen' may be a temporal term, whatever is without any movement whatsoever, will be 'frozen' - whether in a temporal or an atemporal world.

128 And with them the various supporting illustrations and analogies. e.g. that an atemporal being is 'aware', though not able to feel. Or the relation between so called atemporal thoughts and temporal actions. cf. John Zeis 'The Concept of Eternity' 74-75; E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Eternity' 446-447; William P. Alston *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 136-137 - "the psychological concept of the specious present provides an intelligible model for a nontemporal knowledge of a temporal world." But as Delmas Lewis argues: "The absence of succession in the life of God has a consequence that the life of God lacks temporal duration. God is not temporally extended, because such duration can only come about by persistence through successive moments of time. It would seem that this life must also lack temporal location, since to have temporal duration is just to occupy successive temporal positions. cf. 'Eternity, Time and Tenselessness' *Faith and Philosophy* 5:1 (1988) 72-86, 74. Alston's view that God's atemporal knowledge is intuitive knowledge, is defended by John Simons 'Eternity, Omniscience and Temporal Passage: A Defence of Classical Theism' *The Review of Metaphysics* 42.3 (1989) 547-568, and argued against by Gregory Ganssle 'Atemporality and the mode of Divine Knowledge' *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 34 (1993) 171-180. The Stump-Kretzmann position is rejected by Herbert J. Nelson in favour of durationless atemporality, in 'Time(s), eternity, and duration' *The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 22 (1987) 3-19, a view subsequently criticised by Eugene T. Long 'Temporality and eternity' *The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 22 (1987) 185-189.

129 W.L. Craig 'God and Real Time' *Religious Studies* 26 (1990) 335-347, 338; See especially B. Leftow 'Why Didn't God Create the World Sooner?' *Religious Studies* 27 (1991) 157-172; J. Moltmann *God in Creation* 114. Also, as B.L. Hebblethwaite says, "the chief deficiency of the classical view of all time, past, present and future, as equally present to God's eternal omniscience is the difficulty of avoiding making the whole thing in all its details God's own act and therefore making God author of evil." - 'Some Reflections on Predestination, Providence and Divine Foreknowledge' *Religious Studies* 15.4 (1979) 433-448, 447.

130 So there is a basic contradiction in Augustine's concept of eternity and time.

131 Augustine *Confessions* XI, 10.

before he created could not be answered. Before creation, and therefore before movement, time did not exist. This would have to be understood as God being timeless before the creation, in the sense of being without time altogether, rather than having all of time present to him (the Plotinian view he otherwise espouses).¹³² However, this presents another problem. If an atemporal God creates, this must be an action, in which case at this point such a God *becomes* temporal (though see the discussion on atemporal causation in the next section).¹³³ Certainly the state before creation, according to Augustine's view, must be totally atemporal, without even time present to it.¹³⁴

It is interesting to compare Augustine's question and answer with that given two centuries earlier by Irenaeus:

If for instance, any one asks, "What was God doing before He made the world?" we reply that the answer to such a question lies with God Himself. For that this world was formed perfect by God, receiving a beginning in time, the Scriptures teach us; but no Scripture reveals to us what God was employed about before this event.¹³⁵

Unlike Augustine, Irenaeus demonstrated the incompatibility of the biblical doctrine of God as Creator with the notion of timelessness, the view of his Gnostic contemporaries and the Neoplatonists who followed. According to Irenaeus the world was created *in* time, and further assumes that time existed before God's act of creation.¹³⁶

¹³² Augustine's main concept of eternity is Plotinian. The 'eternal' is present to all time, and is its source. See especially Katherin A. Rogers 'Eternity has no Duration' *Religious Studies* 30 (1994) 1-16, 4-6; Alan Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* 44; J.L. Tomkinson 'Divine Sempiternity and Atemporality' *Religious Studies* 18 (1982) 177-189, 182. For the mistaken view that Augustine's concept of eternity is Platonic, and so to be distinguished from the 'simultaneity' view of Plotinus and Boethius, see B. Leftow 'Why Didn't God Create the World Sooner?' *Religious Studies* 162; W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* 404. On the differences between Augustine and Plotinus on 'time', see W.B. Green 'Saint Augustine on Time' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 18.2 (1965) 148-163.

¹³³ Herman Hausheer 'St. Augustine's Conception of Time' *Philosophical Review* 46 (1937) 503-512.

¹³⁴ Karl Barth agrees with Augustine that "there is no time prior to creation," but then goes on to contradict himself by admitting to 'pretemporal' movement in the being of God. He then endeavours to isolate the act of creation from "the sphere of God's pure, inner being" to a created and temporal sphere, with the two spheres somehow being co-inherent. cf. *Church Dogmatics Vol. III, Part 1* (Grand Rapids: T & T Clark, 1958) 70-71.

¹³⁵ Irenaeus *Against all Heresies* II.28.3. cf. translation by A. Roberts, J. Rambaut, revised A. Coxe (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1*; Buffalo, 1886; reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 400.

¹³⁶ Regarding 'process' in Irenaeus' concept of God and creation, see Gustaf Wingren *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (trans. R. MacKenzie; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959) 7.

1.6. Creating is Temporal

God moves, and therefore is 'in time'. God is dynamic, as T.F. Torrance says, "since the field of organized space-time is to be referred not to a centre of absolute rest in an unmoved Mover, but to the dynamism and constancy of the living Creator, it is linked with an inexhaustible source of possibility..."¹³⁷

It would seem that a timeless God cannot create anything at all, for creating is a temporal act of bringing something into existence at a given point in time. One could argue that temporal effects do not require temporal causes.¹³⁸ However, there is no indication in either our experience or in Scripture that there is such a thing as atemporal causation i.e. causation in which a 'timeless' cause produces a temporal effect,¹³⁹ though this is not to say that this could not be true of God (e.g. as Aquinas' speculative *actus purus*). Yet if God does timelessly 'cause', how then does he timelessly cause different things at different times in our world? One may reasonably theorise about a 'timeless cause', but the mystery of 'how' remains, especially 'how' God temporally separates the events he 'timelessly' causes.

W. L. Craig maintains the 'pre-existence' of a timeless and changeless God, but concedes that after creation God exists in the time which begins with that act. "Thus, on a relational view of time God would exist timelessly and independently prior to creation; at creation, which he has willed from eternity to appear temporally, time begins, and God subjects himself to time by being related to changing things."¹⁴⁰ But a timeless God cannot cause anything to exist, unless we say something is eternally caused. If this is said of the world, then as we have shown, it means that the world has always 'atemporally' existed for God. Dualism cannot be avoided if one holds to 'atemporality'. This also draws attention to Richard LaCroix's argument that if God is omnipresent

¹³⁷ T.F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) 73. Torrance also affirms that God is simultaneously 'eternal' in a dimension other than space-time, though related to it as a fourth dimension. For a criticism of the view that time itself is a fourth dimension analogous to space (and so unchanging) see B.L. Hebblethwaite 'Some Reflections on Predestination, Providence and Divine Foreknowledge' *Religious Studies* 15.4 (1979) 433-448, 434-436, with reference to W.V. Quine *Philosophy and Logic* (Prentice-Hall, 1970) 30, and P.T. Geach 'Some Problems about Time' in *Logic Matters* (Blackwell, 1973).

¹³⁸ W.P. Alston 'Divine-Human Dialogue and the Nature of God' *Faith and Philosophy* 2:1 (1985) 5-20. But Keith Ward draws attention to Kant's argument that causality is a category which loses any content if the cause has no temporal relation to its effect (cf. *Critik der Reinen Vernunft, Zweite Analogie*) - K. Ward 'God as Creator' in *Philosophy and Christianity* ed. G. Vesey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 99-118, 102.

¹³⁹ Stephen T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 21.

¹⁴⁰ W.L. Craig 'God, Time, and Eternity' 502.

(in all temporal things), then God cannot also be timeless.¹⁴¹ Omnipresence rules out the dualism of the temporal - atemporal theory.

1.7. 'Personal' Beings are Temporal

There are some things which can be said about a timeless being, or rather, what a timeless being cannot be.

A timeless being cannot utter, but neither can he represent to himself. He cannot physically make or create, but neither can he deliberate, reflect, anticipate or intend, for these are all essentially temporal notions... He cannot, of course, remember or predict, suspect or confirm; nor is it easy to grasp what timeless love really can be.¹⁴²

This is in radical contrast to the God of the Bible, depicted as the God of Life and Love, categories diametrically opposed to the notion of immutable timelessness. What is more, the God of the Old Testament makes plans, remembers, sometimes gets angry, and even changes his mind. So as J.R. Lucas says, "If we are to characterize God at all, we must say that He is personal, and if personal then temporal, and if temporal then in some sense in time, not outside it."¹⁴³ Persons are temporal. They remember, anticipate, reflect, deliberate, intend, etc. Forgiveness applies to actions which have happened in the past. Promises refer to something which is still in the future. This fits with the Biblical revelation of a conscious and personal God, even though there may be timeless and unchanging aspects of this God's being e.g. goodness, truth, beauty (the term 'sempiternal' could just as easily be used here instead of 'timeless', for these unchanging truths exist in time).

¹⁴¹ Richard R. LaCroix 'Aquinas on God's Omnipresence and Timelessness' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 42 (1981-82) 391-399.

¹⁴² S. Sutherland *God, Jesus and Belief* (Blackwell, 1984) 56 - as quoted by R.R. Cook 'God, Time and Freedom' *Religious Studies* 23 (1987) 81-94, 81; see also Stephen T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* 14.

¹⁴³ J.R. Lucas *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality, and Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 213. "To be a person is to be conscious and to be an agent. Time is the concomitant of consciousness and the condition of agency." (212). See also on this point - William Hasker *God, Time, and Knowledge* 150; Robert C. Coburn 'Professor Malcolm on God' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 41 (1963) 143-162; Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human* (Enlarged Edition; London: SCM, 1993) 128; J.R. Lucas *Freedom and Grace* (London: SPCK, 1976) - essay 5: 'Rogationtide Queries' 35-41; *The Freedom of the Will* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) 75.

Every description of God's action contains a temporal reference. It has to, for action implies temporality. But this does not mean that a temporal God is subject to time in a fatalistic way. Time is no threat to God nor a structure that inappropriately conditions his activity as God.¹⁴⁴ As Keith Ward says, "... all past time is perfectly preserved in him; all possibilities are fully known by him and the future goal of creation is assured by his omnipotence and immutable love... Both creative freedom and total control are coherently united in the one concept of God as temporal awareness and purposive will."¹⁴⁵

A temporal and personal God can then relate meaningfully with temporal and personal humans, as the incarnation would also indicate (next section). This is in contrast to Aquinas' argument that "since God is altogether outside the order of creatures, and since they are ordered in him but not he to them, it is clear that being related to God is a reality in creatures, but being related to creatures is not a reality in God."¹⁴⁶ This undermines the moral nature of Christian theism, that humans are moral agents responsible to a moral God who both judges and forgives.¹⁴⁷ And to go further, not only does God change his judgement in forgiveness, but also chooses to forget - impossibilities for the eternal/timeless view of God.¹⁴⁸

144 David A. Pailin 'The Humanity of the Theologian and the Personal Nature of God' *Religious Studies* 12 (1976) 141-158. "The consequence of attempts to go beyond this to assert some time-transcending or timeless character to God is *either* to offer strictly meaningless metaphysical compliments to him *or* to deny the reality of this temporal world as the object of God's concern and action *or* to make God the cipher for some abstract principle or value." (153).

145 K. Ward *Relational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982) 169.

146 Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 1.13.7. as quoted by David B. Burrell *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) 40. For a critique of Burrell's defence of Aquinas, see Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 51-55. Daniel Dombrowski draws the following analogy - "A dog's being behind a particular rock affects the dog in certain ways, thus the relation is an internal relation to the dog. But it does not affect the rock, whose relationship with the dog is external to the rock's nature. Does this not show the superiority of canine consciousness, which is aware of the rock, to rocklike existence, which is unaware of the dog? Is it not therefore peculiar that God has been described solely in rocklike terms: pure actuality, permanence, only having external relations, unmoved, being not becoming?" cf. 'Polar Equality in Dipolar Theism' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 305-316, 308, also 'Must a Perfect Being Be Immutable?' in *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology* ed. R. Kane & S.H. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 91-111, 98.

147 Dalmas Lewis 'Persons, Morality, and Tenselessness' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47.2 (1986) 305-309. "there are no *responsible* agents on the tenseless scheme because there are no responsible *agents* - ie., because there are no *agents* at all." (308); "there can be no responsibility for actions if there are no actions at all." (309). See also Dalmas Lewis 'Timelessness and Divine Agency' *The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 21 (1987) 143-159.

148 Margaret Paton 'Can God Forget?' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35.5 (1982) 385-402.

1.8. The Incarnation of a Temporal God

The incarnation takes place in space and time. While this does not reduce God to one space and time frame, since God is more than Jesus, it shows the real experience of time for God, assuming God was in Christ (2 Cor 5:19). This is a problem for those who wish to maintain some concept of God's simultaneous separation from time.¹⁴⁹ For example, T. F. Torrance, in his book *Space, Time and Incarnation*, wishes to hold to a view of God's transcendence over time (as its creator), but also to show that the incarnation is the intersection of God's realm and our earthly temporal realm.¹⁵⁰

In Jesus Christ the divine reality intersects this-worldly reality like an axis, so that if our language about God who cannot be observed and our language about the world which can be observed, must not be confused, it is because they intersect at decisive points, and not because they are merely the obverse of each other or because they are merely parallel to one another. The interaction of God with us in the space and time of this world sets up, as it were, a coordinate system between two horizontal dimensions, space and time, and one vertical dimension, relation to God through His Spirit.¹⁵¹

Once this connection is made, Torrance finds that he must affirm that space and time are real for God and that even God cannot now withdraw from this space-time relationship established through the incarnation.¹⁵² The outcome of such a conclusion, though Torrance passes over it rather quickly, is that God must *experience*, rather than be without *pathos*.

¹⁴⁹ Stump and Kretzmann attempt a solution by saying that the second person of the Trinity is atemporal both in divine and human nature. So against Athanasius [*De Incarnatione* 54] and orthodox Christian doctrine, God did not *become* a human. Contradicting themselves, they go on to state that the "human nature of the second person has been temporally actual." How? This view has obvious Nestorian overtones. cf. E. Stump & N. Kretzmann 'Eternity' 451-453. J.L. Tomkinson recognises the problem of atemporality for a doctrine of divine incarnation, but avoids answering by believing that considerations of divine revelation should be separate from the discipline of philosophical theology. cf. 'Divine Sempiternity and Atemporality' *Religious Studies* 18 (1982) 177-189, 186-187.

¹⁵⁰ "... the Incarnation together with the creation forms the great axis in God's relation with the world of space and time, apart from which our understanding of God and the world can only lose meaning." T. F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) 68.

¹⁵¹ T. F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* 72.

¹⁵² "Does the intersection of His reality with our this-worldly reality in Jesus Christ mean anything for God? We have noted already that it means that space and time are affirmed as real for God in the actuality of His relations with us, which binds us to space and time, so that neither we nor God can contract out of them." T. F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* 74, cf. 67. A similar statement is made by F.F. Centore 'Classical Christian Philosophy and Temporality: Correcting a Misunderstanding' *Monist* 75 (1992) 393-405, 403 - "Due to the Incarnation, which is the central doctrine of Christianity, temporality can no longer be unrelated to divinity."

... it would appear that the question as to the impassibility of God is the question as to the actuality of the intersection of God's reality with worldly reality, and as to the depth of penetration into our creaturely being. But the God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ as sharing our lot is the God who is really free to make Himself poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich, the God invariant in love but not impassible, constant in faithfulness but not immutable.¹⁵³

So Torrance moves further than many in affirming God's experience of temporality, but nowhere deals with the intractable problem of how the eternal and temporal, as two different planes of existence, can co-exist in the one God (on one level), let alone in the incarnate Son (or anywhere else for that matter). The problem is evident when he says that "the structures of space and time are created forms of rationality to be distinguished from the eternal rationality of God."¹⁵⁴

For Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'eternity' is the hovering of the eternal whole of time over the temporal realm. With the incarnation the two realms touch,¹⁵⁵ without the temporal infecting the eternal.¹⁵⁶ Taking up these ideas, Ted Peters likewise regards the incarnation as the entering of the eternal God into our temporal world and genuinely experiencing time.¹⁵⁷ This is possible because eternity, as the whole of time, embraces or is inclusive of time,¹⁵⁸ and the Holy Spirit is the bond which unites eternal and temporal. It is difficult to know what Peters really means by the Holy Spirit, for he describes the Spirit as some kind of principle uniting two 'symbols' - the father and son symbols.¹⁵⁹ But the Holy Spirit is again referred to at the end of Peters' book as the one who brings

153 T. F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* 75.

154 T. F. Torrance *Space, Time and Incarnation* 65.

155 "Is not the coming of God's lordship the force field which permeates the message and work of Jesus?" W. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology: Vol. 1* 408.

156 This reflects a criticism of Nicholas Wolterstorff 'God Everlasting' in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* ed. S.M. Cahn & D. Shatz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 77-98, 91

157 Ted Peters *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993) 159.

158 Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 175.

159 Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 174, 182. Peters' trinitarian theology is modalistic in my opinion, especially when he comes to express these three 'symbols' as functions - creator, redeemer, sanctifier (184). He openly rejects social doctrines of the Trinity as "wrongheaded" (184). Then again, to avoid a social trinity, he sometimes makes an Arian or adoptionist statement e.g. "the divinity of the Son is gained through his total identification with the Father..." (180). Coming back to the Holy Spirit as the eternal-temporal link, he says, "This faithful unity of Father and Son is the accomplishment of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit indwelling in Jesus that makes the Father fully present to him." He continues, watering this down somewhat, "Whether symbolically portrayed as the Spirit via the angel entering the virgin's womb to precipitate the messiah's birth, or the descent of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism, or the mind of God which Jesus teaches, or the spiritual body with which Jesus is resurrected, it is the Holy Spirit who makes the connection that insures the living Father's presence in Jesus." (181).

eternity into the life of a Christian, "collapsing the times so that the crucified and risen Christ of yesterday and the glorified Christ of tomorrow become sacramentally present in our faith."¹⁶⁰ It would seem as if a Holy Spirit experience for the Christian is a kind of popping out of the temporal realm for a moment, or the equally incredible notion of *experiencing* timelessness (or rather, eternity as a whole). On a different tack, Peters attempts to locate the eternal-temporal conjunction in the coming of the Kingdom of God,¹⁶¹ in eschatology. The eternal has entered time in the person of Christ, and time is now in the process of being taken up into an eternal whole of time, the eschatological goal of time.¹⁶² In dreaming about a final state without temporality, Peters has side-stepped the issue of how the 'time as a whole' plane of existence can co-exist with our present temporal plane. One is also left wondering if there was a genuine intersection between the two in the incarnation, and so whether or not the *communicatio idiomatum* understanding of Christ's humanity and divinity (hypostatic union) is fiction.

Assuming an orthodox Christology (i.e. Chalcedonian), Thomas Senor argues that God the Son must be temporal :¹⁶³

- P1) Jesus Christ read in the synagogue (at the start of His ministry) before He carried His cross.
- C1) So, temporal predicates apply to Jesus Christ.
- P2) Jesus Christ = God the Son
- C2) So, temporal predicates apply to God the Son.
- P3) Temporal predicates don't apply to timeless beings.
- C3) So, God the Son isn't timeless.

Senor extends this argument on the basis of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the one person of God the Son, and the assumption of the human nature in the incarnation. Temporality is then argued on the basis of mutability for this single person.

- P1) God the Son eternally (and essentially) has His Divine nature.
- P2) The human (accidental) nature of God the Son is assumed (or 'taken on').
- P3) X's assuming (or 'taking on') a nature involves a change in X's intrinsic properties.

¹⁶⁰ Ted Peters *God as Trinity* 187; see also 181.

¹⁶¹ Which for Peters is preferred to the 'second order symbol of a Trinity of persons. cf. 185, 186.

¹⁶² Peters follows Pannenberg here, as described earlier in this chapter.

¹⁶³ Thomas D. Senor 'Incarnation and Timelessness' *Faith and Philosophy* 7:2 (1990) 149-164, 150.

- C1) So, the assumption of the human nature brings about a change in the intrinsic (though non-essential) properties of God the Son.
- C2) So, the Son is mutable.
- P4) Mutability entails temporal duration.
- C3) So the Son is not timeless. 164

Irrespective of what time state existed for God the Son prior to the incarnation, the incarnation involves a 'becoming'. The apostle John wrote that, ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (John 1:14). This 'becoming' is affirmed most clearly by Irenaeus,¹⁶⁵ and Athanasius likewise believed that the immutable God somehow *became* human (αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηθρώπησεν - *De Incarnatione* 54).¹⁶⁶ Becoming, thus temporality, is a feature of God's essential (changeless) nature, if in fact God the Son shares in this essential nature. As Christopher Hughes observes (showing the contradictions in Aquinas' Christology), "any orthodox Chalcedonian account of the Incarnation entails that Christ, the Word of God and God the Word, is temporal and mutable."¹⁶⁷

1.9. The Trinity and the eternal existence of Time

It is not necessary to postulate two planes of existence, one 'eternal'/timeless and the other temporal (e.g. Plato), if we say that all reality, including God, exists temporally.¹⁶⁸ Within this everlasting plane of existence there can be both temporal change and changeless truths,¹⁶⁹ but not changeless being. Nor can

164 Thomas D. Senor 'Incarnation and Timelessness' 157.

165 "The Son of God became the Son of Man, that man... might become the son of God" (*Adv. H.* Book III, 19.1); "...our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is himself." (*Adv. H.* Book V. Introduction). Trevor Hart says, "for he [Irenaeus] realizes that it is precisely the *becoming* of God within this history that saves mankind. God *becomes* a man. This is what the Greek mind cannot tolerate, and what Irenaeus knows must be proclaimed, for it is in this *becoming* that the redemption is wrought." cf. Trevor Hart 'Irenaeus, Recapitulation and Physical Redemption' in *Christ In Our Place* ed. T. Hart & D. Thimell (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989) 152-181, 178.

166 Athanasius *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione* edited and translated by Robert W. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 269. "For he became man that we might become divine; and he revealed himself through a body that we might receive an idea of the invisible Father; and he endured insults from men that we might inherit incorruption."

167 Christopher Hughes *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 254, cf. 264-264.

168 The word 'eternal' then means having no beginning or end. Boethius referred to this concept as *sempiternity*, the everlasting flow of successive events, in contrast to his own preference for describing eternity as 'timelessness'. cf. Boethius *The Trinity*, IV.

169 For the use of the "timeless present tense", especially in mathematics, see W. Kneale 'Time and Eternity in Theology' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Vol LXI (1960-61) 87-108, 97-98.

there be a beginning of time, since there has always been movement.¹⁷⁰ This is the doctrine of the Trinity (cf. Chapter One).¹⁷¹ Rather than looking to creation as the first movement and thus a creation of time (Augustine), the doctrine of the Trinity indicates that God has always been an active relationship of divine persons.¹⁷² So time did not begin with the creation of a universe. If God, and therefore movement, has always existed (cf. chapter 4 section 2: God as 'self-moved mover'), then time has also always existed.¹⁷³ This agrees with Stephen Davis' conclusion, though he does not mention the Trinity:

Time was not created; it necessarily exists (like numbers); it depends for its existence on nothing else. Time, perhaps, is an eternal aspect of God's nature rather than a reality independent of God. But the point is that God, on this view, is a temporal being. Past, present and future are real to him... He has temporal extension.¹⁷⁴

Also, J.R. Lucas...

Time is not a thing that God might or might not create, but a category, a necessary concomitant of the existence of a personal being, though not of a mathematical entity. This is not to say that time is an independent category, existing independently of God. It exists because of God: not because of some act of will on His part, but because of His nature: if the ultimate reality is personal, then it follows that time must exist. God did not make time, but time stems from God.¹⁷⁵

And again, Paul Fiddes...

170 Further to the argument from movement, Richard Swinburne argues that time cannot have a first (initially bounded) period. It is not logically possible for time to have a beginning. cf. 'The Beginning of the Universe and of Time' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 26.2 (1996) 169-189. This, as I have noted in section 1.2, was the view of Plato. Aristotle also said that "it seems that all thinkers agree that time did not come into existence." (*Physics* 251b).

171 In contrast to the 'Platonic' notions of his time, Origen sought for a link between the atemporal God and movement. As Colin Gunton observes: "By speaking of the 'eternal begottenness' of the Son, Origen struck a blow, whose implications he never fully worked out, against views of eternity as timeless." cf. Colin E. Gunton *Yesterday and Today: A Study of Continuities in Christology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983) 120.

172 Some have suggested the impossible notion that the Trinity prior to creation was a static being. William Craig says "For in the eternal and changeless love relationship between the persons of the Trinity, we see how a truly personal God could exist timelessly, entirely sufficient within himself." (Time, and Eternity' 501). But, can a love relationship ever be 'changeless'?

173 In addition to the following who are quoted, see also George N. Schlesinger *Timely Topics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 211.

174 Stephen T. Davis *Logic and the Nature of God* 23.

175 J.R. Lucas *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality and Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 213.

Time is a necessary property of God's creative will, which promotes change and humbly suffers change. Indeed, we might even take one step further in thought and dare to suggest that God can indwell all systems of time because he has his own 'time' or 'history' which is capable of intermeshing with them.¹⁷⁶

If one's trinitarian theology denies the existence of interpersonal relations within the Trinity, then one is left with three options in regard to a loving God and time.

1. God is without time before the creation. In this state love is impossible, since love requires action (e.g. giving) and an object to love. In this case, God could not *be* Love, or be described as having love before the creation, since there would be nothing to love.
2. God has the universe timelessly present to him as the object of his love.¹⁷⁷ While this view overcomes the need for a social trinity in which love has always been active, dualism is unavoidable in that the world which is the object of God's love must always have existed.¹⁷⁸
3. The 'singular' God, who is temporal, before the creation planned and willed its existence. However, this considerably weakens the notion of love, even if loving an imaginary and an anticipated object is possible.¹⁷⁹

Each of these options is inadequate, and in fact unnecessary if one holds to a social doctrine of the Trinity. The ontic framework for relationality is temporal. So the dynamic of love as expressed in the Trinity, and in God's relation to the world, is thus incompatible with an atemporal or trans-temporal alternative.

1.10. The Relativity of Time

¹⁷⁶ Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 99.

¹⁷⁷ Grace Jantzen *God's World, God's Body* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 144.

¹⁷⁸ This is the position of Process Theology. cf. Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 75.

¹⁷⁹ B. Leftow 'Why Didn't God Create the World Sooner?' *Religious Studies* 27 (1991) 157-172. Leftow illustrates this with the kind of love that parents can have for a child not yet conceived (104). He also suggests that this would be an anticipatory pleasure, as experienced in waiting until a given date to give a present (168). The date for the giving of creation by God, was determined by him on the basis that one can "reach a point beyond which anticipation would provide a decreasing return of pleasure" (170)

God is a metaphysical reality, yet such a reality that embraces the physical (panentheism). It is therefore questionable whether the physics of time accounts for the metaphysical, except perhaps by analogy. In what follows I will briefly discuss the notion of God's time in relation to such physical theories, to argue that while the theories of the scientists raise interesting questions regarding God's relationship to the world, the life of God (and so God's temporality) cannot be reduced to such theories.

Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity holds that within the cosmos there is no common frame of reference for temporal events, so that time and space are relative.¹⁸⁰ In an attempt to respect this, one metaphysician suggests that God is multi-temporal. "God must exist in a number of different time-sequences, not relatable to each other by relations of absolute simultaneity."¹⁸¹ But it is not necessary to abandon Newton altogether, as Einstein's relativity theory might suggest,¹⁸² especially in his capacity as a philosopher and theologian (see discussion on Newton's 'absolute space' at the end of the previous chapter). Also, the neo-Lorentzian interpretation of the Special Theory of Relativity holds that there is a spatio-temporal order which is privileged.¹⁸³ From this the theologian may suggest that God's own time could be absolute time,¹⁸⁴ or the ultimate reference,¹⁸⁵ especially since God is omnipresent to all time frames.¹⁸⁶

180 Alan G. Padgett 'Eternity and the Special Theory of Relativity' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 33:2 (1993) 219-223.

181 Keith Ward *Relational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982) 166.

182 Richard Arthur represents scientists who are looking again at Newton's theories. He says: "Plainly, Newton's absolute time, calculated as it is on the basis of empirical motions and mathematical 'equation', is far from being the 'monstrous' and 'idle metaphysical conception' that Mach claimed it to be." Richard Arthur introduces his case by saying, "I shall argue that the chief characteristics Newton ascribes to absolute time - its existence independent of changing things, its continuous flow, the equability of its flow, and its distinction from the unequally flowing relative times of the processes used to measure it - are none of them otiose, and are not only rooted in the foundations of his mathematical practice, but are even given empirical content by their link with astrophysics and horology." - Richard T.W. Arthur 'Newton's Fluxions and Equably Flowing Time' *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 26:2 (1995) 323-351, 323, 350; cf. 'Space and Relativity in Newton and Leibniz' *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 45 (1994) 219-240.

183 W.L. Craig 'The Special Theory of Relativity and Theories of Divine Eternity' *Faith and Philosophy* 11:1 (1994) 19-37, 32. Advocates of this neo-Lorentzian position include H.E. Ives, Geoffrey Builder, and Simon Prokhovnik (p.37). "We thus have two different interpretations of Relativity Theory which are radically different in their metaphysical foundations and yet which are, to date, experimentally indistinguishable and therefore unsusceptible to scientific adjudication." (33)

184 But even then not absolute in the sense of invariable.

185 This concept is discussed in the light of Einsteinian Relativity Theory, by W.L. Craig 'God and Real Time' *Religious Studies* 26 (1990) 335-347, 340-341. Craig says, "It is God who exists in the true, ontological time, while we finite observers, restricted to our locally moving reference frames and dependent upon light signal synchronization of clocks, have to make do with our manufactured measured time." 341; see also J.R. Lucas *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality, and Truth*

From his own time perspective, God observes and experiences the various relative times which exist in the moving universe.

The subjective time of a gnat might appear to move very fast and that of an elephant very slowly. The subjective time of someone travelling close to the speed of light would also seem to be moving slowly. It would be rather like a man watching a number of videos at the same time, where some films were running slow and some fast. Indeed, one day in the slow films would be like a thousand years, and a thousand years in the fast ones would be like a day (cf. 2 Peter 3:8).¹⁸⁷

In this sense, God transcends our time. It may then be more correct to say that we are in God's time.¹⁸⁸ Again I turn to the Oxford scientist G.J. Whitrow, who at the end of his extensive study *The Natural Philosophy of Time*, concludes...

... cosmic time is a fundamental characteristic of the universe... there seems to be no need to abandon the classical assumption of a unique universal scale of time, modified where necessary by the demands of relativity. In other words, there is no reason yet to doubt that the fundamental physical constants are truly invariant in time as well as in space and that there is a unique basic rhythm of the universe.¹⁸⁹

The idea of a universal time identified with God, seems to be the view of St. John of Damascus, when he related the seven ages of history to God. God exists before the ages regulated by sun and moon, and is therefore temporally located ('before'). God's 'age of ages' extends through all ages right into the age which once again will not be regulated by days and nights. All these 'times' are relative to God's 'age'.¹⁹⁰

(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) - there is a "divinely preferred frame of reference" 220; Paul S. Fiddes *The Creative Suffering of God* 98.

¹⁸⁶ John Polkinghorne *Science and Providence* (London: SPCK, 1989) 82; Arthur Peacocke *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human* 130.

¹⁸⁷ R.R. Cook 'God, Time and Freedom' *Religious Studies* 23 (1987) 81-94, 87. An additional Old Testament reference is Psalm 90:4., a favourite verse in Rabbinic and apocalyptic literature. Regarding 2 Peter 3:8, Richard Bauckham observes that this is not a reference to God's timelessness, but God's temporal perspective - cf. *Jude, 2 Peter* (Word Biblical Commentary 50; Waco: Word Books, 1983) 310.

¹⁸⁸ A.G. Padgett 'God and Time: Toward a New Doctrine of Divine Timeless Eternity' *Religious Studies* 25 (1989) 209-215, 209.

¹⁸⁹ G.J. Whitrow *The Natural Philosophy of Time* 374.

¹⁹⁰ Nelson Pike *God and Timelessness* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 180-183. Pike comments on St. John of Damascus' *An Exact Exposition of Orthodox Faith*.

This suggests that there is an absolute time reference.¹⁹¹ There is a clock, God's clock, to which all other clocks are relative.¹⁹² Some have in a similar manner theorised that there may be a universal frame of reference for measuring the observable expansion of the universe. P. Davies comments, "At any given place in the universe, there is only *one* reference frame in which the universe expands isotropically. This privileged reference frame defines a privileged time scale (the time as told by a clock at rest in that frame)."¹⁹³ Returning to our discussion of God, as the creator of the universe he might know all the time frames which exist in this moving (expanding) universe, especially since he is immanent throughout. Once the universe begins, along with its relative times, all of the clocks in the universe may "coincide with the moments of real time" i.e. God's clock.¹⁹⁴ While all the clocks are then coordinated (but not synchronised as common time) to God's clock, there is no way the 'speed' of God's clock can be measured from any relative position. All that can be said is that the single moment of 'now'¹⁹⁵ is 'now' throughout the universe, and is at the same moment a 'now' for God.¹⁹⁶ Whatever is said about

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- 191 This should not come as a surprise, since Einstein's relativity theory still contained one absolute - the speed of light at approximately 186,000 miles per second. So, W.L. Craig suggests that "a Lorentzian rather than an Einsteinian interpretation of the Special Theory of Relativity is correct: there is a preferred reference frame in which light is propagated with the velocity *c*, and relativistic effects are due to local motion relative to this frame." 'God and Real Time' *Religious Studies* 26 (1990) 335-347, 347. See further W.L. Craig 'The Special Theory of Relativity and Theories of Divine Eternity' *Faith and Philosophy* 11:1 (1994) 19-37.
- 192 Michael Shallis says, "It is also possible, however, to take a single clock as standard, taking it to define a universal time coordinate, and to relativize everything to it... Of course, the choice of a coordinate time is, to a certain considerable extent, arbitrary - in principle, one could take any clock as one's standard." 'Time and Cosmology' in *The Nature of Time* ed. R. Flood and M. Lockwood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 68-69 - as quoted by W.L. Craig 'God and Real Time' *Religious Studies* 26 (1990) 335-347, 342.
- 193 P.C.W. Davies 'Space-Time Singularities in Cosmology and Black Hole Evaporations' in *The Study of Time III* ed. J.T. Fraser, N. Lawrence, & D. Park (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1978) 76 - as quoted by W.L. Craig 'God and Real Time' *Religious Studies* 26 (1990) 335-347, 343.
- 194 W.L. Craig 'God and Real Time' *Religious Studies* 26 (1990) 335-347, 343. "Notice that the argument makes no reference to and therefore does not depend upon any particular metrication of time. It seems to me, then, that real time and cosmic time ought naturally to be regarded as coincident since the inception of cosmic time." 344.
- 195 I realise that this thought raises the problem of how long is the 'now'. Even those that believe all of time is a simultaneous 'now' for God are faced with the same problem - 'does it have any duration?'. On the various arguments against simultaneous events see M. Capek 'Time in Relativity Theory: Arguments for a Philosophy of Becoming' in *The Voices of Time* ed. J.T. Fraser, 434-454, 446.
- 196 A.G. Padgett 'Can History Measure Eternity? A Reply to William Craig' *Religious Studies* 27 (1991) 333-335. Both A. Padgett and W. Craig agree on this point. cf. p.333. "So if it is now 10 o'clock on earth, we can say (if you like) that it is '10 o'clock' on Sirius, or in eternity, as long as we understand that the '10 o'clock' is simply one way, an arbitrary way that we humans have invented, of pointing to a particular instant. That instant is the same throughout our universe, and in eternity." 333.

relative time frames, there can be no simultaneity within a single frame.¹⁹⁷ As J.R. Lucas puts it, "If God heeded St. Augustine's prayers, He heard them and responded to them in St. Augustine's lifetime, centuries after he spoke with Moses in the burning bush, and centuries before he was moved by the prayers of John Wesley."¹⁹⁸

1.11. Conclusion

Regarding the notion of God's timelessness or 'eternity', C.S. Lewis said, "there is nothing in it contrary to Christianity. But it is not in the Bible or any of the creeds." So, even though Lewis believed atemporal existence was possible, he agreed that, "you can be a perfectly good Christian without accepting it, or indeed without thinking of the matter at all."¹⁹⁹ Some defend the concept of timelessness/eternity, yet acknowledge difficulties in reconciling this with biblical prophecy and the free actions of creatures.²⁰⁰ Others, like William Hasker, having studied the rational arguments for the logical consistency of the doctrine of timelessness/eternity, finally abandon it in favour of a temporal God who changes. The basic reason for this choice is a desire to bring theology into line with "the God who is known through Scripture and experience."²⁰¹ To this may be added the various arguments of this chapter, with the conclusion that the dipolarity of permanence and change (being and becoming) is true of God's nature.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ On this basis William Craig argues against those (e.g. Brian Leftow) who try to use Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity to argue for God's timeless/eternal (simultaneity) frame of reference. cf. 'The Special Theory of Relativity and Theories of Divine Eternity' *Faith and Philosophy* 11:1 (1994) 19-37.

¹⁹⁸ J.R. Lucas *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality and Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 217.

¹⁹⁹ C.S. Lewis *Beyond Personality: The Christian Idea of God* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955) 23.

²⁰⁰ John Zeis 'The Concept of Eternity' 69-70.

²⁰¹ William Hasker *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 184.

²⁰² This, it should be noted, is different than the impossible dipolarity advocated by Process theologians, that God is timeless - temporal. cf. Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 141. See the two essays - Lewis S. Ford 'Can Whitehead's God be Rescued from Process Theism?', and Rem B. Edwards 'God and Process', in *Logic, God and Metaphysics* ed. J.F. Harris (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992) 19-57. Lewis Ford defends Whitehead's 'atemporal primordial nature' when speaking of God, in 'The Non-Temporality of Whitehead's God' *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (1973) 347-376.

2. God, Freedom and Foreknowledge

I have argued against the compatibility of divine freedom with divine atemporality or simultaneity (section 1.5). Instead, the future entails the fulfilment of God's objectives (promises, goals, decrees), *and* the consequences of free actions, including God's free actions.²⁰³ God's purposes have sometimes been understood in deterministic terms, since this conforms to the concept of an immutable and timeless God. But is God immutable and timeless in regard to the future? J.R. Lucas, a theologian and philosopher who regards contingency, and therefore mutability, to be true of God, says:

"God cannot philosophically know what He is going to do until He has made up His mind - else Divine omniscience would have foreclosed Divine freedom, and curtailed His omnipotence - and God cannot, so long as He has created us free and autonomous agents, philosophically know what we are going to do until we have done it."²⁰⁴

Relational contingency is a reality both for divine and human existence, unless freedom is denied. This point is not new, already made by John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) in his rejection of the Boethian/Thomistic definition of time²⁰⁵ (discussed later in this chapter), Fausto Socinus (1539-1604), G.T. Fechner (1801-1887), and the French philosopher - Jules Lequier (1814-62),²⁰⁶ and now adopted by many theologians and philosophers.

²⁰³ Axel D. Steuer 'The Freedom of God and Human Freedom' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36.2 (1984) 163-80.

²⁰⁴ J.R. Lucas 'Foreknowledge and the Vulnerability of God' in *The Philosophy in Christianity* ed. G. Vesey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 119-128, 126; cf. Axel D. Steuer 'The Freedom of God and Human Freedom' 174-176.

²⁰⁵ Alan G. Padgett *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 51-52.

²⁰⁶ See quotations from Socinus and Lequier, with comment, in C. Hartshorne & W.L. Reese *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953) 225-230. The views of Lequier are summarised in Donald W. Viney 'God Only Knows? Hartshorne and the Mechanics of Omniscience' in *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology* ed. R. Kane & S.H. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 71-90, 74-75.

2.1. Foreknowledge and the Bible

The Biblical stories about God seem to confirm divine freedom in regard to the future. On a few occasions in the Old Testament story, God is unsure of the future.²⁰⁷ For example...

The word of the LORD came to me: Mortal... prepare for yourself an exile's baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight... *Perhaps* they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. (Ezekiel 12:1-3)

Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak... *It may be* that they will listen, all of them, and will turn from their evil way, that I may change my mind about the disaster that I intend to bring on them because of their evil doings. (Jeremiah 26:2-3; cf. 36:3, 7; 51:8; Isa. 47:12)

God may certainly predict with far greater accuracy than any human, knowing all that is happening and is caused in the present. But even the future is future for God, and this future is to some degree dependent upon contingent actions still unknown. So some predictions may not be that accurate.

And I thought, "After she has done all this she will return to me"; but she did not return, and her false sister Judah saw it... I thought how I would set you among my children, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful heritage of all the nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me. Instead, as a faithless wife leaves her husband, so you have been faithless to me, O house of Israel, says the LORD. (Jeremiah 3:7, 19-20)

Knowing that the future depends on future contingencies, God often makes conditional predictions - *if* this, then this. For example,

For if you will indeed obey this word, then through the gates of this house shall enter kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their servants, and their people. But if you will not heed these words, I swear by myself, says the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation. (Jeremiah 22:4-5)

And having made a plan, God may even change it after consulting a prophet who requests God to change his mind (e.g. Exodus 32:7-14; Numbers 14:11-

²⁰⁷ The following examples are the focus of discussion in T.E. Fretheim *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

20).²⁰⁸ Humans are drawn into God's planning, and as prayer indicates, they have a part in shaping the course of history. On some occasions God even asks that prayer not be offered to him, so that his intentions may roll on without change (e.g. Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11).

The above discussion, while it underlines the reality of future contingency, does not cancel the observation that God has plans and determines certain courses of action, even to the point of overriding the freedom of others. But not all things happen as predetermined.²⁰⁹ For both divine and human reality entails a relational polarity, both purpose and novelty in regard to another, order and movement (the monopolar extremes being fate and fortune, determinism and indeterminism).²¹⁰

2.2. Foreknowledge and Preordination

How can this polarity be explained in terms of the doctrine of predestination?²¹¹ Firstly, it must be affirmed that God plans and determines (decrees) certain courses of action. In this regard God *predetermines* or *preordains*.²¹² For example, God has determined that there will be a future day of judgement. But this is not to say that all the future is predetermined in this way (eliminating contingency). God is able to bring about what is predetermined, therefore what is predetermined is foreknown.

However, not all things are foreknown as predetermined. God may foreknow future contingent *possibilities*, and may predict the outcome of these

²⁰⁸ Robert C. Chisholm 'Does God "Change His Mind"?' *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 (1995) 387-399.

²⁰⁹ After surveying Biblical descriptions of God's action, Richard Rice concludes that "at times God simply does things, acting on his own initiative and relying solely on his own power. Sometimes he accomplishes things through the cooperation of human agents, sometimes he overcomes creaturely opposition to accomplish things, sometimes he providentially uses opposition to accomplish things, and sometimes his intentions to do something are thwarted by human opposition." - 'Biblical Support for a New Perspective', chapter one of *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* by C. Pinnock, R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, D. Basinger (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994) 38.

²¹⁰ For this reason, the Jewish Biblical scholar - Abraham Heschel, is said to have avoided the term *Heilsgeschichte*. The story of salvation is open ended for creative response to God. cf. Bernhard W. Anderson 'Confrontation with the Bible' *Theology Today* 30.3 (1973) 267-271.

²¹¹ For a discussion of divine necessity-contingency, similar to the following, cf. B.L. Hebblethwaite 'Some Reflections on Predestination, Providence and Divine Foreknowledge' *Religious Studies* 15.4 (1979) 433-448; Keith Ward *Divine Action* (London: Collins, 1990); Clark Pinnock 'God Limits His Knowledge' in *Predestination and Free Will* ed. D. Basinger & R. Basinger (IVP, 1986) 143-162, also Pinnock's response (p.138-139) to an essay by B. Reichenbach.

²¹² Προορίζω - decide upon beforehand, predestine. Of God's decrees in Romans 8:29 -30 [to have a renewed people]; 1 Corinthians 2:7 [the nature of God's wisdom]; Ephesians 1:5, 11 [that those who turn to Christ be adopted as sons, in conformity with God's purposes]; Acts 4:27f [that Jesus accomplish what he was anointed to do].

future contingencies, but not with the certainty of the foreknowledge of future events which are decreed or predetermined by God. God may also predetermine to respond in a certain way to various contingent acts. So, for example, God has predetermined to 'save' all who turn to Christ. But this does not mean that all who turn to Christ have been predetermined to do so, thus eliminating their freedom. What God predetermines in regard to those who freely turn to Christ, is what course of action to take in response to this choice.²¹³ There are no verses in Scripture which indicate that God has knowledge of all future contingencies.

2.3. Fortune and Fate

The prophet Isaiah indicated that some Israelites in his day were practising astrologists who also worshipped the gods Fortune (*Gad*) and Fate (*Meni*).²¹⁴ It is interesting to note that when Yahweh was forsaken, the elements of necessity (fate) and contingency (fortune) were together retained in the quest for a pagan substitute.

At about the same time the Greek poets (e.g. Homer) regarded the impersonal god Fate (*Μοῖρα*), armed with necessity (*ἀνάγκη*), as the dominant cause of all things, a notion which became central in Greek tragedy.²¹⁵ In the words of the historian Herodotus (485-425 BC), the Pythia at Delphi said that "it is impossible even for a god to escape his destined fate."²¹⁶ Even Plato believed that a divine World-Soul guided the universe under the constraint of necessity,²¹⁷ and the Stoics later combined this idea with Babylonian astrology to form their central doctrine of Providence (*πρόνοια, εἰμαρμένη*). This excluded

213 Which I believe is the correct interpretation of Ephesians 1:11-14.

214 Isaiah 47:3; 65:11. cf. Claus Westermann *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (trans. D.M.G. Stalker; London: SCM, 1969) 405.

215 "Dreadful is the mysterious power of fate" ; "Pray not at all, since there is no release for mortals from predestined calamity" - Sophocles *Antigone*, 951, 1337f.

216 John Dillon "Fate, Greek Conception of" *Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 2* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 776-778.

217 Plato *Laws* X, 896Eff., 899D-905D. cf. John Dillon 'Providence' *Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 5* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 520-521. For a detailed study of 'providence' in philosophy from Plato to Proclus, see Myrto Dragona-Monachou 'Divine Providence in the Philosophy of the Empire' in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt - Band II. 36.7* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994) 4417-4490.

any contingency.²¹⁸ Personal freedom was then interpreted as consent (συγκατάθεσις) to the divine order (είμαρμένη), or agreement with the universal *logos*.²¹⁹

Hellenistic Judaism was much influenced by this Stoic teaching, especially through the writings of Philo of Alexandria (20BC - AD45).²²⁰ This influence is perhaps also behind occurrences of δεῖ ("it is necessary") in the Septuagint, a word which does not translate any corresponding Hebrew word, and when used seems to change the meaning of the Old Testament text from intention (divine will) to determinism.²²¹ These factors are likely behind the deterministic attitude which prevailed in the Jewish apocalyptic view of history,²²² and its occasional combination with astrology.²²³

These views must be distinguished from the early Greek usage of 'providence' (πρόνοια), which was essentially identical to the Old Testament understanding of providence as God's guidance and provision.²²⁴ In both classical and later Greek, the common use of 'providence' still had this meaning of "to care for," or "to make provision for."²²⁵ Jesus likewise spoke of God's

218 The main exception being the Stoic philosophy of Cicero (cf. *De Divinatione* 2.5-8). According to Cicero there is some human freedom, and divine foreknowledge is limited. "The gods attend to great matters; they neglect small ones."

219 Max Pohlenz *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought: The History of an Ideal* (trans. Carl Lofmark; Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1966) especially p.123ff; Sophie Botros 'Freedom, Causality, Fatalism and Early Stoic Philosophy' *Phronesis* 30.3 (1985) 274-304.

220 Philo *On Providence* 2. 41 - cf. *Philo Vol. 9 - With an English Translation by F.H. Colson* (Loeb Classical Library - 10 Vols; London: Heinemann, 1941) 487, see contradiction p.483 fn. d.

221 For example, the Aramaic text of Daniel 2:28 reads "what will take place", whereas the LXX using δεῖ, reads "what must take place." For other examples cf. E. Tiedtke & H.G. Link 'δεῖ' in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology - Vol 2.* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 664-666.

222 For a summary of this influence see J. Behm 'προνοέω, πρόνοια' *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 4; trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 1009-1017, 1014-1016. Hans Conzelmann likewise notes that "the idea of predetermination is developed in apocalyptic: 'And thou didst set apart Jacob for thyself, but Esau thou didst hate' (IV Ezra 3.16). It is heightened in the Qumran texts (1 QS III 15ff.; cf. 1 QS XI 10ff.)." - *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1969) 253. The apocalypticists perceived history to be preordained, with an eschatological goal to which it is directed. This goal could be thought of as the negation of history, rather than its fulfilment, another factor which may have influenced a theology of atemporal/timeless eternity.

223 J.H. Charlesworth 'Jewish Interest in Astrology during the Hellenistic and Roman Period' in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt - Band II, 20.2* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987) 926-950.

224 "The English word 'providence' comes to us from the Latin version of the story of Abraham and Isaac. When the boy Isaac asks his father, 'Where is the ram for this burnt offering?', Abraham replies, 'Deus providebit', 'God will provide'." - T.J. Gorringer *God's Theatre: A Theology of Providence* (London: SCM, 1991) 5.

225 J. Behm 'προνοέω, πρόνοια' 1010-1012; John Dillon 'Providence' - "In early Greek thought, Zeus and the other gods are portrayed as exercising care for individual mortals, and in Zeus' case even in a general way for the world as a whole, but there was no overarching idea of divine providence as embracing all human activity, nor was the *pronoia* used in this context..." (520).

care, protection, and provision for creation as a father (Matt. 5-6, 10). But because the notion of determinism had become so entrenched in philosophical and religious thought by this time, the New Testament authors seem to intentionally avoid the word *πρόνοια* when speaking of divine care.²²⁶ However, the Christian Apologists of the second century certainly had no inhibitions in adopting the philosophical view of providence when describing God's rule over the world.²²⁷ Stoic *πρόνοια* was combined with the biblical view of history as the divine economy (*οικονομία*) of salvation, without successfully relating the two.²²⁸ The result was historical pantheism: God and history are one.

The Stoic doctrine of providence gained popularity in late Platonism,²²⁹ and was largely adopted by the most famous of the Neoplatonic philosophers, Plotinus. As John Dillon explains,

While basically accepting the Stoic theory of Fate and Providence, Plotinus seeks to justify the rationality and goodness of God in the face of the multifarious evil observable in the world. Like the Stoics, he regards free will as a subjective phenomenon and holds that true freedom consists in understanding the way of the world and assenting to it.²³⁰

226 Yet something of the Stoic and apocalyptic ideas may surface in the theology of the apostle Paul (eg. Acts 17:26, Romans 8), even though Paul retains the Old Testament (including the apocalyptic) belief that history is directed towards a goal. The Biblical notion of providence is teleological in contrast to Stoic fatalism (1 Corinthians 15:28). cf. Rudolf Bultmann *Theology of the New Testament Vol 1* (trans K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1952) 71. There has been much debate on the influence of Stoic philosophy on the writers of the New Testament. cf. Marcia L. Colish 'Stoicism and the New Testament: An Essay in Historiography' in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt - Band II*, 26.1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) 334-379.

227 J. Behm 'προνοέω, πρόνοια' 1017. - "in so doing they [the Apologists] relate the doctrine of God so strongly to cosmology that insufficient justice is done to the basic biblical concept of the God who works spiritually and personally and carries through His will to save." Athenagorus openly refers to the Stoic doctrine. Clement even entitled one of his writings *Περὶ προνοίας*, and regards the doctrine of God's *πρόνοια* to be a fundamental Christian truth which applies to detailed events (*Strom.*, I, 52, 1ff.; V, 6,1f.).

228 In his comments on Clement of Alexandria, J. Behm says that "even formulae like ἡ κατὰ τὴν πρόνοιαν οἰκονομία (*Strom.*, VI, 123, 2, cf. I, 28,1) cannot conceal the fact that providence and saving revelation are different branches of the divine operation which the Gk. church never succeeded in bringing into organic relation with one another." 'προνοέω, πρόνοια' 1017. For an almost identical comment cf. Peter R. Forster 'Divine Passibility and the Early Christian Doctrine of God' in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990) 23-51, 42, with reference to *God and the Word in St. Irenaeus* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1985).

229 John Dillon *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977).

230 John Dillon 'Providence' 521.

It was Plotinus' philosophy of providence and free will which St. Augustine espoused,²³¹ and which thereafter became dominant in the theology of the Western church.

2.4. Between Two Errors

Salvation is God's gift which may be rejected or received. Jesus proclaimed this gift as the 'kingdom of God', requiring decision, repentance, and faith.²³² His apostles, and the preachers of the early Church affirmed both the grace of God in bringing salvation to humankind through Christ, and the responsible nature of the choice (free will) to either accept or reject this.²³³ Isolating one of these two dipolar aspects for emphasis is the common fault of both Pelagius and St. Augustine in their early fifth century debate.²³⁴

Pelagius continued in the tradition mentioned above, though with an alleged exaggerated optimism regarding the human will to choose rightly. Yet in his defence, this ability was not considered in isolation of the grace of God evident in the creation gift of human choice, the redemptive death of Christ, and the activity of God's Spirit.²³⁵ Pelagius, and especially his friend Caelestius,

231 Peter Brown *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967) 317; Jaroslav Pelikan *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986) 15-16; John Dillon 'Providence' *Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 5* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 520-521.

232 The doctrine of the Protestant Reformers, that faith itself is a gift (as some kind of infused power), effectively destroys the concept of faith as an action of human freedom *responding* to God's invitation and gift of salvation. cf. Keith W. Clements *Faith* (London: SCM, 1981) 42-45.

233 Justin Martyr defends free will against the Stoic doctrine of εἰμαρμένη (2 *Apology* 6/7.4), Theophilus of Antioch affirms that 'for freedom and self-determination God made man' (*Epist. ad Autol.* 2.27), and Irenaeus defends free will in opposition to the Gnostic concept of classes of persons including the 'elect'. cf. Christopher Stead 'The Freedom of the Will and the Arian Controversy' in *Platonismus und Christentum: Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie* ed. H.D. Blume & F. Mann (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983) 245-257, reprinted in C. Stead *Substance and Illusion in the Church Fathers* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985); E.P. Meijering *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co, 1975) - 'Irenaeus' Relation to Philosophy in the Light of His Concept of Free Will' 19-30.

234 Identifying the issue as dipolar does not entail a description of salvation as synergism, an accusation made against Pelagians.

235 Augustine *Four Anti-Pelagian Writings: On Nature and Grace; On the Proceedings of Pelagius; On the Predestination of the Saints; On the Gift of Perseverance* trans. J.A. Mourant, W.J. Collinge (*The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 86; Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1992); Robert F. Evans *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968) with reference to Pelagius' *Expositiones XIII epistolarum Pauli*, ed. Alexander Souter (Texts and Studies IX, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1922-31); B.R. Rees *Pelagius: A Reluctant Heretic* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988); *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991); Gerald Bonner 'Augustine and Modern Research on Pelagianism' (The Saint Augustine Lecture 1970, Villanova University Press, 1972) reprinted in G. Bonner *God's Decree and Man's Destiny: Studies on the Thought of Augustine of Hippo* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987); H.A. Wolfson 'Philosophical

opposed the 'original sin' doctrine which Augustine formulated²³⁶ to emphasise the operation of God grace without chosen human contribution. According to Augustine, humans are free to choose (*liberium arbitrium*), but for the sinner the only choice that can be freely made (i.e. without external compulsion) is one of sinning.²³⁷ God then graciously undertakes the whole process of salvation, preparing and healing the will to choose rightly, and giving faith.²³⁸ This operation of God never fails, and so cannot be effectively resisted. This led Augustine to develop the doctrine of election as God foreordaining who would receive this irresistible grace,²³⁹ a doctrine based on the Platonic notion that God is the timeless and immutable cause of all things, and the Stoic doctrine of providence as explained in the previous section of this chapter.²⁴⁰

Implications of the Pelagian Controversy' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103.4 (1959) 554-562, reprinted in *Doctrines of Human Nature, Sin, and Salvation in the Early Church* ed. E. Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993); E.A. Clark 'From Origenism to Pelagianism: Elusive Issues in an Ancient Debate' *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 12.3 (1991) 283-303; J. Ferguson *Pelagius* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1956); J. Ferguson 'In Defence of Pelagius' *Theology* (1980) 114-119; J.R. Lucas 'Pelagius and St. Augustine' *Journal of Theological Studies* 22.1 (1971) 73-85; R.A. Markus 'The Legacy of Pelagius: orthodoxy, heresy and conciliation' in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in honour of Henry Chadwick* ed. R. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 214-234; G. Bonner 'Pelagianism and Augustine' *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992) 33-51; G. Bonner 'Augustine and Pelagianism' *Augustinian Studies* 24 (1993) 27-47.

- 236 The idea of the seminal transmission of sin may originate with Tertullian (*On the Soul*, 41). It is affirmed by Cyprian, and opposed by Rufinas the Syrian. Augustine appealed to the Latin mistranslation of Romans 5:12 (*in quo omnes peccaverunt* for ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον) to support his argument that all persons were present in Adam's semen, along the lines of the Stoic doctrine of σπερματικοὶ λόγοι. cf. C. Kirwin *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989) 132ff.; J.M. Rist *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 431.
- 237 "The free will taken captive (*liberum arbitrium captivatum*) does not avail, except for sin; for righteousness it does not avail, unless it is set free and aided by divine action" (*contra duas epist. Pelag. III*, viii, 24.) - as quoted by Alister McGrath *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification - Vol. 1 - Beginnings to 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 26.
- 238 By regarding faith itself as a gift, the human response is compromised. This does not mean that faith is then merely an act of self-will or assertion, which may then be considered a meritorious work. Keith Clements has correctly pointed out that there is an element of gift, in that there can be no faith without someone or something to have faith in. God's coming to us may evoke the response of faith. The invitation to have faith is God's gift. cf. K.W. Clements *Faith* (London: SCM, 1981) 42.
- 239 Augustine *Encheiridion* 12.103; *De Correptione et Gratia* 15.47. cf. J.M. Rist 'Augustine on Free Will and Predestination' *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 20:2 (1969) 420-447. Reprinted in J. M Rist *Platonism and its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985).
- 240 Augustine's argument can be set out as follows (cf. K. Ward 'God as Creator' p.108):
- (a) God is immutable; so he cannot do other than he does. Moreover, as perfect actuality, God could not have been other than he is. So God could not have done other than he does.
 - (b) All temporal events are caused by God.
 - (c) Therefore no temporal event could have been other than it is.
 - (d) Acts of willing are temporal events, even though not causally determined by any other temporal event.
 - (e) Therefore all acts of will are necessarily what they are.

The North African churches were successful in gaining Papal condemnation of Pelagius, so that the Augustinian doctrine emerged as the new 'orthodoxy' in the West,²⁴¹ though not without strong opposition.²⁴² Augustine remained virtually unknown in the Eastern Church, though his views on predestination and original sin were later strongly opposed.²⁴³

The debate about God's foreknowledge, especially regarding election, continued in the Western Church during medieval times.²⁴⁴ The problem was in holding freedom and contingency together with a belief in God's omniscience in regard to future contingencies. To illustrate the problem: if God knows everything that will happen tomorrow, then that is what must happen tomorrow or else God's foreknowledge is wrong.²⁴⁵ But this implies that the events of tomorrow are not really contingent, since they are fixed in God's foreknowledge as actual for that day.

One suggested way out of this dilemma (without invoking an eternal "all at once" divine perspective²⁴⁶) is to say that God has knowledge of all contingent possibilities, in which case the future contingencies are foreknown options. This view was first proposed in the sixteenth century by Luis de Molina, and is called the theory of Middle Knowledge.²⁴⁷ Some take the theory only so far as a

241 R.A. Markus 'The Legacy of Pelagius: orthodoxy, heresy and conciliation' 215. Julian of Eclanum complained that the church was being threatened by an African take-over bid. The Augustinian doctrine was endorsed a century later at the Council of Orange (529 A.D.).

242 For example, by St. John Cassian, who pointed out that all the Fathers taught the cooperation of the human will with grace (*synergism*) in the process of salvation and perfection. Other objectors to Augustine's doctrine included: Julian of Eclanum, Vincent of Lerins, Hilary of Arles, Honoratus and Gennadius of Marseilles, Faustus of Riez - under whose leadership the Council of Arles condemned the heresy of predestination. Augustine's reputation was later rescued by decree of Pope Gelasius I (493). See especially the recent study by Rebecca H. Waver *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996).

243 Michael Azkoul *The Influence of Augustine of Hippo on the Orthodox Church* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990).

244 For a summary, see Alister McGrath *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification - Vol. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 128-145.

245 This point does not require that God's foreknowledge *causes* the action foreknown. It is simply an argument regarding the fallacy of combining divine foreknowledge of all things with freedom. cf. Richard L. Purtill 'Fatalism and the Omnitemporality of Truth' *Faith and Philosophy* 5:2 (1988) 185-192. St. Augustine saw the problem when he said, "I have a deep desire to know how it can be that God knows all things beforehand and that, nevertheless, we do not sin by necessity... Since God knew that man would sin, that which God foreknew must necessarily come to pass. How then is the will free when there is apparently this unavoidable necessity?" (*On Free Will*, Book III, chp. 2). Augustine provided no satisfactory solution to this problem. cf. William L. Rowe 'Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will' *The Review of Metaphysics* 18.2 (1964) 356-363.

246 For example, Aquinas' response to the problem, in which case there is no such thing as foreknowledge. cf. Christopher Hughes *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 131.

247 Modern defenders of this view include Alvin Plantinga *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); Jonathan Kvanvig *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); William Craig *The Only Wise God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); Edward

knowledge of counterfactuals - that is, knowledge of what would happen if something else occurs - a knowledge of all the alternatives. Others take the theory further by saying that God also knows 'in advance' what each person will 'freely' choose in any given future situation, given that God has created the circumstances which are the context for the decision. This seems to make the 'middle knowledge' (of all possibilities) redundant, since we have returned to the theory that God foreknows all things which become actual.

The theory of Middle Knowledge limits God's knowledge, and future possibilities, precluding the novel and creative for God (divine contingency). So a number of philosophers and theologians in recent years challenge the logic of future omniscience.²⁴⁸ God may have foreknowledge of possibilities,²⁴⁹ but not all possibilities, and certainly not all future actualities. As Gary Rosenkrantz has argued, this is a divine perfection:

If freedom or an open universe is so valuable and great a good that God must permit a considerable amount of evil in order to secure it (as much of traditional theology has held), then why shouldn't this very freedom, openness, or indeterminacy in the universe find a reflection in the perfect being himself, in the fact that He can have at best inductive evidence for propositions about future free acts? On my assumptions, it is difficult to see how this fact could be regarded as implying that God has a defect.²⁵⁰

Future omniscience is also impossible in that the future does not yet exist (A-Theory). This is not a limitation of divine omniscience, just as the ability to do only what is logically possible is not a limitation on divine omnipotence. As

Wierenga *The Nature of God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); David Basinger 'Divine Omniscience and Human Freedom: A Middle Knowledge Perspective' *Faith and Philosophy* 1 (1984) 291-302; Richard Gaskin 'Middle Knowledge: Reply to Rice' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 45 (1995) 505-509; 'Conditionals of Freedom and Middle Knowledge' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 43 (1993) 412-430. For an argument against the view, see - William Hasker 'A Refutation of Middle Knowledge' *Nous* 20 (1986) 545-557. See also Hugh Rice 'On Middle Knowledge' *The Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (1994) 495-502.

248 Nelson Pike 'Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action' *The Philosophical Review* 74 (1965) 27-46; 'Divine Foreknowledge, Human Freedom and Possible Worlds' *The Philosophical Review* 86 (1977) 209-216; 'Fischer on Freedom and Foreknowledge' *The Philosophical Review* 93 (1984) 599-614; 'A latter-day look at the foreknowledge problem' *The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 33 (1993) 129-164; Frederick Sontag 'Does Omnipotence necessarily entail Omniscience?' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34.4 (1991) 505-508.

249 David Basinger 'Divine Omniscience and Human Freedom - a 'Middle Knowledge' Perspective' *Faith and Philosophy* 1:3 (1984) 290-302.

250 Gary Rosenkrantz 'Necessity, Contingency, and Mann' *Faith and Philosophy* 2:4 (1985) 457-463, 462-463.

Aquinas said, "God has most assured knowledge of all things knowable any time and by any mind..."²⁵¹

2.5. John Duns Scotus

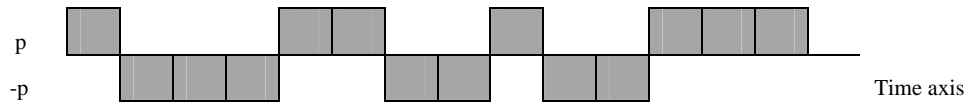
John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) appears to be the only 'scholastic' theologian to assert the reality of a contingent future. This means that God's knowledge of the future must also be contingent.²⁵² His theory of 'synchronic contingency' marks a significant development in Western philosophy and theology, as an argument against the notion of all things being necessary and immutable.²⁵³ The following is a summary of his theory, in contrast to the philosophical paradigms which preceded him.²⁵⁴

According to *Parmenides*, being is immutable and necessary. He declares that change and contingency are phenomena of sense deception ('doxa'). This Parmenidian ontology can be transposed in the following model, in which *p* designates the only possible state of affairs.²⁵⁵



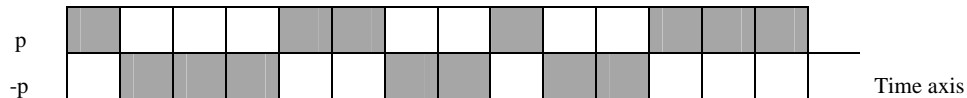
Aristotle did not retain Parmenides' radical necessitarianism; he looked for an alternative ontology, which would leave room for change and contingency. If we concentrate on contingent states of affairs, this ontology can be transposed in the following model (*p* designates a mutable state of affairs):

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- 251 St. Thomas Aquinas *Opuscula VII, Compendium Theologiae ad fratrem Reginaldum socium suum carissimum* 12 - as quoted by Axel D. Steuer 'The Freedom of God and Human Freedom' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36.2 (1983) 163-180, 174.
- 252 This conclusion follows recent studies on John Duns Scotus (see next footnote), rather than the basically 'deterministic' conclusion of previous studies e.g. Douglas C. Langston *God's Willing Knowledge: The Influence of Scotus' Analysis of Omniscience* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986); W.L. Craig *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988).
- 253 The theory is found in Scotus' *Lectura*, a commentary on Peter Abelard's *Sentences*. cf. John Duns Scotus *Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39* - Introduction, Translation and Commentary by A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A.H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker, N.W. Den Bok (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994) see especially p.22-23. cf. Lawrence D. Roberts 'Indeterminism in Duns Scotus' Doctrine of Human Freedom' *The Modern Schoolman* 51 (1973) 1-16.
- 254 This is quoted (without all footnotes) from the introduction to John Duns Scotus *Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39* - Introduction, Translation and Commentary by A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A.H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker, N.W. Den Bok p.23-28.
- 255 Shaded spaces are states of affairs which have been actualised, empty spaces are states of affairs which are possible but not actualised (empty spaces do not occur in the Parmenidian and Aristotelian model).



Aristotle agrees with Parmenides on the equivalence of necessity and immutability. Holding on to this equivalence, yet assuming that there are mutable states of affairs as well, Aristotle arrives at the equivalence of mutability and contingency, however, it turns out that a state of affairs p is contingent if $-p$ can be the case at a *different* moment... So in this Aristotelian model contingency means nothing other than change through time; change consists of states of affairs which are successive in time but necessary on their own. But then, even change itself must be necessary...

A theory of real contingency was not elaborated on until Duns Scotus' *Lectura I 39*. In this work he states that a state of affairs p is contingent if $-p$ is possible for the *same* moment. When we visualise this thesis in analogy to the models above, we get the following picture (again, p is a contingent state of affairs, changing in the way shown by the last example):



This drawing's empty spaces symbolise synchronic alternative possibilities which have not been actualised, yet could have been actualised instead of their counterparts.

According to this theory, there are future contingent acts for God, and his knowledge of the contingent future is itself contingent.²⁵⁶ In other words, God cannot know as actual, future contingent propositions. This does not mean that we adopt libertarianism as a reaction to determinism. John Duns Scotus took the middle path, the reality of both contingency and necessity.²⁵⁷ He was critical of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, for whom God is the efficient and final cause of all things,²⁵⁸ a belief which later finds expression in the predestination doctrine of Calvinism.²⁵⁹

256 John Duns Scotus *Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39* - Introduction, Translation and Commentary by A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A.H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker, N.W. Den Bok p.27.

257 John Duns Scotus *Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39* - Introduction, Translation and Commentary by A. Vos Jaczn, H. Veldhuis, A.H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker, N.W. Den Bok. 21.

258 Brian Davies *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) - chapter 9: 'Providence and Freedom'.

259 C.J. Kinlaw 'Determinism and the Hiddenness of God in Calvin's Theology' *Religious Studies* 24.4 (1988) 497-510.

2.6. God & World - Necessary & Contingent

Necessity and contingency form a dipolar truth about God and all that is created by God. Scientists and theologians affirm that these two poles creatively interact; creativity or development only takes place when there is both order and freedom, law and chance.²⁶⁰ This reflects the polarity discussed in the first part of this chapter: being and becoming.

Charles Hartshorne, whose concept of dipolarity was outlined in the previous chapter (p.150-152), also regards the necessity-contingency polarity to be fundamental. He has shown that out of sixteen options for talking about necessity and contingency as applied to God and the World - only one option can be true.²⁶¹ The most recent edition of Hartshorne's model for showing this, is as follows:²⁶²

	I	II	III	IV
1.	N.n	C.n	NC.n	O.n
2.	N.c	C.c	NC.c	O.c
3.	N.cn	C.cn	NC.cn	O.cn
4.	N.O	C.O	NC.O	O.O

Columns: **I.** God is in all respects necessary (or absolute, etc.)
II. God is in all respects contingent (or relative, etc.)
III. God is (in diverse respects) necessary and contingent

²⁶⁰ T.F. Torrance *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 82ff, 110-111; John Polkinghorne *One World* (London: SPCK, 1987); *Science and Creation* (SPCK, 1988); *Science and Providence* (SPCK, 1989); Keith Ward *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982); *Divine Action* (London: Collins, 1990); Ian Barbour *Religion in an Age of Science* (Harper & Row, 1990); Arthur Peacock *God and the New Biology ; Theology for a Scientific Age* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Ilya Prigogine & Isabelle Stengers *Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984); Ilya Prigogine *From Being to Becoming: Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman & Co, 1980); P. Avis 'Polarity and Reductionism' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29.5 (1976) 401-413; S. Paul Schilling 'Chance and Order in Science and Theology' *Theology Today* 47 (1991) 365-376; Colin Gunton 'Relation and Relativity: The Trinity and the Created World' in *Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on Divine Being and Act* ed. C. Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 92-112.

²⁶¹ My agreement with this does not entail an acceptance of Hartshorne's panpsychism.

²⁶² Hartshorne claims that this table "is as definite a discovery in the metaphysics of religion as I, or for all I can see, anyone now living, or since Whitehead, have made." And again, "It is as powerful an instrument for thinking analytically, rationally, about the theistic problem as is now available..." cf. C. Hartshorne 'God, Necessary and Contingent; World, Contingent and Necessary; and the Fifteen Other Options in Thinking about God: Necessity and Contingency as Applied to God and the World' in *Metaphysics as Foundation: Essays in Honor of Ivor Leclerc* ed. Paul A. Bogaard & Gordon Treash (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1993) 296-311; 'Pantheism and Panentheism' in *The Encyclopedia of Religion - Volume XI* ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: MacMillan, 1987) 165-171; 'The Aesthetic Dimensions of Religious Experience' in *Logic, God and Metaphysics* ed. J.F. Harris (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992) 1-18, 17-18.

IV. God is impossible (or has no modal status)

- Rows:
1. World (what is not God) is in all respects necessary
 2. World is in all respects contingent
 3. World is (in diverse respects) necessary and contingent
 4. World is impossible (or has no modal status)

N = Divine necessity C = Divine contingency
 n = World as necessary c = world as contingent

The views represented in columns I and III are theistic, and column IV lists atheistic theoretical possibilities.²⁶³ The first three items in column II represent belief in a finite God, without any necessary, absolute, infinite, or self-sufficient aspect. The word 'Necessary' means could not be otherwise, and 'contingent' means could be otherwise. The formula 'NC' means that God exists necessarily and there are contingent divine qualities, whereas 'cn' means that "there might have been a different world, but there could not have been no world at all. The supreme creative power could not have simply refrained from creating."²⁶⁴

A few philosophers, according to Hartshorne, have come close to the NC.cn view, namely the mature Plato (cf. Chapter Two, Section 1.6) and Whitehead (cf. Chapter Four, Section 1). But for most, contraries have been contradictions, and as chapter two of this thesis has shown - dipolarity has then been reduced to some form of singular or absolute perfection/maximum. Expressions of this are classical theism (*N.c*) and Spinoza's pantheism (*N.n*), according to which God is exclusively necessary. This makes nonsense of divine freedom and value, and makes passibility an impossibility.

Hartshorne believes that only the NC.cn option survives three important philosophical 'rules': Leibniz's rule that in metaphysics only affirmations can be true; the rule of contrast by which concepts are distinguished (e.g. if nothing is necessary, then 'contingent' loses its sense, and *vice versa*); and finally, that "if Q

²⁶³ In column IV, "in the first option... the world is wholly necessary, there is no contingency anywhere... and no ground for the alleged necessity in an intelligible cosmic power. In option two... there is no necessity anywhere, nothing to limit collapse toward mere chaos or nonentity. Item three... means a not merely contingent world and therefore, some sort of cosmic order, but no cosmic orderer adequately powerful enough (which means intrinsically good enough) for the job. According to atheistic option four... modal logic lacks application." Hartshorne 'God, Necessary and Contingent; World, Contingent and Necessary; and the Fifteen Other Options in Thinking about God: Necessity and Contingency as Applied to God and the World' 306.

²⁶⁴ C. Hartshorne 'God, Necessary and Contingent; World, Contingent and Necessary; and the...' 297.

is a contingent proposition and P entails Q, then P is also contingent."²⁶⁵ He also adds what is an important clarification:

... *c* may mean that you or I, for instance, might not have existed at all, whereas the divine existence obtains no matter what.²⁶⁶ Not mere divine existence but divine actuality is contingent. Indeed actuality, as I use this word, is contingent in all applications. Divine actuality is how, or in what concrete states, the divine essence is instantiated...

'Existence', naturally employed, is less concrete than actuality, so, too, is necessity compared to contingency. That is why it is only existence that can (in God, or in "some world or other") be necessary, whereas actuality cannot be so - provided we avoid using 'actual' for being somehow actualized, concretized, or instantiated. So long as the dichotomy, essence-existence, is taken as exhaustive, so long will neoclassical philosophy be poorly understood.²⁶⁷

The NC.cn formula also reflects something of the analogous relationship between the Creator and creation whereby something can be said about God. The NC.cn view also avoids two opposite idolatries - 'ontolatry' the worship of being, and 'gignolatry'²⁶⁸ the worship of becoming. Instead, as Chapter Four of this thesis has argued, and as Daniel Dombrowski has said: "the divine being becomes, or the divine becoming is - God's being and becoming form a single [dipolar] reality."²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ The principle is defined elsewhere by Hartshorne as, "the conjunction of a contingent proposition and a necessary proposition cannot be necessary, but must always be contingent, no less so than the conjunction of two or more contingent propositions. The whole truth, therefore, is always contingent; and necessary truth is only a constituent." cf. 'Absolute Objects and Relative Subjects: A Reply' *The Review of Metaphysics* 15.1 (1961) 174-188.

²⁶⁶ Hence the reversal of order of *NC* and *cn*, symbolising the greater importance of necessity in God and of contingency in creatures. cf. 'Pantheism and Panentheism' 166.

²⁶⁷ C. Hartshorne 'God, Necessary and Contingent; World, Contingent and Necessary; and the...' 304.

²⁶⁸ The word 'gignitive' (from the Latin *gignere* - to beget) means 'productive of something else'.

²⁶⁹ Daniel Dombrowski 'Polar Equality in Dipolar Theism' *The Modern Schoolman* 62 (1985) 305-316, 309.

Conclusion

Dipolarity is a concept which enables the theologian to say something about God, and the nature of created reality. It is not the key which unlocks the meaning of everything, but it is nevertheless a fundamental concept.¹ A failure to acknowledge this has often led to idealisms which deify one or the other of the two poles, and throughout history this has most often been Oneness and Being. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is a reply to this monism, and is the basis for understanding that God is one-many as well as being-becoming.

Theology and philosophy have often neglected this dipolar or trinitarian framework in a quest for a monistic view of reality, and in doing so have renounced their "traditional claim to monitor man's profoundest intuitions and his most fundamental questions."² Consequently, there has been an impasse in Christian theology until recent times. The call to rethink Christian theology in terms of dipolarity has been suggested by Process philosophers in North America, students of Heidegger in Western Europe (e.g. John Macquarrie, Jürgen Moltmann), and in the recent revival of trinitarian theology - to cite a few examples. This thesis has attempted to reformulate the Christian doctrine of God with reference to these contributions, and in the final two chapters to carry the revision beyond the discussion which focuses on the one-many polarity, to the being-becoming of God.

But how successfully? Firstly, any *theology* would seem to require more of the apophatic silence of the first Western metaphysician of dipolarity - Anaximander (cf. Chapter 2). But this thesis does not presume to have "said it all" about God. Our formulations of truth cannot be equated with *the* Truth. But

¹ Abraham Heschel said, "Polarity is an essential trait of all things. Tension, contrast, and contradiction characterize all of reality... Palliatives may be found, but no cure to polarity is available in this "world of separation." cf. 'The Problem of Polarity' in *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1955) 336-347, 341, 343. This thesis has however disagreed with Heschel who further says, "there is a polarity in everything except God. For all tension ends in God. He is beyond all dichotomies." 347, fn. 10. Yet surprisingly, central to Heschel's writings is the dipolarity of "divine justice and divine compassion," (cf. 412) and also of divine necessity and divine freedom (cf. 413).

² P. Avis 'Polarity and Reductionism' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29.5 (1976) 401-413, 405.

positively, the concept of dipolarity does appear to map one parameter of knowledge, whether knowing God or humanity, with the reservation that the landscape neither stands still nor can be reduced to pure objectification (one pole again). Secondly, the limitations of human language about God must be admitted. While there are grounds for analogous language, not least in the self-revelation of God to humanity, our words cannot 'say it all'. As St. Paul says, our knowledge is partial and also a dim reflection of reality (I Cor. 13:9-12). So we may speak of God's temporality, but regarding its mode of experience for God there is an appropriate human agnosticism. We must live with our limitations.

But the limitations of being do not preclude becoming. Particularity is enriched by relationship with others. The one-many and being-becoming polarities not only provide a conceptual analysis of 'what is', but also point to the possibilities of 'what could be'. Firstly, a relationship is discerned between features of reality which often appear contradictory (e.g. necessity and contingency). So our world-view about 'what is' can embrace dipolar opposites. Secondly, regarding 'what could be', the age-old doctrine of the combination of opposites has often been the secret for unlocking dynamism, vitality, and magic (e.g. Pythagoreanism, Ying-Yang Occultism, Medieval Alchemy). There is a similar realisation in contemporary science, as Chapter Two has shown, that creativity and novelty emerge within a dipolar context.³ This is not to say that there is magical power in the combination of opposites, but that it is only in this context that process and progress are possible.

Dipolarity does not disappear in the emergence of becoming or increased diversity, and neither is there an eschatological disappearance of dipolarity in a final oneness (individuality) or being. This second tendency, 'Neoplatonism', has had a crippling effect on Christian theology. In contrast, the gospel of Jesus Christ has as its focus the restoration of life and relationship, the transforming activity - reactivity of God and humanity resulting in communion (one-many; being-becoming). This affirms the dipolarities discussed in this thesis. They are not merely a feature of pilgrimage towards a trans-dipolar reality, but the framework for a credible and relevant theology of God.

³ The Latin word *contexo* means to interweave, join, or braid together.

• Appendix One •

A Calculus for Polarity

How do polar opposites involve and complete each other? L.W. Norris suggests the following 'calculus for polarity' as a "means for weighing the function which these poles should perform in our exploration of existence."

I quote from L.W. Norris "Existence and its Polarities" - Revision and Supplement' *The Journal of Philosophy* 47 (1950) 96-99, 99.

1. *The principle of polar autonomy.* By this principle one is permitted to stress one pole of a polar set of oppositions to the extent that it reveals its own limits and calls for correction and supplement. "Change" and "flux," for example, should be followed out toward their limit until the meaninglessness of a world of complete flux appears.
2. *The principle of polar tension.* This feature of polar calculus leads us to emphasize one pole to the extent that new relations for it are acquired. "Substance" may be stressed as a basic category so long as meaningful content in the term arises from its use.
3. *The principle of polar axiology.* Here the point is attention to a given pole to the extent that such attention yields unique values. "Freedom" (i.e., moral) may allow self-expression in a complete and unusual way never possible under more ordinary means of restraint. An extreme *may* be more golden than a mean.
4. *The principle of polar augmentation.* Observation of the extent to which one pole may enrich its opposite when combined with it should be made. The more stress one puts on the "quantitative" calculation of existence, for example, the more essential its "qualitative" features become. There need not be an "identity of opposites" in thought, but the augmentation of opposites by a sharing of their peculiar virtues is a significant accomplishment.
5. *The principle of polar concretion.* Ultimately, concern with each pole to the extent that it contributes to the comprehension, growth, and responsibility of the thinker, is of final importance.

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